

“Sculpt a killer body”:
Representation of gender in Men’s Health and
Women’s Health

Bachelor’s thesis
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| <p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Aikakauslehdillä on runsaasti vaikutusvaltaa, ja ne pystyvät helposti vaikuttamaan lukijoidensa ajatuksiin ja asenteisiin. Näkyvyytensä ansiosta ne pystyvät vaikuttamaan siihen, miten mistäkin asioista kulloinkin keskustellaan; toisin sanoen ne vaikuttavat vallalla oleviin diskursseihin. Erityisesti naisten- ja miestenlehdet pystyvät säätelemään sitä, minkä koetaan milloinkin olevan ajankohtaista kullekin sukupuolelle.</p> <p>Tässä tutkimuksessa pyrin selvittämään, miten Men’s Health ja Women’s Health -lehdet representoivat miehiä ja naisia sekä millaisia sukupuolidiskursseja lehdissä esiintyy. Aineistoni koostui yhdestä numerosta kumpaakin lehteä (yhteensä kahdesta numerosta), jotka analysoin kannesta kanteen tunnistuen keskeisimmät diskurssit. Analyysissäni käytin Faircloughin kolmiportaista diskurssianalyysia. Etsin lehdistä ensin kielelliset keinot, joilla rakennettiin sukupuolten representaatiota. Näiden kielellisten esimerkkien pohjalta tunnistin diskurssit. Lopuksi analysoin valtasuhteita, joita diskurssit tuntuivat ylläpitävän.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että ulkonäkö oli sekä miehille että naisille tärkeää, mutta se, miten ulkonäöstä puhuttiin, erosi lehdissä suurelta osin. Men’s Health korosti lihaksikkaan kropan tärkeyttä ja tuntui rinnastavan terveyden ja lihaksikkuuden toisiinsa, kun taas Women’s Healthin keskeisin diskurssi oli kauneuden tavoittelu. Diskurssien seuraukset ovat kuitenkin samanlaisia, sillä ne saattavat vaikuttaa lukijan minäkuvaan negatiivisella tavalla.</p> | |
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1 INTRODUCTION

As magazines are consumed by a large number of people, they have a notable influence on discourses, i.e. the way things are being discussed. When a certain phenomenon is being discussed in a magazine, the way it is presented affects the way people perceive it. Indeed, Williams (2012: 6) notes that magazines give their readers doctrines and norms. By maintaining prevalent ideologies and perhaps constructing new ones through discourses, magazines can affect people's minds and attitudes. Women's magazines are a good example. They write about things that should matter for women, and therefore the readers start to think that 'this should matter to me too'. In this way, a women's magazine "establishes itself as authority on how to be a woman" (Williams 2012: 28).

Discourses are used to represent things, and in order to gain information about them they need to be studied. For example, the representation of genders can be studied through discourses in the magazines, and thus it would be not only an analysis of genders but also an analysis of the ideologies related to genders. As Litosseliti (2006: 58) argues, "gendered discourses position women and men in certain ways" and thus these discourses say something about their behavior, positions and identities. The way the genders are constructed in magazines, or the way they are addressed in general, tells something about the underlying ideologies. Discourses "serve a system of power relations, and all representation involves decisions about what to include and what to exclude" (Fairclough 1995 as cited in Litosseliti 2006: 92).

Representations of genders in magazines have been studied before. For example, Williams (2012) has studied the representation of femininity in fitness magazines. In addition, Cook, Russell and Barker (2014) and Labre (2005) have conducted content analysis on Men's Health and examined how it discusses muscularity and leanness. Although there have been studies about fitness magazines, their contents and representation, there are no comparative studies that would focus on the representation of genders and would compare the discourses in the magazines; in fact, they have focused on either only one gender or only one magazine. Thus, the aim of the present study is to examine what kind of discourses are present in Men's Health and Women's Health. Through discourses, the representation of men in Men's Health and women in Women's Health is studied and compared. The data consists of one issue of both magazines, altogether two magazines. The discourses are analyzed with critical discourse

analysis, which is a useful tool for exposing underlying ideologies. Indeed, according to Williams (2012: 8), language is a good means to use in this kind of analysis, as it “both reflects the ideologies of the producer and reinforces the ideologies through the uttering of them”.

The study is divided into five sections. After introducing the present study, I will discuss gender studies linked to fitness magazines and then present critical discourse analysis, which serves as the theoretical framework of the study. The third part consists of the introduction of the present study, which includes the data and method. Fourth, the magazines are analyzed discourse by discourse, after which they are compared. The fifth and the last section is the conclusion, where I try to answer the research questions and provide ideas for further studies.

2 GENDER STUDIES

In this chapter, I will introduce the central concepts of this study. I will start by presenting critical discourse analysis (CDA, Chapter 2.1). Then I will justify how CDA and gender studies are linked together. After that, I will introduce gender studies, which is traditionally divided into two main branches: the feminist studies and the masculinity studies. I will present feminist studies focusing on fitness magazines (Chapter 2.2), and in the end I will discuss masculinity studies (Chapter 2.3).

2.1 Critical discourse analysis and gender studies

Although ‘discourse’ is a central and widely used term, there seems to be some variation in its definition. Essentially, it means the ways in which we talk about different things. Blommaert (2005: 2) defines it as “meaningful symbolic behavior” and “language-in-action”, whereas Litosseliti (2006: 3) sees discourses as “ways of seeing and experiencing the world ... from a particular perspective”. However, the most relevant definition for the present study comes from Fairclough (2003: 124), as he views discourses as “ways of representing aspects of the world”. Thus, discourses are used to represent different phenomena, such as genders. Despite the different definitions, discourses can be studied by using the same methods. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a popular way of analyzing discourses. In CDA, social phenomena can be studied from a linguistic point of view: “language is both a reflection of and influence on society”, which is why linguistic and social studies complement each other (Williams 2012:

26). What is said by whom is not purely a coincidence, but the speaker has decided to use the language a certain way for a certain effect. For example, if a woman with a masculine feature is being referred to as a 'man', the notion of that feature being inherently masculine is being underlined. Therefore, as Litosseliti (2006: 3) puts it, language has the power to shape the world.

By studying discourses critically, underlying ideologies can be exposed. As Fairclough (1995, as cited in Litosseliti 2006: 92) argues, representations involve "decisions about what to include and what to exclude". For example, when gender representations in media are analysed by using CDA, attitudes towards genders can be exposed. Media is a good platform for this kind of study: due to its vast influence, media has the power to affect people's minds and represent different phenomena from a certain point of view. There are no coincidences in media discourses, which means that everything is written for a reason and thus serves a purpose. Indeed, the media has "the power to represent things in particular ways" (Fairclough 1995: 2). Thus, media has the power to create new ideologies or maintain older ones.

The representations in media can then be studied through a linguistic analysis, which is a common approach in gender studies. However, before presenting the analysis, the concept of gender needs to be defined. What is important is the distinction between gender and sex. The concepts are still often used interchangeably, even though it is nowadays understood more and more widely that the meanings of 'gender' and 'sex'. Sex can be defined as a compilation of biological features separating men from women. In addition, Davis, Evans and Lorber (2006: 37) argue that sex is "a matter of fact": the differences between sexes (i.e. male and female) are self-evident and undeniable. However, it is the concept of gender that is in focus in gender studies. Whereas sex means the static, biological features separating men from women, gender is something more fluid or changing. Gender can even be seen as "socially constructed and learned" (Williams 2012: 10). Furthermore, Williams (2012: 11) states that instead of belonging to only one gender people move between maleness and femaleness, and their acts define how masculine or feminine they are. For example, linguistic choices are a crucial part of constructing one's gender. Therefore, it can be said that people do gender instead of just being 'a man' or 'a woman' (Williams 2012: 11).

While separating genders from each other, the concept of heteronormativity is needed. Wittig (1976 as quoted by Davis et al. 2006: 314) argues that there would not even be the categories of men and women without heteronormativity. Davis et al. (2006: 309) define heteronormativity as a state in which heterosexuality is seen as the only normal sexuality, and therefore, can be taken as a norm. In addition, Davis et al. (ibid.) argue that heteronormativity and conventional constructions of genders are intertwined, the latter serving the former. Heteronormativity can be called institutionalized, because it is deeply rooted in society and therefore taken for granted (Davis et al. ibid.). Furthermore, Jackson and Jones (1998: 131) point out that heteronormativity is partly the reason for the rise of feminism, as it sees women (females) as subordinates. Thus, it can be said that without heteronormativity, there would not even be feminist studies. In addition, Beasley (2013) brings the question of sexuality into the discussion by saying that feminist, sexuality or masculinity studies cannot be separated from each other: female and male genders are seen in relation to each other. For example, women's magazines often emphasize these differences and show that men and women are in constant pursuit of each other: indeed, the so called alpha bias view argues that women and men have central differences (Williams 2012: 44). By studying the representation of genders in magazines, perhaps assumptions of men's and women's differences can be exposed.

2.2 The feminist studies

Even though masculinities and femininities are today studied together under the umbrella of 'gender studies', the name of the discipline has not always been what it is now. Earlier, it was called feminist studies (or sometimes women's studies), which expanded later to masculinity studies and gender studies (Davis et al. 2006: 1). The feminist studies was born in the late 1960s, when women started to demand same rights for them as men had, which led to the emergence of a "need to understand the causes of women's oppression in order to overturn the male dominated social order" (Jackson and Jones 1998: 3). What started as an activist movement later spread to the academic world, as many of the feminists involved in the movement were academics (ibid.). After its expansion to the academia, the feminist studies started to develop different focuses. However, as feminist theory became more diverse, it became clear that there were some fundamental problems, and for example the meaning of the word 'woman' started to be questioned. (Jackson and Jones 1998: 6). This partly explains why the field of gender studies is rather complicated. In addition, Jackson and Jones (1998: 7) argue that feminist

studies soon became interdisciplinary, which is why for example gender studies and linguistics also complement each other. Despite the different focuses, some common elements in the feminist studies can be found. Jackson and Janet (1998: 7) state that the focus has been on “both ‘things’ – the material facticity of women’s subordination – and ‘words’ – the language and discourse”. Due to this interdisciplinary and discourse-focused nature, it is very common in feminist studies to conduct social studies, such as studies of representation.

The representation of women can be studied in different platforms, and for example magazines are a good field for conducting a critical discourse analysis on representation. Women’s magazines and the way women are represented in them has been studied earlier. Caldas-Coulthard (1996, as quoted in Williams 2012: 34) has conducted discourse analysis on traditional women’s magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Vogue* and *Elle*. In addition, Williams (2012) has studied the representation of women in fitness magazines, and it is her study that is the most relevant for the present study. She approaches the theme by defining femininity, which is divided into two sub-categories: traditional femininity and resistant femininity (Williams 2012: 12). Traditional femininity means that it is desirable for a woman to be social, humble, domestic-orientated and dependent on men. These values are what have been seen traditionally feminine, hence the name of the discourse. On the contrary, resistant femininity emphasizes virtues such as independence, assertiveness, rationality, powerfulness, strength and control, which have earlier been seen as masculine traits. Put together, the two types of femininities form a discourse which Williams calls ‘empowered femininity’. In it, as in the traditional femininity, the importance of looks for women is emphasized, but it is also thought that the admiration that a woman gets from her looks is because she has worked hard for her body. In other words, looking good is empowering for women. While trying to fill both roles, women face a situation called double bind. (Williams 2012: 5). It means that if women act according to the virtues of traditional femininity, they may be perceived as weak, and if they act according to resistant femininity, they may be seen as bossy and too masculine. This shows how contradictory the expectations for women can be.

2.3 The masculinity studies

Masculinity studies developed later than feminist studies, but the former has since its beginning been dependent on the latter. There was already an assumed “antagonism between feminism and masculinity” during the women’s liberation movement in the 1960s and 1970s (Gardiner 2002: 2). In addition to masculinity studies being reliant on the feminist studies, it is noteworthy that there have been fewer studies about men than about women (Beasley 2013). Davis et al. (2006: 53) argue that this is because gender has previously mostly been studied from the feminine perspective. Furthermore, Jackson and Jones (1998: 1) argue that because of “male-dominated societies, women have more often been the objects of knowledge than the producers of it.” However, further studies on the masculinities are needed. Even though there is an increase on negative body images and eating disorders on men, the effects of media portrayal on men is “greatly under-documented” (Jung 2011). Therefore, more research is needed to see what kind of influence the media has on men (Labre 2005). In addition, the studies about men have not been as unified as the studies about women, which again shows how masculinity studies can be regarded as subordinate to the feminist studies. This can be seen in the diversity of names that the field has: there are different labels such as ‘masculinity studies’, ‘male dominance studies’, ‘critical studies on men’ or just simply ‘men’s studies’ (Davis et al. 2006: 54).

Although there has not been as much research on masculinities as there is on femininities, some studies have been conducted. Most of them have mainly focused on hegemonic masculinity. According to Cook et al. (2014: 2), hegemonic masculinity means the traditional masculine gender ideal, “whereby men are dominant, aggressive and unemotional i.e. the stereotypical ‘man’s man’”. In addition, according to some feminist theories, it is masculinity itself that is “a social problem antithetical to feminist goals” and therefore inherently oppressive to women (Gardiner 2002: 3). Furthermore, Davis et al. (2006: 56) highlight power as the key issue in hegemonic masculinity: men have power not only over women but also over other men. Therefore, the question of genders is also a question of power, which is why CDA and gender studies can be linked together.

Masculinities can be studied through discourses in magazines. Some common discourses on men’s magazines such as GQ and Esquire have been identified (Litosseliti 2006: 103). One of

them is called ‘the new man’ discourse. It means that the modern man can also be interested in things that have earlier been seen as feminine, such as fashion or health. ‘The new man’ is “someone men can aspire to be” (Litosseliti 2006: 103) In addition, Cook et al. (2014: 2) claim that today men are encouraged to “explore their feminine sides, including concern about appearance and health”. Something similar between the new man and the empowered femininity can be seen, as they both combine traditional values with new ones. In the new man discourse, the old and traditional features of masculinities, such as “male success, wealth, power, heterosexual desire”, are present, while they are combined with new things such as interest in fashion (Litosseliti 2006: 103). Litosseliti (ibid.) continues that this discourse leads to another one called ‘the new lad’, which emphasizes drinking and bonding with friends. In this discourse, the traditional masculine traits are tried to maintain but they are discussed with irony.

In conclusion, gender studies is a wide field of study, and it can be combined with linguistics to reveal underlying ideologies in the society. Maybe due to its vastness it needs clarification. The most crucial concept to define is gender itself, but its definition is not straightforward. Gender studies is in most cases studied from the point of view of the feminist studies and the studies of masculinities. However, it needs to be noted that this division is rather binary. The binary division of genders is supported by heteronormativity, which regards heterosexuality as the norm. Even though gender studies have some challenges, together with discourse studies it can be used to examine the power relations in the society.

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

3.1 Research aim and questions

The aim of this study is to find out how men and women are represented in magazines called Men’s Health and Women’s Health. I will study the representations through discourses, and thus answer the following questions:

1. What types of discourses are used to represent men in Men’s Health and women in Women’s Health?

2. What are the central similarities and differences between the representation of the two genders?

3.2 Data and methods

With 35 editions in 59 countries, Men's Health reaches 71 million readers every month, which makes it the world's largest men's lifestyle magazine brand in the world (Rodale 2018). Women's Health is its sister publication, created in 2005. It has 17 international editions, and it reaches over 15 million readers every month (Hearst 2018). Due to their influential status, the magazines are suitable data for this kind of study. Thus, I chose to analyze one issue of Men's Health and one issue of Women's Health, and more precisely, the December 2017 issues from the British edition. There are several reasons why I chose these volumes and editions. First, the magazines have been published recently and therefore the articles discuss current issues. Therefore, they reflect current ideologies. Second, I chose the British versions due to their better availability, and because I am more familiar with the British culture than with the others coming from the English-speaking countries. The third reason applies also to why I chose Men's Health and Women's Health, and it is because fitness magazines cover issues regarding well-being in general, but because they are mostly focused on looks. As Williams (2012: 7) puts it, "the body is one's active agent in the social world". Therefore, an analysis of discourses about bodies and looks can reflect wider ideologies related to genders.

In the analysis, I used Fairclough's three-dimensional framework for critical discourse analysis, as presented by Blommaert (2005: 29). First, the linguistic clues in the data were analyzed as concrete instances of discourses. The focus was mostly on two aspects: on the way the reader was addressed and on the lexicon. The imperative forms and articles that serve as guidelines for the reader were analyzed. In addition, the lexicon used to refer to genders was analyzed. Second, the discourses were put into a wider context and analyzed as "something which is produced, circulated, distributed, consumed in society" (Blommaert 2005: 29). It means that the participants involved in the discourse were discussed. Third, the underlying power relations that create the discourse(s) were analyzed and the possible consequences of the discourses and their effects on the reader were discussed.

4 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOOKS – THE ANALYSIS

This section consists of the analysis of the magazines. First, I will discuss the most important discourses found in Men's Health (Chapter 4.1). The discourses are presented one by one. Second, I will do the same with Women's Health (Chapter 4.2). For both magazines, I chose one discourse as the main discourse. The other discourses, which were a little less visible, are then discussed. Finally, I will compare the discourses and see if there are differences and similarities between them (Chapter 4.3).

4.1 Men's Health

As a magazine written for men, the discourses present in the magazines suggest what is important in the world of men. Based on the themes of the articles and the word choices throughout the magazine, five main discourses can be recognized. Perhaps the most visible and notable is what could be called the 'muscle growth' discourse: in it, it is emphasized that the reader, who presumably is a man, should at least be interested in growing his muscles, if not already trying to achieve a more muscular body. Second discourse is perhaps a part of the muscle growth discourse or at least strongly linked to it: it could be called the 'weight loss' discourse. There is a presumption that the reader is planning to lose weight. The third discourse then deals with how an ideal man might be perceived, and it could be called 'the heroic, tough guy' discourse. Several articles discussed people who have done heroic things, and the attitude with which these things were discussed was somehow praising. In addition, a 'true man' discourse was also recognized, although it is rather similar to the previous one. Last, the 'new man' discourse discussed by Litosseliti (2006: 103) was also present in the magazine.

4.1.1 'The 'muscle growth' discourse

The 'muscle growth' discourse is already present in the cover, where many of the titles reflect the importance of muscles. There is a picture of Henry Cavill, an actor who recently played Superman, and one of the headlines says "Get Henry Cavill's Superman body plan!" and thus urges the reader to work out to gain a body like Cavill's. In addition, there are headlines such as "Rock hard abs!", under which there are smaller headlines: "Fast 8-pack hacks" and "Add 8 cm to your biceps". The tips and imperative forms are directed to the reader who might feel as

if they have to obey these orders and get visible abs to become socially acceptable. Even the organization of the magazine implies what should be the most important fields of life for the reader: Men's Health consists of six sections, which are called "health", "nutrition", "fitness", "style", "weight loss", and "muscle". It is interesting that muscle and weight loss have their own sections rather than being under the section called fitness. In addition, there are two articles discussing two 'ordinary' yet sporty men. The first article (pp. 38-39) is about Aldo Kane, an ex-marine and now a stuntman, and in the article his body measurements, such as the size of his biceps, are told. At the end of the article Kane's workout program is introduced. The inclusion of the workout program suggests to the reader that if they obey the program they will get a body like Kane's. The second article (pp. 94-99) discusses a mountain climber, and also his body measurements are given in the article. By stating out the measurements it is suggested that this is what the reader also should pursue, and perhaps that the reader can compare his own measurements to the men presented in the magazine.

In the 'muscle growth' discourse, there is an underlying presumption that the reader wants to have visible abs or big biceps. This shows the emphasized role of muscles when it comes to beauty standards for men: as Labre (2005) argues, "sociocultural standards of beauty for males emphasize strength and muscularity". It seems that the most important thing for men is to pursue a better body, which here means a more muscular body. Moreover, the gender representations "exist in relation to ... an ideal reader" (Litosseliti 2006: 93), which means that the issues discussed in the media are actually relevant to the reader; in this case, it means that growing muscles is thought to be an important matter for the reader. In addition, the inclusion of ordinary but sporty men seems to suggest that while trying to achieve a muscular body, the reader should also be 'a normal guy' like Kane and the mountain climber. Indeed, men's magazines seem to promote the idea that an average man, who is neither an athlete nor a bodybuilder, should have "six-pack abs and perfect pectoral muscles" (Labre 2005). As Men's Health is a magazine aimed specially, if not exclusively, for men, the message is clear: 'men, you are interested in muscle growth, and the only way to look good is to have visible muscles'. The magazine also has power to affect people's thoughts, and since its name is Men's Health, it seems that being healthy equals having big muscles. Essentially, this means that the bigger the muscles, the more of a man the person is. The consequences of this discourse might be that the reader thinks that they need bigger muscles, i.e. they need to become something better, which can lead to body dissatisfaction. Furthermore, Cook et al. (2014: 9) suggest that the muscular male body is

central for hegemonic masculinity, as muscles can be seen as a sign of “courage, power, strength, sex appeal and control”. Thus, it seems that hegemonic masculinity is being advocated by Men’s Health too.

4.1.2 Other discourses

Another discourse, which is strongly linked to the muscle growth discourse, is the ‘weight loss’ discourse. The idea of losing weight is already present in the cover. There are two headlines that emphasize weight loss: “108 weightloss superfoods!” and “Flatten your belly”. The exaggerated number of healthy super foods seems to underline the notion of losing weight being something to endeavor. The discourse of losing weight and making one’s body appear leaner is also present in the table of contents, which is titled “Your monthly upgrade”. It seems to suggest that the reader is not enough yet but needs to become something else, i.e. that he needs to be upgraded. Williams (2012: 45) argues that a slender body is a sign of will-power, control and discipline and therefore admirable. Then it can be assumed that by having a lean body one can indicate possession of these valued characteristics, and therefore a lean body is something that everyone should aim for. In addition, men’s magazines seem to suggest that men should pursue a lean and muscular body through diets. However, the inclusion of dietary advice and aspiration for a lean body seems to be a rather new phenomenon in men’s magazines, as “unbridled food consumption” has earlier been “associated with manliness” (Cook et al. 2014: 9). The ‘weight loss’ discourse seems to be operating together with the muscle growth one, as a low level of body fat is pursued so that the muscles are visible. According to Labre and Law (2002), the promotion of lean body type and the assumption that the reader needs to lose weight can lead to body dissatisfaction and eating disorders, and these disorders are already common among boys of all ages. In addition, it can be very difficult to achieve low levels of body fat, and the failure to do so can lead to psychological distress. Thus, the idea that men should lose weight to get visible muscles seems to be promoting a rather limiting way of being a man.

Men’s Health includes many stories about ordinary people, and there is one discourse that unites those articles. It is ‘the heroic, tough guy’ discourse. Again, this discourse can be seen in the cover, where the actor playing Superman is portrayed; Superman has characteristics that are seen as desirable for a man. He is strong and humble and he saves the day – he is a hero. The discourse also manifests in other ways throughout the magazine. For example, there is an article

about Mountain Rescue Service in Chamonix, France (pp.112-119). They save people who are lost or caught up in a blizzard. The article is titled “White Knights”, which already makes them sound very heroic, white referring to goodness. In addition to that, examples of the tough guy discourse can be found. For example, in the Aldo Kane article, it is told that he has broken 6 bones. It seems to indicate that to be a man like Kane one has to be able to endure pain, and if Kane represents the ideal man, should not then all men be able to endure pain? Furthermore, one article discusses chili and its benefits for health. The article discusses a study and remarks that “perhaps unsurprisingly, they also found hardcore chiliheads were more likely to be men” (p. 88). The word ‘unsurprisingly’ seems to be rather odd: why is it unsurprising? Perhaps it is linked to the notion of enduring pain and showing that one can take it. Furthermore, it seems to suggest that it is men who endure pain, not women. Thus, the endurance of pain can be seen as a factor separating men from women. In addition, the different parts of chili are presented, and it is told that some parts are hotter than others. The mildest part is the tip, and the article gives the reader some advice: “If you’re new to this, tackle this end and leave the rest alone. Or you could, you know, grow a pair and get stuck in.” (p. 89) The use of the imperative ‘grow a pair’, while sounding insulting, simultaneously challenges the reader as if saying ‘you are not a man unless you do it’, and it furthermore assumes that one has to ‘be a man’ to be able to eat hot food. This discourse seems to suggest that to be a man one has to be ready to endure pain and do heroic deeds, which again supports the ideology of hegemonic masculinity (Cook et al. 2014: 9).

The magazine included several references to gym behavior, and this discussion seems to be a part of a discourse which could be called a ‘true man’ discourse. In an article (p. 18) where the reader can ask a professional anything, one reader asks if it is necessary to use the belt while doing a deadlift, as their friend has been using one. Both the reader and the physiotherapist agree that it is not necessary and that the friend is a “poser” and that “it’s all for a show”. However, in one article, the pros and cons of doing weights compared to cardio are discussed (p. 36). One of the pros of doing weights is that one can get Instagram likes. It seems a bit contradictory that using a belt while lifting heavyweights is all for a show even though it is also a question of health but going to the gym and shaping one’s body into a preferable way to get Instagram likes is acceptable, even something worth pursuing. In addition to that, one article is about a training method called strongman training (p. 46). It says that “Have fun, but don’t be the guy who spends more time finding the best lighting for a shot than he does mastering a lift.”

There seems to be the contradiction again. It appears that there are certain rules for how to behave if one wants to be a man and especially if one wants to act properly and be accepted in the gym community. The idea that there is only one way of acting like a man could also be considered to be a result of hegemonic masculinity, whereby the acceptable behavior for men is limited.

The last discourse is the new man discourse described by Litosseliti (2006: 103). The new man is a new type of consumer, who is allowed to be interested in fashion and looks, which was earlier not expected from men. For example, one article presents new grooming products and compares them (pp. 121-133). Articles like this have appeared earlier only in women's magazines, but today men are also allowed to take care of their looks. However, the article has a twist: the products are presented rather ironically, as if they were in an award show. The products are accepting awards and giving their winning speeches. Thus, it seems that also the 'new lad' discourse by Litosseliti (2006: 103) is present: the beauty products seem to be important for men, as they are discussed in a men's magazine, but they are still being discussed in an ironic way, as if to lessen their meaning in a man's life. In addition, there is an article about cleaning (p. 23), which might be a rather new thing for a men's magazine. It may be a part of the new man discourse too: earlier cleaning was seen as women's job but now it is something that also men can do. It seems that men are allowed to be interested in cosmetics and other feminine things, but they still have to relate to them rather ironically, as if their masculinities would be damaged if the things were taken seriously. This notion, again, comes from hegemonic masculinity, where men still need to be tough and a 'man's man'.

4.2 Women's Health

Women's Health discusses issues that are typical for a women's magazine: looks and other people. It can be assumed that the themes in Women's Health should matter for women. Indeed, "magazines serve as a source of information about how to be feminine" (Williams 2012: 6). I recognized four main discourses from Women's Health. First, there is the 'looks matter' discourse, in which it is assumed that women are interested in improving their looks. Then comes the 'weight loss' or the 'perfect body' discourse, which is rather similar to the 'looks matter' one, but there were still some differences so that they form their own discourses. The

third discourse is women's relation to other people, especially to men. The fourth and the last discourse is what Williams (2012) calls 'empowered femininity'.

4.2.1 The 'looks matter' discourse

The most visible discourse in *Women's Health* is what could be called the 'looks matter' discourse. Several examples of this discourse can be found. First, one of the sections in the magazine is titled "Good looks", which underlines the importance of appearance. Second, there is an article where a skin-related problem is discussed, and a professional gives a solution (p. 33). Here, the problem with the skin is ageing, which leads to the conclusion that looking young is the norm and ageing is something negative that should be avoided. Third, one article gives tips how to do one's hair after a gym session. The article includes several presumptions about what is beautiful: "Dutch to fishtail plaits creates *shape and texture* ... and showcases *voluminous, thick hair*"; "fake volume and body", "volumizing product", "make your face look slimmer", "hair appear longer", "creates *texture and body* for when you want to party" (pp. 89-94, italics added). This article suggests that long and thick hair is desirable and that the reader should try to achieve it, as it makes the reader look younger. Fourth, different mascaras are compared in one article. Here, it is said that

"What you *really* need are lashes with serious staying power, whether that's falsies that stay put through next-level training at the gym, treatments that make your own natural lashes curl like a good bicep or quick-application products that deliver enough glam whatever the guest list or dress code." (p. 96)

There is a direct implication that women want – or need – big and voluminous lashes. Traditional beauty standards can be found from the article: "making me look younger and more energized", "my lashes looked full, soft and sexy". Again, it is not only important to look good but also to look young. This discourse is also visible in an article about Mollie King, an actress, who is also on the cover of the magazine. King's looks are being discussed throughout the article (pp. 38-45). She is an actress, but her acting skills are not even mentioned. As Litosseliti (2006: 93) puts it, whenever women are portrayed in the media, their physical attributes are emphasized "to the exclusion of other characteristics". Instead, her appearance is discussed with remarks such as "flat of stomach", "goofier than most very pretty girls allow themselves to be", "who looks gorgeous". Essentially, this discourse is about making an effort to look beautiful:

as Litosseliti (2006: 98) argues, “beauty work” is something that is expected from every woman, which reflects the beauty standards for women. According to Labre and Law (2002), these beauty standards can be harmful, as women compare themselves to the images presented in the media. The comparison can lead to “lowered satisfaction with one’s own attractiveness”. By maintaining the ideology that women should be improving their looks, *Women’s Health* seems to be contributing to its readers’ dissatisfaction with their appearance.

4.2.2 Other discourses

Like *Men’s Health*, *Women’s Health* also has the ‘weight loss’ discourse, which could also be called the ‘perfect body’ discourse. This discourse differs from the previous one because it is merely focused on how the body looks. The discourse manifests itself already in the cover: headlines such as “Beat Winter Bloat”, “Get Great Guns” and “Torch Fat Fast” all tell the reader to get started, and they imply that the reader has to lose weight or otherwise shape their body. It is also interesting that the headlines include war-related vocabulary, which implies that women are in a war against fat or ‘bad bodies’. Furthermore, the magazine has a section called “Best body”, which seems to include the assumption that the reader pursues the best possible body. The table of contents also hints what is – or what should be – important for women. There is a “Fat burner’s diary” under the “Best body” section, which implies that the less fat, the better the body. Thus, there seems to be a clear image of what an ideal body for women is. In addition, one reader asks a professional that “Is it really trickier to get back in shape after having kids?”, and the professional answers that “if you were in good shape before your pregnancy” there is no problem (p. 22). However, “good shape” is not defined, but rather it is assumed that the reader knows what it means. As Williams (2012: 45) argues, “today’s body ideal for women is more than simply being thin, it is being toned and fit.” Thus, it can be assumed that good shape means a thin and toned body. Moreover, the presumption about the perfect body can be seen in the Mollie King article, where her workout program is presented. It is titled “Sculpt a killer body like Mollie’s”, which implies that a similar kind of lean and sporty body is something that should be pursued. In addition, it seems that it is also recommended to be in good shape not only for oneself but also to please others. For example, there is an article about tricep dip, and it is said that “Master this move for enviable arms. Just add one sleeveless dress.” (p. 27) The body is not just a body but rather something that tells about the values of that person and where they have spent time on: as Williams (2012: 7) argues, “the body is one’s active agent in the

social world". By having a body that meets the beauty standards, one can prove that they are socially acceptable.

Another discourse, which is not as obvious but which is still present, is women's relation to men or to other people. Indeed, women are still represented in relation to others and not independently (Litosseliti 2006: 93). For instance, one reader asks the magazine how to help her boyfriend get over the fact that she is taller than him (p. 23). This example applies to this discourse in two ways. First, there is the assumption that women are and should be smaller than men. Second, it is indicated that it is the woman's job to help the man to get over it: women are "primarily responsible for relationships" (Litosseliti 2006: 100). Furthermore, it seems that women are valued based on their relationships to their husbands/partners or their families. For example, in an article discussing anxiety during Christmas, the reader's partner is being referred to as "your partner" (p. 64). Later in the article it is said that "you're single or less than loved-up" (p. 66) which again sounds like the woman's relationship status values the woman. These both examples seem to assume that the reader has a partner or that if they do not, then there is something missing. In addition to that, an interview from a woman (p. 87) includes remarks such as "with my husband and three children" and "being a mum", which makes it seem that these facts define this woman. Furthermore, there is an article about good Christmas gifts, where it says that "for your dad, brother, boyfriend" (p 103). It seems again that the relation the reader has to the men in her life is important. There is also a section where there are best gifts for the woman herself, and it says: "Because let's face it, they're never going to get it right. For me? How did you know?" (p. 102) As Williams (2012: 57) argues, it seems it is women's duty to take care of others and themselves. Women are not then defined independently but through others.

Williams' (2012) empowered femininity was present in Women's Health. It is the discourse where traditional, feminine values are combined with more modern ones. Women are supposed to take care of others – which can be seen for example in the Christmas gift example – but simultaneously they need to be strong and independent. Empowered femininity can also be seen in the Mollie King article. She embraces body positivity: "You have to be proud of how you look and accept who you are", but later she adds that "I'd like more booty but I know I'll always have a tomboy shape". This seems rather contradictory: how can women be proud of their bodies and still be in the pursuit of changing them? This is what Williams (2012: 5) calls double

bind: King tries to be strong and independent (favoured virtues in resistant femininity), but simultaneously discusses her looks and relationships (features of traditional femininity). This shows how women struggle when they try to fill the roles that are expected of them.

4.3 Similarities and differences

Now that I have discussed the central discourses in Men's Health and Women's Health, the representations of men and women can be compared. Based on the discourses, it is clear that looks are important for both genders. However, the focus is different: for men, having big muscles is essential, whereas for women, it is important to look young and beautiful. Other differences can be found. In Men's Health, the men's behavior is greatly emphasized: there seem to be rules for how to 'be a man'. In Women's Health women's relationships to other people seemed crucial.

Both main discourses, the 'muscle growth' and the 'looks matter', seem to deal with expectations that both men and women face. Even though the emphasis is different, the consequences that come from expectations are similar. Women are supposed to be beautiful and have a great body, and men are supposed to be muscular, tough guys. But these expectations are hard, if not impossible, to meet, which causes problems. The pressure that comes from unrealistic representations in the media have earlier mostly affected women, but today, they affect men even more and more. As Labre and Law (2002) argue, the lean and muscular body type advocated by Men's Health too "may be just as difficult for men to attain as the thin ideal has been for women". Indeed, what has earlier been women's problem and what has caused for example eating disorders for girls now affects men and boys too. Both women and men face unrealistic expectations regarding their looks. When the expectations are not met, dissatisfaction with one's looks follows. While the magazines have the power to affect the reader's mind by telling what the ideal woman or man is like, it is the reader who suffers from the consequences.

It is not straightforwardly stated that men and women are different, but the discourses highlight what matter for the two genders, and those issues are different. Women need to wear make-up and do their hair, whereas men need to have big muscles and be tough guys. As Litosseliti (2006: 92) puts it, "the actual representations of women and men are often stereotypically

limiting”, and this can be seen in the magazines too. For example, in *Women’s Health*, there is an article about crying and how it is good for one’s health. It says that “we’re talking runny-nosed, blotchy-faced, final scene of *The Notebook* bawling” (p. 69), which contains three presumptions about women: 1. they have seen the movie 2. they thought it was sad and 3. they cried. In the same article, a doctor tells that “People often assume that female sex hormones are responsible for the fact that adult women cry more often than adult men”, which, put together with the *Notebook* example, underline the notion that women are emotional and cry easily. Coates (1996: 253, quoted in Williams 2012: 15) argues that crying is “constructed as a gendered behavior”, and performed a great deal more often by women than by men. In contrast, men are not allowed to cry; due to hegemonic masculinity, they have to act tough and brave. It seems that men and women face expectations not only regarding their looks but also their behavior.

Litosseliti (2006: 101) argues that women’s and men’s magazines are based on the notion that women and men are somehow different, and that “men and women occupy exclusive sub-cultures”. This can be seen already in the titles of *Men’s Health* and *Women’s Health*: men and women are so different that they both need their own magazines. The division into two genders, men and women, comes mostly from the notion that men and women look different. This is why people try to highlight their femininity and masculinity and thus mark their gender (Williams 2012: 41). In addition, Williams (*ibid.*) argues that bodies are used to display cultural standards and that people shape their “bodies to meet social standards”. These social standards are seen in the magazines too, as *Men’s Health* emphasizes muscularity, whereas *Women’s Health* emphasizes looking beautiful and being in a good shape. Thus, even though the discourses in *Men’s Health* and *Women’s Health* are different, they are similarly damaging as they maintain limiting representations of genders.

5 CONCLUSION

By analyzing discourses critically, ideologies and attitudes towards certain phenomena can be exposed. For example, representations are often studied through critical discourse analysis. There has been research on representation of femininities in women’s magazines (Williams 2012) and some research on masculinities (Cook et al. 2014; Labre 2005), even though the latter has been substantially lesser. Thus, the aim of this study was to see how men and women are

represented in *Men's Health* and in *Women's Health*, respectively. The focus was on the discourses used in the representations. After the discourses were analyzed and their possible effects were discussed, they were compared to see the similarities and differences between the representations of men and women.

The findings show that for both women and men looks are important, even though the emphasis varies. For men, being a muscular man's man seemed to be the ideal, whereas looking beautiful and young was important for women. As Litosseliti argues (2006: 92), the gender roles are still rather limiting, which can be seen in the findings too. *Men's Health* seemed to emphasize big muscles and manly behavior, such as heroic acts and high pain endurance. *Women's Health* on the other hand included ideologies about looks and being pretty. These are characteristics that have been seen as traditionally feminine and masculine (Williams 2012: 12; Cook et al. 2014: 2).

The findings show that men and women still face expectations based solely on their gender. The genders were represented rather restrictively. However, limited representation can lead to different problems. The attempt to fit in roles set by the society and the pursue of the ideal body can cause "body dissatisfaction, eating-disorders, unhealthy dieting or a desire for greater muscularity" (Labre and Law 2002). Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity, which was present in *Men's Health*, may lead to dangerous behavior when boys try to 'prove themselves' and do things that are harmful for them in order to show that they can endure pain. In addition to these concrete problems, people may find it difficult to try to fit into the gender ideologies maintained by magazines such as *Men's Health* and *Women's Health*. Still, "these cultural expectations ... serve as standards against which people judge themselves and others" (Williams 2012: 3). Thus, the representations may cause people to conflict with their identities, which can again cause further damage.

As the present study was conducted in the form of a critical discourse analysis, the findings may be slightly subjective (Blommaert 2005: 32). However, the themes of the magazines were not diverse, and based on them, the discourses were rather easily recognized. If a similar study with the same data were conducted, the findings would probably be mostly the same. Studies like this are needed in order to expose representations that are based on harmful ideologies. For example, similar study but with perhaps a different magazine and different group that is

represented would provide information about that certain group. Magazines need to be studied, as they can create “acceptable social norms” (Cook et al. 2014: 2). Thus, they have the power to affect people’s minds and attitudes.

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