

**“DUMP YOUR CHILDHOOD SWEETHEART”:** An  
analysis of the way the reader of *FHM* is invited to  
relate to women

Master's thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract  <p>Miesten lifestyle -lehtien negatiiviset naisrepresentaatiot ovat herättäneet huolta tutkijoiden ja feministien keskuudessa jo muutaman vuosikymmenen ajan. Lehtien sukupuolten välille rakentamia suhteita on kuitenkin tutkittu verrattain vähän, ja niiden lukijapositioneet ovat jääneet yleisemmän maskuliinisuuden tarkastelun varjoon. Näiden tarkastelu täydentäisi ja syventäisi sukupuolirepresentaatioiden tutkimusta ja antaisi paremman pohjan lehtien kulttuuristen vaikutusten arviointiin.</p> <p>Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena on täyttää aukko ja selvittää, miten miesten lifestyle -lehdet kutsuvat lukijaansa suhtautumaan lehdessä representoituihin naisiin. Tutkielman teoreettinen viitekehys tulee kriittisestä diskurssintutkimuksesta. Erityispaino on Faircloughin (1992, 1995) diskurssinäkemyksellä.</p> <p>Aineistoni on lokakuun 2011 <i>FHM</i>. Olen valinnut tämän lehden, sillä se on yksi suosituimpia ja vaikutusvaltaisimpia miesten lifestyle -lehtiä. Aineisto on rajattu yhteen lehden yksityiskohtaisen diskurssianalyysin mahdollistamiseksi.</p> <p>Tutkielman metodi pohjaa Faircloughin kriittiseen diskurssianalyysiin, mutta sitä täydennetään lukijapositioneiden sekä kuvien analyysillä. Tarkastelen kolmea eri asiaa: tekstin tarjoamaa lukijapositioneeta, naisten representaatiota sekä haastattelussa naisten itse ottamia rooleja.</p> <p>Tuloksista selviää, että <i>FHM</i> esittää lukijan ja naisten välisen suhteen perustaksi seksuaalista halua sekä usein miehistä ylemmydentunnetta. Lisäksi se rakentaa etäisyyttä lukijan ja naisten välille esittämällä tavalliset naiset usein epämiellyttävinä ja naispuoliset julkisuudenhenkilöt puolestaan kaukaisina ja erilaisina. Tutkielman tulokset myötäilevät aiemman tutkimuksen linjoja, mutta tarjoavat uutta tietoa erityisesti niistä mekanismeista, joilla naisten ja miesten suhteita ja ryhmien välistä etäisyyttä luodaan.</p>	
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION .....	5
2.	ANALYSING DISCOURSE.....	8
2.1.	Different approaches.....	8
2.2.	General principles of critical discourse analysis .....	9
2.3.	Fairclough's three-dimensional conception of discourse .....	11
2.4.	Criticism and developments .....	14
2.5.	Summary .....	15
3.	RELATIONSHIPS AND IDENTITIES.....	17
3.1.	Media and Fairclough's three functions of language .....	17
3.2.	Relationships and identities in the present study.....	18
3.2.1.	The reader .....	18
3.2.2.	The women.....	20
3.3.	Summary .....	21
4.	GENDER.....	23
5.	MEN'S LIFESTYLE MAGAZINES.....	25
5.1.	From men's magazines to lads' mags.....	25
5.2.	Gender in lads' mags .....	26
5.3.	Debates on sexism .....	29
5.4.	The decline of the lad.....	31
5.5.	Summary .....	31
6.	RESEARCH DESIGN .....	33
6.1.	Research questions .....	33
6.2.	Data.....	33
6.3.	Method.....	35
6.3.1.	Relationships in analysis.....	36
6.3.2.	Course of the analysis .....	42
7.	ANALYSIS: <i>FHM</i> IN OCTOBER 2011 .....	44
7.1.	Reader position.....	44
7.2.	Girlfriends and celebrities .....	46
7.2.1.	Aversion.....	48
7.2.2.	Desire .....	49
7.3.	Distance.....	51
7.3.1.	Women as a rare occurrence .....	52
7.3.2.	Women as isolated from men.....	53
7.3.3.	Women as different .....	53
7.4.	Summary .....	55
8.	ANALYSIS : <i>SO HOT RIGHT NOW</i> .....	56
8.1.	Genre and structure.....	56
8.2.	Reader position: the reader and the journalist.....	57
8.3.	Stan as fantasy .....	59
8.4.	Stan as a silly girl .....	62
8.5.	Summary .....	63
9.	ANALYSIS: <i>THE LORD OF THE DANCE</i> .....	64
9.1.	Genre and structure.....	64
9.2.	Reader position: the reader and Sinclair .....	65
9.3.	Women as ego boosters .....	67
9.4.	Women as objects of looking .....	68
9.5.	Summary .....	68
10.	CONCLUSION.....	70

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....74

## 1. INTRODUCTION

On the glossy pages of *For Him Magazine*, “the world’s best women”, as the magazine proudly proclaims (Greatmagazines 2012), gather monthly to tell their story and unbutton their trousers. The magazine treats its audience with stories of “sexy ladies” and “hot women”, with the odd mention of an ex-girlfriend or -wife here and there. The reader is invited into a network of ready-made gender relations the moment he (and it usually is a he) takes a first look at the revealing cleavage of the front page girl. The purpose of this thesis is to dive into the gendered world of *For Him Magazine (FHM)* with the analytical tools of critical discourse analysis.

So why gender and why a magazine? Firstly, gender and the meanings attached to it are a perpetually important topic since they influence all of our lives. The way we are raised, the expectations we encounter, the work we do and the money we make while doing it are all likely to be affected by it. Attention to gender is attention to the unwritten norms of society. Secondly, this study starts from the constructivist belief that gender does not simply exist, but it is shaped by the way it is being talked about. The values and characteristics attached to women and men in magazine articles, committee reports or over a cup of coffee all influence the very core of the concept. As Fairclough (2003: 8) writes, texts have effects on us. In today’s plural world, *FHM* is one voice in the cacophony that attempts to define what gender is and what it entails. As the magazine is read by thousands of people worldwide every month, it is nevertheless a loud one. This makes the messages it sends an important topic of inquiry.

The reason I have chosen *FHM* out of all popular magazines is the genre it belongs to. *FHM* is a men’s lifestyle magazine, more specifically a so called lads’ magazine. This means that it addresses its readers primarily as representatives of the male gender. The point of views and topics discussed in the magazine are believed to be interesting, relevant and acceptable to its readers because of their shared experience of being men. Everything in the magazine is thus in some way a commentary on what gender is and what it should be. As Benwell (2003a: 154) writes, “the very format and rationale of the magazines encourages and even relies upon an active and positive affiliation by readers to the normative identities set out within the magazine”. Because of this, the magazine is a rich source of material for a study which hopes to elaborate on the current notions of gender.

Moreover, men's lifestyle magazines have been accused of being a disturbingly negative influence on gender relations. In a recent study later to be published in *The British Journal of Psychology* (Middlesex University 2011), Horvath, Hegarty, Tyler and Mansfield conclude that readers find it almost impossible to differentiate between these magazines' ways of speaking about women and convicted rapists' derogatory statements regarding the female gender. They fear the magazines are normalizing dangerous sexism. Earlier textually oriented studies have also repeatedly concluded that men's lifestyle magazines are sexist, albeit embellishing the attitude with irony (e.g. Benwell 2003c, Gill 2007). These findings call for further research. Horvath et al.'s study concentrates on readers' reactions to statements selected from the magazines (Middlesex university 2011), and thus it cannot give a thorough picture of how gender relations are constructed in context, in the magazines. This would be necessary for understanding the magazines' full message. Much of the textually oriented research on lads' magazines, on the other hand, dates back ten years or so. To properly understand the magazines today and the dangers they perhaps pose, previous research needs to be complemented.

My intention is not only to update previous textually oriented studies, but to analyse lads' magazines' gender roles from a new perspective. Earlier studies have often concentrated on the masculinity advocated by the magazines and commented on the role and representations women have in this world. I will, on the other hand, focus my attention precisely on the relationship the texts attempt to construct between their readers and women. Thus, I hope to not only discuss the gender representations and relations in the magazines but to get at the core of how the reader is encouraged to stand in relation to them. In light of Horvath et al.'s concerns (Middlesex university 2011), this seems crucial.

My focus on relationships means that I will pay attention to how the magazine addresses and positions its reader. I believe this approach has plenty of advantages for a gender oriented study. Men's lifestyle magazines have, after all, been found to harbour different types of masculinities (compare Gill 2007: 204-217 and Gauntlett 2002: 152-180) and consequently different attitudes towards women. The reader's position needs to be addressed to understand which types of roles and relationships are offered for the reader. Analysis on reader position has been conducted by Benwell (2003c) with a differing focus, but the reader's positioning with regard to women has yet to be studied.

I will be using critical discourse analysis as my theoretical and methodological framework. It encompasses the constructivist understanding (see Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009) which makes gender in the media a relevant topic and provides me with the practical tools needed to conduct textual analysis. More specifically, I will apply Fairclough's (1992, 1995) theory of discourse, since it overtly approaches the relationships constructed in (media) discourse. I will be modifying his framework to better fit my data. In the analysis of reader position, I will additionally employ some insights from Mills (2005).

I will begin this study with an introduction to discourse analysis in chapter 2. I will move from a general depiction of the approach to a more detailed description of critical discourse analysis and Fairclough's social theory of discourse. In chapter 3, I am going to discuss Fairclough's concepts regarding relationships and identity more closely in relation to my own work and develop them further to fit my needs. In chapter 4, I will briefly present my theoretical and methodological choices with regard to gender, drawing from the field of gender studies. Chapter 5 shifts the attention to the immediate context of this study, that is men's lifestyle magazines and their theoretical understanding. In chapter 6, I am going to elaborate on my research questions, data as well as the method I intend to use. Chapter 7 entails an analysis of one issue of *FHM*, whereas chapters 8 and 9 focus the gaze to two particular articles I consider illustrative of the gender relations in *FHM*. Finally, chapter 10 concludes the study with a discussion on my results and propositions for further study.



## **2. ANALYSING DISCOURSE**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with a general picture of discourse analysis and a more specific understanding of the framework I will employ in my analysis. I will begin by discussing some central commonalities and divisions in the discipline, then move on to a more detailed account of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Most thoroughly I will discuss Fairclough's (1992, 1995) work, which will be my theoretical and methodological starting point in this thesis. Chapter 3 will continue with Fairclough's work in a context more specifically related to my research questions.

### **2.1. Different approaches**

Discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary field conjoined by an interest in the relations between language use and the world outside of it (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 20). It differs according to purpose, methodology and the discipline within which it is being conducted, and it has been divided into different parts in various ways. I will first present a rough categorization of discourse analysis according to Fairclough (2003, 1992). I have chosen to follow Fairclough's classifications, since understanding his own position in the discipline helps locate him and therefore also this study in the field. For a more multifaceted analysis on the divisions within the field, see for example Jokinen and Juhila (1999: 55) or Pietikäinen (2000: 65-70).

Fairclough divides the field of discourse analysis in two ways: First, he believes a division can be drawn between analyses that include detailed text analysis and analyses which omit it (Fairclough 2003: 2). The first is typical especially of linguistics, the latter of discourse analysis in the field of social sciences. Secondly, Fairclough (1992: 12-37) draws a division between critical and non-critical approaches to discourse. Non-critical approaches describe discursive practices, but critical approaches continue to show how these practices construct societal relations, identities and beliefs and comment on how discursive practices are intertwined with societal power (Fairclough 1992: 12). It should be noted, however, that this division is not an unproblematic one (see, for example, Blommaert 2005: 24).

With the above mentioned categories in mind, Fairclough's own work is relatively easy to situate. He (1992: 4) considers his discourse theory to be located between the linguistically and socially oriented traditions of discourse analysis, with nevertheless a strong emphasis on linguistic detail. Moreover, Fairclough's work is located firmly in

the sphere of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992: 86-99). My own thesis will be drawing largely on Fairclough's work, and it thus follows the same guidelines. This approach fits my goals in many ways, several of which will be discussed later in this and the following chapter. For now, it suffices to say that a linguistically oriented analysis which integrates societal concerns suits my purposes for the sake of the nature of my data and the aims of my study: my data are mostly written text which offers itself to close linguistic analysis, whereas the conclusions I hope to draw should bear some significance in the world outside of language.

## **2.2. General principles of critical discourse analysis**

In this section, I will present an overview of critical discourse analysis (CDA). I will outline some of the main concerns and commonalities of the field. (For a different account of this, see Meyer 2001: 14-20.) Special emphasis will, again, be on Fairclough's work.

Within critical discourse analysis, the main object of interest is discourse. The term often has two levels of meaning. The first one is the broad basis and starting point for the entire discipline, whereas the second one applies to more specific instances of language use (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 50). To describe the basic assumptions behind CDA, both need to be discussed. (For a more thorough exploration on the concepts, see for instance Gee 2005: 7-8).

On a broad level, *discourse* refers to language use as social practice. Drawing from a constructivist point of view, CDA assumes that language use both describes and constructs the world around us (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 53). Fairclough (1992: 63-64) includes in the concept of discourse spoken and written language use, later (Fairclough 1995: 54) complementing it with other types of semiotic activity such as pictures. The latter definition is similar to Blommaert's (2005: 3) and Pietikäinen and Mäntynen's (2009: 26) views of discourse, which encompass semiotic activity beyond the written or spoken word. I will also employ this broader definition, in practice focusing on written texts and visual images as discourse. Here it needs to be noted that I deviate from Fairclough's usage of the word *text*, in which he includes non-textual elements in addition to written language (e.g. Fairclough 2004: 3). I have chosen to retain the concept *text* for written language, in the hope that it will prevent confusion when discussing text analysis and image analysis as methodologically separate entities.

On the narrower level, discourse is understood as a specific and established perspective on a particular issue (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 50), “a particular way of constructing a subject-matter” (Fairclough 1992: 28). Different discourses describe the world from different points of view, and they have different standings in society and in relation to one another. Discourses affect and are used for influencing the way people relate to one another (Fairclough 2003: 124). This concept is employed by numerous researchers and with differing emphases (see, for instance, Scollon and Scollon 2004: 4-6). I will, however, not discuss it in any depth, since this level of discourse will not be central for my study. To sum up, discourses (as a count noun) refer to different ways of speaking which always define the object of speaking in a specific light.

Moving one step further towards the specific, particular objects get and are given their meaning through the way they are represented. The term *representation* refers to the picture that is formed of a specific issue or object in discourse (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 55; for a thorough account, see Hall 1997). A representation is a smaller unit than a discourse; different representations set together might evoke a particular discourse. For understanding the process of representation, Fairclough (1995: 103-104) stresses the subjective nature of texts. Language use is never neutral, and also the representation of a particular object always carries a point of view. Texts are seen as sets of choices (Fairclough 1995: 18), all of which have an impact on the meanings which will be conveyed. It is the task of a discourse analyst to reveal which choices have been made, which omitted and what implications this all has on the type of representations and world view that discourse is constructing. The idea of representation is central for understanding how discourse relates to the world outside of it, and it is also a frequently used concept for practical analysis. As will be clear in chapter 6.3.1. on methodology, also I will employ the concept as a category to be examined in my data.

Having emphasized the importance of textual properties in terms of meaning formation, I should note that I do not claim that meaning resides in discourse alone. On the contrary, following Fairclough (1992: 80), I believe that texts (and discourse generally) provide the reader with a set of cues for the interpretation process. Meaning resides in both the properties of the text as well as the texts’ interpretation (Fairclough 1995: 16). This thesis has been demarcated to analysing the former of the two; questions of actual audience interpretation will have to be taken up another time.

CDA starts from the assumption that discourse repeats already existing social structures and is being restricted by them, but also shapes them itself. Thus, language use and society have a dialectical relationship (Fairclough 1992: 62-73). Deducing from this point of departure, discourse is considered to be intertwined with political and ideological power, serving to contest and naturalize particular power relations. The aim of critical discourse analysis is, then, to reveal the underlying meanings in discourse as well as provide resources for those disadvantaged by the current system (Fairclough 1992: 9). The ultimate goal of critical discourse analysis is to bring about more equal social relations (Kress 1996: 15).

Because of CDA's societal orientation, it is the natural framework for my thesis. As widely distributed discourse over masculinity and femininity, men's magazines take part in the ideological struggle over the meanings of gender. This is a topic traditionally heavily laden with questions of power and equality. The resources CDA should provide for the disadvantaged are in this case the awareness of the means with which *FHM* constructs particular types of gender relations. This will hopefully enable readers to take a more critical stance towards what they are reading and to contemplate on its implications on their world view. This analysis can, then, be seen as a part of the same discursive struggle that *FHM* is contributing to.

Lastly, it is necessary to address the fact that the very foundations of CDA have been sharply criticized. For example Widdowson (1998: 142, 148; see also Widdowson 1995, 1996 and an answer in Fairclough 1996) considers the principles of CDA to be vague and the analysis prone to produce biased interpretations based on the interests of the researchers. While I acknowledge that these are real dangers in a research field that by its own admission relies on interpretation, I believe that the biggest problems can be overcome with thorough reasoning and an outright admittance that the interpretations made are not the only ones possible; hopefully they will, nevertheless, be plausible. The conceptual difficulties will be addressed below.

### **2.3. Fairclough's three-dimensional conception of discourse**

I will now concentrate on Norman Fairclough's views of discourse. Fairclough's prominent contribution to the field of critical discourse analysis is his social theory of discourse. This theory is useful for a study which focuses on meanings embedded in texts, since it provides its applicators concrete concepts and methods for analysis. It is a broad framework which attempts to combine the social and the textual, using an

abundance of theoretical concepts to support the analysis. These concepts change as the analysis develops from book to book. In my study, I will rely on a relatively old set of definitions from Fairclough (1992, 1995), since these are best designed to address questions of relationships constructed in the media (see chapter 3.1); for instance, in Fairclough (2003), questions of relationships are left out completely. I will, however, draw on Fairclough (2003) on occasions where the revised framework does not collide with the older terminology but serves to clarify the existing concepts.

Applying Fairclough's theory requires some screening. His concepts build a multi-layered network with changing configurations that are sometimes difficult to pin down and use in an analysis (see Pietikäinen 2000: 76-79). For the purposes of this study, I have adopted and applied Fairclough's general view of discourse as a three-layered concept as well as the notion of language's representational, ideational and interpersonal functions (elaborated on in the next chapter). I will, then, leave out for instance a discussion on the different perspectives Fairclough (1995: 56-68) offers for the analyst: communicative events and the order of discourse. These concepts seem to me to be quite theoretical and bear relatively little consequence for the type of analysis I intend to conduct. To understand my point of view to discourse and the way it functions, it is enough to comprehend the above discussed premises of CDA together with the concepts explained below.

Fairclough divides the broad concept of discourse into three layers. The inner most layer of discourse is text and its characteristics from vocabulary to text structure. The second layer is discursive practice, which includes the production, distribution and consumption of texts. This level connects the text to the third layer, that is, societal practice. In this layer, the broader societal context of the text is brought into the picture and especially issues of power and ideology become relevant. (Fairclough 1992: 73-100.) Fairclough (1992: 73) calls analysis on the inner sphere "description", whereas analysis on the second and third layers is called "interpretation".

Fairclough's layers are separate and separately analysable, yet overlapping and interconnected in various ways. In the present study, the analysis (chapters 7, 8 and 9) will be concentrating mostly on the textual and discursive levels, whereas chapter 5 discusses background information which should enable interpretations that bear also societal relevance. Since the different levels intertwine, however, also the societal layer will necessarily be drawn upon in the actual analysis.

Fairclough (e.g. 1992, 1995) lists numerous concepts which might be relevant for analysis on the different levels of discourse. In practice, the idea is to draw on the ones which are relevant for the data and research questions at hand. I will next introduce two concepts, namely *voice* and *genre*. I have chosen to discuss them here, since the first is important for understanding some of my theoretical choices (see chapter 3) and the second is elementary for much of media analysis since it underlies the production and interpretation of media texts (see explanation below). Voice and genre are in Fairclough's model second-layer concepts, falling under the broader category of intertextuality. This refers to the ways in which texts are full of more or less clearly demarcated parts of other texts (Fairclough 1992: 84). Later, as the conceptual and methodological bases of this study are further elaborated on, more concepts will be included into the discussion.

Voice is a frequently explored concept and as such has various meanings. Fairclough (1992) uses it without much explanation, apparently implying with it either represented speech or a noticeable point of view to be found in a text. In a later work, however, he (2003: 41) amplifies the concept to mean "ways of being or identities in their linguistic and more broadly semiotic aspects". Blommaert (2005: 4), on the other hand, discusses the concept in a thorough manner, meaning with it "ways in which people manage to make themselves understood or fail to do so". I am inclined to follow in Fairclough's footsteps, since with the data I intend to use, I would not dare to claim to know what people actually want to say, and thus pass judgement on whether or not they are successful. That is also not my aim. In this paper, then, voice refers to the idea that all utterances have a point of view that belongs to someone, be it expressed by quotation marks or simply the tone in which it is being conveyed.

Genre refers to the way specific formal properties classify a text in a particular way. According to Fairclough (1992: 124), genre can "make clear the sense in which discursive practice is constrained by conventions". This is the reason why the concept is necessary for me: Although genre is not my central interest, I do need to develop a broad understanding of the unwritten rules which govern the form and content of the different types of articles I will analyse. Genres also imply certain ways of consuming texts (Fairclough 1992: 126) and will thus provide clues for detecting how meaning is constructed in discourse. In this study, then, genre is understood as a "relatively stable set of conventions that is associated with, and partly enacts, a socially ratified type of activity" (Fairclough 1992: 126). According to Fairclough (1995: 56), genres can be

defined according to their organizational properties. In my data, genres such as interviews and reportages are common. (For more discussion on genre, see for instance Mäntynen, Shore and Solin 2006.)

To sum up, Fairclough's three-layered conception of discourse introduces plenty of tools for practical analysis. I will in this study concentrate on concepts which relate to the two inner layers of discourse. I have here introduced two of them, namely genre and voice. In the next chapter, I will introduce more concepts specifically related to the construction of relationships in texts.

As a last remark it needs to be mentioned that although Fairclough (1995: 54) includes the analysis of non-textual elements to the tasks of discourse analysis, his concepts tend to be aimed for textual analysis. Thus I have also until now concentrated on text. In chapter 6.3.1 I will turn to multimodal analysis.

#### **2.4. Criticism and developments**

Fairclough's theory dates two decades back now. Above, I have explained some of its basic principles and the reasons for why it serves my purposes. Next, I will discuss what has come since. I will describe some of the most noteworthy critiques to Fairclough's views as well as some of the directions critical discourse analysis has taken since. This will hopefully show that, for my needs, Fairclough's theory is still the most fitting.

Blommaert (2005) has both criticized Fairclough's theory and developed his own sociolinguistic approach. Blommaert (2005: 34-35) accuses Fairclough and CDA in general for too much concentration on texts and too little attention on the societal context behind them. In addition, he blames CDA for being too limited to the western sphere (Blommaert 2005: 35). Blommaert's answer to these problems is a discourse analysis that highlights context and takes note of sociolinguistic systems to understand the world. Although I understand Blommaert's critique, I believe it is most relevant when the goals of the study are related to language competence and global inequalities. Understanding context is certainly essential also for this study, but I believe Fairclough's three-layered model includes it to an extent that fits my purposes. In addition, Fairclough provides me with better tools for studying representations within the western world than Blommaert's work; Blommaert himself (2005: 35) praises Fairclough for his work within this sphere.

Ruth Wodak and the Vienna school of discourse analysis (e.g. Wodak 2001, Reisigl and Wodak 2001) have developed CDA in another direction. Their discourse-historical approach encompasses many of the same basic assumptions and concepts embraced by Fairclough, but their research programme proceeds differently. With an interest in racism in Austria, the Vienna school makes use of various methodologies, data and much historical knowledge (Wodak 2001: 65), and they concentrate on exploring the connection between genres, discourses and fields of action (Meyer 2001: 22). While this approach seems highly relevant and productive for their topic and data, its methodological basis is far too broad for my analysis.

Lastly, Scollon and Scollon (2004) have taken discourse analysis in a direction they call nexus analysis. Unlike textually oriented analysis which focuses on discourse, this approach takes action as its point of departure (Scollon and Scollon 2004: 13). Instead of focusing on particular texts, the analysis begins with a nexus of practice, where discourses, the prevailing interaction order and the historical bodies of the participants come to form a particular kind of social action (Scollon and Scollon 2004: 20-21). The basic principle behind the analysis is that the “most mundane micro events are nexus through which the largest cycles of social organization circulate” (Scollon and Scollon 2004: 8). This means that even seemingly insignificant everyday events are worth looking into. I find this insight very important even for textually oriented discourse analysis. The practical analysis recommended by the Scollons is, however, too ethnographic (see, for instance, Scollon and Scollon 2004: 9) for my purposes and my focus on textually constructed relationships deviates from their goals. Thus, even though assuming the underlying principles of nexus analysis, this study takes another direction in terms of its aims and methodology.

To sum up, CDA has been further developed and complemented by several researchers in ambitious ways. The recent frameworks tend to, however, have aims and data sets that differ from mine. Thus, despite its age, Fairclough’s framework continues to serve me best.

## **2.5. Summary**

I have in this chapter introduced discourse analysis, going from a broad description of the field to an overview of the principles of critical discourse analysis. These principles include an understanding of language use as a socially constructive practice and an



ambition to affect society by producing critical information about it. My study entails detailed linguistic analysis but it is based on these beliefs and objectives.

Moreover, I have described the immediate theoretical background of my thesis, that is, Fairclough's three-layered conception of discourse. In this model, the first layer is the level of text, the second encompasses the discursive practice which surrounds and underlies the text and the third refers to society around the text. My study will consider all of these in some form.

Lastly, I have discussed the ways Fairclough's theory and CDA generally have been criticized and updated. This has been done by, among others, Blommaert (2005), Wodak (e.g. 2001) and Scollon and Scollon (2004). I have explained that, although important with regard to numerous other research questions, these developments cannot bring me further with my precise interests.

### **3. RELATIONSHIPS AND IDENTITIES**

This chapter will continue the discussion on Fairclough's work (1992, 1995) from the point of view of relationships and the way they can be constructed in texts. I will start by discussing the way Fairclough sees the functioning of language, and how and through which categories this works in media texts. Here, the correspondence between Fairclough's interests and mine will hopefully further explain why I have chosen to follow his theory. I will then move on to some problems which Fairclough's definitions pose for me. I will discuss relationships first in connection with readers and then in connection with women. With regard to both, I will suggest some substantial changes in Fairclough's framework.

#### **3.1. Media and Fairclough's three functions of language**

According to Fairclough (1992: 64), discourse constructs the social world in three ways: it constructs representations of reality, social identities and social relationships. The last two are inseparable in the actual analysis (Fairclough 1995: 127). Thus, this study cannot focus only on relationships but it also needs to address questions of identity in some way.

The three aspects listed above correspond to three functions of language Fairclough (1992: 64-65) considers essential to all discourse. These are called the ideational, identity and relational functions. According to Fairclough (1992: 169) the first can be read from particular aspects of grammar, vocabulary and cohesion. The latter two can also be grouped under the title of interpersonal function, and they can be examined, for instance, in speakers' politeness strategies, modality and interactional control (Fairclough 1992: 138; see chapter 6.3.1. in this study). The explicit focus on relationships makes Fairclough's view attractive to the present study.

Fairclough (1995: 125) also lists the different participants among whom relationships are constructed in the media. He states that media texts construct relationships between audiences, reporters and various categories of other participants. For my analysis, the relevant groups are the readers (audiences), women (other participants) and sometimes editors (reporters). The importance of the editors for my work comes from their mediating role between the two other categories, discussed in chapter 8. Fairclough's categories are, then, easily transportable into my data.

Fairclough (1995: 12) refers to constructions of social relations in the media as “simulated relations between people in a shared lifeworld”. This connection to the world outside of the magazine makes these relations an all the more intriguing object of study. Following Fairclough (1995: 12) and the principles of CDA, I believe the media affect the gender relations in society and are affected by them. What is in the media does not stay in the media, but represents and takes part in constructing the social conditions in society beyond it.

Fairclough starts from the idea that identities and relationships are constructed through the interpersonal aspects of language (Fairclough 1995: 128; Fairclough 1992: 138; see chapter 6.3 in this study). In practice this limits the analysis to participants who are taking part in interaction. In the case of the category of others, Fairclough (1995: 125) even explicitly states that the concern here is with others “as direct participants in media output”, whereas aspects of representation are left to the ideational functioning of language. Implicitly Fairclough is, then, assuming that no relationships can be constructed in the media between categories that do not have a voice (see chapter 2.3.2.) or to a category that does not have one. Furthermore, only instances where the voice of different participants can be heard can contribute to the relationship between them.

### **3.2. Relationships and identities in the present study**

Although the premises of Fairclough’s theory give me a good starting point, its conceptual bases is insufficient for my work. Fairclough’s model does not seem to be able to properly explain the relationships most important to me, that is the one between readers (Fairclough’s *audiences*) and women (Fairclough’s *other participants*).

Although Fairclough (1995: 58; 1995: 125) explicitly states that audience identities and audience-other relationships are a concern for him, in practice he discusses both very little and provides his reader with tools which do not seem to suffice for examining them. The rest of this chapter will be dedicated to a discussion of these problems and my solutions to them.

#### **3.2.1. The reader**

Fairclough’s basic assumptions about the construction of identity underlie this study. Fairclough (1992: 43) adopts Foucault’s insight that discourse constitutes social subjects, moderating the idea by emphasizing the dialogical relationship between discourse and the material world (Fairclough 1992: 60). This works as a starting point

for his identity and relational functions of language. I am happy to assume this view as the starting point for my study, especially as it is the reason for why I consider discourse and my research topic in particular worth investigating.

Fairclough does not, however, explain in clear terms how audience identity can be analysed in a text. If only interpersonal properties of discourse such as interactional control can affect audience identities, audiences who are not given a voice could not acquire any identity or be a part of any relationship in media texts. Yet Fairclough (1995: 58) claims that the media constructs even reader identities, which indicates that there must be a way for media consumers' identities to be constructed without their own active participation in media discourse. This would mean that Fairclough's methods for examining audience identities would need to be radically broadened.

Moreover, there is some conceptual confusion with regard to reader identity in Fairclough's work. Aside from using the term *identity*, Fairclough refers to a process whereby a text *positions* its readers in a certain way. This view draws on Althusser's idea of a text's capacity to *interpellate*, that is, to invite the reader to adopt a particular position from which its message appears coherent (Fairclough 1992: 84). According to Fairclough (1995: 123), the way a text positions its reader "can cumulatively shape the knowledge, beliefs and values of audience members". The idea seems to come very close to audience identities, yet Fairclough leaves the connection between the concepts unclear. On a theoretical level, the concepts seem at times to be used synonymously (e.g. Fairclough 1992: 44), but in practice they are understood differently. Whereas identities should be detectable in the interpersonal properties of texts, positions can apparently be read from the coherence relations in texts (Fairclough 1995: 122) and they are discussed in connection to an analysis of representations and the ideational functioning of language (Fairclough 1995: 123). This confusion makes the analysis of reader identities all the more difficult.

To make the situation clearer, I am going to use the term *reader position* instead of *identity*. Here, the focus shifts from a "self" the reader is constructing for himself to the role the text is offering to him. It needs to be noted that similar issues have been discussed under many expressions (see, for instance, Kress and Leeuwen 2006: 115). Due to Fairclough's above mentioned use of the concept, I believe reader position can be incorporated into his framework without theoretical clashes. Speaking of reader positions enables me, then, to move away from the interpersonal properties of texts

which would limit my analysis to interactive situations and to broaden my methodological base.

I will complement Fairclough's theoretical framework with Mills' (2005) insights on reader position. Similarly to Fairclough, she draws on Althusser's ideas to understand reader position as a role or roles that texts construct for their readers to assume (Mills 2005: 51). Mills, however, discusses the process of positioning further than Fairclough. Extending Althusser's ideas, Mills (2005: 50-55) writes that a text invites its reader for a specific reader position through direct and indirect address. Direct address is the way a text speaks to the reader, whereas indirect address entails both the things presented as obvious in the text as well as the background information that the text requires from the reader (ibid.). Mills believes that although texts can make different reader positions available for the reader, they tend to have one dominant reading through which they best make sense. A critical reader may, then, always disregard the obvious position offered to her or him but examining a text with the dominant reader position in mind produces nevertheless interesting information about the values embedded in the text. Mills (2005: 51) is also convinced that even interpellations that are not received are influential. These insights complement and deepen the idea of positioning that can be detected in Fairclough's work and broaden the methodology beyond the interpersonal properties of language. I will continue integrating them into Fairclough's overall framework of discourse in chapter 6.3.1 on methodology.

To sum up, when discussing the reader as a participant in a textually mediated relationship, I will use the term *reader position*. This has the great advantage that it makes explicit the process by which reader identities are formed in texts. Speaking of reader positions also enables me to draw on a broader theoretical and methodological framework which provides me with valuable tools for understanding my data. In addition, using the word *position* emphasizes that this role is not a separate entity but located in relation to other entities and people. For my thesis, the essential relationship is to women, who the text invites its reader to look at through a certain position.

### **3.2.2. The women**

Another complication with Fairclough's view of relationships relates to the category of others. As Fairclough's methodology is only applicable to a category of others who take part in interaction, in my data no woman without a voice would qualify as a participant

in a relationship. This would mean ignoring a great part of how women as a category are constructed in the magazine. Moreover, already due to my definition of reader position, I will not limit my view of relationships to situations where people engage in interaction. In the view sketched above, the reader is not constructed only in interactive situations, but actually throughout the discourse under analysis. This means that the reader is also constantly positioned in relation to other categories appearing in the discourse, including women. With this as the starting point, I believe it is essential not only to understand how women themselves appear to be constructing their identity in the magazine, but to understand how women are depicted. Surely representing a woman as either a lover or a foe, as wonderful or hateful, can be considered a part of the invitation for relationship the text is making for the reader. I will, then, be starting from the assumption that also women's representations influence the relationship the reader is to take to them.

It should be mentioned that I will not completely disregard Fairclough's understanding of relationship construction in interaction; instead of seeing it as the entire picture, I consider it one part in the process. In my data, women and editors are both depicted in interactive situations in the magazine, and Fairclough's methods are therefore useful when examining these situations. I will, however, deviate from Fairclough's terminology one more time here. Even though I accept the idea that participants define their "selves" in interaction, I will not employ the word *identity*. This is because this word is laden with a heavy interdisciplinary background (e.g. Hall 1999: 36-44) and seems to me to be too multifaceted to the specific methodological use I would put it into. I will, then, speak of *roles constructed in interaction* rather than of identities. I believe this expression covers the target of investigation sufficiently and without unwanted connotations.

### **3.3. Summary**

In this chapter, I have elaborated on Fairclough's understanding of relationships but made some changes to it to make it better fit my needs. In this study, then, I will accept the idea that discourse constructs representations, identities and relationships, but stress the interconnectedness of all of the categories. I will start from the assumption that relationships are constructed not only in interaction and relating to the identities of the different participants, but also with the help of representations. For instance, a reader is invited to take a certain type of attitude towards a group of others through the way the

others are represented. This influences the relationship constructed between them. To me, therefore, a relationship is the way two categories are positioned in relation to one another, entailing both the roles they acquire in interactive situations and the roles which are assigned to them through representation.

The changes I have made warrant a partly different terminology from that which Fairclough uses. With regard to the readers, I will speak of reader positions rather than identities. I believe this fits well in Fairclough's framework, and simultaneously complements my theoretical and methodological understanding of how a text constructs its reader. I will also abandon the concept of identity with regard to other groups such as women, and rather speak of representations and roles in interaction, since I feel that these better exemplify the methodology and goals of this study.

#### 4. GENDER

The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate on the background assumptions regarding gender in this study. My intention is not to dive deep into the problems of what gender substantially is. Nevertheless, as will be elaborated on below, the terminology I intend to use warrants a brief discussion of the issue. I will start with a short introduction on the different ways gender has been understood in gender studies, and then explain my position with regard to them.

In the previous decades, gender has been understood in several ways. Second wave feminists (e.g. Rubin 1975) differentiated sex from gender to mark the difference between men and women's biological differences and the social and cultural values attached to them. This highlighted the constructed nature of many gender differences traditionally seen as natural. After this, the sex/gender distinction has been challenged perhaps most notably by Butler (1990). In her theory of performativity, she denies the clear difference between the social and the biological, arguing that also biological difference could be understood in other ways (Pulkkinen 2000: 49-50). Thus, the division of people into two sexes becomes problematic. It needs to be mentioned that Butler's theory relies on the philosophical assumption that meaning is created in discourse, and reality, for instance the physical being, as such can never be reached (ibid.). Butler's view has been highly appreciated but also severely criticized. For instance, her tendency to overlook the material aspects of identity has been a target of debate for feminists not willing to locate everything in discourse (Lazar 2005: 12). On the whole, a consensus about the nature of gender remains to be achieved.

For my analysis, a thorough understanding of gender is not necessary. I am not inclined to deny the existence and (at least partial) accessibility of the physical, but as my data consists of discourse, exploring this is not my purpose or project. What is significant for me is the belief that discourse contributes to the construction of gender, an idea in line with the constructivist base of CDA.

However, keeping an open mind towards Butler's theory does pose a problem for me with regard to words like *women* and *men*. If the idea of two natural sexes is questioned, then the use of these words might only serve to emphasize an artificial distinction (Ojajärvi 2004: 262 -263). Gill and Arthurs (2006: 444) suggest that, instead of *women*, the expression *femininities* should be used to emphasize the constructed nature of the category. Although this is a theoretically sound suggestion, its practical employment



would make my analysis difficult to write. For instance, referring to actual female interviewees would become unnecessarily complicated if only the abstract levels of represented and constructed femininities could be talked about. I will, then, continue to speak of *women* and *men* with regard to people and *masculinity* and *femininity* with regard to the typical characteristics attached to these categories, at the same time requesting the reader to bear in mind that this is not an attempt to anchor the concepts and all their implications into biology.

In conclusion, this thesis will rely on the insight that what we consider to be typically female or male, feminine or masculine are at least partly discursive constructions. Even with the theoretical problems behind the words, I will continue to refer to *women* and *men* for the sake of clarity and because, in my data, these categories are clearly existent.

## 5. MEN'S LIFESTYLE MAGAZINES

In this chapter, I will give a short overview of men's lifestyle magazines and the research already conducted on them. This is the immediate background of my study, and the field to which I hope to make my contribution. I will concentrate on the so called lads' magazines, one of which *FHM* also is, which took over the market in the latter half of the 1990s. I will first present a brief history of men's lifestyle magazines' entry onto the market. Then, I will discuss the role and representations of gender in the genre. I will introduce the *new lad*, a type of masculinity advocated by the lads' magazines, then move onto women's representations. I will also discuss gender relations in the magazines and outline the place of the present study in the field of research. After this, I will take some time to go over disagreements researchers have had on sexism in men's lifestyle magazines. I will conclude this chapter by describing lads' magazines' situation today.

### 5.1. From men's magazines to lads' mags

Men's lifestyle magazines were for a long time considered an impossible product to create. Before the end of the 21st century men bought magazines that discussed a certain hobby, sport or a theme like nude women, but a magazine that would have been aimed at men just as the representatives of their gender was not expected to sell (Gill 2007: 204). Gill (ibid.) offers two reasons for this. First, men were not expected to identify themselves through their gender in a way that would have attracted them to such magazines. Second, finding the proper tone for the magazine could have been difficult, since the familiarity expressed in the corresponding women's magazines might have had homosexual undertones and thus have been threatening to the heterosexual male reader. In short, men and their masculinity were not expected to be ready for men's lifestyle magazines.

The situation changed in the 1980s. Accompanied by the new gender roles feminism was shaping, some new men's magazines appeared in the latter part of the decade. Fashion-centred lifestyle magazines *Arena* and *GQ* were published and gained some success (Gauntlett 2002: 155). Their popularity was, however, nothing to compare with what was coming. Starting with the publishing of the British *Loaded* in 1994 (ibid.), new types of men's magazines often called the lads' magazines or lads' mags took over the market. *Loaded* offered its readers a "young, loud, hedonistic celebration of masculinity" with a special focus on beer, football, women and 'shagging' (Gill 2007:

208). Soon, *Loaded* got followers. A month after its release the formerly somewhat unsuccessful fashion magazine *For Him Magazine (FHM)* was relaunched as a men's lifestyle magazine. In 1998 it sold better than even the most popular women's magazines (Gill 2007: 209). Other men's lifestyle magazines such as *Maxim* were published soon after. Even the existing men's magazines started to take direction from the lads' mags, namely by offering their readers a growing number of pictures of semi-naked women (ibid.). Soon, men's lifestyle magazines spread from their home country the UK to a great many other countries. A new and influential genre had been born.

## 5.2. Gender in lads' mags

Lads' magazines have constructed a new image of man often referred to as the *new lad*. According to Benwell (2003a: 157), this category can be considered synonymous to the "ideal reader, the voice and ethos of the men's lifestyle magazine". Therefore, the new lad has at least formerly been strongly tied to the reader position in lads' magazines, and the characteristics attributed to him are also bound to influence the way women are depicted in the magazines. This makes the lad of substantive interest to this study.

The new lad combines different discourses of masculinity. He is a young man who likes, as mentioned with regard to *Loaded*, his beer, football and casual sex. Despite his characteristically masculine interests, he falls short of the traditional, manly ideal and rather bases his identity on self-deprecating humour and irony (Benwell 2003a: 151-164). The new lad oscillates between heroism and anti-heroism, striving for the former but falling back on the latter in the face of inevitable failure (Benwell 2003a: 157). The magazines thus construct a reader position which "acknowledges and recognizes a traditional masculinity but to which the reader is not allowed to aspire" (ibid.: 161). Furthermore, the new lad is not very interested in work, stays clear of fatherhood and views women as sexual objects (Benwell 2003b: 13). He is also white (ibid.). All in all, then, the new lad is a man who is aware of the ambitions and responsibilities he could take up, but who nevertheless chooses to go drinking with the mates instead. *Loaded's* motto summarizes the idea nicely: it is advertised as the magazine "for men who should know better".

It needs to be noted that the stability of the masculinity advocated by lads' magazines is under debate. Gauntlett (2002: 152-180) states that men's lifestyle magazines do not expect any fixed masculine identity but instead convey uncertainty. According to him, this can be seen in the vast amount of advice the readers are given and expected to

accept in the magazines (Gauntlett 2002: 175). On the other hand, for instance Jackson, Stevenson and Brooks (2001: 85) state that the new lad is presented in the magazines as a category anchored in biology. In opposition to Gauntlett's views, this would make the masculinity in the magazines unwavering. Also Gill (2007: 214-215) writes that the magazines support the idea of a clear and natural gender difference, thus leaving little room for uncertainty. No final conclusion has been reached, but it seems that the latter opinion has more advocates than the first.

The celebration of the lad demarcates men's lifestyle magazines as an exclusively male domain. The magazines' editors claim to share the lad identity with their readers (Benwell 2003a: 154), and they address their audience colloquially as mates (Jackson et al. 2001: 76). In fact, the editors themselves often become protagonists in lads' magazines (Benwell 2003a: 154). Benwell (ibid.) argues that the "circulation of meaning, discourse and discursive identities between the editorial team and community of readers" makes the relationships between the texts, their producers and readers particularly salient in men's lifestyle magazines. Moreover, Benwell (2001: 20-22) writes that these magazines construct masculine identity and ingroup relations through the exclusion of what is 'other'. The role of the outcast is often assigned to women (ibid.). These observations provide an interesting starting point for an analysis of gender relations.

Women's roles in this lad territory have traditionally been constricted. Many researchers (e.g. Gill 2007: 214-215, Benwell 2003b: 20-21) have concluded that women are depicted first and foremost as sex objects in men's lifestyle magazines. The most prominent indications of this are the (vast amount of) semi-nude women posing provocatively on the pages of the magazines. Gill (2007: 207) writes that men's lifestyle magazines have "an almost hysterical emphasis on women's bodies and heterosexual sex". One reason for this, she (ibid.) thinks, is the underlining of heterosexuality to avoid accusations of homosexual undertones. Moreover, using an article in *FHM* as an example, Gill (2007: 214) finds that women in the magazines are unpleasant, manipulative and yet coy about sex. In their search for commitment and safety, they want to tie men down (Jackson et al. 2001: 84-86). Benwell, on the other hand, remarks that women almost never have a voice of their own in lads' magazines (Benwell 2003b: 20-21); and even if they do, what they say might not make the situation better. Gauntlett (2002: 158) points out that the interviews of women in *FHM* are often superficial and

‘titillating’. All in all, women’s depiction in lads’ magazines cannot be considered flattering.

Based on the insights of previous research, the relationship between the genders in lads’ magazines seems hardly friendly. In her above mentioned analysis of an article in *FHM*, Gill (2007: 214) states that the relationship between women and men in the magazine is antagonistic, with women at fault for the relationship’s hostile nature. With regard to sex, women are the objects and men lust after them (ibid.). Jackson et al. (2001: 84) complement this by concluding that men and women are depicted as polar opposites when it comes to sexual desire in *FHM*. Women want commitment, men freedom (ibid.). Relationships between men and women lack emotional warmth (Jackson et al. 2001: 81-82). Gauntlett (2002: 169) deviates from the majority of research by pointing out that *FHM* teaches its readers to please their girlfriends, thus depicting gender relations in a friendly light. He (2002: 173) believes that the fear of commitment found by Jackson et al. (above) is, in fact, a “fear of anything which might stop you enjoying yourself”, not something directed against women as a gender. These contradictions remain unsettled, and further studies are called for to elaborate on the relationships in *FHM*.

Although gender in men’s magazines has interested researchers since the birth of the genre, more research needs to be done. Little research has been conducted on the relationship specifically the reader of men’s lifestyle magazines is invited to take to women. Most previous research has concentrated on analysing masculinity (e.g. Benwell 2003c, Benwell 2001, Gauntlett 2002), and conclusions drawn about the relationships between the genders have tended to be side products of this. Some researchers (e.g. Gill 2007: 214; Jackson et al. 2001: 79-90) have commented particularly on relationships between women and men in lads’ magazines, but have left the relation between the reader and the generic group of *men* unaccounted for. This might be problematic, since it is methodologically different to analyse the construction of the reader position than representations of men in general. Also, the relationship between two represented groups can be assumed to bear a different significance than the relationship the reader is offered to take to a certain group. Moreover, it needs to be noted that Jackson et al.’s (ibid.) account of relationships discusses especially *intimate personal relationships* between men and women, thus demarcating the research topic to a very particular type of relationship. These remarks do, of course, not exclude the possibility that separating between *men* and the *reader position* in lads’ magazines

proves to be irrelevant in practice; they only warrant further research. The present study hopes to answer this call.

As a concluding remark it needs to be mentioned that Benwell (2003a: 151-168) has explored the reader position in lads' magazines with close and systematic textual analysis. Her object of interest is, however, different from mine: she discusses reader position in relation to different forms of masculinity (see account of heroic and anti-heroic masculinity above), not in relation to women. Her insights will, then, be considered valuable signposts for this study, yet they cannot answer the specific research questions I hope to elaborate on.

### **5.3. Debates on sexism**

I have now discussed the most immediate theoretical context of this study, namely gender in lads' magazines. Before moving onto the current state of lads' magazines, I will briefly elaborate on claims of sexism in the genre. Even though taking a stand on the following issues is not my main purpose, I will inevitably comment on them during my analysis.

As is perhaps clear by this point, researchers cannot quite agree on how lads' magazines should be understood. Many have criticized them strongly for being sexist. For example Benwell (2003b:15) writes that men's lifestyle magazines "marked a return to traditional masculine values of sexism, exclusive male friendship and homophobia". Some think that the entire category of the new lad is characterized by his "knowingness of his own sexism" (e.g. Gill 2007: 212). Others, however, defend the magazines and emphasize differences within the field. Below, I will discuss some of the arguments for and against the existence of sexism in lads' magazines.

Perhaps the clearest indicator of sexism in lads' magazines is the vast amount of nude women posing seductively on their pages (see the discussion above). Not everybody, however, sees this as a sign of sexism. Gauntlett (2002: 173-174) defends the magazines with two arguments. First, he notes that there are also some successful women's magazines portraying men in very little clothing. Thus, reading sexism into it in this day and age does not work. Secondly, he makes the point that although men and women tend to be posing in very different ways in these types of pictures, both genders' poses could in their own way be read as "I'd like to have sex with you" -poses. This would make the differences superficial and the pictures comparable. I consider both of these

arguments questionable. First, even if men should be objectified in some women's magazines, two wrongs do not make a right and thus give an excuse to lads' magazines. Secondly, the difference in men and women's poses could be interpreted as a power difference in their relation to sex and to each other, thus making it possible to read women's poses as sexist even if both genders were signaling equal willingness for sex.

Where Gauntlett (2002: 152-180) makes a valuable, albeit partly controversial, point is in observing that the magazines differ from each other. He considers it possible that the lads' magazines *Loaded*, *Front* and *Maxim* should have sexist elements in them, but claims that *FHM* does not carry the same type of content. He suggests that as *FHM* sometimes teaches its readers to treat their girlfriends nicely and even advises them on various domestic tasks, the magazine is contributing to a form of masculinity even feminists would or should be happy with. It has to be noted that he (2002: 169) does admit that this stands in contradiction to the army of semi-nude women all over the magazine. These conclusions, of course, highlight the importance of emphasis; which specific aspects of the magazine are chosen to represent its ideology? I would consider Gauntlett's remark about *FHM*'s feminist-minded attitude a too easy statement in the light of the issues that for instance Gill (2007: 214-215) and Benwell (2003b: 20-21) have raised. Nevertheless, pointing out that there are differences within the field is an important observation to make.

Researchers also disagree on how the ironic tone of the magazines should be understood. Benwell (2003b: 20-21) considers the magazines' use of irony as a way of dodging guilt when it comes to sexism. As Gill (2007: 212) writes: "irony means never having to say you're sorry". Gill (*ibid.*: 215) also thinks that the self-deprecating discourse mentioned above works this way. Gauntlett (2002: 168-169), on the other hand, thinks of irony as the magazines' way of signaling that they do not want to patronize their readers. He does not think that the magazines are essentially sexist, but they are, in fact, laughing at sexism itself, not women. In short, what Gill and Benwell consider excuses Gauntlett accepts as explanations.

The arguably sexist tone of the magazines has had some researchers asking if the entire phenomenon of lads' magazines should be seen as a hostile reaction to feminism and its consequences. Benwell (2003b: 13) states that the new lad was a reaction to the pro-feminist, nurturing but narcissistic *new man* who supposedly gained popularity in the

1980s. Gill (2007: 211-212) summarizes different researchers who have concluded that lads' magazines portray a longing back to traditional, patriarchal masculinity. Gauntlett (2003: 156-166) does not accept this claim, at least with regard to all lads' mags. He claims that whereas *Loaded* can be seen as this type of a reaction, *FHM* for instance cannot. The very nature of the lads' magazines is, then, a topic under debate.

#### **5.4. The decline of the lad**

The immensely successful launch of the lads' magazines dates some twenty years back now, and some claim the lad culture is a thing of the past. The British edition of *FHM* has lost its leading market position to *Men's health*, a title targeted at some 5-10 years older men than *FHM* and featuring less nude women and more health and relationship advice. The lad is no longer new and fresh but rather an idea criticized vehemently by numerous researchers and feminists.

The traditional lads' magazines have had to adjust. *Loaded* has added relationship advice to its repertoire already at the beginning of the millennium (Gauntlett 2002: 160). *FHM* has proclaimed to become more mature and to give more space to more serious topics (Marriott 2006). Falling circulations have forced the once market leader to rethink some of its core values, and in 2010 its publisher Bauer Media claimed to wave goodbye to lad attitude and give more room to a more complex type of a young man (Darby 2010). Nevertheless, actual changes in the magazine have yet to be verified by research. At least in a study examining men's magazines published in 2004-2006, Ricciardelli, Clow and White (2010) found a laddist masculinity in *FHM*, *Stuff* and *Maxim*. As many of the discourse analytic studies of lads' magazines date some ten years back now, new research on the field is called for. This study will, then, hopefully shed some more light onto the current state of the lad.

#### **5.5. Summary**

For more than two decades already, men's lifestyle magazines have been a success among readers and a research topic for scholars. In this chapter, I have sketched a rough picture of the phenomenon, from its launch to its current state of reformation. I have explained how these magazines have by many researchers been seen as havens of unapologetic sexism, celebrating a type of masculinity which continues to consider women mainly as sex objects.



I have also mentioned that most of the research conducted on lads' magazines has taken place years ago, and the magazines' later developments have not been documented very elaborately. In addition, the existing body of research has often been preoccupied with the masculinity advocated in the magazines, thus leaving questions of reader position and relationships open. It is, then, time to update and complement the previous research.

## 6. RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter, I will explain how the present study proceeds based on the theory discussed in the previous chapters. I will start by presenting my research questions, then move onto the data I am going to analyse and the methodology I intend to use. Lastly, I will report on the actual course of analysis.

### 6.1. Research questions

The purpose of this study is to analyse the way the immensely successful lads' magazine *FHM* constructs relationships between its readers and the women depicted in the magazine. My research questions, then, are the following:

What kinds of relationships does FMH invite its readers to take to the women depicted in the magazine?

1. What type of a reader position is dominant in the magazine?
2. How does this position relate to the women represented in the magazine?

### 6.2. Data

I have chosen for my analysis the October 2011 issue of the British *FHM*. Next, I will introduce some basic facts about the magazine. I will also explain why I have chosen this particular magazine and specifically one paper issue of it for my analysis.

*FHM* is one of the most popular lads' magazines in the UK. It was first published as a lifestyle magazine in 1994, and it soon became the most popular lifestyle magazine in the UK (Gauntlett 2002: 156). It has since lost its leading market position, but it continues to be extremely widely read. In the first half of 2011, the British *FHM* had a circulation of 155 557 (Bauer Media). The magazine is published in 22 countries. A new issue comes out once every month. *FHM*'s motto is "funny, sexy, useful" and it is targeted at affluent men between the ages of 18 and 35. It promises its readers that

*FHM* magazine every month brings you the world's best women, as well as brilliant fashion, features, men's health and fitness advice, reviews, and everything else a man needs to know. (Greatmagazines 2012)

I have chosen this men's magazine because of its popularity. It not only has plenty of readers, but according to Gauntlett (2002: 171) it has also had an impact on other similar magazines. Moreover, *FHM*'s directors' relatively recent assertions about changes in the magazine (see chapter 5.4.) call for further research to update the existing studies.

I have decided to examine one printed issue of *FHM* for several reasons. First of all, the October issue is quite a standard example of *FHM*, and there is no need to doubt that it resembles other issues of the magazine in much of its content and especially tone. Furthermore, as the October issue alone has 132 pages, it is more than long enough for a discourse analytic study. This work must, then, be seen as a case study, the purpose of which is to provide the reader with thorough but restrictedly generalizable information about its topic. *FHM* has also a web site, but a paper issue has seemed an easier and more appropriate object of study to me. On the internet, the reader has a never-ending continuum of links he can choose from when searching for articles, and can better skip and disregard uninteresting material. In the finite space of a paper edition, the publisher's choices build a far more strictly limited, coherent entity. This restricts the researcher's opportunities to pick and choose articles in a way that would lead to biased conclusions. Advertisements I will leave out of my analysis since, although in these types of magazines they often are tightly linked to the editorial content (see Gill 2007: 182-183 for a discussion on women's lifestyle magazines), they are produced by professionals from a different field and are presumably read in a somewhat different way than the journalistic content of the magazine.

*FHM* categorizes its articles under three headlines: Features, Access and Upgrade. The first are long interviews and reportages. A great part of them introduces celebrities in interview and other formats, but a few also discuss other themes such as sports and comic figures. The second category entails a wide selection of articles on different topics including, for instance, film, music and cooking. The most substantial differences between them and Feature articles appear to be the length of the text and the amount of pictures accompanying the writing. Both the Feature and Access articles tend to be characterized by a humorous tone. The third category seems to be characterized by a somewhat more earnest tone than the rest of the magazine, discussing, among other things, fitness and nutrition. All in all, *FHM* provides its readers with light entertainment wrapped in a colourful package.

Due to the length limitations of this study I am forced to concentrate on some articles more than others. I will highlight relevant aspects from various articles, but take a special focus on two features, the interview of Alexandra Stan (*So hot right now*) and

the reportage on DJ Bob Sinclair's evening at work (*Lord of the dance*)<sup>1</sup>. These I have chosen after a careful reading of *FHM*. I have decided to analyse *So hot right now* because, firstly, it is the article most prominently displayed on the cover of the magazine. Jackson et al. (2001: 75) believe that the cover of the magazine is its most essential feature. The cover story, therefore, is an important object of study. Furthermore, as an interview of a scantily-clad female celebrity it is a typical example of a female-centred article in *FHM*. Thus, understanding this article sheds light on other articles in *FHM* as well. I have chosen *Lord of the dance* on the grounds that it discusses women in a very different light than *So hot right now*. First of all, the women depicted in it are not celebrities like Stan. Secondly, the article provides the reader with a (rare) account of situations where both men and women are displayed in the same scenes. This gives me the opportunity to examine how men and women's interaction in a non-interview situation is portrayed. Thirdly, the article has a male celebrity as its lead. This provides me with an interesting point of comparison in terms of *So hot right now*. To sum up, *So hot right now* and *Lord of the dance* portray men and women, their relationships and interaction from very different points of view. Focusing on them should provide a many-sided account of gender relations in *FHM*.

### 6.3. Method

The rest of this chapter is dedicated to a discussion on the way I will analyse my data. I will first elaborate on my understanding of the concept of *relationship* in terms of practical analysis. This will concretely bring together some of the remarks I have made in chapters 2 and 3. After that I will account for the actual analytical process.

Before a detailed account of my methods, however, a few general words about the methodological starting point of this study need to be said. Fairclough (1992: 74) believes that "any sort of textual feature is potentially significant in discourse analysis." For the present study, this insight has meant that a broad array of different concepts will and must be used to get to an overall picture of the research topic. I will, nevertheless, be concentrating on concepts relating to Fairclough's two inner layers of discourse, that is text and discursive practice (see chapter 2.3.). The third level of Fairclough's model has been incorporated in chapter 5 in the form of a discussion on the societal background of *FHM*, and it will be drawn upon when I discuss the implications and

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<sup>1</sup> For copy write reasons I have not been able to add my data as appendices in this study.

relevance of my results. This analysis will, then, be systematic in terms of its goal, not in terms of a specific textual property examined in the text.

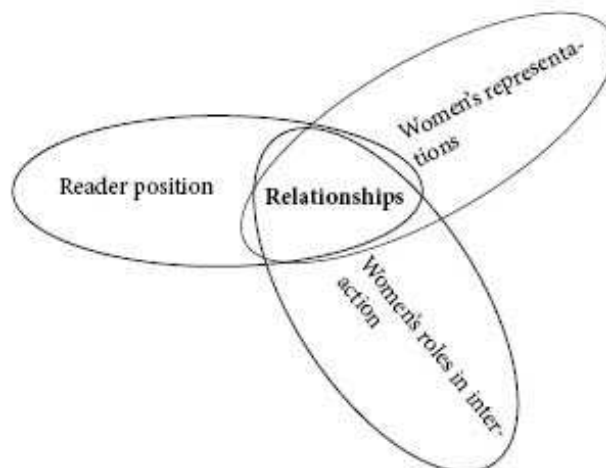
### **6.3.1. Relationships in analysis**

I will start from the assumption that there are three aspects which contribute to the construction of relationships between the reader and a category of others in media discourse. These are the reader position, the others' representations and the others' roles constructed in interaction. This view is based on Fairclough's insights on the construction of relationships and identities (see chapter 3), but deviates from it in two major ways. First, it encompasses both the ideational and the interpersonal properties of language, in practice complementing Fairclough's view on relationship construction with an analysis of representations (see chapter 2.2. on representation). Because of this, as explained below, I will adopt certain points of view from Van Leeuwen (1996) to guide my analysis. Secondly, it uses the concept *reader position* instead of Fairclough's *identity* (see chapter 3.2.1). This has led me to include Sarah Mills' (2005) insights and methodology into my analysis, explicated shortly. To sum up, I have started from Fairclough's (1992, 1995) methodology and view of discourse but modified his understanding of relationship construction to fit my data.

I also assume that pictures and other non-textual elements contribute to media discourse (Fairclough 1995: 17) and thus also to the relationships embedded in it. I will concentrate on pictures, analysing them with Machin's (2007) and Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) methodology. As I will elaborate on below, pictures will be assumed to contribute both to the ideational and interpersonal properties of discourse.

To make my understanding of the relationship between the reader and the women represented in *FHM* clear, I present it in a visual form below (Figure 1.). It needs to be stressed that this figure illustrates the methodology I will use, and the divisions made in it are based on the different "groups" of linguistic and multimodal aspects that will be analysed. This is why women's representations and roles in interaction are divided into separate sections; the point is not to divert attention from the fact that they together define how women are perceived in the magazine, but to illustrate the difference in methods when examining each. This figure will be followed by a discussion of each of the three sectors contributing to the relationship in terms of the specific methods that are required for text analysis. For the sake of clarity, I will discuss image analysis separately after that.

**Figure 1. Relationships between the reader and women in *FHM***



My analysis of *reader positions* rests on Mills' (2005) understanding of the concept. I have left out Fairclough's methods for reader identities, since they require the person whose identity is being defined to be taking part in interaction (see chapter 3.1.). In my data, the reader position can only be read through more subtle cues in the text, and this is where Mills' understanding of the process serves me well.

As already explained (see chapter 3.2.1), Mills considers *direct address*, *background information* and *obviousness* essential for the analysis of reader positions. To make my methodology consistent, I will try and incorporate these ideas into the framework and terminology used by Fairclough. It needs to be noted that I will do this with my own data in mind, not, for example, trying to map out all possible ways a text can address its reader.

Direct address and background information are relatively easily located in Fairclough's model of discourse. In my data, direct address of the reader steers the attention to what Fairclough considers to be text-level elements, prominently the use of pronouns such as *we* and *you*. Background information, on the other hand, makes the choices made when producing texts interesting (Fairclough 1995: 103-104). Here, attention needs to be targeted at what has been included, what omitted and what type of world the reader is thus supposed to be familiar with when reading a text. Fairclough (ibid.) connects this

to the ideational function of language. It will therefore be discussed further in connection with representations.

Mills' obviousness is a slightly more complicated concept. She herself (2005: 53) states that the term is close to but differs from Fairclough's understanding of *presupposition*, a second-layer element in Fairclough's model of discourse (Fairclough 1992: 120-121). According to Mills (2005: 53), obviousness refers to something generally assumed, whereas Fairclough's presupposition is knowledge the reader in particular is assumed to have. Mills bases her view on a relatively old work by Fairclough (1989). In a later work Fairclough (1992: 120), however, writes that "presuppositions are propositions that are taken by the producer of the text as already established or 'given'---". Presuppositions are signalled by formal cues such as definite articles (ibid.). With this definition in mind, I see no reason why the concept would not fit well into Mills' idea of obviousness. Presuppositions are thus one aspect constituting obviousness in this study.

Furthermore, I believe that Fairclough's understanding of coherence can be helpful in combing the obvious from a text. By this concept, Fairclough (1992: 83-83) means the way a text as a whole makes sense even without the existence of explicit markers of cohesion. A coherent reading, then, requires the reader to have certain assumptions and even background knowledge, and untangling these is the focus of analysis. Like presupposition, coherence is located on the second layer of Fairclough's model of discourse (Fairclough 1992: 75). Coherence relations are what Fairclough himself (1995: 122) considers important for examining reader positions, and also Mills (2005: 53) at one point refers to reader positions as "places of coherence in the text". Coherence seems, then, to be another well-grounded target of investigation for obviousness.

So far, I have discussed my methodology in terms of how a text positions its readers. Now, I will shift my attention to women and the way their roles in the magazine limit and enable particular types of relationships. As I have shown in Figure 1 above, I believe there are two aspects to this: the roles women are assigned and which they assign to themselves in interaction, and the way women are represented in text. I will elaborate on these next.

Women's roles depicted in interaction are explored with the help of Fairclough's interpersonal properties of language. Fairclough (1992: 138) considers interactional

control, modality, politeness and ethos essential for analysing identities and relationships, with the addition of mood and formulation in Fairclough (1995: 128). These first- and second-level-elements of discourse should, then, provide the basis for understanding how identities are constructed in language use. All of these concepts are not essential for my data and analysis, and I will therefore not explain their exact meanings here but elaborate on them later when necessary. I will in practice, then, start my analysis with all of these concepts in mind but comment only on those which prove to be relevant in the course of the analysis.

Representations are the most difficult objects of analysis to pin down with a few selected linguistic features in this study. As commented on above, Fairclough (1995: 103-104) emphasizes the importance of exploring the choices made in texts to understand representations (see chapter 2.2.). Here, the focus is similar to the one taken for examining the reader position. On a more detailed level, however, an itemization of the methodology becomes complicated. Fairclough (1992: 169-199) writes that specific aspects of vocabulary, grammar and cohesion should be examined to get to the ideational functioning of language. When employing these text-level concepts in practice he nevertheless makes use of broader concepts such as *presuppositions* and *voice* (1992: 171) as well as *genre* and *discourse* (Fairclough 1992: 192-193). When it comes to representations I will, then, more than anywhere else have to fall back on Fairclough's belief that any linguistic features are potentially relevant for the analysis.

I will, however, orientate myself loosely after Van Leeuwen's (1996: 32-70) discourse analytical framework of the analysis of social actors' representations. As Van Leeuwen focuses specifically on the representations most important for me, that is, on social actors (as opposed to, for instance, of inanimate objects), his insights will give needed additional precision to my analysis. It is not my intention to use his entire framework and burden my methodology with a disarray of concepts stemming from different fields, but only to choose and adopt some broad points of view. My choices are not haphazard but based on previous research which has applied the framework for similar purposes as I will: Taylor and Sunderland's (2003: 169-188) application of Van Leeuwen's insights on gender identities in men's lifestyle magazines, and Machin's (2007: 118-123) utilization of them for his framework of multimodal analysis (also applied in my image analysis, see below). Thus, applying Van Leeuwen's framework will also ensure that my text and image analysis will follow the same guidelines.



From Van Leeuwen and his later appliers, I will adopt a set of questions to ask from my data. First, I will be interested in whether the women in *FHM* are presented as individuals or as representatives of a group (Machin 2007: 118-119; Van Leeuwen 1996: 46-50). Secondly, I will observe which characters are included and which excluded from the text (Machin 2007: 121; Van Leeuwen 1996: 38-42; Taylor and Sunderland 2003: 173). Third, I will check if women are depicted in a positive or negative light in the magazine (Taylor and Sunderland 2003: 172; this question is not explicitly linked to Van Leeuwen's framework, although the study draws on his work). These foci will give direction to my textual analysis of representations, even though their particular linguistic realizations cannot be itemized more precisely at this point.

For image analysis, I will apply Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) as well as Machin's (2007) insights. The latter's book is largely based on the former (Machin 2007: V), but it contains some useful divisions which I will employ in this section. I have chosen Kress and Van Leeuwen's framework for image analysis, since it fits well with the broader theoretical framework behind this thesis. It is located in the critical tradition and it starts from the assumption that also the visual contributes to both the ideational and interpersonal functions of discourse (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2010: 14-15).

Furthermore, similarly as I have sketched in chapter 3, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 115) assume that texts construct an implied reader or reader position which can be read from the text. Machin (2007: 109) even explicitly talks about the way pictures *position* their viewer. This framework should, then, compliment my text analysis well.

As the starting point, I will take visual properties which Machin (2007: 109) groups under the title *representation of social actors*. For me this means conducting an analysis of the way women are depicted in *FHM*, including for the sake of comparison a brief investigation of men's representations. The concepts investigated under this title come to a large extent from Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996) work, and I will be referring to them to complement my methodology. I have, however, chosen to follow Machin in his general categorization since it brings well together aspects particularly interesting in terms of people's (as opposed to inanimate objects) depiction in pictures.

For Machin (2007: 109-128), an analysis of social actors means examining both the interactive and ideational properties of pictures. The first include *gaze*, *angle of interaction* and *distance*. These properties position the viewer in relation to the people depicted in pictures. When looking at gaze, it is important to note if the people depicted

in pictures are looking at the viewer or not, that is, if they are *demands* or *offers* (Machin 2007: 110-113; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 116–124). Angle of interaction, on the other hand, refers to the camera angle from which the people are being depicted, and it encompasses meanings about the involvement and power relations constructed between the viewer and the people represented (Machin 2007: 113–115). Distance means the size of frame in pictures (Machin 2007: 116-117; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 124-129).

The second, ideational properties of pictures include *individuals and groups*, *categorization* and *non-representation* (Machin 2007: 118-123). These properties have to do with the ways people are represented in pictures, and they draw on the same work as my analysis on representations in text, that is, Van Leeuwen (1996). According to Machin (2007: 118-123), the first concepts refer to pictures' capacity to represent people either as individuals or as parts of larger groups. Categorization, on the other hand, refers to the characteristics through which people are depicted, directing attention to whether they are presented as representatives of a particular cultural or biological category. Examining non-representation means pondering on who might be left out of the pictures completely.

In addition to the clearly categorizable interpersonal and ideational properties of pictures, Machin (2007: 123-128) considers *agency and action* as well as people as *carriers of meaning* possibly relevant for the analysis of social actors in pictures. The latter (ibid.: 127-128) directs attention to iconographical meanings in pictures, highlighting the importance of things such as salient objects and symbolism. I will not pay much attention to it since it does not seem very relevant for my data and research questions. The former, however, is certainly worth looking into. In terms of agency and action, attention is directed to what people depicted in pictures are doing or, more precisely, if they are active agents in the pictures or not. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 59-68) have approached this issue by dividing participants in pictures into *actors*, *goals*, *reactors* and *phenomena*. Here, actors refer to participants which are the sources of action processes, goals to the objects of action. Reactors are participants not acting but simply looking at something, phenomena the objects of looking. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) categorize these concepts under the term “narrative representations”, and following this, I also will employ them to acquire information on how participants, women to be precise, are represented in the magazine.

### 6.3.2. Course of the analysis

I started my analysis by reading the October 2011 *FHM* carefully through to get an overview of the magazine. During this phase, it became clear that the reader position and women's representations would be the most relevant parts of my understanding of relationship in this study. The magazine entailed few situations where women were taking part in interaction. Already at this point, then, the concept of *voice* (see chapter 2.3.2) became important for understanding women's position in the magazine.

A more detailed analysis began with the reader position. I looked for things the reader was expected to know and believe through presuppositions, coherence relations and background information. I also searched for situations where the reader was addressed by the editor to see how this affected the reader position. In addition, I paid attention to the interactive properties of the magazine's pictures.

Next, I moved to women. I listed all instances where women were mentioned, remarking on the role they were discussed in, the prominence they had in the magazine and the attitude that was taken towards them. This included both text and image analysis, as well as an investigation of how these elements interacted together to form particular kinds of representations. In text analysis, coherence and choices especially on the level of vocabulary and grammar proved interesting. In terms of image analysis, Machin's ideational properties as well as action and agency were central for the topic.

On the basis of the above mentioned analysis of representations, I divided women into two main categories and three sub-categories which related to the reader in different ways. After this, I started to look for differences and similarities between and within the representations of women in these categories. Connecting the representations to my findings on the reader position, I itemized two types of relationships *FHM* offers for its readers. Then, I took a step back to see if there were any general conclusions I could draw based on these results. I ended up believing that the magazine distances its readers from women.

After my analysis of the entire *FHM*, I moved onto examining two articles with more detail (see chapter 6.2.). I started by checking if the women appearing in the articles fit into my previously outlined categories. Then, I added a brief analysis of genre to get an idea of what possible rules and limitations underlie the relationships offered by the

articles. After this, I analysed the reader position with the same methodology I used for the entire *FHM*.

Next, I moved onto analysing the women in the articles. In the article *Lord of the dance*, relationships could be textually analysed only on the level of representation due to the role of the women in the article. In the interview *So hot right now*, on the other hand, both ideational and interpersonal aspects of language needed to be attended to. In addition, I conducted analyses on the pictures accompanying the articles following Machin's methodology for *representations of social actors* elaborated on above.

Lastly, I categorized my results based on the features I found characterising relationships in the article. These I then connected to my previous findings. On the whole, I found that these individual articles supported my overall view of *FHM* well.

## 7. ANALYSIS: *FHM* IN OCTOBER 2011

In this chapter, I will examine the entire October 2011 issue of *FHM*. First, I will start by discussing the reader position in the magazine insofar as it is relevant to my research questions. I do not claim that there is one coherent position in the entire issue, but will rather look for interesting and regularly appearing characteristics which serve to equip the magazine's reader to understand and enjoy the discourse offered. I will later specify the image with regard to particular situations and relationships. Secondly, I will divide the magazine's representations of women into rough categories, after which I will outline two types of relationships with the help of these categories. Lastly, I am going to return to examining the representations of women in the magazine generally, with the attempt to draw some conclusions about the relationship between the reader and women in the magazine.

A brief remark should be included here about the titles of *FHM*'s articles. *FHM*'s articles do not always have very clear headlines, and even if they do the title might be far too long to be included in my text. I will, then, call an article by the part of its title that is most prominently displayed. In practice, for instance, I will abbreviate *20 experts give their best piece of advice on attracting women* into *Attracting women*, since this part is written with larger letters than the rest.

### 7.1. Reader position

Even without much empirical analysis, it is possible to say that *FHM* is constructing a position for a male reader. The magazine is aimed at men and its readership is overwhelmingly male (see chapter 6.2.). This can be assumed to form the basis for the reader position and the relations the reader is expected to take to women.

The reader position in *FHM* is glaringly heterosexual. The magazine provides its reader with advice on how to attract women as well as an abundance of scantily clad women in seductive poses. As many of the latter are demands (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 116-124), they quite blatantly invite the reader for sexual desire. In addition, in the article *12 things we should really stop being impressed by* the reader is addressed (see Mills 2005: 50-55) with the word *we*, including him into a group that is *genetically hot-wired to gawp and feel a bit sweaty* in the presence of good-looking women. The highlighted heterosexuality of the magazine has also been commented on by many researchers (e.g. Gill 2007: 207).

The reader is also positioned to harbour interests that are traditionally considered masculine. Thirty-one pages of the magazine are devoted to articles on superheroes, sports and video games. Moreover, extensive background knowledge (see Mills 2005: 50-55) on the topics is often required from the reader. This is obvious in *22 most ludicrous things in football right now*, an article which provides the reader with an army of players', sport reporters' and managers' names without clarification on who these are. Once, for instance, the editor concludes that the combination of success and good looks possessed by some football managers *makes you feel for the likes of Dalglish and Ferguson*. Without previous knowledge about who Dalglish and Ferguson are (and what they look like), the sentence does not make much sense. To remain coherent (see Fairclough 1992: 83-83), then, these articles require a knowledgeable reader.

*FHM* positions its reader in the role of an "ordinary bloke"; not especially attractive, not especially book-wise, but possessing a sense of humour. This image is most prominent in places where "men" are discussed as a category or where the reader is being directly addressed, making it an obvious point of identification for the reader. Most explicitly, the ordinary man is constructed in the article *Moving up*, where the image is being personified by the comedian Danny McBride. In the editor's formulation, *film bosses have replaced the typical Tinseltown 'superman' with - - one of us*. Expressions *one of us* and *us* are repeated three times in the article with regard to McBride, apparently due to him being *lazy, chubby and heart-stoppingly vulgar* instead of *crooning, clean-cut and perfectly chinned* like his Hollywood namesakes. McBride's success is represented as a triumph for the ordinary man. Supermen are also left to Hollywood in the article *What seems to be the trouble*, which showcases questions men have written on different discussion forums as examples of the silliness of their gender. Furthermore, the article *Good news for men* places the reader in the position of a man physically out of shape and happy to remain so. The reader is addressed with the encouragement *don't worry, be fatty*; a humorous intertextual reference to the song *Don't worry, be happy* by Bob Marley. On the whole, the celebration of the avowedly mediocre shows a continuing commitment to the ironic and antiheroic role discussed by Benwell (2003a: 151-164).

It needs to be mentioned that not the entire issue of *FHM* is characterized by irony. Especially with regard to health and good appearances the magazine seems to be balancing on a thin line. On the one hand, the reader is expected to celebrate an unhealthy life style as a natural preference for a man. On the other hand, especially the last section of the magazine (Upgrade) offers the reader plenty of seriously presented

advice on nutrition. This can perhaps be explained with the help of market developments and insights from previous research. According to Gauntlett (2002: 168-169), men's lifestyle magazines try hard not to appear patronizing. They have therefore traditionally avoided giving sincere advice to their readers. However, with the recent commercial success of *Men's health* magazine and the changes promised by the leadership of *FHM* (see chapter 5.4.), it could be that *FHM* is now providing its readers with two positions to choose from: the self-sufficient lad of the previous years and the health-conscious man celebrated on the pages of the less laddish magazines. Moreover, the humorous tone that seems to characterize the magazine does not extend to all articles where male celebrities and professionals are introduced. SEAL snipers and long-distance runners are still admired in all earnestness. This deviation from the ironic tone has been accounted for by Benwell (2003a: 157), who concludes that men's lifestyle magazines "have retained a soft spot for traditional masculinity and its icons". These, then, are examples of the heroic masculinity discussed in chapter 5.2.

To sum up, the reader position that can be detected in several articles of the magazine is that of a heterosexual man with traditionally masculine, even boyish hobbies. Although interested in super heroes, he himself is no Schwarzenegger. A sense of humour compensates for the lack of muscle. It thus seems that despite the editors' promises for change, *FHM* in 2011 continues as an advocate of the same type of masculinity that it celebrated ten years ago.

## **7.2. Girlfriends and celebrities**

I will next spend a while examining the representations of women in *FHM*. I will divide these into different categories and comment on their role in the magazine. Having done this, I will move on to discussing the different relationships these categories invite and enable the reader to take to them.

The women appearing in *FHM* can broadly be divided into two categories: *celebrities* and *girlfriends*. The first category is quite self-explanatory, entailing in this issue mostly singers and actresses. The second category I call girlfriends for the lack of a better word. The women in this category have landed on the pages of the magazine because of a non-platonic relationship they actually or potentially have or have had in the past with a man. Thus, singer Alexandra Stan is classified as a celebrity even though she might be someone's girlfriend, since she is represented through her role as a celebrity instead of

that of a girlfriend. At least in this issue of *FHM*, girlfriends tend to be ordinary women far from the glamour of Hollywood.

There are only a few instances where the women represented do not fit into one or the other category. A clear example of this would be a female judge mentioned briefly in an article recounting passages of Eminem's life. She is the only woman in the magazine who is introduced in the text through an occupation which is not related to entertaining or the media. I will mention some other deviating examples later when necessary to give a comprehensive picture of the magazine. Although the classification is, then, not watertight, it is sufficient for drawing the conclusion that the roles of a celebrity and girlfriend are almost the only ones through which women are featured in *FHM*.

Celebrities and girlfriends receive a different degree of prominence in *FHM*. Celebrity women are perhaps the most salient element in the magazine. Singer Alexandra Stan appears on the cover of the magazine and her picture is presented conspicuously on the first page of the list of contents. Actress and model Alice Greczyn is featured equally prominently on the second page of the list of contents, and her interview is the first longer article in the magazine. Girlfriends, on the other hand, are barely visible; their position comes close to Machin's non-representation (2007: 121; also Van Leeuwen 1996: 38-48 for exclusion). Aside from Eminem's ex-wife Kim portrayed in a small picture with the rapper, they do not appear on the photos that accompany articles. Also the attention they get in texts is minor. The same girlfriend is never discussed longer than in the length of one paragraph. The girlfriends never have a voice, and none of them are interviewed in this issue. This corresponds to Benwell's (2003b: 20-21) findings discussed in chapter 5.2. The only way the reader of *FHM* hears a woman's point of view is, then, through a celebrity interview.

The category of girlfriends can be further divided into three about equally often appearing sub-categories. First, women who are presented having or having been in a romantic relationship with a man form one category. This entails the actual (ex)wives and (ex)girlfriends presented in the magazine. Most of the women in this category are ex-partners, but as I will discuss later, there is no great difference in the way in which current partners and ex-partners are represented. Secondly, women who are or have been (only) sexually related to a man form another category. Here, I have included the women who are represented through some type of sexual relation to a man with no mention of a relationship. Thirdly, women who are presented as desired candidates for



either type of relationship form yet another category. This entails mentions of (non-celebrity) women for whom the editor or some other man represented in the text expresses desire. The first two sub-categories are indicated by unambiguous expressions such as *wife* or *a girl I'd pulled*, whereas the last is signalled in many different ways which I will discuss thoroughly below in connection with desire.

The different categories I have sketched above offer and presuppose different types of relationships with regard to the reader. Next, I will outline some of the features which characterize these relationships. I will begin with two aspects which are separable according to the different categories, namely aversion and desire.

### 7.2.1. Aversion

The reader is positioned to be averse to romantic relationships. This is achieved by presenting actual girlfriends and wives in a negative light (see chapter 6.3.1 for guidelines for representation analysis). When they are mentioned, they tend to be discussed in connection with problems, regardless of whether they are current or former acquaintances. In the *Jokes* section, a man poisons his wife because she has been unfaithful to him. In *FHM's university check list*, a high school girlfriend must be *dumped* because she is preventing a male student from having sex with other women. In *What seems to be the trouble*, an ex-girlfriend is to blame for a man's impotence. It seems that there are no such things as happy relationships in *FHM*.

Aversion to romantic relationships is supplemented by the omission of feelings when discussing them. A similar finding has been made by Jackson et al. (2001: 81-82). The emotional side of relationships is mentioned only once, in the article *FHM's university check list*, where the expression *fall in love* is used. Here, the reader is predicted to *fall in love with women for no reason whatsoever* as a part of student life. The feeling is, then, undermined by its representation as irrational and directed towards an unspecified group of people. The women who are presented as potential girlfriends tend to be discussed in plural, detaching romantic feelings from desire. This can be considered the textual equivalent to what Machin (2007: 118) means by *collectivization*, that is presenting particular people as a homogenous group (see also Van Leeuwen 1996: 48 for assimilation). This is obvious in *Attracting women*, an article in which celebrities advice the readers on how they can best attract women. On the cover of the magazine, this article is headlined *The two button rule and 19 other ways to attract sexy ladies*. The expression *sexy ladies* functions as a way of removing emotional intimacy from the

pursuit. It does this by its plural formulation (another reference to women as a group), its emphasis on appearance and by employing the word *lady* which connotes formality. Even the problems men are depicted having with ex-partners are never caused by hurt feelings. This is in line with the reader position that prides itself on taking few things seriously.

Aversion is sometimes turned into disdain. For instance, variants of the expression *a girl I've pulled* appear three times in a section where reader letters are published. This expression depicts sex as something a man does to a woman (an example of Fairclough's 1992: 180 *directed action process*), objectifying the woman and stripping the act of intimacy with its crude connotations. Furthermore, the expression is used in situations where it is simply substituting the expression *a girl I had sex with*, normalizing it and the point of view it carries as a way of understanding sex and women. For the reader to accept this as a legitimate way of speaking, he needs to adopt the condescending relationship it entails to women. Here, Benwell and Gills' claims of sexism in lads' magazines (see chapter 5.3) seem well warranted.

In the world of *FHM*, then, aside from sex men seem to gain little from interaction with women. The reader is invited to respond to those women who engage with men in either a sexual or romantic way with reserve or even condescension. This way of representing romantic relationships has previously been discussed, for instance, by Gill (2007: 214).

### **7.2.2. Desire**

The most obvious element characterizing the relationship between the reader position and the women represented in *FHM* is sexual desire. This is presented as a given towards many celebrities, and naturally with regard to the category of women desired to be girlfriends or sex partners. This also corresponds to Gill's (2007: 214-215) and Benwell's (2003b: 20-21) findings about women's objectified role in the magazine discussed in chapter 5.2.

*FHM*'s pictures are the most obvious indicator of the non-platonic relationship offered to the reader. All the women portrayed in the magazine are traditionally attractive, young, white and carefully made up. They are, thus, depicted in a way which categorizes them biologically into what Machin (2007: 121) acutely calls "Barbie-type stereotypes of female attractiveness". Almost all of them are celebrities, and only very few of them are wearing clothes that could be used in everyday life as something other

than underwear. As a result, a specific type of female body becomes the only permissible passport with which women are granted visibility. Picture angles are a mixture of oblique and frontal, and there are slightly more demand-pictures than offer-pictures in the magazine (Machin 2007: 110-115). These distinctions do not, however, seem very important: All of the picture types seem to serve the same purpose, namely showcasing women's bodies to produce the most sexually desirable effect possible without crossing the border to pornography.

Also the texts in the magazine highlight sex and sexuality in connection with women. The magazine entails three major celebrity interviews featuring women, out of which two describe the celebrity's appearances in the very beginning. Singer Alexandra Stan is described as *strikingly sexy (So hot right now)*, whereas singer-songwriter Jodie Connor is said to have a *toned, petite frame (Nice pins)*. The third interview (*Alice Greczyn*), on the other hand, features actress Alice Greczyn and begins with a clarification of the film role she is best known for. Interestingly, immediately after mentioning the part, Greczyn moves onto describing a sex scene in the film: *But do you know the funny part about the bedroom scene?* Two things are taken as given here: Firstly, the use of the formulation *the bedroom scene* implies that the existence and familiarity with the particular scene is presupposed (see Fairclough 1992: 120). Secondly, the direct switch to discussing the film through this scene implies that this is what makes her interesting to the reader. If this is not taken as given, the coherence of the text suffers. Women are, then, systematically discussed in terms of their appearances or sexuality in this issue of *FHM*.

The emphasis on sexuality is perhaps most interestingly pointed out in the relationship between the text and the pictures. For the most part, the pictures are far more sexual than the text. For instance, the interview of Jodie Connor concentrates mostly on her work as a singer-songwriter, whereas her pictures are highly suggestive. In the rare occasion where the picture does not invite desire, the tables turn. In *Unleash the autumn comedy*, a picture of Amy Huberman portrays the actress with full clothing and a grimace on her face. The difference to other pictures of women is understandable, since the photo is probably a promotional picture for a comedy show, taken, therefore, in a different context. In the accompanying text, however, the program is introduced by the statement *Irish hottie Amy Huberman, Game of Thrones' Emun Elliott and Whites' Stephen Wight could make it big off the back of this show*. Whereas the actors are presented through their work history, the actress is defined through her appearance and her sexuality is being underlined. On such occasions, the magazine's concentration on

appearances seems almost compulsive (remember Gill for “hysterical emphasis on women’s bodies” in chapter 5.2.).

Another way that the importance of sexuality becomes highlighted is in snatches of interview text that are lifted to accompany pictures. Separating them from their context tends to turn even unrelated lines double-minded. For instance, when Alexandra Stan (*So hot right now*) explains that she has made a particular type of music video because she is *always up for trying new things*, the quotation is taken to accompany a picture where she is lying in her bikini in a suggestive and somewhat complicated-looking pose. In this context, the line can easily be read as a sexual disclosure. What is especially interesting here is the way the visual affects the interpretation of the text. I would argue that this happens on a larger scale with regard to the entire magazine: framed by prominent pictures of women posing seductively, the most obvious line of interpretation for the reader is to see sexual hints in the way women are represented also in the text whenever possible. And, as discussed above, *FHM* has made sure it is possible.

In conclusion, the reader is being offered a relationship which is characterized by desire to a great majority of the women portrayed in the magazine. The invitations to desire often seem to be based on the objectification of women, which again supports researchers’ (see chapter 5.3) claims of sexism in lads’ magazines. So far, I have discussed the issue mainly with regard to the ideational side of language. In chapter 8, I will also show how the interpersonal aspects of the discourse affect the interpretation.

### **7.3. Distance**

I have so far argued that the relationships the reader is offered to take to women in this *FHM* are characterized mainly by either aversion or desire. The former feeling is mostly targeted at women who are represented through some types of real-life relationships with men, whereas the latter is reserved for those who are either observed from a distance or observable only through the pages of a magazine or a television screen. This forms an interesting equation, which has led me to believe that it is possible to comment on the overall relationship the October 2011 *FHM* offers its reader to take to women. Next, I will argue that *distance* characterizes the entire relationship between women and men, inevitably influencing the relationship the reader positioned as male is offered to assume to women.

The above examined relationships create distance between the genders by dividing them into different worlds. With the majority of ordinary women either excluded, voiceless or unpleasantly represented, *FHM* does not present real-life female counterparts for the reader. Since girlfriends are also extremely rare in pictures, only celebrity women can be said to be visually represented as individuals in this *FHM* (Machin 2007: 118-119). Celebrity women's distance from the reader, on the other hand, is being emphasized by highlighting their extraordinary life styles. For instance, Alice Greczyn (*Alice Greczyn*) explains the luck she once had finding modelling work by saying *I know it's difficult to believe, but trust me, things like these happen in Hollywood all the time*. This makes her the representative of the wonderland of Hollywood, as opposed to the reader who is positioned as an outsider to that world. In conclusion, the only women prominently displayed in the magazine do not share the lifeworld of the reader.

The categorization analysed above is not the only element leading to a feeling of distance with regard to the women represented in the magazine. In the rest of this chapter, I will discuss some additional features of the October issue which have led me to consider distance important. These observations cross the boundaries of the categories I have listed above, which is why I have chosen to present them in their own right.

### **7.3.1. Women as a rare occurrence**

Despite of the salience of the celebrity women, women appear relatively seldom on the pages of the October 2011 *FHM*. Counting all textual mentions as well as pictures portraying women, out of 132 pages women are mentioned on 55. From this count, I have excluded the mention of Patti Smith in a list of performers in a concert on page 37, and a barely recognizable picture of a female figure portrayed in a snapshot taken from a video game on page 45. In these two cases, the women seem to me to be too invisible to mention. Otherwise I have included the slightest mentions of the feminine gender. In much of the magazine, then, women do not exist.

Women also rarely play a significant role in long articles. There are 60 articles that are at least a half a page long in the magazine. Out of them, four discuss women as a topic. By topic I mean here that women are not just mentioned, but that the articles are either interviews of women or they centre on issues which clearly relate to women, the most common example being articles discussing relationships. Out of these four articles, three are celebrity interviews and one is concerned with relationships. In the rest of the

magazine women play a minor role. This means that, on the whole, *FHM* is constructing a space where femininity is largely absent.

### 7.3.2. Women as isolated from men

*FHM* also gives the impression that men and women rarely interact with each other. This is obvious in both pictures and text. The separation of the genders contributes to the feeling of distance between the genders.

Men and women are portrayed together or even in the same picture extremely seldom in the October 2011 *FHM*. There are only two instances where a man and a woman are pictured together clearly as a couple, one of which is an advertisement near the end of the magazine and the other a picture of Eminem and his ex-wife, a marriage (or actually two) not described happy. There are no pictures of men and women interacting as friends, at least without some sexual tension described in the text that accompanies the pictures. On the whole, the impression the pictures give is that women and men do not really engage with each other.

The same pattern can be seen in the text. As already written, in this *FHM* only the article *Attracting women* discusses relationships between the genders on some level. Girlfriends are usually mentioned very briefly. Platonic friendships between the genders are mentioned only twice, once in a reader letter where the writer refers to *my mate Cat Cubie* and another in *What seems to be the trouble* where the writer refers to *a female friend of mine*. Especially the former stands against much of what I argue in this chapter: The word *mate* connotes a non-platonic familiarity that evaporates all segregation between the genders. Moreover, since Cat Cubie is a celebrity, referring to her with this word also dissipates the gap between the reader and celebrities. Nevertheless, as a one-time occurrence I would consider this the exception that proves the rule, pointing out a type of representation which is otherwise never employed.

### 7.3.3. Women as different

In this issue of *FHM*, women are not only largely absent and separate, but also quintessentially different from the characteristics the reader is positioned to have. Whereas the reader is expected to harbour traditionally masculine interests (see chapter 7.1. on reader position), especially the celebrity women in the issue are represented in a traditionally feminine way. For instance, Alexandra Stan is quoted considering shopping in London to be a paradise to *Romanian girls*. Jodie Connor hates the

outdoors, wind, rain and walking. An opposite example is the television host Pollyanna Woodward, who is presented as the *perfect partner* because of both her fearlessness and her interest in gadgets. She is also depicted wearing a tight leather dress which probably contributes to the perfection. Nevertheless, she is the only exception.

The way women are portrayed in pictures strengthens the sense of difference. Women's pictures often exhibit the whole figure, indicating "close social distance" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 124-125). In Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006: 124) theory, this is a distance appropriate for "impersonal business". It suggests a less intimate relationship than what they call "personal distance", occurring when the person portrayed is depicted from the waist up or closer (ibid.:125). Moreover, a clear majority of the women depicted are Reactors, meaning that they are not engaged in doing anything. They are, using the term Machin (2007: 124) borrows from Halliday, mostly involved in existential processes, that is, simply appearing. Men's pictures, on the other hand, vary clearly more in their size of frame and regularly portray men engaged in some action. (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 114-149.) Generally speaking, whereas women pose for the camera detached from everyday life, men are shown doing their work in natural surroundings.

With difference come different requirements. As already discussed, women in *FHM* need to fulfil strict beauty standards. Men, on the other hand, are let off more easily; the anti-heroism of the reader position (see chapter 7.1.) alone indicates that a more relaxed take on masculinity suffices. The comedian Danny McBride (*Moving up*) is even elevated to idolization *because* he does not fulfil the appearance requirements predominant in Hollywood. Also the advice addressed to the reader for attracting (sexy) women contains little advice relating to looks and an abundance of praise for humour and politeness (*Attracting women*). This is a strong indicator that *FHM* draws a clear line between men as *we* and women as *them* (see Benwell 2001: 20-22 for women as 'other'). Whereas in men's case the magazine seems to be wary of burdening the reader with unreachable requirements, with regard to women no such restrictions apply. The reader is not expected to be bothered if the women represented in the magazine set impossible standards; they do not need to identify with her. *FHM* cherishes, then, a double standard by setting differing and differently achievable criteria for the proper man and the proper woman.

#### 7.4. Summary

In this chapter, I have taken a look at the October 2011 *FHM* in its entirety. I have divided the women represented in the magazine into various categories based on the role and context through which they have been portrayed in the magazine. Already this work has showed the bases for some of the relationships offered; someone presented as the reader's girlfriend certainly invites a different type of relationship than someone presented as a celebrity.

However, to properly understand the *types* of relationships offered to the reader, a more thorough analysis of the features that characterize these relationships has been necessary. As a result, I have found that women are desired as potential sex partners but responded to with aversion and even condescension as partners in an actual relationship. This finding is supported by what previous research has had to say about the representations of men and women in the magazine.

Based on these results, I have argued that it is possible to consider *distance* as a defining factor with regard to the entire relationship the reader is being invited to take to representations of women in this issue of *FHM*. This is further endorsed by presenting women to the supposedly male reader as something rare, separate and different from the reader himself. In the end, the magazine invites its reader to a world where women simply do not play a significant role as something other than eye candy.

It is important to emphasize here that my conclusions are based only on one issue of the magazine, and the salience women and relationships are granted differs from issue to issue. The extent of the distance may, then, vary. I would, however, suggest that the point of view is in any case one worth exploring. I will explain my views on this more precisely in chapter 10. Next I will, however, turn to two articles in the October 2011 *FHM* with more precision. After each analysis, I will relate my results to the findings reported in this chapter.



## 8. ANALYSIS : *SO HOT RIGHT NOW*

I will next examine the article *So hot right now*, featuring singer and celebrity Alexandra Stan as an interviewee. I will begin with a short description of the article and the genre to which it belongs. This is necessary because the genre affects Stan's representation. After this, I will move on to discussing the reader position in the article. At this point this will largely be done through the relationship the reader is invited to have to the editor writing the article. Complementary comments on the position are made later on in the analysis. Lastly, I will discuss the relationship(s) the text offers its reader to take to Alexandra Stan. I will argue that this relationship is characterized by distant admiration and desire, coloured by subtle hints of bemused condescension. In the end, I will connect this analysis to the categories and relationships I have sketched in the previous chapter. I will argue that Stan is a good example of a woman the reader is invited to desire but whom he can never hope to meet. The reader is also not invited to respect or admire her for any other reason than her body.

### 8.1. Genre and structure

The composition of *So hot right now* is strictly regulated by its genre and the practices governing its production. The article belongs to a genre the editors have titled *cover shoot*. In practice, this means a multi-page article with plenty of pictures and relatively little text, featuring a female celebrity whose picture is also depicted on the cover of the magazine. The interviewee is taken to a selected location and photographed for the month's magazine, wearing mostly bikinis or underwear. A short film of the shoot is presented on the magazine's web pages. In the contents-list of the magazine, the article is categorised under the broader term *feature*. This can be considered an upper-level genre in relation to *cover shoot*, but as it entails in this magazine a very broad range of different types of articles, the concept is of little practical use for me here.

The genre has implications on the content of the article. The magazine states that Stan is *starring in an exclusive FHM cover shoot*, indicating that the visual aspect of the article is a central part of it. In fact, out of the 12 pages dedicated to the interview, 11 have photos on them and only three have text. Thus, the genre behind the article foregrounds the pictures in comparison with the text. This highlights what I have stated in chapter 7.2.2. about the way pictures may influence also the way an article is read. Moreover, the cover shoot genre also sets obvious demands on the interviewee. Firstly, the cover girl has to be a celebrity willing to take part in a half-nude, suggestive photo shoot. The

most prominent female figure in the magazine is, therefore, almost necessarily someone who complies to and is shown to embrace the objectified status this type of imagery necessarily indicates. Stan fits this image well, since she is known for music videos as suggestive as the photos in *FHM*. Secondly, the most prominent female figure in the magazine has to fulfil certain beauty standards, to be able to be represented through a certain biological categorization of female attractiveness (Machin 2007: 119-121). Other forms of femininity are excluded by default. In consequence, the article's genre alone regulates the type of femininity that can be presented and highlighted in it.

*So hot right now* introduces Alexandra Stan to the readers in a very general way, focusing on her leap to celebrity. The text starts with an introduction where the journalist explains who Stan is and describes her habitus. After this, a description of her journey to fame begins. First, Stan's answers are incorporated as quotations into the text. The latter part of the article, on the other hand, is in a clear cut question-answer format. Plenty of pictures featuring a bikini-clad Stan on the beach from all sides and angles illustrate the article.

## **8.2. Reader position: the reader and the journalist**

The reader of this article is being positioned as a stranger to Stan, looking at her through the proverbial eyes of the editor reporting the interview. As I will show later, this has significant consequences to the range of interpretations possible for the reader. Next, I hope to clarify the dynamics between the reader, editor and Stan and thus elaborate on the reader position available in the text.

Stan is presented as a new acquaintance to the reader. She is introduced as being *actually a strikingly sexy pop sensation*, the use of the word *actually* implying that the *strikingly sexy pop sensation* is new information to the reader. In addition, the article provides the reader with a vast amount of information about Stan. Also this indicates an expectation of little background knowledge.

The editor, on the other hand, assumes a familiar relationship with the reader. He makes himself accessible with the use of direct address (Mills 2005: 52-53). In the first direct question-answer pair of the article, the editor poses the question *so how should we react to Mr. Saxobeat*. Here, *we* seems to encompass the reader and all listeners of Stan's music. Also Stan seems to interpret the question this way, as she answers that the song *gives people the freedom to dance however they want*. Interestingly, the journalist takes

up this answer with the comment *Excellent! 'The Worm' it is*. With the ambiguous *we* preceding this comment, it is left open whether the subject of this thought is the interviewer alone, or if the reader is invited to share this thought and the type of masculinity it indicates as well (I will return to this below). In any case, the interpretation that the comments made by the editor should also represent the reader's reactions is left open. By using the term *we*, then, the editor can call the reader on his side, to create a common group for both of them to belong to.

It has to be noted that the interviewer's *we* seems sometimes to encompass just the journalist himself and perhaps the rest of the crew involved in the photo shoot. This appears to be the only possibility when the interviewer, apparently with tongue in cheek, states that *we intend to take her (Stan) clubbing when she visits the UK next month*. The statement is, however, ambivalent even here, since the interview is presented as a one-on-one conversation and the sudden *we* does not have a clear referent.

The editor also apparently gives the reader access to his thoughts. In the first part of the text, this is expressed by remarks which seem to be representations of the editor's spontaneous reactions to Stan's comments. For instance, after Stan reveals that she loves going to night clubs, the editor remarks that *this is fortunate ---*. This can be interpreted rather as a thought than a comment said out loud in the interview situation. In the latter, question-answer part of the text, the same types of reactions are embedded at the beginnings of the interview questions. This makes the representation of the discussion fluent and conversation-like and the journalist's voice in the article immediate and strong. The illusion that the reader has access to the journalist's thoughts and immediate responses calls the reader to relate to him and see Stan through his point of view. This corresponds to Benwell's (2003a: 158-159) analysis where the writer is considered the "standard-bearer for the qualities of magazine masculinity" and the main point of identification for the reader.

In conclusion, the article invites the reader to relate primarily to the journalist himself. This happens both by granting the reader access to the journalist's thoughts and thus positioning him closer to the reader than to Stan, and by using the pronoun *we* in a way which relates the reader to the journalist's reference group. Therefore, I will start from the assumption that the relationship the journalist constructs between himself and Stan reflects also the relationship the text offers its reader to take to Stan. If the journalist

expresses admiration to Stan, the reader is implicitly invited to agree. This makes the reader's position in relation to the journalist vital for understanding the relationship he is invited to take to Stan.

### **8.3. Stan as fantasy**

The most prominent feature of the relationship the text offers the reader to have with Stan is one-sided sexual desire. This is most obtrusive in the pictures but can also be read in the text. This finding is in line with the results of the previous chapter.

The picture-centred format of the article constructs Stan as an object of looking. In all of the pictures in the article, Stan is posing for the camera. As most other women portrayed in the magazine, in Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006: 114-149) terminology she is always a reactor. She is mostly looking at the reader, with the exceptions of once standing with her back turned to the reader and twice having her eyes shut. There are, then, no phenomena. (ibid.) She is not connected to anything in the context of the pictures but poses only for the reader (see chapter 7.3.3. for difference and distance). The photos are not introducing Stan the singer but Stan's body. Whether the picture is an offer or a demand, it is inviting the reader to look, enjoy and imagine a little further. With the prominent role the pictures play in the article, this invitation necessarily sets the tone also for reading the text. To sum up, the article's pictures are the most blatant invitation to see Stan as the object of sexual desire.

Although the text of the article is far tamer than the pictures, the invitation to desire can be found also there. Desire is expressed in the previously mentioned description of Stan as a *strikingly sexy pop sensation*. More implicitly, it is indicated with the way the interviewer positions himself in relation to Stan, signalling repeatedly that he would like to make closer contact with her. For instance, when Stan praises London, the editor enthusiastically "halts" the interview to enquire if she would consider moving to the city and therefore living closer to him. Conveying this tension is also an invitation for the reader to see Stan in a similar way.

Unfulfilled desire is, however, all the reader can expect. The text signals that the reader or his likes have little chance of getting more from Stan than the interview in question. This is conveyed in various ways.

The identity constructed for Stan places her in a world unreachable to a regular person. She is represented predominantly through her status as a sudden celebrity, emphasized

by the expressions used to describe her and her career. A singing contest that brought her together with her producers *changed her life* and her repeatedly emphasized success has made her into the *Kylie of the Carpathians*. The more mundane and perhaps more easily relatable parts of her life, on the other hand, are either only quickly alluded to or altogether dismissed. When Stan's home town is introduced, it is described through the metaphor (see Fairclough 1992: 194-197) *an Eastern European Ibiza*. This transports meanings from the party-filled life she is depicted as having now, thus keeping the discussion in the sphere of success and parties. Stan's studies are mentioned only in passing, as she is referred to as *a management and tourism student*. By nominalising (see Fairclough 1992: 182 – 183) the process of studying into the state of being a student, the editor avoids granting it the space and prominence of a full sentence such as "Stan used to study management and tourism". Moreover, the purposefully set up surroundings Stan is depicted against in the photos dissociates her from everyday life (see chapter 7.3.3. for comparison).

Stan's difference is also highlighted by the way the editor constructs his role in comparison to hers in the interview. The question-answer exchange structure of the article (Fairclough 1992: 153-154) emphasizes his role as a journalist doing his job, whereas Stan is taking a *well earned, clothes-deficient beach break*. Moreover, although the interviewer shares Stan's interest in parties and clubbing, he approaches it from a very different role. As mentioned above, given the permission to dance to Mr. Saxobeat as he pleases, the interviewer describes his preferred dancing move as *the worm*. By choosing this rather "un-cool" dancing style, he depicts himself not as a sleek party guy, but rather a "nerdy" or at least self-ironic outcast. Either way, this dancing style does not indicate that he would be the one dancing together with Stan. This role matches Benwell's and Gill's depictions of the self-deprecating new lad who cannot quite reach the standards of the traditional masculinity (see chapter 5.2.). It further separates the worlds of the interviewer and reader from that of Stan, and by this also distances her from the reader.

Stan's position as an unreachable fantasy is also indicated by the fact than she never has to properly address the editor's attentions. For instance, she answers his question about moving to London in a matter-of-fact tone, not paying attention to the question's possible implications conveyed by the editor's enthusiasm. If the editor's wish would be considered sincere instead of a joke fitting to the format of *FHM*, turning it down might require the use of more refined politeness strategies (see Fairclough 1992: 162-166). On

another occasion, the interviewer states that he and (apparently) the camera crew wants to take Stan clubbing. The comment, however, is hidden in the text in such a way that Stan does not have to react to it. It is, in fact, a question of interpretation whether the interviewer's suggestive remarks are even meant for her or if they are just to stay as shared knowledge between the editor and the reader. All in all, Stan's answers are nice and polite, but in the text she does not invite the interviewer or the reader to imagine any further. The idea of Stan having an actual relationship with the likes of the reader is, then, either just a part of the genre or so far off that she does not need to acknowledge it. This is naturally in complete opposition to the visual side of the article where invitation to desire is blatant. The pictures are, however, the part of the article most obviously controlled by the cover shoot genre, and thus the invitation they convey is a rather formal one. Combined with the more restrained text, it is obvious that the invitation the pictures make to the reader is to want, not to touch.

Perhaps the most interesting way the article creates distance between the reader and Stan is with the strong presence of the interviewer. The conversational exchange structure of the interview also constructs the interviewer as a character in the text (compare Benwell 2003a: 154 for editors becoming protagonists in lads' magazines). His habit of commenting on Stan's answers highlights his identity not just as an impartial interviewer but also as a person in his own right. As the reader is invited to identify with this prominent character, he is, then, constantly reminded of who his likes are and what group he is supposed to identify with. The differences in Stan's and the interviewer's roles emphasize the distinction. This divides the participants of the text into two camps: the reader and journalist on the one side, Stan on the other. Thus, Stan becomes "the other", the object of looking and wondering (see chapter 3.2 for women as others in lads' magazines). This differs significantly, for instance, from the interview of the guitarist Sergei Pizzorno in the same issue of *FHM* (*Back with a big bang*). In his interview, the questions are more formal, their composition closer to that of a news interview where the personality of the interviewer is hidden and her or his work is to convey the interviewee to the audience.

To sum up, the reader is invited to desire and admire Stan for her appearances. Simultaneously, Stan's difference and distance from him is being emphasized. The reader must stay in the role of a hometown boy admiring the poster of a celebrity.

#### 8.4. Stan as a silly girl

Alexandra Stan is not only distant, but also looked slightly down upon. This is evident both in her pop celebrity status and the way her speech is being represented. I will spend the rest of the chapter discussing this clearly negative tone in her representation.

Stan's identity is that of a celebrity, not a seriously taken musician. This is evident in the expression *pop career*, which she is said to have and which draws attention to her popularity rather than to her music. This is, then, a characteristic of vocabulary which Fairclough (1992: 190-192) calls *wording*; that is how a particular meaning can be represented with differing words and thus presenting it from a particular point of view. Furthermore, the questions asked of Stan do not have so much to do with music as with performing, *dancing and singing all day and all night*, as her work is being described. This is again very different from the above mentioned interview of Serge Pizzorno, who is asked about his life as a musician and his making of music. The only occasion where a more serious side of Stan's touring is being referred to occurs is when she herself comments on her heavy work load. Moreover, Stan's hit Mr. Saxobeat is described to *infiltrate your brain, no matter how much you hate it, no matter how the critics slate it and no matter how preposterous the saxophone solo is*. With this as the introduction to her music, the reader is hardly offered the position of a fan.

Stan is also presented as silly in other ways. Her youth is emphasized and she is described with the word *diminutive*. Her clubbing and dancing is repeatedly emphasized. In addition, her answers often connote childlike enthusiasm, as in when she declares that *I love that phrase, 'I'm coming from London town', that's so funny*. The way the reader is invited to interpret Stan's tone is evident in the journalist's reactions, which subtly indicate his more mature stance. For example, as Stan describes her favourite photo shoot as *that one where I was lying on the beach ball and had my socks up like a footballer*, the interviewer's comment is *We're inclined to agree*. This comment, especially the word *incline*, has a distinctly formal tone, and thus indicates a sophisticated position in relation to her more unreserved quotation. This can be considered *framing*, which in Fairclough's (1995: 83) definition refers to the way the "surrounding features of reporting discourse can influence the way represented discourse is interpreted". Here, then, the editor frames Stan's voice as distinctly childlike by juxtaposing it with his own more formal tone. Moreover, the editor also takes it upon himself to steer the conversation and make his control of it prominent (see

Fairclough 1992: 154-155 for interactional control and setting and policing agendas). This happens with expressions such as *go on* and *hold on*. Thus, the editor is making the power relation between himself and Stan clear.

To sum up, Stan is presented to the reader as a star with questionable musical talent and a sometimes childishly enthusiastic disposition. This can be detected in both the ideational and the interpersonal elements of the discourse in the article. The article invites the reader, then, to be amused on her account.

### **8.5. Summary**

In the analysis of *So hot right now*, I have concentrated on the relationship the reader is offered to Alexandra Stan. This has been necessary since she is the only representative of women in the article. The conclusions I have drawn from this analysis exemplify what I have written in the previous chapter.

Stan belongs to the category of celebrities. The most prominent characteristic in the relationship the reader is offered to take to her is desire, supporting the results of my general analysis of *FHM* as well as the work of previous researchers studying lads' magazines. In addition, I have concluded that the reader is also given the possibility to be bemused by her silliness, thus limiting the admiration to her appearance.

My analysis of *So hot right now* also gives an example of my conclusions on the distance between women and men in *FHM*. Stan's status as a celebrity is being emphasized in a way which, as was discussed more generally in chapter 7.3, separates her from the position allotted to the reader. Furthermore, the strong presence of the editor invites the reader rather to relate to him than to the interviewee.



## 9. ANALYSIS: *THE LORD OF THE DANCE*

In this chapter, I will analyze the article *Lord of the dance*, centring around DJ Bob Sinclair. I will begin the analysis by briefly introducing the genre and the structure of the article and the ways in which this might influence the content of the article. After that, I will examine the position the article outlines for its reader, mainly concentrating on the relationship the reader is invited to have to the main character Sinclair. Finally, I move on to analyzing the relationship the text invites its reader to take to the women represented in the article. As with the analysis of *So hot right now*, I will in the end connect these results to the overall picture of relationships in *FHM*. I will argue that *Lord of the dance* exemplifies well the condescending attitude the reader is often offered to have towards women, at the same time inviting him to desire them. First, however, a word on the women in the article.

The women represented in *Lord of the dance* are Sinclair's background dancers, fans or generally Ibiza clubbers. These are difficult to separate from each other, since the pictures in the article portray many women who are not mentioned in the text. In terms of the categories presented in chapter 7.2. on *FHM*, these women are closest to girlfriends, specifically desired sex partners. They are not, however, always represented in this way, as will be clear in the analysis below. This chapter will, then, not be taking these categories as a starting point, as their value for the analysis would be meagre.

### 9.1. Genre and structure

*Lord of the dance* is a feature article, more precisely a type of "reportage". In the article, an editor of *FHM* follows DJ Bob Sinclair for one night in Ibiza through three night clubs where the DJ is playing, reporting on his experiences and impressions. This genre leaves the editor with relatively free hands, describing his experiences and including other voices in the text as he considers appropriate. In consequence, for my analysis the important aspect about this genre is the freedom of choice it grants to the editor, as opposed to the limitations it poses.

The reportage is altogether five pages long and covers the period of roughly one day, starting at 6 pm and ending at 4 pm on the following day. The text is divided into six sections, each one titled with the time of day it recounts. An abundance of photos from Sinclair's hotel and the clubs he plays at illustrate the article. The people depicted in the pictures are often posing for the camera. Apart from the reportage's cover spread, the

article's pages are collages of short text clips and relatively small photos with no conspicuous main picture. The impression is restless and fragmented, an effect perhaps designed to demonstrate the energetic spirit of the night. The pictures categorically represent Sinclair and/or his fans or his female background dancers. Visually, the article paints a world in which only Sinclair and a few traditionally attractive women play a role.

In *Lord of the dance*, the editor's role is clearly smaller than in the article on Alexandra Stan. His voice is not presented in direct quotations and he very seldom refers to himself. Although reportage would as a genre allow a stronger presence, the article gives Sinclair the centre stage. Moreover, Sinclair's voice is not framed by the editor's remarks in the way Stan's are. Sinclair is, then, the sovereign star of the article.

## **9.2. Reader position: the reader and Sinclair**

In *Lord of the dance*, the reader is offered the position of a fan with a backstage pass. This relationship has a noteworthy impact on the way he is invited to see the women represented in the article. I will next itemize those properties in the article which have led me to this conclusion.

Sinclair's position as the layman's hero is set up by presenting him as a well-known star. He is introduced to the reader as *the world's most revered DJ*, but his career or background apart from nationality are not discussed any further. Being familiar with Sinclair is, then, an expectation. This is a clear difference compared to the article on Alexandra Stan, where the singer is being introduced thoroughly and with little background information needed. Moreover, whether the reader is familiar with the DJ or not, he is expected to accept Sinclair's status as a presupposed fact. This is most evident in the first paragraph of the article, where Sinclair is named *superstar DJ Bob Sinclair* with no validation required. Frequent references to Sinclair's devout fans verify his popularity. For instance, as Sinclair arrives in Ibiza, *the women who flock to witness Bob --- share drinks and prepare to experience one of the biggest clubbing nights of their lives*. In this sentence, the definite article causes the existence of the devout female crowd to be taken as obvious, a presupposition (Fairclough 1992: 120). Sinclair's success is further underlined by highlighting the glamour of his lifestyle. He is *whisked to his five-star hotel where he is being put up by the promoters, and led through an overcrowded backstage area*. The passive formulation of the sentences fades the people working for the clubs to the background and emphasizes Sinclair's status as a celebrity

waited on by others. To sum up, the article makes clear the reader understands how big of a name Sinclair in fact is.

Moreover, Sinclair is represented as well worth the fame. For instance, after predicting that Sinclair's fans in Naples are expecting the best night of their lives, the editor assures: *And they'll get it, too*. To accept the statement of fact (Fairclough 2004: 109), presented without modalization or hedges (Fairclough 2004: 171), the reader will have to adopt a position of unreserved confidence in Sinclair. Moreover, Sinclair himself is constantly boasting in the article. The editor does not frame his comments with any hints of doubt but rather supports them with his own praise. The readers are, then, expected to read the article in a manner favourable to Sinclair, either as accepting the praise as fact or perhaps taking it as irony. Both might characterize the reading: Sinclair is certainly idolized in the article, but the lad-type irony described by previous researchers also fits the picture. Especially when Sinclair extols his own physical and sexual attributes, his comments are easy to interpret as tongue in cheek. All in all, the position the reader is invited to take is full of admiration for Sinclair.

Finally, despite being a star, Sinclair is also presented with characteristics the reader can identify with. He is depicted from close personal distance (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 124) and often in demand-pictures, making funny faces at the camera and thus calling the reader to have fun with him. In addition, he is photographed both tired and putting a piece of sushi into his mouth. This makes him more relatable even to a reader who has never set foot in a night club. Also, Sinclair is called by his first name, unlike for instance Stan. This creates a certain familiarity between the reader and Sinclair, and balances Sinclair's role as a celebrity.

Understanding Sinclair's position in the article is important when analyzing the women's role in it. As already indicated, Sinclair has the skill, the job and the women. He is the ultimate lad: one of us, just better. The reader is positioned looking up to Sinclair and the type of masculinity he represents, taking him as a positive role model. This affects the way the reader is invited to relate to the women in the article. Since the women represented in it are supposedly Sinclair's fans, the DJ's relation to and attitude towards them forms the base on which the women are defined. With Sinclair as the hero of the article, questioning his reaction to the women would be to question the article and the reader position it offers.

### 9.3. Women as ego boosters

Women have a clear task in *Lord of the dance*: they boost Sinclair's masculinity and consolidate his status as a superstar. This is evident in their representations and the way Sinclair responds to them. As the supporting staff of the article, the women in the article are important to the reader only in their relation to Sinclair and, as I will discuss in the next section, as objects of looking.

The women represented in the article are elements of the setting rather than individuals. On a textual level, they are part of a voiceless and nameless crowd, unable to state their points of view on the roles and situations they are depicted in. Few of the women are even mentioned in the text, and they seem to be understood as a category rather than a group of individuals (Fairclough 2003: 146). In the pictures of the article women are still portrayed individually, albeit through the biological Barbie-type stereotype already discussed in the two previous chapters. In addition, women in the pictures are depicted at least from the waist up, which in Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006: 125) theory indicates at the least "far personal distance" from the reader. Textually they are reduced into a crowd by wording their behaviour at an airport with the expression *to flock*, a choice of words which bears connotations to an uncontrolled herd. Moreover, there are almost no male fans in the pictures, sending the message that Sinclair is the rooster amidst his hens.

The women in the article serve to highlight Sinclair's claims of his sexual attractiveness. The amount of women apparently interested in him is testament to the status. Sinclair is depicted with several good-looking young women, and while eating he is being *surrounded by numerous hot women* toward whom he *exudes confidence and charm*.

The instrumental role women serve in the text does not allocate them a very high status. Their role as temporary entertainment is indicated at the supper assembly mentioned in the previous paragraph. As the food is eaten, Sinclair's charm comes to an end. -- *without ceremony, he grabs his DJ bag and heads out of the restaurant to do what he's really come here for*, the editor describes. Juxtaposing chatting with women and playing at the club in this way assigns women to the less important sphere of pleasure in opposition to the serious work sphere. The example also depicts them as easily disposable. Moreover, at one point, Sinclair is depicted reacting to a *leggy woman* with a *car horn noise* and a *semi wolf whistle*. The explanation for the behaviour is that he is

lifting his spirits in preparation for the evening. Questions of how comfortable a preparation practice this might be for randomly chosen women are ignored. All in all, this article depicts women as people who need not be taken into consideration as men proceed with their business.

Although the reader is not Sinclair, the admiration he is invited to have for Sinclair assumes that the editor and Sinclair's attitude towards women is not offensive to him. This sets the premises for the reader's relationship to the women in the article. He is, then, invited not to relate to women but rather to see them as status symbols or simply entertainment. The condescending attitude discussed in the previous chapters is strongly present in this article.

#### **9.4. Women as objects of looking**

Although *Lord of the dance* does not offer its reader a personal relationship to the women portrayed, the article's pictures do give an impression of a more familiar relation. Many of the photographs are offers, some of which portray women looking at Sinclair. In these cases, the reader's position is that of a bystander who can enjoy the women's attention only through identification to Sinclair and the male sex in general. Some pictures, however, are also demands which throw the reader a more direct invitation. For instance, the first page after the cover spread of the article presents a photograph with three women sitting by a pool. Two of them are looking at the camera and posing in a fashion reminiscent of Alexandra Stan's suggestive photos. This is, then, the closest relationship the reader is offered to the women in the article.

The heterosexual desire discussed in the previous chapters seems to be almost imposed on the article. For instance, neither the women mentioned above nor the place they are depicted in are referred to in the text. It can only be presumed that the women are at the pool of the hotel where Sinclair is staying. It seems, then, that *FHM* has taken it as its task to provide its readers with pictures of barely dressed women on all occasions possible.

#### **9.5. Summary**

In this chapter, I have examined the way *Lord of the dance* defines the relationship between the reader and the women represented. Since women have no voice in this article, the analysis has had to rely on ideational instead of interpersonal aspects of discourse.

*Lord of the dance* is interesting, since it is the only article in this magazine where women and men are represented together somewhere other than in an interview situation. It also portrays a male celebrity in a way which stands in glaring opposition to the depiction of female celebrities; the familiarity and unreserved admiration with which Sinclair is being represented and addressed differs greatly from the way Alexandra Stan is represented to the reader (see the previous chapter).

The reader is given a position where accepting the article's message about Sinclair's superiority also warrants taking an instrumental and at times condescending attitude towards women. Sinclair's female fans are, then, a group presented much of the time in a negative light. Furthermore, the reader is invited to feel desire towards the women. Both of these results support the findings presented in chapter 7 on *FHM*. This article also contributes to the distance discussed earlier by reducing women into a flock and depriving them of voice.

## 10. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have examined the relationship the reader of *FHM* is invited to take to the women represented in the magazine. To be able to analyse this, I have outlined a view of text-mediated relationships based on Fairclough (1992, 1995, 2003) and Mills' (2005) methods, complementing it with Machin's (2007) as well as Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) image analysis to better understand the multimodal aspects of the magazine. Now, having conducted the analysis, it is time for some concluding remarks. I will next summarize the results of this study and discuss their relation to previous research. After this, I will comment on the significance and limitations of this study, concluding with suggestions for further research.

I have found that perhaps the clearest characteristic of the relationship the reader of *FHM* is invited to take to women is desire. This is evident all over the magazine where women are discussed or portrayed. The reader is positioned as a heterosexual man who wishes to attract women and who enjoys looking at pictures of semi-nude celebrities. The women depicted in the magazine are traditionally attractive and often discussed in relation to sex and sexuality. They also tend to pose in accentuatedly seductive ways, inviting the reader for sexual fantasies. This finding is very much in line with the findings of earlier research, which has argued that women are presented as sex objects in lads' magazines (e.g. Benwell 2003b: 20-21).

In addition, I have found that the reader is often expected to have a condescending attitude towards women. He is invited to relate to men who express disdain towards women, and he is positioned to be averse to romantic relationships. Moreover, especially women who are represented as someone's sex partners or girlfriends are often referred to in ways which can be considered sexist, for instance the expression *a girl I once pulled*. Like desire, condescension can be found throughout the magazine. Also this correlates with the previous research which states that women are objectified and belittled in the magazines (e.g. Gill 2007: 241). This speaks against Gauntlett's (2002: 152-180) belief that *FHM* stands out as a non-sexist example in the midst of many questionable lads' magazines and provides further support for Horvath et al.'s (Middlesex university 2011) fears about the magazines' negative influence on gender relations.

Aside from commenting on the relationships *FHM* constructs, my results contribute to the existing body of research in two ways. First, they indicate that at least certain

aspects of the old laddist masculinity still prevail in *FHM*, despite the editors' promises for change (see chapter 5.4). Secondly, as was perhaps to be expected, my results imply that the relationship the reader is offered to take to women is very similar to the relationship previous research has found between women and men generally in lads' magazines.

This analysis deviates from the insights of previous research in the exploration of the idea of distance. I have argued that *FHM* constructs a space where women and the reader are distant from one another. I have my methodology to thank for this result. Unlike in previous research, the methods in this study have included a careful categorization of the women appearing in the magazine and a discussion of their relation to the position outlined for the reader. I have found that the women who share the expected reader's everyday surroundings appear in the magazine rarely and mostly in a negative light. The women who are represented as different from the reader and who the reader can never imagine to meet, on the other hand, are highly salient and at least partly positively depicted. This, then, makes it seem like the reader has little to expect and gain from interaction with women.

The idea of distance is possible to relate to concepts such as *ingroups* and *outgroups*, much discussed for instance by Benwell (2001). Depicting women as distant and different is a way to exclude them from the lads' world and to make them *the outgroup* which necessarily acquires a negative role due to its otherness alone. In this issue of *FHM* at least, then, the overt sexism of condescension and objectivization is not even required for excluding the feminine gender. All that is needed is to assign negative and positive depictions as well as visibility according to the categories through which women are portrayed. This result thus demonstrates a mechanism with which gender relations, exclusion and othering can be constructed and accomplished in magazines. I believe it is my main contribution to the field of research on lads' magazines.

My results can, however, not be generalized far. Wanting to enable a detailed analysis, I have kept the data small. This means that my results apply properly to this issue of *FHM* only. I do believe that my findings on the condescension and objectified status of women are relatively trustworthy, since they are so widely supported by previous research. Distance, however, is a trickier concept. As mentioned previously, the extremely minor role girlfriends play in this issue is not a prevalent state of affairs but varies from issue to issue. To get a general picture of the magazine, a clearly larger data



would have to be analysed with this concept in mind, paying special attention to the attitude with which the girlfriends appearing in the magazine are discussed. The value of this study comes, then, rather from its theoretical understanding of the issues at hand and the possibilities it points out than from the precise representations and relationships combed out of the October 2011 *FHM*.

Another point where the present study can be criticized is its methodology. As I have not confined my attention to particular linguistic aspects but have wanted to keep my hands free, I have also exposed my study to the type of critique Henry Widdowson has targeted against CDA and Fairclough (see chapter 2.2). My analysis and interpretations are subjective, and although I have done my best to base them on the data at hand, another type of reading would always have been possible.

There are many ways in which this line of research could be continued. First of all, the reader position and its relations to characters and categories in texts could be further investigated. One way to do this would be to take one step further towards the interpreting subject. So far, my allusions to psychological processes such as identification have played a minor role in the study and they have been based on earlier discourse analysts' use of the concepts. It might be time to change the focus. For instance, research on narrative empathy and character identification (e.g. Keen 2007: 93-96) could provide practical tools for understanding how the reader might react to particular types of representations. What makes the reader sympathise with a character represented in a text? Based on this, does the text promote or enable identification? So far, no concise methodological framework for analysis of this type exists.

It would also be very interesting to compare men's lifestyle magazines with equivalent women's magazines in terms of relationships. With the abundance of relationship advice and emphasis on romance found in women's lifestyle magazines, an analysis might show revealing differences in the way the genders are advised to relate to each other. The idea of distance could also prove to be relevant in the comparison. Vigorito and Curry (1998) have shown that women's magazines represent men in relatively feminine roles; the more female readers a magazine has, the more feminine men's representations seem to be. If this is still true, it could mean that women's magazines strive to reduce the distance between the reader and the "other" gender, whereas men's magazines might be stretching it to the limit. Bearing these possibilities in mind, a comparative study would be extremely interesting.

Summing up, the questions prevail. Are women and men in *FHM* depicted categorically as so different and far away from each other as it seems based on this one issue? If so, what consequences does a feeling of distance have on the way we react to the group we feel it towards? And if men's lifestyle magazines uphold this distance, what do women's magazines do? All in all it could be argued that the present study has produced more questions than answers. I believe that can be considered both a shortcoming and an accomplishment.

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