

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, I will provide a conclusion of the study which is based on the findings and discussions in the previous chapter. I will also present my personal opinion about the topic of the study, as well as some suggestions for general readers and other researchers who might also be interested in conducting further research related to Semiotics, media, and masculinity.

The purposes of the study are to analyse and find out the visual and textual signifiers that appear on the cover of the magazine together with the signifieds and to figure out how the signifiers may reveal the concept of masculinity. After conducting the study, I find that there are eleven signifiers that appear through the visual aspects of the magazine and nine signifiers that appear in the form of texts. Relying on the analysis that has been conducted, I can see that each signifier stands for a mental concept that is different from those that are conveyed by the other signifiers, but in the end most of the mental concepts can be related to

one idea: masculinity—be it from the general point of view or from the western culture point of view.

Moreover, after analysing the data, I understand that the signifiers can reveal the concept of masculinity through many ways. Some of them conform to the concept of masculinity directly. For example, the colour blue, the word *competition*, the wrist watch, and the tattoos are directly associated to the concept of masculinity. Another example is the names of male celebrities that are featured on the cover of the magazine, which have been considered as the icons of masculinity by society. Therefore when we read their names, there is a strong probability that we would associate the names with the concept of masculinity.

Meanwhile, some others have to be related to other concepts first before they can finally be associated to the concept of masculinity. For example, on the cover of the magazine, we can find a signifier in the form of an emblem on the denim jacket worn by Joel Madden, which shows the flag of the United States. To analyse this signifier, I should first relate it to the concept of nationalism and then relate it to the concept of masculinity, as nationalism has often been seen as a masculine thing.

I also find that the concept of masculinity can be analysed not only by looking at the contents of the texts featured on the media, but also at the shapes of the typography that are used by the media. From the discussion, I find that although the text says “*men*”, which can definitely be considered the root of the concept of masculinity, it is possible that the shape of the word does not conform to the concept of masculinity.

Furthermore, one of the textual signifiers mentions the name of a Puerto Rican male celebrity, Ricky Martin, who is actually known worldwide as a gay but still considered as an icon of masculinity. This finding has led me to the conclusion that homosexuality is one thing, while masculinity is another thing. From this study, I understand that a man can be a homosexual yet still is considered masculine. This means that masculinity has got nothing to do with a person's sexual orientation. This tells us that men ought not to be straight in order to be considered masculine.

In conclusion, GRAZIA Men magazine Australia has featured many elements of masculinity in its first edition that help distinguish the male version from the female one. Out of twenty signifiers found on the cover and discussed in the previous chapter, only three signifiers do not conform to the concept of masculinity found. Seventeen signifiers have proved that the concepts of masculinity are carried by the magazine through its visual aspect, which can be seen from the colour selections, gestures of the model, body and facial attributes, and font selections; and its textual aspect, which involves the choices of diction and name to be featured on the cover.

The concepts of masculinity appearing on the cover show the idea that a male is perceived as a leading, competitive, easily-challenged and powerful gender who is craving for success, struggling against anxiety and cluelessness, and associating himself with several physical attributes to show his masculine identity, for example, through facial hair and tattoos.

In my personal view, gender is one of many things that are interesting to study, because it is simply everywhere to see and it is related to our life. Studying masculinity helps me understand that the construction of gender identity can be found even in a small thing like the typography, where the shapes of the edges of a written letter can define whether the character of the font is considered masculine or feminine.

I also find that gender plays an essential role in building some images of magazines; the other way around, magazines also have a great influence upon the construction of the stereotypes of gender.

It is quite ironic that due to the falling of the magazine sales, Bauer Media has discontinued both the female and male versions of GRAZIA magazine Australia early in 2013, thus making the first edition of the GRAZIA Men its only edition ever published. It would have been more interesting if the signs of masculinity on the cover of this edition could be compared to those of other editions.

Regarding that matter, I suggest that researchers who want to discuss a similar topic choose one magazine that has several editions as primary sources of the data so that the covers of the editions can be compared to each other to give a richer and more interesting results and findings.

There are so many things that can be related to the concept of a particular gender identity—be it masculinity or femininity. The stereotypes will always be constructed by society from time to time. It is suggested that we seek some more

reading sources in order to be more aware of the signs of the gender identity that appear in our surroundings.

I also suggest that Maranatha Christian University, especially the English Department, provides the students with more recent and updated resources and literary works that discuss the Semiotics, gender and media issue as well as their interrelation. The aim is to help students solidify their knowledge about the connection between the science of signs, gender and the media.

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