

The Reception of Moderate Male Stereotypes in Androcentric Advertising:
A Study on the Decoding of Subtle Representations of Masculinity

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Abstract**The Reception of Moderate Male Stereotypes in Androcentric Advertising:**

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Commercial advertising often employs stereotyping in order to connect with the intended audience and appeal to the widest possible demographic. The gender binary of male and female is one of the most popular audience segmentations, therefore gender provides an excellent example for the study of stereotypes. This study focuses on the portrayal of male stereotypes in advertising, and seeks to explore how stereotypes of masculinity are represented in androcentric advertising, and understand how these stereotypes are perceived by men. It uses a reception study and Stuart Hall's (1996) theory of encoding/decoding to discuss the use of stereotypes with male University of Ottawa students, aged 18-25. Participants in the study suggest that the stereotypes portrayed in commercial advertising influence their masculinity in numerous ways, including, but not limited to, the way they dress and the way they act.

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Look, my feminism is neither pro-women nor anti-men but thumbs up for the seven billion. Thumbs up for everyone on this little blue-green planet trying to get through the day. In a world of infinite trouble, the idea of equality isn't some fabulous luxury that we can gift ourselves when we are feeling morally flush. Equality is not humanity's cashmere bed socks. It's not a present like champagne. Absolute human equality is a necessity like water, because if we look at a map of the world where every nation struggling with poverty, child mortality, and political instability is marked in red, it's notable that the bright red shaming rash coincides almost identically with the most unequal countries in the world.

In the twenty-first century, humanity's greatest resource isn't oil or titanium or gold. Its brains. And any time we make a choice as a society to offline a section of society, we waste these billions of tons of brains.

- Caitlin Moran, 'Gender in the 21st Century' Munk Debate, November 15, 2013

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Chapter 1

Introduction

My interest in masculinity was spurred by an assigned project during my Communication undergrad at Memorial University. It was a fourth-year theory course and I was asked to present on Sean Nixon's "Advertising, magazine culture, and the 'new man'" (2009), a very condensed version of his book, "Hard looks: Masculinities, spectatorship, and contemporary consumption" (1996), in the context of other theorists that we had studied throughout the semester. Highlighting case studies on Levi's 501 jeans and Brylcreem commercials, Nixon discusses the introduction of the style press and the public acceptance of male grooming and beauty habits. In an attempt to address the previously untapped market of male consumers, both Levi Strauss and Brylcreem employed rigid notions of traditional masculinity in their advertising and branding strategy in order to engage their target consumer.

Nixon comments on two specific Levi's commercials: *Launderette* (1985) and *Bath* (1986). *Launderette* features a young, attractive man who enters a launderette, strips down to his boxers, and throws his Levi 501s in a washer full of rocks in order to achieve the stonewashed look that Levis is renowned for. *Bath* features a similarly handsome young man who spends the day alone in his apartment working out and admiring photos of girls. Eventually, he slips into a pair of button-fly 501s, and sits in a bathtub full of water in order to achieve the popular 'shrink-to-fit' look. According to Nixon (2009), these commercials were created in an attempt to reinvigorate current Levis buyers, and to entice new, young, customers as a part of Levi's 'return to basics' campaign. The crux of this campaign was to associate the Levi's name with Americanness, durability, and quality, by harkening back to the 50's street style. While the Levi's campaign rested on stereotypes of traditional masculinity in

order to sell a product, I pondered intent: do these commercials reinforce stereotypes or just efficiently address as many viewers as possible?

A natural theoretical companion to Nixon is Richard Dyer's, "The role of stereotypes" (2009). Dyer draws from Lippman, and suggests that stereotypes need not always be used as a 'term of abuse' (Dyer, 2009). Both Dyer and Lippmann suggest that stereotypes can be used in four ways; as an ordering process, a short cut, a point of reference, or an expression of values. Dyer suggests that stereotypes are particularly useful in terms of social categories that are often in flux and invisible – stereotypes make what is often invisible, visible (Dyer, 2009). Although stereotypes types may not intend to cause harm, they are often employed in a pejorative manner, or used with ill intent. The question then becomes one of power within society: "who proposes the stereotype, [and] who has the power to enforce it [...]?" (Dyer, p. 209, 2009).

In examining commercials, questions regarding power fall to the advertising industry. "Social communication in advertising" by Leiss et al. (2009), makes a suggestion imperative to the current research: that advertisements serve more than just an economic function; that the broad perspective of advertising is a form of social communication which influences not only perspectives in the public sphere, but can also influence personal identity formation (Leiss et al., 2009). This influential capacity puts additional pressure and responsibility on the advertising industry which, as Leiss et al. state, has resulted in greater restrictions. Advertisers use stereotypes not only as a way to represent reality, but also as a method of targeting specific audiences – their primary concern is to sell products. It is not only the idea of representation that is in question, but also the relationship between advertisements and the powerful media conglomerates. Audiences are seen as something that can be bought and

sold, and simply put, some audiences are more valuable than others (Leiss et al., 2009). Given the limited screen time and the cost of television airtime, advertisers must try to connect with as many people as possible in their thirty seconds.

As suggested by Leiss et al. (2009), an advertiser wants to find commonalities within their target audience so that a commercial will resonate with as many viewers as possible, but; there are both favourable and unfavourable ways to connect with your audience. Working under the assumption that reinforcing inflated forms of traditional masculinity benefits only the advertiser, commercials for Axe body spray, specifically the “Women – billions” commercial, unites male viewers under the assumption that all males would like to be hunted by a plethora of scantily clad women. This commercial grabs at the low hanging fruit, and although it may appeal to a large audience, it represents both genders as overtly sexual and unable to control their desires. There are alternatives to using gendered stereotypes to grab the viewers’ attention; take for example, a Wonderful Pistachio commercial. They often rely on popular culture references, specifically those related to the online realm, and more recently, they have turned to celebrities like Stephen Colbert for endorsement. The Wonderful Pistachio commercials refrain from lifestyle branding and instead, connect with the audience through good-natured humour, which is not at the 'cost' of any social group or segmentation.

If commercials have the ability to influence both the public and private spheres as Leiss et al. (2009) suggest, how are males affected by the representations of masculinity? What is society being told to expect of males? What are males being told to expect of themselves? More importantly, what are the consequences of these expectations?

The most diligent way to answer these questions is to turn to the viewers, and explore

their reception processes. Reception studies invite open discussion and acknowledges that consumption and decoding occur on an individual basis, and that connections can be made to other individual's experiences with the same content. This method allows for the identification of themes and genres by the audience (Lindolf, 1991).

The reception study facilitated for the current research was open to male University of Ottawa students between the ages of 18-25. According to Meghan Dale's report on the "Trends in the Age Composition of College and University Students and Graduates", approximately 68% of the post-secondary population falls between the ages of 18-25. The median age for a university student is 22.8, while the median graduation age is 24.8 (Dale, 2010). The 18-25 year old population sample has been chosen in order to encapsulate the vast majority of post-secondary students at various stages of their academic career. The School of Psychology's Integrated System of Participation in Research (ISPR) program was utilized in order to guarantee participants. Each participant was asked to complete a pre-screening questionnaire in order to determine demographics of representation such as nationality, race, and sexual orientation.

Three commercials presenting moderate male stereotypes were selected and shown to the participants in a group setting (see appendix B). After the airing of each commercial the groups were invited to participate in a discussion based on a series of predetermined topics (see appendix C). The nature of the ISPR is such that student participants are required to complete a particular number of research hours as outlined by their program, and while students may attend the group studies were not always willing or eager to participate. Additionally, due to the nature of group studies, it is impossible to maintain anonymity, thus there may be some apprehension in disclosing particular emotions or feelings in the group

setting. For any number of these reasons, discussion in the first reception study group was fairly brief, and it became clear that a second study group was necessary in order to question participants further.

As original research, this study provides a current male perspective on the representations of masculinity, particular to commercial advertising. “Advertising is particularly vulnerable as a system of social imagery because it is so prominent and intrusive, and because its condensed format implies greater simplification and typification in its representations, which leaves advertisers open to accusations of distorting real social conditions and denying the authentic experiences of ordinary people” (Leiss et al., 2009). It is important to understand the way in which commercials use masculine stereotypes in an attempt to market products to the modern male consumer. Such stereotypes not only serve as a way for the male consumer to identify with the product, but they also serve as an example of the dominant hegemonic ideals of masculinity.

As such advertising impinges directly upon some very sensitive and important areas of life, and forces policy makers to think very carefully about its proper place within a democratic society. The uniqueness of advertising agencies, and the regulatory issues confronting them, is that they have emerged as the point of mediation between the industrial, cultural, and communication sectors of society (Leiss et al., 2009, p. 772).

Therefore, these commercials not only play upon aspects of masculinity for economic gain, but it also teaches society what to expect of men, and it teaches men how to conform to these ideals.

Chapter 2 provides a review of literature surrounding the topics of gender, masculinity, and commercial advertising. In researching gender, a monumental paradigm shift becomes evident; from the notion that gender is tied to, and dictated by, biological

factors particularly related to sex, to the more current line of thinking, where gender is considered a performance that is socially influenced. As this study aligns closely with the second camp, the literature review will focus on the socially constructed nature of gender.

For the purposes of the current research, it also becomes necessary to prove the significance and proliferation of commercial advertisements. Commercials are often associated with television, but with the advent of new media streaming platforms such as Netflix and Hulu, on demand services like Shomi and Crave, and with the ability to time shift your favourite television shows and fast forward through the commercials, it becomes obvious that the landscapes of commercials are changing. However, they aren't extinct yet: in a way, they have become more intrusive. Now you are forced to watch commercials before you watch your selected video on YouTube, and the commercial, if programmed well, is somehow related to the video you are about to watch. Regardless of format, commercials are often regarded to be of little social significance. Perhaps this is due to the original thirty second format, or now the even more fleeting fifteen second versions available on YouTube. With all things considered, the current research is contingent on the fact that commercials are a source of social influence – that cues or messages identified in them are used in identity creation and the way in which we interpret our surroundings.

The role of stereotypes are also explored; beginning with representations of masculinity in both the public and private spheres, and the way in which male consumers are targeted, and ending with the proliferation of misandry in today's society. The 'male crisis' as coined by Susan Faludi (2000) suggests that the displacement of males in the workforce during wartime transition, as well as other factors such as the feminist movement, have forced men into an identity crisis; unable to find a role for themselves in the workplace or the

home. Nathanson and Young (2001) suggest misandry, the binary to misogyny, a more extreme version of Faludi's crisis. They suggest that misandry is prevalent in today's society, but often goes unnoticed because misogyny and feminism take the spotlight. The intent is not to discredit the need for, or the ground gained by feminism, rather to put a call out for gender equality rather than gender superiority. Nathanson and Young's (2001) overall concern is that the effects of misandry are not yet known, and that forming an identity in such a climate may prove to be difficult, and for a male to acknowledge its affect means admitting vulnerability.

The third chapter outlines the research and design methodology by first listing the research questions:

R1: How are stereotypes of masculinity identified or represented in androcentric advertising?

R2: And, how are these stereotypes perceived by male viewers?

A reception study was employed as a method to explore these research questions; after airing the commercials to participants, a list of topics focused on masculinity (see appendix C) were posed in order to facilitate discussion. Two studies were held in November 2014, with a total of eleven participants that span various nationalities, ages, and relationship statuses. In exchange for their participation in the study, students were awarded one research point. The chapter closes by describing the three commercials used in the study and the reason behind their selection.

Chapter 4 focuses on the results and analysis of the original research by exploring the participants' discussion of each commercial separately. In each section, the participants identify the male and female stereotypes that they thought present, any problems they had with those stereotypes, and their personal or emotional connection, if any, with the

commercial or the product advertised. The discussion then moves to the general discussion topics on masculinity, including; the impact of the media on their personal lives, stereotypes and masculinity in the media, interaction with commercials, personal influences on masculinity, society's views on masculinity, and any perceived dangers in using advertising to define masculinity. Section 4.2 provides analysis of each section presented in section 4.1 by incorporating secondary sources. The chapter closes with a review of insights gleaned from the research, including thoughts on representations of the male body in public, metrosexuality, and misandry.

Chapter 5 serves as a conclusion by exploring the theoretical, empirical, and methodological implications of the thesis of the present work. It provides a brief summary of findings, as well as suggestions for further research, and references. The proceeding appendices contain a number of useful resources including; transcripts of both reception studies, screenshots of the commercials shown to participants during the reception study, a list of discussion topics, ethics approval documentation, and critical analysis of the discussion taken from the reception studies.

The current research hopes to provide a better understanding of how stereotypes are used within androcentric advertising, and how the male population relates to these stereotypes. In turn, it will contribute to the canon of theory on stereotypes and masculinity, and it will help to further the understanding of the encoding/decoding process outlined by Hall. Additionally, it will provide ground for further exploration on the proliferation of misandry and its effects on males and society as a whole.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Perspective

In researching gender, it becomes almost immediately apparent that there are three overarching paradigms: the biological perspective; which ascribes characteristics of gender to biological sex and physical factors; the social construction perspective, which relies on notions of gender performance, and a combination of both ideologies where notions of social construction are refracted through a biological prism. Gender as a purely biological construct has largely fallen out of vogue. This project will adopt the performative perspective acknowledging that gender in its current form is largely performative and socially influenced. That being the case, the literature review canvasses only this paradigm, with a particular focus on masculinity, masculine stereotypes, and their representation in history and pop culture.

Following a review of pertinent literature on the topic, this chapter will explore Lippman's theory on stereotypes also proves integral as it introduces the notion of stereotypes as an ordering process, rather than a term of abuse. It will then outline Hall's theory of encoding/decoding which guides the current research; Hall insists that the audience plays an active role in the consumption of television advertisements. That is, consumers interpret the content of an advertisement based partially on their own personal experience. It is this process of decoding that serves as the primary motivation in the reception studies.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Discussion on Gender

Most of the current research on gender operates under the assumption that gender is largely performative – that we model ourselves after ideals of femininity and masculinity set

out by mass media, popular culture, respective governments, people leaders, and other influencing factors. Gender performance suggests that we operate in order to achieve an ideal notion of gender, or in some cases, perhaps to rebel against that same ideal. Social constructivism in its purest form forgoes any tie between gender and biology, thus Lynne Segal et al. (1993) suggest that gender constructs are constantly changing and evolving.

Simone de Beauvoir is often regarded as one of the pioneers of gender performance theories. Her suggestion is that gender is an aspect of identity that is gradually acquired, rather than an innate characteristic, given at birth: “one is not born, but rather becomes a woman” (de Beauvoir, 1973, p. 301). That being considered a woman is different than being considered a female, and that the two need to be intrinsically bound (Butler, 1986). *The Second Sex*, was the catalyst for viewing women as other, and also brought sexed and gendered bodies into the realm of phenomenological investigation. She also suggested that sexual equality does not mean sameness; that equality often exploits masculine ideologies and advantages, that equality erases sexual differences, and perpetuates the male gender as absolute (Butler, 1986). While de Beauvoir focusses on women as her primary object of study, her thoughts on the performative nature of gender can also be applied to male gender performance.

Judith Butler seconds de Beauvoir: gender is not a fact about an individual, rather it is culturally formed, yet there is not body that pre-exists cultural inscription – there is no ‘natural’ body. Butler furthers the theory on gender performance by distinguishing between performance, which necessitates a pre-existing subject, and performativity, which supposed no pre-existing subject (Salih, 2002). While the current research agrees with the distinction between the two, the distinction will not be explored further: for the purposes of the current

research, gender will be regarded not as something an individual is, rather something an individual does (Salih, 2002).

To further illustrate the notion of gender as something one does, Butler uses the analogy of a wardrobe to explore the regulatory frame from which we enact our gender. Your sex, culture, geographical location, socio-economic status, and a myriad of other factors determine what 'clothes' one has to choose from in their closet (Salih, 2002). We pick our outfits based on our own notions of who we are, and what we want to convey, yet we also make choices based on how we want to convey ourselves to others, and how others perceive us. The closet analogy exemplifies the illusion of choice while reiterating the largely regulatory frame which presides over our choices (Salih, 2002). The illusion of freedom of choice can also be applied to the media: while commercials, television shows, movies, etc., often convey a spectrum of gender profiles, it still perpetuates invisible boundaries around the possibilities and choices surrounding gender performance. With our increasingly complex relationship and understanding of gender, our 'closets' may have expanded a little, the framework from which we 'choose' our gender may be more open, but the analogy serves as an example of the distinction between sex and gender, and the ascribed or enacted nature of gender (Salih, 2002).

Anthony (1998), emphasizes gender performance through behaviour by discussing androgyny and public washrooms. She uses the term 'social engineering' to describe a plan to shape people's behaviour. "We teach children to wear clothing, even when they don't have to for warmth or protection. We teach them to read and do mathematical calculation, even when they find school boring or distressing. [...] The main point is that we expect all persons, especially children, to endure large amounts of frustration, anxiety, and fear, entirely for the

sake of forging the kind of society that we think is desirable. [...] It's *gratuitous* social engineering that creates and sustains a lot of the existing gender structure" (Anthony, 1998, p. 13-14).

2.1.2 Stereotypes and Brand Gender

Fugate and Phillips (2010) explore the similar notion of product gender: they question whether or not product gender is still a useful marketing strategy given the increases in cross-gendered social behaviours (Fugate and Phillips, 2010). Following Bem's (1974) gender schema, scholars discovered that most products are coded as either masculine or feminine, which allows consumers to both encode and organize these products and services (Fugate and Phillips, 2010).

The authors then explore product use and consumption in tandem with self congruency theory and identity theory. Self congruency theory dictates that consumers are uncomfortable using products that are not made for them in a gendered sense – that they would prefer to use the corresponding, culturally normative, gendered product (Fugate and Phillips, 2010). This is perhaps most obvious in the gender classification of toys for young children. Identity theory is "...based on the notion that individuals negotiate their social role through interaction with others and one's perceived social location in others" (Fugate and Phillips, 2010, p 252). Mass media messages such as those found in advertising, can heavily influence one's gender identity (Fugate and Phillips, 2010). Observing consumer consumption through the lens of both theories suggests that people will choose products that reflect their perception of their own gender identity while simultaneously, the same products may also contribute to the construction of one's gender identity.

2.1.3 Masculinity

While societal perceptions provide a backbone for brand gender theories, the same perceptions can influence people's understanding of gender paradigms. Society's perception of an individual is influenced by their social engineering and gender performance, which in turn affects interpersonal relationships. A male may be defined by any number of terms describing interpersonal relationships, such as husband, father, son, co-worker, etc., all of which embody varying traits. Chesebro and Fuse (2001) provide a definition of masculinity from an interpersonal perspective:

...masculinity is the study of the discourses and the effects of the discourses generated by men, unifying men, and revealing the identity and characteristics men ascribe to themselves, others and their environment. When the social consequences of masculinity are examined, the exploration can also include the study of the ideological and political systems that masculinity has spawned which accordingly can include examinations of patriarchies, male bonding, warfare, territorial expansions, specific forms of aggression as well as a host of terms – such as *bachelor*, *husband*, *warrior*, and *protector* – employed to define identity and role of men in interpersonal relationships (Chesebro and Fuse, 2001, p. 203-204).

While the definition does introduce violence as aspects of masculinity, a trait that is beyond the scope of the current research, the definition also suggests that masculinity can be socially influenced. Chesebro and Fuse (2001), like Segal (1993), go on to say that masculinity is not static, that it changes from culture to culture and from era to era (Chesebro and Fuse, 2001). They also present a counter argument which suggests that masculinity is an internal or innate quality, a theory employed by Pleck's (1981) male sex role identity (MSRI). “In Pleck's (1981, pp. 2-3) view, a “man's efforts to attain a healthy sex role identity” are “twisted” by paternal absence, maternal overprotectiveness, the feminizing of schools, and “general blurring” of male and female roles that is “occurring now in society””

(Cheseboro and Fuse, 2001, p. 208). While Pleck may argue that the characteristics of masculinity are ingrained and natural, by suggesting that men can become less manly because of the feminizing of schools etc., he acknowledges that gender can be altered by social influence. Cheseboro and Fuse maintain: “masculinity is a product of human interaction; it is a social construction. Masculinity is a product of the images and characterizations that humans decide to attribute to men as a group; it is a symbolic construction” (Chesebro and Fuse, 2001, p. 209).

Connell, as Kimmel (1993) suggests, ties masculinity to history in order to achieve a more well-rounded definition. Connell takes it a step further by providing examinations of masculinities in different cultures such as neo-Confucian China, and pre-colonial Papua New Guinea, to examine how their definitions of masculinity have changed through time, and with varying political influences (Connell, 1993). The outcome of his analysis of these cultures leaves him wondering:

...whether “masculinity” is in itself a culture-bound concept that makes little sense outside Euro/American culture. Our conventional meaning for the word “masculinity” is a quality of an individual, a personal attribute that exists in a greater or lesser degree; in the mental realm an analogue of physical traits like hairiness of chest or bulk of biceps. The connection of such a concept with the growth of individualism and the emerging concept of the self in early-modern European culture is easy to see. A culture not constructed in such a way might have little use for the concept of masculinity (Connell, 1993, p. 606).

If we adopt Connell's view – that our North American understanding of masculinity only makes sense if we have the necessary tools to understand the comparisons and the symbols – then studying commercials within their intended demographic makes sense.

Concerns regarding masculine representation become clear when examining

stereotypes and physical representation of the male body in the public sphere. Kimmel (1993) begins his article by suggesting that men, as gendered beings, have no history. That the vast majority of books are about men, but not about men being men. Kimmel (1993) states that “we cannot understand manhood without understanding American history – that is without locating the changing of definitions of manhood within the larger context of the economic, political, and social events that characterize American history” (Kimmel, 1993, p. 28). While Kimmel raises this point, when he speaks of gender in the past, he fails to provide a specific time period for it, and broadly categorizes it as having happened at the turn of the century.

Drawing on the article's title, Kimmel discusses what he means by 'invisible gender'; that gender, for those that are privileged by it, is invisible (Kimmel, 1993).

American men have come to think of themselves as genderless, in part because they can afford the luxury of ignoring the centrality of gender. So military people, political, scientific, or literary figures are treated as if their gender, their masculinity, had nothing to do with their military exploits, policy decisions, scientific experiments, or writing styles and subjects. And the disenfranchised and oppressed are those whose manhood is not considered to be equal (Kimmel, 1993, p. 30).

“That men remain unaware of the centrality of gender in their lives perpetuates the inequalities based on gender in our society, and keeps in place the power of men over women, and the power some men hold over other men, which are among the central mechanisms of power in society” (Kimmel, 1993, p. 30). Kimmel doesn't give men much credit – perhaps he is even pushing for the 'ignorance is bliss' perspective. Regardless, it doesn't give much credit to man's capability to interpret his own surrounds, or even popular culture and mass media. Men, perhaps due to changing gender roles, have become more

aware of their gender and are constantly inundated with information on masculinity.

Connell (1993) also examines why it is critical to study masculinity at this point in history. Mike Donaldson (2010) argues that working class masculinity is defined more through its link with the family and household than it is through the workplace itself (Connell, 1993). If this contrast seems dated, it is because crisis such as the postwar boom, and the more recent economic recession have displaced traditional notions of masculinity, and "...the conditions of [the] gender regime in working-class communities have changed (Connell, 1993, p. 618). Traditional definitions of masculinity are being deconstructed and are being remodelled. Young men, as Connell points out, can react to this remodelling in a number of ways, which can be influenced by the media's depiction of masculine behaviours.

It is also important to examine masculine representations as they appear in the media. Kaufman's (1999) article on the portrayal of men's family roles in television commercials cites a number of somewhat dated sources, and relies heavily on content analysis, but it does provide some insight into Mary Douglas Varvus' (2002) article on the stay-at-home dad, as well as Nixon's (1996) and Buchbinder's (2004) conversation about the active/passive male body. Douglas Varvus (2002) suggests that men, as portrayed by news specials featuring the stay-at-home dad, are an exception to the rule, and that men do not innately possess the qualities necessary for parenting. This is supported by Kaufman's (1999) content of analysis which indicated that married men were often portrayed in commercials as trapped and vulnerable, while single men were shown as free and independent. Commercials for home products such as cleaning or hygiene items are largely aimed at women and rarely feature men. While Kaufman focuses on commercials featuring men and children, 9.4% of home

product commercials feature women, while 5.4% feature men (Kaufman, 1999).

In examining how men are addressed in television commercials, it becomes essential to examine their consumption habits. Holt and Thompson (2004) examine masculinity through consumption, a function of providing for their family; they introduce the compensatory consumption thesis which states that the breadwinner ideal is predominant in America, as providing for their family, and participating in the corporate economy earns them respect and helps them climb social hierarchies. “Men use the plasticity of consumer identity construction to forge atavistic masculine identities based upon imagined life of self-reliant, premodern men who loved outside the confines of cities, families, and work bureaucracies” (Holt and Thompson, 2004, p. 426). As the authors point out, this theory fails to identify the 'often pleasurable dramatic tension' that is created between the two masculine ideals of the breadwinner and fantasy of autonomy, culminating in the desirable man-of-action (Holt and Thompson, 2004).

The authors identify mass culture discourse and everyday consumption as two moments of cultural production. Heroic masculinity, one form of masculine ideology gleaned from cultural production, presents a dualism: the respectable, model citizen (breadwinner), and the unruly, independent (rebel). When the 'pleasurable dramatic tension' between the two subsides, the man-of-action hero emerges (Holt and Thompson, 2004).

In the breadwinner model, one becomes a man through achieving a socially acceptable economic status, heavily influenced by the American myth of success and gratuitous rags-to-riches stories.

In the breadwinner model, men work hard and are dependable collaborators in a corporate environment. They are willing to devote themselves to their careers, playing by the rules to climb within organizations and communities toward material success and higher status. They are reserved, dependable, and devoid of self-aggrandizing flamboyance. The twin goals of earning social respect and earning money provide this model's motivating force. Breadwinning men are represented as paragons of family values and community pillars. Americans know the breadwinner though iconic good fathers played by the likes of Jimmy Stewart, Michael Landon, and Bill Cosby (Holt and Thompson, 2004, p. 427)

The rebel model of masculinity is represented by icons of the American West, like the Marlboro Man and John Wayne, who relied on their strength and cunning to survive in the wild. "The United States provide[s] a context where a manhood ideal [stipulates] that men should be completely free, in nature, unshackled from binding institutional authority or the constrictures [constrictions] of social judgements..." (Holt and Thompson, 2004, p. 428). More recent examples of the rebel model of masculinity include the bad boy, the gangster, the artist, and the musician, all of whom refuse to fit in.

The man-of-action hero model is the combination of the breadwinner and the rebel who "...[embodies] the rugged individualism of the rebel while maintaining their allegiance to collective interests, as required of breadwinners" (Holt and Thompson, 2004, p. 428). The man-of-action hero is not haunted by conformity as the breadwinner is, nor is he incapable of working with others, as the rebel is – the man-of-action straddles both models of masculinity, taking only the good characteristics of both (Holt and Thompson, 2004).

While it is beyond the scope of the current research, a mention of race must be made. Kimmel goes on to make bold claims such as: "the constituent elements of "hegemonic" masculinity, the stuff of the construction, are sexism, racism, and homophobia. Masculinities are constructed by racism, sexism, and homophobia, and social sciences has been ever complicit" (Kimmel, 1993, p. 30). In speaking of the role played by social science in

advocating this racist and sexist view of gender, Kimmel says: “Immigrant men, homosexual men, and black men were all tainted with the same problem: they were not properly manly. Some were unable to exercise manly self-control over primitive impulses, others were overly refined and effeminate; both effeminacy and primitive were indications of insufficient manhood (Kimmel, 1993, p. 32). Kimmel fails to provide references of sources for these large and definitive statements.

Connell identifies ethnocentrism as a major limitation of the research on masculinity. While he acknowledges that race and class blindness exist in the research, he speaks primarily of a “...more startling ethnocentrism by which a discourse of “masculinity” is constructed out of the lives of (at most) 5 percent of the world's population of men, in one culture-area, at one moment in history” (Connell, 1993, p. 600). Due to the sample size of the current research, the same ethnocentrism applies; participants were drawn from a sample of university students. However, the commercials shown to the participants were aired in North America, therefore aimed at this demographic.

2.1.4 Hegemonic Masculinity and Self-Construalism

Zoning in on a very specific form of consumption, Buerkle (2009) discusses gender performance through meat consumption, and introduced metrosexuality as the pinnacle of gender performance. The consumption of animal flesh, particularly beef, has a long history of being associated with what Buerkle calls 'traditional masculinity', which he attributes to the images of men as hunter/gatherers. Despite modern day adaptations of masculinity, “Harry Brod observes that western culture accepts as a given that there exists a natural essence to masculinity as opposed to feminine performance, which openly discusses changes

in social fashions and politics” (Buerkle, 2009, p. 18). The performative nature of masculinity went largely unnoticed until the advent of metrosexuality. By associating beef consumption with masculinity, Buerkle suggests that a 'retrograde' masculinity is activated – one that is driven largely by biological factors, and is assumed to be natural, innate, and fixed, rather than variable, and performed, like metrosexuality or femininity.

Buerkle provides a content analysis for the Burger King “Manthem” ad which, “...provides an especially powerful example of beef consumption represented as a means for men to reassert a traditional masculinity, which occurs through rejecting femininity” (Buerkle, 2009). Largely, the men in the ad denounce anything that may be considered feminine (quiche, minivans, etc.), and assert their independence. The “Manthem” ad in particular, parodies early feminist movements by featuring men holding signs that say “I am man” (after Helen Reddy's, “I Am Woman” anthem), and burning their underwear as a parallel to bra burning. The consumption of meat is seen as a rejection of femininity and an activation of Buerkle's retrograde masculinity.

It is important to realize that gender performance is not only a social mechanism used to influence the perception of others, but it is also used to influence self-perception, or as Martin and Gnoth (2009) suggest, it is the notion “of self-construalism” that pushes forward dominant hegemonic notions of masculinity, as “Self-construal relates to a person's self-concept or self-view” (Martin and Gnoth, 2009, p. 355). That is, in order to be perceived by both society and themselves as properly masculine, males often perpetuate traditional masculine stereotypes (Martin and Gnoth, 2009). The authors test this hypothesis by examining how males react to male print models. Unfortunately, the terms feminine man and androgynous man are not described or defined in the article. The hypotheses proved that men

do adopt more traditional forms of masculinity in order to assert their own masculinity and, in addition, when in groups, feminine and androgynous men prefer masculine models. They speculate that this difference is due to concern over how the feminine and androgynous may be classified by other participants if they voice their true preference, therefore they feel pressure to promote the traditional masculine male (Martin and Gnoth, 2009).

Echoing the sentiment of many other writers, Douglas Vavrus (2002) suggests that the United States is undergoing a change in how they look at masculinity, and that these changes suggest that gender is constructed based on social and symbolic construction. These constructions weigh heavily on media representations as they "...[play] and integral part in extending, constraining, and promoting particular ideas as appropriately masculine" (Douglas Vavrus, 2002, p. 353). Douglas Vavrus uses of stay-at-home fathers to argue that such representations reinforce aspects of patriarchal privilege within the domestic space (Douglas Vavrus, 2002). Depictions of the "Mr. Mom" work to introduce the caring and nurturing aspects of parenthood into the masculine cannon. Douglas Vavrus coins the term 'discourse of legitimation' as "...a set of appeals and gender reversals that attempt to normalize male nurturance and domesticity by promoting these practices as properly masculine" (Douglas Vavrus, 2002, p. 353).

One of the main shifts in hegemonic masculinity identified by Douglas Vavrus is a move from paid labour in the public sphere, to unpaid labour in the private sphere, equating to an economic emasculation. "Not only is the realm into which they [males] have moved conveniently coded as feminine, the public, paying realm *from* which they have moved has been historically dominated by men" (Douglas Vavrus, 2002, p. 365). This change in spheres

has spurred conversation and media attention around the stay-at-home dad, which further suggests that their actions deviate from the pre-established norm. In an effort to avoid the effeminacy associated with 'mothering' a child, news stories suggest that men don't possess innate parenting qualities, and that they require assistance from Mr. Mom conferences and boot camps before they are able to sufficiently care for their child. Furthermore, it suggests that parenting does not come naturally to males, and that the media does not reflect male parents in the same way that it reflects female parents (Douglas Vavrus, 2002)

The suggested remedy is to depict

competent stay-at-home heterosexual fathers with well developed coping strategies, who have won the approval of a variety of childcare authorities, [and] these narratives [will] attempt to normalize and validate the experience of these dads and their families. And in underscoring the “manliness” of this work, television accounts [extend] conventional connotations of masculinity such that the traditionally feminized, private-sphere activities of parenting seem quite appropriate for men to adopt (Douglas Vavrus, 2002, p. 368).

Defaulting to the nuclear family as a hegemonic ideal reinforces the notion that men operating in the private sphere pose a threat to masculinity. News stories which feature stay-at-home dads and their concerns in adopting the nurturer role, attribute the difficulty of parenting largely to their gender, rather than the difficulty of parenting itself (Douglas Vavrus, 2002).

2.1.5 The Male Body in the Media

While a study in stereotypes portrayed in the media provide insight into the social construction of gender, an examination of how the male body is represented in the public sphere provides an even sharper point on the study. Buchbinder comments on representation

of the male body in popular culture, particularly as an object of spectacle and a definition of masculinity. Through Mark Simpson (1994), Buchbinder (2004) discusses the potential trivialization of masculinity as the male body becomes increasingly prolific. Men

...have good reason to be concerned. Everywhere they look they see naked male flesh served up to the public on billboards, magazine covers and television screens. Men's bodies are on display everywhere; but the grounds of men's anxiety is not just that they are being exposed and commodified but that their bodies are placed in such a way as to passively invite a gaze that is *undifferentiated*: it might be male *or* female, hetero *or* homo (Simpson, 1994) (Buchbinder, 2004, p. 142)

Susan Bordo (2000) explores the male body through the lens of both the public and private spheres. Her examination shows a male crisis of a different kind from that Faludi – Bordo exposes how men have been physically stunted through inaccurate or unfair portrayals of the male body in advertising and media messages. These portrayals, in turn, affect how males view themselves, and shape how they want to be perceived by others. Bordo employs both the self-congruency theory and the identity theory discussed by Fugate and Phillips (2010), in her discussion on phalluses, in which she suggests that young men's perception of his own penis is not based on real flesh and blood penises, rather 'magestic imaginary members' portrayed in the media, to which no man can ever compare. With psychologist Anthony Quagliari, Bordo suggests that men are trained to see themselves as never enough. Moreover, men are not supposed to be a body with a sex; they are not supposed to be guided by physical or emotional attachment, rather they are supposed to think objectively at all times. The image of the human body is not static as suggested by the Cartesian model, nor are its changes purely biological as the Darwinian model would suggest, rather it is riddled with images of values and ideal – other indicators of culture – that have been written on it (Bordo, 2000). The gap between one's self and the cultural projections of bodies is created

not through a comparison to healthy bodies, nor the bodies of others, but rather to icons, "...fantasies made flesh. Flesh designed to arouse admiration, envy, desire" (Bordo, 2000, p. 70).

Much of Bordo's conversation is centered around, or contingent on, the concept of 'the gaze'. Bordo suggests that the womens' liberation of the 60's and 70's drove the male-body-as-sex-object underground. As liberated women became the cinematic focus, the beautiful men of fifties Hollywood disappeared (Bordo, 2000). This was changed again with the gay liberation movement and sexualized images of the male body are returning. However, "...to be so passively dependent on the gaze of another person for one's sense of self-worth is incompatible with being a real man" (Bordo, 2000, p. 172). Linked to the notion of gaze, is of course an inherent sense of voyeurism, which is, with the reintroduction of male bodies in the media, something that females must brush up on. "Getting what you have been most deprived of is the best gift, the most healing gift, the most potentially transforming gift – because it has the capacity to make one more whole. Women have been deprived not so much of the sight of beautiful male bodies as the experience of having the male body offered to us, handed to us on a silver platter, the way female bodies – in the ads, in the movies – are handed to men" (Bordo, 2000, p. 178).

Buchbinder identifies four reasons for the proliferation of the male body. First, he identifies female equality: while Buchbinder agrees that the increased popularity of the male body serves to equalize the past consumption of the female body, he also insists that capitalism has provided the opportunity to commodify everything, including the male body as 'desire-worthy' by women (Buchbinder, 2004). Secondly, gay culture has provided the

opportunity for a particular type of body to be portrayed; normally very muscular, hard-lined bodies, which may cause anxiety among non-homosexual men in that “...they gay body might be perceived as more masculine than the straight one” (Buchbinder, 2004, p. 223). Although it is not discussed in Buchbinder's article, this also raises the question of whether or not gay bodies are portrayed as muscular and 'more masculine' in order to reassert their masculinity? Thirdly, Buchbinder highlights the HIV/AIDS crisis of the early 1980s, in which images of the 'emaciated' AIDS patient was contrasted with the 'over-weight' HIV-free body. “The muscular male form rapidly reasserted itself, now not only reclaiming its position as *the* object of male homosexual desire but also proclaiming its status as healthy...” (Buchbinder, 2004, p. 223). Lastly, Buchbinder highlights the change in employment patterns since the 1970s, wherein equal employment opportunities have resulted in more females in the workplace and by default, men are no longer automatically the breadwinners; “...the male subject since the Industrial Revolution has thus become unstable or irrelevant” (Buchbinder, 2004, p. 224).

Buchbinder also identifies 3 types of male bodies: the waif, which he likens to Donatello's *David*, as it is young, adolescent, and dangerously feminine, while Michelangelo's *David* represents the athletic body type – the ideal male flesh. Buchbinder names the third body type *Silenus*, which represents the over-weight man, sometimes associated with aging (Buchbinder, 2004). Buchbinder also examines the changes that the Industrial Revolution has brought on the body; while a muscular body used to be representative of the physical labour found in the working class, it has now shifted to represent the ability to afford gym memberships. With this

...the idealized male body accordingly appears to us as natural, effortlessly achieved –

even when we *know* that this is not the case. Like an haute couture garment, that body is intended to be worn with apparent ease and to excite admiration and envy in the beholder. [...] ...Representations of the ideal male body [...] transform that body into a gesture that simultaneously draws attention to itself *and* pretends that it is little more than the result of youth, nature, and accident (Buchbinder, 2004, p. 228).

Focusing primarily on the fashion industry, Nixon examines the role of the male body and portrayed masculinity throughout history. It is through the “...reshaping of the mens' toiletries and grooming products markets, [and] developments in menswear markets set some of the big terms for the emergence of the 'new man' imagery. Specifically, it is through cultural practices associated with the functioning of these markets that the new visual representations of masculinity emerged” (Nixon, 2003, p. 31). Nixon presents the case study of Levi's jeans; from 1985-1986 Levi-Strauss decided to target the 25-35 year old, mainstream man in attempt to recover their sales. They launched their 'back to basics' campaign, which focused on Americaness, durability, and quality (Nixon, 1996). Focusing on two television adverts, Nixon highlights five characteristics of masculinity: first; the appropriation of the 1950's style, secondly; the muscular surface of the male body, thirdly; the tough attitude of the 1950's style paired with codings of sensuality, fourth; the display of the bodies as to attract the viewers' gaze, and finally; the male was featured on his own (that is, he is relies on no one) (Nixon, 1996).

Like Nixon (1993), Bordo provides an in depth, longitudinal survey of fashion as it relates to the male body, and highlights that originally, attention to beauty was associated not with femininity, but with affluence and wealth. Jewelery and other adornment also served as a visual marker of the elite, separating them from the peasants (Bordo, 2000). The nineteenth century marked a significant difference in the way men and women dressed - mens' clothes had to be utilitarian, while womens' clothes became increasingly frivolous. The industrial

revolution not only furthered the divide between masculine and feminine fashion; it also affected the public and private spheres. Men in the workplace were meant to dress and act in a 'no nonsense' manner, and women were meant to provide a welcoming retreat where man could restore himself. With the rise of the feminist and gay liberation, masculine vanity went into hiding, for fear of being considered feminine, or worse, a homosexual. A different vernacular was incorporated when advertising beauty products to men, underscored by themes of success, promotion, and independence (Bordo, 2000).

What's interesting is the available literature on male reception of masculine representation in the media: the majority of studies focus on a specific subset of masculine representation, such as race, or sexual orientation. While these subsets absolutely warrant study, it is also important to study masculinity as a whole, while incorporating the views of the aforementioned subsets. In her 2006 doctoral thesis on the male body image and related behaviours, Gina Bottamini interviewed males, aged 18-25 about their understanding of the male body through various depictions, and how this related to their understanding of their own body. She found that generally the participants desired to be tall, lean, and muscular, but not too muscular (Bottamini, 2006): similar notions are explored in the current study in the analysis of the 'Protein' commercial. While Bottamini (2006) and the current research share some similarities (in methods, sample population, etc.), she focuses on one issue within the realm of masculinity, while the current research has a wider breadth.

In a study performed by Levina et al. (2000), they explore the relationship between visual media and its effects on opinions towards gay men and lesbians. In a process similar to the current study, they show three different participant groups videos with varying messages:

one with an anti-gay message, one with a pro-gay message, and the third with a neutral message. The participants we contacted after viewing the message to gauge whether or not their opinions on gay men and lesbians had changed (Levina, 2000). While this study does not examine masculinity exclusively, it examines masculinity in relation to homosexuality, and it uses men as both participant and subject. The study found that viewing the videos, regardless of their anti-gay, pro-gay, or neutral messages, did little to change the opinions of the viewers. This study did not focus on the participant's reception of the videos or their messages, rather it served to measure a message's ability to change opinions on a particular topic.

The current study seeks to address a gap in literature by examining the decoding process of male participants as they discuss their reception of masculine portrayals in the media. The study will seek to garner the opinions of as many subsets of males as possible, including race and sexual orientation. Furthermore, by examining moderate or subtle male stereotype, the current study hopes to flesh out the nuances of the male reception and decoding process.

Fowler and Thomas (2013) highlight the need for increased study of male portrayals in television and advertising. They suggest that the masculine gender role is currently undergoing major changes, and that men turn to popular culture, particularly advertising, to piece together their desired self-concept. "Given the important role that advertising plays in the development of the male self-concept, focused study of male depictions in television advertising is warranted, both to clarify how men are currently being depicted and how these depictions have changed over time" (Fowler and Thomas, 2013, p. 2).

Writing specifically on men, they suggest that the masculine gender role focuses

specifically on assertive, problem solving behaviour, with a focus on status and power.

“Traditional male gender roles not only influence society's perceptions of what personality characteristics a man should display, but also have been linked to expectations of men's physical appearance” (Fowler and Thomas, 2013, p. 3). With these expectations come great pressure and consequence, which is only furthered by the behaviours that men are expected to avoid, such as seeking psychological help, and homosexuality (Fowler and Thomas, 2013). Men are expected to conform to such gender roles in order to gauge their masculinity, which is daunting. Furthermore, seeking help is a sign of weakness, thus masculine gender role becomes a form of self-fulfilling prophecy in that men are left with little choice but to buckle down and bear it.

2.1.6 New Masculinities

Male insecurities around being considered feminine are addressed and capitalized on by the creation of new forms of masculinities. Metrosexuality, for example, is presented as a form of performed masculinity, negating the notion that only femininity is in flux. Buerkle suggests the use of retrograde masculinity in advertising points to the idea that masculinity is fluctuating more than ever before – in an attempt to maintain manhood, retrograde masculinity is used to point to an essential, natural, masculinity. In Buerkle, Badinter (1992) states: “...young men do not identify with the caricatured virility of the past or with a total rejection of masculinity”. Retrograde masculinity celebrates sex over gender, presupposing that masculinity is prescribed rather than performed.

Simpson (2013), defines metrosexual as: “a young man with money to spend, living in or within easy reach of a metropolis – because that’s where all the best shops, clubs, gyms

and hairdressers are. He might be officially gay, straight or bisexual, but this is utterly immaterial because he has clearly taken himself as his own love object and pleasure as his sexual preference” (p. 6). While Simpson’s definition strongly pushes self-love, it is important to note that the definition condones male grooming and vanity, which can then be capitalized upon. As Cheong and Kahr (2015) explore, the makers of men’s beauty products change their packaging to attract male clientele, often adapting from the female version of the packaging. While this ties back to the aforementioned concept of brand gender and product gender, it also seeks to give men a logical reason to groom. Grooming products are viewed as luxury items, perhaps even considered frivolous for men, and often reflect the feminine desire to have perfect skin or hair. “The marketing of male grooming products, on the other hand, needs to provide another reason for men to groom, i.e. one that distances men from the ideals of feminine beauty yet legitimises the care of their appearance as logical and rational” (Cheong and Kahr, 2015, p. 379). Metrosexuality provides a safe buffer between being considered overtly feminine, while still allowing males to be vain, or engaged in grooming habits.

Metrosexuality is not the only created masculinity: lumbersexuals, are a newer trend.

Describe by Walker (2014) as:

a breed of modern man that can be found in the organic produce aisle, the independent bookshop, even a John Lewis advert. Despite his earthy appearance, Lumbersexual remains, like his predecessor, an urban sophisticate. But while the Metro preferred a clean-shaven, highly evolved approach to life in pre-recession boom times, his austerity-era descendant the Lumber is more rough and ready. His hirsute appearance and uniform of flannel shirts, denim and heavy-duty workboots has something of the 19th century mountain man about it [...] The Lumbersexual can talk about his feelings, though. He cares about the environment more than the economy, and only works in industries that don't require a suit (p. 1).

The lumbersexual identity doesn’t just approve of mens’ desire for personal grooming (of

course, for lumbersexuals, it is beard oil and hair pomade), but it also leave room for emotional vulnerability, despite a rough exterior.

2.1.7 An Exploration of Misandry

A recent movement in the cannon of literature written on males and masculinity often references the ‘male crisis’, or misandry. While the current study does not acknowledge the male crisis in its more extreme forms, it does acknowledge that masculinity has, and is, undergoing some substantial change, some of which is misandric in nature, and therefore, warrants mentioning. Susan Faludi (2000) provides a highly ethnographic perspective of men in the workplace by examining men in various professions including; shipyard workers, soldiers, and astronauts. The purpose of Faludi's quest is to examine why men proved so resilient and resistant to the feminist movement. Faludi's examination turned up a plethora of information on American masculinity. Perhaps her strongest argument is that masculinity was, and still is, undergoing a major crisis. She outlines three broad catalysts for this crisis, the first being economic in nature; men have undergone a number of changes of regarding their economic authority. Faludi specifically identifies the period of time after the Vietnam war as a time of transition in the workplace – women take on a more active role, and men are displaced as the primary breadwinners of the household (Faludi, 2000). This shift is linked by the second catalyst identified by Faludi, that of the feminist movement.

As females began to gain a stronger political foothold, men felt as though they were further displaced in society. “No wonder men are in such agony. Not only are they losing the society they were once essential to, they are “gaining” the very world women so recently shucked off as demeaning and dehumanizing” (Faludi, 2000, p. 39). Lastly, Faludi names

paternal betrayal, a lack of fatherly guidance, as loss of the connection with adult life (Faludi, 2000). The danger in Faludi's masculinity crisis, is that she comes dangerously close to providing an excuse for all male wrongdoings and misgivings. In a discussion of man who has lost his job, and become abusive to his wife, Faludi says; “as the male role has diminished amid a sea of betrayed promises, many men have found themselves driven to more domineering and some even “monstrous' displays in their frantic quest for a meaningful showdown” (Faludi, 2000, p. 31).

In discussing mens' entry into the consumer world after the second half of the 20th century, Faludi states that “...manhood had become a performance game to be won in the marketplace, not the workplace...” (Faludi, 2000, p. 38). “Wherever the American man turned in the nineties, he seemed to be facing a display case. Worse, he seemed to be in one. Ornamental culture could assume many forms, but at its core, was a virulent voyeurism, and [...] sex was its gold standard” (Faludi, 2000, p. 505). The advent of this ornamental culture is what encouraged and furthered Nixon's concept of the 'new man'; one concerned with outward appearances and public perception.

The pinnacle of the 'crisis of masculinity' is misandry, or the binary to misogyny. Nathanson and Young (2001) state that as misogyny, misandry is imbedded in our culture, but is difficult to detect. Misogyny is currently in the spotlight, but misandry is visible, yet goes unrecognized as a problem. They raise two main points: first, misandry is more persuasive than people imagine, and in some cases, more persuasive than misogyny. Secondly, misandry often goes unrecognized due to the prevalence of gynocentrism but, what alters society's view of women, also alters society's view on men (Nathanson and

Young, 2001). With the prevalent gynocentric view come a double standard; it is socially acceptable to make jokes at the expense of men, but the same behaviour is unacceptable when directed towards women. This ongoing problem of sexism directed towards males is what the authors define as misandry (Nathanson and Young, 2001).

As a remedy to this problem, the authors suggest 'vive la différence', that is, to celebrate the difference between the sexes rather than focusing on them. They acknowledge that problems usually arise in how people interpret these differences, that difference is so often recognized through the spectrum of a hierarchy as they feel the need to classify the differences as wither superior or inferior to their own (Nathanson and Young, 2001). The overarching problem pertaining to gender is that superiority is preferred over equality.

Gender role are like scripts: some actors learn their lines and recite them on cue. Others, and "method actors" in particular, actually try to "become" the characters they portray. The importance of this point cannot easily be overestimated, because the discussion is not merely about communication. It is about morality as well. We live in a society that publicly, and often privately, values equality on specifically moral (as well as practical) grounds. When women are said to be more egalitarian than men, therefore, they are said to be more moral than men (Nathanson and Young, 2001, p. 61-62).

In terms of media effects, Nathanson and Young agree that projected images and messages can affect the viewer's identity. While women are often asked to identify with characters who are in jeopardy *because* of men, men are often asked to identify with male characters who put women in jeopardy (Nathanson and Young, 2001). "Because traditional sources of identity for men have been severely undermined or even attacked by a society preoccupied almost exclusively with the needs and problems of women, many men are left with whatever sources happen to be supplied by popular culture" (Nathanson and Young,

2001, p. 144). Men are increasingly portrayed as ontologically evil, that when given the choice between good and evil, men usually choose evil, thus demonizing men (Nathanson and Young, 2001).

Misandry continues to go unnoticed in today's society because it is almost always chalked up to a lapse in judgment yet, feminism can never be taken too seriously (Nathanson and Young, 2001). Oddly enough, they are working towards the same common goal: equality for both genders. While the various stages of women's liberation movements have created an army of crusaders, it is difficult for men to acknowledge misandry because it involves acknowledging that they are under attack, which means admitting vulnerability. The full effect of misandry is not yet known: men will continue to seek out new identities with unpredictable results.

2.2 Theoretical Perspective

2.2.1 Lippman's Stereotype

Following closely in Walter Lippman's footsteps, in "The Role of Stereotypes", Richard Dyer defines the term 'stereotype' by suggesting that it provides a point of reference, an ordering process, and an explanation of the way in which value is expressed through the use of stereotypes. Dyer begins by separating stereotype from its usual 'term of abuse' where it holds a negative connotation. Dyer points out that Lippman, in his original definition of the term highlights the usefulness and necessity of stereotypes:

A pattern of stereotypes is not neutral. It is not merely a way of substituting order for the great blooming, buzzing confusion of reality. It is not merely a short cut. It is all these things and something more. It is the guarantee of our self-respect; it is the projection upon the world of our own sense of our own value, our own position and our own rights. The stereotypes are, therefore, highly charged with the feelings that

are attached to them. They are the fortress of our tradition, and behind its defences we can continue to feel ourselves safe in the position we occupy (Dyer, 2009, p. 206).

Stereotypes are often automatically given a negative connotation but, as Dyer indicates, stereotypes are not necessarily neutral, but they can be used to address or attract large audiences. It is this notion that will be carried throughout the study when exploring stereotypes – they will be viewed as an effective way to communicate with a substantial group of people through advertising. Dyer states that the use of stereotypes to order people through generalities, patterns and typifications is necessary in order for individuals to make sense of the society in which they live. While these groupings may be based on partial knowledge, that does not necessarily mean that the groupings are false or incorrect; “...partial knowledge is not false knowledge, it is simply not absolute knowledge” (Dyer, 2009, p. 207).

Dyer also explores an important concept raised by Lippman: that the effectiveness of a stereotype relies on consensus, that is,

stereotypes proclaim, “This is what everyone – you, me, and us – think members of such-and-such a social group are like, as if these concepts of these social groups were spontaneously arrived at by all members of society independently and in isolation. The stereotype is taken to express a general agreement about a social group, as if that agreement arose before, and independently of, the stereotype. Yet for the most part it is *from* stereotypes that we get our ideas about social groups. The consensus invoked by stereotypes is more apparent than real; rather, stereotypes express particular definitions of reality, with concomitant evaluations, which in turn relate to the disposition of power within society” (Dyer, 2009, p. 209).

For this reason, stereotypes in androcentric commercials will be examined – the study will question whether or not the stereotypes portrayed in such commercials that relate to men in the 18-25 age demographic and whether this potential connection influences the way in which participants view themselves and construct their own identity.

Drawing on Scallion and Scallion (1995), Chesebro and Fuse (2001) draw a distinction

between 'ideological statements' and 'stereotyping'. “We have said that a balanced cultural description must take into consideration the full complexity of cultural themes. When one of those themes is singled out for emphasis and given a positive or negative value or is treated as the full description, then we would want to call that ideology rather than cultural description. A much more common term for such cultural ideological statements is “stereotyping”” (Chesebro and Fuse, 2001, p. 217). They outline four instances in which stereotyping exists; when only one feature of a group is used define said group, second; when one characteristic of a group is meant to provide a full description of the group, third; when a sweeping or universal characteristic is used to describe only one group, or lastly; when a sweeping or universal characteristic is used to contrast between two groups (Chesebro and Fuse, 2001).

In examining the use of stereotypes, Barthel (1990) draws on articles published under *Esquire* magazine's column 'Man at His Best', and examines the role of the gentleman in replacing the now extinct, cowboy image. The column offers advice on money, cooking, drinking, travelling, etc. “Since in American culture the cowboy was the real man and the gentleman less than, the first step in reconstructing the gentleman is to renounce any connection with the feminine. Recipes [suggested in the articles] are savory rather than sweet, drinks are serious rather than frivolous, vacations are rugged and often physically demanding” (Barthel, 1990, p. 129,). *Esquire* also uses the nostalgia of the 'glory days' to recall earlier manhoods and the period before the feminist movements. “With the distance between the feminine and the macho carefully negotiated, 'Man at His Best' can settle down to discuss what it knows best: the manners, morals, and machinery necessary to the 'Man on

the Move” (Barthel, 1990, p. 132).

2.2.2 Hall's Encoding/Decoding

The goal of the present research is not to prove whether or not the audience can be influenced by commercials (rather it hinges on the assumption that they can), but perhaps the debate can be quelled by exploring Hall's discussion on encoding and decoding. Stuart Hall struggles with the role of the receiver, particularly in the sender-message-receiver model of communication. This basic, linear, structure of communication does not account for interpretation on the behalf of the receiver, rather it makes humans out to be automatons who simply digest whatever message is sent. Hall focuses on 'sign vehicles', and a shift to a production-circulation-distribution/consumption-reproduction paradigm (Hall, 1996). The introduction of consumption takes into account any personal experiences or biases that may affect the interpretation of a message. Hall further deconstructs consumption into modes of encoding and decoding. Encoding is the way in which an event becomes a story, the subtext or spin applied to make the story newsworthy or marketable. “The 'message form' is the necessary 'form of appearance' of the event in its passage from source to receiver” (Hall, 1996). Decoding represents the way in which the message is deconstructed on the receiving end. Hall provides the example of a historical event rebroadcast on television; while we might try to understand what it is like in Cairo today by watching news broadcasts on television, we really have no idea of what it is like to be Egyptian. That same broadcast would mean something completely different to an Egyptian watching it from their home in Canada, it would mean something entirely different again, for an Egyptian watching it from their home in the streets of Cairo. Again, the meaning of any given message will vary,

depending on the receiver. It is this notion of decoding that will be examined in the study – reception group participants will be asked if they can relate to stereotypes portrayed within the commercials they view.

Hall also identifies three factors that play into both the encoding and decoding of messages, and can further complicate the interpretation of messages: frameworks of knowledge, relations of production, and technical infrastructure, which help us in our 'conditions of perception' (Hall, 1996). Frameworks of knowledge consist of background information or knowledge already possessed by the receiver, which help to provide context to the message. Technical infrastructure provides a means by which to send and/or receiver messages (i.e. television, radio, etc.). This infrastructure can also create divisions between who does or does not receive a message, by means of access or availability to the given technology. Thirdly, relations of power encompasses who encodes the message and their motive in doing so (Hall, 1996). To further explore the potential variations in decoding or interpreting, Hall provides three methods of decoding: dominant hegemonic perspective; where the message provided is accepted outright, the negotiated perspective; where aspects of the dominant-hegemonic perspective are accepted, but other views are applied as well, and lastly, the oppositional code; where the message is outright rejected (Hall, 1996). By creating these methods of decoding, Hall openly addresses the notion that sent messages are subject to the receiver's own input. Such relations of power will be examined in the study by considering the potential gain the company has in portraying stereotypes within their advertisements.

The encoding/decoding discussion begs the question: what is the responsibility of

advertisers? The moral responsibility of advertisements are brought into question but recognizing the dual function of the institute as both a representational system and an economic power. The role of advertising in social/public policy is brought into question, as the debate over its use of stereotypical representations perforates society. The debate is particularly heated because advertising employs these representations for economic gain. Leiss et al. (2009) present the advertisers viewpoint; that they follow all necessary guidelines – they argue that commercials are held to stricter regulations than any other form of advertising (Leiss et al., 2009). “Advertising has become 'the economic fulcrum of the commercial media system' so that its exclusion of certain groups from the marketing targets and overemphasis on others affects the representational range of commercial media as a whole” (Leiss et al., 2009). While this controversy is the crux of many current debates, it is not the primary concern of this study. This article however, does provide a wealth of information regarding the mediating practices of advertising which prove useful for the study. Additionally, in representing the advertisers’ side of the debate, the article brings to light many of the practical and effective uses for stereotypes that prove useful for this study.

Hall’s notion of encoding and decoding, and Lippman’s definition of stereotype provide the theoretical backbone for the present research. In terms of commercial advertising, there may be an overarching message that is being communicated, but that individuals may interpret the message in a myriad of ways depending on personal experience. Messages regarding masculinity may impact an individual in different ways, thus resulting in different understandings of how males should perform in order to conform to stereotypes and societal expectations. Stereotypes may be used as a method of ordering and a

means to communicate with a large group of people but, stereotypes are rarely neutral and unfortunately, they are where we get some of our ideas about large groups of people. It is for this reason that advertising, when addressing audiences through the use of stereotypes, must be both cautious and responsible for the stereotypes they portray.

The following chapter will outline the research questions for the present research, and will explain in detail, the use of a reception study over other methods such as surveys or questionnaires. It will then catalogue the reception study process from recruitment through the University of Ottawa's ISPR program, through to the logistics of execution. Justification for the demographic of the selection sample will be made, as well as a comprehensive summary of the age, nationality, relationship status, and sexual preference of participants represented in the study. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the research tools; that is the commercials chosen to show participants, in order to better understand the stereotypes that the participants were subjected to.

Chapter 3 Methodology

A review of literature pertinent to masculine stereotypes, representation, and their use in commercial advertising has led to the following research questions:

R1: How are stereotypes of masculinity identified or represented in androcentric advertising?

R2: How are these stereotypes perceived by male viewers?

After screening three commercials for participants, a number of topics were introduced in order to spur conversation during the study (see appendix C). The reception study was employed in order to fulfil Jensen and Rosengren's (1990) requirements of 'in-depth interviewing and participant observation' by engaging participants in focused discussion about the commercials that were aired.

3.1 Research Methods

Hosting a focus group was originally considered as a potential method, but was eventually rejected because the current study necessitates emphasis on the negotiated meaning of the stereotypes. While a focus group allows for open conversation, they are often centred on the effectiveness of the advertisement or, the proliferation of the advertised product or service. A reception study was chosen over methods like surveys or questionnaires, simply because it provides the opportunity for discussion between the researcher and the participants; that is, the researcher can facilitate the discussion by presenting a topic, but participants do the majority of the talking. While participants may raise interesting topics or concerns in a survey or questionnaire, the researcher would not be

able to pursue the point further.

Ultimately, the reception study was chosen as a method because they are used to understand what participants learn from media or commercials, which provides greater insight into the reception process (Jensen and Rosengren, 2005). Reception studies acknowledge that consumption and decoding occur on an individual basis, and that connections can be made to other individual's experiences with the same content. It allows for further examination of Hall's encoding/decoding theory and individual interpretation, which is filtered through a spectrum of personal experiences and biases. This method allows for the identification of themes and genres by the audience (Lindolf, 1991), which proves useful for the current research by making the invisible process of interpretation and identity formation, visible. If participants in the study are open to discussion, they shed light on the way in which commercials have influenced (or have not influenced) their own sense of masculinity. "With reference, moreover, to the social context of audience background variables as well as to other cultural and political institutions, reception analysis has explored how audiences may contribute to social meaning production and cultural patterns generally through their membership of socially specific interpretive communities" (Jensen and Rosengren, p.63, 2005).

A discussion guide was formulated in order to ensure efficient and pertinent conversation during the reception study (see appendix C). Open-ended questions and comments were posed to the participants in hopes that they would carry the majority of the conversation. The discussion guide covered such topics as: general thoughts on the aesthetics and content of the commercial, thoughts on the portrayal of masculinity and stereotypes present in the commercial, and then moved into more general topics on their interactions

with commercials and the potential influence of the media on their own masculinity. There were some difficulties in sustaining the conversation (which will be further discussed in section 3.2), so the researcher often had to engage in the conversation or, in some instances, accept no response. The reception study had an ‘open floor’ policy wherein participants could introduce a topic or question of their own to the group, in which case the researcher’s function was to keep the conversation on track and relevant to the study’s subject matter.

3.2 Sample Selection

The reception study groups were comprised of male University of Ottawa students age 18-25. This demographic was selected for a number of reasons: first, the age range spans the typical university undergraduate track that is, approximately 68% of the post-secondary population falls between the ages of 18-25. The median age for a university student is 22.8, while the median graduation age is 24.8 (Dale, 2010). This age range encapsulates students at various points in their academic careers: some have just entered university, while others are preparing to graduate. This targets students at transitional periods in their life; some are transitioning from high school students to university students, while others are leaving university and preparing for a career or further studies. Other life changes may occur at these transitional periods, such as fatherhood or marriage. By inviting men aged 18-25 to participate in the study there is increased probability of incorporating tropes of manhood that may be portrayed in the commercials.

The School of Psychology's Integrated System of Participation in Research Program (ISPR) at the University of Ottawa, was employed in order to ensure ample participation in the reception study. Recruitment was done through the ISPR website, where students can browse through active studies. Generally speaking, these students are required to participate

in research studies and gain research credits as a requirement of their academic program, thus guaranteeing participation – a guarantee that other recruitment methods, like posters, cannot provide. Additionally, the ISPR website allows researchers to pre-screen participants, allowing the researcher to garner relevant demographic information. For the current study, nationality, relationship status, age, and sexual orientation, were noted in order to determine the representation of such categories in the research findings.

The current study was listed as a standard lab study on the ISPR website, and the abstract stated: “stereotypes are often employed in commercials in order to address the widest possible demographic. The reception of these stereotypes will be studied in an attempt to understand how the modern man relates. While the description of the study was listed as: The male consumer is often targeted through stereotypes of masculinity in advertising. These stereotypes are used in an attempt to connect with the male consumer for profit (“I relate with the man in the commercial therefore, perhaps this product is for me”), but the same commercials also serve to set the precedent for the ideal image of the modern man. The concern then becomes, who decides what the ideal man should look like, and how do men try to relate to this ideal? For the purposes of the reception study, participants were required to view the commercials and discuss them in a group setting. The only eligibility requirement for the study was that participants were males, between the ages of 18-25”.

Eight students signed up for the first of two studies held on November 19, 2014. Six of eight participants attended. Nationality was represented by five Caucasian, one Asian, and two African American. Four participants were single, while four also reported being in a relationship. All eight participants stated that they were heterosexual. The age spectrum was as follows: three aged 18, one aged 19, one aged 20, one aged 21, one aged 22, one aged 23.

The second study held on November 26, 2014, had six participants sign up, five of which participated. The group was represented by one Caucasian, one Arabic, and three African American. All five participants reported to be both single and heterosexual. The age spectrum is as follows: two aged 18, two aged 20, and one aged 21. When considering both participant groups together, nationality was represented as: five Caucasian, four African American, one Asian, and one Arabic. Seven reported to be single, while four were in a relationship. All eleven participants reported being heterosexual. The overall age spectrum is as follows: four aged 18, three aged 20, two aged 21, one aged 22, and one aged 23. Two participants, one of whom identified as homosexual, and one of whom identified as asexual, completed pre-screening, unfortunately neither attended the reception study, thus only heterosexual males are represented. Additionally, no nineteen year old participants signed up for the study, so that age demographic also remains unrepresented.

It is worth noting that the original research proposal stated that there would be one reception study with a maximum of ten participants. The original thinking was that one study would garner enough data to satisfy the requirements of the research project however; while the first reception study did provide useful insight, the researcher thought that deeper probing was necessary in order to best explore the participants' understanding of stereotypes. As previously mentioned, students participating in the ISPR program as research subjects are required to complete a designated number of research hours as outlined by their academic program in exchange for research credits. Guaranteed participation in the reception study was beneficial given that the current research had to be completed on a pre-set timeline. However, because students are required to participate in research as per their program, they are not necessarily willing participants. That is, many students came to the reception study

for the research credit, but were not anxious to participate in discussion or conversation – the researcher had to encourage students to contribute to the conversation. Given the nature of the reception study, other factors such as shyness regarding the subject matter, or lack of anonymity given the group setting, may have contributed to the participants' demeanour. For these reasons, a second reception study was held where the expectations were made clear at the onset, and which yielded better conversational results. Additionally, the first study originally had eight participants sign up through the ISPR website, yet only six participants attended. The researcher thought that hosting a second study was in the best interest of the project. The second study proved increasingly fruitful. Transcripts of both reception studies can be found in appendix A.

3.3 Logistics

Once ethical clearance for the current research was granted (see appendix D), the study was made live on the ISPR website for potential participants to view. Participants were accepted on a first come, first serve basis, with a maximum capacity of ten participants per study. Participants were required complete the pre-screening, and to sign up at least 24 hours before the study, and were asked to provide a minimum of 72 hour notice if they were unable to attend.

Upon arriving at the reception study, participants were invited to take a seat and review the consent form; two copies were provided, one for their personal records, and one to sign for the researcher's records. After all participants had joined the room, the researcher provided a brief introduction, covered and collected the signed consent forms, and reminded all participants that if they had any questions or concerns after the study was completed that the researcher could be contacted via the email provided on the consent form. All participants

were reminded that the study would be recorded and transcribed, and that they were welcome to withdraw from the study at any point without consequence. The researcher then circulated an attendance form, asking all participants to record their ID code in order to grant a research credit to those in attendance, while maintaining anonymity. The researcher then circulated another form, asking any participants who would like a copy of the transcript to provide their email. The participants were reminded that should they change their mind, they could contact the researcher and redact their statements. The researcher then explained the format of the study: that one commercial at a time would be aired, followed by a discussion of that particular commercial. After all three commercials were viewed and discussed, there would be some general questions, after which the study would be finished. At the end of the study all participants were thanked for their time. Each reception study was audio recorded then later transcribed by the researcher (see appendix A).

3.4 Research Tools

This study focuses on participant decoding of moderate male stereotypes; that is, representations of masculinity, specifically traditional masculinity, that is not over emphasized or exaggerated for commercial or comedic purposes. Originally, only commercials from the automobile, beer, and food categories were going to be considered however, upon further examination, these categories often provide some of the more obvious examples masculine stereotypes. In an effort to provide a more unique perspective on masculine stereotypes, the more predictable stereotypes were avoided and instead, commercials representing the aging husband, the physically fit male, and the working father, were chosen (see appendix B).

The commercial 'Morty', advertises the Swiffer line of cleaning products, and

portrays the housekeeping challenges of a real-life, aging, couple. The commercial opens with Lee, the wife, introducing herself and her husband Morty. As Lee climbs onto the dining room table to dust a light fixture, she explains that she is getting older and some things are harder to do. Morty stands by the side of the table and watches her carefully as she dusts and says: “This is not a safe thing to do” [in reference to her climbing onto the dining room table]. Lee then grabs a small step stool, and climbs it to dust the top of a cabinet, to which Morty responds: “Careful babe”, as he watches from a distance. When Lee stumbles while using the step stool, Morty enters the frame and guides her as she begins to climb again. The commercial then cuts to Lee, opening the front door of the house to see a bright green box with a Swiffer logo on it. Lee opens the box in the kitchen, and Morty looks on as she examines the different Swiffer products. The commercial then cuts to Lee using the Swiffer products throughout the house, without the aid of step stools – the longer handle on the products allow her to dust in high, hard to reach areas, without requiring her to climb. As she continues to clean, now free from the danger of falling, Morty is shown yawning on the couch. Lee asks: “Morty, are you listening?”, and the shot shows Morty asleep on the couch, while Lee is still dusting. When the image fades out, the text says “It’s that easy, Morty”, and you can hear Morty say: “I’m listening”, as non-diegetic music plays.

'Protein', a commercial for Oscar Meyer protein packs, features men working out in numerous fitness environments. The first scene features a bearded, physically fit man performing heavy rope training, when a significantly smaller male asks: “What does that do?”, to which the bearded man replies: “Not sure, but it looks awesome”. The second scene features two men running on treadmills: one with a respirator and a heart monitor, while the other is wearing typical gym sweats, and shooting questionable glances at his treadmill

neighbour. The third scene opens at the front desk of a hot yoga studio, where the female instructor explains to the male customer that: “[they] heat the room to 110 degrees”, as one of the female yogis inside the studio passes out. The fourth scene depicts a man parachute running in a park, as he startles a fellow jogger with his unusual exercise. Next, two men in gym sweats are at a juice bar; as the female barista hands one of them a smoothie, the other asks: “What did you get?” “No clue, but it’s jacked with protein”, says the second male, as he winks at the barista. The commercial then shows a close up of the first male opening an Oscar Meyer Protein Packs, which contains nuts, meat, and cheese. The narrator says: it’s 13 grams of protein, without taking itself too seriously. It’s the original protein, it’s Oscar Meyer.

'Safari', a commercial for Expedia's travel rewards program, features a working father and his daughter. The commercial is unique in that it features no dialogue from the characters, and very little voice over. It opens with a young girl looking out a window with an animal figurines sitting on the sill. A taxi cab pulls up outside of the house, a man emerges from the vehicle, and she runs from the window and down the stairs to greet her father, who hands her a toy giraffe. She gingerly places the new toy on the window sill with the others. The commercial then cuts to the father, sitting alone in an airport terminal, and then to him sitting in a hotel room, video chatting with his daughter. In the next scene, he is wandering a market, and picks up a stuffed animal. In another cut, the father’s cab pulls up to the sidewalk again, and the daughter adds the new toy to her collection. The father lovingly looks down the hallway towards his daughter, and then turns to his computer which is open to the Expedia website. The next cut is to the father and daughter on a safari ride, driving past a giraffe, as the narrator says: “Turn the trips you have to take into one you’ll never

forget with points for every flight and every hotel; Expedia Rewards”. Whether he is a single father or not remains to be seen, but the commercial makes it clear that he is away from home a lot, and he uses the safari trip as a bonding experience. With little dialogue, the commercial relies heavily on imagery and aesthetics to convey its message.

As previously mentioned, each of these commercials depict subtle or moderate male stereotypes – no one characteristic is over exaggerated. Protein provides the strongest representation of traditional masculinity by placing emphasis on male physical fitness for ironic purposes; the commercial is trying to communicate that being healthy is easy by showing how complicated certain exercise routines are. Each of these commercials presents a subtle version of a masculine stereotype, which allows for greater discussion and teasing out of the core issues during the reception studies.

A list of topics were comprised in order to encourage discussion during the reception study (see appendix C). Most topics were posed in the form of open-ended question meant to facilitate discussion. After each commercial aired, the same topics were raised which allowed for clear, concise discussion around each individual commercial, giving equal discussion to each of the different stereotypes presented. The topics invited participants to discuss portrayals of masculinity and stereotypes within the commercials. They also asked whether they could identify with the males depicted in the commercials, and whether or not they agreed or disagreed with the characterized stereotypes. After all three commercials were discussed, additional topics were raised in order to further explore the role of stereotypes in the participant's lives. The topics explore the extent to which the participants feel they are influenced by commercials, what impacts their masculinity, and how they feel society expects men to behave. These questions yielded candid and open conversation about the

impact of lifestyle branding and the expectations placed on men.

Critical analysis of the data obtained from the reception study was done by initially comparing the conversations from the two reception studies. General notes (see appendix E) were made for each commercial regarding the topics discussed; the general content and aesthetics of the commercials, which male and female stereotypes the participants identified, and their thoughts on the stereotypes. While independent notes were maintained for each commercial, the notes from both reception studies were combined and divided into three main categories: stereotypes identified (male and female), problems that participants had with the stereotypes, and the participant's connection with the commercial. The general questions from the discussion guide (see appendix C) were approached in the same manner – combining the data from both studies but maintaining separation by topic. The general questions resulted in six themes to be discussed further in Chapter 4: Results and Analysis, which include: their own interaction with commercials, the impact of commercials and mass media on their own life, commercials that the participants found personally impactful, influences on their masculinity, commercials' influence on society's concept of masculinity, and the potential dangers or benefits of portraying masculine ideals in commercials. These general themes are combined with secondary sources in section 4.2.

The next chapter will focus on an analysis of the results of the reception studies that were conducted. Themes, stereotypes, and motifs explored by the participants in the reception studies will be critically examined in tandem with the secondary sources explored in the literature review. Participants explore ideas around masculine stereotyping, the use of stereotyping in commercial advertising, the influence of pop culture on their personal

concepts of masculinity and their own identity, and the influence of pop culture on societal expectations of men. Ultimately, the research seeks to examine the way in which participants decode the moderate male stereotypes used in the chosen commercials.

Chapter 4

Results and Analysis

This chapter will provide an in-depth and critical analysis of outcome of the original research drawn from the reception studies. The discussion will first cover the participants' general views of the commercials that were shown during the study by examining the stereotypes that they identified, any problems they found with the stereotypes, and their connection (if any) with the commercials. Section 4.1 focuses solely on data from the reception studies. Sections 4.1.1, 4.1.2, and 4.1.3, approach the commercials individually and serve to answer the research question regarding the male perception of stereotypes (R2). Section 4.1.4 – 4.1.9 explores the reception study's general discourse topics on stereotypes and masculinity, following the reception topics list found in appendix C. Topics include: influences on masculinity, influences on society's view of masculinity, the impact of commercials and mass media on identity formation, and the pros and cons of using commercials to define masculinity. Section 4.2 provides an analysis of the data by incorporating secondary data. Section 4.3 concludes the chapter with insights regarding the proliferation of male bodies in the media, metrosexual representation, and instances of misandry.

4.1 Data

4.1.1 Participants' Discussion of 'Morty'

This commercial visually establishes an obvious division of labour; housework belongs to the female realm and not the male realm. In 'Morty', a Swiffer cleaning product commercial, Morty's wife Lee performs household duties, he maintains a watchful eye (see

appendix B, figures 1.4-1.6). Participants were able to identify both male and female stereotypes. Morty played the role of the dominant protector who, while worrying about his wife, generally seemed disinterested in domestic activities. “He just sat back, and even when he was telling his wife that it wasn’t really safe he wasn’t doing much, he just kind of stood there like “Oh, don’t do that”” (see appendix A). Participants noted that he was only interested in protecting Lee against physical harm – once it was established that she was safe, he was napping on the couch. “The fact that he is just chilling, watching, while she’s cleaning the whole time [suggests his role as a protector]. [...] So it kind of shows how men are the protector, they watch out for their woman, and once they’re good he can chill” (see appendix A). Morty assumed no active role in the house cleaning, which led some participants to believe that the commercial was not directed towards the male population. In contrast, participants thought that Lee, the wife, was portrayed as active, industrious, member of the domestic realm, who takes pride in her household. Participants were able to excuse the majority of these stereotypes by chalking them up to Morty and Lee’s age; if all elements of the commercial remained the same, but featured a younger couple, participants thought it would raise questions of egalitarianism:

I think it was kind of clever how they did it because like, they show like an older couple, they’re an older generation, so obviously back then women weren’t so much in the workplace and they did more of the work at home. Like if they had a younger couple in there, you’d be like “Oh my god, that’s not true”, like egalitarianism or whatever, but like, oh, it’s the older people, so you kind of know where they are coming from (see appendix A).

But, because the commercial functioned in part, on a nostalgic idea of the past, the participants had no serious objections to the stereotypes that were portrayed.

Participants felt that the commercial relied upon stereotypes, particularly male stereotypes, to emphasize that the product and the commercial were directed towards a female demographic. “I think the commercial has a really obvious target audience, like the man’s not getting involved in anything, and it’s a commercial about cleaning, so like, they want to gear the commercial towards women” (see appendix A). This is commonplace in commercials, and in many of these cases, male inadequacies are often met with humour at the expense of the man. There is an imbalance: one gender also has to be superior. While the commercial may use nostalgia to recall gender relations of the past and connect with viewers, it is also exploiting these differences for capital gain.

While the commercial may have not been directed towards a young male demographic, the participants felt little connection to the commercial, and despite some progressive views on household divisions of labour, participants had limited experience with Swiffer cleaning products. Only one participant admitted to having used Swiffer products: his mother purchases them so he knows that they work, therefore he continues to purchase them for his own household. Rather than being guided by his wife, he is being guided by his mother when it comes to purchasing cleaning supplies. When the second group were asked if they would purchase the product, one participant comically responded with: “I’d just get my wife to do it”. While this statement was made in obvious jest (the same participant listed himself as single on the pre-screening form), it is worth noting that even viewers and buyers address gendered divisions of labour with humour in the same way that commercials do.

4.1.2 Participants’ Discussion of ‘Protein’

Reminiscent of the visual representations in the ‘Morty’ commercial, ‘Protein’, a commercial for Oscar Meyer ‘Protein Packs’, also creates a division between the genders. Participants stated that the males in the commercial were portrayed as active and physical, and that the commercial relied on a ‘gym rat’ stereotype, which portrays men as dumb and blindingly focussed on working out. In contrast, they found that the females in the commercial were portrayed as passive and oblivious, and that yoga and flexibility training were coded as ‘feminine’ by the advertisers, suggesting that these workouts are not intended for men. One participant described the male exercises as “a lot more intense” (see appendix A) than the female exercises. “The guy [in the commercial] wouldn’t participate in the yoga, or he seemed like he didn’t know anything about it. Just the idea of like, flexibility or whatever yoga entails wouldn’t be a part of a routine for him” (see appendix A). They thought that men were the focus of the commercial because society views men as physical and active, while females are often viewed as passive. “I think like, again, it shows mostly men in the video because in society men are seen like, as physical and you know, active” (see appendix A). Due to the comedic nature of the commercial, most participants dismissed its message and did not accept it as a credible source of information regarding nutrition or fitness.

The commercial plays upon the difference between males and females, and the inadequacies between the genders are met with humour. The participants suggest that the commercial plays upon the ‘gym rat’ stereotype; “...the ‘I’ve got to get my protein and do my lifts’ kind of thing” and “...typical strutting and chest puffing...” (see appendix A). The active gym rat persona provides a contrast to the passive female character. Females are only

represented twice in the commercial: once as a yogi (see appendix B, figure 2.3 and 2.4) and once as a female barista (see appendix B, figure 2.6). Although the barista does not say anything, and she just hands the male a drink, one participant described her as ‘very not-all-there’ (see appendix A). The women in ‘Protein’ are given much less active role than the men, and are therefore seen as ‘useless’ and ‘not-all-there’.

While the men in the commercial are portrayed as active, the ‘gym rat’ stereotype dictates that they are not necessarily that bright. Many of the men are performing exercises or consuming health food without knowing the premises behind them, which some of the participants found offensive:

Participant 1: They pretty much portray us as idiots [...] I wasn’t a big fan of that commercial, like it doesn’t really make me want to buy the product or anything.

Participant 2: So, this ad is targeting dumb males who don’t really know what they are doing at the gym

Participant 1: Not even dumb, I think it’s more like, bigger guys, you know? Or guys who are like trying to get into shape? [...] (see appendix A).

The participants identified a disconnect with this commercial: it seems to be directed towards health conscious men who visit the gym regularly, but the participants thought that the pre-packaged, processed, meat and cheese product would not appeal to the same demographic. Instead, they thought that the commercial might be directed towards males who had recently adopted a healthier lifestyle and were still unsure about appropriate diet choices. It seems to be using a fear appeal, preying upon the insecurities of self-conscious men who are looking to become fit. One participant stated: “...something like that [health food choice] I mean usually you rely on people you trust and expertise, you don’t rely on a

commercial” (see Appendix A). The participants relayed that they would seek information from an expert or a knowledgeable friend who are willing to disseminate information.

4.1.3 Participants’ Discussion of ‘Safari’

‘Safari, which advertises Expedia’s new travel rewards program, presents an interesting case as it portrays the relationship between father and daughter. While it doesn’t portray many female stereotypes, it does depict the father as being a gentle nurturer, protector, and breadwinner, but also a potentially absent working father. The participants found the family dynamic to be relatively open-ended: some thought that the commercial highlighted a nuclear family where the mother wasn’t featured, others thought that it was about a single dad, while others made no assumption because the dynamic was wholly unclear. What all participants could agree on was that the father travels frequently for work, that the daughter misses him during his absences, and that each time he returns from a trip he gives her a stuffed toy; therefore, the frequency of his absences can be measured by her stuffed toy collection (see Appendix B, figure 3.3, 3.4). “I think it’s like, a dad who like, travels a lot, and every time he goes on a trip he brings back, like, an animal for his daughter [...]” (see appendix A). The participants thought that the commercial was making an emotional appeal by playing upon the relationship between a daughter and her absent father, but also thought that it was a fair depiction of the modern working father. “I think it kind of shows like, a modern father. In today’s society, like a single dad, who travels a lot and doesn’t really have time for his children, and so obviously he has to take them for his business trips and so it kind of shoes, oh, you know, that way you can bond and build that connection when really you are not there” (see appendix A).

The only potentially negative stereotype observed by the participants was that of the absent working father, which seemed to be largely ignored due to the father's care and concern for his daughter. Despite the absenteeism that comes with being a breadwinner, his transgressions are forgiven in light of his noble efforts.

I think it's like a contradiction to a long time negative stereotype, like the dad is aloof, and provides an income and the mom is really gentle, but him it just showed him being really caring, and even when he goes on his trips, he is trying to... I think they are pulling like a psychological mind game like, "Oh, you're a working dad? He's a working dad. You want to make your child happy? And then bringing her on a trip makes her happy". So, they kind of just go on travels 'cause like, it will make her happy (see appendix A).

The participants also noted the luxuries that are afforded to an affluent family; it is because the father works that they can afford to go on safari vacations, otherwise they would have to find a less luxurious way to bond and create family memories.

4.1.4 Participants' Interaction with Commercials

When asked how they would respond or react to a commercial that resonated with them, participants stated that they would be willing to share the commercial through social media, if they thought that it would relate with their friends group in the same way. They would share a commercial by posting a YouTube link on Facebook or other social media platforms, or by re-tweeting it. Participants also admitted that they would be willing to participate in promotions or contests that involve sharing or interaction with commercials through social media. So, while the original form of commercials have change to match technological innovations, so to, has viewers' interaction with the commercials.

4.1.5 Recollection of Impactful Commercials

To gain further insight into which commercials resonate with males aged 18-25, participants were encouraged describe and share a commercial they found memorable. One participant recalled a Guinness beer commercial, which features an all-male, wheelchair, basketball team, who are engaging in a lively and spirited game. At the end of the game, all but one of the males step out of the wheelchairs, and they leave the game together – only one man requires the wheelchair, the others use them so that they can all play basketball together. They all leave the gym together and the next shot shows the whole team enjoying a Guinness together at a bar, and the voice over says: “Dedication, loyalty, friendship. The choices we make reveal the true nature of our character”. While the participant admitted to not enjoying beer, he conceded that the commercial made him want to drink Guinness.

4.1.6 Impact of Commercials and Mass Media

Both the participants’ willingness to engage with commercials through social media, and their recollection of impactful commercials indicate a commercial’s ability to influence the viewer. It can encourage a viewer to share content with friends and family, and, as evident from the participant’s admission regarding the Guinness commercial, it can also entice a viewer into trying a product they would not otherwise try. The participants were encouraged to talk about the impact of commercials and mass media on their lives – how it can influence their views and self-perception, while aiding in identity formation. One participant expressed: “Everything revolves around social media, so it’s hard not to be dependent on it” (see appendix A), which conveys the overwhelming and inescapable nature of media proliferation.

When asked how the media influences actions and behaviours, participants responded with:

Participant 1: I mean, just look at me. I mean, I'm wearing Jordans [sneakers] because I see Jordans everywhere. The way you act? I dunno, you just kind of watch TV, you see how people act, you see the reactions of other people, then you adopt that because you want to get certain results

Researcher: So when you are buying into the iPhone are you also buying into the life that it portrays?

Participant 1: Exactly, yea, like, almost like the luxury, you're in a different caste system [...] You're almost in a higher level, you know, you feel like you are above someone

Participant 2: It's almost like commercial association, like you see the iPhone you automatically associate it with a lavish life. And you don't have that life, but you think that having it upgrades you (see appendix A).

What the participant is describing is lifestyle branding at its finest; a product becomes associated with an image, and a consumer purchases that product in hopes that they will adopt a similar lifestyle.

4.1.7 Influences on Masculinity

The participants' discussion on the influences on masculinity overlaps with their conversation on the influences on masculinity because the media in part, influences their masculinity. "Media itself like, plays the role of propaganda [...] often times you will see that in an advertisement, like Apple, you see the guy buys the iPhone and he lives in this really nice, fancy apartment and has a really beautiful wife, so it kind of makes you assume like, if I have the iPhone 5, I'm going to have that amazing life, you know? So it's kind of like, tricking you into that sense" (see appendix A).

Participants list other influences as:

Participant 1: Being dominant... feeling like you are above someone, obviously like boosts your masculinity... like whether it be clothes, or body, or anything, just being like, or even a haircut sometimes makes you feel like, “Yea, I’m more of a man than you”, you know?

Participant 2: The people you surround yourself with too... yea, like your friends

Participant 3: Female attention

(see appendix A).

4.1.8 Commercials’ Influence on Society’s Idea of Masculinity

While commercials may influence how a male performs his masculinity, they may also impact the way society views masculinity; it may influence what society expects of a man. If commercials teach men what products are necessary to be a man, and how to ‘be a man’, then they also teach society that men who don’t conform to these ideals aren’t ‘man enough’. Participants were encouraged to discuss the ways in which commercials influence society’s perspectives on masculinity: “[...] you want the society to have a certain idea, and ideology, so that you’ll want to buy it [a product]” (see appendix A). While commercials may perpetuate certain masculine ideals in order to address a particular demographic, advertisers also have a stake in these ideologies; if society doesn’t accept them, then their marketing strategy will fail.

4.1.9 Implications of Using Masculine Representations in Commercials

Participants were unable to comment on the potential harm of masculine representations in commercials, but one participant stated that he didn’t see any benefit to the practice. “Men in our society today should figure out what they want to be and what they define as masculinity and they shouldn’t figure it out just from watching a TV ad or whatever” (see appendix A). The same participant was asked: if men are not learning about

masculinity from mass media, where are they learning about it? His response was: “Just from self-perception and self-experience I guess, like going out and doing stuff” (see appendix A). In theory, this is a great suggestion however, exposure to media is only increasing, and with such strong messages may prove difficult.

4.2 Analysis and Discussion

This section provides an analysis of the original data by incorporating secondary sources, some of which were explored in the literature review, without the context of the current data.

4.2.1 Analysis of ‘Morty’

The participants discussed the division of labour between Morty and his wife Lee. Morty was more than willing to do nothing more than to keep a watchful eye on Lee as she performed a number of cleaning tasks. Here, Lee is shown as active in the domestic realm, while Morty is a passive protector. “This sex based division of labor is traditional. The wife is knowledgeable about garbage bags, yet does not actually take out the garbage herself. Rather, it is the husband’s job. However, even when a wife is able to sit back and watch her husband do something, she often must guide him through the chore” (Kaufmann, 1999, p. 450). This dynamic is recurrent throughout similar household product commercials. The female is portrayed as the matriarch (of the chores, at least) and the male is portrayed as clueless.

This male/female dynamic led participants to believe that the commercial was directed towards a female demographic; it is meant to empathize with the female viewer,

suggesting that other husbands or partners are equally as clueless. Kaufmann provides support for this insight: “Men are often present but passive when their wives are performing household tasks [...] when men are active within the household, it tends to be in activities considered male, such as taking the garbage out. Yet even when men participate in traditionally male household tasks, they are often shown to be incompetent” (Kaufmann, p. 450, 1999).

The Swiffer commercial, and other commercials like it, also work to code household cleaning products as female. While this is largely a marketing tactic, it also allows consumers to negotiate their gender role through consumption (Fugate and Phillips, 2010). As previously discussed through a discussion on metrosexuality and other identities created to justify a particular form of consumerism, generally speaking, consumers want to know which products ‘belong’ to their gender, and are somewhat uncomfortable purchasing outside of these boundaries – they want to know who the typical user is (Fugate and Phillips, 2010). This is tied, in part, to identity theory, which suggests that “...individuals negotiate their social role identity through interaction with others and one’s perceived social location in reference to others” (Fugate and Phillips, 2010, p. 252). These roles are reinforced in a variety of ways, including social institutions and mass media. So, while the commercial is targeting female from a marketing standpoint, it also uses the self-congruency theory which suggests that consumers will purchase items that are, in some way, reflective of their own identity (Fugate and Phillips, 2010). This not only codes the product as feminine, but it also marks it as not masculine.

The participants questioned the equalitarian nature of the commercial: because the commercial featured an elderly couple, they thought that the gendered division of labour would be accepted but, had the commercial featured a younger couple in the same role, that same division may have raised concern among viewers. This provides an interesting example of the mirror versus mold argument; the first suggests that advertisements merely reflect society, while mold assumes that the ideas conveyed in media can shape society (Eisend, 2010). Lee and Morty provide a reflection of a bygone era, where the gendered division of household labour was very obvious and widely accepted, yet their commercial may still influence today's viewers. The current research identifies the feedback loop created by the mirror/mold debate: whether conscious or not, the audience critically decode commercials, and advertisers must take their criticisms into account in order to stay relevant.

4.2.2 Analysis of 'Protein'

As indicated by Nixon (1996), the dynamic between active and passive bodies became increasingly important with the advent of fashion print ads, where still bodies were used to display and advertise a product, and are often ascribed particular characteristics. As male models became more popular within the fashion industry they were often portrayed as passive rather than engaged in physical activity. Putting males into a passive position was seen as feminizing them (Nixon, 1996), which suggests that males should be active and females should be passive. 'Protein' plays upon this dynamic in a very literal way: the men in the commercial are physically engaged in exercise, while the females are relegated to a more passive role. This not only speaks to the gender roles within the confines of the gymnasium, but also within the larger realm of society.

What's interesting is that we have undergone a shift in how we view the body: it has become more than a physical entity, more than a biological entity, it has become a symbol of cultural and historical shifts; a symbol like any other – one that carries meaning.

Darwinian science profoundly altered the Cartesian picture by showing that the body's mechanisms aren't timeless and unchanging, but have evolved dramatically over time. What's still missing from this picture, though – and what was ultimately supplied in the twentieth century – is the recognition that when we look at bodies (including our own in the mirror), we don't just see biological nature at work, but values, and ideals, differences and similarities that *culture* has "written", so to speak, on these bodies (Bordo, 1999, p. 26).

With an increase in bodies on display, particularly the male body, through the influx of male models and the creation of the male consumer, bodies have become increasingly open to scrutiny and criticisms. This creates an interesting space in which to examine the male body, because it is changing under the watchful eye of the public, and male are not yet fully comfortable with being vulnerable.

The active body has undergone a recent shift: "...the muscular male body, which until comparatively recently signified the working-class body, used to be the *by-product* of physical labour. It is now the *goal* of physical effort performed in gymnasias, on home exercise machines, and so on..." (Buchbinder, 2004, p. 227). This shift coincides with a shift in male labour: from jobs that require physical exertion, to office jobs that require little to no physical strength. Fit, muscular bodies are hard, while non-fit bodies are considered soft – something that few men want to be called. A soft core, or showing emotion under the right circumstance can sometimes contribute to a masculine demeanour, but stoicism is largely desired (Bordo, 1999) – by banishing a soft body, they are banishing feminist characterizations. The same shift became apparent in gay culture: "...it's not just about

looking good, but about dispelling homosexual stereotypes, by embodying an ideal of masculinity which announces that one is a real man..." (Bordo, 1999, p. 68).

The 'gaze' is integral when studying bodies in the media; the intent of the ad is to attract the viewer's eye, and hopefully stick in their mind. Simone de Beauvoir acknowledges the presence of gaze, and draw a distinction between the male and female gaze in a heterosexual relationship: for the female, the absence of her lover's gaze is torture as his gaze provides a judge, while for the male, his partner's gaze is a constraint, a 'hell', that if he were alone in the world he would be completely free (de Beauvoir, 1952). Without the gaze of another, we can continue to pretend, or reveal in our own disillusionment, but under the watchful eye of another, we feel as though we must perform. For the men in the Protein commercial, they are aware that they are being watched, they are in a gym full of people, therefore they are not only working out for the sake of physical fitness, but also for the sake of personal performance. Perhaps the ideal, modern, physically fit body is not only hard, but also has a particular personality or performance associated with it.

Is the muscular, macho man what society wants from men? Or do they prefer a sensitive guy, one who is in touch with his emotions? Perhaps society is confused about what it expects from men. Much like females, men are now held to a double bind; that is they are expected to maintain two mutually exclusive, incompatible sets of instructions at the same time (Bordo, 1999). For women, the double bind is that they should work alongside men, work hard, and be successful, but not lose their femininity in the process. For boys

we fabulously reward those [...] who succeed in our ritual arenas of primitive potency, and humiliate the boy whose sexual aggression quota doesn't match up to

those standards. But at the same time, we want male aggression to bow to civilization when a girl says "no" and to transformed into tender passion when she says "yes" (Bordo, 1999, p. 242).

Of course this is not the only double bind applicable to men: in some cases we want men to be highly successful, and provide for their family, which requires them to work long hours, but we also want them to be available, both physically and emotionally. Placing anyone, male or female, into the contradictory requirements of a double bind, suggests that society as a whole, and perhaps us as individuals, are not sure of what we want.

4.2.3 Analysis of 'Safari'

The father in 'Safari' represents the breadwinner model of masculinity, wherein "...men work hard and are dependable collaborators in a corporate environment. [...] The twin goals of earning social respect and earning money provides this model's motivating force. [...] Breadwinning men are represented as paragons of family values and community pillars" (Holt and Thompson, 2004, p. 427). He serves the role of both protector and provider of the family, regardless of the family dynamic.

Mary Douglas Vavrus (2000) presents an examination of the "Mr. Mom" or stay-at-home dad movement, suggesting that it seeks to code domesticity and nurturance as masculine. Not only does the representation of Mr. Mom seek to masculinize the caregiver role, but it also serves to carve out a new consumer identity for males. The late 1990s marked a shift in the family dynamic; men were proven to be 'capable' of being a stay-at-home parent or homemaker. Not that men weren't capable pre-1990, rather economic changes resulted in more unemployed males, and the stay-at-home father received increased media coverage during the period, bringing the practice into the spotlight. While on the surface this

shift in family dynamic seems to present an alternative to the nuclear family, it merely switches the sex of the parent, leaving other family dynamics, such as the single parent or same-sex parents, unrepresented (Douglas Vavrus, 2000).

By coding the domestic sphere and parenting as appropriately masculine, the stay-at-home dad movement opened up a form of consumerism previously dominated by women (Douglas Varvus, 2000). This realm of consumerism was made safe from masculine feminization through “...resolute heterosexuality” (Douglas Varvus, 2000, p. 366), that is, by ensuring that the domestic sphere was understood to be equally as masculine as it is feminine, and ensuring that alternative family dynamics, such as same-sex parents, do not present a view different than the heterosexual view. By protecting masculinity, the men occupying the private sphere are still considered to be ‘real’ men – their masculinity is not at risk.

Repetitive use of product placement [...] strengthens connections between consumerism, heteronormativity, and middle-class life as these are recurrent aspects of the discourse of legitimation. It also further naturalizes the heterosexual nuclear family as the proper site for household consumer product consumption it is clear what “counts” as family in this context (Douglas Varvus, 2000, p. 368).

Consequently, the masculinization of caregiving and domesticity also works to reinforce dominant hegemonic ideals of masculinity: viewing masculinity as a socially constructed hierarchy, some notions are accepted and ascend through the hierarchy, where others are rejected, and descend (Douglas Vavrus, 2000). A gender binary is created where cultural representations are coded as feminine or masculine with little room for grey areas, such as feminine masculinities, or vice versa. “...Male masculinity and female femininity

delimit the terrain of what is considered “normal” gendered practice” (Douglas Varvus, 2000, p. 358). The Mr. Mom movement works by adopting the opposite ideology rather than actually normalizing the parent role for males, thus maintain dominant hegemonic ideals of masculinity (Douglas Varvus, 2000).

The Mr. Mom movement also works to normalize parenting for fathers; that having a stay-at-home dad instead of a stay-at-home mom has no psychological effect on the child. News stories featuring interviews with stay-at-home dads often feature psychologists or other experts who suggest that ‘children will be just fine with their fathers in charge of them’, which softly suggests that parenting is a skill that men need to hone; that it doesn’t come as naturally to them as it does to women (Douglas Varvus, 2000). Having made the shift from paid labour to unpaid domestic labour, the perpetuated assumption is that “...men possess no innate talent for parenting...” (Douglas Varvus, 2000, p. 365), that parenting, for a father, is unnatural.

Because men are taught and encouraged to be providers for their family, there may be a transitional period as they assume the caretaker role. Like stay-at-home moms, they may experience feelings of isolation or depression (Douglas Varvus, 2000). The catch is, expressing these feelings, or seeking treatment for them, means exposing vulnerabilities – a trait heavily coded as non-masculine (Nathanson and Young, 2001). In light of this, various stay-at-home dad resources have been created, closely resembling the resources available to stay-at-home mothers, such as newsletters, support groups, and conventions (Douglas Varvus, 2000). “These serve a dual function in that they permit fathers to air their grievances, frustrations, and concerns (many of which sound like those women express when

they are the stay-at-home parent) and they traverse the boundary between private, domestic space, and the public sphere of mass media” (Douglas Varvus, 2000, p. 362).

While the media attention surrounding stay-at-home dads has framed the movement as revolutionary or, at the very least, progressive, it is also exclusive (Douglas Varvus, 2000). Little attention is paid to family dynamics which break the nuclear family illusion, leaving out both single parents and same-sex parents. The absence of gay fathers in the male bonding resources available to stay-at-home dads suggests that

...their presence threatens the tenuous connection forged between manliness and at-home paternity [...] conversely, focusing exclusively on heterosexual Mr. Moms strengthens that connection, it forecloses questions about the authentic masculinity of these dads by compulsively assuring [society] of the heteronormativity that masculinity researchers claim is at the heart of hegemonic masculinity (Douglas Varvus, 2000, p. 363)

The simple fact that the stay-at-home dad movement was newsworthy in the 1990s suggests that their behaviour presented a deviation from societal expectations of masculinity, as well as a shift in the understanding of the nuclear family dynamic. Despite the outward appearance of a broadening definition of masculinity, the media interpretation of the stay-at-home dad movement has worked to further inforce hegemonic ideals of masculinity and further ostracize alternative family dynamics.

4.2.4 Analysis of Participants Interaction with Commercials

The role of the commercial in daily life is changing with the evolution of technology, it is important to understand the viewers’ interaction with the media. Audiences are no longer subject to sitting through commercial breaks in their favourite television shows; they can now fast forward through them, or even evade them almost entirely by streaming or

downloading their favourite program. With that being said, commercials, in a visual sense, are no longer a media restricted to the television – they pop up during Internet searches, and we are often forced to watch them before a clip on YouTube. Commercials, in the traditional sense, may be on the decline, but they continue to pop-up in more pervasive and inescapable ways. For these reasons, it was important to discuss the participants' interaction with commercials in today's context. While there was no objection from participants on the proliferation of commercials in their daily life, they spoke of interacting with commercials in a way that goes beyond Hall's (1996) notion of encoding and decoding.

4.2.5 Impact of Commercials and Mass Media

Commercials can impact personal aesthetics, they can influence how a man wants to look, what he wants to wear, and what brands he buys. "...The meanings that we ascribe to symbols such as dress mediate social interaction: we interact with others based on situated interpretations of the symbols they use, including dress, speech and movement. As a part of this exchange, individuals may alter what they wear in order to gain social approval or to challenge existing norms or standards" (Martey and Consalvo, 2011, p. 167).

As a consequence of both lifestyle branding, and the portrayal of hegemonic stereotypes perpetuated in commercial advertising can also influence how a person behaves and acts. As indicated by the participant: "...you see how people act, you see the reactions of other people, then you adopt that because you want to get certain results" (see appendix A). This is a take on Charles Cooley's ([1902] 1964) notion of the 'looking-glass self' as raised by Martey and Consalvo (2011) in an article on the use of online avatars for self-exploration.

Martey and Consalvo (2011) examine the way that "...players use avatars to perform self contextualized [...] group identities, from gender, race, and sexuality, to specific communities, such as furies or role players (Martey and Consalvo, 2011, p. 165). They suggest that physical appearance provides a form of non-verbal communication, and it aids in the creation of both individual and group identities. Through the use of an avatar, or, as the participant in the present study states: through the use of commercials, an individual is able to "...imagine [their] appearance in the eyes of others" (Martey and Consalvo, 2011, p. 166). This theory operates on the basis that we ascribe meaning to clothing and other products, such as technology, and that we interact with other individuals who have similar tastes, and we may alter our preferences in order to gain acceptance into a particular group (Martey and Consalvo, 2011).

Cooley ([1902] 1964) as explored by Martey and Consalvo (2011), suggests that the looking-glass self

...refers to how people make choices about their appearance and behaviour based in part on how they imagine others to see them: through social interaction we learn to see ourselves reflected in others perceptions of society. The looking-glass self has three main components: how we imagine we appear to others, what we imagine others' judgement of that appearance to be, and the development of a sense of self through that judgement" (Martey and Consalvo, 2011, p. 167)

This works on two levels: as indicated by the participant in the current research, representations of masculinity in commercials allows the viewer to safely explore new self-identity options; he can watch a male on television, identify desirable traits in the character that he, himself, may want to portray, and he can safely gauge the reaction of others by gauging the reaction of others to the male character on television. The second functional level centres on lifestyle branding – advertisers treat clothing as a symbol by ascribing

meaning to it, then consumers desire the clothing because of the meaning it conveys. Fear appeals take this a step further by playing upon existing lifestyle anxieties surrounding the objects perpetuated meaning

In the current research, the participant states that he sees the way people act on television, he sees people's reaction on television, and then he adopts that behaviour because he wants to garner similar results. Portrayals of men on television or in commercials provide male audiences with a third person view of themselves – it provides a space for males to explore their own identities without having to face an potential consequences for performing them in 'real life' (Martey and Consalvo, 2011).

4.2.6 Influences on Masculinity

If commercials can influence the way a person dresses and acts, and understanding that gender is largely performative, then surely it is not a stretch to suggest that commercials can influence masculinity. In discussing the marketing strategy of Apple, the participants talk about lifestyle branding; the way in which advertisers create a desired lifestyle around a product in an attempt to sell both the product and the lifestyle to customers. "As representations, advertisements are not merely a vehicle of meaning, but active in the construction of meaning. Media thus participate in the social shaping of masculinity by reinforcing and reshaping it" (Brandth, 1995, p. 126), and more poignantly;

We see these ads as establishing a pedagogy of youthful masculinity that does not passively teach male consumers about the qualities of their products so much as it encourages consumers to think of their products as essential to creating a stylish and desirable lifestyle. These ads do more than just dupe consumers into product loyalty; they also work with consumers to construct a consumption-based masculine identity

relevant to contemporary social conditions (Messner and Montez de Oca, 2005, p. 1879-1880).

It becomes evident that commercials can serve a dual function: they can teach consumers about a product, but they can also advertise a particular life style. This seems to work in two different ways; a *luxurious* lifestyle branding, and *everyman* lifestyle branding.

A participant highlights the elements of luxurious lifestyle branding in his recollection of the iPhone commercial, where the male character who owns an iPhone also has a beautiful wife and a posh apartment. Luxurious lifestyle branding does not attempt to mirror the lifestyle of the average viewer in order to connect with them, rather it plays into their hopes and desires. The lifestyles portrayed in these commercials may provide goal for the viewer to achieve (ie. 'I want to have a life similar to the life portrayed in the Apple commercial, so I am going to work harder to afford an iPhone'), or it may cause fear and anxiety surrounding their inadequacies (ie. 'I don't have a lifestyle similar to that of the man portrayed in the Apple commercial, therefore my lifestyle is inadequate').

Everyman lifestyle branding attempts to connect with viewers by portraying a lifestyle that is similar to their own, which serves to address a wider demographic while evoking moods and feelings (Messner and Montez de Orca, 2005). In these instances, the commercial may advertise the product as something they need in order to maintain their current lifestyle, while still pointing out inadequacies. The commercials may not outright suggest the purchasing of the product, but rather insinuate that the product is necessary in order to live a happy, ordinary life (Messner and Montez de Orca, 2005).

Commercials using fear appeals may threaten masculinity: these commercials deny men the opportunity to make decisions about their masculinity that are not influenced by the

media. Instead, viewers see how masculinity is portrayed in the media, and the type of lifestyles that masculinity are being connected to, and are encouraged to purchase products that support these fictional lifestyles. Commercials may play on themes of masculinity such as the everyman, or the breadwinner, or they may perpetuate overly lavished lifestyles to evoke fear surrounding the potentially unattainable.

Gender images in television commercials provide an especially intriguing field of study. The ads are carefully crafted bundles of images, frequently designed to associate the product with the feelings of pleasure stemming from deep-seated fantasies and anxieties. Advertisers seem quite willing to manipulate these fantasies and exploit our anxieties, especially those concerning our gender identities, to sell products (Craig, 1992, p. 210).

No image is neutral. For Hall (1996), an image, or a 'sign vehicle', is encoded with meaning on the sender's side, and then given a new or different meaning again when the receiver decodes the message, by applying their own experiences or biases. "Images can and do mean many things and often all at the same time. Equally often, responses to an image such as this can be affected by any number of contingent social and personal factors such as gender, race, age, or nationality" (Wall, 2008, p. 1035). There are certainly occasions when advertisers intentionally play upon audiences' insecurities by using fear appeals to persuade them to purchase a product, but the viewer may also add fuel to the 'fear fire'. Commercials may not always incite new insecurities in viewers, rather they may play upon existing ones. It is important to avoid a binary reading of an image; when stereotypes are used in advertising they may be coded in one way, but unpacked by the viewer, in another. "It is not that stereotypes are not relevant or do not inflict great damage, but in order to understand their strength we need to move our assessment from the categorical oppositions of true/false and see them as elements within much wider tropes of representation" (Wall, 2008, p. 1037).

Stereotypes may also manifest in brand gender; while gender is a popular segmentation strategy in advertising, "...advertisers often use color, shape, texture, packaging, logos, verbiage, graphics, sound, and names to define the gender of a brand" (Wolin, 2003, p. 117). This necessitates that arbitrary things, such as colour, be associated with a particular gender. This is perhaps, most evident in products for young children (ie. pink is for girls, blue is for boys, while yellow and green remain somewhat gender neutral). These decisions are based on dominant hegemonic structures of gender; pink is pretty and delicate, therefore it is coded as feminine. Brand gender also suggests that feminine products are accepted differently by males, and vice versa (Wolin, 2003). While Wolin (2003), explores the extent to which males and females accept gender-opposite products, it is important to note that stereotypes are not only used to direct advertising at a particular gender segmentation, but they are also used to dictate which products are appropriate for a specific gender to use.

Fugate and Phillips (2010) contend that there have been a softening of the gender lines and behaviours in recent years, and thus "...intuitive thinking would indicate that the practices of deliberate or at least permissive product gendering may no longer be a popular or productive marketing strategy" (Fugate and Phillips, p. 251, 2010). They suggest however, that brand gendering is still commonly used as a promotional tool. The consumption of these gendered products is tightly tied to the gender identity of the consumer; research indicates that both males and females are hesitant about using products that are not 'made for them', and consumers want to know what product is 'theirs' (Fugate and Phillips, 2010). This is

perhaps most obvious, again, in children's products, where toys are typically either boy or girl toys – rarely are they both – which presents clear behavioural restrictions.

Identity theory highlights the social and variable nature of identity creation. It suggests that identity creation is not created by the individual alone, rather it is negotiated through interactions with other members of society. To further the notion, Fugate and Phillips suggest that popular culture and mass media can also influence identity creation.

Identity theory

...is based on the notion that individuals negotiate their social role identity through interaction with others and one's perceived social location in reference to others. [...] Gender identity is one's most significant social identity. This identity is embedded in and reinforced through social institutions including the mass media (Fugate and Phillips, 2010, p. 252).

This not only reinforces the ability of commercials to influence identity formation, but it is also reminiscent of Cooley's ([1902] 1964) looking-glass self, where we use reflections of our self, or of the characters portrayed on television, to mediate potential outcomes of our own identity formation.

The self-congruency theory states that "...individuals use products that are in some way reflective of their own image or identity; individuals purchase products for their symbolic meaning and their reflection of that individual's self-concept rather than just for functional attributes of the product" (Fugate and Phillips, 2010, p. 252). Perhaps this is why advertisers still rely so heavily on the gendering of products: in an effort to brand to both males and females, they may not connect with either segmentation. Due to the importance of gender identity for consumers, heavy emphasis is placed on the product's presumed gender

during the purchasing process (Fugate and Phillips, 2010) but, perhaps the gendering of products need not rely so heavily on gendered stereotypes.

4.2.7 Commercials' Influence on Society's Idea of Masculinity

It is fitting that the participants have little to say about the influences on society's ideas of masculinity because "our culture is only just beginning to pay attention to stereotypes of men and what they say about masculinity. The fact is that every female stereotype usually has a male stereotype in tow. In highly gendered worlds "femininity" and masculinity" are joined like the head cheerleader and the captain of the football team – opposites that belong together, couldn't exist without each other" (Bordo, 1999, p. 115).

The participant suggests that men should figure out who they want to be through self-reflection rather than through media or pop culture influence. This opens up the notion of a double bind, or an instance in which a person is trying to fulfil two prophecies – "...any situation in which a person is subject to mutually incompatible instructions, in which they are directed to fulfil two contradictory requirements at the same time" (Bordo, 1999, p. 242). While men may attempt to define through masculinity through inward reflection they may also be judged against the depictions of masculinity perpetuated in popular culture. If they don't live up to these expectations, they may feel compelled to re-evaluate their masculinity when in fact, they are content with who they are.

4.2.8 Implications of Using Masculine Representations in Commercials

Tied closely with the influences on society's idea of masculinity, some of the dangers of masculine representation arise from the notion of a double bind (Bordo, 1999). Men may

be held to standards that are different than their own definitions of masculinity thus they may feel pressure to change the way in which they perform their masculinity. Furthermore, popular culture representations may change societal views of masculinity, resulting in a re-evaluation of the way they view masculinity – they may come to expect something different from men. While expectations may take on a variety of forms, perhaps the most obvious example lies in the ornamental culture, which manifests largely in the physical representation of men. While this topic was not discussed in the reception studies, insight is provided in section 4.3.1.

4.3 Insights

In conducting this research, particular themes began to emerge which deserve merit and discussion. In researching masculinity, it becomes clear that masculinity is changing, and not just in the same way that gender is continually changing. Some scholars write and talk about the ‘crisis of masculinity’, and while the current research doesn’t indicate that there is a crisis, it does point to problems within masculine representation. Many of the issues raised in talking about the ‘crisis of masculinity’ are similar to the topics raised during the crisis of femininity. While sections 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3 are in no way an exhaustive list of the challenges faced by men today, they do resonate strongly with the research conducted in this study.

4.3.1 Male Bodies in the Media

It is easy to default and blame advertisers for negatively influencing masculinity, but advertising has other impacts as well. While these examples may not be entirely positive,

they certainly have a positive light to them, and are therefore worth exploring. Sean Nixon's (1993) concept of the 'new man' explores a shift in the representation of masculinity in the media. Nixon focuses heavily on print media which was the dominant form of advertising during the 'new man' era. Nixon examines 'Launderette', and 'Bath', two Levi's commercials which present new ideas of male fashion and grooming. "Together with the reshaping of the men's toiletries and grooming products markets, developments in menswear markets set some of the big terms for the emergence of the "new man" imagery. Specifically, it is through cultural practices associated with the functioning of these markets that the new visual representations of masculinity emerged" (Nixon, 1993, p. 31). By introducing men into the commercial space, by making them models, and by tailoring shops and products to their preferences, it became acceptable for men to take interest in their own grooming and fashion practices.

Of course bringing men into the limelight was not without consequence. Society began to anticipate men in a certain way, and any man who deviated from those expectations was often branded as an outcast, or 'the other'. One modern example can be found in the singer/songwriter, Sam Smith; he is a young, white, gay, man, who has recently attained star status. He has been in the spotlight for his talent, but also because of his body type: to some, Smith is overweight, particularly for a gay man. This supposes that there are different expectations for the male gay body, than there is for the male straight body: according to Shaw (2014), in order to fit into the gay community, you must possess muscles (particularly abdominal muscles), be well groomed, and be generally good looking. While there are clearly deviations from this 'rule' in terms of acceptable gay body types, the archetype holds

true as Smith was called out on social media as being fat, ugly, and Shrek-like (Shaw, 2014). Smith is ridiculed because his body does not meet the societal expectations of a male body, moreover, a gay male body (why the heterosexual body needs to be differentiated from the homosexual body is a topic for a separate research project).

Prince Fielder, an African American baseball player, was featured in ESPN's 2014 'Body Issue' in the nude. Fielder received sniping remarks regarding his 'unathletic' figure, to which he responded: "A lot of people think I'm not athletic, or whatever, but I do. Just because you're big doesn't mean you can't be an athlete, [...] and just because you work out doesn't mean you're going to have a 12-pack. I work out to make sure I can do my job to the best of my ability. Other than that, I'm not going up there trying to be a fitness model" (Clifton, 2014). While his comment did not stop the social media lash-back, positive things did emerge from the body-shaming ordeal: fans of Fielder and his modelling united on Twitter through #HuskeyTwitter, spawning an outcry of support. The ESPN 'Body Issue' differs significantly from the Sports Illustrated 'Swimsuit Edition' as ESPN seeks to incite envy and empowerment of various types of athletic bodies (Clifton, 2014). For Prince Fielder, as with Sam Smith, being in the public eye highlights some of the issues body issues that males may face.

Buchbinder (2004) identifies 3 models of the male body: one, "...the muscular, youthful, adult male body" (Buchbinder, 2004, p. 225) or the athletic body, which is depicting man not as he is instead, how he 'should' be. Secondly, the waif, a representation of the statues of Donatello and Michelangelo – a youthful and adolescent representation that borders on being too feminine. Lastly, the Silenus, an overweight male who may be linked

with the aging male (Buchbinder, 2004). “The idealized male body accordingly appears to us as a natural, effortlessly achieved – even when we *know* that this is not the case. Like an haute couture garment, that body is intended to be worn with apparent ease and to excite admiration and envy in the beholder” (Buchbinder, 2004).

The examples of Sam Smith and Prince Fielder perpetuate both the pros and the cons of bodies being represented in the media. Sam Smith sheds light on the expectations placed on the gay male body, while opening up the media landscape for discussion on male body issues, both heterosexual and homosexual. “...Media techniques for representing the male body tend to construct it as heroic, sculptural, even when in repose. These bodies are not merely muscular and powerful; through their strong definition and the consequent hardness of the lines and planes of the body, these male forms become self-contained [...]; the muscular bodily ideal” (Buchbinder, 2004, p. 222). Again, we are left to wonder why we cannot *vive la difference*; celebrate our differences – why must one segmentation dominate over another?

The current research presents some of the implications of masculine representation in popular culture: the participants are influenced by the commercials and characters they see on television night after night, and they feel pressure to mimic the character’s style and behaviour. ‘Protein’ emphasizes stereotypical representations of masculine strength and physicality. While the main purpose of the commercial is to see Oscar Meyer ‘Protein Packs’ to physically fit males, it also serves a wider, societal function of setting expectations for the male body – expectations which exclude the Sam Smiths and Prince Fielders of the world.

4.3.2 Metrosexual Representation in the Media

Ervin (2011) defines metrosexuality as "...a straight man with some stereotypically feminine traits, such as taste in grooming and culture" (Ervin, 2011, p. 58) which reflect changes that are taking place in society (ie. Nixon's 'new man'). Metrosexuality was termed to justify men's place in consumer culture by allowing them to be better consumers: by making it acceptable for men to shop for cosmetics and grooming products, it allows them to buy more: "...beyond grills and cars, the metrosexual sports model lengthens men's shopping lists to include SPF moisturizers and expensive shaving creams" (Ervin, 2011, p. 60). From a more theoretical perspective, metrosexuality furthers the notion of gender as a performance, as it continues to separate sexuality from the 'true' self (Ervin, 2011).

Men report that advertisers are out of touch with men's reality – and advertisers exploit this anxiety by reinforcing hegemonic notions of masculinity. Traditional forms of masculinity are paraded before females in hopes of garnering their approval, but what about male approval (Ervin, 2011)? The identity of the metrosexual was created as a marketing ploy meant to earn more money, not to reassure males who display 'feminine' behaviours; any increase in public acceptance of such individuals is purely consequential.

Lumbersexuals, a more recent trend, pertains to bearded, long-haired, plaid wearing men. By taking the appearance of the 'wilderness man' and drawing attention to personal appearance acceptable advertisers are able to market beard oils, pomades, etc., to them, making it acceptable for such 'unrefined' men to purchase beauty products. The positive side to this

constant swapping out of masculine identities (the bad boy, the regular Joe, etc.) is that it acknowledges masculinity as a shifting, changing, and evolving construct (Ervin, 2011).

It is important to explore metrosexual representations in the media for a number of reasons; first, metrosexuality can be viewed as a marketing strategy, which is used to market ‘feminine’ products, like beauty products, to males. This opens up a new demographic of consumer in the beauty category as metrosexuality seeks to normalize or masculinize ‘feminine’ purchasing practices. Second, metrosexuality presents a threat to dominant hegemonic ideals of masculinity in much the same way that the notion of the Mr. Mom (Douglas Varvus, 2000) does. Metrosexuality presents opposing views to the way in which men are typically represented, which provides an opportunity to expand the definition of masculinity. Third, and most important to the current research, the promotion of metrosexual behaviour necessitates the performative nature of gender. By suggesting that men can change the way in which they perform their gender by adopting more ‘feminine’ characteristics and behaviours, it suggests that gender is not entirely biological. Alternatively, if men adopt more masculine traits in an attempt to perpetuate a form of hyper-masculinity, they also reinforce the performative aspect of gender. If metrosexuality is widely acknowledged and accepted, then the performative, ever-changing nature of gender must also be accepted.

4.3.3 Discussion on Misandry

Nathanson and Young (2001) speak of gender binary in terms of a dualism – a dualism which is not unique to gender studies, but which is apparent as a worldview: “consequently, no group of people should be considered either innately good or inherently evil” (Nathanson and Young, 2001, p. 251). While they do push the concept of the ‘male

crisis' which the current research does not seek to support, Nathanson and Young make palatable points about the pervasive nature of misandry in today's popular culture. To define misandry, they begin by comparing it to misogyny:

Like misogyny, misandry is culturally propagated hatred. And like misogyny, it is often expressed as negative stereotypes of the opposite sex. But unlike misogyny, misandry is not closely monitored, because, from a gynocentric perspective, it is considered morally and legally acceptable. Even though misandry is clearly visible to anyone with eyes to see and ears to hear, it is not visible to many people *as a problem* (Nathanson and Young, 2001, p. 5).

The current research seeks to highlight the pervasive nature of misandric stereotypes. If it is as Susan Bordo (1999) says, that every female stereotype has a male stereotype tied to it, then there is much work needed to explore the impact of stereotypes on males. In an effort to avoid very blatant and obvious uses of stereotypes, which are often dismissed by viewers as satire, more subtle examples were chosen: the division of household labour between an elderly couple in 'Morty', the role of active, physically fit males in 'Protein', and the relationship dynamic between a father and daughter in 'Safari'. While the commercials bolstered no hyper-masculine stereotypes, they still convey very specific traits to the participants: a husband who is disinterested in housework, males who choose to get fit through very demanding physical activity, and a father who seeks to create memories with his daughter in lieu of his frequent absences from home. The current research indicates that stereotypes do not need to be obvious or hyper-masculine to influence viewers – they can be subtle and still make clear suggestions on what it means to 'be a man'

There are many contributing factors to the invisibility of misandry. To begin with, evidence of misandry, like misogyny once was (and is), has become so rooted in aspects of

culture that it is difficult to identify. When it is identified, it is rarely considered as a problem. When it is identified, and it is considered problematic, few know what to do about it, particularly in light of the largely gynocentric worldview (Nathanson and Young, 2001). “Like misogyny, misandry can be found in almost every genre of popular culture – books, television shows, movies, greeting cards, comic strips, ads or commercials, and so on – and in every sub-genre within some of those” (Nathanson and Young, p. 7, 2001). In the fight against sexual polarization, misandry is more pervasive than most people imagine, and in some cases, even more pervasive than misogyny. What is commonly forgotten is: the same factors that altered society’s view on women during the female crisis, can also alter views on men (Nathanson and Young, 2001). Here lies a double standard: it is ok to make jokes or use negative stereotypes at the expense of men, but it is reprehensible to do the same towards women. “The problem is how people *interpret* difference. The lamentable human tendency is to do so in connection with hierarchy, using difference as an excuse to assign superiority and inferiority” (Nathanson and Young, 2001).

Nathanson and Young (2001) begin their descent into the ‘male crisis’ by describing the dehumanization of men in popular culture, outlining how they are portrayed to extremes; from the bad boy to a beast. They suggest that viewers, both male and female, will inevitably begin to associate and identify with the characters they see on television, and poignantly outline the dangers of stereotypical masculine portrayals in television movies, which can also be applied to other aspects of popular culture, like the commercial:

At a time when virtually all positive sources of masculine identity have been sexually desegregated, some boys and men will inevitably turn to the remaining negative ones. Because traditional sources of identity for men have been severely undermined or

even attacked by a society preoccupied almost exclusively with the needs and problems of women, many men are left with whatever sources happen to be supplied by popular culture (Nathanson and Young, p. 144, 2001).

This is, perhaps, the most central concern garnered from the results of the current research; that inaccurate, negative, or even derogatory portrays of men and masculinity may influence how men behave. That in an attempt to conform to what they assume is a desirable definition of masculinity, they will adopt attitudes and beliefs portrayed in popular culture, stripping them of choice in defining certain aspects of their [gender] identity on their own.

What further complicates misandry is that males within society are considered privileged, making it difficult for others to feel sympathy towards them. Where males are considered enemies or rivals, they receive even less sympathy. Women may easily default to misandry when they feel threatened or endangered, and the double standard deems this behaviour acceptable. Perhaps the most worrying and perplexing view of misandry is that it cannot damage men: that any males who feel as though they've been a victim should 'take it like a man' (Nathanson and Young, 2001). Furthermore, discussing such topics means exposing emotions and vulnerability, both of which are largely considered feminine characteristics. "To acknowledge being under attack is to acknowledge vulnerability. And to acknowledge vulnerability for many men in our society, is to deny their own manhood, even if doing so would be in their best interest. Being a man, they have been taught, means being in control..." (Nathanson and Young, p. 247, 2001). The concern then becomes: what affect will misandry have on men?

The next chapter will provide a brief summary of the methodological, theoretical, and empirical implications of data gained from the of the research questions by summarizing the project's findings. It will also serve as a vehicle for limitations of the current research and suggestions further research.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The implications of stereotypes leave advertisers in a precarious situation: are they to abandon their tried-and-true methods of targeted advertising for a more ethical, non-misandric (and non-misogynistic) format? Should advertising be convicted as both the alleged problem and the solution to such large social concerns? A ‘narrow’ view of advertising suggests that commercials are merely “in business”, that is, they only seek to make a profit; a view which ignores their ‘wider’ cultural role (Leiss et al., 2009). The same narrow view also suggests that: “...because advertisers pick up the tab, they deserve to have their say, unencumbered by legal controls” (Leiss et al., 2009, p. 778). One rebuttal is that the advertisers do not, in fact, pay for the advertising, rather it is the consumer, through their purchasing of the product, who picks up the tab. The advertisers have a responsibility to the consumer as a stakeholder, and the consumers’ interests should be reflected in the advertising (Leiss et al., 2009).

Advertisers use emotional appeals and fear appeals to persuade consumers to purchase their product. Lifestyle branding preys upon unresolved tensions and insecurities, telling consumers that the life they desire is just one product away. While these depictions may often be immoral and reprehensible, it is merely one piece of a larger puzzle. “Attacking advertising for its biased view, and for its undoubted contribution to perpetuating regressive social practices, is one thing; but actually seeking to modify or eliminate practices enshrined in public attitudes, behaviour, and institutional structures by reforming advertising

representation alone is another” (Leiss et al., 2009, p. 780). While it is important to remember that advertising has an ability to perpetuate falsehoods surrounding masculinity which may manifest in viewers, it is also important to remember that commercials are just one piece of the larger misandric puzzle; that other aspects of culture also perpetuate misandric ideals. Therein, commercials alone cannot provide the solution – while encouraging advertisers to become more conscientious in their gender portrayals is a start, it is a responsibility that must be carried throughout other forms of popular culture.

Participants revealed that they are influenced by popular culture and commercials: not just in the products that they buy, and they clothes that they wear, but also in the way that they behave, their lifestyle choices, and the way in which they perform their masculinity. Participants admitted that they found lifestyle branding to be particularly convincing in terms of buying power; that if a commercial played upon anxieties or fears that resonated with them, that they would feel additional pressure to purchase the product.

Participants were able to identify stereotypes of masculinity in all three of the commercials shown during the study. In ‘Morty’ the participants perceived the husband, Morty, to be performing a traditional form of masculinity; one where he takes little interest in the domestic sphere, especially household chores. They understood Morty to be a protector, as he was concerned for his wife’s safety as she performed labour intensive household tasks, but he did little else to help her clean. The participants were not offended by these stereotypes, instead they accepted them as a form of nostalgia, suggesting that because of the couple’s age, they were merely maintaining a division of labour that was developed during a time when men often worked outside of the home and women were left to look after

the homestead. Participants suggested that if this same commercial had featured a younger, more modern day couple acting in the same manner, it would raise questions of equalitarianism.

In viewing 'Protein', participants felt as though the commercial portrayed males in terms of the 'gym rat' stereotype; someone who is very focussed on physical fitness, almost to a fault. The participants thought that the commercial targeted a specific type of gym rat: someone who is new to the gym, is unsure of certain exercise routines, and is fairly clueless when it comes to nutrition. They thought that the males in the commercial were portrayed as dumb and ill-informed, which some participants found offensive. In contrast to the females in the commercial, the males were portrayed as active, while the females were generally passive, working only to serve the male characters. Participants also found indications of product gender as hot yoga was coded as feminine, suggesting that more strenuous or athletic work outs are intended for males.

'Safari' presented a unique opportunity to examine the portrayal and reception of stereotypes within the father/daughter dynamic. While the family dynamic was open to interpretation, participants offered a number of options ranging from a nuclear family, to a single parent. What they could all agree on was that the father, for professional reasons, spent time away from his home and his daughter, and was serving the role of a provider. Some participants admitted feeling an emotional connection to the commercial despite not being fathers themselves. This was in part, due to the aesthetics of the commercial, but also because of the emotional appeal, drawn from the use of familial relations.

Regardless of its form, whether it's a billboard, a sign on a bus, a segment on the radio, or a commercial on television, advertisements must consistently try to break through the noise, and connect with their audience. While the landscape of commercials, particularly television commercials, are changing, the motive remains the same – target your audiences, and create desire or want around the product to gain profit. Gender is one of the most common audience segmentations, and each gender is targeted through the use of stereotypes in advertising, and product gender (Wolin, 2003).

Stereotypes can be used merely as a means of ordering or organizing people – they need not always be used in a negative or pejorative manner. The difficulty with using stereotypes in advertising is that, while trying to address a specific demographic, stereotyping often excludes sections of the population at the expense of the 'other' (Dyer, 2009). What's more, is that commercials are not benign aspects of popular culture; they have the ability to influence personal identities and lifestyle choices. With this power in the hands of advertisers and the advertiser's drive for profit, one must question their motives and intentions (Leiss et al., 2009)

Discussion with the participants suggests that even the subtle use of stereotypes conveys a very clear idea of what is expected of men and how masculinity should be performed. Because gender is such a large and frequently used segmentation, commercials almost always portray stereotypes of gender. Furthermore, participants highlight lifestyle branding as a very suggestive marketing technique as it not only attempts to sell a product, but also tangible aspects of a particular lifestyle. These techniques manifest in a very real

ways in the participants: one participant admits that his brand and clothing choices are based on the advertising and popular culture surrounding the product.

Product gender also uses gender stereotypes to perpetuate the idea that products or brands can be gender specific. This operates on the notion that consumers prefer purchasing products that are ‘made for them’ or ‘theirs’. While there are many examples of product gender, particularly within the beauty and grooming product category, perhaps the most obvious examples exist within the childrens’ category. From a young age boys and girls are corralled into playing with toys that are ‘for them’ (Fugate and Philips, 2010).

Advertisers acknowledge the relevance of brand gender – they not only perpetuate it through making specific products for specific genders, but they also *market* specific products to specific genders. As an example, the participants very quickly assumed that the ‘Morty’ commercial was directed towards females for two reasons: first, the commercial focused on Lee house cleaning, while Morty watched. Secondly, the participants assumed that this commercial for cleaning products would be no different than other commercials for similar products – focused on females. This sentiment was expressed by a participant: when asked about purchasing cleaning products he stated, “I’d just get my wife to do it”. Here, product gender has influenced viewer perception of the product and purchasing power.

Gender plays a central role in the creation of personal identity. Central to the thesis of the current research is that gender, whether male, female, or otherwise, is a performance, and can be entirely separate from biological sex; sex may influence gender performance, but it is not the sole determining factor. Due to its performative nature, gender can be influenced in a number of ways and theoretically, there is no one right or wrong way to perform it, despite

the fact that dominant hegemonic ideals of masculinity which suggest otherwise. While ‘traditional’ form of masculinity are perpetuated as the norm, other forms of masculinity exist and they are no more, or no less ‘correct’ (Segal, 1993).

While metrosexuality was not specifically referenced by the participants, it does provide insight into the current research. As ‘alternative’ representations of masculinity are increasingly portrayed and accepted, the definition of masculinity changes accordingly. While metrosexuality may be used primarily by advertisers to create a new consumer in the beauty and grooming category, it also appropriates behaviours typically regarded as feminine. Furthermore, if homosexual, transgendered, and/or queer representation become more common, they will be perceived as less of a threat to dominant hegemonic ideals to masculinity.

Part of the interest (and the difficulty) of studying masculinity is that largely, men are encouraged to be providers and protectors, and to not demonstrate weakness or vulnerability. While this makes obtaining males opinions on masculinity difficult, it also suggests that work in the area is novel. Breaking the shroud of secrecy may be helpful: evaluating what influences their own masculinity may spur further discussion and make vulnerability more socially acceptable.

The current research has some limitations: first, it does not reflect the opinions of homosexual, queer, or transgendered males. Despite the researcher’s best efforts, the opinions of homosexual men are not represented in the current study. As per the pre-screening performed through the ISPR Program, all participants reported being heterosexual. While one homosexual male and one asexual male originally signed up, they did not attend

the reception study. While it was not the intent of the current research to neglect the opinions of these demographics, it is the belief of the researcher that each of these orientations deserve their own body of research. Both Nixon (1993) and Faludi (2000) briefly mention the transgender role in shaping current masculinities, and it would be doing a disservice for the current research to try and provide the representation merited given the current time restrictions. An independent survey of transgendered opinions on male stereotyping would yield a necessary addition to the canon of literature on masculinity.

Secondly, the research only surveys commercials aired in North America, and questions males currently living in Canada. While the intent of the research was to survey this population, in order to fully understand the male reception of stereotypes, a more international survey must be conducted. In reviewing similar studies from China and Germany, it becomes clear that both masculinity and stereotypes are viewed in very different lights. This macro view may highlight correlations between different cultures understandings of masculinity.

In terms of methodological considerations; while reception studies did yield favourable results, in a research project with less time constraints, perhaps supplementing the reception studies with one-on-one interviews with the participants may prove to be both engaging and provocative. Due to the lack of anonymity present in a reception study, participants may be more comfortable with sharing personal experiences in a private setting, yielding deeper and more introspective reflections on gender and masculinity.

In light of the findings of this project's original research, in tandem with gaps in research identified by the literature review, there are several considerations for further

research. First, while Caucasian, Asian, Arabic, and African American nationalities were represented in the study, a survey of one specific nationality may also yield interesting results, particularly if the participant has experienced non-Westernized forms of popular culture. While conducting the literature review for the current study, some information on the African American male was available, but it was low in volume compared to that available on the white, Anglo-saxon, male. Exploration into the stereotyping of visible minorities may provide interesting insight not only in terms of gender studies, but also for ethnic and racial studies, and critical racial theory.

Commercials are, of course, only one piece of the popular culture puzzle. Nixon (1993) explores print ads and fashion photography, while other academics delve into the worlds of action heroes, feature length films, childrens' toys, literature, and even food, to explore the stereotypes of gender. A study with a focus on anyone of these mediums would certainly be a welcome addition, and provide necessary observations for both the exploration of masculinity and the struggle for equality.

The current research highlights the proliferation of commercials in everyday life, and suggests that the representations of masculinity in commercials can influence the way that male viewers perform their masculine identity. Impacts on personal gender performance can be seen through the way viewers choose to behave and dress, which can be influenced specifically through lifestyle branding. Such advertising often relies on stereotyping in order to best address the largest popular demographic. Much like their feminine counterpart,

masculine stereotypes are often employed in such advertising without many of the same critiques that feminine stereotypes receive, but preying on male insecurities should not be an appropriate alternative (Nathanson and Young, 2001). The power dynamic between the genders is one of superiority – one gender must always dominate the other – which results in no real ‘winner’ (Nathanson and Young, 2001). Just as it is important to look beyond the scope of advertising and into the realm of popular culture for influences on masculinity, so to, is it important to look beyond the battle of gender superiority to a more equalitarian view: a humanistic approach. Using gender stereotypes in advertising may be the tried-and-true method, but perhaps it is time to challenge the creativity of advertisers and present them with an opportunity to find a new method that works without belittling any gender.

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Appendix A
Transcripts

Reception Study No. 1
November 19, 2014

Researcher: What we are going to do is we are going to quickly look at 3 different commercials, we're going to look at them twice each, after each commercial, we're going to – I'm going to ask you a set of questions. I'm just here to facilitate discussion, I'd like you guys to mainly host the discussion, but if you have questions at any time just let me know. So we are going to start with the first commercial, let me know if it's not loud enough. If you can't see, feel free to move somewhere where you...

Morty (Swiffer) commercial plays

Researcher: So is that a good volume for everyone?

Participant: Mm.

Morty (Swiffer) commercial plays

Researcher: Ok, so, probably familiar to some of you guys. So there are six, I believe, different questions on each commercial... sorry five. So, just some general thoughts on the content of the commercial? Just open floor discussion.

Participant: He seems kind of useless.

Researcher: Ok, can you expand on that a little bit?

Participant: He just sat back, and even when he was telling his wife that it wasn't really safe he wasn't doing much, he just kind of stood there like "Oh, don't do that".

Researcher: Anyone else?

Participant: Well he was kind of watching over her a little bit but, towards the end he was just sitting in the chair.

Researcher: And how much of that, if any, is to do with their age demographic?

Participant: Almost entirely.

Participant: Yea, probably a lot.

Researcher: Ok.

Participant: I think the fretting probably has more to do with the age demographic but the

sort of, being disinterested, that's probably more of a male-centric stereotype.

Researcher: Ok. Any general thoughts on the aesthetics of the commercial? In terms of it being appealing, unappealing to you particularly?

Participant: Kind of bland, and it brought focus to the couple.

Researcher: Ok. So would you say that it was more of an advertisement of maybe the relationship between them rather than the product?

Participant: Yea, they are more focused on their dynamics then they are on the actual Swiffer.

Researcher: Ok. In terms of, I mean you guys would all have cleaning responsibilities, would this appeal to you in terms of making you buy this product?

Participant: Not really, no.

Participant: No.

Researcher: Ok. And some general thoughts on the representations of masculinity in the commercial.

Participant: Well, did he really do anything? I mean, she pretty much did it all, so...

Participant: He seems like the dominant authoritative figure.

Researcher: And is that something that you would expect to see in a cleaning commercial?

Participant: Not typically.

Participant: Yup, I sort of find that products aimed at women play off of male stereotypes...

Researcher: Ok.

Participant: ...and kind of the reverse; products aimed at men play off the female stereotypes.

Researcher: Ok, and how would you feel about a product, a cleaning product, with an advertisement that was focused on male cleaning? Would it make you more or less inclined to buy that product?

Participant: I think it would certainly catch my eye faster.

Researcher: Ok.

Participant: Yea.

Researcher: And did you guys feel any connection with the viewer? Did you guys feel connected to the couple?

Participant: Not at all.

Researcher: No? Ok. So we've touched on it a little bit, but would you say that there is any portrayal of any stereotypes?

Participant: Sure

Researcher: What would the stereotypes be?

Participant: Even like, he wasn't listening at the end, or he's not really – house cleaning is not his place as a male.

Researcher: Would you – we've talked predominantly about negative stereotypes, would you say there was any positive? Whether they be female or male?

Participant: I guess industriousness is vaguely positive

Researcher: Ok

Participant: And the wife can take pride in her house and the state of its being

Researcher: Ok. Good. Do you have any strong agreements or strong appeals with any sentiments expressed in the commercial? Other than the fact that it just left you feeling kind of neutral about the couple and the product? Is that a fair statement? Ok. Have you had any previous experience with Swiffer product?

Participant: Yea

Researcher: Yea? And does this sway you to continue or not continue buying them? So why would you have purchased them in the first place?

Participant: They actually work well.

Researcher: Ok. And you know it through...

Participant: My mom would buy them for our house, I just kept with it once I got to university.

Researcher: Ok. Any other comments on that commercial? Ok, so let's move on to the second one. So it's going to be the same thing, I'm going to play it twice and then we are going to cover the same questions. So you can kind of have the questions in mind as we go through.

Protein (Oscar Meyer) commercial plays twice

Researcher: Ok, so I think that's a little bit of a newer commercial so I am not sure if it would be as familiar to you guys. Obviously advertising a different product, so general thoughts on the contents of that commercial?

Participant: It was a little bit funny

Researcher: Ok, is that appealing, unappealing?

Participant: It would probably make me actually stop and watch it [inaudible]

Researcher: Ok, anything else?

Participant: It's kind of a satire on all the crazy new workout techniques that people are using

Researcher: Ok, and if you were someone who used one of those techniques would you still feel that it was a funny commercial? If you were the guy running around with your parachute? Ok. What about the product itself?

Participant: I wouldn't be inclined to buy it but it was a funny commercial.

Researcher: Ok. And any general thoughts on the aesthetics of the commercial? Appealing, unappealing? It's a food product, so that's something to keep in mind. It's something that we are going to eat it – did the commercial make you want to eat that product?

Participant: The – it looked kind of weird just carrying meat around in your pocket...

Researcher: Ok.

Participant: ...that's something. I don't know how I feel about meat in pockets.

Researcher: Yea, it's kind of something. You need a refrigerator perhaps. And what about the way that it portrays men who work out?

Participant: It's a funny way of putting it.

Researcher: Ok. How about the portrayal of men – the way men work out, to the way that women work out? Because in the commercial the only working out that women are doing is hot yoga.

Participant: A lot more intense.

Researcher: The womens' or the mens'?

Participant: The mens'.

Researcher: What about the fact that – what do we think about the fact that the man was enquiring about hot yoga? What about him?

Participant: I think he was kind of treating it like a joke sort of.

Researcher: Ok. The commercial kind of did too. I mean the girl, the lady passes out, you know? So she's... anything else about the stereotypes?

Participant: It definitely played off that kind of gym rat stereotype, the 'I've got to get my protein and do my lifts' kind of thing.

Researcher: Mm hm. And so, and food product, that's you know, a protein, targeted at protein people, is that a successful way to target people who need that product?

Participant: I don't see it

Researcher: No?

Participant: People that are health nuts are probably not going to be eating Oscar Meyer meat.

Researcher: That's true. So they are probably looking to target a middle demographic. Someone who thinks that they are little bit more into the gym than they actually are.

Participant: Yea.

Participant: The person in the commercial wasn't too shredded so it wouldn't come across as "Oh this is going to get you jacked".

Researcher: And, what about the – in a typical household, if the primary grocery buyer was a female, how do we think that commercial would appeal to her or not appeal to her?

Participant: I think the way the question is framed – if somebody knows how to eat and knows how to eat right at the gym, I don't think they'd be – female or male – if somebody probably doesn't know a lot about the gym, I could see them being more inclined to try it out.

Researcher: Ok. So some general thoughts on the representation of masculinity in the commercial?

Participant: Sort of typical strutting and chest puffing, and the lumber male stereotype too.

Researcher: Ok. Any other thoughts on masculinity in that commercial? There's lots of examples. You have guys doing different kinds, different levels of exercise. Is one particularly more or less masculine than the other?

Participant: The guy wouldn't participate in the yoga, or he seemed like he didn't know

anything about it. Just the idea of like, flexibility or whatever yoga entails wouldn't be a part of a routine for him.

Researcher: What if they had, instead of the lady passing out in the yoga class, what if it was a guy passing out in the yoga class? Would it still be funny? Would it still be the same message?

Participant: I think it would still be making fun of yoga to some extent, but not as much pushing the stereotype.

Researcher: Did you notice any other stereotypes being portrayed? Negative or positive?

Participant: The woman, the cashier or whatever, what's the word I'm looking for?

Researcher: The barista, type thing?

Participant: ...yea, very not-all-there.

Researcher: What about all the males in commercial; are being portrayed as active, if not actually moving and being physically active in the commercial, at least active in the sense that they are seeking something out, like the guy is enquiring at yoga... the only real female activity that we see are the girls – the girl passing out at yoga and the girl making a drink. So if we look at males as being active in the commercial, and females as being passive, what does that say?

Participant: It is kind of coming across as males are dominant and they can just do whatever they want and work on themselves while women are stuck helping the men achieve their goals.

Researcher: Ok. What if we had an active female like, at the beginning, instead of the male as the guy at the helm of the ropes – what if it was a female?

Participant: Doing the first exercise?

Researcher: Yea, or any of the exercises, any of the male active roles that were portrayed.

Participant: Well if they did all of them, like I don't know if this product is gender specific or if it's just for both. If there was females doing all of them I wouldn't even be watching the commercial, I mean it wouldn't be something that would appeal to me.

Researcher: Ok.

Participant: If it was a female doing the first exercise you would think that they just have no idea what they are doing.

Researcher: Whereas, you thought of the male as being in control of it?

Participant: He still had no idea what he was doing but they were doing parachute run and things like that too, so.

Researcher: Ok.

Participant: But that was kind of portrayed almost throughout the whole commercial, like the guys were hanging out like “I don't know why I am doing this” but “It's got protein” or “It looks awesome”.

Researcher: Mm hm. So, maybe is that – is that a stereotype of males or is that more of a stereotype of males who go to the gym?

Participant: Males who go to the gym.

Researcher: Ok. Any strong agreements or appeals with the sentiments expressed in that commercial?

Participant: It definitely is a stereotype that's representative of actual people who go to the gym.

Researcher: Ok.

Participant: I've seen it a lot, I worked at a gym for a while.

Researcher: Ok, and so if the product is direct at the middle demographic – the people who are maybe trying to feel out the whole gym idea, do you think that the commercial would be successful?

Participant: Probably not.

Researcher: No?

Participant: It's an Oscar Meyer product. Most people who go to the gym show others who go to the gym what to do; what kind of protein they should have, what kind of supplements... I mean, something that's online, unless it's Redbull, and people at the gym don't usually have Redbull, just Redbull is a good energy drink to have especially when you're trying to get jacked up, but like, something like that I mean usually you rely on people you trust and expertise, you don't rely on a commercial.

Researcher: So it wouldn't necessarily be a successful commercial for someone who knew a lot about the gym or who was a frequent...

Participant: Not just know about, but if I didn't know anything I would go to the first person I did know, and then I would ask friends, family members who did know, and nine out of ten of them would not reference that commercial or any advertising on the TV, they would just go to their friends and ask them where to go and go to supplement shops and ask those

people what to do. I don't think that would help at all.

Researcher: So perhaps, when addressing that demographic, or trying to appeal to people who go to the gym, maybe a celebrity endorsement would be...

Participant: Yea if you got, I mean – if you just got professional athletes, that's one big thing.

Researcher: Ok. Has anyone had any experience with this particular product? I mean I know, we probably all know Oscar Meyer lunchables, but I feel like that's a...

Participant: I've never heard of them.

Researcher: Yea, ok. And are you sold? Are you all going to run out and buy Oscar Meyer protein packs? Does it appeal at all to anyone?

Researcher: No?

Participant: I'm still hung up on that meat in the pocket.

Researcher: Yea! I'm not sure that's such a great idea. Alright so, the last commercial.

Safari (Expedia) commercial plays twice

Researcher: So a little bit different from the other commercials we have seen, in terms of both the product that its advertising and the relationships portrayed in the advertisements. So, this is the first time that we have seen a father/child relationship, so keep that in mind as we go through. Obviously, a commercial for Expedia – a new points program through Expedia. So, general thoughts on the content of that commercial.

Participant: It's definitely trying to get at you from an emotional angle.

Researcher: Ok, how so?

Participant: Kind of trying to make people think about the time that they have to spend away from their kids.

Researcher: And the father is spending time away from his daughter because? Presumably?

Participant: I'd say work.

Researcher: And what does that say about fathers? Working fathers?

Participant: That they're providers.

Researcher: What is the commercial, if anything, insinuating about a father who is the provider?

Participant: That he doesn't necessarily spend as much time with his family as he should.

Researcher: And the only woman in the commercial is the daughter, agreed? What does the absence of any other female suggest?

Participant: Single dad, maybe?

Researcher: Any other option?

Participant: The mother is with the kid at home, at work, could be anything, it doesn't specify.

Researcher: Ok. Any thoughts on the aesthetics of the commercial? Whether it was appealing or unappealing?

Participant: It was emotionally manipulative, I think that was a good thing.

Researcher: Ok. Good particularly for the product?

Participant: Yea.

Researcher: Because it works or because it is in line with the product.

Participant: Yea, it makes you think, I mean, it makes you think about actually if you were ever going to do something like that.

Participant: And the colours too, it was kind of muted up until you see the Expedia screen and then everything is colourful when they go on the trip.

Researcher: Ok. And a family vacation, what does that mean for a family? Do families, happy and unhappy, go on vacation?

Participant: Sorry, do happy and unhappy families go on vacation?

Researcher: Yea, like if your family, when you had, if you had family vacations as a child, generally, for the most part, fond memories?

Participant: It's usually like a happy sentiment

Participant: It's also something that only people with a certain amount of luxury can afford.

Researcher: Right. And it's an experience that creates memories, right? So by kind of making that link, what Expedia is saying?

Participant: If you use their product you will have luxury and you will be able to make these nice memories.

Researcher: Do you think that that was the intention of the commercial?

Participant: Yes.

Researcher: Ok. Any objections? Any potential different way to advertise vacation points website? Could you think of another? No? General thoughts on the representations of masculinity in the commercial?

Participant: Well, it was a little bit more nurturing than the others

Researcher: Ok. Anyone else? We talked about emotion, so did you guys feel a connection with the commercial?

Participant: For me, yea.

Researcher: Yea? Ok.

Participant: For me, not terribly, I don't have a daughter so.

Researcher: Can you, do you have any suggestions for what might have been more effective for you?

Participant: Not really. I can't really afford to go on vacation right now so it's sort of a moot point.

Researcher: So maybe if they had played up...

Participant: How inexpensive it is?

Researcher: ...the expense... yea.

Participant: Yea.

Researcher: Ok. Any portrayal of stereotypes, negative or positive?

Participant: The stereotype of 'dad is always away working'

Participant: Yea, I don't really know if it portrayed any stereotypes, it is sort of an assumption that the dad was always away, you don't really know that, it could be any number of things going on. It could be that he and his partner could take equal business trips... you just don't know.

Researcher: Ok, anyone else? Ok, any strong agreements or appeals to the sentiments expressed in the commercial? No one thinks – no one feels that they were exploited? That their family vacations weren't as good? Ok, just one last, general question: in commercials that you would find maybe more appealing whether they be... any type of commercial, beer commercial, sports commercial, whatever it might be, if you guys, if a commercial really struck you as funny or interesting, how would you, or would you go about sharing it? Or, interacting with it?

Participant: If the commercial was funny?

Researcher: Mm hmn.

Participant: Yea, I would show my friends.

Researcher: Ok.

Participant: Yea, advertising works through that, I guess.

Researcher: And how would you go about sharing it with your friends?

Participant: I would just tell them about it, give them a YouTube link on Facebook, I mean...

Researcher: Ok, anyone else?

Participant: That's probably how I would do it too.

Participant: Text it to them.

Researcher: Ok.

Participant: Re-tweet like a promotion or something.

Researcher: Ok, and any time when like, a promotion or contest that's also functioning as a commercial, same thing? Same process? You'd be willing to...

Participant: If my friends were interested in it.

Researcher: Yea? Ok. Any questions, comments? No? Ok. Again, if you have changed your mind and you would like a transcript just jot down your uOttawa email, if you have no other questions you are free to go. Thanks so much guys.

Transcript of Reception Study No. 2
November 26, 2014

Researcher: Ok, so my name is Melissa, I am doing my Masters in Communication, I am writing my thesis on the reception of male stereotypes in advertising. So what we are going to do tonight is, I am going to show you three different commercials, I'm going to show them to you twice, after each commercial I am going to ask you a series of questions, they are the same questions both times, and then after the three commercials I just have some general questions on your ideas around advertising and stereotypes. If you have questions at any time just feel free to stop and ask. Other than that, generally I am here to facilitate conversation, I would like you guys to speak the majority of the time. Like I said, I do have some questions to kind of spur conversation, but if you guys could do the majority of the talking it would be a great help to me. This is an hour of your life, this has been two years of my life, so if we can just suck it up, do it, not a lot of fun but we'll get through it. So like I said, I am going to show you both commercials – I'm going to show you the same commercial twice, and then we are going to talk about it. So...

Morty (Swiffer) commercial plays

Researcher: So, probably not a new commercial to any of you, but we are going to watch it one more time

Morty (Swiffer) commercial plays

Researcher: Ok, I'm going to ask you, like I said, a series of questions, they are going to be the same questions that I am going to ask you for the other commercials, so you can kind of keep them in mind as we go. So the first question is: just general thoughts on the commercial – on the content of the commercial. Go, just open table, yeah.

Participant: I think the commercial kind of shows a male dominance

Researcher: Ok

Participant: The fact that he is just chilling, watching, while she's cleaning the whole time. So kind of like giving peace of mind, like she can do it without him having to watch over her. So it kind of shows how men are the protector, they watch out for their woman, and once they're good he can chill.

Researcher: Anyone else?

Participant: I think the commercial has a really obvious target audience, like the man's not getting involved in anything, and it's a commercial about cleaning, so like, they want to gear the commercial towards women

Researcher: Ok

Participant: So like, yea

Researcher: Ok, so anyone else on content?

Participant: I also feel like it emphasizes on stereotype more, like it's not for men, just for women

Researcher: What about the fact that Morty, the man in the commercial, says: "I wish it was easier", but he is never actually cleaning in the commercial? Any thoughts on that?

Participant: I think he says that because, like, he sees how much trouble she is going through, and it kind of puts him in trouble because he has to watch her the whole time when he just wants to chill, like lay back, sleep, so that's why he is saying that he wishes it was easier, so that he doesn't have to watch her.

Researcher: And the text at the very end of the commercial, I don't know if you, I don't know how well it comes across, but the quote is: "It's easy Morty", right? So at the end, he's asleep, and they are showing, yea it is easy now, you're just a little snooze. So anyone else on content before we move on? Ok, general thoughts on the aesthetics of the commercial? Was it appealing, unappealing? Reason?

Participant: The lady's voice was kind of annoying

Researcher: Ok

Participant: I didn't really find it interesting at all, just to watch, like you said, obviously there is a target audience, it isn't appealing to most males I guess

Researcher: Ok, and do you think that it is – we talked about it maybe being targeted towards females, do you feel that it is targeted specifically towards this age demographic? Or that that could maybe translate to a younger couple as well?

Participant: Yea, I think translates well, the context in which it's presented, like you see the conversation, you know that they're older, but a lot of younger couples have communication problems, so although it's an older audience, or older people, it's still believable.

Researcher: Ok

Participant: I didn't find it appealing at all because I have seen it before, and it showed her with a walker in one scene, and then a miracle, she can walk

Participant: Yea

Participant: Yea

Researcher: Anyone else on the aesthetics? Ok. So, general thoughts, we talked a little bit about it, but general thoughts on the representation of masculinity in the commercial? And do you guys feel any connection to that commercial?

Participant: [inaudible conversation with another participant regarding volleyball]

Researcher: Alright, we can skip it, that's fine. There was, again, we talked about it a little bit, but do you guys think there was a portrayal of any particular stereotypes in that ad?

Participant: Well, obviously just the stereotype, and like, in male/female relationship, where the female has to do all the cleaning and the male is just sitting there watching, like obviously that's a stereotype

Researcher: Ok, and would you classify that as a negative or a positive stereotype? A true or false stereotype?

Participant: Probably negative, it's kind of inferring that men don't really do anything around the house just because they don't feel like they have to.

Researcher: Ok

Participant: I think it was kind of clever how they did it because like, they show like an older couple, they're an older generation, so obviously back then women weren't so much in the workplace and they did more of the work at home. Like if they had a younger couple in there, you'd be like "Oh my god, that's not true", like egalitarianism or whatever, but like, oh, it's the older people, so you kind of understand where they're coming from.

Researcher: It's maybe more of a "It's ok because it's nostalgic"?

Participant: Exactly

Participant: I think they kind of distract you by the fact that she's like, trying to do it...

Participant: It's comical

Participant: Yea, exactly, whereas if you were to see a younger couple you'd say, "Oh, why is the man just watching" you know? But you can see he's an old man too, so you could infer that, oh, maybe she's more capable

Researcher: Ok, great. Do you guys have any strong agreements or appeals with the sentiments expressed in the commercial? You weren't repulsed by anything, you weren't particularly attracted to anything in it? Ok. Any previous experience with the product?

Participant: [laughter]

Researcher: [laughter] No? Any ideas on whether you would purchase them, will purchase

them?

Participant: I wouldn't purchase it

Participant: I would purchase it because it makes life easier

Researcher: Yea, exactly

Participant: I'd probably buy whatever is the cheapest

Participant: Yea

Participant: Yea

Participant: I'd just get my wife to do it
[Laughter]

Researcher: Ok, so, like I said, I'm going to show you another commercial and then the same series of questions, so just give me a second to... you guys can see it fine?

Participant: Yep

Protein (Oscar Meyer) commercial plays

Researcher: So I'm not sure if that one is as familiar as the last one...

Protein (Oscar Meyer) commercial plays

Researcher: Ok, so, general thoughts on the content of that commercial?

Participant: I think like, again, it shows mostly men in the video because in society men are seen like, as physical and you know, active.

Researcher: It's interesting that you use the word active, because if we look at the females in that commercial, the only female that is doing anything other than preparing a drink, is passing out from yoga, hot yoga, so that's an interesting dynamic between active and passive. Any other just, general comments on that commercial?

Participant: I think that it's almost like a satire, like they are almost mocking, well cause like, currently the biggest issue with first world countries is obesity, so everyone is trying to get into shape, so it's like, you have to do all this nonsense to get into shape, so eat cheese and nuts and meat

Researcher: That you keep in your pocket.

Participant: Yea

Participant: I feel like it's still stereotypical because it's just saying that like, men are stupid because like, all the obstacles that you face, he's like I don't know why I'm doing this but I'm just doing it.

Researcher: Ok, any general thoughts on the aesthetics of the commercial? Whether it was appealing or unappealing?

Participant: I found it funny, but the package itself didn't seem appealing at all. I would not want to buy that.

Researcher: And so, the fact that the commercial was comedic, did that hook you? Are you going to run out and buy Oscar Meyer protein packs?

Participant: Nope

Researcher: No. And it's nothing to do with the commercial itself? More so to do with the product?

Participant: The commercial kind of just seemed like a goofy thing. It kind of just seemed more like one of those prank videos, you know?

Participant: [inaudible]

Participant: Exactly, it was more entertaining – you can't take it seriously cause it seems so, it's obviously trying to be stupid

Participant: It's like lunchables

Participant: I know, like adult lunchables...

Participant: Yea

Participant: ...except like grimy ones. I'd rather buy the old ones

Researcher: You just want the Kit Kat bar

Participant: She knows man, she knows!

Researcher: So any thoughts on the representations of masculinity in the commercial?

Participant: They pretty much portray us as idiots, I don't know, I think personally, I wasn't a big fan of that commercial, like it doesn't really make me want to buy the product or anything.

Researcher: It's definitely targeted towards a specific type of male, like a male who frequents the gym, but at the same time, I think that it's probably targeting a male who's a novice at the gym, because I feel that if you're a pro at the gym, you're probably not eating processed meat

out of your pocket, you know?

Participant: Mm hmn.

Researcher: Am I right in assuming that? I mean, I don't know, but I feel like, that's not, you know... you are right, it's an adult lunchable, so do you go to the gym and then crush a lunchable, I don't think that that's... it's someone who is maybe new at the gym or, you know, doesn't know exactly what they are doing.

Participant: So, this ad is targeting dumb males who don't really know what they are doing at the gym.

Participant: Not even dumb, I think it's more like, bigger guys, you know? Or guys who are like, trying to get into shape? You know, cause they look at that and they're like "Oh, well I am kind of struggling, so this will probably make my life easier"

Researcher: Maybe pocket meat will help. So the portrayal of stereotypes, we did just briefly touch on it, does anyone want to talk about, maybe the stereotypes that the females were in in that commercial? Or maybe expand on any of the male stereotypes?

Participant: The women appeared pretty, like, useless. Even when she like, "Oh, she's fine", when they passed out of heat... when the other lady passed out "Oh she's fine", kind of seemed like the women were oblivious, and they were just there, as like, figures of, I don't know... useless.

Researcher: Ok, great. Any strong appeals or agreements with the sentiments expressed in that commercial? Or are you all going to run out and buy adult lunchables?

Participant: Probably not

Researcher: No? You're not hungry, you don't want to run to the gym, none of that? Ok, but you are not strongly offended by any of it?

Participant: I wouldn't say, not really.

Researcher: Ok, alright, so we are going to move on to the last one. So this one is a little bit different, there is not a lot of dialogue so I'm going to ask you to pay attention to, more so the aesthetics of the commercial, and obviously the larger sentiment being expressed. It is a little bit darker, so hopefully you guys can see it fine.

Safari (Expedia) commercial plays twice

Researcher: So, general thoughts on that commercial?

Participant: I didn't really get it

Researcher: No?

Participant: No

Participant: I think it's like, a dad who like, travels a lot, and every time he goes on a trip he brings back, like, an animal for his daughter, and then one day he decided to go on a trip, like a safari with his daughter.

Researcher: Ok, so I think maybe one of the key points is, in the little bit of dialogue they say, "take the trips you have to take and turn them into one you want to take". So what do we assume?

Participant: I think it kind of shows like, a modern father. In today's society, like a single dad, who travels a lot and doesn't really have time for his children, and so obviously he has to take them for his business trips and so it kind of shows, oh, you know, that way you can bond and build that connection when really you are not there.

Researcher: Mm hm. Is everyone kind of on the same page with agreeing that he's a single dad? Or is it maybe just that he is just a working dad in a regular family? Regular being nuclear with a mom and a dad?

Participant: No, I think he is a single dad.

Researcher: Ok, anyone else?

Participant: I think he is a single dad

Participant: And the girl is pretty old, so it kind of seems like, oh, like, based on inference, you'd be like, oh maybe the parents divorced and that's why the daughter kind of seems sad and he brings her the toys in order to uh...

Participant: And also they are going on a trip and there is no mom there.

Researcher: General thoughts on the aesthetics of the commercial? Appealing? Unappealing? Obviously it's based a lot on imagery, not a lot on dialogue, so it does leave a lot to be assumed.

Participant: I'd say appealing.

Researcher: Yea?

Participant: I mean it draws your attention because there's a constant change in setting. In the commercial when they are in the house, you kind of just drift off, but they constantly keep so you kind of stay focused.

Researcher: Ok. Anyone else?

Participant: I found it kind of depressing.

Researcher: Yea?

Participant: I found it kind of hard to focus on it because it is kind of dark and gloomy and the music was kind of sad, so I think like, maybe it would appeal more to like, children that are in the position or, parents that are in the position, but personally I didn't find it appealing.

Researcher: Ok. Anyone else? Ok. General thoughts on the representation of masculinity in the commercial? So obviously we are looking at a single working dad, if we're going to work with that assumption. What does that say about the single working dad?

Participant: It says like, a single dad can't be with his daughter because he works too much

Researcher: Ok. And it takes taking a trip, rather than maybe, an afternoon at a zoo, to bond with a daughter?

Participant: That's true.

Participant: I didn't think about that.

Participant: He could just take her to the zoo.

Participant: You know what I'm saying?

Researcher: Anyone else? I mean obviously Expedia doesn't make any money from a trip to the zoo if your zoo is local, but... So, portrayal of stereotypes, if applicable? Negative or positive?

Participant: I think it's like, a contradiction to a long time negative stereotype, like the working dad is aloof, and provides an income and the mom is really gentle, but him it just showed him being really caring, and even when he goes on his trips, he is trying to... I think they are pulling like a psychological mind game like, "Oh, you're a working dad? He's a working dad. You want to make your child happy? And then bringing her on a trip makes her happy." So, they kind of just like, go on travels 'cause like, it will make her happy.

Researcher: Ok. Anyone else? And did you guys find that commercial... anything appeal to you? Anything that you strongly oppose to? How about, in terms of the product, obviously, does the father daughter dynamic work for you guys? Or would you guys, if you were trying to be enticed into an Expedia some sorts of travel points reward program, would it be better to advertise, like, from a different angle, whether it be cost, or where you can go...

Participant: For our age? If it was for our age, I feel you would probably have something more fun...

Researcher: Ok

Participant: Like, go to Cuba

Researcher: Cancun...

Participant: ...yea, you know...

Researcher: Ok

Participant: ...And so like... parties...

Researcher: Ok

Participant: ...Not like... sad giraffes...

Researcher: Yea.

[Laughter]

Researcher: You don't all want to go on a safari when you graduate?

Participant: Nah

Researcher: Ok, so just some general questions and then we will wrap it up. So, when you guys see a commercial, whether it is online or it's on TV, if it strikes a chord with you, and you think that someone else in your life might enjoy it, how do you go about sharing it? Do you? Or if you share it at all?

Participant: Facebook, for sure

Participant: Yea

Researcher: Post a link? Ok.

Participant: YouTube

Researcher: By posting a link?

Participant: No, like really, yo, come see this.

[Laughter]

Researcher: Ok, ok. And just generally, it doesn't have to be just commercials, but do you guys find yourself affected by mass media? Whether it's TV or billboards – any form of mass communication?

Participant: Yep.

Researcher: How so?

Participant: Just now a days, everything revolves around social media so it's difficult to not be dependent on it.

Researcher: Ok. And in terms of how you act and behave, does it have any influences on you?

Participant: Definitely.

Researcher: How so?

Participant: Oh, like, I mean how does it...? I mean just look at me. I mean I'm wearing Jordans because I see Jordans everywhere. The way you act? I dunno, you just kind of watch TV, you see how people act, you see the reactions of other people, then you adopt that because you want to get certain results.

Researcher: Ok. So, if you see a commercial and you like the commercial, you like the product, you're enticed to buy the product, does mass media or commercials – does its effect extend beyond buying power? Beyond... do you think that a commercial has any more power over you other than just convincing you to buy something?

Participant: I mean like, media itself plays like, the role of propaganda, I mean like if you advertise often times you will see that in an advertisement, like Apple, you see the guy buys the iPhone and he lives in this really nice, fancy apartment and has a really beautiful wife, so it kind of makes you assume like, if I have the iPhone 5, I'm going to have that amazing life, you know? So it's kind of like, tricking you into that sense.

Researcher: So when you are buying into the iPhone are you also buying into the life that it portrays?

Participant: Exactly, yea, like, almost like the luxury, you're in a different caste system, you know like the caste system? You're almost in a higher level, you know, you feel like you are above someone.

Participant: It's almost like commercial association, like you see the iPhone 5 you automatically associate it with a lavish life. And you don't have that life, but you think that having it just upgrades you.

Participant: Yea like you are halfway there.

Researcher: And what about if you see someone with an iPhone, or whatever object you want...

Participant: What iPhone?

[Laughter]

Researcher: It doesn't matter... iPhone, lets say iPhone 5

Participant: It depends on the iPhone. If it's the 3G it's like... I'm outta here!

[Laughter]

Researcher: Let's say that you see someone that you want and it's better than what you have, how does it make you feel about that person?

Participant: That's when you trip them and make sure they drop it and crack their screen

[Laughter]

Researcher: Make it worthless to them?

Participant: No, like when I see someone that has something it doesn't really phase me, but I could see how it could like, if I really wanted it I'd be like: "Come on..."

Researcher: A little bit of jealousy? Ok, ok.

Participant: You know it is all based on opportunity, you know? So that's like the main factor. Like if you have the opportunity to get it you most like will just because you are jealous of that person. But if you don't have the opportunity just leave it.

Researcher: So jealousy can also drive you a little bit?

Participant: Of course, yea.

Researcher: Alright, do you have an examples of ads that have impacted you in some way? Like when we talked about sharing ads, is there any commercial that you were like: "I have to show my friends this" or, I have to go get this product or, just something that you really identified with? Or you really didn't identify with and you hated it? No?

Participant: Actually only one...

Researcher: Ok

Participant: ...it was this Guinness ad, I don't like beer, but by the end of the ad I wanted buy Guinness.

Researcher: Ok

Participant: It was like commercial with friends, they are playing wheelchair basketball and they are just hooping and people are falling and they are getting up and stuff, and the angle,

the camera angle, was like the same level as the wheelchair...

Researcher: Ok

Participant: ...And then by the end they were finished their scrimmage basketball, he was like, they were like, "Ok, we'll see you next week Bob?" and then everyone gets out of the wheelchair except Bob

Participant: Yea

Researcher: I think I remember that one

Participant: And they head to the bar and have some Guinness

Researcher: Why do you think that one – why do you think that ad effected you personally, or why you remember that ad? Beside the fact that you know, beer is tasty and you wanted a beer afterwards?

Participant: I don't know, it just showed that friendship and camaraderie and stuff like that, and so I like that.

Researcher: Ok. Excellent.

Participant: You feel like that but then the next morning you're like...

Participant: You are walking around and you are like "Uhhhhh..."

Researcher: Ok. So what impacts or influences your masculinity?

Participant: Being dominant.

Researcher: Ok, how so?

Participant: Feeling like you are above someone, obviously like boosts your masculinity...

Researcher: Ok

Participant: ...like whether it be clothes, or body, or anything, just being like, or even a haircut sometimes makes you feel like, "Yea, I'm more of a man than you", you know?

Researcher: Ok. Anyone else?

Participant: The people you surround yourself with too

Researcher: Through influence?

Participant: Yea, like your friends.

Researcher: Ok

Participant: Female attention

Researcher: Ok, anyone else? Ok. What, if anything, do advertisements teach you about masculinity or being a man? And does this impact how you act? So you guys just watched that Expedia ad, is that going to make you... if you guys all turn out to be single working dads, is it going to make you think about: "Oh yea, I should take my daughter on a safari" because that's what good, single fathers do?

Participant: No

Participant: No

Researcher: No? There's no, you can't think of any, there's no ad, no beer ad, that has affected your masculinity where you've said "I've got to be more like that guy"?

Participant: No

Researcher: No? Ok. What do you think advertisements teach society about men? So what? So you think, as a female, I'm watching these commercials, what do you think that these commercials teach me about men? Teach me to expect of men?

Participant: This is what a man should be like and if he is not like this then...

Participant: He isn't man enough

Participant: ...yea, exactly, or don't go for him or... kinda teaches women that... kind of build their own standards into what a man should be.

Researcher: Anyone else? No? Do you think there are any dangers or any benefits in using advertisements or mass media to teach men how to act?

Participant: I don't think there are any benefits, just because, men in our society today should figure out what they want to be and what they define as masculinity and they shouldn't figure it out just from watching a TV ad or whatever.

Researcher: So if they're not learning from mass media, where are they learning it?

Participant: Just from self-perception and self-experience I guess, like going out and doing stuff [inaudible]

Researcher: Personal trial and error?

Participant: Yea.

Researcher: Ok.

Participant: I believe like, most of these commercials, they don't really if you're being perceptive and stuff, they just want you to buy their products, they couldn't care less.

Researcher: Ok. But they, commercials, in order to have some buying power, would they... they would have to appeal to someone.

Participant: Yea, I don't really agree with that to be honest, it's like, as a commercial you are trying to pitch an idea, you want the society to have a certain idea, an ideology, so that you'll want to buy it. I mean if you present this idea of masculinity, and you associate that idea of masculinity to a product, and everyone wants to be masculine, you are going to buy that product, so you have to like, put an idea in people's head first.

Researcher: I think we can all probably recall an Axe body spray commercial in some form or fashion? And that obviously doesn't appeal to me because I am straight, and I like men, and I don't want women to run through the forest at me. So, that doesn't teach me how to be a man, but it certainly teaches me how to act as a female, and it certainly teaches a man how to act as a man. Yea? As a dominant, 'society views men in this way, women in this way'.

Participant: Personally I never really liked any of those commercials, like male product commercials they just seem too unrealistic, so I kind of find them as a joke.

Researcher: Ok

Participant: Like I can't take them seriously.

Researcher: Ok. And similar to the last question, are there any dangers or benefits in the way that advertisements portray men to society? So, is there any danger in teaching me, as a female, how I should expect men to act... through the media?

Participant: It may give females unrealistic expectations I guess, of men, to expect things that we are not, I guess.

Researcher: It kind of, and I mean, feel free to disagree, but it kind of teaches me to expect the same thing from every man, right? Whether you're a scholar or a retail worker or whatever, I expect the same thing. I want you all to be strong and smell good...

Participant: Yea

Researcher: Ok. Any questions for me guys? No? Ok, other than that, if you have any questions, there is a copy of the consent form for you to take, my e-mail address is there. If you change your mind and want a copy of the transcript, feel free to e-mail me and let me know. Other than that, if I could have your signed consent forms, and the other one is for you

to take home.

Appendix B
Screenshots
Screen Shots of 'Morty' (Swiffer) Commercial



1.1



1.2



1.3



1.4



1.5



1.6



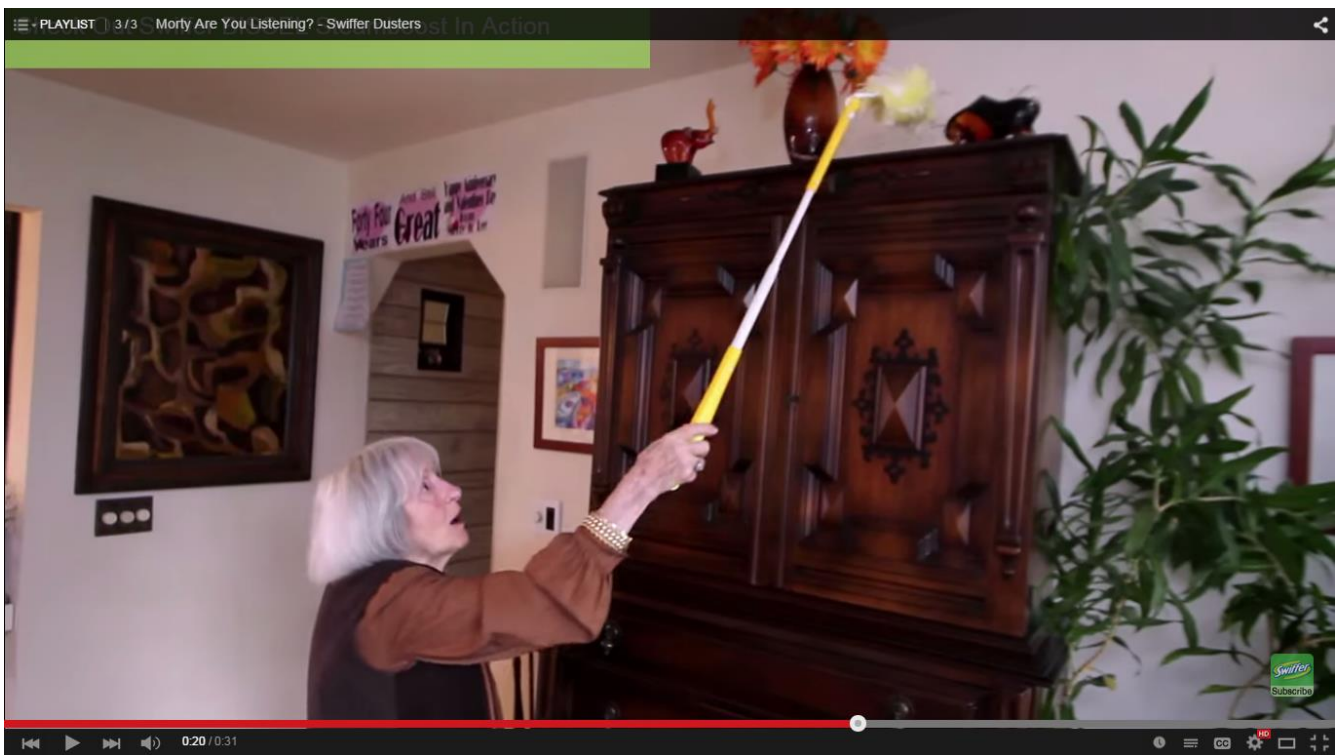
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1.8



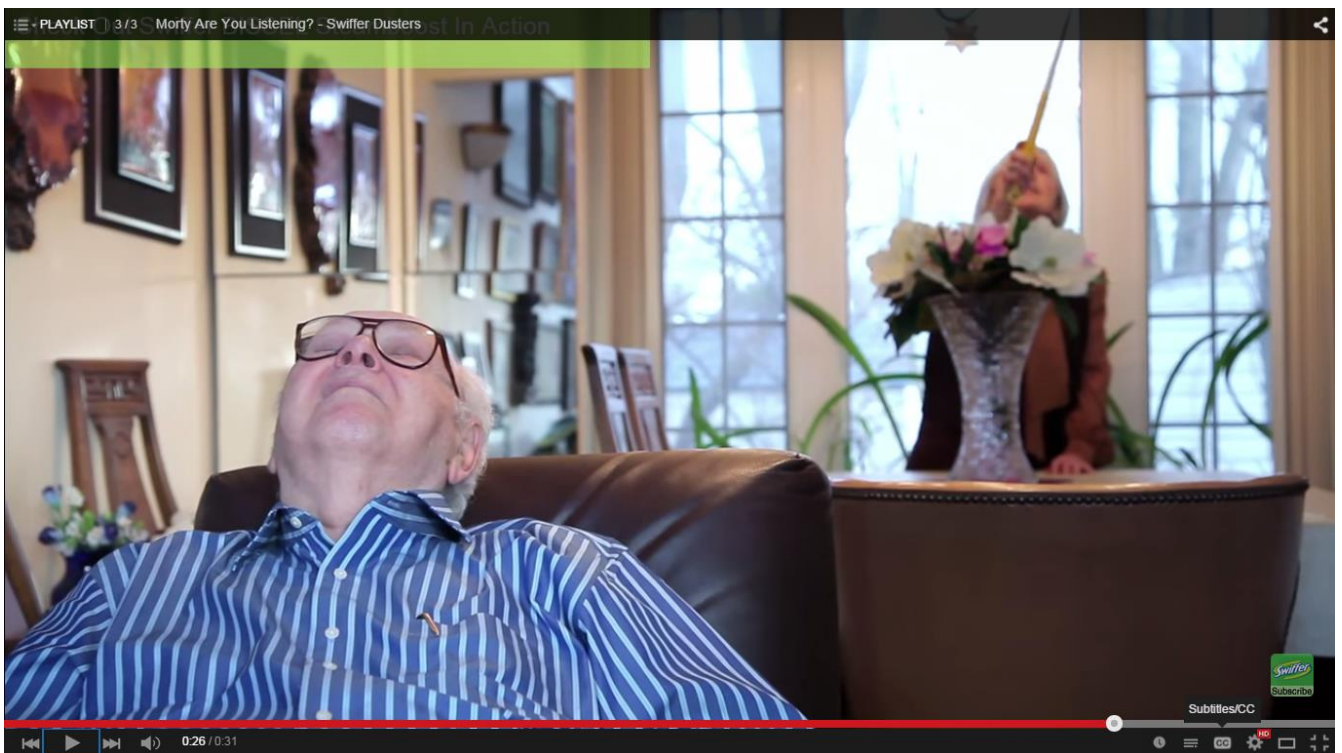
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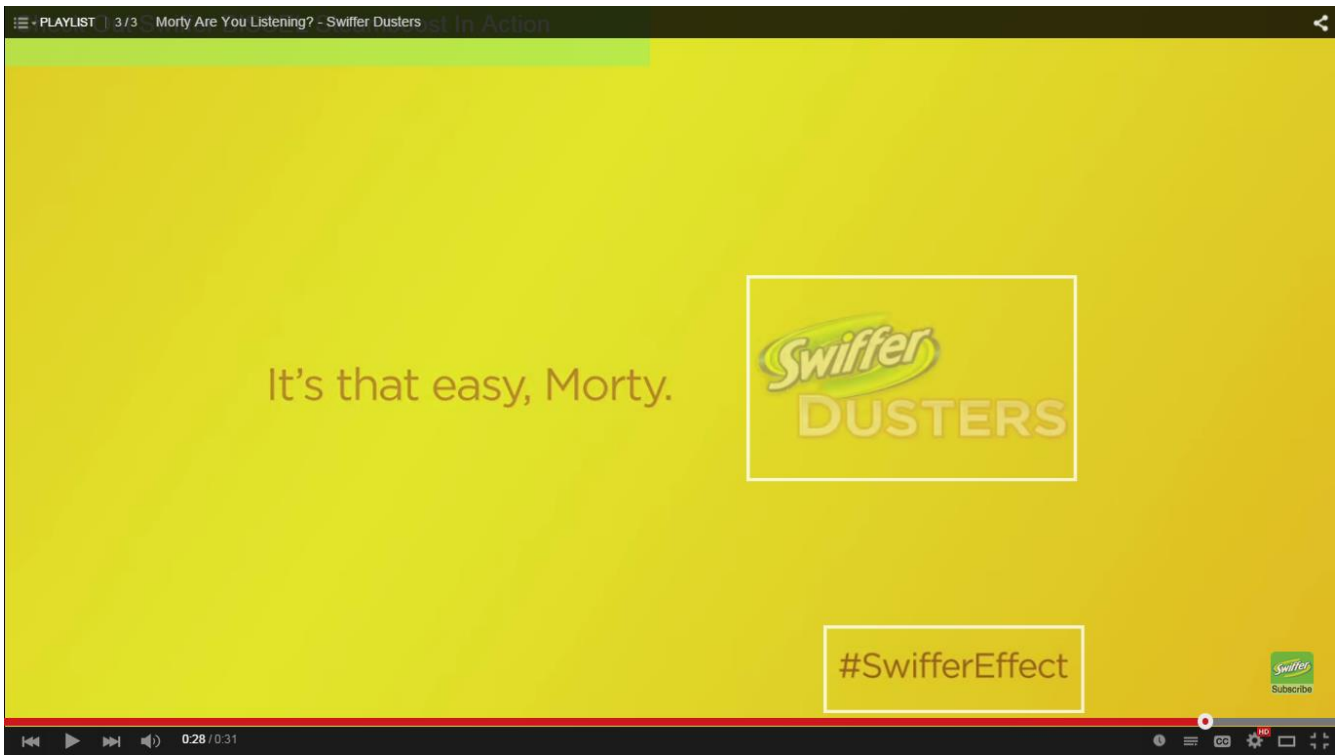
1.10



1.11



1.12



1.13

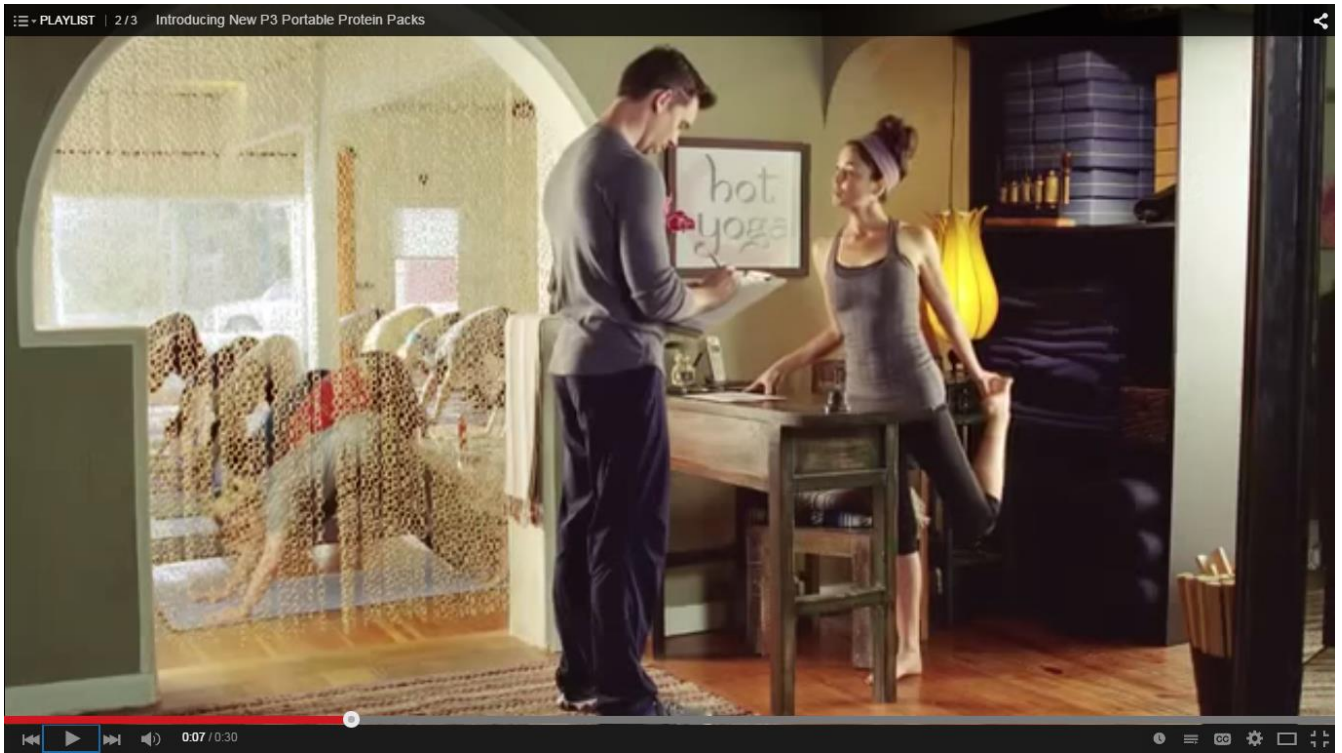
Screen Shots of 'Protein' (Oscar Meyer) Commercial



2.1



2.2



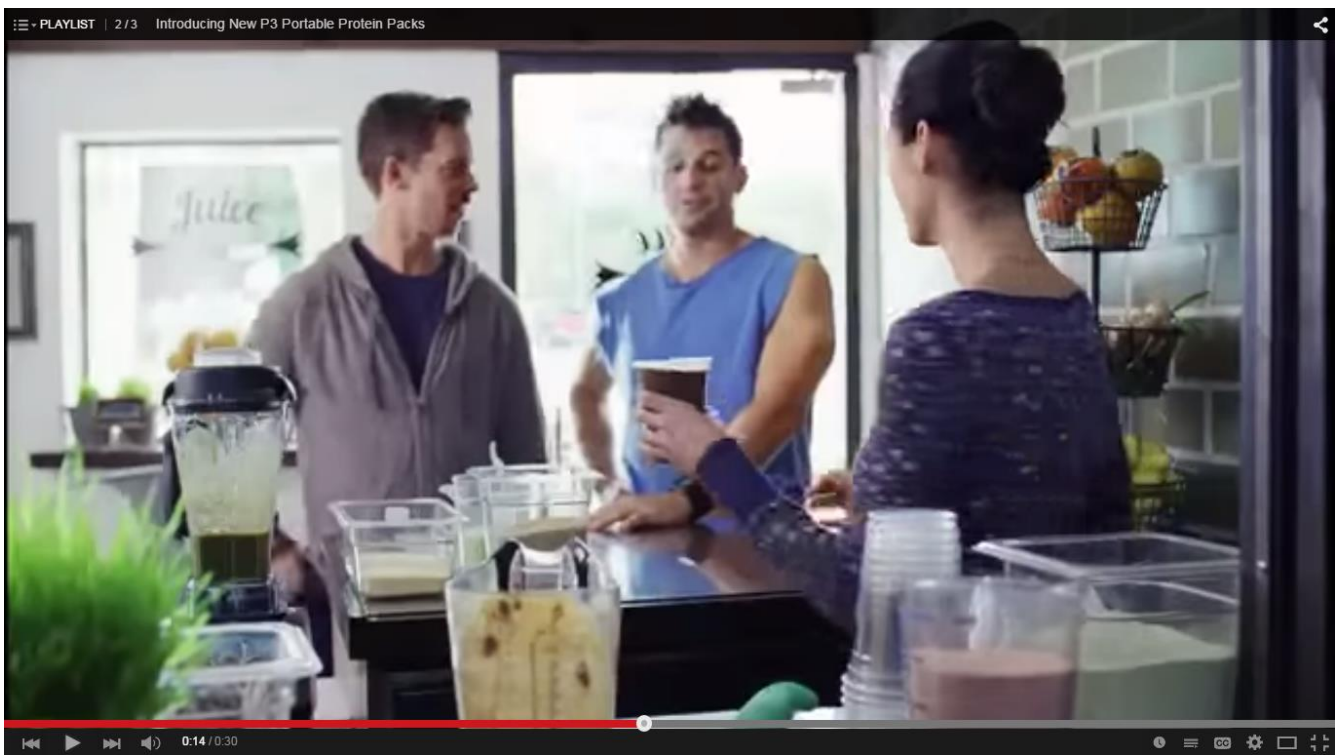
2.3



2.4



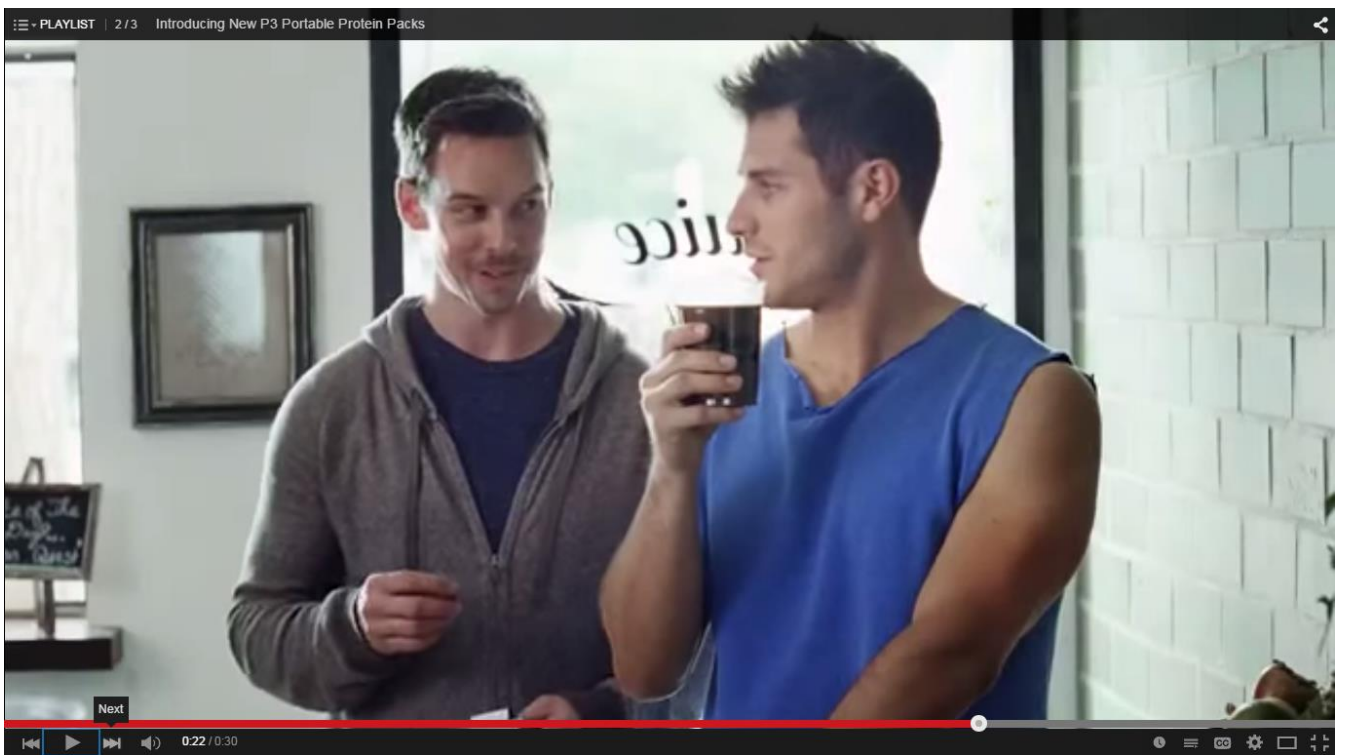
2.5



2.6



2.7



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2.9



2.10



2.11



2.12

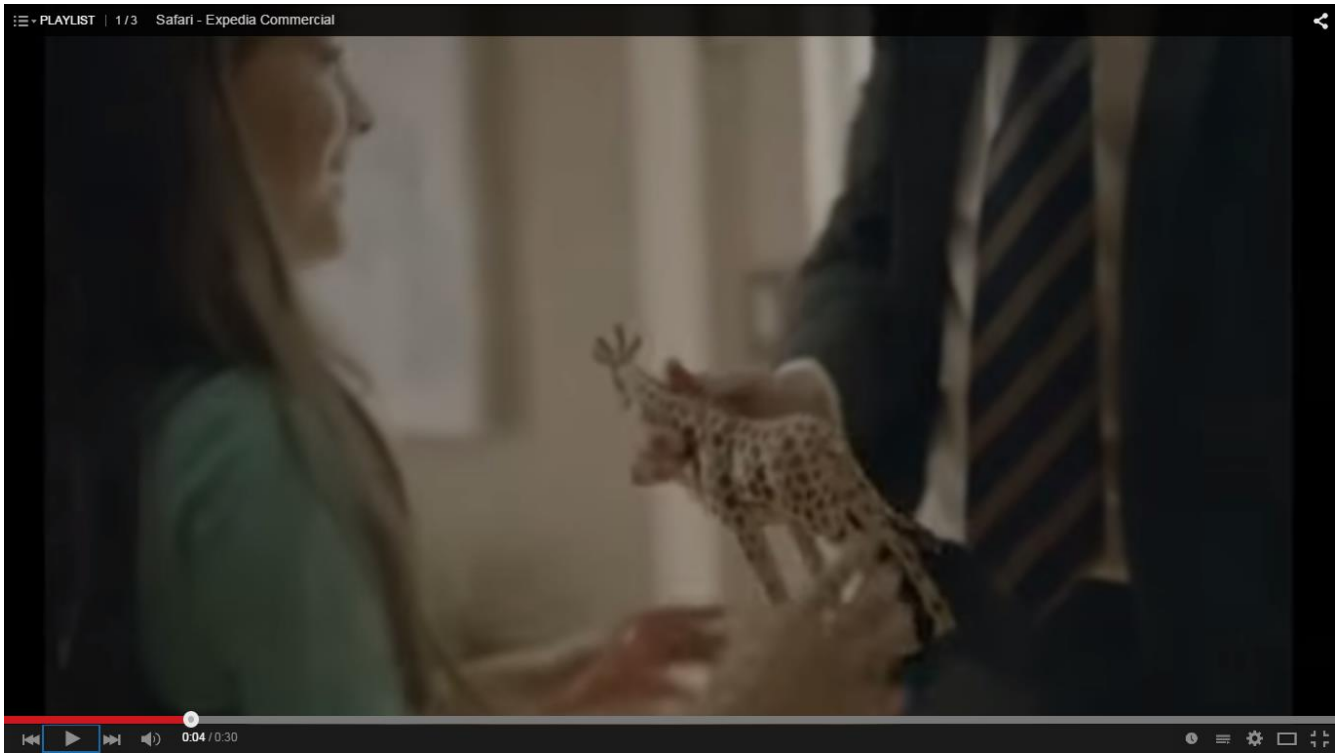
Screen Shots of 'Safari' (Expedia) Commercial



3.1



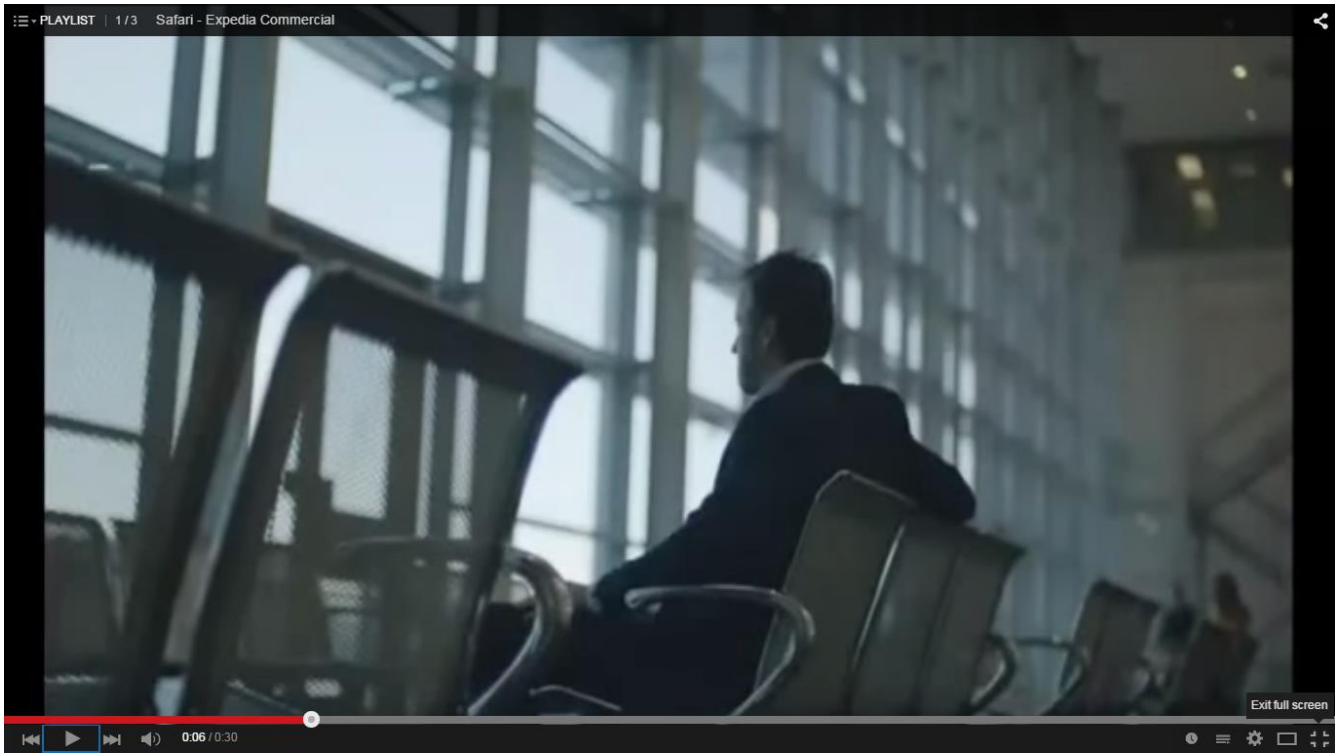
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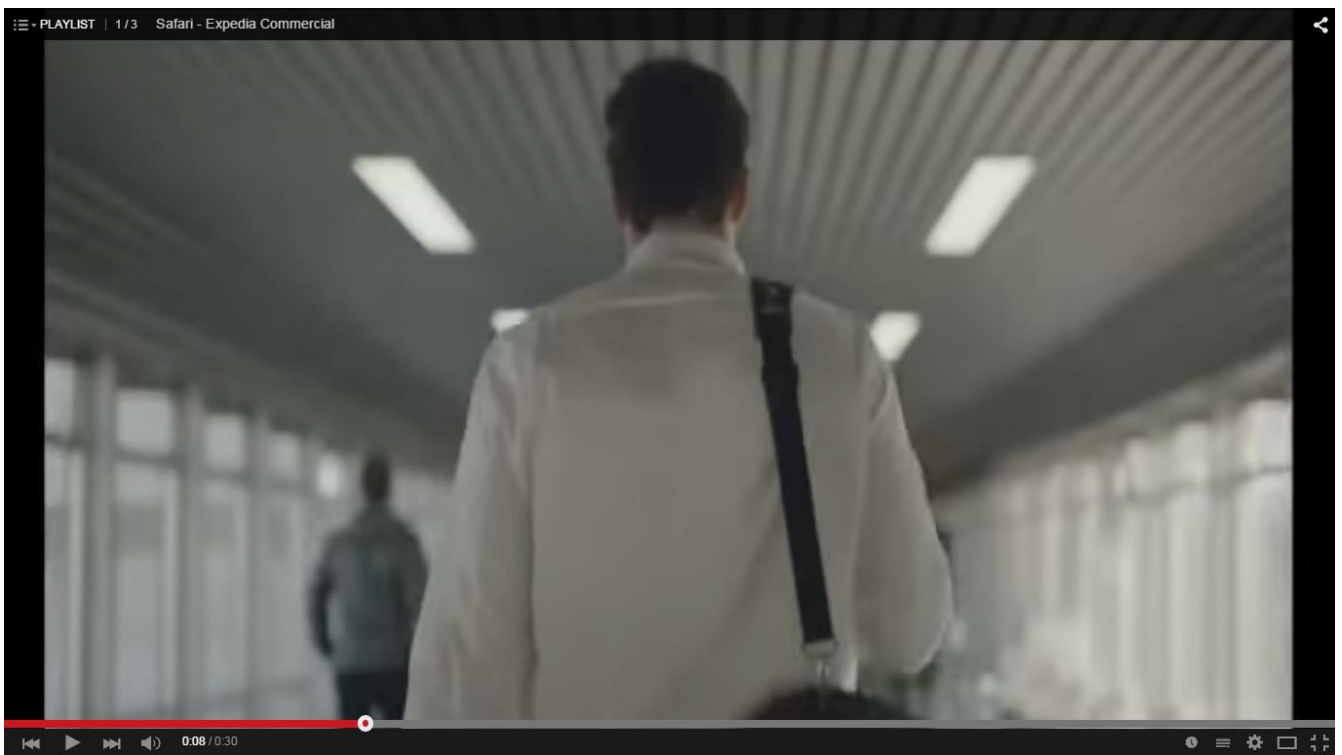
3.3



3.4



3.5



3.6



3.7



3.8



3.9



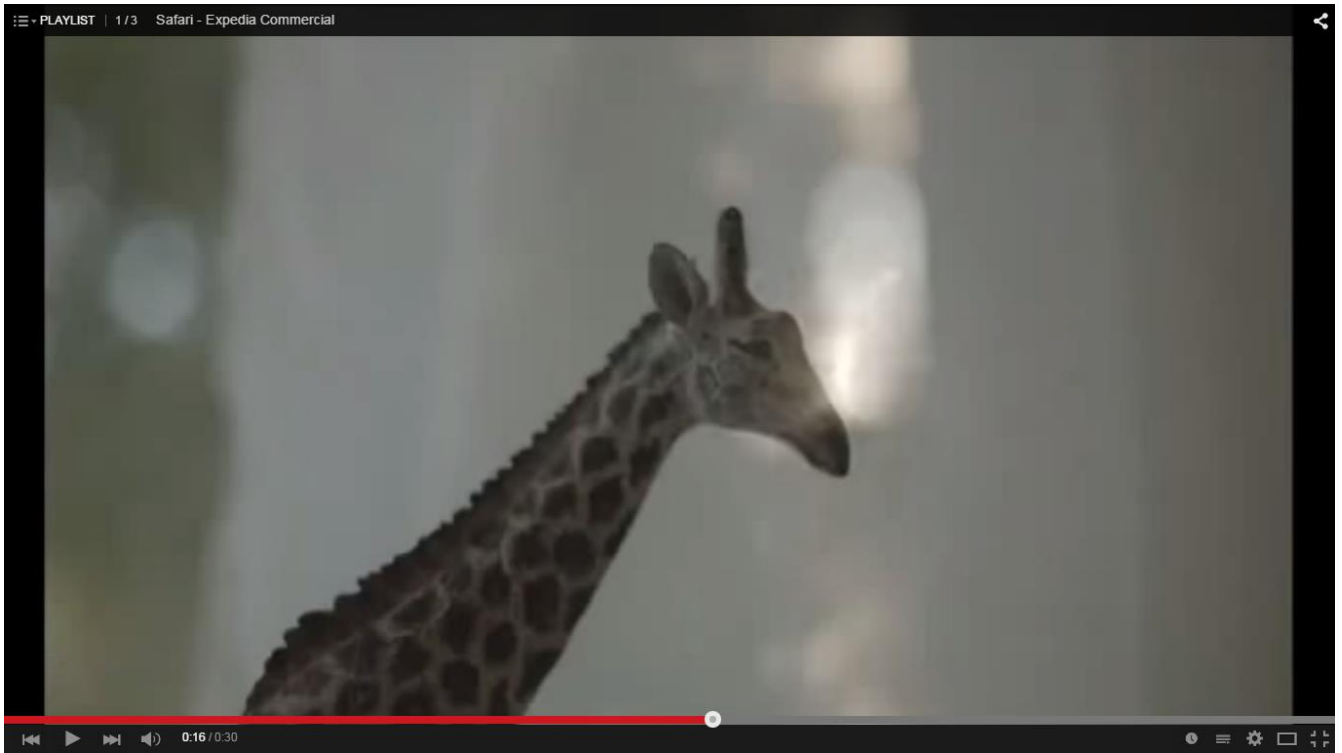
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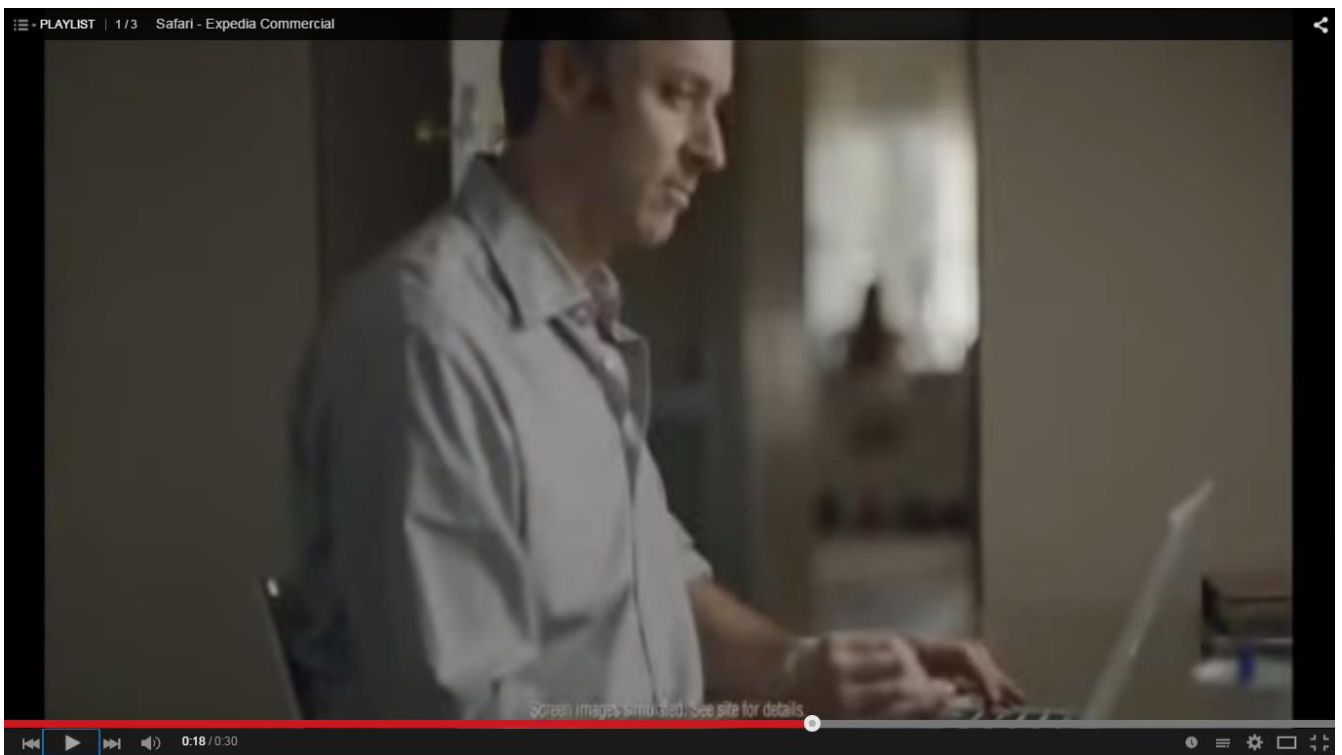
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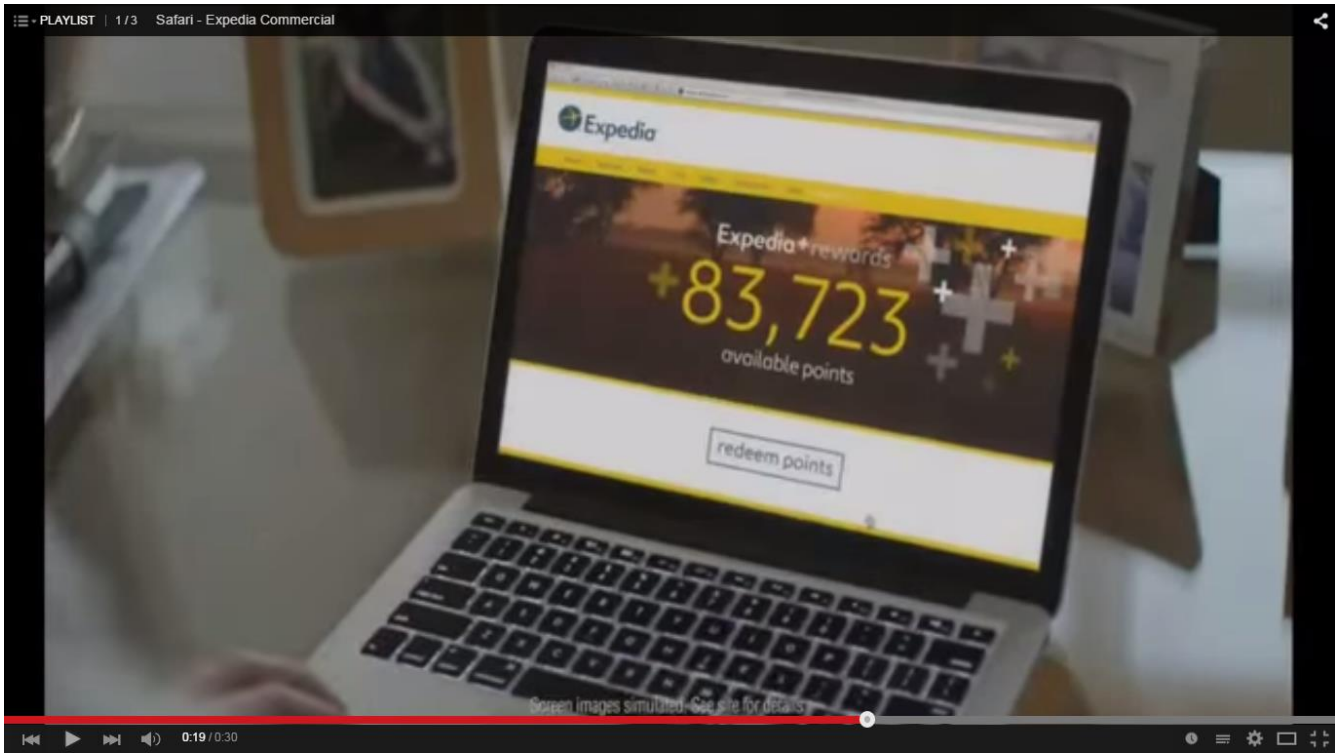
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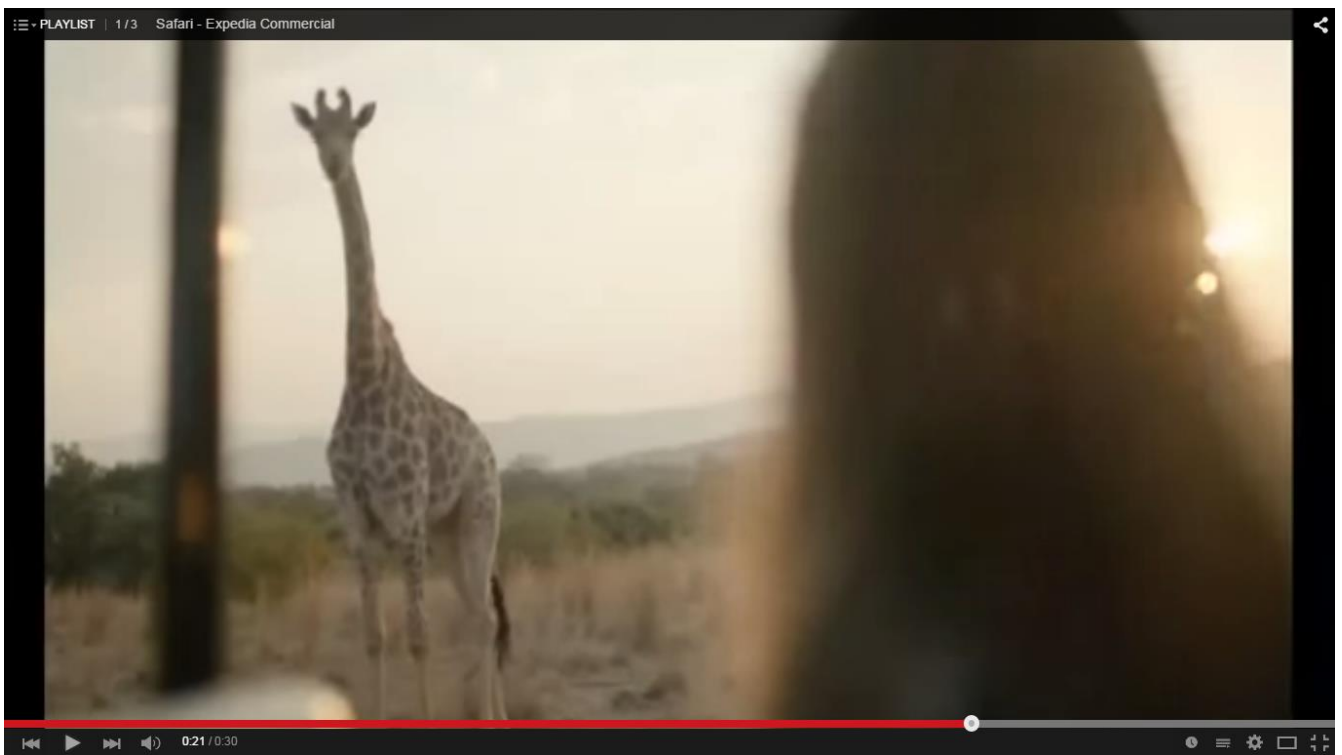
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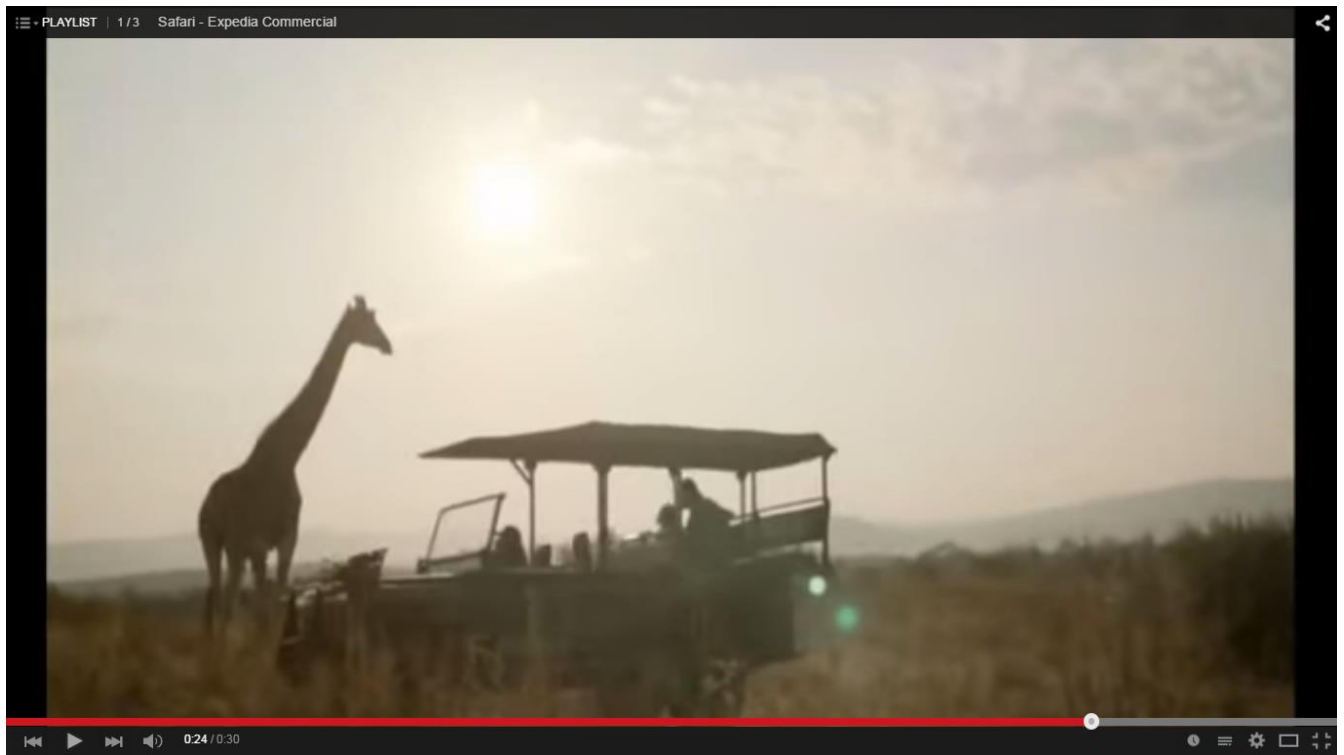
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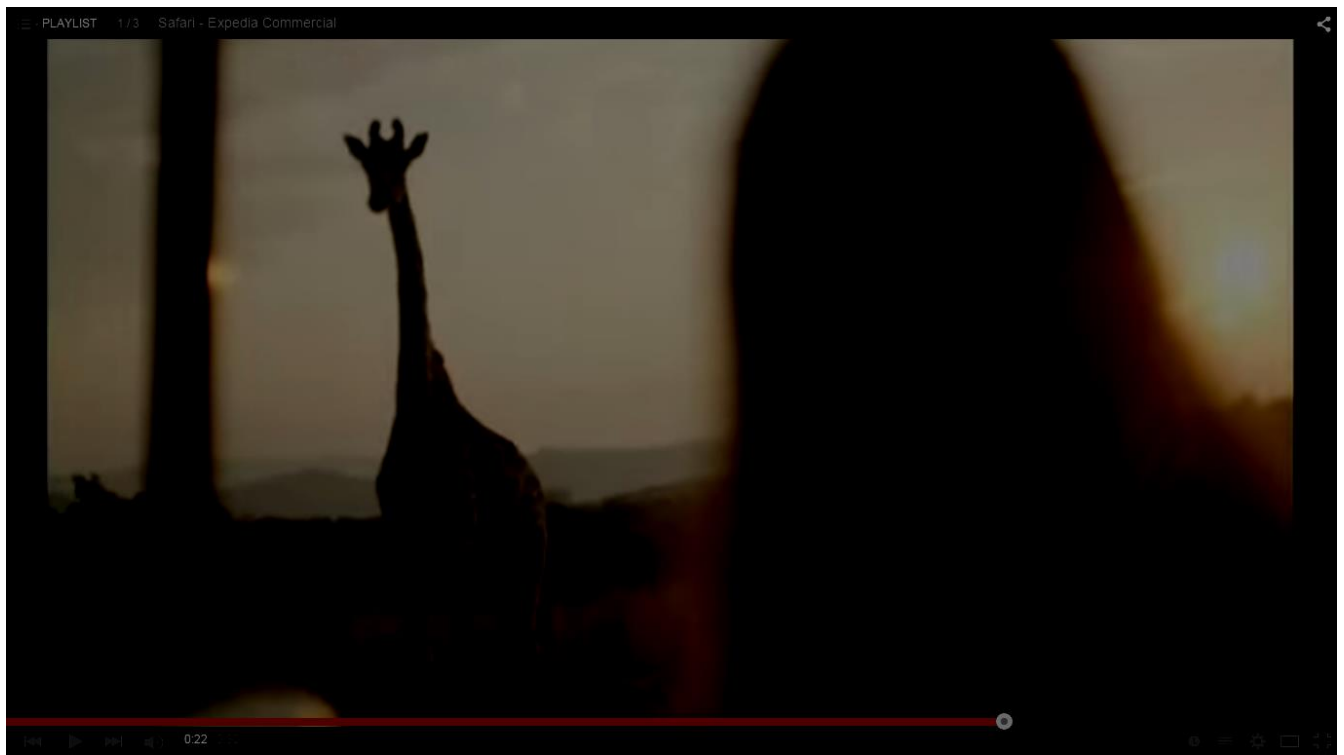
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3.16



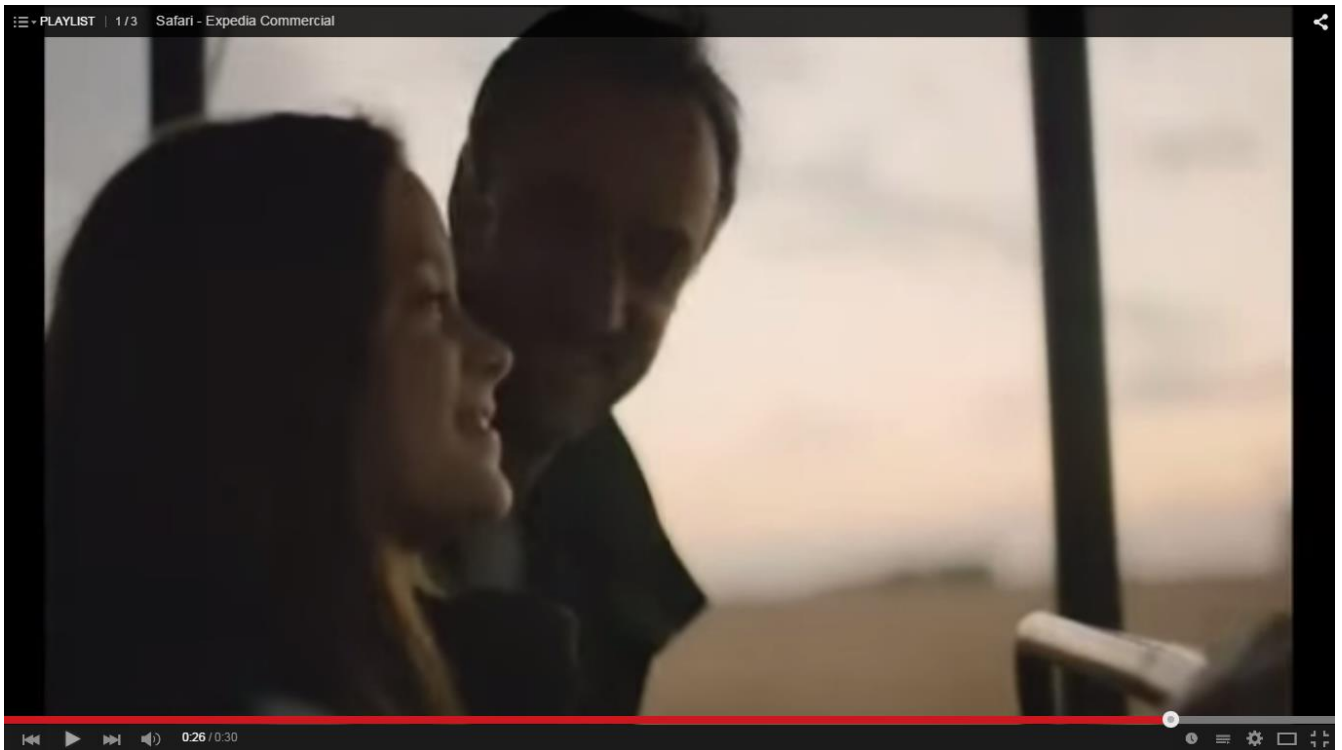
3.17



3.18

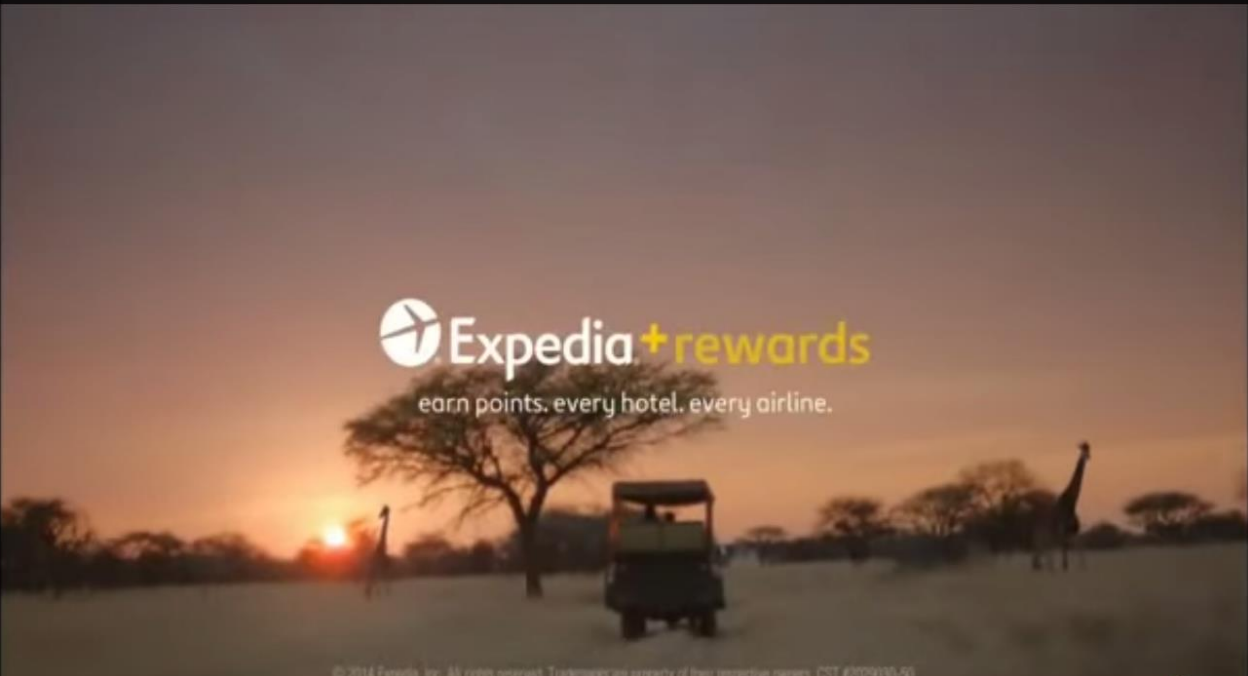


3.19



3.20

⋮ - PLAYLIST | 1/3 Safari - Expedia Commercial



Expedia+rewards
earn points. every hotel. every airline.

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⏮ ⏪ 🔊 0:27 / 0:30 ⏩ ⏭ ⚙️ 📺 🗑️

The image shows a video player interface. The main content is a commercial for Expedia+rewards. The background is a savanna landscape at sunset, with a safari vehicle in the center, a large acacia tree, and giraffes in the distance. The text 'Expedia+rewards' is centered, with 'Expedia' in white and '+rewards' in yellow. Below it is the tagline 'earn points. every hotel. every airline.' in white. At the bottom of the video frame, there is a copyright notice: '© 2014 Expedia, Inc. All rights reserved. Trademarks are property of their respective owners. CST #020930-50'. The video player controls at the bottom include a play button, a progress bar showing 0:27 / 0:30, a volume icon, and several other icons for settings, full screen, and playlist.

3.21

Appendix C

Reception Study Topics

Topics raised after each commercial:

1. General thoughts on the content of the commercial
2. General thoughts on the aesthetics of the commercials – was it appealing or unappealing?
3. General thoughts on the representations of masculinity in the commercials – is there a connection with the viewer?
4. Portrayal of stereotypes if applicable – are they generally negative or positive?
5. Strong agreements or appeals with sentiments expressed in the commercial

Previous experiences with the products advertised (have they purchased them, will/would they purchase them?)

General topics discussed after all commercials were aired to spur further discussion:

1. Interaction with commercials – sharing, commenting online, etc.
2. Effect or influence of mass media on the individual
3. How are you affected or influenced? For advertisement, does it extend beyond buying power?
4. Do you have any examples of ads that have impacted you in some way?
5. What impacts or influences your masculinity?
6. What, if anything, do advertisements teach you about masculinity or being a man?
Does this impact how you act?
7. What do you think advertisements teach society about men? How does this impact

your own sense of masculinity?

8. Are there any dangers or benefits in using advertisements to teach men how to act?
9. Are there any dangers or benefits in the way that advertisements portray men to society?

Appendix D Ethics Approval

File Number: 08-14-12

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 10/02/2014



Université d'Ottawa **University of Ottawa**
 Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Ethics Approval Notice Social Sciences and Humanities REB

Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Role</u>
Isaac	Nahon Serfaty	Arts / Communication	Supervisor
Melissa	Dawe	Arts / Communication	Student Researcher

File Number: 08-14-12

Type of Project: Master's Thesis

Title: The Use (or Misuse) of Stereotypes in Male-Centric Advertising

<u>Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</u>	<u>Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</u>	<u>Approval Type</u>
10/02/2014	10/01/2015	Ia

(Ia: Approval, Ib: Approval for initial stage only)

Special Conditions / Comments:
N/A

Appendix E

Critical Analysis

“Morty” – Reception Study No. 1

- Male passive – stood there and watched her perform housework
- Surveillance, protector, watching over her but no active role in cleaning
- Female/domestic realm – participants able to chalk this stereotype up to the age of the couple portrayed in the commercial
- Stereotype not immediately absorbed and accepted by participants
- Male inadequacies met with humour
- Male fretting – protector role, but disinterested in domestics (male stereotype)
- Dominant male authoritative figure, protector role
- Female products play off male stereotypes and vice versa
- Female industriousness and taking pride in her house seen as a positive female stereotype

“Morty – Reception Study No. 2

- Male dominance and protections
- Clear to the participants that the commercial is directed towards females not men
- Participants thought that perhaps the male in the commercial (Morty) wished cleaning was easier that cleaning was easier so that he wouldn't have to actively watch over/worry about his wife – he could return to sleeping on the couch
- Domestic realm as a female space viewed as a stereotype – male disinterest in the domestic realm also viewed as a stereotype – both considered to be negative by participants
- Participants were also able to dismiss the stereotyping present in the commercial due to the age of the couple portrayed – if same commercial featured a younger couple it would raise questions of equalitarianism
- Participants were able to sympathize with couple – thought that she might be more physically able to do the work
- Despite previous statements and suggestions about younger couples having different views on the household division of labour, all but one of the participants admitted to having an experience with Swiffer products. One participant admitted that he purchased the product because his mother used to do so
- When asked whether or not they would purchase a product like this, one participant joked that he would get his wife to do it

Stereotypes Identified in “Morty”

Male: passive, watching/protector, dominance, housecleaning not for males, disinterested in domestic affairs, worrying/fretting

Female: active, in control of domestic realm, industriousness, pride in household

Commonalities Between Reception Studies Regarding Stereotypes

- Commercial emphasizes the stereotype but it is not immediately absorbed and accepted
- Due to both the male and female stereotypes portrayed in the commercial, the participants thought the commercial was directed at female viewers
- Male inadequacies met with humour – male products play upon female stereotypes and vice versa
- Able to dismiss stereotyping based on nostalgia/age of the couple – using a younger couple would raise issues of equalitarianism

Participant Connection/Experience with the Commercial

- Despite some progressive views on domestic divisions of labour, participants had little to no experience with Swiffer products
- One participant admitted that he purchases the product because his mother used to, so he as continued the trend now that he is living on his own
- Another participant humorously stated that he would get his wife to purchase the product

“Protein” – Reception Study No. 1

- Satire on funny/crazy work out techniques
- Male workouts portrayed as more intense than female workouts
- Yoga, or a ‘female’ workout is portrayed as a joke – flexibility is not for men
- Participants thought that the commercial was directed towards someone who was new to the gym – attributed to cluelessness about working out, not knowing how to eat properly. Thought that people who were serious about fitness would not eat processed meat and cheese but instead, would turn to experts/opinion leaders for suggestions
- Participants assumed that the barista featured in the commercial was clueless – based only on visual interpretation as the barista had no dialogue
- Males viewed as dominant – females stuck helping the men achieve their goals

“Protein” – Reception Study No. 2

- Participants thought that the commercial featured mostly men because society views men as physical and active
- Again, as in “Morty”, stereotypes are met with humour (satire/mocking)
- Thought that men were portrayed as stupid – they don’t know what they are doing, they just want to get fit (dumb, gym rat stereotype). Men being portrayed in this fashion as not appreciated by participants
- Women as passive, useless, and oblivious – commercial is directed to males, so females are put in the passive role

Stereotypes Identified in “Protein”

Male: physical, active, gym rat stereotype (dumb and blindingly focussed on fitness), male work outs portrayed as more intense than female workouts

Female: useless, passive, oblivious, yoga seen as a joke (flexibility is not for men)

Commonalities Between Receptions Studies Regarding Stereotypes

- Inadequacies (of both genders) met with humour – male audience meant to laugh at the bizarre nature of the workout techniques, females meant to laugh at the lady passing out during hot yoga
- Participants not appreciative of men being portrayed as idiots
- Stereotypes seem to address/appeal to very physically fit men but the product may not appeal to the same people

Participant Connection/Experience with the Commercial

- Doesn't appeal to people who know about fitness and proper eating habits
- Disconnect between product and target audience left many participants confused about both the commercial and the product

“Safari” – Reception Study No. 1

- Father/daughter relationship portrayed – makes an emotional appeal
- Father shown as protector/provider – portrayed as working father who is also absent for long stents
- Luxury associated with financial security, something that a father can provide
- Some participants found the emotional appeal effective even though they aren't fathers
- Very open ended family dynamic: perhaps that other spouse spends an equal amount of time away on business, possibly a single father – participants thought it was open to interpretation

“Safari” – Reception Study No. 2

- Participants were unanimous: the dad portrayed was a single dad who travels a lot on business
- No mother on the safari trip or apparent at home
- Participants thought it was a depiction of the modern father; not available a lot due to work so he takes his daughter on a trip to bond and connect
- Aesthetics of the commercial depressing: muted colours, no dialogue just music – attributed to the emotional appeal
- Thought it might appeal to children who are in a similar situation
- Shows the father not only as a provider/breadwinner, but also as a nurturer/caregiver

Stereotypes Identified in “Safari”

Male: protector, breadwinner, absent working father, gentle, nurturer

Female: the only female in the commercial is the daughter – participants made no observations/comments regarding stereotypes applicable to the daughter character

Commonalities Between Receptions Studies Regarding Stereotypes

- Open-ended family dynamic: nuclear family complete with a mother is not featured, therefore some participants assumed he was a single dad, some participants made no assumption – too open, not clear
- It is clear that the daughter misses her father and that he is frequently absent (as indicated by her stuffed toy collection) – emotional appeal based on the absence of the father
- Thought it to be a realistic depiction of the modern father who works to provide for his family

- Any potentially negative stereotypes were negated by the father's care and concern for his daughter

Participant Connection/Experience with the Commercial

- Despite not being fathers, some participants were still drawn in by the emotional appeal – they found themselves sympathizing with the daughter
- Generally, the product advertised did not appeal to them – they suggested that advertising a more appealing destination (ie. a party/spring break location) in tandem with affordable pricing would be more engaging