

Unit 2.2

Masculinity

Word bank

manliness
masculinity
camera shot
socialisation
expression
linguistic determinism
gender bias
social constructs
syntax
readership
male chauvinism
spoof
culture jamming
subvertising
parody
pastiche
hypermasculinity
Bechdel test
patriarchy
role models
role reversal
awareness campaign
counterstereotypes
progressive
dadvertising

Learning objectives

- understand how gender roles have been constructed differently in different temporal contexts
- develop skills for analysing the stylistic and structural features of visual texts and moving images, such as advertisements and commercials
- become more aware of the issues of gender stereotype, and the pressures on men to be 'manly' or masculine
- develop creative skills by making your own advertisement.

In the previous unit you explored ways in which gender stereotypes are constructed, using the examples of stereotypes of mothers and wives. This unit continues to explore the problems of gender stereotyping, but in relation to men. What expectations are created for men by narrow definitions of **'manliness'** in the mass media? According to many dictionaries, 'manliness' includes such traits as 'tough', 'powerful' or 'rugged'. Where do these ideas come from?

In this unit you will consider how these definitions of manliness are constructed. You will study a range of texts, developing your skills of critical analysis and questioning gender stereotypes.

Getting started

2.1 What associations can you think of for the word **'masculinity'**?

- On a sheet of paper, write down three things that come to mind when you hear this word. Do not write your name on the paper.
- Give this paper to your teacher, who will read out your class's responses.
- What are the differences between 'masculinity' and 'manliness'? Discuss these differences as a class.

International mindedness

To what degree are your definitions of masculinity determined by the culture in which you were raised? Review your answers to Activity 2.1 and discuss how these definitions reflect your class's cultural backgrounds.

- 2.2** Read Text 2.11 which is a transcript of the Old Spice commercial. Watch the commercial online by searching for: 'Old Spice' and 'The Man Your Man Could Smell Like' or 'Smell Like a Man, Man'. Discuss your answers to these questions:

- a To what degree does this commercial promote your class's associations of masculinity which previously you wrote down for your teacher (Activity 2.1)?
- b What are the effects of its language on the audience? Consider its use of diction, images, symbols, **camera shot** and camera angle. Discuss your answers as a class. See Unit 1.3 on analysing film to support your discussion.
- c Whom does this commercial target – men or women? What makes you say this? How might men and women respond differently to this commercial?

Text 2.11

Hello, ladies, look at your man, now back to me, now back at your man, now back to me. Sadly, he isn't me, but if he stopped using ladies' scented body wash and switched to Old Spice, he could smell like he's me. Look down, back up, where are you? You're on a boat with the man your man could smell like. What's in your hand? Back at me. I have it. It's an oyster with two tickets to that thing you love. Look again, the tickets are now diamonds. Anything is possible when your man smells like Old Spice and not a lady. I'm on a horse.

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AOE question

How can texts present challenges and offer insights?

In response to Text 2.11, write a list of 'insights' and another list of 'challenges' with regard to:

- gender roles
- stereotypes
- gender equality.

2.3 Socialisation is the process of learning to behave in a way that is acceptable to society. It is the result of interactions between people, and the messages that you receive through various media in everyday life. How are young men and boys socialised through the use of various **expressions**? An expression is a turn of phrase that is commonly used. Here are some expressions that create unrealistic expectations of boys and men. They can be damaging to society and to relationships. Have you heard such phrases used before? Look up the meanings of any of these phrases you do not know. As a class, discuss these questions:

- Why might these phrases be thought offensive?
 - Why are they problematic for society?
 - What do they imply about manhood?
- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| a Nice guys finish last. | b to man up |
| c Boys don't cry. | d to grow a pair |
| e Men are pigs. | f mummy's boy |
| g Boys will be boys. | h to wear the pants/trousers |
| i That's so gay. | |

TOK

Is language a *description* of real-life experiences, or does language structure our understanding of real life? This is a question often asked in TOK.

The idea that language shapes our understanding of reality is known as **linguistic determinism**.

If the phrase 'that's so gay' is used to mean 'that's so stupid', then people will equate homosexuality with intellectual inferiority. This is why such phrases and others from Activity 2.3 can be harmful and offensive. Can you think of other examples of how language determines your understanding of gender roles?

2.4 Gender bias is the act of appealing to one gender over the other. Here are two job descriptions for an engineering job. The first one uses vocabulary that might appeal to a male audience. The second one might appeal to a female audience. Assign every italicised word in the job descriptions to a different person in your class. Individually, look up the meaning of your word or words (if you have been assigned more than one). Explain to your classmates why you think these words show a particular bias towards men or women.

Text 2.12

Engineering job descriptions

Barbara Annis and Richard Nesbitt 2017

	Male-themed words used in an engineering job description	Female-themed words used in an engineering job description
Company description	We are a <i>dominant</i> engineering firm that <i>boasts</i> many <i>leading</i> clients. We are <i>determined</i> to <i>stand apart</i> from the <i>competition</i> .	We are a <i>community</i> of engineers who have effective <i>relationships</i> with many <i>satisfied</i> clients. We are <i>committed</i> to <i>understanding</i> the engineer sector <i>intimately</i> .
Qualifications	<i>Strong</i> communication and <i>influencing</i> skills. Ability to <i>perform</i> <i>individually</i> in a <i>competitive</i> environment. <i>Superior</i> ability to <i>satisfy</i> customers and manage the company's association with them.	<i>Proficient</i> oral and written communication skills. Collaborates well in a <i>team</i> environment. <i>Sensitive</i> to clients' needs, can <i>develop</i> <i>warm</i> client <i>relationships</i> .
Responsibilities	<i>Direct</i> project groups to <i>manage</i> project <i>progress</i> and ensure accurate <i>task control</i> . <i>Determine</i> <i>compliance</i> with clients' <i>objectives</i> .	Provide general <i>support</i> to the project team in a manner that's complementary to the company. <i>Helps</i> client with construction <i>activities</i> .

From *Results at the Top: Using Gender Intelligence to Create Breakthrough Growth*

CONCEPT

Culture

Text 2.12, two job descriptions for the same job, gives you an insight into *culture*. It shows you how engineering firms view the role of men and women differently. How are gender roles expressed differently in job advertisements in the culture where you live?

2.5 Based on your discussions from the previous activities and your own experiences, describe the types of **social construct** that have been created by the media for men and boys. A social construct is a representation of a person, place or thing, collectively created by society through social interaction and the mass media. Complete these sentences. Share your answers with your classmates. How similar or different are your answers? How have the girls in your class answered differently from the boys?

- a In my society, there are pressures on men to be ...
- b A 'good' father is one who ...
- c People usually find men attractive when they ...
- d Certain characteristics of men that are not valued by society include ...

Readers, writers and texts

2.6 You are going to read Text 2.13, an editorial from a men's magazine which comments on what it means to be 'a man'. After reading the editorial, consider the statement: 'An ideal man, according to Text 2.13, is ...'. What evidence can you find in the text to support these endings (a–g) to this statement? Discuss your answers as a class.

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| a ... a gentleman. | b ... apolitical. | c ... a provider. |
| d ... sensitive. | e ... tough. | f ... heterosexual. |
| g ... knowledgeable. | h ... resourceful. | i ... responsible. |
| j ... honest. | k ... rigorous. | l ... disciplined. |

AOE question

How can texts present challenges and offer insights?

Do you remember this question? It was asked in response to Text 2.11 earlier in this unit. Return to your lists of insights and challenges in response to Text 2.11. After reading Text 2.13, are there any points you would add to your lists?

Text 2.13

What Is a Man?

Tom Chiarella for *Esquire* 2015

A man carries cash. A man looks out for those around him – woman, friend, stranger. A man can cook eggs. A man can always find something good to watch on television. A man makes things – a rock wall, a table, the tuition money. Or he rebuilds – engines, watches, fortunes. He passes along expertise, one man to the next. Know-how survives him. This is immortality. A man can speak to dogs. A man fantasizes that kung fu lives deep inside him somewhere. A man is good at his job. Not his work, not his avocation, not his hobby. Not his career. His job. It doesn't matter what his job is, because if a man doesn't like his job, he gets a new one. 5

A man can look you up and down and figure some things out. Before you say a word, he makes you. From your suitcase, from your watch, from your posture. A man infers.

A man owns up. That's why Mark McGwire is not a man. A man grasps his mistakes. He lays claim to who he is, and what he was, whether he likes them or not. 10

- Some mistakes, though, he lets pass if no one notices. Like dropping the steak in the dirt.
 A man doesn't point out that he did the dishes.
 A man looks out for children. Makes them stand behind him.
 A man knows how to bust balls. 15
 A man has had liquor enough in his life that he can order a drink without sounding breathless, clueless, or obtuse. When he doesn't want to think, he orders bourbon or something on tap.
 Never the sauvignon blanc.
 A man welcomes the coming of age. It frees him. It allows him to assume the upper hand and teaches him when to step aside. 20
 Maybe he never has, and maybe he never will, but a man figures he can knock someone, somewhere, on his ass.
 He does not rely on rationalizations or explanations. He doesn't winnow, winnow, winnow until truths can be humbly categorized, or intellectualized, until behavior can be written off with an explanation. He doesn't see himself lost in some great maw of humanity, some grand sweep. That's the liberal thread; it's why men won't line up as liberals. 25
 A man gets the door. Without thinking.
 He stops traffic when he must.
 A man resists formulations, questions belief, embraces ambiguity without making a fetish out of it. A man revisits his beliefs. Continually. That's why men won't forever line up with conservatives, either. 30
 A man knows his tools and how to use them – just the ones he needs. Knows which saw is for what, how to find the stud, when to use galvanized nails.
 A miter saw, incidentally, is the kind that sits on a table, has a circular blade, and is used for cutting at precise angles. Very satisfying saw. 35
 A man knows how to lose an afternoon. Drinking, playing Grand Theft Auto, driving aimlessly, shooting pool.
 He knows how to lose a month, also.
 A man loves driving alone most of all. 40
 Style – a man has that. No matter how eccentric that style is, it is uncontrived. It's a set of rules.
 He understands the basic mechanics of the planet. Or he can close one eye, look up at the sun, and tell you what time of day it is. Or where north is. He can tell you where you might find something to eat or where the fish run. He understands electricity or the internal-combustion engine, the mechanics of flight or how to figure a pitcher's ERA. 45
 A man does not know everything. He doesn't try. He likes what other men know.
 A man can tell you he was wrong. That he did wrong. That he planned to. He can tell you when he is lost. He can apologize, even if sometimes it's just to put an end to the bickering.
 A man does not wither at the thought of dancing. But it is generally to be avoided. 50
 A man watches. Sometimes he goes and sits at an auction knowing he won't spend a dime, witnessing the temptation and the maneuvering of others. Sometimes he stands on the street corner watching stuff. This is not about quietude so much as collection. It is not about meditation so much as considering. A man refracts his vision and gains acuity. This serves him in every way. No one taught him this – to be quiet, to cipher, to watch. In this way, in these moments, the man is like a zoo animal: both captive and free. You cannot take your eyes off a man when he is like that. You shouldn't. The hell if you know what he is thinking, who he is, or what he will do next. 55
 A man listens, and that's how he argues. He crafts opinions. He can pound the table, take the floor. It's not that he must. It's that he can. 60
 A man is comfortable being alone. Loves being alone, actually. He sleeps.
 Or he stands watch. He interrupts trouble. This is the state policeman. This is the poet.
 Men, both of them.

LEARNER PROFILE

To what degree does the 'man' described in Text 2.13 exemplify the character traits of the IB learner profile: open-minded, balanced, caring, knowledgeable, principled, thinker, communicator, inquirer, reflective, risk taker?

CONCEPT

Identity

Text 2.13 deals very much with *identity*. Why do you think Tom Chiarella wrote this text about what it means to be a 'man'? To what degree are his readers searching for answers about their own identity? Do you think the author is trying to define his own identity by writing this text? If you are a young man, think about the degree to which this text influences your own sense of identity.

TEXT AND CONTEXT

- Mark McGwire is an American baseball player who eventually admitted to using muscle-enhancing drugs.
- Grand Theft Auto is a violent computer game.
- ERA is an acronym for earned run average, a concept used to measure the ability of a baseball pitcher.

2.7 Syntax refers to the order in which words are written and the use of punctuation.

- The syntax in Text 2.13 is not always grammatically correct, as some sentences lack nouns. Why do you think the author chose this use of syntax?
- You could argue that the syntax of this text relies on short sentences and excessive use of punctuation. Why has the author written the text in this way?
- How does syntax contribute to the tone of the piece?

2.8 The term '**readership**' refers to the target audience of a particular newspaper, magazine or other frequently published text.

- Research the readership of *Esquire*, the magazine in which Text 2.13 was published. Read a few of its articles online.
- What words would you use to describe the audience that typically reads *Esquire*?
- To what degree does Text 2.13 appeal to that audience?

Find evidence to support your answers. Discuss your answers as a class.

Time and space

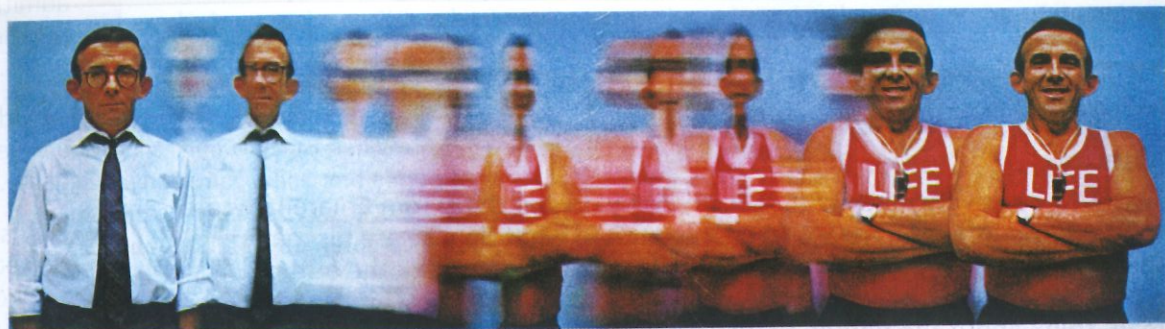
2.9 How have car advertisements changed over the past decades? Specifically, how do these changes reflect cultural shifts in gender roles and social constructs? Study Text 2.14 and discuss your answers to these questions:

- The tagline reads 'Only Mustang makes it happen!' What does 'it' refer to? What is the effect of the word 'only'?
- How does the copy of this advertisement use pun or a play on words, specifically with the word 'dig', which can mean 'like' and 'excavate'?
- 'Identity' is one of the key concepts for this course. How does this advertisement appeal to and comment on 'identity'?

Beliefs and values

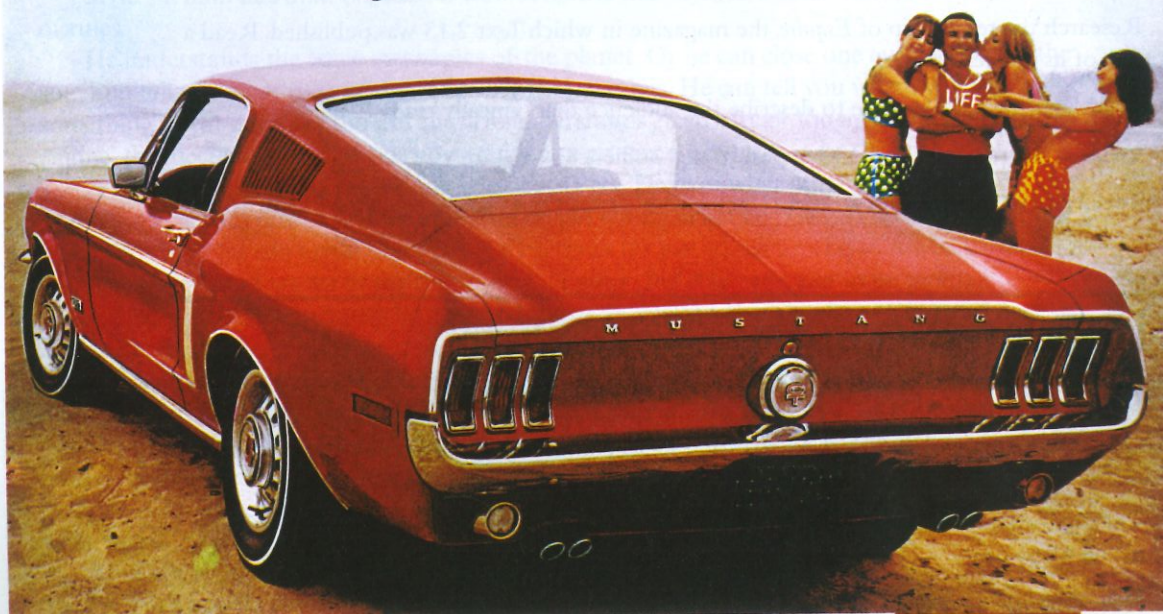
- d Look up the definition of the phrase '**male chauvinism**'. Is this an example of male chauvinism? Refer to this text to support your answers.
- e This advertisement is from 1968. Could a similar advertisement appear today?

Text 2.14



Sidney spent Sundays seashelling at the seashore. Then Sidney started digging the '68 Mustang—the great original. Dug the models: hardtop, fastback and convertible. Liked the low price, too, which left Sidney lots of clams to design his own Mustang, Sidney style. Now Sidney's making waves all over. Last week he saved 3 bathing beauties. (And they all could swim better than Sidney!)

Only Mustang makes it happen!



FACTS ABOUT THE 1968 MUSTANG: Mustang's list of standard equipment can't be matched by any other sporty car in its price range. Includes floor-mounted stick shift with fully synchronized 3-speed transmission, bucket seats, door-to-door carpeting, all-vinyl trim, 5-pod instrument cluster. And Mustang gives you a range of options no competitor offers. Like SelectShift with 3 forward speeds—can be used as a manual or an automatic; available with any model, any engine. Or an all-pushbutton AM Radio/Stereo/Tape System, V-8's up to 390 cu. in. And the broadest choice of performance options around: including a special heavy-duty suspension, front power disc brakes on all models, wide-oval tires, and more.



Mustang
Fastback GT

AOE question

How can cultural contexts influence how texts are written and received?

The Ford Mustang (Text 2.14) is a type of car, often called a 'muscle car', which has more horsepower and is lower to the ground than the average car. In the cultural context of muscle cars, this advertisement and the Dodge commercial (Text 2.15) may be highly effective in targeting their audience. What about the cultural contexts of other vehicles?

- a Find and compare advertisements for plug-in hybrids, minivans, utility vehicles or trucks.
- b How do these target a different demographic?
- c How has cultural context helped shape the production and reception of these texts?

2.10 In order to view Text 2.15, you need to do an online search for 'Man's Last Stand', a Dodge Charger commercial that aired during the 2010 Super Bowl. The Super Bowl is the championship game of the National Football League in the USA. American football is often seen as a 'tough' and 'masculine' sport. While both men and women watch the Super Bowl every year, many of the commercials appeal to a male audience. After watching the commercial as a class, discuss your answers to these questions:

- a Compare the titles of Text 2.14, 'Only Mustang makes it happen', and Text 2.15, 'Man's Last Stand'. How do these titles reflect different cultural contexts?
- b How does the context of Text 2.15, which aired in the USA during the Super Bowl in 2010, determine how it was received?
- c How does this commercial reflect cultural values that are similar to or different from those expressed in Text 2.14?
- d How do the implicit messages of Text 2.15 comment on masculinity and marriage? How appropriate are these messages in the context in which you live?

2.11 The previous activities asked you to compare and contrast advertisements for the same product from different times. Think of products that are typically marketed to men, such as lawn mowers or beer.

Do an online search for advertisements for these products from different eras. As a class, make a 'then and now' wall where you place copies of these advertisements side by side for your classmates to see. Discuss how notions of what it means to be a man have changed over time.

Record your findings in your learner portfolio.

AOE question

How do the conventions of different types of text develop over time?

While Text 2.14 is a print advertisement and Text 2.15 is a TV commercial, focus on the convention of using masculinity to sell 'muscle cars' in both texts. How have gender roles and relations shifted in the years between the texts? Where do you see evidence of this shift in these texts?

Text 2.15

Man's Last Stand, 2010

Do an online search for the Dodge Charger Super Bowl commercial from 2010, using the search term 'Man's Last Stand'.

Intertextuality: connecting texts

2.12 Text 2.15, the Dodge Charger commercial, was met with criticism after it aired in 2010. Criticism is sometimes best expressed through ‘**spoof**’. A spoof is a way of making fun of a particular text by imitating its style and structure for a different purpose. Do an online search for spoofs of the Dodge Charger commercial, using search terms such as ‘Women’s Last Stand’ or ‘Dodge Charger spoof ad’. Choose one of these spoof ads, and discuss your answers to these questions with your classmates:

- a** What is the main message of your spoof commercial? Why do you agree or disagree with this message?
- b** How does this spoof make you more conscious of how harmful the original commercial is towards women?
- c** How does this spoof achieve its purpose by using the same stylistic and structural features of the original commercial?

2.13 Spoof advertisements and commercials, like the ones you explored in the previous activity, are examples of **culture jamming**, or **subvertising**. These are tactics used to disrupt or subvert mainstream media and the messages they construct. Subvertising aims to expose the methods used in advertising by large corporations. It makes people think about the adverse messages that they frequently send. **Parody** and spoof are closely related to **pastiche** – a type of text that imitates the style of another text. Unlike spoof, which mocks a particular text, or parody, which mocks a genre of texts, pastiche does not mock the text on which it is based or the intentions of its author. Instead, pastiche draws inspiration from the original text and continues in a similar style.

In this activity you will consider one example of a pastiche:

- a** Divide into two groups and go into separate rooms.
- b** The first group reads the poem *Broetry* by Brian McGackin (Text 2.16) and prepares a short presentation. In the presentation, explore the purpose of the author, his use of language and how readers may interpret his poem.
- c** The second group reads both *Broetry* (Text 2.16) and ‘This is Just to Say’ by William Carlos Williams, a poem which you can find through an online search. This group also researches common interpretations of Williams’s poem and prepares a presentation on *Broetry* (Text 2.16), exploring the author’s purpose, use of language and the readers’ response in the light of Williams’s poem.
- d** Both groups then come together in one room. The first group should present first. After the second group has presented, discuss how the analyses were different. How was the second group’s interpretation different from that of the first group? How was the second group’s interpretation affected by the knowledge that *Broetry* is a pastiche?

Text 2.16

Cover poem from *Broetry*

Brian McGackin 2011

I have finished
the beer
that was in
the icebox

and which 5
you were probably
saving
for Friday

Forgive me
this girl came over 10
so sweet
and so hot.

AOE question

How can comparing and interpreting texts transform readers?

Activity 2.13 shows how interpretations of the same poem can be different, especially when one interpretation is informed by an interpretation of another poem. You can do this type of activity with other pastiches or parodies.

Towards assessment

2.14 In 2013, psychologists Megan Vokey, Bruce Tefft and Chris Tysiaczny at the University of Manitoba published a paper about the problems of **hypermasculinity**. Hypermasculinity, according to them, is underpinned by four beliefs:

- Danger is exciting.
- Toughness is a form of emotional self-control.
- Violence is manly.
- It's fine to be callous about women and sex.

The researchers studied over 500 advertisements in several mainstream men's magazines from 2007 to 2008 and concluded that over 50% of advertisements promoted one or more of these four beliefs of hypermasculinity. Conduct your own research, using similar methods.

- a Find several magazines (in print) that generally appeal to a male readership.
- b For each advertisement, check to see if there is evidence of one or more of the beliefs that underpin hypermasculinity.