"HE WOULDN'T BE SEEN USING IT…"

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE

INFLUENCE OF MEN'S FACIAL SKINCARE ON

MALE IDENTITY

ANGELA DIANNE BYRNE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Manchester Metropolitan University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology

The Manchester Metropolitan University

2017

Contents

Figures

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work, has not previously been submitted in any form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere, and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

Angela Dianne Byrne

Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without the help of many people who have supported me along the way, so if you are not mentioned here, then I apologise for the oversight. First, I give thanks to my family who have not only supported me, encouraged me and believed in my ability to complete this Herculean task alongside full-time work, family and voluntary commitments. Thank you Brendan, Ciara, James and Malachy – I am hoping you can continue your life and academic journeys in the knowledge that it is never too late to achieve your goals too! Thanks also to my parents and friends who have continued to believe in my ability to get this study done.

I am grateful for the Department of Marketing, Retail and Tourism in the Faculty of Business and Law at Manchester Metropolitan University who have sponsored me over the years and been supportive in helping me to complete this thesis. My thanks especially go to Professor Ruth Ashford and Rod Humphreys as my past Heads of Department who encouraged me to continue. I also made a promise the day before a dear colleague passed away that I would complete this PhD so not forgetting my friend Dr Helene Hill for her belief in me. My thanks also goes to Dr Katie Milestone my Director of Studies, and supervisor Professor Steve Miles who have diligently guided this work and provided constructive criticism, support and pragmatic advice on how to complete this thesis. I must not forget the participants who took part in this research, giving up their time and providing a few laughs along the way. Thank you for your contribution as this study would not have been possible without your involvement. Finally, I thank God for my continuing faith and answering my prayers.

Abstract

This thesis presents the results of an empirical study investigating the use of facial skincare products by men in the UK. It examines the under-researched area of how men negotiate facial skincare usage in terms of masculine identities. Men's facial skincare remains a 'culturally sensitive' area (Hall, 2015). The existing literature on various types of 'capital' (Bourdieu, 1979) does not adequately describe the cultural and social benefits for men using facial skincare products to improve their appearance. Furthermore, 'gender capital' (Bridges, 2009) fails to explain sufficiently how men protect their sense of masculine identity whilst using a potentially feminising product. The research explores the consumption of a diverse range of products within this growing sector of consumption that supposes men should seek to improve their overall body image (Cornwall *et al.,* 2016). The study offers an insight into how modern men relate to products that were previously positioned in relation to women's beauty. The research adopts a social constructionist approach. Firstly, a framework based on the approaches of Williamson (2002) and Van Leeuwen (2005) for semiotic analysis is developed and used to illustrate the various signifiers of masculinity applied by advertisers for audiences. The second stage of the research is focussed on qualitative interviews and the first of two focus groups with men about their responses to advertisements for male skincare products and their feelings about male skincare and masculine identities in the 21st Century. Final stage data collection explores how pressures on appearance informs identity ideals involved interviews with younger males supplemented by a focus group. In addition, industry representatives express their views in a series of interviews in order to provide a means by which to understand current trends and issues surrounding men's facial skincare products. Key findings from this study highlight how men escape accusations of being vain or effeminate whilst using a product that retains a feminine inference. The reliance on women to guide decision-making provides a context that enables men to preserve their male identity by distancing themselves from seeming to be overtly interested in a 'beautifying' product. The contested concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1995) and Cooley's (1902) 'looking glass' analogy are brought together through the concept of 'looking glass capital' to illustrate how men who use facial skincare products benefit from an improved appearance and how they go about protecting gender ideals.

Chapter One. Introduction

Introduction

> *"A self-idea seems to have three principle elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person, the imagination of his (sic) judgment of that appearance, and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification… The thing that moves us to pride or shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind"* (Cooley, 1902: 164).

We are in an era where individuals are actively encouraged to work upon their bodily appearance as part of an aesthetic improvement of the self (Elias *et al.,* 2017). Recent research on UK male grooming has been largely limited to trends in relation to men and their body shape and weight loss (Gough *et al.,* 2014) or to understanding men's desire to create a 'V'-shaped 'spornosexual' body (Hakim, 2016). Another focus of research has considered the evolving practices of body depilation termed as 'manscaping' (Hall, 2015). There has been little exploration of the role that facial skincare plays for men and the implications this has for current constructions of masculinity. An exception to this is a study highlighting how men attest facial skincare products are used for anti-ageing purposes, conducted in Finland and the USA (Ojala *et al.,* 2016). The implications that facial skincare products have for ideals of masculinity and male identity are explored in this study.

The under-researched area of men's attitudes towards facial skincare products is investigated in this thesis in order to understand what this reveals about contemporary masculinity. By exploring any identity implications that may result from men's use of facial skincare products, this study seeks to gain "a knowledge of the real world that contributes to its reality" (Bourdieu, 1979: 467). Whilst not the primary focus for this study, Bourdieu's (1979) discussion of 'capital' as a supporting ideology sheds light on how a potentially feminising practice, namely facial skincare is being taken up by men. One way of understanding this is through the application of Cooley´s (1902) concept of the 'looking-glass self' as it suggests how a person's self grows out of social interactions with others. In what ways we are perceived to be viewed by others is highlighted by Cooley as informing our sense of self. Reflecting upon how men relate to the use of facial skincare products provides a context for a wider understanding of masculinity, as

highlighted by Blackburn's (2014: 16) observation of how our identities are "our lifelines used to guide the journey".

Perceptions surrounding what is currently accepted as notional ideals for gender influence our identity. Orbach (2017: vii) highlights that a woman's sense of femininity is formed from how the body is "seen, treated and handled". She points towards how an increasing trend towards the 'commercialisation of the body' has resulted in greater value being placed on 'aesthetic labour' or the work involved in creating a desirable appearance. In seeking to gain a better understanding of femininity, Elias *et al.* (2017) describe how 'aesthetic entrepreneurship' refers to how self-transformation is achieved through the management of the body. This trend is not limited solely to women. Elias *et al.* (2017: 5) argue that, "neoliberalism makes us *all* 'aesthetic entrepreneurs'" as we are encouraged to work upon our appearance physically to help improve how we subjectively feel about ourselves. The body is seen as key to understanding the complexities of gender and subjectivity in the 'neoliberal era' (Elias *et al.,* 2017). Whilst neoliberalism lacks a clear definition, Elias *et al.* (2017) notes that a common feature of the concept involves the extension of market principles into all areas of life. Hakim (2016) offers an understanding of neoliberal notions that suggests there is an underlying need for freedom of expression and drive towards individuals seeking to attain 'completion of the self'. Men's use of facial skincare offers an example of how males individually and collectively are prompted to compete and 'complete' their improving skin appearance in pursuit of a form of wealth gained as 'capital'. In this study, I highlight how men are increasingly encouraged to partake in practices that form part of a wider economic process that benefit the beauty industry and is often rationalised as 'looking after ourselves'.

It was around the start of this millennium that facial skincare products specifically for men were first available in the UK. Facial skincare has strong links with the concept of improving visual appearance for women and as such offers an interesting arena to study in terms of how advertisers position similar products for men. The introduction of this male grooming resource is explored in terms of why they are marketed at men and how this potentially informs male identity. This study aims to offer an appreciation of how male engagement with this practice provides an insight into contemporary attitudes

towards gender and identity. The fact that facial skincare products for men exist is not sufficient to prompt consumption by men (Mintel, 2016). Men's actual skin has not changed; however, society's expectations of men have (Tungate, 2011). As a result, this study also draws attention to changes within society that have placed an increased pressure upon men to improve their appearance and combat wrinkles to age well. Ojala *et al.* (2016) highlight how the face as a site for ongoing defence against the signs of ageing has prompted men to scrutinise their appearance.

At the opening of this chapter, a brief extract of Cooley's (1902) concept of the 'looking-glass self' illustrates how we come to envision ourselves through the eyes of others. Borrowing from the looking-glass analogy, this research sheds light on the growing pressure placed upon men to improve their facial skin appearance which has to date received little attention. This increased focus on their physical image by men forms part of a trend towards considering appearance enhancement as a form of an ongoing 'project' (Hall, 2015). The need to improve their face with skincare products is 'mediated' as an acceptable ideal for men (Jackson *et al.,* 2011). This is driven partly by the growing importance of celebrity role models such as David Beckham, who are perceived to offer a positive link with masculinity and facial skincare products (Kelting and Rice, 2013). In addition, the trend for 'selfies' has prompted men to look at themselves more critically in terms of their image, creating an increased additional pressure to present positive images of the self on social media (Pounders *et al,* 2016). Eager and Dann (2016) suggest that the advent of 'selfies' has encouraged a form of 'human branding' whereby individuals seek to present the most positive version of their image to upload and share to platforms such as *Snapchat*. Moreover, the varied range of products and services positioned to improve men's looks suggest that men *should* be doing more to enhance their overall appearance (Mintel, 2017). I draw attention in this study to how developing beauty practices for men potentially conflicts with traditional ideals of masculinity. Patriarchal values persist suggesting natural male dominance in positions of power (Butler, 2004). This translates in how appearance is supposedly less of a concern for men.

In this study the contemplation by males of an improved skin that may be achieved by use of facial skincare products is explored in the context of how men's ideals may be informed by the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2003). Gender ideals

continue to guide how men and women relate to some consumption choices such as the use of facial skincare. The implications of men changing their grooming practices to embrace facial skincare offers an insight into expectations of masculinity currently. The imagined effect of how other men (and women) judge appearance as part of the 'looking-glass self' (Cooley, 1902) is adapted in this thesis. Hence, as a result of using men's facial skincare products, men can imagine how this is appreciated, or indeed, *expected* by others. Cooley's (1902) 'looking-glass self' provides a context to explain how men reflect upon their improved facial skin appearance but seek to ensure their ideals for masculine identity are not compromised by this potentially feminising beauty practice.

Specifically, Cooley (1902) refers to an 'imputed sentiment' in respect of how men wish others to perceive their appearance in a positive manner. This supposition provides a perspective for this research. Advertisers and retailers offer a reason for men to use facial skincare products as a seemingly normative practice. This also suggests a growing understanding by men that their appearance is being 'judged' by others. Cooley (1902) proposes that the judgement can lead to a sense of 'pride' or 'mortification'. Pride contains an evaluative dimension that suggests we feel pride when we think we deserve the admiration of others as opposed to simply anticipating it (Blackburn, 2014). Linking this to the use of facial skincare products by men, pride can be gained by evaluating the results of the improved skin they have attained. I argue that whilst modern men wish to feel a sense of pride in their appearance, they seek to retain traditional ideals in respect to expectations of how men should notionally not be too obviously concerned with their looks. The potential for a sense of 'mortification' highlighted by Cooley (1902) is also possible in relation to how facial skincare products used by men in obvious ways may result in the suggestion of a diminished masculine identity for some men.

The facial skincare market for women is well established. However, *Beiersdorf,* (*Nivea's* parent company), highlighted in November 2015 that competition in women's facial skincare is hardening. Smaller players like *Beiersdorf* are struggling to keep pace with the larger facial skincare companies, like *Proctor and Gamble*. For that reason, skincare manufacturers have recognised a potential way forward through developing the men's facial skincare market, where competitive barriers are lower and growth potential is high (Euromonitor International, 2015). The continued proliferation of men's facial skincare

products stems from a desire by brands to drive up skincare market sales. Nevertheless, facial skincare retains strong affiliation with women, as products were originally positioned as part of a female beauty routine. This presents a problem in terms of the positioning of men's facial skincare products.

In a patriarchal society, concerns about looks are traditionally a pressure placed on women (Bennett and Gough, 2012). Thus, products linked to beauty 'nudge' the boundaries of traditional ideals of masculinity. Historical associations of facial skincare as a field connected with women conflates product use with femininity. As a result, connecting men with facial skincare use has the potential to 'feminise' men. Facial skincare products for men have implications for male identity as traditional ideals of masculinity are challenged by men's use of 'beautifying' products (Hall, 2015). This thesis seeks to explain how men articulate facial skincare product use in relation to male identity.

Background to the Thesis

The men's facial skincare sector in the UK has grown exponentially in recent years and is worth an estimated £100 million in 2017 (Mintel, 2017a). As such, men's grooming is a valuable sector and an interesting one to consider in terms of how this might relate to societal gender ideals. Recent trends have seen sales slow down mainly due to the current fashion for facial hair amongst men, but the market remains strong. This study offers an insight into why men are consuming such products and what this tells us about current constructions of masculinities.

Gender ideals are influenced by media such as advertising offering a form of 'reality' used to position facial skincare products as an acceptable consumption practice for men. Models are selected by advertisers to purposively "inflame our desires and lure us with youth and beauty" (Blackburn, 2014: 45). This is an accepted approach for the promotion of products traditionally linked with women and beauty but presents a challenge to advertisers determined to ensure facial skincare routines are accepted as a mainstream masculine practice. Therefore, this thesis highlights how advertisers use techniques to associate products with signifiers of masculine ideals to legitimise facial skincare as a male consumption practice. As a potent influencer of societal trends, advertising offers a

lens through which we can explore how a product sector historically linked to women is offered subsequently to men. Mills (2015) points out that men and women differ in their response to advertising and brands that noticeably differentiate for gender such as the 'for men' descriptor help to stimulate male facial skincare product consumption.

The inception of men's facial skincare products was not purely an opportunistic launch by manufacturers from the women's market. There has been a cultural shift in attitudes, whereby men are becoming more susceptible to buying goods and services aimed to improve their overall appearance. Male grooming products and services such as moisturisers, facials and more recently, beard oils are now more widely available (Mintel, 2016). Nevertheless, men are not a homogenous group. My research has sought to gain an insight into male participant's thoughts on skincare. This has been drawn from a sample encompassing a range of age groups. Cooley's (1902) suggestion that appearance is judged by others maintains relevance for this research in terms of how men currently negotiate the idea of using facial skincare products, in reference to the effect this has upon their 'self-feeling' or identity.

Borrowing from Cooley's (1902) 'looking-glass self' analogy, this study seeks to understand how facial skincare for men helps to inform male identity by offering an insight of the "imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind" (Cooley, 1902: 164). The research draws attention to the idea that men are consuming facial skincare products as part of a wider trend towards men seeking to improve their appearance. Additionally, the thesis highlights how advertising increases the pressure upon men to consider their appearance as an ongoing 'improvement project' as suggested by the proliferation of facial skincare products 'for men'. Advertising creates fantasy. The consumer will not become the persona in the advertisement in terms of enhanced looks (Blackburn, 2014). However, importantly for this study, men may have an increased confidence as a result of using facial skincare products.

The facial skincare market is heterogeneous and there remains an ambivalence towards product consumption amongst men, especially within the older generation of males (Mintel, 2017; Mintel, 2017a). For those who remain in the workplace longer, there is greater appreciation that older workers cannot afford to neglect their appearance. There is arguably an increased pressure for men to compete with younger colleagues once they

reach the age of 40 (Aldin, 2007). This is especially the case in the advertising and digital industries where younger employees are perceived as being more creative than older men (Sorrentino, 2014). Facial skincare products serve to boost skin appearance. Blackburn (2014) highlights how those who are considered as attractive by others are more likely to find friends and partners and interestingly, they tend to earn at least 5 percent more in their careers than those considered less good-looking.

There are differing ways of embodying masculinity. The older generation seem to favour a more traditional version of ideals of how men should act and be represented (De Casanova *et al.,* 2016). Hence, 'menaissance man' has been adopted as a moniker for British men who have yet to fully embrace moisturising (Bainbridge, 2008). On the other hand, media figures such as David Beckham have provided a positive influence on the facial skincare market for men, adding the 'cool' and 'must-have' factors to male-grooming products (Bainbridge, 2008). It is in this context that this thesis explores the consumption of male facial skincare products in relation to the supposed pressure that is placed upon men to improve their appearance whilst ensuring that traditional masculine status is not lost.

Structure of the Thesis

The study explores what facial skincare reveals about the broader context in which masculinities are negotiated and constructed, relating to men's sense of self and identity. I argue that men subvert any potentially feminising aspects of facial skincare use by drawing upon 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2003) ideals to support how this improves their appearance and opportunities. Enhanced appearance is acquired as a result of men using facial skincare products. The concept of the 'looking-glass self' (Cooley, 1902) provides a context to appreciate the increased awareness for men of the gaze placed upon them. How use of facial skincare products relates to men's sense of identity is explored as an illustration of the trend towards men as consumers of beauty products.

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to original knowledge about male attitudes towards facial skincare products and addresses the following aims and objectives as core concerns:

- What are the factors that are driving forward the male facial skincare market?
- How are men's attitudes towards face skincare consumption influenced and acted upon by men?
- What do men's attitudes towards male facial skincare products tell us about contemporary constructions of masculinities?

A brief outline of the sequencing of the chapters is provided here to help guide the reader through the development of the thesis.

Chapter Two examines the nature of consumption and consumer society to understand how attitudes towards men's facial skincare products differ in respect of gender expectations. A short history of the emergence of facial skincare products within the UK is provided in this chapter. This adds a better understanding of the evolution of the men's facial skincare market. The chapter explores the process of how it is that facial skincare, linked to women and beauty in the past, is now being reconfigured as something aimed at men. The changes that have occurred over time are outlined offering an insight into how facial skincare products for men are designed to align with notions of masculinity. Another theme explored within the chapter centres around understanding how the marketing of men's facial skincare products are positioned to appeal to a diverse range of men without implying a degree of feminisation. The chapter goes on to consider the ways that consumption influences ideals for male identity. The writing of Zygmunt Bauman (2012) helps to provide a context for how men's facial skincare presents an opportunity to explore attitudes to consumption in relation to identity in this study. Various themes relating to purchase of men's facial skincare and male consumers are used to consider why some men use facial skincare products and others reject the practice.

Chapter Three explores gender and how neoliberalism is influencing masculinities. These important areas are examined in relation to a changing gender spectrum. Ideals of masculinity are contested. In this chapter, I consider the suggestion that men should be less concerned with their image than women should. How an increased focus on improving their appearance might affect men's self-concept and what this reveals about changing notions of gender are contemplated. As a result, this chapter offers an

additional insight for what this reveals about male identity in relation to the evolving positive connotations of men's facial skincare.

Chapter Four looks at the contribution of advertising and celebrity culture to consider the influence this has upon masculinities in terms of representing facial skincare as a social norm for men. The chapter highlights how traditional forms of advertising have seen a reduction in the effect they have upon younger audiences especially. In addition, advertising is discussed in relation to exploring how celebrity culture has enjoyed a meteoric rise in terms of exposure to the public (Gee, 2014). The relative power of advertising to influence audiences is reviewed in relation to the potential of celebrity culture to inform new ideas such as the adoption of men's facial skincare practices. Celebrities can offer lifestyles that audiences wish to emulate. The intentional stylisation of contemporary forms of masculinities in advertising and the relevance of such depictions is discussed in relation to how this influences male facial skincare consumption. This also relates to the discussion in Chapter Three exploring typologies of masculinities and influences in modern society.

Chapter Five considers the methods used to research the questions at the heart of this study. A social constructionist methodology is presented as the approach considered most appropriate for this research. A detailed overview of the various phases of research that were completed are also outlined. The research employs a variety of qualitative methods that are discussed in this chapter. The approach used for the semiotics analysis of samples of advertisements within the first two phases of the research is also outlined.

Chapter Six provides the first of three chapters exploring the findings and analysis. Semiotic analysis of facial skincare advertisements carried out by the researcher are presented and discussed to identify key 'resources' used by advertisers to convey gender. The techniques used by advertisers to signify masculinity in facial skincare adverts are highlighted and discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Seven presents the findings and analysis focusing on the sample of men's facial skincare product advertisements outlined in Chapter Six. These advertisements were considered using the views of male participants in two distinct phases of data collection. Various themes are identified and these are considered in relation to how advertisers

position products for men in ways that reinforce facial skincare as a practice for male audiences. A focus group with males from differing age groups and backgrounds discussed key themes that were identified from the two phases of analysis and interviews.

Chapter Eight considers phase three of the research, in which interviews with younger males from upper sixth form college and university were conducted. In addition to meetings with grooming industry professionals, a focus group took place to explore different consumption influences. The emphasis moves away from advertising to widen the perspective further. Key inspirations informing attitudes to men's facial skincare are identified. Throughout the chapter, findings are discussed in terms of the context of concepts outlined in Chapters Two, Three and Four namely, consumption, masculinities and advertising.

Finally, Chapter Nine provides a discussion and reflection of the overall contribution of the research in relation to the research questions this study sets out to consider. A discussion surrounding how the research questions are addressed and a reflection of the key findings are provided in this concluding chapter. The thesis is therefore intended to empirically examine men's consumption of skincare and its relationship to the ways in which masculinities are reproduced.

Chapter Two. Facial Skincare Consumption and Male Identity

"Each to each a looking-glass
Reflects the other that doth pass" (Cooley, 1902: 164).

Introduction

The last two decades have seen a growing increase in facial skincare products such as moisturisers, cleansers and toners available for men (Mintel, 2017). Consumption is important to this research as the ultimate aim of facial skincare produced for males is to stimulate and to reinforce consumer purchases, ensuring that these commodities form part of a daily grooming repertoire. This chapter explores how the proliferation of men's facial skincare products has created a pressure upon men to consider their face as a site for 'improvement'. Attitudes towards new consumption practices often reveal nascent trends that reflect changing values and attitudes within societies (Lury, 2011). With this in mind, a particular focus for this study examines how the consumption of facial skincare products may have an impact upon male identity. The evolution and historical development of the market for men's facial skincare products is provided to understand how this may link to changing ideals and notions concerning masculinity.

This chapter in addition focuses on how products relating to improving facial appearance have been largely the province of a market aimed at women. An emphasis was placed on women improving their facial skin appearance to make themselves more desirable to men. The expectation for women to seek careers and positions of authority was suggested as being less important than improving and maintaining their appearance. A pervasive patriarchal notion implied that women's ultimate goal was to secure a good husband and run the household efficiently whilst remaining attractive (Johnson, 2008). Interestingly, Blackburn (2014) highlights how women are required to present a good face to the world to preserve their reputation. This contrasts with the need for men to retain superiority as a masculine ideal. Traditionally men have assumed their role to be the main income provider and concerned themselves more about achievements rather than appearance (Gulas *et al.* 2010). Hence, facial skincare products positioned *for men* have emerged from a well-developed women's sector. Their presence also suggests that men are more accepting and desirous of beautifying benefits (Coad, 2008). What is of concern

for this study is how males negotiate expectations of masculine behaviour in relation to facial skincare products positioned specifically in the market for men. The trend towards beauty products for men has emerged from the potential economic benefits this affords the beauty industry. In addition, emerging ideals have led to an increased subjectivity amongst individuals and notions that the self needs to be improved (Cornwall, 2016). Facial skincare products for men presents a challenge as their use by men may suggest a feminising of masculinity ideals. This may serve to conflict with heteromasculine ideals. Equally, this might not present a problem for some men who do not identify with traditional versions of masculinity.

Cooley's (1902) concept of the 'looking-glass self' is explored in this chapter in respect of how men contemplate 'the self' in relation to the under-researched area of men's facial skincare. Better-looking skin is valued increasingly where the focus especially through the media is concerned with appearance (Hall, 2015). In this study I explore the relevance of Cooley's (1902) understanding of how appearance influences in what manner others view a person and more importantly, how people view themself in relation to the current trend for male facial skincare products. Mintel (2017a) highlights a strong correlation between appearance and confidence suggesting that Cooley's appreciation of how the self is contemplated by others is still noteworthy currently. Notably for this thesis, in what way use of men's facial skincare improves self-esteem is important, especially in consideration of how this may affect men's sense of self (Cooley, 1902). Self-esteem links to happiness as how we feel about ourselves forms a large component in how we feel about the way things are going for us (Blackburn, 2014). How men negotiate the use of products that may suggest men are regarded as 'less masculine' by association is central to this study. Studies into consumption may have significant implications for gender identity. Of particular concern for this study is how men use or avoid use of facial skincare products; what this suggests about their sense of self and the implications this may have wider for ideals of male identity.

Facial Skincare as a Masculine Practice

There are diverse ranges of products aimed at improving men's image (Mintel, 2017). Men's facial skincare is part of a myriad of consumables promoted as a 'necessary' part of

contemporary lifestyles. Whilst there are a variety of so-called grooming products that are positioned within the men's market, very few studies have considered how men feel about the increased pressure to adapt to new 'beautifying' practices. Hall (2015) has explored make-up for men in the UK linked to metrosexuality. In addition, Ojala *et al.* (2016) have considered the emphasis on anti-ageing for facial skincare for men in the USA and Finland. Of particular interest to this thesis, is how a market that was originally positioned wholly for women has been developed as an idea of the male 'self' needing to be improved. Thus, whilst the premise of face skincare products is to improve appearance, Aldin (2007) highlights how this needs to be communicated in a style that resonates appropriately for men. Typical ideals of what many men strive for are finding a partner, getting promotion or gaining compliments on their achievements (Aldin, 2007). These are 'hegemonic masculine' (Connell, 2003) ideals that are important for this thesis in terms of how skincare is aligned with more traditional masculine identity traits, as discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

Exploring the 'Looking-Glass Self'

Face skincare is positioned as a beauty aid in relation to the women's market. The positioning of similar products for men requires careful consideration by brands and advertisers (Morris and Cundiff, 1971). They need to ensure that facial skincare products do not diminish ideals of masculinity. Cooley's (1902) 'looking-glass self' is used as a means by which we can begin to explain how men use potentially feminising products but protect masculine ideals for how this is perceived by others. The pressure to improve appearance for men as a wider expectation of modern men conflicts with traditional ideals of masculinity. However, Coupland (2007) highlights how men may gain an improved facial skin appearance for a more 'marketable face' for careers and relationships. Moreover, better-looking facial skin arguably helps men's self-esteem (Blackburn, 2014).

This thesis highlights how men seek to retain symbolic masculine ideals through their interpersonal interactions and the perceptions of others. Men's facial skincare provides a focus in how the use of products used in relation to improving appearance informs identity. I argue that the importance of men's contemplation of the self through the

mirror analogy offers a starting point as a way to appreciate how men's attitudes to facial skincare products are developed. The 'looking- glass self' holds three key components that were cited at the opening of this thesis. I link these to contemporary male attitudes of men's facial skincare products. First, Cooley (1902) suggests that we must imagine how we must appear to others. The need for introspection in consideration of appearance is indeed evidenced in the proliferation of products with the emphasis on improving men's appearance (Mintel, 2017). The second idea is that we imagine the judgement of that appearance (Cooley, 1902). This suggests that a critical eye is placed upon men in terms of greater visibility generally and the idea of men analysing other men's looks through the notion of the 'inversion of the male gaze' (Patterson and Elliott, 2002). The final component of the 'looking-glass self' (Cooley, 1902) refers to how we develop our self through the judgements of others. This is key for how men respond to external pressures to feel that they need to improve their appearance. Drawing upon how the human mind is formed as part of a larger social influence, Cooley's (1902) analogy of the 'looking-glass self' concept offers a way of understanding how men's facial skincare products provide a potential for improved appearance. This forms part of a wider grooming trend that is born out of a culture that increasingly places expectations upon how men *should* consider improving their facial skin. A current example of this is the active construction of the digital self on shared media using 'selfies' (Pounders *et al.,* 2016).

Cooley (1902) recognised the importance of how the supposed judgement of others on the actions taken by individuals affects the self-concept. If men are deemed overly interested in beautifying products, then this suggests a feminising of social constructs in relation to current ideals of masculinity. Conforming to expectations linked to gender requires considerable effort and induces an expectation of ideals of masculine and feminine identity (Bourdieu, 1991). There is an increased societal expectation on men to improve their appearance so that the 'mediated' self presented online offers a form of the 'self as a human brand' (Eagar and Dann, 2016). Nevertheless, the creation of this 'brand' for men must be achieved in ways that suggest that little or no effort has been made to achieve this to protect traditional notions of male identity. As a further context for how facial skincare has developed as a consumption ideal for men, I will now provide an overview and background to this market. It is useful to reflect upon the evolution and

progression of this sector to provide an insight into ways that men are being encouraged to improve their appearance and how this affects their changing identity.

The Advent of Men's Facial Skincare Products

Male facial skincare was first advertised over a century ago. Shannon (2004) highlights how the solution for 'hungry and thirsty' pores was to 'force' shaving soap into them as a remedy, thus providing a matter-of-fact functional appeal to male consumers of facial skin products. The established grooming routine of soap and water for men's facial skincare was portrayed as an outdated practice by the promotion of an alternative that offers an immersion into a new 'improved' regime (Oblong, 2012). As a result, 'making do' with what can be termed as an old-fashioned practice, using only soap and no moisturiser afterwards, is one option for men (de Certeau, 2000). On the other hand, men can adopt a relatively new custom of branded facial skincare products that may help them to realise optimised skin attainment (Tenerelli, 2001).

The men's facial skincare market has certainly evolved since its initial launch into the UK. However, Mark Tungate (2011) reflects on how facial skincare within the UK is not a completely new practice. Previous grooming repertoires have offered a form of appearance enhancement for men. In the late 1800s, so-called 'Dandies' were men who were recognised by their overt use of make-up and hairstyles. However, such displays by modern men would be considered as inappropriate in respect of expectations for current ideals of masculinity. Tungate (2011) notes how the UK male grooming market was an established practice but maybe a forgotten one. This was mainly due to the two world wars changing perceptions and priorities in male vanity. Men's appearance has always been of importance to some degree. Prior to these two historical events, men were deemed an important consumer in terms of grooming products and the notion of improving the self through appearance. Emerging towards the end of the Second World War, the term 'hipster' was initially associated with a particular subculture connected with jazz music. More recently 'hipster' describes trendsetters in society who lead the way towards changing habits and ensuring that new practices seem 'hip' and acceptable for those wishing to follow fashionable trends (Pfeiffer, 2015). The move towards acceptance of evolving trends such as men using skincare products can be stimulated by

various influences. Trends in the consumption of products such as men's facial skincare reflect wider values in relation to expectations surrounding gender. How this is currently negotiated in terms of what this suggests about male identity is of concern to this study. In terms of appearance-enhancing ideals, male identity is informed by what manner masculinity is viewed currently.

Masculinising Skincare for Men

As early as 1996, US marketers were aggressively pursuing the men's facial skincare market. Focus groups conducted at the time gained an understanding of the male consumer. Findings suggested the need for more masculine verbs in advertising copy such as 'attack' and 'fix' used in place of 'exfoliate' and 'retexture' alongside the use of sports and sports car analogies to position facial skincare to men (Hotchkiss, 1996). As a result, the positioning mechanisms adopted by advertisers to support facial skincare as a masculine product commenced. Will King the founder of *King of Shaves* suggested the need to implement a 'men's beauty language' using words in advertising like 'defend' to sell facial skincare (Bittar, 2004). This is something I explore in the analysis of advertising copy within the samples of advertisements in Chapter Six of this study.

Patriarchal ideals persist in how facial skincare is positioned for gender. Mulvey (1975) observes how men were presented in cinematic portrayals as a 'powerful ideal ego' and active constructors of meaning. This is as opposed to how women are symbolically suggested as a site for beauty. Women form the image for men to look at as part of the 'male gaze' (Mulvey, 1975). The strong, male protagonist looks intensely at the woman. Notionally, this offers the normative premise that men in the audience should consider the woman on the screen as an "icon displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men" (Mulvey, 1975: 64). Women are 'objects' viewed for the pleasure of others. However, interestingly for this study, Mulvey (1975) highlights how women are the 'active controllers of the look'. This suggests that women exert some power over men who are captivated by the woman's beauty. As the gaze shifts towards men, how can the use of facial skincare products offer a similar form of power for men? The notion of men 'making meaning' is opposed to women's subjugated position as 'bearers of meaning' (Mulvey, 1975). This offers an insight into how men avoid any suggestion that their use of

face skincare products diminishes masculinity. It also suggests a feminist perspective. Hence, my concern is with how male facial skincare aligns with patriarchal values of masculinity as opposed to a more feminising version of men.

Male bodies viewed as 'subjects', contrasting with females seen as 'objects', suggests a male hierarchy of gender identity (Bourdieu, 2001; Uhlmann and Uhlmann, 2005). The increased importance placed on men's appearance has highlighted the move towards men as 'objects' and men increasingly becoming the focus of the 'gaze' by others (Hall, 2015). The defence of traditional masculine ideals has been a key positioning approach for men's facial skincare from the outset (Mills, 2015). The pursuit of improved facial skin resulting from a good skincare regime is a routine that lies outside of more traditional notions of how men are expected to act. The ways that facial skincare products are positioned for a male market offer an insight into current notions of masculinity. The extent to which men's face skincare has influenced ideals for men is at the heart of this study.

Male Facecare in the UK

The UK men's face skincare market was started by German manufacturer *Beiersdorf* with its *Nivea for Men* line, launched in 2001. Back in 2002, Dennis Nishi in *Men's Health* highlighted the functional benefits of facial skincare products used in conjunction with a healthy diet and good sleep for male readers. Nishi (2002: 4) contended that *"while a healthy diet, plenty of water and a good night's sleep go a long way toward helping your skin age like a fine Bordeaux, venturing into the world of skincare can be the extra step you need to improve your winter look"*. Thus, an improved facial appearance was tenuously aligned with discerning tastes such as recognising a good vintage for wine.

Johnson & Johnson entered the market in 2002 with *Neutrogena Razor Defense Shave* and facial skincare products. Then in 2004, *Gillette* launched its men's grooming line, *Gillette Complete* (Bittar, 2004). The inference in the brand name implying that men required such products to 'complete' themselves. Whilst beauty was highlighted as the key benefit for female readers, the male market were presented with the idea of improving one's lifestyle and appearance but falling short of calling this 'beauty' for men. The year 2004 heralded the entrance of *L'Oréal* into the men's face skincare market in a bid to steal a

share in profits in this sector from *Beiersdorf's Nivea for Men.* The male facial skincare sector was not an overnight success and initial sales figures were modest suggesting that men were reluctant to change their ways (Bittar, 2004).

Marketeers connected grooming products with active lifestyles, sport and the promise of sex as the key hook to appeal to male audiences (Bittar, 2004). However, Suzanne Grayson, a beauty consultant and form *Revlon* executive remarked in 2004, that men still needed to be educated on how to use grooming products. She asserted, 'you're not going to get guys over 45 to buy this stuff even if their faces are falling off" with the exception to the rule being gay men (in Bittar, 2004: 24). The gay market is highlighted as a sector who are more confident in their use of men's skincare products. However, the main positioning approach by brands suggested heteromasculine ideals. *Gillette* promised, "better skin and results in 14 days" and clearly distanced the products from any association with the female market by using a stern male background voice warning not to use 'girl' stuff (Bittar, 2004). A spokesperson for *Nivea* (Savoie) in 2004 suggested "it probably won't happen right away, but once it becomes culturally acceptable for guys to use facial skincare products – because magazines say it's OK, more athletes speak up about it, wives and girlfriends buy it for them – it'll put men in a different mindset" (Bittar, 2004: 24).

The advent of men's lifestyle and glossy magazines provided a platform for discourse around the notion that "the skin and face were to be explored and cultivated with a practical regime of aids and accessories available in the consumer marketplace" (Mort, 1999: 78). However, men's lifestyle magazine sales are currently in decline and the advent of online media has more recently provided an alternative medium for offering advice to male consumers (Hall *et al.,* 2013). Taylor (2008) highlights how facial skincare brands were taking more of an educational approach for men's skincare products, as the uptake on product use at the time was much rarer than for women's. As a result, lifestyle and sports sections of blog sites were sought out to mediate brand benefits to men as opposed to beauty blog sites targeted for women (Taylor, 2008).

From 2006 onwards, the male facial skincare market saw an increased range of retailer own-label products seeking to capitalise on the growing men's sector. *Marketing* in 2006 pointed out how *Waitrose* introduced a line of male-grooming products to bolster its

premium, own-brand facial skincare portfolio. The introduction of the *Skintools* range comprised of five grooming products. The collection appealed to men using functionality linked to how the product can improve identified problems such as dry skin or razor burn. Functionality remains a key feature of why men use facial skincare products (Mintel, 2017). In addition, simplicity was used as the key message. Market research indicates that men avoid products that are too time consuming or involve multiple steps (Mills, 2015). *Skintools* were promoted simplistically, delivering an ability to "do what they say on the tin" (Marketing, 2006: 9).

Gay Men as Skincare 'Experts'

In 2008, Robinson remarked on how the men's market is following the trend of the women's facial skincare products towards higher-end luxury appeal for "men who are highly selective and discerning about their skincare" (Robinson, 2008: 5283). The arrival of men's facial skincare has created a diverse reaction amongst men. Men's lives are altering, as they are staying single longer, divorcing earlier and therefore needing to shop for themselves (Flavin, cited in Tungate, 2011). Thereby, this offers the potential to change roles and identities along the way. Flavin further suggests that the changes brought about in men are due to their shifting roles in relation to the evolution of women in society. These changes offer a potential for the emancipation of men into new identities that protects their masculine identity but also presents the opportunity for men to reinvent themselves (Tungate, 2011).

Another key influence on changing men's consumption practices came about with the introduction of reality television shows seeking to 'improve' appearance. Clarkson (2005) emphasises the stimulus of the US reality TV show *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* on men's facial skincare consumption. The show influenced changes for 'open-minded heterosexual men' into 'sensitive metrosexuals' (Clarkson, 2005). The gay community typically place more emphasis on their appearance than heterosexual men (Gough *et al.,* 2016). *Queer Eye* featured gay men who gave advice on fashion, grooming, interior design, food, wine and culture to straight men. It was considered the most flamboyant challenge towards 'dominant masculinity' ideals at the time (Clarkson, 2005). *Queer Eye* attempted to mould straight men into 'hyperconsumers'. This was based on the ideal

that the gay market had refinement and taste that straight men should emulate (Clarkson, 2005). The programme was first broadcast on the cable network *Bravo* in the US during July 2003. During the third season, it changed the name to *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* to reflect the purpose of the show more adequately. The premise of the show uses the stereotype that gay men have superior knowledge in relation to fashion, grooming, interior design, style and culture. The show finished screening in October 2007.

Men were offered agency as consumers due to changing ideals surrounding men's appearance considered as part of an ongoing 'project'. This parallels studies highlighting the ideology of women's glossy magazines that suggested beauty and appearance improvement as a desired 'necessity' (for example, Belkaoui and Belkaoui, 1976; Waters and Ellis, 1996; Lysonski, 2001; Williamson, 2002; Eisand, 2009). The cultural gaze was turned towards commenting on how a man ought to take care of himself. The shift was from patriarchal roles of masculinity towards a consumer-orientated masculinity. This provided a change in emphasis on how men *should* look and act in society but also one that objectified male looks (Clarkson, 2005).

Recent Male Skincare Trends

More recently, in 2017 men's moisturiser sales in the UK achieved £100m showing a decrease by 4.7% from 2016 (£104m), which is attributed to a lack of new users from those aged 35-39 years (Mintel, 2017a). Mintel (2016) highlights men's limited interest in expanding routines to encompass a wider range of products beyond using moisturiser after shaving. The main reasons for not using moisturiser mentioned by men was they failed to see why they needed facial skincare products (56%) or were not interested in how their skin looks (26%) (Mintel, 2016). A descriptor of 'disinterested dudes' has been offered by Mintel (2017a) for this group of mainly older men. Other reasons for not using facial skincare for men was cited by some in Mintel's (2016) report as being a not very masculine thing to do (14%). Explanations for resisting men's facial skincare outlined by Ojala *et al.* (2016) were that male respondents didn't like the feel of the moisturiser as it felt 'disgusting' or perceived it as being 'women's stuff' which seems to align with traditional views of masculinity. Mintel (2017a) highlights an emerging trend amongst

some men that they term as 'confident chaps' who perceive women's skincare products to be superior to men's and use these products as they wish to achieve the best skincare results.

The main concern for males aged 16-24 years are spots, as 63% of men of this age group feel self-conscious if they have a spot (Mintel, 2016). This is significant for the current trend for sharing images on social media. Wrinkles are less of a concern for men as they are for women (Mintel, 2016). This is not surprising given the gender inequalities in terms of ageing (O'Neill, 2015). Twigg (2013) highlights how advertising advises older women to battle against ageing to maintain social visibility and cultural worth. There is a common perception that women are considered as 'ageing' at a younger age than their male counterparts (Twigg, 2013). The lack of female models on the catwalk after their late twenties is one example of this as Twigg (2013) points out. Although notions of ageing are fluid as many in society attest that they feel younger at a particular age than their parent's generation (Twigg, 2013). Attitudes towards maintaining skin against the signs of ageing are changing. A move towards natural ingredients and a focus on alleviating skin disorders such as skin irritation or spots has gathered pace since 2015. Mintel (2017a) notes that younger men have a stronger engagement with beauty and grooming routines and are more likely to use facial skincare products containing natural ingredients and have termed those men who use products to prevent ageing whilst enjoying the fragrances that many contain as 'sensorial souls'. The shifting trends within the marketplace, such as positioning facial skincare products for men, offer a context to understand how males identify and experience aspects of modern culture. Furthermore, this provides a way of understanding how male identity is influenced and affected in relation to 'beautifying' facial skincare products for men.

Facial Skincare as a Prerequisite for Males

Modern men are apparently fascinated with their appearance and use an array of goods, including facial skincare to maintain their looks (Hall *et al.,* 2012). However, the impetus for men's use of such products serves as a reflection of the drive towards exploiting economic possibilities that manufacturers gain from this trend. Mintel (2017) highlight that in respect to using beauty products for men and women, almost three quarters of

adults in their survey of 2,000 respondents agree that looking good makes them feel more confident. If accepted as representative of wider views, then men's facial skincare helps to contribute towards improving self-esteem. Bauman (1963) suggests that a potential consumption routine is established by recognising and accepting this as part of a more 'structuralised pattern'. Hence, facial skincare use needs to fit with societal notions of masculinity. Assimilation into culture takes time. Bauman (2012) appraises how consumers have been 'coerced' into viewing shopping and consumption as synonymous with 'a good life'. Male consumers are encouraged to 'complete' themselves through the act of consuming products including facial skincare (Jackson *et al.,* 2011). There is disparity between the ideal body, the real body, the "dream body and the looking-glass self, reflected in the reaction of others" (Bourdieu, 1979: 207). However, reasons for why men may resist the potential offered by facial skincare consumption are also explored in this study thus affording further context for how attitudes to men's facial skincare offer an insight into current notions of masculinity. Such notions impact upon identity. Consumption practices of goods considered as 'feminising' by some men are contemplated in terms of how this informs male identity. Equally, how male consumers express their use of face skincare products is important for this study.

Male facial skincare appeals to consumers by subjectively suggesting the product is 'required'. Commodities such as facial skincare products are associated with what Bauman (1968) terms a 'social reality'. This 'reality' is suggested by the use of artificially created signs. These signs form part of a semiotic role creating meaning. Such signs convey a need-satisfying role for males. The signs offer distinction and definition to deliver a 'rite of passage' for new consumers (Bauman, 1968) such as when younger males first start shaving. Facial skincare provides another grooming component for possible adoption by younger males as they are more likely to spend longer on appearance enhancing routines (Mintel, 2017).

Facial skincare for men remains problematic for some men. It conflicts with ideals of masculinity. Furthermore, the perceived lack of need for such products as outlined earlier in this chapter present problems for brands. To some extent, facial skincare can be said to have been what Ritzer (1999) refers to as products being 'commoditised' by brand manufacturers. This is achieved by using scientific rationale underpinning reasons

for male consumers adopting a 'grooming routine' as opposed to merely washing their face with soap and water. The use of brand names used in relation to male skincare product packaging offer 'cues' to signify men as the intended consumers. Furthermore, McNeill and Douglas (2011) highlight how colours are used to suggest a particular gender for audiences. These 'resources' are promoted as a material need by manufacturers and advertisers to potential consumers as part of a wider system of culture (Bauman, 1963).

Signifying Masculinity in Facial Skincare Brands

An increasing importance has been placed upon consumption of not only products as useful commodities but also in terms of the social and 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu, 1979) offered through association with various brands. Accordingly, the adoption of products such as facial skincare for men is achieved by presenting particular brands to discerning consumers. Such brands serve as signifiers of identity that Ulrich (2013) suggests are lifestyle 'markers' and potentially transfer an association of 'status' or acumen to male consumers. However, the approach used by all concerned in the process of aligning facial skincare products with men presents a range of issues. A key issue for this study is how facial skincare conflicts with accepted notions of masculinity.

Brands symbolise product potential. This potential is linked to the consumption of male facial skincare products. Signs and signifiers such as the use of models as lifestyle indicators signify the potential benefits realised to consumers. Increasingly, consumers' evaluation of which product to purchase relates to a consumption of symbols or 'sign value' as part of brand and lifestyle literacy (Szmigin, 2003). Tungate (2008; 2011) highlights a move towards a 'branded male'. He is described as a confident and competent consumer of goods. Furthermore, he is increasingly concerned with acquiring acceptable brand name products. For that reason, the consumption of brands presents an opportunity to offer 'symbolic capital' through the discernment of what constitutes a 'good' facial skincare brand for men (Bourdieu, 2001). This confers a multitude of expressions of masculinity that serves to erode a clear understanding of what masculinity means today (Alexander, 2003). However, in relation to men's facial skincare, Bourdieu's (2001) 'symbolic capital' potentially conflicts with recognised ideals of masculinity. An overt knowledge and use of facial skincare by men may suggest this to be feminising.

Facial skincare products for men and women contain many similar ingredients (Oblong, 2012). Brands seek to align with accepted expectations of gender to distinguish the products 'for men'. Many of the brands that initiated in the women's skincare sector extended their products into the men's market. Brand extensions from the female market as 'mother brands' (Jung and Lee, 2006) are often problematic. Typically, females accept male brands more than males accept female brands for facial skincare (Ulrich, 2013). Examples include *Nivea for Men, Clarins and Clinique* to name a few where the brand's identity is drawn from a previously feminine domain (Ulrich, 2013). Changing the name is not sufficient to signify a product is acceptable in the domain. The inception and evolution of the male facial skincare market provides a context for how this 'gender sensitive' (Gough, 2006) product sector attempts to position itself more effectively for men. Brands that were synonymous with the female facial skincare market previously may need to heighten 'gender cues'. An exploration of how skincare is signified as male-appropriate for male consumers is explored in this study in Chapter Six.

Souiden and Diagne (2009) contend that facial skincare is sold on the premise of offering beauty and youth, empowering users to gain benefit from their enhanced looks. Brands seek to align products with lifestyle markers. The symbolism in terms of status as originally suggested by Bourdieu has less relevance for this thesis. However, the various ways that brands position facial skincare with masculinity is more important to understand. An individual's pattern of consumption is formed from a myriad of consumption practices over time. This culminates in an overall consumption identity (Warde, 2005). Consumers as 'social agents' are amassing more power within society. Individuals are 'self-monitoring' about particular needs and wants. This has led to less structural control on consumers, as there is greater choice from the array of products and brands available from which to choose. The choice of product becomes problematic due to the array of options available. The creation of a market for male facial skincare consumers presents a number of issues in relation as a consumption practice for men. Creating a perceived need is one element. Another lies in how this affects expectations for men and in what way this informs their identity.

A 'Marketable' Male Face

This study focuses on how increased expectations that men should improve their appearance is countered by the need to protect ideals of masculine identity. Interestingly, men's facial skincare product use has been highlighted as benefiting men with opportunities to get ahead in careers and relationships (Hall *et al.,* 2013). Furthermore, Coupland (2007) draws attention to the benefits of a 'marketable' face for gaining popularity and social mobility in society. These offer 'valid' reasons for men to accept use of facial skincare products as a normal practice. Arnould and Thompson (2005) highlight how consumer culture offers consumers identity projects as part of an ongoing improvement project. Men's use of facial skincare products provides a way of improving skin that provides visible benefits in terms of keeping skin looking younger for longer. Cooley's (1902) notion of the 'self-idea' offers a context to illustrate the influence the perception others hold of your appearance has on how facial skin appears to others. This so-called 'reflexive consumption' helps to inform identity (Lash and Urry, 1994). Facial skincare forms part of a marketing practice concept and therefore offers an economic structure that men can also translate their own personal interpretation of what this means to them.

The decision to consume or not to consume male face skincare products is explored in this study in how this ultimately affects in what way masculine identity is interpreted in contemporary society. Those males who actively seek to consume men's face skincare products are then said to be part of a recognised system of exchange and value. This enables their membership of a wider participation as a consumer of male facial skincare products. The purchase of male face skincare is not a naturalised process. It necessitates action on the part of the male consumer to participate. Consequently, using facial skincare products becomes a social action forming part of male identity (Munro, 1996). Appearance-enhancing practices are not naturally aligned as a masculine activity. How men connect this to identity is important in this study.

Men's Skincare and Identity

'I'm metro, not gay' was attested by one online contributor in Hall *et al.'s* (2012; Hall, 2015) study on male cosmetics. This comment points to an important identity position

held by men wanting to enjoy the benefits of improving or maintaining appearance without detriment to how others view their identity. Men's scrutiny of their face in the mirror continues to be premised in terms of defending traditional notions of gender. Hall (2015) highlights in his study how the use of cosmetics by men is rationalised in terms of health, repair and hygiene purposes to reframe these practices in a masculine context.

Considered in more detail in Chapter Three, Hall *et al.* (2012) have highlighted 'metrosexuality' as being a commodifying practice in itself. Simpson first coined the term 'metrosexual' in *The Independent* in 1994. In an article entitled 'Here come the mirror men', Simpson described a typology of young men with disposable income who may be 'gay, straight or bisexual'. The 'metrosexual' was defined as a heterosexual urban man who enjoys shopping, fashion, and similar interests traditionally associated with women or homosexual men (Simpson, 1994). Heterosexual men were encouraged to engage in practices traditionally aligned with females such as facial skincare. 'Metrosexuality' as an identity marker is relevant in relation to how men maintain heterosexual positions in society and use grooming practices to enhance power and privilege (Hall *et al.,* 2102). However, I highlight how metrosexuality lacks influence as an identity ideal in relation to the use of men's facial skincare products for some men.

Coad (2008) argues that David Beckham is one of a number of celebrities that are associated with promoting metrosexual practices and ideals and as such offering an alternative to traditional modes of gender practices. Additionally, a range of other so-called A-list celebrities endorse the use of facial skincare products (Hall *et al.,* 2013). The use of such celebrities has suggested less risk for consuming facial skincare products to male consumers. This will be discussed further in Chapter Four. Barbalova (2012) notes how celebrity endorsers such as Pierce Brosnan in the *L'Oréal for Men Expert* skincare product campaign have boosted the UK market where metrosexual ideals are blended with 'hegemonic masculine' notions. Brosnan has played James Bond, a character embodying traditional ideals of masculinity. This approach has helped to amass male facial skincare consumers (Barbalova, 2012).

The work of Bauman (1983) and those following in his footsteps, such as Arnould and Thompson (2005); Hall *et al.* (2013); Flitchett *et al.* (2014) and Ojala *et al.* (2016), are drawn upon to identify how facial skincare presents an opportunity to consider a variety

of attitudes and associations with male identity. Hence, the logic of facial skincare as a consumption practice for men is discussed in relation to men's identity rather than simply as provision of an opportunity within the marketplace. Fitchett *et al.* (2014) highlight how a Consumer Culture Theory approach offers an insight into the centrality of the consumer as an active subject agent. Men may feel that use of face skincare enhances their appearance in a society that increasingly values image (Gough, 2016). A love of consumption for its sake or a "consuming desire of consuming" (Bauman, 2001: 13) as a trend would possibly help stimulate male facial skincare product consumption. However, men's attitudes towards consuming for the sake of consumption are not universal.

Aligning Skincare with Lifestyles

Different factors may come into play to help a man decide whether face skincare is relevant and appropriate as part of their lifestyle requirements. Spence (1993) presents a multifactorial gender theory in suggesting that humans are influenced by various factors in specific contexts. Identifying what influences are important for men who are contemplating facial skincare product use as a natural part of their lifestyle. The decision to consume or not to consume men's face skincare products can be linked to multifactorial gender components including identity (Spence, 1993). However, identity is framed by a myriad of influences. As such, the key elements are a sense of male or femaleness, gender identity, gender role attitudes, gender role behaviours and sexual orientation (Ulrich, 2013). Bauman (2005) identifies how 'flexible identity' results from a constant shifting sea of societal paradigms. How men adapt to changing societal ideals towards facial skincare products gives an insight into how masculinity is adapting over time.

Men's facial skincare was not part of consumers 'needs' until being recently promoted as such. Similarly, men were highlighted as 'functional' consumers for fashion clothes rather than for vanity (Woodruffe-Burton, 1998). In view of this, men's face skincare could be construed as reflecting what Bauman (2001) terms the 'plasticity of needs'. Hence, functionality is no longer the premise for consumption as this is replaced by pleasure. However, positioning facial skincare products for men as part of a 'pleasurable' remit flies

in opposition to dominant ideals of how men should be seen to consume for practical reasons (Jobling, 2014).

Bauman (2005) draws attention to how 'frames' are increasingly fragile and shifting in this context. How humans make sense of their understanding of normative behaviour, expectations and trends have to be constantly renegotiated. Although the market is clearly established in terms of sales and the brands available, beautifying concepts are deflected for men's skincare to avoid any suggestions that men consuming such products are considered more feminine as a result. Consumption practices differ so that male facial skincare consumption is not unified in how or why it is used. This offers various typologies in relation to why male consumers use products, such as in the prevention of dry skin during sporting activities like snowboarding. Hall *et al.* (2013: 230) have emphasised the functionality value of products as a defence from men who use facial skincare products on a 'need to use' basis. Activities such as outdoor work, sports and 'partying' have been underlined as reasons to legitimately use facial skincare products (Hall *et al.,* 2013).

Men's defence of the use of beauty products such as concealer, foundation, face powder, rouge, eyeliner to name a few was highlighted by Hall *et al.* (2012). They found that respondents adopted a pragmatic, technical and functional stance to rationalise their use of beauty products as part of a masculinisation of make-up. Brands have drawn upon societal expectations of how men, considered as part of a patriarchal ideology, are traditionally expected to be more technically able than women (Connell, C. 2010). Tungate (2011) refers to the importance of functionality in relation to men's facial skincare products and the need to use language that provides scientific and technical rationale. On the other hand, the particular choice of brands in relation to facial skincare consumption can suggest lifestyle enhancement (Souiden and Diagne, 2009). Facial skincare products offer the potential for better-looking skin which is valued by others. Using beauty products such as facial skincare presents an opportunity to reframe men's cosmetics for health, hygiene and repair work as part of more image conscious modern males.

The Imagined Effects of Men's Facial Skincare Products

Once men purchase goods such as male facial skincare products on a regular basis, the consumption process moves from a functional format towards a more symbolic process of meaning construction in relation to social identity (Szmigin, 2003). As a result, consumption offers a form of representation such as how moisturiser functions to help enhance face skin. Hence, use of a product can enhance your 'imaginary' life by providing a better lifestyle or making you feel happier through hedonistic affiliation with certain brands (Falk, 1994). However, consumption is arguably not itself a practice but as Warde (2005: 137) suggests it is a "moment in almost every practice" which draws upon the experiential and personal aspect of that action.

Cooley's (1902) 'looking-glass self' description of how a judgement is placed upon self-concept in relation to what is imagined by others is important for this study. "I imagine your mind, and especially what your mind thinks about my mind, and what your mind thinks about what my mind thinks about your mind" (Cooley, 1927: 201-202 in Cooley, 1998). The concept of how others perceive a man's enhanced image when he looks in the mirror garners greater importance in respect of how men build a strong self-image for how skincare use is appropriated and rationalised by male consumers. Equally, what this means for men's sense of their own identity and how this is framed is also significant. Thus, a male consumer may utilise facial skincare products for a practical purpose. Alternatively, for the lifestyle opportunities it may offer as someone who understands the benefits of such a practice.

For consumption to be more widespread, consumers need to share similar values such as the realisation that goods such as men's facial skincare products will improve appearance. Additionally, the potential market for male facial skincare needs to be able to interpret the symbols that surround the consumption of such products (Bocock, 1993). So the consumption of male face skincare products is informed by identity, individualisation and how the process is represented through mediums such as advertisements.

Consumers may move beyond the image of society to their own imaginations offering men the opportunity to renegotiate whether or not facial skincare forms part of their imagined reality (Bauman, 2005). The mirror reflects not only the person who looks into it but also expectations surrounding notions of idealistic appearances at a given time

(Cooley, 1902). Grooming is symbolic. Also grooming can become more relevant when linked to age, gender, power, sexuality and even religion. Das and De Loach (2011) contend that exploration of practices such as facial skincare in relation to men helps towards a greater understanding of (male) identity in contemporary society. As a result, the consumption of products such as facial skincare by males offers an opportunity to consider how this affects men's identity and cultural implications of male facial skincare products.

Identity Risk and Men's Facial Skincare

The idea of adoption of facial skincare products by males can be seen as a potential 'social risk' in terms of the cultural association of the practice. In addition, there is an element of 'risk' relating to identity on how the decision to buy men's facial skincare products is viewed by others (Beck, 1999). One issue is the association of perceived 'risk' for men using facial skincare products in terms of inconsistencies with traditional views of masculinity (Beck, 1999; Ulrich, 2013). Men's facial skincare offers the potential to produce an embodied meaning as part of social situations as men negotiate what this practice may confer to others (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Whilst consumption is not synonymous with consumerism (Miles, 2001), consumerism provides a form of expression such as the status and symbolism conveyed by purchase. Male consumers are an 'identity-vulnerable' segment in relation to facial skincare products as a consumption practice that traditionally has been regarded as feminine (Tuncay and Otnes, 2008).

Consumerism within contemporary society forms a 'moral doctrine' that must be followed in developed countries for example, consumption as a form of contemporary citizenship (Urry, 2000). Miles and Miles (2004: 149) contend that "consumers do not constitute a unitary or coherent social group" and therefore influencing elements have become increasingly important in terms of how identity is informed as a consumer. Men who speak openly about using beautifying products for the sake of looks alone risk ridicule (Waling, 2016). The emphasis on their use by men is not discussed, unlike in the case of women's products (Hall *et al.,* 2013). Ojala *et al.* (2016) attest that some regard the use of facial skincare as synonymous with being gay. As previously highlighted in *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* (page 28) homosexual men have contributed towards a

better appreciation of men's developing consumption of facial skincare practices. Coined the 'pink pound' in 1984 by the Guardian newspaper, the term describes how the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community has often been seen to lead the way in terms of innovation in the grooming market through their spending power and lack of fear of being labelled effeminate (Quest, 1998). Interestingly, Schneider *et al.* (2013) found that within homosexual partnerships there tended to be equal input to the decision-making process facilitating discussions of the relative benefits involved with the purchase.

The advent of men's facial skincare products necessitates a self-appraisal of men's skin in relation to other men. The underlying implication mediated through advertisements for facial skincare products to men is that they should be concerned with enhancing their appearance. Advertisers present the face as a flawed feature of the body that deserves ongoing improvement. In this study, I explore how advertisers convey traditional notions of masculinity to instil the idea that face skincare is empowering men in their pursuit of enhanced looks without demeaning their masculine identity (see Chapter Four). Furthermore, I seek to understand how men are perceived as less concerned with their appearance and the implications this has for men's use of face skincare products. Men's dominant position as part of a patriarchal culture is arguably protected (McRobbie, 2016). However, the inception of products that potentially undermine traditional notions of masculinity such as men's facial skincare products present a conflict with male identity ideals. By drawing upon traditional traits associated with masculinity, the potential for men to have a sense of 'mortification' (Cooley, 1902) is avoided. For those men who do not see the value of facial skincare products, there is an ongoing negotiation of meaning to what skincare symbolically offers to male consumers and the prevailing notion that men should be caring for their facial skin. There are societal expectations, norms and values relating to how facial skincare is interpreted by men. The variation of differing attitudes raised by the advent of male face skincare products are important to consider for this research.

The 'Problem' of Men Ageing

Consumer society is rooted in providing solutions for real or supposed problems. These 'problems' are allegedly solved by consuming products and services offered by the agents of production. An example of this is the advertising campaign for *Gillette's Skincare for Men* with the strapline 'the best a man can get'. The slogan assumes the position that men should be striving to be the best or become the best in all aspects of life including facial skincare. Bauman (2001) asserts that consumer society draws upon anxieties highlighted by those seeking to create markets such as men's facial skincare. This subsequently fosters beliefs that products such as men's facial skincare offer a solution to be desired and consumed.

Consumables such as men's facial skincare offer an opportunity to sustain youth longer in modern society where looks are important (Bauman, 2001). Bauman (2006) draws attention to how the power of consumer experience reigns supreme over pure imagined experiences by individuals. Perceptions held by individuals are key for this study and how this informs and influences masculine identity. The advent of facial skincare for men suggests that men *should* be concerned with improving their face. Ageing in society generates an opportunity for marketers to highlight the importance of protecting looks for longer. The way that ageing is viewed in society has changed over time. Older people who retire from the labour market are perceived as less productive and can be perceived to be a burden on society (Szmigin and Carrigan, 2000). Furthermore, Catterall and MacLaran (2001) highlight how the collective narrative around ageing in society has shifted from being a natural biological feature, to a phenomenon linked with decay, dependence and decline thus reinforcing fear of ageing amongst individuals.

The signs of ageing are perceived to be something to be avoided. Facial skincare products can be used as a form of appearance enhancement and protection against ageing skin. Indeed, people associate ageing with bodily decline and this links to how others, perhaps subconsciously, perceive a person's ability to contribute effectively to society (Ojala *et al.*, 2016). If the market presents the ideal for men to aspire towards good facial skin then a cultural norm filters through to suggest that men *should* be using facial skincare as part of their routine (Fitchett *et al.,* 2014). The implication of this suggests that ageing should be 'managed'. This can become a project for the 'self' to engage with products marketed to

promote anti-ageing products. Use of such products suggests that men can 'stay and play hard' as ageing threatens men's status as 'competently gendered people' (Ojala *et al.*, 2016: 359). Hall *et al.* (2013) highlight that presentation of the 'ideal look' via the media has the potential to create uncertainty about appearance suggesting a need to constantly monitor for imperfections and signs of ageing. Consumer culture necessitates that the face is maintained against the signs of ageing as this is conveyed as flaws in modern society. Men perceive facial skincare as acceptable when presented in the context of legitimately combating ageing in order to maintain power (Ojala *et al.*, 2016). A key trigger offered by Bauman (2001: 27) is the use of fear or 'uncertainty-generated anxiety'. This can prompt a consumption need such as the fear of ageing linked to self-concept (see Ojala *et al.*, 2016) and is important to consider for face skincare consumption. As a result, the framing of ageing as a negative process is practically and actively addressed by the purchase of face skincare products by men.

Men's facial skincare offers agency for men to retain positions of influence in society for longer. In seeking to improve looks for longer, the use of facial skincare products by men may improve self-esteem. Ojala *et al.* (2016) draw attention to the pervasive premise that ageing is deemed in a negative light, and is something that can be defended against by men using facial skincare products to preserve their looks for longer (see also Gough *et al.*, 2016). What's more, assumptions are made about chronological age as opposed to the cognitive age perceived by individuals.

Within contemporary society, the body is a personal resource providing socially symbolic potential. Catterall and MacLaran (2001) draw attention to the importance of cognitive age linked to the self-concept in so far as how it is individuals view themselves as younger than their chronological age. This may provide a reason for some older men failing to consider their face as a site for improvement as they accept their chronological age. Alternatively, others may use face skincare as they embrace the potential and still perceive themselves as a younger self. Older men may feel younger and wish to preserve their image for longer. Jankowski *et al.* (2016) highlight the sociocultural pressures to resist the signs of ageing in relation to body image. Skin elasticity is a sign of ageing and the current cultural trend is one that values the acceptance of a youthful appearance despite ageing being a natural process (Jankowski *et al.,* 2016). Ageing is synonymous

with an emasculating effect on men (Ojala *et al.,* 2016). Hence, facial skincare products offer the potential for men to remain a competent contributor within society conforming to patriarchal ideals. Men who allow facial signs of ageing may be perceived as weak and failing to assert their masculine ideals of power and competence in society (Ojala *et al.,* 2016). Advertisers appeal to these notions in their use of how skincare offers the 'mechanics' or 'functionality' to take charge of distancing themselves from ageing.

'Men Like Me' and Skincare

Traditionally, men have valued the durability of goods. Segal and Podoshen (2012) highlight that more recently purchases by men have been affected by actual self-concept and personal factors instead of societal factors. Underlying reasons for consumption of products such as male skincare takes a variety of forms and range from practicality along a spectrum towards more hedonistic notions. Equally, the decision not to consume male facial skincare products provides a valuable issue to consider in terms of a possible conflict with notional ideals of gender. However, the continued growth in consumption of men's facial skincare products suggests that a significant number of men have embraced this grooming practice (Mintel, 2017). The conceivable differences that arise amongst individuals are also important in consumerism as the realm of consumption offers a 'psycho-social expression' between the 'consumed', and the consumer (Miles, 1998: 5). As a result, men may perceive their consumption of facial skincare products as an expression of their ability to identify an appearance-enhancing consumable. This adds to their looks and ultimately improves self-esteem. Equally, the brand may play a part in suggesting discernment in choice of product and may form part of a hedonistic rationale.

Those who use men's facial skincare products form part of a larger group. This consumer group is linked by use of commodities such as facial skincare products and by a descriptor placed upon the group such as 'male face skincare consumers' (Gabriel and Lang, 1995). Individuals participating in consumption practices have become more cognisant with the various signs, symbols and significance of brands within society (Goldman, 1992). As a result, consumer culture translates the value of facial skincare commodities through brand value recognition. This increases what Lury (2011: 11) describes as the "significance and character of the values, norms and meanings produced in such

practices". Men's facial skincare forms part of consumer culture and the brands offered form a conglomeration of signs and symbols to entice male consumers to embrace the consumption of such products. Consumption helps to establish differences between social groups as part of economic, social and cultural practices (Bocock, 1993) and the act of conforming to peer group ideals helps individuals to 'fit in' and thereby become more immersed within their social setting.

Advertisers and retailers position facial skincare as the norm for men. The assumption then placed upon men is that they *should* use skincare to improve their face. Looking good matters, and Maguire and Stanway (2008) contend that attention to appearance is inseparable from identity production in contemporary society. Consumption presents problems for consumers in terms of the way that it enables the adoption of products such as male facial skincare but equally constrains individuals in relation to whether or not to conform to such practices (Maguire and Stanway, 2008). As such, Mort (1996) contends that consumers converge as a community collectively shaped by the practice, in the case of this study, of men using facial skincare and offers a signifier of iconographic style for others to consider. Men may still groom using functionality as their underlying premise. On the other hand, men may be entering a new era where looking after the skin is a sign of 'capital' linked to the body (Bourdieu, 1979). Ideals surrounding identity for men may be changing.

Mediated Mirrors and the Male Face

'Life' is presented to the consumer as a series of consumer choices from a variety of sources. The sources may emanate from shops, online, in private and public spaces. All of these sources need to be perceived and made sense of in the 'orgy of commodities' (Bauman, 2006: 138). Individuals have an imagined connection in the consumption process where they are brought together collectively as 'consumers' with related assumed goals defining their lifestyles (Fitchett *et al.*, 2014). Consumption offers a connectivity within what we understand as 'society'. In an increasingly frenetic existence, many social and commercial transactions are conducted online as networks and knowledge are obtained through the Internet. In the imagined entity we understand as 'society', people can interact face-to-face and make sense of their existence (Bauman,

2006). The pervasiveness of the Internet and social media has triggered a new form of engagement with others offering a more 'connected' society in terms of information sharing from consumer experiences such as the use of men's facial skincare products. In addition, Nui (2013) highlights how the Internet provides a key medium for younger male audiences to buy facial skincare online without the fear of recrimination. Indeed, Bauman (2006) contests that such is the power of the Web in contemporary society that the metaphor 'society' could be replaced by the more valued descriptor of 'network'.

Improving facial skin by use of skincare products for men has been presented as a normative behaviour. Hence, a practice that conflicts with patriarchal ideals of masculinity is framed as a prerequisite for the modern male consumer. This is cultivated within society, underpinned, and fuelled by media strategies such as online testimonials (Hall *et al.,* 2012). Testimonials deploy people's versions of reality and can be treated as what Hall *et al.* (2013) terms 'real talk' to help men assume practices such as using facial skincare as a valid consumption practice. Self-evaluation is the main approach used by consumers making decisions on which products to buy. When men feel that they are making decisions on products that they have little expertise in Nakayama *et al.* (2011) highlights they are more likely to defer to expert opinion, personal and electronic word-of-mouth referrals to inform their choice.

The advent of online media has shifted empowerment for consumers who can 'co-create' brand and advertising as part of user-generated content and as such become communities in their own right (van Dyck, 2014). Accordingly, the various experiences and feedback offered by those submitting feedback online provides information to help those men who are considering using men's facial skincare products. Acceptance of practices such as facial skincare products for men is contingent on advice acquired through contacts and 'surfing' the 'web' to decide upon what to consume (Hall *et al.,* 2013). Jin and Phua (2014) suggest the advent of social media has facilitated a vehicle for celebrities, bloggers, vloggers and reality stars to express their views around brands and use of products.

Male Beauty Vloggers

Banet-Weiser (2017) highlights how neoliberal capitalism has created the opportunity for 'self-governed entrepreneurs' to take advantage of digital spaces to encourage audiences to perform 'aesthetic labour' on their bodies. Vloggers (video online 'expert' endorsers) create public documentations of their personal lives and experiences that may influence how men perceive the use of products such as facial skincare (Snelson, 2015). This relatively new medium has hailed the rise of previously unknown individuals becoming renowned commentators on contemporary lifestyles. They record aspects of their daily lives that influence audiences. Content included in the vlogs would seem banal to most if viewed via television channels. However, viewing content online provides a more private sphere that followers can relate to on an individual basis. The influence of this medium has led to some vloggers attaining celebrity status, amassing thousands of fans. This has attracted advertisers to promote brands on the sites the vlogs are uploaded to with vloggers tending to become more selective of which brands appear on their site as their popularity grows (Duffy and Hund, 2015).

Duffy and Hund (2015: 7) highlight how the presentation of the self needs to be carefully managed to enable brands to communicate meaning through the vlogger and link with a 'commodifiable ("glam") social media image'. However, this 'glam' lifestyle needs to suggest a natural depiction of their life to ensure authenticity for the viewer (Duffy and Hund, 2015). Vloggers provide information to followers on a range of topics including improving personal appearance. When viewed online, this offers a discreet mechanism for men to acquire tips and advice on subjects that they may not be comfortable speaking about with friends. Vlogging helps to change ideals for masculinity and provides a context for this study's focus on men's changing attitudes towards facial skincare products. Vloggers self-market on social media platforms such as *Instagram, Facebook and Twitter* with the most successful gaining significant monetary rewards from brand sponsorship (Bramley, 2017). Maguire (2015) suggests that the appeal of the vlogger is heightened by the merging of the user-generated content of the vlog producer with the potential for use of the products seen by the consumer. This has resulted in vlogging as a form of 'produser' by demonstrating how to get the best from branded products that are used as discussed by the vlogger (Maguire, 2015).

Based in the UK, Jake Jamie ('beautyboy') was recently signed by *L'Oréal* to promote their makeup products for men as he attempts to 'degender' the use of makeup (Bramley, 2017). Acne was the trigger that first prompted Jake Jamie to trawl beauty counters seeking advice from often-bemused female assistants. He started blogging in secret, as he was apparently scared his friends and family would judge him (Redfern, 2016). Societal expectations of gender prevail influencing what is perceived as typical or accepted behaviour for men and women. Arrigo (in Redfern, 2016) remarks that "when a man does something that is socially associated with women, he's seen as weak or letting his gender down in some way". The male beauty blogging community is rapidly growing mainly down to the way that bloggers and vloggers are seen as 'regular guys you can trust' (Redfern, 2016).

Beauty vlogger Lewys Ball is the big name in *Rimmel's* recent *London* campaign and *Maybelline* uses YouTuber Manny Guiterrez as their first male ambassador (Bramley, 2017). These young males are representative of a changing emphasis on the potential that brands can offer for men to enhance their appearance. The inspiration offered by vloggers has triggered permission for men to consume facial skincare products (Harman-Kizer, 2014). This medium is not the only influence. However, vloggers offer online tutorials normalising the practice of facial skincare to wider audiences. Furthermore, vloggers draw upon traditional masculine markers such as heterosexual prowess to legitimise this to men (Hall *et al.,* 2012). In view of this, vloggers present a heteronormative way to consume men's facial skincare products. Likewise, this medium offers a more private way of gaining advice of how to use such products effectively (Harman-Kizer, 2014). Similarly, vlogging has mediated a new way of educating and suggesting practices such as the application of makeup as an acceptable practice for men (Bramley, 2017).

Interestingly, Raun (2015) highlights how the use of vlogging in the transgender community is important as it offers a form of mirror reflecting the transformed image and reinforcing this as a permanent feature for the vlogger. Beauty vlogs can also present a form of mirror for the audience, reflecting the potential offered as an outcome of using the products as demonstrated by the vlogger. Hence, the vlog is a medium with mirroring

qualities that can work for self-validation for the beauty vlogger, providing authenticity for those viewing the vlog (Raun, 2015).

The use of facial skincare products by men offers an illustration of how benefits can be sought and potentially perceived as being achieved in an improved skin by those using such products. The imagined benefit is further augmented by the effect this has upon another's mind as suggested in Cooley's (1902) 'looking-glass self' concept. The use of facial skincare products by men is considered not only in terms of personal benefits gained, but also in wider acceptance as a male grooming requirement. The increased use of digital media used as a form signifying success has led to Hakim's (2015) observation of how 'fit is the new rich' in terms of sharing improved body images online. This suggests that an improved appearance for men influences how others perceive a person's worth in a society concerned with looks. This is an important notion that I will explore further in this study. Online user-generated media has provided a viable lens to reinforce male facial skincare as normative behaviour developing ideals for men to improve their appearance. The recent trend of sharing images online is another change in how males place an increasing importance on the need to look good and how this is seemingly scrutinized by others.

The 'Selfie'

The practice of taking 'selfies' that are shared through digital media has placed an increased pressure on men to improve their appearance (Hakim, 2016). The term 'selfie' has entered contemporary culture and transformed social ideals and attitudes and is defined as "a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media" (Eager and Dann, 2016). The person taking the 'selfie' can actively promote the image they want to project which is then intentionally shared for approval by others (Lim, 2016).

Eagar and Dann (2016) suggest that through technology 'the self' has become commodified for all. Historically, the power and dominance of traditional media has excluded individuals from 'human-branding performance' (Eagar and Dann, 2016). However, the 'selfie' can be used as a medium to narrate the human brand as the individual is the brand manager (Eagar and Dann, 2016). The proliferation of 'selfies' that

are shared via social media platforms such as *Instagram* have the potential to influence existing discourses. Such images play an important role in how we experience being in the world and consequently shape our appearance ideals (Tiidenberg and Cruz, 2015). Furthermore, Tiidenberg and Cruz (2015) contend that those individuals taking 'selfies' are merging how they perceive their bodies in photographs taken by others with their evaluation of how they look in the mirror. By evaluating two views of their appearance (photo and mirror), this informs how a person can improve upon this for their posed 'selfie'. The potential offered by use of facial skincare products by men provides a way forward for those men who scrutinise their appearance and identify that an improvement is required.

Pounders *et al.* (2016) suggest that the motivation to post 'selfies' is derived in part to the conscious or subconscious process in which people attempt to influence the perceptions of other people about a person. Goffman introduced the term 'impression management' in 1957 as a way of channelling information in a manner that showcases a person in the best way. The social media platform is considered as a channel for social interaction and impression management is used by Pounders *et al.* (2016) to explain how desirable images are defined as those that depict what a person would like to be or thinks they can be. Impression motivation and impression construction are descriptors used to explain 'impression management' (Pounders *et al.,* 2016). Impression motivation thus refers to how people personally choose to create a particular impression as a form of control. The person who wishes to produce a particular effect on others creates the impression construction of this. The key drivers for taking 'selfies' were identified as suggesting those taking the images were experiencing happiness, signifying the 'selfie' taker has a good life and emphasising their physical appearance (Pounders *et al.,* 2016). Whilst Pounders *et al.* (2016) focussed on women for their study, equally Jankowski *et al.* (2016a) highlighted how men are taking 'selfies' as a form of engagement with an online community. A key aspect of their study was the importance of a positive physical appearance and 'selfies' were posted on social media as a tool to establish self-identity and self-esteem. This self-esteem increased with the number of likes a 'selfie' image attracted (Pounders *et al.,* 2016).

The 'selfie' has enabled individuals to communicate a 'constructed and curated image of themselves' (Eagar and Dann, 2016). This suggests that 'selfies' provide a way of presenting an image of the self to others that has been planned to invoke an intended outcome. Mintel (2017) highlights that a strong selfie-culture drives interest in appearance. The sharing within social media serves to promote beauty and grooming routines. The proliferation of such images offers another stimulus for men to scrutinise their facial skin and seek to compete for approval of their image by others in a digitally engaged world. This helps towards the acceptance of practices such as using facial skincare products by men and forms part of 'embodied' ideals of masculinity (Hakim, 2016).

The 'selfie' has cast the importance of self-appearance into the mainstream spotlight by encouraging people to care more about how they appear. Lim (2016) highlights that how the outside world views the way a person looks has become more important than how a person behaves off-camera. An increased focus on appearance has implications for how men are seemingly required to improve their appearance as required ideal of modern society. The changing issues in relation to identity, consumer differences and consumption practices offer significance to the overall representation and adoption of the concept of male facial skincare products within the market.

Male Skincare Brand Discernment

Male grooming is constantly evolving and Coslett (2013) reflects that when she first started to write about male grooming in 2006 the sector was at the stage of trying to convince men to moisturise. The market for men's face skincare is rapidly expanding and is hosting a vast array of products and services including tinted moisturiser and facial peels. Men's face skincare allows for comparison with alternative choices and by doing so presents an element of social positioning through the acquisition of certain products or brands (Szmigin and Carrigan 2000; Hall, 2015). In terms of facial skincare products, there are an increasing number of premium-priced facial skincare websites offering niche brand alternatives to those available on the high street. These premium brands provide access to the attainment of 'prestige' labels developed specifically for a discerning market to consume. The consumption of male facial skincare products has been linked by Souiden

and Diagne (2009) to three variables which impact on the process namely: personal variables (self-image); socio-cultural variables (societal beliefs and consumer lifestyles); and marketing variables (advertising representations) which all serve to influence males choosing to purchase products. The decision to buy male facial skincare products is informed by a man's beliefs and personal variables in relation to how the consumption of the product influences his male identity. These influences surrounding men's contemplation of facial skincare are important for this study as they contribute to understanding how men are influenced and 'nudged' into reflecting upon their sense of self in light of changing ideals for masculine grooming.

Conspicuous consumption can offer a form of defence for men consuming facial skincare. When faced with uncertainty about a product, consumers may opt for the most expensive brand choice and one that is considered 'upmarket' as a form of 'insurance' that the product will be 'good' (Szmigin, 2003). Facial skincare brands offer 'hope in a jar' (Belk, 2002) suggesting that 'beauty' is something that can be enhanced for a price. Facial skincare can be perceived as a 'possession' in terms of acquiring the means to enhance looks. Linked to brand consumption, consumers can exhibit possession as part of their conspicuous consumption (Segal and Podoshen, 2012). The consumption of male facial skincare products is linked intrinsically to a tendency towards narcissism that offers a propensity to incorporate brands as part of identity formation (Featherstone, 1982; Lambert and Desmond, 2013).

Hughes (2015) contends that society is moving towards narcissistic tendencies by access to easy credit and the premise similar to *L'Oréal for Men's* strapline that 'you're worth it too'. Consumers thereby may have a sense of entitlement to procure consumer goods and services that they feel they 'need' or 'deserve'. *L'Oréal* is a prime example provided by Blackburn (2014) of how advertisers use carefully selected images of models that, similar to Narcissus, suggest a form of self-love. The character Narcissus in Greek mythology failed to love anyone he encountered until he chanced upon his own reflection, whereupon he fell in love with himself. Blackburn (2014) describes how the sense of self we have is largely made up by our sense of other people and what their sense of us is. Moral notions contribute to important dimensions of self-consciousness. The sense of the self is made up by these moral notions and compose our identity

(Blackburn, 2014). Blackburn (2014) suggests that by drawing other people or other things into our lives this brings more reason for self-contentment or self-love that cannot be gained by mere introspection. Whilst this reflection was a general philosophical observation by Blackburn, it links to the current trend for 'selfie' posting and the need for affirmation that those posting such images is 'liked' by those following them. Furthermore, the move towards men placing more importance on their appearance links in this study to how this may provide an enhanced confidence as a result.

Christopher Lasch's (1978) observation of society's trend towards a more narcissistic culture provides an important metaphor for why men should want to improve their looks as the gaze turns inwards to the self. Men's facial skincare is a prime example of narcissistic self-contemplation (Lasch, 1978). For that reason, narcissistic consumers are more likely to look for brands that signify status and thus boost their self-image (Lambert and Desmond, 2013). However, the choice of brands, whilst recognised as important in relation to consumption, is not a key focus within this study. I concentrate more on evolving attitudes to the idea of men's facial skincare and inherent identity issues this may trigger.

In a capitalist society, a need must be created and then a sense of empowerment offered to the consumer by purchase and use of the product or service (Hughes, 2015). Men's facial skincare products present an opportunity for 'self-validation' for the individual who uses the products. Blackburn (2014: 57) reflects that *L'Oréal's* strapline 'because you're worth it' insidiously implies for the viewer "because you are not worth it. But you could be if you buy the stuff". The advertisements serve to objectify looks and the comparison of the viewer's face in the mirror serves as a reminder that the consumption of facial skincare products can improve worth of the user. Hughes (2015) argues that through a consumption-led economy, consumers are being 'infantilised' by a manipulative process that makes them dependent on products. However, I contend that men are drawing upon identity ideals for traditional masculinity to frame their reasons for using facial skincare products.

Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter, I have highlighted how consumption exists as a practice informing constructions of contemporary masculinity. The suggested improvement in appearance gained from using market commodities such as male face skincare products has an influence on consumers' self-concept. In view of this, consumables such as facial skincare are not bought purely on a 'need' basis. Male consumers may buy into the idea of projecting a certain image to improve their perceived social status. Consumer goods therefore appear to capture the essence of the self and so form part of our identity through consumption. The proliferation of products and services positioned *for men* that are intended to improve appearance suggests that men need to engage with this consumption arena, influencing how they view themselves.

This study considers facial skincare in terms of how it may affect male identities and specifically, how it is men that men thus relate to notions of masculinity. Key defences such as functionality and anti-ageing help to frame the use of facial skincare in ways that resonate with patriarchal ideals of masculinity so that 'safe' ideals of masculinity for men persist which I will go on to explore in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three. Masculinities and Social Change

"Other persons involved in the sense of self may be distinct and particular… there is no sense of 'I', as in pride or shame, without its correlative sense of you, or he, or they" (Cooley, 1902: 163).

Introduction

In the last chapter, changing consumption practices and in particular how the evolution of men's facial skincare affects male identity was explored. This chapter focuses on how conventions for masculinities are changing and what this suggests as a trend in the wider context of gender. The rising emphasis on masculine beauty has placed men's appearance under increased scrutiny. Whilst men are not a homogenous group, changing grooming practices inform men's sense of self. Expectations of men are altering and in view of this Morril (2017: 54) highlights "it's early, but it's time that beauty isn't off limits to men". Gough *et al.* (2014: 106) remark that, "masculinity is not what it used to be" and in this study, I adopt the position that masculinity is culturally constructed, fluid and alters over time. In this chapter masculinity is therefore reviewed with a particular focus on how products such as facial skincare may conflict with traditional notions of masculinity. I draw attention to how an improved image is mediated as heteronormative to gain wider acceptance of such products (Jackson *et al.,* 2011). Competing theories on masculinity are explored with a view towards appreciating how opinion concerning male facial skincare practices might be influenced by particular identity formations and societal expectations.

We live in a 'somatic' society where the body and looks are worked upon as a source of distinctiveness by dieting and fitness routines, amongst many other appearance 'improvement projects' (Gough, 2016). Men may contest this is for purposes other than for beauty. However, this chapter considers how traditional ideals of masculinity are blurring with the increased focus on men linked with beautifying products such as facial skincare. The growing importance of shared images on social media is a key driver for men using grooming products and is more prevalent amongst younger men who wish to build their online community, unashamedly advertising their looks. A heightened expectation for men to improve their appearance provides an influence for the use of

facial skincare by men. Cavendish's (2015) work exploring attitudes towards grooming amongst boys aged 13-15 years old provides an example of this. In relation to building an online presence one young respondent stated, "it's not unmasculine to care what you look like" (Cavendish, 2015: 48). We are entering an era whereby products promoting better facial skin and therefore facial skincare use is something that may enhance or detract from masculine ideals. Connell's (2003) 'hegemonic masculinity' provides an illustration of certain traits that men may draw upon to defend their masculine identity. Within a patriarchal society men are presumed to naturally assume dominant roles and hegemonic masculine ideals are those consistent with men retaining power, high-status, and what is understood as currently acceptable gendered behaviour within a given time and cultural setting (McRobbie, 2016). Whilst not a dominant ideology in modern society, the expectations surrounding how men behave are to some extent influenced by traditional traits for masculinity. The changing roles and aspirations surrounding masculinity are considered in this chapter, exploring gender inequality and identity.

One aspect of how identity and facial skincare interlink is in how men seemingly distance themselves from the grooming practice to protect their identity and masculine status. As the title of this thesis reveals, some men will not use facial skincare products or do not wish others to know that they use them. This suggests there are variations surrounding what is considered as accepted masculine behaviour. In the next sections, I will further explore the key theoretical approaches that will help me to investigate such concerns.

Gendering Identity

This thesis adopts a social constructionist view of gender that suggests we role-play in expected ways in society (Butler, 2004). Goffman (1979) contends that the construct of 'norm' in how gender is 'performed' is difficult to categorise as this is subject to social actors within a particular culture or context. Whilst skincare is not considered as a naturally masculine practice, I suggest that how others view those men using such products remains important for male skincare consumers. Individuals relate to gender 'norms' in the form of a continuum involving their own appreciation of constructs of femininity and masculinity at a given time (Thorpe, 2010). This leads to a semantic interplay attempting to categorise gender identities using masculine or feminine

variables. The societal norms that regulate gender offer an opportunity to deconstruct and denaturalise notions of femininity and masculinity in relation to accepted gender practices (Butler, 2004). Hence, this study investigates how men use skincare in acceptable ways of how men are expected to 'perform' and takes the view that "gender is something that people do rather than are" (Hall, 2015: 26).

As gender and gender roles change within society, what defines gender such as acceptance of men using face skincare products is constantly evolving. An exploration of facial skincare products specifically 'for men' provides an opportunity to reveal how gender is conveyed within contemporary society. Cultural values guide our expectations of male and female behaviour informing consumption practices that are associated with gender (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004). Hence, there is a polarised difference in the way that gender is regarded in terms of nature versus nurture influencing the way that men and women are 'expected' to behave in relation to their gendered identity. Ideals for masculinity has implications for how gender is 'performed'. This study therefore sheds light upon how attitudes amongst men are changing in view of the focus upon them to attend to improving their facial skin appearance as an implied requirement of modern masculinity.

How people relate to their assigned gender has garnered interest in the last couple of decades. Studies have provided a large corpus of research aligning gender with identity that offer insight into men's approaches to male grooming (Connell, 1995; Butler, 2004; Bridges, 2014; Hall, 2015). Clearly, gender studies is a multifaceted field and gender reassignment is one example whereby the individual seeks to construct their own gender identity by rejecting their biologically assigned gender (Connell, 2009). The notion of 'undoing gender' has been offered in relation to the increased number of individuals negotiating their gender identity and deciding to reassign gender or transgender (Magaraggia, 2012).   Thus, discussions relating to gender from first wave studies of masculinity have moved on from debates regarding the dichotomous aspect of biological gender.

The notion of a 'gender spectrum' or 'gender continuum' has been developed to represent the myriad of identities relating to sex and sexualities in contemporary society (Farr, 2013). Gender identity is important for this study in relation to current expected

norms for men and how this may influence attitudes towards men's use of facial skincare products. Gender codifies individuals within society via the choice of clothes, moniker, make-up, grooming and accessories to signify habitus within a particular group, thereby suggesting a specific gender identity (Entwistle, 2000). The institutionalization of heterosexuality is a pervading societal norm that continues to treat 'difference' in sexualities in a punitive or ostracising manner (O'Neill, 2016). This has led to some feminist writers suggesting that gender is in fact synonymous with sexuality (Butler, 2004). Deviance away from societal expectations can result in a loss of social standing amongst peers (Hall, 1997). The decision to use men's facial skincare products allows for exploration into whether men accept new ideals of masculinity, or if men continue identifying with versions that are more traditional.

Men's Skincare as a Form of Empowerment

Diedrichs (2015) suggests that in the last 5 to 10 years, working-class men have typically spent more than they had in previous years on facial skincare products and beauty treatments highlighting the increasing importance they place on their appearance. The economic and political changes especially since the financial crash in 2008 has resulted in greater inequalities for many men who may have been in manufacturing industries prior to the banking crisis. Lindisfarne and Neale (2016) highlight how the changing economic environment has affected the ruling classes very little, whilst 'subordinated' males from working class backgrounds have struggled with changing roles in the workforce for those who find employment. The skills set gained by men in more traditional manufacturing industries such as coal and steel have been increasingly replaced by a service economy that serves to capitalise on what is most profitable in a neoliberal economy (Lindisfarne and Neale, 2016). Facial skincare for men offers an example of how manufacturers seek to capitalise on insecurities about skin appearance that adds to company profits. How men anticipate and protect the potential loss of social standing that may result from the perception that consumption of facial skincare makes men less 'manly' is central to this investigation. Likewise, it is useful to consider another product category that was traditionally linked to a female market in terms of how advertising helped to change ideas and ideals surrounding gendered consumption behaviour. Cider, for example, was not associated with traditional masculine constructs in Irish society, or indeed the UK prior to

the success of a campaign designed to change preconceptions. MacLaran and Stevens (2009) highlight how the advent of the re-branded *Magners* campaign drew upon the societal myth of the 'Celtic Soul' embedded in Irish men (MacLaran and Stevens, 2009). The gendered historical discourse aligning Ireland as feminine, juxtaposed to England as a dominant masculine identity was used so that *Magners* retained masculine privilege in the way that men drinking cider was represented (MacLaran and Stevens, 2009).

Individuals and men in particular, for the purpose of this study are highlighted as 'intentional agents' (Beasley, 2012) who are not completely fashioned by structures of power in society. Whilst gender may be *done* to us, conversely people may also *do* gender in terms of how they form their gendered identity (Beasley, 2012). Gender roles and socialisation form an important part of how individuals interpret and negotiate behaviour such as using men's face skincare products, testing the boundaries of accepted notions of masculinity (Richins, 1991). Men are increasingly aware of idealised male images to emulate in terms of fashion and consumption (Frank, E. 2014). For that reason, this thesis goes on to explore the value gained by men using face skincare products in consideration of how traditional notions of masculinity may conflict with male beauty as an ideal.

A Patriarchal Image of Masculinity

Gender ideology aligns men with being naturally rational, efficient and intelligent thus affording them positions of status within society as the natural breadwinner (Milestone and Meyer, 2012). Dominant notions of how men *should* behave are considered as a context for how men negotiate their use of skincare whilst avoiding any challenge to their masculine identity and status. A feminist perspective contests that men should naturally assume privilege, however the division of labour between sexes and biological constraints are key to latent ideals of masculine hegemony (Butler, 2002). Gender roles may be changing but ideals of gender persist. The concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2003) proposes that men have an innate right to leading positions in society and maintain privilege in male-dominated areas such as betting shops (Cassidy, 2014). Historically, a patriarchal system gave privilege to male status, but the idea that this power persists has been contested as being outdated and second wave ideology (Ricciardelli *et al*., 2010).

Connell offers a feminist approach, presented before her transition from male to female. Her views on gender identity are informed by her personal gender identity, and may not be representative of wider contemporary masculinities. Nonetheless, Wedgewood (2009) contends that Connell's work on masculinities and gender theory offers a vantage point as her life history provides an embodied critical insight into gender.

The term 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2003) often merges two key concepts. One relates to the social process and patriarchal authority of masculinity in society. The context that has relevance for this study is the idea of archetypes of 'hegemonic masculine' ideals as a social dominance in society (Adams *et al.,* 2010). It is difficult to determine to what extent such archetypes exist in contemporary society. The idea of hegemony lies primarily in the power that men exert over women in society and whilst role models such as the powerful, aggressive male are not typical in society these can still provide impetus for men to aspire towards (Carrigan *et al.*, 2002). Whilst many contest the notion as being outdated, Hall (2014: 29) describes 'hegemonic masculinity' as "the current most honoured way of being a man in a given context, even though most men do not enact it". This presents a heteronormative ideal for men to draw upon to assert masculine identity. The media permeates the ideology through film characters such as the all-action protagonist portrayed by Vin Diesel in the *Fast and Furious* films (Hall, 2015) and hegemonic males are those that Connell (2005) says society currently accepts as a powerful figure. Some traits are manifest in bodily displays of aggression expressed in physical and emotional strength, men taking risks and through predatory heterosexuality (De Visser *et al.*, 2009). As a result, boys can learn expected ways of how to perform as 'real men' from media role models.

Perpetuating Hegemonic Masculine Ideals

Messerschmidt (2012) highlights the importance of historical and cultural structures as a key feature that serves to legitimate hierarchical gender relations. Gender roles in society evolve and 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1995) presents an ideal of a traditional, dominant, patriarchal stereotype role model. In consequence, Adams *et al.* (2010) suggest that this notional ideal can be expressed as a form of 'orthodox' masculinity to emphasise this as the established role men are *expected* to play in society. As the default

identity for men to align with, such gender ideals are important to note for how they may influence men when contemplating skincare product use. Men may not overtly seek hegemonic practices to assert their gender identity; nevertheless, they also often more subtly align themselves with it (Bridges and Pascoe, 2014).

Hegemonic principles are not only confined to men as the concept is rooted in the power relations and status that society recognises at a given time and within cultural contexts. An example of this is Haynes's (2012) exploration of how women adopt hegemonic ideologies in physical dress codes amongst fellow female lawyers to convey power and suggest a perceived higher status in deference to contemporaries. Thus, our bodies are a medium for culture and a text to represent ideals of gender through personal appearance. Women's image as the subject of men's gaze or 'bearer of the look' (Mulvey, 1975) is long established and the additional inclusion of men as the focus for contemplating appearance offers an interesting position to consider. This is especially important for this study in terms of how an increased focus on men's appearance conflicts with traditional ideals of masculinity (Connell, 2003). The idea of 'hegemonic masculinity' exists not only in opposition to femininity but also in relation to other masculinities (de Visser *et al.,* 2009).

Men's view of facial skincare as a potentially feminising practice reflects wider ideals of masculinity however; I contend that men use hegemonic traits to control their masculine space in a feminised arena. Critically, Bourdieu (2001) highlights that the ideology of hegemony refers to the social ordering in society that acts as a symbolic machine tending to endorse masculine domination. When men are placed in situations that conflict with their normative gender identity they have been found to perform in ways that distance themselves from any suggestion that their ongoing male construct has been de-stabilised in any way. Bridges (2010) found an example of this in his ethnographic observation of men who participated in annual mile long walks in high heels. Male participants wore heels in the walk to draw attention to how women, simply by their style of dress, are often objectified by men which sometimes leads to violence against women. Nevertheless, some men conflated the notion of men wearing heels with being synonymous with those men wearing them being gay. The attitudes of men making these remarks reinforced how men may adopt 'hegemonic masculine' norms when they are

placed in a female and therefore potentially feminising environment (similar to face skincare product consumption). Bridges (2010) observed that those particular men were attempting to reassert gender identity but were doing men a disservice in the process.

Traditional, patriarchal roles and values exist as role models for other males to aspire towards whilst negative traits suggest men to be homophobic, devalue women and have increased male bravado (Anderson, 2009). The conceptualisation of hierarchy and power aligned to 'hegemonic' principles does not reflect the fluid, multiple discourses surrounding embodied contemporary masculinities (De Visser *et al.*, 2009). Many of the precepts surrounding a preeminent status for men in society provide a 'benchmark' for men to ascertain, frame and reflect upon their masculine ideals. The growing importance of products that suggest that men should be concerned with improving their appearance reflects how ideals of masculinity are subtly changing and offers a useful yardstick to disseminate contemporary, fluid ideals of masculinity.

A counter argument for 'hegemonic masculinity' as an ideal is that it is a social construction and thus in a state of continuous transformation (Duncanson, 2015). However, a critical feminist perspective suggests that society appends 'normalcy' of male privilege status and dominance to maintain power for men (Connell, C., 2010). Whilst not all males achieve power and status, societal discourse has treated this as a concern by flagging 'masculinity in crisis' (MacInnes, 2001) to reinforce privilege that males *should* maintain hegemony in society (McCormack, 2014). Use of skincare by men may suggest that men who may feel the need to make more of an effort to enhance their skin are not presenting a traditional version of masculinity. Equally, male consumers may be asserting a new form of masculinity that supports emergent ideals placed on men.

A Blurring of Hegemonic Masculinity

I argue that 'hegemonic masculinity' whilst flawed as an ideology continues to offer a source of influence on expectations for men in contemporary society. Criticisms contesting the currency of this descriptor surround the fluidity of ideals for masculinity (McCormack, 2014). Whilst a single concept to define masculinity is too restrictive, a premise for 'hegemonic masculinity' is that all practices deemed as feminine and 'non-hegemonic' are marginalised as less important. This may then lead to criticism of men

partaking in stereotypical feminine associations as weak and less masculine (Anstiss and Lyons, 2014). The blurring of gender roles has become manifest around the masculinities arena creating a form of 'cultural turbulence' that disrupts accepted notions of how men are expected to behave (Connell, 2003). The importance placed on heteronormative values of 'hegemonic masculinity' fails to recognise other dimensions of masculinities (Connell, 2005a). Use of skincare products by men suggests a practice that is not typical of traditional masculine values. This study explores how men consume skincare without the suggestion that this makes them less masculine as a result.

Men's places and practices in gender relations have changed with face skincare products and similar 'beautifying' practices diversifying into the male zone. Concepts linked to improving appearance for men has presented an opportunity for masculinity to be represented not as a certain type of man, but through discursive practices (Duncanson, 2015). So some men can avoid 'hegemonic masculinity', whilst others embrace the 'ideal' (Connell, 2005a). There is no ideal role model of a man representing 'hegemonic masculinity'. Besides, the idea perpetuates unhealthy attitudes towards masculinity and lacks rigour in relation to males as a subject matter. In addition, the term fails to recognise an assemblage of masculine traits (Messerschmidt, 2012), embodiment (Duncanson, 2015) or hierarchy of agency within gender groups and social dynamics and trends (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). The changing constructions of multiple axes of masculine identity are not reflected by this 'orthodox' ideal (Duncanson, 2015). Whilst, the concept fails to recognise how sex roles have evolved, 'hegemonic masculinity' may provide a signpost for representation of masculinity (O'Neill, 2015). Thomas (2013) asserts that as gender roles shift in society, meaning and power for dominant masculine ideals are derived through relational interaction with 'hegemonic femininity' creating a form of currency in relation to femininity. Thus, Watson (2015) suggests the future may lie in a feminising of the hegemonic role. However, a privileged status in society for males continues to be inculcated as an expectation (Messerschmidt, 2012). As a result, men who are seen as more feminine in relation to other males have lost potential 'capital' in the eyes of more dominant 'mainstream' males (Dhaenens and de Ridder, 2014). Expectations for men to improve their appearance also serves to undermine a stable ideal for masculine identity.

Neoliberal Influences on Male Identity

An improvement of the self has become a common discourse whether this is in terms of the drive towards education, appearance, home ownership and other measures of 'success' suggested by neoliberalism (Lindisfarne and Neale, 2016). Steger and Roy (2010) highlight how neoliberalism has evolved as an ideology and describes how economic and political governance and policy packages have shaped how individuals express their sense of empowerment as a source of 'capital'. In brief, neoliberalism places an increased emphasis encouraging individuals to be more invested in improving their life chances. Hardin (2014) defines neoliberalism as the manifestation of an emphasis on how individuals are refigured as corporations or entrepreneurs. Thus she draws attention to how there is a suggestion that people can have an increased sense of ownership in how they shape their lives. This sense of purpose in improving life chances has an impact on how products and services such as the use of skincare products by men are used to 'complete the self'.

Neoliberalism came into being from global economic expansion from the 1960s onwards and was an attempt to solve the falling profits in rich, industrialised countries by offering credit on a large-scale to workers so that individuals could 'afford' to buy products and services from organisations (Lindisfarne and Neale, 2016). This transactional exchange is part of a capitalist economy however, Lindisfarne and Neale (2016) highlight how neoliberalism has created a more unequal world. Employees are made to work harder against increasing threats of unemployment. Many of the welfare safety nets that were previously in place have been removed thus creating anxiety and destroying confidence in the future. Neoliberalism is governed largely by encouraging entrepreneurial values such as competitiveness and self-interest and celebrates individual empowerment (Steger and Roy, 2010). In this increasingly pressured existence, friends, family and colleagues have less time for each other. Money and work pressures lead to more stressful lives and less help from others. Steger and Roy (2010: 13) highlight how bureaucratic ways for governance in society are replaced by neoliberal ideals of public servants no longer serving for the 'greater good' but as self-interested actors 'responsible to the market'.

Lindisfarne and Neale (2016) suggest that ideologies about the rights of individuals demanding 'me time' and the notion of 'being worth it' evolve from the fragmentation

that is created from pressured, busy and stressful lives. Cornwall (2016: 1) remarks how neoliberalism has created far-reaching effects on all our lives as practices that promise new freedoms for individuals have helped to create different desires, identities and 'new ways of relating and being'. Along with changing ideals, men are increasingly encouraged to partake in practices that present challenges to what it is to be a man. With greater freedom of expression, old certainties are eroded and conventions crumble making way for newly evolving constructions of masculinity.

Whilst the use of men's skincare products offers a protection against ageing and an improved skin, the practice also may suggest a feminising of masculinity for some. However, Frank (E. 2014) argues that visible consumerism of male grooming helps to perpetuate patriarchy by allowing men to express a form of power by taking control of enhancing their appearance. Using men's lifestyle magazine articles as a focus, Frank (E. 2014) explored the trend towards men increasingly removing hair from their body. The depilation of hair from back, groin, ears, nose, legs were noted as an embodied aesthetic ideal. Previously, removal of unwanted body hair was more of a concern for women but gay male culture has embraced depilation as a beauty ideal for some men. However, male depilation, similar to the use of facial skincare products by men suggests a shift in masculine practices. This has importance for this study in how such practices inform masculine identities. Notably, women who do not remove unwanted hair are seen as violating expected societal ideals of making themselves more attractive for men. Men with the resources and knowledge to improve their physical attractiveness with a less hairy body exert power over other men who fail to engage in this grooming practice (Frank E., 2014). The aesthetic of body depilation as a regular routine offers a way of signifying masculinity and femininity, oppression and dominance. Likewise, facial skincare use by men does not naturally have an affinity as a masculine practice and potentially suggests a feminising of masculine behaviour.

A greater awareness of the need to improve appearance forms part of a growing trend towards encouraging men to improve their skills to gain competitive advantage for dating and relationships with women against other men. O'Neill (2016) highlights how participants in her study are seeking to gain greater choice and control in their heterosexual relationships with women by attending commercial training courses in the

'London seduction community'. The main motivation for those men participating in the course was to improve their chances in securing a set of knowledge practices for the governance of intimate gender relations with women. This serves to reconfigure existing power relations among men in their competiveness to 'pickup' women (O'Neill, 2016). Thus, seduction skills can be improved as part of the rationalisation of neoliberal ideas that everything can be enhanced or obtained for a price.

Men's Facial Skincare Habitus

Social behaviour conveys a suggested 'habitus' whereby individuals accrue or lose 'capital', depending upon the 'field' or social arena that actions are taking place (Bourdieu, 1979). Facial skincare is not a natural 'field' or 'habitus' for men and as such women are generally perceived as having a greater experience of this product sector. When men feel out of their depth in making consumer choices such as facial skincare products, they often defer to females to make decisions and influence the purchase (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2006). Thota *et al.* (2014) highlight how women provide influence in the choice of brand and products that men use for male beauty products. Likewise, the opinions of girlfriends and wives are influential in which grooming products men consume (Schneider *et al.,* 2013). Souiden and Diagne (2009) contend that women buy facial skincare for their partners to show how they want to help promote or maintain their good looks. Hence, I highlight how men use women's expertise in relation to facial skincare products to improve their appearance whilst seemingly distancing themselves from any suggestion they are overly interested in beauty.

Facial skincare products are firmly associated as a beauty aid within a female market. Locating skincare within a masculine 'habitus' subjectively embodies use of beauty products as a part of social discourses and masculinity (de Visser *et al.,* 2009). Bourdieu's (2001) notion of 'habitus' is useful in considering how perceptions, taste, appreciation and disposition help to orient practices and thereby give them meaning and offers the nexus to explore deep-seated views of masculinity and identity (Keddie *et al.,* 2007). Mellstrum (2002) provides an example of this in how skills and knowledge acquired by employees in the mainly male habitus of the car industry suggests a 'technical' capital and a more powerful 'hegemonic' status. In contrast, I draw attention to how facial skincare

presents a contentious practice in terms of identity for males to assert and negotiate their constructions of current ideals of masculinity. Men can adopt or reject the practice.

The male fashion industry is more established than men's skincare and illustrates expectations linked to gender in another field concerned with improving appearance and image. Initially the sector identified a loss of 'symbolic capital' for male models ensuing from perceptions of the profession as 'unmanly' within a female habitus (Entwistle, 2004). The notion of 'masculinities in transition' has been raised (Gough, 2006) to describe how males in a mainly female environment such as hairdressing tend to subvert gender norms. As a result, men are seen as losing privilege by being perceived as more feminised due to their working practice (Thorpe, 2010). To counter perceptions of what some may consider as a characteristically feminine domain, many male hairdressing participants have alluded to presenting a more feminised 'camped up' version of themselves whilst in their work environment (Robinson *et al.,* 2011). This suggests a form of gendered embodiment or subversion of a true gendered self into a gender display that parodies the social environment. As a result, certain techniques may be employed such as ironic displays of traditional masculine ideals termed by Benwell (2004) as 'evasive masculinity' to protect identity. On the other hand, Gough (2006) noted that the writing style of news items relating to men in what were assumed to be traditional female roles such as cooking, shopping and dieting used masculine metaphors relating to military and sport. This approach sought to reinforce hegemonic formulation of masculinities to readers to defend men in 'alien habitus' (Gough, 2006).

Gender notionally has domains such as 'a woman's place', or 'men's work' (Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971). A particular interest in how men perform masculinity in various settings has evolved in the 'field' of 'masculinity' (Coles, 2009) whereby men traditionally are expected to be in positions of 'privilege' within society (O'Neill, 2015). Men also protect their masculine status or gain 'capital' by association of their sporting or physical prowess aligned to traditional masculine values (de Visser *et al.,* 2009). 'Doing' masculine things is more important than 'looking' masculine according to de Visser *et al.* (2009) suggesting that men who use skincare must frame their reasons in a 'masculine' context.

Oleskar (2015) identified how some men who have moved away from their traditional role as agents of production such as labour in coalmining have increasingly consumed

products such as facial skincare and fashion. This suggested a way for men to compensate for a lack of status in their labour role and gain autonomy in another way (Oleskar, 2015). Thus, accepted ideals of masculinity are being challenged by emerging practices. Thereby, for the purposes of this study, masculinities are configurations of 'practice' that form recognised behaviour, attitudes and traits suggesting that men can be chameleon-like in their gender display and resonate with societal values at a given time (Connell, 1999 in Connell, 2010).

A More 'Inclusive' Masculinity

The theory of 'inclusive masculinities' (Anderson, 2009) is included here to highlight the various ways that men may be influenced by changing masculine ideals. The main principle underpinning the notion of 'inclusive masculinity' is the decrease relating to societal levels of homophobia and *'homohysteria'* where men and boys have a cultural fear of being homosexualised or accused of being gay (Anderson, 2011a). There remains a pervading ideal of traditional traits of how men should act in society. How men interact with each other as part of their homosocial relations provides a way for understanding masculinity and how it is constructed. For the purpose of this thesis, facial skincare for men may be perceived as a practice that potentially conflicts with 'hegemonic masculine' ideals. Hence, a move towards acceptance of a more feminised version of 'inclusive masculinity' offers a rationale supporting greater approval of the use of facial skincare products by men. 'Inclusive masculinities' is an alternate concept to 'hegemonic masculinity' which reflects a growing feminisation of masculinity suggested by the use of beauty products such as face skincare by men.

Anderson (2011) draws attention to how traditionally boys and men have asserted their *'heteromasculine'* persona to avoid any homosexual stigma, especially when they are in feminised territories such as negotiating use of facial skincare products as a male beauty regime. The use of 'guy talk' is one example whereby men filter what is discussed to mirror traditional notions of masculinity (Waling, 2016). This reflects the social judgement in relation to masculinity and what is deemed as a 'real man'. Waling (2016) contends that a 'mythscape of aspirational masculinity' presented by the media creates uncertainty as to which behaviours and traits are deemed acceptable for men. 'Inclusive

masculinities' partially frames gender in terms of power in what de Bloise (2015) perceives as a progressively equal, less macho version of 'hegemonic masculinity' and suggests that men are more accepting of feminised versions of masculinity.

Heterosexuality maintains privilege and remains the heteronormative position for masculinity notwithstanding an increasing rejection of homophobic attitudes (McCormack and Anderson, 2010). However, heterosexual identity may be compromised in an 'inclusive masculinities' context. 'Inclusive' was used as a descriptor for those 'straight' males who did not fear to be labelled gay for their actions (Jarvis, 2015). Or else, men were categorised as 'hypermasculine' if they portrayed traditional alignment with hegemonic ideals (Anderson, 2009). When exploring the influence of class on the notion of 'inclusive masculinity' in a British sixth form, McCormack's (2014) findings suggested there was a lack of homophobic attitudes among the young male working-class respondents. On the other hand, changes in UK legislation that negate the denigration of gay lifestyles may be another reason for young interviewees appearing to be more 'inclusive' in their attitudes and possibly does not present a true reflection of values (de Bloise, 2015).

'Inclusive masculinities' provides an interesting descriptor for how men relate to increasingly feminised versions and practices of masculinity. A more pluralised and inclusive version of masculinity is affirmed within Jarvis's (2015) UK study exploring heterosexual men participating in gay sport clubs. The impetus for 'straight' men joining a gay football team offered the opportunity for heterosexual men to be an 'agent for change' (Jarvis, 2015). This presented new ideals of constructions of heterosexual males and contributes towards a gradual blurring of traditional notions of masculinity. How men frame their identity is more complex than labelling this in terms of 'hegemonic' and 'inclusive' notions. The premise that "men can now use facial moisturisers and other skin care products" (Anderson, 2009: 157) ignores the point that looking different negates the fact that men may not actually be different (O'Neill, 2015). Men are using skincare products as attested by rising sales, but how their use is appropriated in acceptable ways for men's status and sense of self is in need of further exploration.

Exploring Changing Masculine Ideals

Women have always had a critical eye placed on their appearance (Duncanson, 2015). Thus, societal expectations have led to a beauty industry that assumes the pursuit of an improved appearance as a norm for women (Scott, 1994). Preserving 'manliness' when using face skincare is, on the other hand, problematic for men. Hence, De Visser *et al.* (2009) highlight traditional male activities such as sport as a form of 'insurance' countering non-traditional masculine behaviour. Another defence lies in the way that face skincare use is referenced amongst men. If a man looks younger, he then suggests he has vitality and more to offer society in terms of traditional notions of how men should act (Jankowski *et al.,* 2016). Hall (2015) suggests that men bring into play discursive practices such as using the rationale of face skincare use as a functional need to preserve traditional male identity with other men. How masculine status is asserted in the use of 'beautifying' facial skincare is explored in this study to understand how men protect identity. Some men continue to defend their traditional values however, and as such Gough *et al.* (2016) draw attention to a 'softening' of masculinity in their study exploring older, obese men's attitudes to their body image. They found men evaluating their bodies in the mirror and wishing to 'drop a jean's size', similar in comparison to practices traditionally associated with women. The move towards self-evaluation and away from male bodies as embodied 'machines' for work (Gough *et al.,* 2016) suggests that constructions of masculinities remain fluid.

The pervasive culture among men is to avoid any association with bodily practices such as the use of face skincare products suggesting vanity (Gill *et al.,* 2005). The underlying premise is that men should 'look after' themselves (a morally responsible body). Gill *et al.* (2005) found that when men openly display vanity and narcissism, other men perceive this negatively as an appraisal of masculine embodiment. The need to defend traditional notions of masculinity (hegemonic or orthodox) remain to the point that any discourse amongst men that suggests non-conformance, such as femininity or narcissistic tendencies is avoided to maintain status (Adams *et al.,* 2010). The media positions men as sexualised objects of the gaze as it has done for women (Barber, 2008). The proliferation of images of men as an object of gaze have stimulated a call for men to 'define' themselves through their body and consequently, their facial skin.

Over a decade ago, Gill *et al.* (2005) highlighted the potential effects of this 'visibility' for men coming from virtual 'invisibility' in the 1990s, (although this is not the case for black men who tend to remain invisible in mainstream brand advertising (hooks, 2015)). This swift transition towards 'hypervisibility' of male images in the space of a decade has a potential impact on the self-esteem of boys and young men in relation to appearance. Gill *et al.* (2005) note how the shift in societal perspective concerning men's image has led to a displacing of heteronormative values driving men to 'redefine' themselves by improving how they look. As a result, ideals of masculinity have triggered a trend for cosmetic surgery. This has led to a newly masculine term 'male femininity' to describe the pursuit of new ideals of firm, fit, flexible and fat-free bodies as opposed to muscular body building projects that are aligned with 'traditional' forms of masculinity (Atkinson, 2008).

An increased media exposure of idealised forms of men has provided a platform to mediate grooming products such as face skincare to male markets (Mort, 1996). Alexander (2003) suggests that organisations profit by generating insecurity about the (male) self by offering a solution through a particular corporate brand. Facial skincare brands often imply that men's skin will not look good without use of their products (Mintel, 2016). Facial skincare for men has flourished in terms of the size of the market and the range of products available (Euromonitor, 2015). As men become more accustomed to consuming facial skincare products, their ability to distinguish between brands grows in competence (Mintel, 2017). As a result, the idea that masculinity forms part of an ongoing embodied construction project has emerged (Anstiss and Lyons, 2014). Norman (2011) asserts that embodiment offers an opportunity to explore how 'feminising' practices such as face skincare influence masculine norms.

'Sticky Masculinity'

Traits of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2003) are still found in images of traditional, white, protestant men in religious advertisements (Hoover and Coats, 2011). Wignall (2016) characterises how faith based organisations play an important part in the gendering process as part of the restitution and reshaping of gender norms. Neoliberalisation in everyday life is highlighted by Wignall's (2016) study of the role that

the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) plays in reasserting ideals of masculinity. The YMCA arguably addresses issues surrounding men's behaviour such as delinquency, disruptive or unproductive masculinity that fails to match the expectations of a neoliberal state. A static form of masculinity based on a Protestant ethos of strength, industry and self-discipline which was historically termed 'The Whole Man' provides the underlying premise for the YMCA movement (Wignall, 2016). Current liberal values of equality, fairness and compassion provide the underlying rationale shaping how YMCA seeks to guide masculine ideals in the twenty-first century. Wignall (2016) highlights that many of the boys he observed were from backgrounds where education, family life and relationships were chaotic and the YMCA required these young males to learn a different form of 'self-value'. The school and the street are identified as key environments that male prestige is acted out. A 'pecking order' and 'Big Man systems' operated for boys that Evans (2011) observed on London council estates. Expectations of teachers required boys to behave at school, whilst a more frenetic and often violent disposition was expected on the street thus creating confusion as they moved from one system of masculine power to another (Evans, 2011).

Some men do not seem to be able to disassociate with traditional ideals of how men should act (Thorpe, 2010). Changing roles for men in society has contributed to 'hegemonic masculinity' failing as a descriptor for how men relate to an increasingly diverse set of identities in relation to gender. This lack of a clear masculine identity has led to a descriptor of 'sticky masculinity' to explain how men continue to be associated with hegemonic principles such as harshness and violence in the way that bodies are entwined with culturally established signs of masculinity (Berggren, 2014). Nonetheless, there are evolving ideals of male body image that counter traditional notions of masculinity (Smeesters *et al.,* 2010). Barber (2008) explored the trend for white, middle-class American men using hair salons that are recognised as a predominantly female domain as a way of suggesting discernment over those men using barbershops. More recently up-market barbers have emerged catering for the fashion for beards and offering more of a salon-style approach for men. Newly evolving grooming practices offer an enhanced self-esteem for men as they conform to changing societal practices in relation to image. How men frame their use of facial skincare as a masculine practice is important to understand for this study.

Men's identities are aligned with their consumption behaviour. A heteronormative defence is often offered to rationalise the use of facial moisturisers by men using instrumental terms to protect gender identity. For that reason, men may say that they use facial skincare products to assist the health of their skin, rather than to improve appearance (Gill *et al.,* 2005). There are a plethora of products and activities to draw upon as part of ongoing improvement of image for men which potentially 'softens' masculine ideals (Gough *et al.,* 2014). I suggest that men rationalise their use of facial skincare products aligning with an orthodox version of masculinities or hegemonic ideals to assert traditional values.

Male Skincare and Metrosexuality

Although considered by some commentators as outdated (Hakim, 2016), 'metrosexuality' offers a contextual descriptor for this thesis as it is concerned with how men relate to their appearance and expectations surrounding gender. The descriptor serves as an example of a trend towards how men are 'required' to contemplate their image as a project for continued improvement. A growth in male grooming products and in men who were becoming increasingly interested in their personal appearance heralded the emergence of the label 'metrosexual' (Simpson, 2003). Whilst the focus on appearance by so-called 'metrosexuals' has been linked to earnings as a marker promoting social identity, Das and Loach (2011) suggest that men may also be motivated by a form of hegemony gained by improving their appearance through grooming.

The use of face skincare products by men forms part of a wider set of so-called 'metrosexual' activities whereby men practice undertakings that were previously regarded as being performed by females and homosexual men (Hall, 2014). Clarkson (2005) suggests that the concept or label of 'metrosexuality' erases the imaginary line between notions of how straight and gay men 'perform'. Meanwhile, Hall (2015) highlights how it describes heterosexual men who may suggest a more feminised version of masculinity. Nevertheless, there is fluidity in the way men interpret the descriptor. Some align the label with straight men 'copying' gay men (De Casanova *et al.,* 2016). As a result, the gay community use the term 'metrosexual' to describe men living 'straight' lives who in fact are not 'out' (De Casanova *et al.,* 2016). Hall (2015) argues that sexuality

has little to do with how men groom. A metrosexual is more concerned with looking good and generally defends his heterosexual identity if challenged by others.

'Metrosexual' as a descriptor has been criticised as lacking currency in contemporary society. Nevertheless, the concept of 'metrosexuality' offers a re-framing of acceptable practices for men (Gough, 2013). The moniker of 'metrosexual' provides legitimacy for men to use facial skincare products whilst preserving heteronormative values. This collective terminology embraces the fact that men wish to improve their appearance with an attention to detail previously reserved for females. Commentators present labels to explain changing behaviour amongst men often using heterosexual, traditional notions of men as a benchmark of 'normative' practices.

Evolving Masculinity Descriptors

A reaction to the 'metrosexual' was the typology of 'retrosexual' ascribed to men wishing to exacerbate their 'manliness' by chest hair implants and stronger chin lines (Simpson, 2004). Another later masculinity fashion denotes leaner, physically 'ripped' and toned men who strive to look like sportsmen or porn stars, and coined as 'spornosexual' (Simpson, 2006) who were influenced by fashion shoots such as *Dolce & Gabbana,* magazine articles and male nude calendars (Oleskar, 2015). The 'V-shaped' physique of 'spornosexuals' are noted by Hakim (2016) as part of the move towards the freedoms offered for the individual as part of neoliberal ideals. Men who may be disenfranchised by the economic downturn are offered a way of improving their bodies as an ongoing 'project' (Hakim, 2016). As economic inequality has amplified, it seems that gender differences have resulted in an increased gendered marking that Lindisfarne and Neale (2016) highlight as symptomatic of masculinities under neoliberalism. As a result, young men have an opportunity to gain a form of 'body capital' and gain kudos in relation to others seeking to develop their body image (Hakim, 2016).

Heterosexual men are being encouraged to be groomers and consumers in the beauty market, further challenging traditional ideas relating to 'hegemonic masculine' ideals and practices (Frank, E. 2014; Anstiss and Lyons, 2014). In turn, a trend towards constructing an identity through everyday consumption or 'compensatory consumption' such as the foray into grooming products and cosmetic surgery has emerged (Atkinson, 2008; Hall,

2015; Gough, 2016). These trends have helped to trigger the idea of a malleable construction of idealistic consumer identity for males that is rooted in symbolism and an imagined life (Lagrange, 1999; Holt and Thompson, 2004). This offers the potential for many forms of the masculine ideal. A more recent label, 'hybrid masculinities' refers to a softening and more feminine version of traditional forms of men that blur gender differences but fail to challenge gender inequalities (Bridges, 2014). The main premise for hybrid masculinities lies in the assimilation of cultures and performance of men with subordinated 'others' (Frank, E. 2014) as this particular descriptor is framed from studies of men having sex with other 'straight' men but maintaining their heterosexual identity (Bridges, 2014). Thus, De Casanova *et al.* (2016) contends that 'hybridised masculinity' blends traditional versions of hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinity in homosocial settings with other men.

As a possible counter to sexualised imagery of males, the concept of 'hyper-masculinity' is based on exaggerated beliefs about contemporary men. These inflated views include men displaying callous attitudes towards women and sex; toughness as a form of emotional control and violence aligned as manly and danger seen as exciting (Vokey *et al.,* 2013). This type of 'hyper-masculine' image appeals to mainly younger, lower socio-economic and less affluent males who are more likely to emulate such representations (Vokey *et al.*, 2013). Likewise, 'hyper-masculinity' offers a form of 'capital' for men who are often from lower class sections in society by adopting bodybuilding projects for example (Bridges, 2009). Males are still likely to embody hegemonic ideals to retain status amongst their contemporaries. So hegemonic ideals 'bend', but are not broken by the opportunity to blend other forms of masculinity (De Casanova *et al.,* 2016). These descriptors offer an insight into how men are influenced in relation to current ideals of masculinity. To what extent skincare is validated as an acceptable practice for men is considered throughout this study as I explore how metrosexual and other terms fail as a catch all for all men that use such products.

Embodying Facial Skincare as Masculine

Men's facial skincare use provides an opportunity to explore how the use of such products and the practice of moisturising potentially reflects traditional notions of

masculinity whilst pushing the boundaries of male identity. Body image concerns are synonymous with women (Gough, 2013). To maintain a form of capital linked to masculinity men have eschewed certain 'gendered' practices such as using facial skincare (Bridges, 2014). Men's face skincare offers the opportunity to improve personal appearance as an ongoing body project or conversely, may be alienating to those men holding traditional notions of masculinity.   Nevertheless, men are increasingly using facial skincare products. Fury (2016) highlights a trend towards men buying premium brands suggesting in turn that men are signalling an improved knowledge of face skincare products.

The body is used by men as a vehicle to express individualism and is another element that informs contemporary constructions of masculine identity (Boni, 2002; Gill *et al.*, 2005). Connell (2000) points out that men's bodies do not determine the patterns of masculinity but form part of the societal discourse around the concept of defining, disciplining and forming part of the gender order for expectations surrounding men's bodies. The body offers a site for improvement and a focus to explore how ideal versions of masculinity are negotiated. An example of this is how Wright (1997) describes a body ideal for some gay men as typically thin, with little or no body hair, youthful in appearance and exhibiting a more effeminate behaviour who self-refer as 'Twinks'. Hall (2014) draws attention to how the media triggers an increased self-awareness amongst men giving permission to admire other men's bodies and looks. A defence of traditional masculine ideals continue and is illustrated in how men's facial skincare is not a topic that would be naturally openly discussed by men for fear of being considered 'girly' (Ojala *et al.,* 2016).

Hall (2015: 2) highlights how 'normally' sexed (men) work up their gender and sexual identities to make them appear 'fixed and normal' within social interactions with others. Men are keenly engaged in "actively constructing and policing masculine behaviours and identities, regulating normative behaviour" (Gill *et al.,* 2005: 37-38) and are therefore, conscious of the implications of their actions on how others perceive their identity. Previously, men simply ignored their embodied status or perceived their bodies as machines or tools to ensure they performed roles expected in society (Gough *et al.,* 2016). Whilst metaphors aligning men as strong providers in dominant positions in society persist, Gough *et al.* (2016) contend that the male body is constructed increasingly

as an aesthetic object in mediated locations such as advertising. How men are presented in face skincare advertisements to male audiences influences how such products are viewed in society. Societal ideals of male stereotypes have not always been in accord with the ensuing reality of how men have changed over time in relation to their roles, image, lifestyle and behaviour. Males are depicted progressively in an idealised manner, eroticised in their approach and coded in ways that give permission for them to be looked at or desired (Anstiss and Lyons, 2014). This is manifest in the way men consume images of other males to appreciate ways to construct their own image and understand what is considered fashionable (for example, Schroeder, 2006).

The body offers a project to be worked upon and thus face skincare for men forms part of this remit (Rohlinger, 2002). Notions of men's shared convictions and embodied identities are potentially structured by a 'grammar of individualism' that informs the construction of body ideals (Gill *et al.,* 2005). Hence, the male body can be a tool that men manipulate in order to achieve a gendered identity (Boni, 2002). Knowledge of what is desirable as part of an embodied experience such as working towards a more muscular shape or growing a beard for men provides an opportunity for shared values and understanding (Patterson *et al.*, 2009). The nature of embodiment means that observations relating to the body can be encoded and understood without discussion and as such, offers an opportunity for increased capital and "a site of transcendence" (Nayak and Kehily, 2006: 464). The stylised depictions of males as represented by the media are influenced by societal expectations on how men should be portrayed (Mellstrum, 2002). If the specific setting deviates too far from constructed ideals then this would serve to potentially alienate or confuse audiences.

Rationalising Men's Use of Skincare

So how can men gain 'capital' through using facial skincare products? I suggest that metrosexuality and other such descriptors of how men are seemingly more self-aware of their appearance fail to explain how an improved skin does not suggest a more feminine version of masculinity. Gender conduct such as greater acceptance by men of facial skincare use is reinforced as normative through repeated performance. Men using skincare products offers a way of completing the self through better appearance by

improving facial skin. However, skincare use is not something that men would publicise freely for fear that this compromises traditional notions of masculinity (Ojala *et al.,* 2016). Nevertheless, there are benefits for men as interestingly, those considered as more attractive at interview stand a better chance of appointment (De Casanova *et al.,* 2016). Societal expectations in relation to gender and power and embodiment of male dominance and control suggests that men in the pursuit of power are rewarded with *'real power'* (Thompson and Hirschman, 1995). In contrast, females who pursue power are often perceived as less feminine and thereby lose status (Talbot, 2003).

The construction of masculine heterosexuality is intrinsically linked to expected bodily modes of behaviour (Nayak and Kehily, 2006). Conversely, gender may be determined as deviant for sexualities other than those identified as heterosexual (Butler, 2002). Hence, a heteronormative portrayal of men becomes the norm for selling mainstream products such as face skincare to men (Elliott and Elliott, 2005). The pressure to conform to a younger image ideal affects individuals in differing ways such as the extremes of cosmetic surgery at one end of the spectrum effecting low self-esteem (Hall, 2015). Likewise, an increased number of beauty services has led to greater pressure on both women and men to improve their image suggesting that looking older can result in "being marginalised or perceived as less capable" (Jankowski *et al.,* 2016: 13)*.* Seemingly, skincare offers men a way to improve their appearance and gain a form of 'capital' if used in an appropriate context for masculine identity.

Acquiring Capital

Bourdieu's (1979) discussion of 'capital' offers a platform for understanding how men do not lose a sense of masculine identity when using a potentially feminising product. I highlight the overall discreet benefits conferred to users of men's face skincare product results in acquiring a form of 'capital' (Bourdieu, 1979). When males embrace a new practice such as using face skincare the influence this may have on traditional and emergent notions of male identity is important to understand. As a focus for this study, the positive effect on men's self-concept as a result of using skincare are contemplated. 'Capital' is discussed in this study as a way of understanding how men use products with feminising links and what this reveals about evolving identity issues.

'Capital' is a term used as a means of gaining power and advantage over contemporaries (Bourdieu, 2001). Position and status helps men acquire 'capital'. In a society that values looks, younger looking skin helps men to retain status for longer. Men's facial skincare practice has been justified by how it improves looks, and in doing so potentially creates better opportunities in life (Ojala *et al.,* 2016). Bourdieu offers a theory based on a symbolic economy which consists of four forms of 'capital' that stratify society, thus the traditional economic capital is further explained by cultural, symbolic and social capital (Bourdieu, 2001). 'Symbolic capital' refers to the status achieved by belonging to social groups. Whereas, 'social capital' is aligned with the personal networks an individual develops. 'Cultural capital' can help promote social mobility and is embodied through a person's behaviour and the accumulation of cultural knowledge confers power and status (Bourdieu, 1979). Bridges (2009) combines a hybridization of Bourdieu's (1979) theory of 'cultural capital' and Connell's (1995) 'hegemonic masculinity' ideology in 'gender capital'. Together these two theories offer a rationale for how men draw upon traditional ideas of masculinity to defend old-style expectations of men.

Gender Capital Explored

'Gender capital' (Bridges, 2009) protects gender identity in a particular context, practice or environment that may conflict with traditional expectations relating to men and women. It is useful at this point to reflect upon a definition provided by Bridges (2009: 92) in which, "gender capital refers to the knowledge, resources and aspects of identity available within a given context that permit access to regime-specific gendered identities". However, in this thesis I illustrate how 'gender capital' fails to explain how men negotiate masculine identity in relation to face skincare. 'Gender capital' provides an appropriate descriptor of how men retain traditional ideals of masculine identity in certain regimes (Bridges, 2009). Such as in the case of men who embody masculine ideals through bodybuilding as an appearance improvement project (Bridges, 2009). A key component of 'gender capital' is how men use 'cultural capital' as a way of gaining status. The obvious development of muscles as part of bodybuilding does not conflict with ideals of masculinity. However, facial skincare as the particular regime for this study does undermine historical notions of masculinity, as the benefits of an improved facial skin appearance are not usually discussed amongst men (Ojala *et al.,* 2016).

Bridges (2009) study of male bodybuilders illustrates how men embody ideals of masculinity. They do so by acquiring knowledge, resources and an ongoing formulation of capital that fits with gender ideals. When males enter an arena more traditionally associated with women, men have been found to assume 'hegemonic masculine' traits (Connell, 2003). By adopting traditional traits that are more naturally aligned as a hegemonic ideal for men, Gupta and Gentry (2016) argue that men are able to maintain masculine norms in an environment more usually associated with women. An example of this is the use of competitiveness with other men to secure fast fashion purchases instore where there was a scarcity of products (Gupta and Gentry, 2016). 'Gender capital' has also been used in a hybridised form with female lawyers exploring 'physical capital' (Haynes, 2012) and connected to gender and occupation (Huppatz and Goodwin, 2013). Men using facial skincare products to improve appearance is not a masculine ideal. This is unlike gaining a muscular body or being more competitive with other men. The benefits of an improved facial skin are more subtle and usually linked with beauty.

Gill *et al.* (2005) using Bourdieu's (1995) 'symbolic capital' concept, perceive that in a consumerist society the body is less about what the body is able to do and more about what it looks like. Aldin (2007) underlines the benefit of good looks when men compete in the workplace. Likewise, younger looking skin provides a form of hegemony to assist career progression (Das and Loach, 2011). I suggest that men gain a form of capital that is less obvious than 'cultural capital' as used in Bridges's (2009) notion of 'gender capital' when they improve their appearance by using face skincare products. Men's use of facial skincare is shaped by neoliberal rationalities. This helps men to frame their use of facial skincare in ways that align with patriarchal values.

The 'looking-glass self' (Cooley, 1902) highlights how people in our close environment serve as the 'mirrors' that reflect images of ourselves. Improved self-image can increase self-esteem. Therefore, the idea of the 'social self' is drawn from the life an individual perceives as his or her own. 'Self-feeling' is more how a person emotionally reflects how they fit in as part of a wider community. This self-feeling is a mental attitude of how an individual's behaviour is perceived. As social structures change, so can a person's perception of what is necessary as part of their identity. As a result, this can offset potential conflicts with gender ideals such as how men perceive products related to

beauty such as face skincare. Conversely, some men reject facial skincare as a feminising practice, therein defending traditional identity notions of masculinity.

'Gender capital' (Bridges, 2009) articulates how men retain gender identity in feminised environments combining 'hegemonic masculinity' with 'cultural capital'. However, 'cultural capital' is not appropriate as a descriptor of the benefit men gain as a result of using facial skincare products. Whilst an improved appearance for skin is a feature that many would wish to attain, Bourdieu's (1979) 'cultural capital' relies upon cultural competence, social status and standing that is acquired over time and expressed through knowledge. As men are not likely to openly discuss the benefits they have gain from use of a product associated with beauty for fear of ridicule by other men, then 'cultural capital' fails as a way of expressing how it is men use skincare and thus ensure their masculine identity is not undermined by this practice.

It has been suggested that better looking facial skin from using men's skincare products can result in improved careers and relationships (Oleskar, 2015). These are ideals expected for men in a patriarchal society. The notion of the 'looking-glass capital' is introduced in this study as a description of the potential for men to protect masculine identity whilst using facial skincare products. Expectations that men should be concerned with how others view them adds further to the complexities for modern men. The recognition of the influence of others on the self-concept presents another influence on whether or not men choose to use facial skincare products. "Each to each a looking-glass, reflects the other that doth pass" (Cooley, 1902: 164) provides a context for how modern men are increasingly concerned with how they look and how others perceive a man's pursuit to improve his appearance. Connell's (2003) 'hegemonic masculinity' provides an additional supporting theory to explore how this traditional notion of masculinity provides guidance for how men deflect their use of skincare as something that is not associated with beauty.

On the face of it, male facial skincare products benefit men by improving appearance and increasing their confidence. The potential problem lies in how men negotiate an improved facial skin routine that increases their self-esteem whilst not diminishing ideals of masculinity. Social structures that traditionally have offered clear notions that men

should not be concerned with their image then present conflict when ideals linking to identity subsequently change.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has explored the evolving constructions of diverse and fluid masculinities in terms of societal trends, influences and conflicting ideologies. Labels charting the changing personas of 'metrosexual' to a later concept of 'hybrid masculinities' offer a rationale in how males respond to the growing men's grooming market and role ideals. Moreover, embodiment and men's face skincare products in how the body is a site for improvement as an ongoing project for current ideals within a given time has been addressed. Notions of masculinity are informed by societal ideals of men gaining power to maintain privilege in relation to their contemporaries. Whilst hegemonic principles persist as a traditional trope of masculine ideals, concepts have moved on to 'neo-Bourdieuan' values that intersect class, masculinities and decreasing homophobia (McCormack, 2014). Hence, a hetero-masculine identity can offer embodied 'capital' in improved appearance and self-esteem for men, transecting 'inclusive masculinity' ideals and maintaining hegemonic status (McCormack, 2014). I suggest that some men are rationalising the beauty aspects of their use of facial skincare. My studies suggest such men use skincare and ensure that this does not denigrate their masculine status.

The thesis uses the supporting concept of Cooley's (1902) 'looking-glass self' in consideration of the assumed critical gaze on men's appearance. In view of this, the study moves on to explore the mediation of images through advertising and celebrity culture in order to provide a further context in which I can address why it is men are challenged to use products such as facial skincare. These are considered in relation to the value they hold for ideals of masculinity and men's identity in the context of men's facial skincare consumption.

Chapter Four. Men, Advertising and Skincare

"The social self is simply an idea, or system of ideas, drawn from the communicative life, that the mind cherishes as its own" (Cooley, 1902: 161).

Introduction

As part of a wider 'system of ideas' (Cooley, 1902), advertising has influence on the 'social self' informing men's identity and as such this chapter explores how advertising presents ideals of masculinity. Advertisers employ various techniques to position facial skincare in a manner that assumes that men *should* be using such products. This study continues to investigate how an increased awareness by men to improve their appearance is encouraged through the mediation of facial skincare as a masculine concept. The work of Williamson (2002) provides a cultural framing of advertising within this study. I highlight how advertising has shifted from 'use value' to 'symbolic value'. This connects to my underlying concern that men should be concerned about their facial appearance as part of the self. Mediated ideals inform male self-concept and advertising acts as a portal to transport audiences into the potential 'self'. Male facial skincare products are provided through advertising as a way to construct a social identity for men.

The advertising industry is drawn together from a narrow field of mainly white, middle-class men. I suggest that this has implications for the way that advertisements are framed in a specific way for audiences. In particular, there is an absence of black and other minority ethnicities within UK advertisements for both men and women's facial skincare products. Whilst not a significant issue for this study, this lack of representation of contemporary multicultural society mirrors how many products and services are mediated within the UK. Commentators like Cashmore (2006) have argued that advertising has less influence than celebrity culture as an impetus to change attitudes. Exposure to celebrities through magazines, television and social media suggest lifestyles to emulate that are more 'fluid' (Rahman, 2004). Celebrities like David Beckham possibly may offer a more natural appeal to audiences to stimulate demand for appearance-enhancing products such as men's face skincare (Gee, 2014). Hence, the idealised versions of masculinity, offered both by advertising and celebrity culture, are significant for this study.

Symbolising Male Skincare Potential

Advertising has adapted over the last few decades, reacting to the greater availability of information online by forming digital platforms for consumers. The potential for products that suggest shared ideals for audiences has an increasing economic importance as part of neoliberal rationale (Cornwall, 2016). Moving beyond the informational need for men's facial skincare products, advertising paradigms in consumer society have shifted towards meaning-based approaches resulting in men in particular feeling confused about the 'call to action' (Stevens and Ostberg, 2011). This has implications for how men view advertisements for products such as men's facial skincare. A confusing array of advertising creative platforms have proceeded to mix function with more abstract symbolic forms, often obscuring the social reality that men relate to as part of their self-concept. This promotes meaning for products like men's face skincare as part of wider ideals of masculinity. Notional ideals for gender have implications for male identity and advertising is explored in this chapter and Chapter Seven in how it influences the way that men view skincare as a part of their sense of the 'self'.

The work of Anthony Giddens (1991) surrounding concepts of the 'self' is useful as a context for this study in consideration of how skincare is negotiated by men as an accepted practice. Giddens (1991) discusses how negotiating the 'self' as part of a wider practice can offer the sense of feeling part of a broader group. When advertisers link the use of face skincare products by a diverse range of men then this can help to normalise the practice for a wide group of male consumers. Conversely, using face skincare products may lead to fragmentation from newly emerging ideals by not feeling this is relevant to a man's traditional sense of identity. Those men who appropriate skincare products may notionally acquire a sense of authority. Equally, Giddens (1991) argues that 'uncertainty' may result in a sense of 'powerlessness' for those who do not use such products.

Giddens (1991) contends that advertisers present 'commodified' experiences to audiences. Facial skincare products can be suggested as contributing towards an improvement of the 'self' that may be conveyed not only as a wider lifestyle concept but also as a form of self-actualisation (Giddens, 1991). Thus, advertisers are potentially informing audiences of what is acceptable as a cultural practice rather than simply

presenting products for their own sake. Indeed, as Leiss *et al.* (1991) argue advertising has social power but not social responsibility. The influence advertising has upon male identity in how attitudes towards men's facial skincare products and changing ideals for male identity are mediated is explored in this study.

Conveying the Value of Skincare for Men

Advertising provides an important context for this study as it stimulates a need where it previously did not exist and provides an avenue to introduce and assert male facial skincare as an acceptable practice. Williamson's (2002) work affords a way of explaining how advertising offers symbolic referents that convey meaning to audiences and in doing so they present ideals of contemporary masculinities to society. Through advertising, products assume a 'currency' that forms an 'exchange value' for the user connecting 'value' with society's desirable qualities. The advertisement gives meaning to society and society gives meaning to the ideals aligned with the advertisement (Featherstone, 1982). The human association between a commodity (face skincare products) and (male) model provides a 'gestalt' for those viewing advertisements (Du Plessis, 2008). Williamson (2002) suggests that this helps audiences who see advertisements to appreciate the desirable qualities that the product can offer, thereby giving it further meaning and as such, her work provides an important supporting theory for this thesis. The 'gestalt' indicates, "the sum of the parts is more than the individual parts" (Du Plessis, 2008: 50) and in the context of men's facial skincare, the 'gestalt' suggests use of the product as an indicator of modern lifestyle.

Symbolism such as 'typical' lifestyle formats becomes increasingly important to form identities through consumption (Williamson, 2002). In relation to words, or images presented in male facial skincare product advertisements men make connections by association of what is already known or understood as a 'referent' (Williamson, 2002). When staged in glamorous settings, products such as face skincare can suggest notions of indulgence. They also imply that consumption of such products improves appearance (Williamson, 2002). The particular choice of male models displayed with male facial skincare products creates a 'system of significance' forming what Barthes (2009) terms a 'mythology' relating to the brand's desirable properties. The illusory myth system

created within advertising connects the model chosen for what advertisers present as idealistic looks (the sign). This is used to signify what can be achieved through use of the face skincare product (the signified). In addition, male audiences are exposed to a 'sensory reality' so that men respond to the idea that use of face skincare products conform to contemporary societal values. Williamson (2002) contends that the (male) model in a face skincare advertisement creates 'juxtaposition' or 'metonymy' that suggests a connectivity between the product and model, whereby one 'stands for' the other (Williamson, 2002). Hence, 'men like this' use these particular skincare products to improve their facial appearance. Importantly for this study, Williamson (2002) stresses how the form and structure of the 'referent system' of advertising interlinks and creates meaning in a social system. This has relevance for how men interpret advertisements for facial skincare as part of their self-concept. 'Social mythologies' offered within the context of the advertisement are proposed as providing a cultural frame for goods (Leiss *et al.,* 1997), and these can be used to demonstrate how face skincare products can improve the quality of life for men.

Products are identified as part of the male domain by advertisers use of distinct or subtle differences such as using a male model to logically connect such products are intended for men (Williamson, 2002). The product links part of a 'real or natural order' for consumers to convey social values and 'taste' (Leiss *et al.,* 1997). Likewise, the use of attractive male models with face skincare products correlates the product's potential to create such looks as the value of good skin is a referent (Williamson, 2002). Images offer a 'mirror phase' whereby the male in the image reflects the product's desirable attributes. The advert invites the reader to buy into these qualities, thereby becoming a kind of shorthand metaphor of an illusory self (Williamson, 2002). Although the so-called mirror image is one that is projected by the advertiser's own constructions of masculinities, it is limited by a lack of diversity in the industry.

The Imposition of Advertising Ideals

The intentional approach used by advertisers presents cultural meanings and social norms to which (male) audiences are obliged to conform (Harmon-Kizer, 2014). Fleck and Zetioun (2014) highlight how the practice of advertising has to adhere to the application

of codes, however the values and ideas that underpin advertisements are formed by advertisers. This in turn serves to create social formation of meaning (Kervin, 1990). Consequently, the public buy into branded male facial skincare when propositioned with deft creativity, engaging tones of voice and effective targeting of consumer segments (Tibbs, 2010). Nevertheless, the versions of masculinities presented are formed from the advertiser's narrow construct of reality to represent men and influence the ideals that men draw upon when contemplating their identity (Hariharan *et al.,* 2015). Hall (1998) emphasises how the choice of models in advertising often fail to reflect cultural diversity or whatever it is that constitutes the 'typical' man. Furthermore, a strategic 'use value' approach by advertisers promotes the continuance of outdated gender stereotypes that bear little resemblance for audiences in contemporary society (Holt and Thompson, 2004). This has implications for how men relate to advertisements for men's skincare. Leiss *et al.* (1997) highlight how advertisers use manipulative methods to compel men to conform to media ideals of how men *should* look. However, if models fail to represent the diversity of men in society then face skincare becomes less relevant.

Society is formed from a diverse array of individuals. Men are called to conform to consumption practices offered by advertising, although advertisements are symptomatic of what McCracken (2009) terms 'convergent culture'. This means that advertising ideals that inform male identity are limited in their approach by advertisers' version of 'reality'. Couldry (2003) verifies that the underlying values in society serve to frame rituals in media relating to social aspects of our lives. Through 'spectacularisation' and 'hyperreality' the consumer reinvents and co-choreographs acceptable forms in society such as how males are represented in face skincare advertisements (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995). Barthes (2009) reinforces this further suggesting that advertising acts as a conduit to translate idealised versions of masculinity which use 'media reality' to propose new products. Hence, attention is drawn to how the referent benefit of face skincare for men is constructed from the advertisers' narrow view of male skincare products suggesting a 'social reality' for men to embrace (Williamson, 2002). This 'social reality' influences the ways that men take inspiration relating to social norms informing masculine ideals. Windels and Lee (2012) further attest how advertising is orchestrated by a relatively small field of individuals operating as a 'community of practice'. They tend to recruit mainly white, middle-class men who translate their ideals of masculinity to audiences. The lack

of diverse representation within the advertising industry perpetuates outdated societal constructs of masculinities (McLeod *et al.*, 2009). Women find it difficult to enter into a male-dominated arena that often operates in such a 'laddish' culture (see McLeod *et al.,* 2011; Grugulis and Stoynaka, 2012; Windels and Lee, 2012).

As an integral part of modern culture, advertising has the power to recycle cultural models of what we perceive as normative behaviour. Social interactions such as exposure to advertising (or celebrity culture) help to premise new practices such as male face skincare. Consumer society is a culture with its own systematic properties (McCracken, 2005). Thus, we depend upon meanings conveyed by consumer goods as they capture significance for lived lives. As advertisers draw upon their own cultural constructions of society, McCracken (1986) contends their approach is not always relevant to audiences. This has implications for the choice of model deployed in advertising. The narrow perspective offered from the field of advertising creatives has a direct effect on how face skincare translates to males and has implications for their identity.

Whilst race is not a focus for this study, McClintock's (1995) work on how Victorian Britain reinvented race difference as a form of commodity racism is useful to note in terms of how this may continue to influence how men's skincare is advertised currently. The colonial heritage was drawn upon by advertisers as a way of providing economic and spiritual salvation to the 'great unwashed' masses in Victorian England. The focus on cleanliness of clothes and bodies became a constant in a society that was changing in respect of expectations of gender, class and race. Advertisers used the appeal of improving hygiene as a way of demonstrating the imperial progress of Britain. Prior to the inception of soap as a household commodity, body washing was seldom undertaken before the Victorian obsession with cleanliness. The availability of cheaper ingredients triggered the mass importation of ingredients for soap making. By the end of the late 1800s, ten big manufacturers dominated the UK market. Soap brands were promoted using 'imperial glamour and racial potency' for a predominantly white audience as a way of mediating soap (McClintock, 1995). To place this in context, a major manufacturer *Unilever* used the strapline "Soap is Civilization" (McClintock, 1995: 207) to reinforce cleanliness as a cultural value. The reference to civilization served to underscore the need for cleanliness as a sign of virtue in society.

An early *Pears Soap* advertisement depicting a white boy clothed with a white apron bending over a black boy bathing in a tin bath shows the effects on the boy after he has bathed. McClintock (1995) highlights how his body has turned white from the powerful cleansing achieved by use of the soap, whilst his face remains stubbornly black as a sign of his cultural difference. Such iconic images mediate normative values for society at a given time. Whilst the racial undertones described here are shocking in contemporary society, at the time they provided a moral and economic rationale for audiences to buy products. The invisibility of black people, especially in relation to beauty products, has become a dominant theme in advertising whilst historical concepts such as the value of a black man's strength has become a way for advertisers to include race in images (hooks, 2015). This reflects upon colonial ideals outlined by McClintock (1995) but seemingly, has resonance for contemporary representational ideals.

Advertising Ideals for Men

Male facial skincare product images provide a canvas to admire, critique and suffuse grooming offering a 'literal reality' (Jameson, 1991). The effect this has upon male identity suggests that advertising charges consumers to construct a seemingly flawless appearance. This is unattainable by male audiences *en masse*, often leading to feelings of inadequacy, triggering low self-esteem (Schroeder, 2006). The images portrayed are unrealistic to the point that some view the distortion as pure fabrication or perceive this as a type of 'hyperreality' (Baudrillard, 1998). Devised in such a way as to provoke specific reactions by audiences, images are captured that are intentionally manipulated by light, exposure time, the angle from which the image is taken and the context they are placed within. Therefore, advertisers offer a mediated 'social reality' of their choosing. As such, Goldstein (in Stanczak, 2007) asserts that 'all photos lie'. Audience perception is affected by the stylistic setting of adverts in terms of camera orientation and the perception of the size of objects depicted (Trampe *et al.,* 2010). The approach used can infer a positive association of naturalness in a system of pictorial conventions and analogies. Equally, this can seem to be contrived and unrealistic depending upon the relative positioning of product and model (Peracchio and Meyers-Levy, 2005).

Advertising images present a potential form of symbolic power. Advertisers in their 'privileged' position project lifestyle ideals as 'realities' back to society (Nixon, 2003). However, this approach is not always socially responsible. Social mediation should foster social responsibility as Leiss *et al.* (1997) suggest. Farr (2013) highlights that advertisers fail to represent the diverse spectrum of masculinities in contemporary society. At best, this lacks resonance. At worst, this engenders a lack of satisfaction with appearance that may have implications for a consumer's self-esteem.

There is an established link to how the use of idealistic images has affected some female consumers, resulting in poor self-esteem and in extreme measures resorting to cosmetic surgery (Wolin, 2003). Equally, the emphasis by advertisers to suggest how men *should* look also fails to consider the effect this has upon men. A negative self-feeling is created when men imagine their appearance to be judged by others as lacking, leading to what Cooley (1902) termed as feeling a sense of 'mortification'. Unattainable images have been linked to low self-regard in male audiences (Elliott and Elliott, 2005). Men equate images of perfect males in magazines and perceive that if they can attain similar looks then they will gain notions of 'success' like those in the adverts (Farr, 2013). These aspirations are often unattainable and can trigger eating or psychology disorders (Diedrichs, 2015). This leads to possible problems with body dysmorphia and anorexia in male audiences (Leit *et al.,* 2002; Farr, 2013). For example, in 2014 the Royal College of General Practitioners found a 66% increase in eating disorders such as body dysmorphia and anorexia nervosa amongst men suggesting a greater need to seek approval and positive reinforcement on 'improving' looks amongst peers (Garvey, 2015).

Advertisers create idealisations, fantasies and potential mythologies for society to contemplate that often lack consideration for the attitudes formed by this (Berger and Luckman, 1966). As such, advertising does not simply inform audiences about products, it also helps to form identities through lifestyle indicators. These indicators link improved appearance for men with the consumption of products like facial skincare. How men identify with models used in advertising has implications for identity as part of a wider social system of ideals (Cooley, 1902). The models and copy used by advertisers provide a reference that glamorises how men *should* look (Stern, 1996). The reflections offered by images created by advertisers are not reflective of 'typical' men but do present ideals to

inform male identity and serve to influence how men view face skincare in relation to their sense of self (Elliott and Elliott, 2005). Visual and image-based constructs help us learn about our social worlds (Stanczak, 2007). They also convey meaning and mediate ideals of masculinities to male face skincare audiences. Rhetorical symbols similar to a language system create a complex interplay for how male readers of a face skincare product advert view brands. Advertisers seek to reinforce masculine ideals and this encourages men to contemplate their sense of self in relation to facial skincare and other 'beautifying' products.

Societal conceptions are moulded by mass media and idealised male images employed in advertising stimulates society's preoccupation with appearance, vanity and narcissism (Lysonski, 1985). Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) suggest advertising provides a social artefact resonating with expected societal roles at a given time. Currently, there is a trend towards ornamental rather than functional male images. This potentially threatens traditional ideas of masculinity. Furthermore, Milestone and Meyer (2012) argue that this trend undermines key tenets aligned with what it is to be male, that is to be heterosexual as a heteronormative ideal.

Mediating 'Orthodox' Masculine Ideals

Advertising techniques draw upon semiotics as a system of signs using paradigms and syntagms as a 'referent system' (Williamson, 2002) such as the use of a particular male model to refer to a specific set of signifiers. Of interest to this study is how many of the images devised by advertisers tend to adopt traditional 'hegemonic masculine' (Connell, 2003) approaches to audiences. An example is the use of 'hypermasculine' (Vokey *et al.,* 2013) male models to suggest that 'men like this' use face skincare products. 'Hegemonic masculinity' pervades as the dominant ideal offered in advertising images for men to negotiate their sense of self. Practices such as facial skincare for men potentially undermine 'hegemonic masculinity' ideals (Connell, 2003). How advertisers address this forms a key focus for this study. When men look in the mirror, the facial skin that is reflected is judged in terms of how it appears to the self and is imagined by others (Cooley, 1902). However, advertising offers an additional influence in terms of presenting 'ideal' faces to judge men's skin. Stevens and Ostberg (2011) draw attention to how

many advertisers adopt a traditional approach that fails to challenge the status quo hence, a *laissez-faire* approach reinforces expectations by including 'hegemonic male' ideals in advertisements (Stevens and Ostberg, 2011).

The selection of a particular male model, with obviously good skin, suggests that buying male face skincare products improves men's skin (van Leeuwen, 2005). However, if a more feminine male is used this may signal that the consumption of male face skincare does not have a broad appeal for male consumers (Elliott and Elliott, 2005). For that reason, Williamson (2002) attests the structure of one system of signs gives structure to another. As with any image, cultural encoding and decoding is critical in providing a collective understanding of the intended communication. Therefore, metaphors are often used to convey a recognisable 'rugged man' trope to reinforce the product does not denigrate traditional views of masculinity to male audiences (Gentry and Harrison, 2010). The American ideal of 'rugged individualism' are suggested by the predominant use of white, strong, males in images (Hirschman, 2003). Such images devised by advertisers offer representations of masculine ideals but they are unrealistic and possibly counter-productive (Fitzgerald and Arnott, 1996) and as Gentry and Harrison (2010) argue they do not reflect reality. The depictions mutate ideals of masculinities producing 'perfect' mythical concepts that trigger low self-esteem in male audiences (Cash *et al.,* 1983). In addition, Holt and Thompson (2004) suggest that unattainable ideals leave males feeling 'emasculated' by their inability to construct their traditional male identity. This means that models, language and stylised settings adopted in male skincare product advertisements personify tropes that are often outdated, lack resonance or are unrealistic. However, they serve as mediated ideals for men in relation to contemplating facial skincare products.

Encouraging Appearance Introspection for Men

The importance placed upon image by society means that facial cosmetics are pre-eminently steeped in manipulating signifiers (Johnson, 2008). The faces of models become all important in serving to convey ideals the brand wishes to emphasise. Johnson (2008) draws attention to the use of the face as a 'synecdoche', where advertisers use part of the face to represent the whole, suggesting 'the perfect face'. Critically, the ideal

consumer is conceptualised and offered for consumption through advertising (Goulding, 2003). Advertisers draw attention to the face as a site of admiration for the fine qualities and signification that the skin has been nurtured and maintained in a regime to be replicated by male audiences (Johnson, 2008). The notion of what is considered 'idealised' as a form of 'hegemonic beauty' is a cultural construct. This changes over time and it is influenced by societal ideals relating to body image and desired traits (Johnson, 2008). Beauty is not just skin deep, but also relates to the cultural and temporal context and Brumbagh (1993) highlights that whatever is considered beautiful at a given time is deemed as good in advertising.

Models used in advertising offer an idealistic imagined reflection that others wish to attain as part of improving their self-idea (Cooley, 1902). Thus, advertisers present their ideal versions of men in facial skincare advertisements to suggest the potential that male consumers may achieve in better looking skin. Male beauty is less well defined than female beauty, however some features in men's faces such as large brow ridges, relatively big chin, chiselled cheekbones and smaller eyes signal facial ideals for masculinity (Hall, 2015). As a result, buying face skincare products advertised by attractive male models suggests that the product helps men to attain similar skin to the model. We live in a society that values how we look. Buying face skincare products is an act of blind faith. Potentially it will not make us better looking and claims about spending a lot of money to get better results are often discredited (Fury, 2016).

Scott (1994) highlights how advertising images form symbolic artefacts that mirror social norms in society. Hence, advertisements codify acceptable ideals of masculinity. Visual literacy constructs a system for learning, recognising, making and understanding pictorial messages for audiences (Stern, 1992). Hence, Stern and Schroeder (1994) suggest that consumers appreciate the nuances or 'intertextuality' involved in advertisements. The subtle nuances offered through advertising provide guidance for men who may be contemplating using facial skincare but are wary of the implications this may have for how others view this as part of wider ideals of masculinity. McClintock (1995) provides a useful insight that I wish to highlight in so far as she refers to the inclusion of the mirror in advertising for soap (the earliest facial skincare product). Victorian societal expectations were that households should be gleamingly polished and clean. The mirror or a highly-

polished frying pan held by a monkey was a common feature used in Victorian advertising for *Monkey Brand Soap* (McClintock, 1995). Those undertaking the work in households were expected to publicly appear pristine in white aprons and untouched by the labour required to keep such high standards. This provides an interesting analogy to use when contemplating how men may use the mirror for facial skincare improvement. The private view of men's face in the mirror is also where the knowledge of the labours involved in perfecting the skin with facial skincare products is retained. This also links to a discreet from of narcissism. The public sees the outcomes of the use of facial skincare products without the knowledge that this is what has shaped the improvement. Just as the sign of a good quality polish was perceived by the ability to leave no trace of its use in gleaming floor the maid had polished (McClintock, 1995), men's facial skincare products have a similar potential for discreet use.

Translating Skincare as a Men's Product

McCracken (1986) suggests that advertising acts as a conduit to translate and locate meaning through various mediums between consumer goods such as male face skincare and the culturally constituted world. Similar to Williamson's approach, he sees that text and visual signifiers attribute symbolic meaning to advertising audiences. Through the transfer of meaning model, old meanings such as face skincare products aligned to women only locate new meaning in a culturally constituted world. Thus, male face skincare has the potential to become a grooming ritual that is acceptable for men when transferred through advertising in a meaningful manner (Miller and Allen, 2012). Interestingly, the cosmetics industry has tended to adopt a desaturated, very plain, white look translating cleanliness and scientific appeal for skincare (von Logue Newth, 2013). Science and technical jargon make claims seem more credible for male skincare consumers (Johnson, 2008; Taylor, 2013) or to reinforce logical reasons for using such products (Coslett, 2013). Whilst nature-based narratives are another technique used in skincare advertisements so that the exchange of meaning 'denaturalises' the natural for the viewer and the assumption is that the ingredients are aligned with naturalness (Williamson, 2002).

Advertising is a key mediator of consumption practices. The existence of advertising leads to the creation of efficient consumers through the suggestion that there is always a critical eye placed on you as an individual needing to improve appearance through the consumption of products (Corrigan, 1997). Hence, it becomes your duty to ensure that you are constantly improving your life by grooming, the adherence to fitness regimes and by keeping up with fashion (Lury, 2011). The 'use value' offered by male face skincare is translated through advertising for men as potential consumers. This forms a symbolic commodification of men's skincare as part of 'exchange-value' in relation to how others view this (Corrigan, 1997). Advertising entreats men to consider their looks in relation to how others view them rationalising the need for skincare as part of changing values. The appeal to male consumers lies not only in the mediation of normalising the practice through advertising representation, but also in the iteration of male facial skincare consumption as a collective activity that men are assumed to do (Bocock, 1993).

Media portrayals have sought to engage audiences by presenting more of a 'social reality' to stimulate consumption (Firat *et al.,* 1995). Arnould and Thompson (2005) therefore discuss the fact that the symbolic 'resources' used by advertisers and retailers need to be meaningful to the target audience. This is necessary in order to successfully mediate and connote, in the case of this study, the consumption of men's face skincare as a typical 'social practice'. The consumption of male facial skincare products offers the opportunity for advertisers to mediate a commodity as an indicator of lifestyle choice. Moving away from use-value and material utility towards how facial skincare provides a "self-referential system of signifiers" (Featherstone, 1991: 85). These signifiers influence ideals for the constructions of masculinity and have implications for how men identify with ideals for the self.

Objectifying Men in Advertisements

The shift towards symbolic representation has led to an increasing emphasis on physically idealistic portrayals of gender that in turn trigger a range of negative issues (Smeesters and Mandel, 2006). The move is towards contemplating how males have been increasingly depicted in eroticised and decorative poses (Feasey, 2009). In recent times, advertiser's employment of sexualised imagery objectifying males has been criticised for

a lack of social concern for potential consequences (Elliott and Elliott, 2005). Representations have increasingly been used that have been highlighted as objectifying men in a sexualised manner to promote grooming products (Schroeder and Zwick, 2004; Farr, 2013). Thus, the use of idealised versions of masculinity to sell appearance-enhancing products such as unrealistic depictions of 'buffed' bodies and chiselled good looks may trigger a lack of self-esteem in men (Shroeder and Zwick, 2004). Media influence upon men has implications for this study in how this suggests men need to conform to notions of current ideals. Hence, advertising helps to articulate masculine desire via the use of male bodies to be appreciated in a similar way to how artwork is viewed (Schroeder, 2006). Sexualised, hegemonic and unrealistic images of men in advertising potentially trigger negative issues concerning homophobia and gender stereotyping. Indeed, as Elliott and Elliot (2005) contend they provide a means of legitimising exploitation and the use of sexuality as a marketing ploy.

Advertisers create idealisations, fantasies and potential mythologies for society to contemplate that often lacks consideration for the attitudes that are formed in the process (Berger and Luckman, 1966). Models that lack resonance with male facial skincare audiences fail to engage potential consumers, as the meaning or 'cues' are not effectively conveyed (Johnson, 2010). The influence of men's lifestyle magazines and advertisements using erotic depictions of males presented as a 'sexual ideal' has contributed as another important component influencing constructions of masculinity ideals (Jackson *et al.,* 2000). Despite the recent downturn in sales of so-called 'lads mags' and the demise of *FHM* and *Zoo,* there remains a proliferation of 'buffed' men offered as an ideal body form in glossy magazines such as *GQ* (Silverman, 2015). Images of men with muscular bodies offer one reason for the increase in men trying to emulate 'perfect' bodies through skincare, diet, depilation, surgery and bodybuilding (Frank, E. 2014). Although clearly not all men respond in this way to such images as evidenced in the growing numbers in society classed as overweight or obese. Nevertheless, the notion that men are being increasingly depicted in sexualised and objectified images presents the opportunity for males to increase their relative power and social status by achieving better skincare, toned bodies and maintain a younger, healthier body for as long as possible (Vanderbosch and Eggermont, 2013).

The use of sexualised images of men in advertising and notations of 'narcissistic', caring and 'reconstructed' males have potentially led to females gazing overtly at male forms (Entwistle, 2000) and males on males (Patterson and Elliott, 2002). The persistent trend towards men improving their appearance continues and influences the propensity to consume facial skincare by men as part of an ongoing 'project' (Hall, 2015). In a consumerist society, men are potentially free to work on their identity but they are constrained by perceptions relating to expectations of gender (Hall, 2015). Hence, the body as a 'tool' and the body linked to 'image' are becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish in relation to males depicted in advertising (Boni, 2002).

Conflicting Male Images

Advertisers' depiction of men has evolved in recent years away from stereotypical body images in advertisements depicting mesomorphic, clean-shaven and receding hairlines (Kolbe and Albanese, 1996; Schroeder, 2006). In addition, changes in men's domestic roles such as more 'hands on' parenting have provided a shift towards a more sensitive and feminised portrayal of men. Interestingly, Wolheter and Lammers (1980) highlight that the part of males in non-working roles in advertisements has increased with professional roles decreasing significantly and the emergence of 'decorative' depictions for males as sex objects has emerged from mid 1970s onwards.

Goffman (1979) highlights how gender roles have often been parodied within advertising. Gentry and Harrison (2010) found an example of this in how males may be portrayed as incompetent when represented in a domestic setting not stereotypically associated with the male domain in society. Humour is another mechanism used to convey lack of social normality such as the depiction of males at the receiving end of denigrating action against them (Gulas *et al.,* 2010). Meanwhile, Elliott and Wooton (1997) draw attention to how males are portrayed as attempting to eat chocolate in a seductive manner in British adverts but are seen as failing to do so. This approach reinforces societal conceptions of gender expectations by suggesting this is not a naturalised setting for men. Nonetheless, Furnham and Thomson (1999) highlight how men are more likely to be portrayed suggesting practical and social career advancement as an incentive for the purchase of products. McRobbie (2016) contends advertising lacks authenticity as it fails to depict

contemporary diverse gender identities. How advertising adjusts written and visual appeals for gender is important to understand as men and women differ in their contemplation of advertisements.

Gender Implications of Advertising

Biological gender differences are said to account for variations in the ways that males interpret intended meaning in advertising (for example, Meyers-Levy, 1989; Darley and Smith, 1995; Putrevu, 2001; Cramphorn, 2011; Noseworthy *et al.*, 2011). This also has importance for this study in terms of how advertisers influence men using various techniques. Two key research approaches explain how advertising impacts on gender: namely cognitive psychology and biological predispositions. Cognitive psychology contends that disparate information connects advertising to audiences by emphasising similarities ('men like me'- relational processing) with attributes that are aligned to a certain advertising message ('use value' - item-specific processing). This may result in differing gender interpretations due to superiority by males in spatial skills and female proficiency over males in verbal skills (Putrevu, 2001).

As 'selective processors' men need face skincare adverts to be exacting and brief in the key message appeal. This is in contrast to women who are 'comprehensive processors' (Meyers-Levy, 1989). Hogg and Garrow (2003) found that men need short, direct pointers to act upon in advertising. Men do not show a preference for objective claims in advertisements (Cramphorn, 2011; Noseworthy *et al*., 2011). Thus, Putrevu (2001) asserts that the use of attribute-based copy highlighting distinctive features of a male face skincare brand should be kept to a minimum to maximise effectiveness in advertisements. Males and females vary in the ways they respond to advertisements for incongruent products where the image shown is not the one normally associated with a product. When skincare is 'staged' by advertisers with various items to signify associative realms of meaning it may not always resonate with men (Trampe *et al.,* 2010). Men react best to symbols, analogy, celebrity, fantasy and music to align brands positively through advertisements (Trampe *et al.,* 2010; Noseworthy *et al.,* 2011; Cramphorn, 2011). Language transfers meaning. Thus, words create an intertextual referent for men to attribute their own interpretation of the nuances used in advertising copy for male facial

skincare (Williamson, 2002). The social construction of language, symbolism and symbolic language are essential constituents of the reality of everyday life. Language helps to normalise propositions like men's face skincare in a manner that resonates with masculinities. However, copywriters choose language subjectively and they often employ clichéd propositions. This in turn affects the understanding and way that a male recipient relates to words in facial skincare advertisements (Shaw, 2012).

Talbot (2003) argues that the most important sign system of human society is a system of vocal signs. However, this viewpoint fails to recognise the growing trend towards visual and symbolic formats to communicate to diverse audiences who do not share the same language. Similar to images, language has the ability to resonate with a diverse and fluid male audience or equally has the potential to alienate. As a result, advertising for men's face skincare products needs to communicate effectively in a way that makes consumption acceptable for a diverse group of men. Berger and Luckman (1966) highlight that commonplace understandings of everyday life operates primarily by interpreting linguistic significations and symbolic language. Additionally, Talbot (2003) draws attention to how the socialisation of language forms an integral part in understanding the cultural world. This has implications for how advertisers apply male referents in written copy. For example, conventionally copywriters use descriptors such as 'handsome' for males as opposed to 'pretty' for females to characterise gender.

Through the acquisition of language and the adoption of some aspects of words and phrases, advertisers intentionally discriminate to gendered audiences. This contributes to linguistic terminology attributed to contemporary masculinities (Berney-Reddish and Areni, 2006). Advertisers employ what Barthes (1973) termed 'meta-language'. This is used to highlight, infer and thereby transform an image or social myth into a 'reality' by use of various phrases and typography to suggest another meaning. Therefore, copywriters adopt a tone of voice and an attitude in addressing viewers and as such use a type of short hand in which Goldman and Papson (1998) describe as a 'knowing wink'. This 'meta-communicates' the relationship of the brand to audiences through the association of brand values and signifiers such as the use of 'matey' language in copy (Goldman and Papson, 1998). In this way, advertising language for men's face skincare products is presented in a way that inflates the masculine appeal to audiences.

Each culture's language provides a distinctive structure used to construct understanding in a particular sphere. An example of this is how English language lacks the gender markers found in French and Spanish so semantic inference provides male and female nuances (Yorkston and de Mello, 2005). For that reason, Barnard (2001) attests it is imperative that copywriters use current and appropriate language to resonate with audiences. By doing so, men's face skincare is mediated effectively for male audiences as a self-idea that links positively to self-concept. 'Tokenism' changes the perspectives of audiences by breaking down their individual ego and fragmenting it so that they will align with the product in a collective sense (Shaw, 2012). Thus, men can form part of a wider collective appreciating the benefits of improving their face skin. Other approaches include an attention-grabbing headline to create interest. However, Ali (1997) suggests this is effective only if appropriate language is used for the intended audience.

Males are not comprehensive processers of advertising language and copywriters fail to overcome this obstacle by persistently employing outdated clichés of language to assign gender in skincare for men (Cramphorn, 2012). Advertisers use approaches such as adopting a 'reading position' to suggest the copywriter has a pseudo-relationship with the (male) potential face skincare consumer (Goddard and Patterson, 2000). This assumes a 'presupposition' that men understand the benefits of the product (Goddard, 1998; Benveniste, 2000). However, this linguistic mode of address often fails to fully engage as some men just simply do not perceive the need for face skincare. A more direct method used by advertisers to connect male skincare as a social norm is the use of modifiers and metaphors (Brierley, 1995). These linguistic tools describe the benefits of facial skincare products to men using language that is considered relevant for males such as 'scruffing' and 'tooled up' (Johnson, 2008).

Consumers are interpretive agents with the ability to 'bend' advertisements promoting consumption practices in order to fit their own needs (Elliott and Elliott, 2005). Through influences from media, the use of men's facial skincare products can be seen as part of a regime that is contributing to the 'reflexive project of the self' (Giddens, 1991: 100). I argue that it notionally offers an improved sense of self for those men that use it. 'Mediated society' (Jackson *et al.,* 2011) via advertising and celebrity culture normalises and influences our sense and what is fashionable and acceptable for genders.

Celebrity Influences

An increased appetite to consume lifestyles of celebrity and reality television stars has reduced the effect of advertising as *the* major consumption influence within society (Silverman, 2015). Moreover, amelioration of celebrity culture and more specifically reality television shows such as *The Only Way is Essex* have paved the way for copying practices such as male facial skincare used by 'celebrities' in the programme (Davis *et al.,* 2014). Such shows offer an opportunity for men to continue to improve their overall appearance in what Elliott (2015) coins the *'*reinvention of persons' as an ongoing identity 'project'. Reality television remains a potent transmitter of cultural messages to viewers by suggesting it is 'real' and presents 'reality' in a cultural format (Davis *et al.,* 2014). What is more, makeover shows demonstrate how transformations in images for men amplify social power and status. Attitudes of some men towards male face skincare products are consequently shaped by exposure to such 'reality' shows and this influence is investigated in this study within Chapters Seven and Eight.

Importantly, McCracken's Meaning Transfer Model (1986) provides an early conceptualisation, prior to the plethora of current reality television shows of the way advertising and reality stars offer ritualised behaviour. This serves to induce the routine use of male facial skincare. 'Culturematic' explains how society amalgamates seemingly disparate aspects of culture such as male skincare and reality television (McCracken, 2012): for example, the way male stars in the show *The Only Way is Essex* discuss their ongoing appearance enhancement projects such as facial peels. The ensuing 'Culturematic' (McCracken, 2012) fusion has the effect of normalising and offering face skincare for men as a potential for acquiring an improving appearance. Celebrity figures mediate ideals such as using face skincare for men (Gee, 2014). As a result, the importance of celebrity culture fuses the aura of celebrity with consumer's aspirations in their continuing identity formation and relates to how this informs contemporary constructions of masculinities (Cashmore, 2006). Moreover, celebrities increasingly command attention and convey idealistic portrayals of contemporary attractiveness and lifestyle 'must haves' such as male facial skincare.

A celebrity acts as a kind of referent to transfer meaning about the benefit of product use through advertising. As a result, the famous person provides a cultural frame that blends

the attributes they are known for with the brand. McCracken (2009) contends that celebrity culture has trumped high culture and thus becomes a mechanism to understand 'taste' in society. Essentially the potential for meaning is transferred by this juxtaposition of symbolic properties of the endorser and the endorsed (McCracken, 2005). 'Taste' in society is suggested through those held in regard for their ability to confer what is good (McCracken, 2009).

The influence of celebrity culture on society continues to grow informing (male) identity (Cashmore, 2006). A rise in reality television shows and a growing desire to emulate the lifestyles of famous icons mediate masculine lifestyle practices (Cashmore, 2006). Celebrity culture is thus arguably rapidly replacing advertising as *the* key influencer of consumer ideals such as using male skincare products (Gee, 2014). 'Typical' consumers, experts and celebrities are used to influence potential consumers (Fleck *et al.,* 2013; Harmon-Kizer, 2014). Celebrities are of interest to this study in how they attract attention, entertain and may translate ideals for male facial skincare.

Cashmore (2006) highlights how celebrity culture has facilitated a society whereby consumers are simultaneously passive and active producers. Additionally, products control consumers and consumers are controlled by the desire to look good (Cashmore, 2006). Thus, celebrities represent culture back to itself as a form of cultural barometer and so provide an excellent conduit to endorse the ideal of male facial skincare products. As Cashmore (2006) goes onto argue over time, celebrity has mutated from 'self-made' people known for skills and positions of power towards the idea of manufactured stars famous for being famous through the advent of reality television shows (Cashmore, 2006). Celebrity has ascended into apotheosis as a form of lifestyle to emulate. Cashmore (2006) suggests that celebrities are mobile advertisements linking the potential gained from using lifestyle commodities such as men's face skincare products. Meanwhile, McCracken (1989) argues that celebrities are part of consumer society and offer a tie up between product and consumer as part of a shared cultural transference of ideals.

A Manufactured Notion of Celebrity

'Celebrityhood' is suggested by Cashmore and Parker (2003) as a form of commodification of the human form, whereby individuals become 'things' to be adored. Attaining skin similar to an admired celebrity arguably helps to rationalise the use of male skincare products as part of changing values that may be attributed to neoliberalism presenting new ideas, identities and ways of relating and being (Cornwall, 2016). Whilst celebrity culture is formed from abstract desire in society, ideals suggested by celebrities embody desire as a form of commodification (Rojek, 2001). On the other hand, Cashmore (2006) highlights how image has become more important than the substance of that image. As a result, people are famous simply for their media exposure and offer a form of cachet to emulate. As conventions crumble, new ways of creating certainty are sought by people. So-called reality television shows such as *The Only Way is Essex* and *Geordie Shore* include a range of males who embrace facial skincare as an integral part of their grooming, inspiring audiences to emulate their looks (Gee, 2014). Celebrities and reality shows include 'manufactured' celebrities. These 'stars' are commodities that are used to commodify the constructs of ideals of fame as part of modern day capitalism (Furedi, 2010). Celebrity presents a way to conform to newly evolving values surrounding lifestyle and appearance that stimulate the consumption of facial skincare products by men. Kamins *et al.* (1989) advance the notion that the reality star offers a 'media reality' that transfers 'social reality' ideals. By this he means that celebrity culture potentially translates a more realistic mediation than advertising does. The relationship between celebrity and followers is a weak tie but helps to stimulate the flow on new concepts and ideals such as male facial skincare (Berthon *et al.,* 2013). Celebrities present idealistic notional ideals for men to copy as conventions of masculinity are affected by shifting societal values that place greater importance on improving appearance as a sign of success.

Celebrity endorsers employed in advertising convey social norms and symbolic lifestyle aspirations for audiences to align with. The particular choice of celebrities deemed as appropriate in advertising is an important device to align men with facial skincare (Kamins, 1990; Fleck *et al.,* 2014). McCracken's (2005) transfer of meaning in celebrity endorsement is premised on two key ideologies linked to the choice of celebrity used for the brand. These relate to source credibility and source attractiveness in addition to

concepts such as likeability, familiarity and similarity. Rossiter and Smidts (2012) highlight that many advertisements eschew celebrity endorsers or any model in favour of using a product only image. However, in the case of male face skincare the model should be attractive, trustworthy, and likeable and present a role model that matches with the brand. Rossiter and Smidts (2012) contend that a well-known celebrity that matches all these criteria then presents a good 'hook' to persuade target audiences.

The ideal of celebrity has normalised the pursuit of beauty and a kind of narcissistic introspection so that men should consider skin as an ongoing project. Consumers rely on image and social influence projected through advertising campaigns (Elberse and Verleun, 2012). Celebrities facilitate the transfer of brand properties to potential consumers (McCracken, 1989). The assumed expertise of the endorser has an impact on attitudes towards the brand (Eisand and Langner, 2010). However, transformational commodities such as male facial skincare products rely largely on the attractiveness of the endorser (Fleck *et al.,* 2014). Elberse and Verleun (2012) perceive the success of a celebrity in their field such as sport has a slight advantage on sales.

Exploring David Beckham's Influence

As a key translator of contemporary masculinity ideals Beckham has been flagged by Gee (2014) as illustrating the notion of 'flexible masculinity' first coined by Whannel (2002). Conceptually, 'flexible masculinity' blends traditional 'hegemonic' attributes. Gee (2014) perceives that Beckham is the embodiment of a form of 'flexible masculinity' to appeal to male consumers who in turn form part of brand communities. As such, Beckham dislocates from traditional constructions of 'flexible masculinity' towards a more fluid, diverse, multi-faceted masculinity that is constantly evolving (Kelting and Rice, 2013; Gee, 2014). Whannel (2002) contests that Beckham's 'flexible masculinity' also translates value as a fluid commodity sign for consumption of products such as male facial skincare. Gee (2014) attests that media representations of Beckham embody a flexible approach to constructions of masculinity bending the codes of identity formation through consumption of his multiple fluid masculinities. However, a recent backlash in the media concerning problems with suggested tax evasion in a charitable organisation he set up,

has led to negative comments surrounding David Beckham's well publicised desire for a knighthood (Rayner, 2017). Even the most adored of celebrities have their limitations.

Controversy aside, Beckham offers a lens to explore what it means to be a 'man' in the new millennium, embracing face skincare products and fusing traditional constructs and new versions of masculinity (Frank, 2014; Gee, 2014). Beckham's footballing and working-class roots are mixed with feminine fashion choices such as when he famously wore a sarong, his wife's underwear or nail polish. Beckham thus genuinely pushes the boundaries of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2003). As previous studies indicate, he therefore makes the use of male grooming products more acceptable to a diverse spectrum of men (see Kelting and Rice, 2013; Harmon-Kizer, 2014).

The fascination with Beckham as a signifier of a lifestyle to emulate lies in his authenticity suggesting genuine substance behind his fame (Cashmore, 2004). This obsession also signifies a contemporary pathological obsession with celebrity culture that is symptomatic of neoliberalism. A greater emphasis on appearance to suggest 'success' has placed more importance on following trends adopted by celebrities. Beckham provides a behavioural influence for young working-class men to induce facial skincare product use. However, Turner (2004) argues that public interest in celebrities' lies primarily in examining their private lives and not their career achievements. The representations of Beckham help to transfer ideals of masculinity such as the adoption of facial skincare routines (Cashmore and Parker, 2003). Beckham's identity offers a construction of masculinity blending 'new man' (Mort, 1993) ideals with traditional values of working-class man made good initially through sporting prowess.

Hall (2014: 21) highlights that Beckham has allowed himself to be exploited by marketers for "vanity, status and financial gain", in doing so, Beckham gave permission to other men to look at him. This has helped to change attitudes, whilst challenging conventional notions and outdated constructs of what it is to be a man. Beckham has morphed into a mediated, commodified version of masculinity that allows men to negotiate the blurred borders of masculine identity (Rahman, 2004; Gee, 2014). His established heteronormative masculinity provides license for Beckham to experiment with alternative feminine sides to his identity without subordinating his status (Gee, 2014). Whilst Beckham suggests an example of a celebrity that uses beautifying products without

diminishing ideals for his masculine identity, I explore how other men use skincare to enhance their looks and gain 'capital' as a result.

Concluding Thoughts

What my discussion of advertising reveals is that the mediation of male facial skincare helps to reinforce men's appearance enhancement as part of evolving neoliberal ideals of masculinity. I have presented the key techniques and methods used in advertising to mediate ideals of masculine consumption through facial skincare products. The continued use of unattainable images as part of a 'media reality' suggested by advertisers has been outlined. The continuing stealth of celebrity culture in society has insidiously entered the public psyche as part of a 'social reality'. This in turn, through the emulation of lifestyles, provides a conduit to inform contemporary constructions of masculinity. Aspirational advertising models and celebrities provide a wider reference suggesting that men should be concerned with their appearance. Men who use face skincare products can aspire to improve their skin and boost their self-esteem as a result of their efforts.

Reality television has provided a vision into lives lived by glamorous and often talent-free 'stars' however, in providing spectacle for audiences they have also offered an insight albeit unintentionally into new consumer values. These values inform male identity. Consideration has been given to how advertising has moved away from a reliance on information provision for consumers towards the inclusion of more symbolism. This chapter explored in part how male face skincare products are mediated to society partly through the lens of advertising. It looked at how images of 'masculinities' are represented to convey notions of contemporary male ideals. Perceptions of gender have evolved over time. The shift from stereotypical displays within advertising towards a greater emphasis on men in terms of a more decorative focus has been highlighted. How men defend their identity whilst gaining benefits for their enhanced image from the use of face skincare products is explored as the central focus in the data collection in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. In Chapter Five I will go on to reflect upon the research methods I used as part of my project designed to investigate how men use facial skincare products as a means of protecting their masculine identities.

Chapter Five. Methodology

"The reference to other persons involved in the sense of self may be distinct and particular" (Cooley, 1902: 163).

Introduction

A key line of investigation in this study was how men defend their identity in relation to facial skincare as an appearance-enhancing but potentially feminising 'opportunity'. A wider reflection of how masculinity was changing in relation to an increased importance placed upon men's appearance was explored in this study. In particular, I considered how advertisers impose the pressure on men to look good. Manufacturers of facial skincare products prompt men to constantly evaluate their looks and a supposed need to share positive images of the self on social media has culminated in changing ideals for modern men. An exploration of the factors that drive sales of men's facial skincare products and men's attitudes towards this consumer sector were examined in this study in order to offer a better understanding of what this suggested about contemporary constructions of masculinity.

The key themes of consumption and male consumers, masculinities studies, advertising and celebrity culture underpinned this study and helped to identify the key objectives of this research. The methods employed in this study explored how facial skincare was mediated as an ideal for men. It was difficult to predict in advance of data collection what were the important influences surrounding male identity thus attitudinal responses were identified as a key concern for this study. In view of this, qualitative methods were used to provide a mechanism to gain understanding from the data collection and let ideas emerge from respondents.

Pilot Study

As a means of gaining a better understanding of the influence of advertising on gender, I undertook a pilot study using a sample of advertisements purposively drawn from a range of UK lifestyle magazines, considering monthly editions targeting a similar range of socio-economic groups and ages. The study incorporated five female-targeted (*Elle, Cosmopolitan, Company, Vogue* and *Marie Claire*) and five male-targeted (*FHM, GQ,*

Esquire, Maxim and *Arena*) glossy magazines. The focus of the pilot research sought to explore how gender, with a particular reference towards masculinity, was represented in a sample of advertisements within magazines. Content analysis coding adapted from Neuendorf (2002) was carried out to understand how cues were used by advertisers to position gender to audiences. Using Pierce's (1977) semiotic analysis approach, Goffman's (1979) six themes (from his seminal study into gender advertisements) were used for the coding criteria. The thematic constructs of his study were relative size; the feminine touch; function ranking; the family; the ritualization of subordination and licensed withdrawal (Goffman, 1979). Relative size refers to the way that women tend to be displayed in advertising images stylistically to ensure that any men appearing with them seem larger and more of a dominant feature. Whilst the feminine touch describes how females are more often depicted caressing objects as opposed to how men differ from this approach, usually shown grasping or manipulating things in a purposeful manner. The family presents a cultural ideal of gender display with women typically shown in caring or domestic settings that aligned with widely held expectations of women at the time of Goffman's (1979) study. The ritualization of subordination refers to how people appearing at the top of an image are suggested as dominant to those below them. This also translates to bowing or tilting of the head in deference to another. Generally, Goffman (1979) highlighted that women tended to be depicted in subordinate ways to men in the advertisements he examined. Licensed withdrawal describes the way that women are staged in advertisements looking away from the viewer, suggesting that she is psychologically removed from the social situation.

The research in this thesis sought to build upon how contemporary constructions of masculinity continue to evolve, mirroring a more fluid concept of modern men. As such, this study explored male attitudes and behaviour in relation to what may be considered a 'feminising' creation namely, facial skincare products for men. In what ways advertisers mediate men's facial skincare products allowed for further reflection on the extent to which advertisers mirror conventions or seek to influence and inform them in relation to gender ideals.

An Overview of the Data Collection

The collection of data for this thesis falls into three distinct phases, summarised briefly here and discussed in detail later in this chapter. The pilot study highlighted how advertising was a valuable communication medium to signify gender to audiences. As a result, the decision was made to choose advertising as a medium to contemplate how facial skincare was presented to audiences in the first two phases of data collection for this study. The particular techniques employed by advertisers serve to reflect societal ideals (Elliott and Elliott, 2005). Nevertheless, they also serve as reflections of the ideals held by advertisers. In view of this, advertisers offer their own social constructions of gender. For that reason, advertising was an important lens to explore how facial skincare ideals for men influenced male identity.

Emergent issues that included a more feminised, sexualised and uncertain representation of men within advertising were highlighted at the time of commencing this study (for example, Elliott and Elliott, 2005). In view of that, I sought a product designed to enhance appearance and available to both genders. Focusing on one product type allowed an insight into how the advertiser's approach to men differed to designate societal constructs signifying that the product aligned with males. This quest commenced by buying the entire month's collection of so-called lifestyle magazines aimed at men. Magazines provide a rich resource for research. Goffman (1979) and Williamson (2002) whose work influences the semiotic analysis in this research have previously used magazines for seminal advertising studies. Facial skincare was identified as an ideal sector. Whilst skin itself has not changed, the notion that men should be caring for their skin with products was relatively recent. Men's facial skincare offered an opportunity to explore how advertisers position products in relation to gender and what this reveals for masculinity linked to male identity.

The research commenced in phase one with the researcher using semiotic analysis on a range of facial skincare product advertisements in lifestyle magazines. A sample of men's glossy magazines were analysed using content analysis followed by semiotic analysis, using the approach Goffman (1979) adopted in his seminal study exploring gender advertising. I conducted a content analysis using Neuendorf's (2002) approach to identify salient facial skincare advertisements. In addition, the sample of advertisements was

explored using semiotic analysis to identify the key 'resources' used to signify gender by advertisers. Whilst the pilot study used Peirce's (1977) model for semiotic analysis, this study placed a greater emphasis on the social context of how the advertisers suggest gender linked to facial skincare products to male audiences. As a result, van Leeuwen's (2005) social semiotic model and Williamson's (2002) 'referents' were adapted for use together in this research. The semiotic analysis exercise revealed key themes that were used as discussion cues for participants in the interviews following this.

The decision was taken to use semi-structured interviews to allow male participants to present their views on the analysis undertaken by the researcher. Respondents checked the key themes identified by the researcher. Any emerging themes were added as a form of 'laddering technique' (McGivern, 2013). The same ten male respondents were interviewed in the two initial phases exploring their attitudes over time. Access was obtained initially on a convenience sample basis and then through snowballing from contacts of respondents. A challenge ensued to track down and re-interview the set of ten original respondents who had dispersed in the period of time that elapsed after the initial set of interviews had taken place. It was not the original intention of this research to revisit the same respondents. Nevertheless, this proved an effective way to ascertain any changes over time in their attitudes towards men's facial skincare. It also allowed for observation of differences in approach by advertisers over this period.

In addition, a focus group with a more diverse age range of 18-59 year old male participants was organised. A list of moderator cues was developed to stimulate a discussion of issues surrounding attitudes towards facial skincare products, their representation and consumption. The sets of advertisements from both phases were used as cues for discussion. The third phase of research included interviews with ten facial skincare consultants and a range of industry grooming professionals. These key informants were able to discuss foremost consumer trends and attitudes within the male facial skincare and grooming sector. Likewise, ten semi-structured interviews with younger males in upper sixth form and undergraduate students took place exploring attitudes towards consumption and influences surrounding male face skincare product use. Younger men were part of the group identified by Mintel (2015) as being those most likely to use facial skincare products. They were included to explore how their attitudes

towards facial skincare products may differ from the age groups interviewed in the first two phases of research. An additional focus group comprising of young males aged 19 to 27 years old explored influences surrounding social media and consumption to investigate any impact this may have upon use of facial skincare products by participants.

Contributors within interviews and focus groups were largely drawn from respondents identifying as White British males with one Black British participant in the first two phases of the data collection. Along with three White British males, one Chinese British male and one British Asian male took part in the first focus group. Whilst sexuality, ethnicity and age were not a focus for this study, an overview of participants provides some context for how ideas may be have been influenced. Participants were predominantly heterosexual with three men identifying as homosexual in the initial two phases of interviews. Younger male and industry expert respondents were described as White British. Gay men have been identified as being important in the use of beautifying products (Schneider *et al.* 2013). Whilst not a key focus of this study, respondents in the phase three interviews included two younger males whom identified as gay men along with three industry male experts. There were three females included in the industry experts interviewed. Due to the initial profiling for lifestyle magazines and decision to interview males in full-time education aged 18 years and over, participants identified as students or professionals with middle-class attributes. The second focus group included White British heterosexual males with one participant from Greece. Appendices Two and Six include an overview of participant descriptions.

The final phase of interviews involved gaining access to facial skincare consultants and industry professionals. This was challenging as the focus on running busy practices means that time out for interviews is a trade off from profit generated by client time. As such, the dynamics involved in contacting respondents were complex. A combination of convenience sampling leading onto snowballing were used to meet younger males and grooming professionals for interview. The main aim throughout the data collection was to seek opinion on the key drivers informing attitudes towards men's facial skincare. This was in order to understand what this tells us about constructions of contemporary masculinities. Semiotic analysis of advertisements, themes from the transcripts of

interviews and focus groups held with respondents form the basis of data collection for this research.

The research questions were outlined in Chapter One. It is useful to see how they connect within the research design of this thesis and are thus restated here. For that reason, this study sought to explore the following research questions using facial skincare products as a lens to explore contemporary masculinities:

- What are the factors that are driving forward the male facial skincare market?
- How are men's attitudes towards face skincare consumption influenced and acted upon by men?
- What do men's attitudes towards male facial skincare products tell us about contemporary constructions of masculinities?

Researching Men's Skincare

To provide further context for the influences surrounding the approach to my research it is useful to consider my understanding of knowledge and 'truth' and how it informed this study. The collection of empirical data from the 'real world' as part of this study imports from advertising cultural and structural influences upon how 'truth' is interpreted (Grbich, 2013). Accordingly, natural sciences tend to debate between realism and relativism and the continuum that exists between these polarised views on seeking the 'truth'. Johnson and Duberley (2000) highlight how ontology considers the nature of existence, whether it is real or illusory. Several variations of realism are available for consideration in terms of how a researcher accesses truth, facts and reality.   Hence, a traditional research viewpoint tends to seek an observable reality using provable evidence. Whereas, nominalism takes a different view in how 'truth' is understood asserting that this is shifting and rarely present. This stance fails to concede that people have opinions and identities that can be understood through research so nominalism was deemed not suitable for this study.

Those researchers who favour internal realism perceive a single reality is possible to attain. Once scientific laws are discovered these are then seen as absolute and independent of further observations (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012). Realist scientists

identify that 'truth,' relating to scientific discovery, lies outside of the process of research. It is largely influenced by social factors. Realism is favoured by natural scientists who believe that a single truth can be acquired through research. The emphasis lies in the notion that science can be investigated externally to social influences in the world and observation can take place that has a direct relationship to the phenomena being investigated (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012). This study was built upon the contention that external influences cannot be isolated from society as they affect how identity, relationships, attitudes and behaviour are shaped. Advertising as a conduit for social meaning is inherently subjective due to those involved within the industry bringing their own approaches on how best to represent and appeal to men. A relativist perspective seemed the most appropriate way to describe how 'truth' is gained as part of the research approach in this study. Additionally, men as a target audience for facial skincare products are not a holistic group and by nature would interpret signs and signifiers in a variety of ways and this may have influenced their understanding of advertising and celebrity culture (van Dyck, 2014).

Advertising reflects ideals within society. In view of this, the research approach adopted a social constructionist viewpoint in relation to the way advertisers reflect their ideals of masculinities and potentially contribute towards societal expectations of men. Moreover, the diversification of facial skincare from a female domain to the male market provided an opportunity to deliberate on any issues this may have had for masculine identity. The key focus of this study explored men's face skincare in relation to what this revealed about constructions and ideals of contemporary masculinities. This research took a 'situated reality' (Crotty, 1998) approach. The 'media reality' offered by advertisers, influence of 'celebrity culture' and social media as perceived by potential consumers of male facial skincare was considered. As such, a deeper consideration concerning the relationship of how humans understand their constructed reality was important to this study (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012). The representation and mediation of commodities (male face skincare), and how celebrities and advertisers subjectively appeal to and influence audiences are included in the analysis of advertisements and through discussions with respondents. In addition, facial skincare consumption influence from family and peers was investigated in this study.

Facial skincare as an ideal for male audiences draws upon social constructs such as language and images to appeal to audiences (Johnson, 2008). Advertisers create 'acceptable' signs to indicate signifiers of masculinity within advertisements for men's facial skincare products. I explored what contributes towards facial skincare products being accepted in a 'male domain' as a potential for 'looking-glass capital' to be gained by the use of such commodities. Advertisers offer their personal sign ideals of contemporary male norms to audiences hence, the research approach adopted was informed by the view that any knowledge gained is a socially constructed phenomenon.

Social Constructionism

The multiple realities experienced by people and the importance of subjectivity in how knowledge is gained is recognised in social constructionism. Most important for this study was the way that knowledge is deemed as subjective, thereby constructed, and based on the shared signs and symbols that are recognised by members of a culture (Grbich, 2013). More recently social constructionism has garnered recognition that people determine their own reality rather than from external factors. As this study explored the mediation of male facial skincare, the focus lay moreover on how men and those devising the various signifiers (advertisers, celebrities and peers) *"appreciate the different constructions and meanings that people place upon their experience"* (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012: 23-24). The particular selection of signs by advertisers was important to understand in how this has an influence on notional ideals of what was accepted as current signifiers of masculinity. Quinlan (2011: 96) attests given that, "social phenomena develop in social contexts that individuals and groups create, in part, their own realities". Social constructionism places importance on the way that individuals perceive and make sense of the world they live in. How men's attitudes are formed in relation to face skincare products was explored in the context of evolving influences that suggested acceptable practices and ideals for men.

Researchers such as Berger and Luckmann (1966) advanced social constructionism in a response to a growing belief that people's ideas and values should be sought. This facilitated different meanings and constructions from people's experience as part of their 'reality'. The approach places importance on people's thoughts both as individuals and

collectively, and the ways that communication takes place (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012). Gergen (2001: 63) suggests that social constructionism "is inherently reflexive, sensitive to the ways in which one's own actions contribute to the cultural presumptions of the real and the good". Whereas, Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2012) perceives social constructionism as having strengths as a paradigm in terms of being able to explore concepts over a period, understand people's meanings and adapt new issues and ideas as they emerge in a natural approach to contribute to new theories.

Choosing a Qualitative Methodology

This research was informed from a relativist ontological perspective with social constructionism guiding the epistemology. A quantitative research approach towards planning the methodology was deemed to be too constrained in terms of exploring the various nuances relating to constructs of masculinities. Hence, the research adopted a qualitative approach. The difficulties in making sense of qualitative data is widely documented. The immense amount of data created by research can often be the source of the problem as opposed to the ability of the researcher to organise it (Quinlan, 2011). The nature of qualitative data collection places demands on the researcher to reduce data for easily accessible outcomes to the research (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012). As a result, "there are many ways of getting analyses 'right' – precise, trustworthy, compelling, credible – and they cannot be wholly predicted in advance" (Huberman and Miles, 2002: 394). There is possible researcher bias in the collection and dissemination of data. In addition, problems arise in the sampling accuracy, generalisability, credibility and quality of findings and outcomes (Miles and Huberman, 1994). However, qualitative methods are more likely to lead to "serendipitous findings and to new integrations" and possibly lead to new conceptual frameworks (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 1). The strengths of qualitative data are that it explores "naturally occurring, ordinary events in ordinary settings" (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 10). Hence, it reveals rich, thick data over a sustained period. This helps to explore meanings people place on things as 'lived experience'. It can offer a sense of perspective on 'real life'. As a result, qualitative research offers a diverse scope in relation to how data is gathered and often provides an opportunistic approach towards understanding complex issues such as how ideals of masculinities are mediated.

Choosing Advertising as a Research Medium

"Advertising is an important historical record. It is possible to think of print advertising as the family album of society" (Belk and Pollay, 1985: 888). Hence, advertising offered the potential to explore how advertisers represent ideals to audiences at a given time. There are a plethora of advertising mediums. Print advertising was selected as a discussion prompt in the first two phases of this research for a number of reasons. The nature of printed advertisements provided the basis for multiple modes of 'resources' for semiotic interpretation such as the model, colours used, product image, layout, brands and copy. Goffman (1979) notes that a collection of themed advertisements based on the researcher's prescribed criteria can provide 'specifiable representativeness' within a similar genre. Magazines use high-quality paper thus, advertisements were presented in a static, durable format and it was easier for respondents to interpret at their leisure during interviews. There was no need for replaying advertising television footage, radio advertisements or displaying web pages. An additional benefit for this study was that written advertising copy offered a view of how advertisers use linguistic techniques to position gender.

Magazines with a similar editorial profile based on fashion, beauty and grooming were identified initially in the pilot study and then within phase one of the data collection for this study. The selection sought a convergence of age groups with a focus on appearance enhancement or grooming. At the time of starting the research, there was an array of men's so-called lifestyle magazines. To ease the complexities involved in deciding which magazines to use in the sample for this study, I decided that a good starting point was to revisit the titles targeting men used in the pilot study. The publications selected all fell within the following age categories identified by BRAD (2006) 16-34 (*FHM*), 20-44 (*GQ*), 25-44 (*Men's Health*). A common age range converging between 25 and 34 years of age within the readership profile was similar to Mintel's (2006; 2013) core audience for men's facial skincare consumption. This provided a guiding rationale to recruit participants for the first two phases involving advertisements in this study. To maintain consistency, the selection for the sample was from magazines within the same month of publication. This sample aimed to provide a 'snapshot' of representation within one particular country at a particular time.

Neuendorf's (2002) classification system was used in a content analysis carried out in the sample of lifestyle magazines, categorising the advertisements to identify products for both genders. The classification system was configured by systematically analysing page-by-page every magazine advertisement and noting a number of category elements. These categories included the product type; model included, target gender, key descriptor, and the main function of the product. In addition, colours used, brand name, copy description, layout, website, logo, position of advertisement within the magazine were noted. Furthermore, the magazine title, page number, endorsements and any other factor deemed worthy of note were included. The advertisements were revisited to hone down the sample for semiotic analysis to include products purely for moisturising facial skincare use. A process of elimination ensued.

Selecting Advertisements for the Sample

Where possible advertisements that included models were used in the sample to explore how advertisers were seeking to suggest a particular look for men to aspire to. The exception to this was *Clinique Men's Supplies*. The sample of advertisements produced six images where most were concerned with skincare without a cosmetic enhancement.

During phase two, the intention was to replicate the magazine sample used in phase one. However, a content analysis of *FHM, GQ* and *Men's Health* editions elicited only one potentially usable advertisement. This particular advertisement focused on facial scrub and shaving. There were two other advertisements that incorporated magazine subscription offers so were not ideal for inclusion. *FHM* had no advertisements that could be considered. A wider range of men's lifestyle magazines was explored for suitable advertisements throughout. Again, there were no male facial skincare product advertisements. As a result, the search was widened to access men's face skincare advertisements in media such as television and websites. Men's lifestyle publications were in decline and advertising had increasingly moved online. Terms such as 'male face skincare UK advertisements' were typed into *Google* search engine to find advertisements which were suitable on an availability basis. This elicited two websites and two television advertisements on *YouTube* deemed as appropriate. Although there was a hiatus in magazine male face skincare advertisements during April and May, the June edition of

Men's Health contained three suitable advertisements. I chose to use only one website in phase two participant interviews to limit the variety of media participants were asked to consider. In the next stage of the research, the researcher analysed the sample to elicit key 'resources' as signs of gender to readers through semiotic analysis.

Incorporating a Semiotic Analysis Framework

> *"Semiotics, as a culturally based discipline, makes a number of assumptions about social life in addition to the fundamental idea that we inhabit a world of overlapping systems of signs, signs about signs, and metacoding of such systems… Semiotics assumes that language is the model for other sorts of social relations"* (Manning, 1987: 36).

Semiotic analysis was chosen as a method for interpreting any apparent and underlying meaning offered by facial skincare advertisements within this study. It provided a valuable tool to understand how meaning is mediated in everyday life (Berger, 2000). The importance of the consumer world is allegorised as "a web of meanings among consumers and marketers woven from signs and symbols ensconced in their cultural space and time" (Mick, 1986: 196). In this context, semiotic analysis was useful in gaining a cultural understanding of how masculinity was signified by advertisers in relation to facial skincare products. As such, semiotic analysis provided a way of identifying emerging ways of depicting gender and what had lapsed over time. Semiotics offered a suitable method for this study to explore ways that advertisers used signs and symbols to create a positive overall appeal of facial skincare to a male consumer group. How advertisers frame masculinity was explored in this study to understand the implications this has for those viewing such advertisements and what this suggested about current ideals of masculinity. Interpreting what images convey to generate credible social knowledge continues to grow in importance. Also in how the perspective or 'situatedness' reveals assumptions of the reader (Stanczak, 2007). Differing emphases and philosophies have been adopted in regards to applying semiotic analysis to advertisements. Examples include 'reader-response theory', which explores consumer interpretation of adverts (Moisander and Valtunen, 2006). Alternatively, a social criticism of 'text-interpretive theories' considers how visual content conveys meaning (Moisander and Valtunen, 2006). The approach taken for this research adapted both methods by

combining research text interpretation and consumer reader-response to provide a social constructionist critique of advertisements.

The emergence of social semiotics has evolved largely due to work by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996). They perceive representation as a process in which the makers of signs create a representation of some object or entity. This relates cultural, social and psychological connections to the 'sign maker'. The emphasis of this approach lies in the value of cultural, personal and social contexts. It becomes meaningful in terms of the intention of the sign maker suggested to the reader of images. The interaction of participants in the creation of signs and the 'context of social constitutions' influence how images are interpreted (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). The intention of the creator of images such as the advertising creative is informed by cultural norms and values. Models and products are portrayed in a certain manner to convey ideas such as traditional ideals of gender.

Kress and van Leeuwen's (2005) semiotic model includes Saussure's (1916) sign, signifier, signified and adds to this a social context. This social context was integral in this research linking ideals of masculinity to male identity. There was a shift towards an appreciation of social influences linked to media in the way that advertisements provide a structure for consumer goods to be sold. Media analysis highlights an association with the way advertisements for products such as men's facial skincare are represented. Williamson (2002: 13) suggests that advertisers "are selling us ourselves" or at least an idealised version of ourselves. The advertising techniques used for how they convey meaning and 'referent systems' creating meaning for people are important (Williamson, 2002). These 'referents' were used in the research as a process to understand how the transference of meaning from signs in facial skincare takes place. The notion of 'currency' offered by Williamson (2002) in relation to how signs may contribute to overall understanding of constructions of contemporary masculinities formed part of the analysis by the researcher. The signifier or material object and what is signified create the meaning of the sign. For a sign to have meaning there has to be someone to whom the meaning is intended thus, allowing a 'system of beliefs' to exist (Williamson, 2002: 17). I used Williamson's (2002) approach in conjunction with van Leeuwen's (2005) to explore the

underlying meaning in how male facial skincare was mediated in this study as part of the social context of expectations and ideals for gender illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Semiotic Approach (Adapted from van Leeuwen (2005) and Williamson (2002))
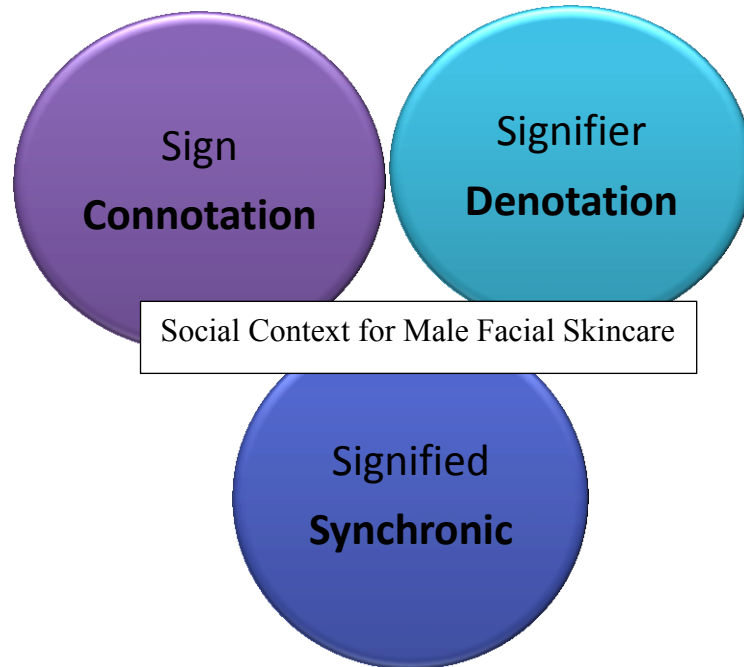
The concepts of denotation and connotation were considered in my sample of advertisements, whereby denotation was formed by signification suggested from a sign. As a result, the signifier denoted or provided a meaning to what was signified in the semiotic analysis of the advertisements (Williamson, 2002). Williamson (2002: 99) thus offers the term 'synchronic structural analysis'. This describes the process of a referent system (advertising). Signs trigger a meaning within the context of another sign in relation to 'anterior' or prior knowledge about what a product does (connotation). This links the suggested positioning of the product to the recipient of the advertisement (denotation). These two (connotation and denotation) act in tandem (synchronic) to produce meaning. Hence, facial skincare products are positioned *for men*. Such 'referents' offer a way of informing attitudes that facial skincare is acceptable for men.

The first two phases of the research incorporated semiotic analysis as a method. An initial review of the advertisements by the researcher determined key resources for exploration acting as a prompt for discussion in interviews with participants. Derrida (1972: 87) provided a context for this, "when we cannot grasp or show the thing, we signify, we go through the detour of the sign. We take or give signs. We signal. The sign

in this sense, is deferred presence". A product that was aligned to females requires careful consideration to assign this towards a male market. As such, the advertisement offers an endorsement, providing norms to men via the devices employed to convey masculine attributes. The use of metaphors and specific language was considered by the researcher in the analysis of the advertising copy.   The choice of words by advertisers is designed to affect the reader. This is used to associate the product offered as something more than a commodity. It can become a lifestyle indicator. The stance taken by Barthes (2009) whereby language is seen as socially constructed informed the approach in this study analysing how advertising copy suggests a gender context for the reader. Language relates to the making of things and "metalanguage is referred to a language-object, and myth is impossible" (Barthes, 2009: 173). This reinforced how advertising copy potentially offered further insight for how ideals of masculinity were suggested by advertisers in this study.

Written copy provided an important semiotic resource exploring how advertisers mediated heteronormative behaviour for male audiences. The copy content was analysed by the researcher to explore how the devices and techniques employed by advertisers mediated 'masculinity' and conveyed skincare as an acceptable product for adoption by men. The approach taken by advertisers to align skincare with masculinity provided 'resources' to understand how gender was presented using a literary approach. The researcher analysed the inference in the advertising copy in relation to how knowledgeable advertisers assumed men's face skincare audiences were when addressing readers of advertisements. Goddard and Patterson's (2000) approach of advertisers adopting an assumed reading position to the viewer of the advertisement was included with the variables of well-informed, informed or uninformed. The written address to readers of the advertisements assuming the target gender as neutral, specific or biased (Talbot, 2003) was also assessed. Van Leeuwen's (2005) social semiotics of sign/signifier/signified in a social context was used in addition to gain an understanding of the copy techniques in relation to gender.

A shared appreciation of the intention behind a certain image with all the various elements therein was not something that was acquired easily. 'Resources' offered new significations over time as the cultural interpretation of meaning changes. When

considering how best to undertake semiotic analysis and who should be involved, the approach taken was in line with Mick (1997: 253) who highlighted that "a realistic and comprehensive view of semiotics acknowledges multiple levels of meaning". I semiotically analysed each advertisement. A checklist detailing various semiotic resources was compiled using relevant aspects in relation to the advertisements. This was updated as new elements emerged. All the advertisements were analysed several times to ensure that potential gender cue resources were identified. Once it was clear that the researcher could not find any new semiotic resources, the data was gathered. The outcomes of the analysis formed the basis for the moderator checklist for use in the first interview phase of the research. In order for understanding to take place in relation to signs, signifiers need to generate meaning by association or code (Berger, 1998). The 'latent meaning' of advertising was highlighted in a semiotic reading of advertisements (Domzal and Kernan, 1993). The significance offered by advertising may not always be obvious. A male angle was essential, as men's attitudes towards the concept of facial skincare and what this tells us about masculinities and representation in advertising was core to this research.

Interviews Exploring Advertisements

Interviews offered the opportunity to meet and build rapport with a person face-to-face. During all three phases, interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants "to preserve the interview in its original form" (Gummesson, 2000: 128). Any observations of relevant body language for example, signs of agreement such as nodding or discomfort with the topic were noted to provide further context of how the interviewee may have been feeling about the line of questioning. Video recording of interviews was considered, but ruled out. It was felt by the researcher that this would inhibit the responses and rapport between interviewer and interviewee. Image recording provides a more accurate resource to interpret, but this approach may have triggered bias as participants respond differently when they are conscious of being filmed. The researcher transcribed the voice recordings after interviews were completed to stay close to the data, manually extracting any recurring themes.

The six male facial skincare adverts that had been analysed by the researcher were used as visual prompts within the series of interviews in phase one. Ten semi-structured interviews with male target audience respondents were conducted by the researcher during phase one. The 'resources' (van Leeuwen, 2005) used by advertisers to signal gender that had been identified by the researcher initially were analysed by respondents in relation to the sign, signifier, signified and social context. Participants noted the source that the advertisement appeared in and applied their own assumptions relating to an assumed target audience for the publication. Discussions surrounding how advertisers were positioning facial skincare in terms of gender cues such as colours, written copy, choice of models and layout were a central focus for the interviews. Semiotic analysis undertaken by the researcher prior to the interviews offered the guiding principle to elicit discussion surrounding the representation of masculinities in the first two phases of interviews and the first focus group.

The interviews followed a checklist covering key aspects of the advertisements for discussion, formed from the basis of the semiotic analysis undertaken by the author prior to this phase of the study (Appendix One). The checklist was updated for phase two interviews (Appendix Three) to incorporate additional considerations such as body type as an image influencing men (Berger, 2012). For phase two, the original participants were contacted and invited to participate again in the next stage of the research. This posed more of a logistical issue as many had moved away and were in careers demanding long hours so the interview schedule took longer than anticipated to organise. Transcripts from the first phase were made available to participants. Participants were asked to consider any changes between the two phases in terms of personal attitudes, market sector changes and advertising strategies relating to gender specific signs. The first respondent remembered the advertisements. The next two could not recall any. Hence, any key trends and changes during the elapsed time period were difficult to note. In view of this, these participants agreed to look at the first set of advertisements soon after the interview. The advertisements used for the phase one interviews were printed out and put into a pack that was mailed to the first three participants for reflection. Subsequent respondents were provided with these to look at and take away from the interview.

Interview approaches can take a variety of forms to engage participants as opposed to being a passive recipient of the interview. From a social constructionist perspective participants can be "actively involved in using the available cultural resources and discursive practices to construct meaningful accounts of social reality" (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006: 71). This was the intended approach used during the interviews. Difficulties with understanding cultural meanings and interpretations within specific advertisements arise for researchers. Hence, O'Donohue and Tynan (1997: 242) offered five dimensions of 'creative composites' namely personal experiences, personal values, cognitions, emotions and hedonism related to key themes of attitudes towards advertising. These dimensions were incorporated in the interviews. Respondents were encouraged to comment freely on pre-selected advertisements using a moderator checklist of key resources as a central discussion tool. The duration of the interviews in phase one was between 40 minutes and 2 hours. This depended upon the desire or ability of the participant to discuss key topics to greater depth. This was in line with good qualitative interviewing practices (Morrison *et al.*, 2002). In order to create an informal approach, any prompting of participants for further information was kept to a minimum so that more naturally occurring responses were given. To avoid undue bias, the researcher often adopted a naïve position regarding facial skincare practices and brands, so that the participant was gently led through key areas of discussion and responses were elicited 'from the participant's point of view' (Morrison *et al.*, 2002: 47).

Interviews were conducted in a place familiar to the participant to maintain a natural setting (Morrison *et al.,* 2002). An interview guide scheduling the key topics for discussion was prepared after the main coding framework was devised following semiotic analysis by the researcher of the advertisements. A data sheet was compiled to enable the researcher to provide additional notes on any key issues that arose and in order to note body language (Appendix One). The data sheet also contained information on the participant's name, age, job occupation, relationship status and provided a useful tool to consider the impact of these variables on consumer behaviour of facial skincare products. A running order for a discussion of the advertisements in each phase was devised. This replicated the one used by the researcher in the initial semiotic analysis. This order was maintained for each of the participants to ensure consistency of any potential ordering effect. When the interview had reached 'redundancy' or the point at which no new

information was forthcoming from participants, then the interview was brought to a close (Morris *et al.*, 2002). They were contacted at a later date with a copy of the transcript of the interview to approve or to offer amendments if appropriate.

A focus group with five males took place using the advertisements from both phases as a stimulus to elicit discussion on face skincare product usage and preference. This lasted around thirty-five minutes and was conducted in a relaxed environment in a café area of a community hall. The group was recorded with permission and key themes were transcribed from the discussion that took place.

Rationale for Methodology

I commenced this study within the Faculty of Business and the initial focus was on the advertising approach used to gain acceptance by men of a product category that was more widely accepted as a women's beauty aid. Hair care products were less of an issue in terms of conflicting with male identity ideals as the fashion for gels, waxes and various styling brands were discussed freely in lifestyle commentary sections and the use of such products were evident in the hairstyles of many men deliberated such as David Beckham. The decision to choose skincare came about as this was by design a more discreet product than hair styling products and at the time of starting the research in 2004, men's products were still relatively recent to the market. This provided a good opportunity to explore how skincare as an established product in the women's market was marketed to men.

I selected a sample of advertisements in June 2006 that offered moisturising as the key feature as opposed to a more cosmetic benefit such as foundation that was more freely available in the women's market. Make-up for men was entering the market in 2004 but there were no advertisements in the content analysis and I felt that skincare was a more subtle product whereby the application was not obvious by those using it. I undertook a semiotic analysis using Williamson (2002) and van Leeuwen's (2005) models as a way of identifying the key referents used to convey signifiers of masculinity to the target audience. The themes that emerged formed the discussion focus for the interviews and focus groups that followed. I wished to check my understanding as a female researcher of how skincare was mediated as a masculine product with the views of male participants to provide a more rounded approach.

Phase One and Two Interviews

Secondary research (Mintel, 2006) on male grooming highlighted "it is younger men who have taken more readily to the concept of facial skincare, with a peak amongst men aged 25-34, *Nivea for Men's* core target group". This age group formed a basis for profiling of participants using semiotic semi-structured interviews within phase one and two and was similar to the target audience for the magazines used in the research. The study aimed to understand how males interpreted the specific signs used to locate men's facial skincare commodities as part of the male sector. The emphasis was to elicit responses from males primarily and sampling for respondents was based on those males likely to be readers of men's lifestyle magazines. A starting point was to seek men who fitted the BRAD (British Rates and Data) advertising demographic data (Figure 2) profiled for the men's magazines used in the research.

Figure 2 BRAD Profile for Magazine Sample

Publication	Target Gender	Age	Socio-economic group	Lifestyle Indicators
FHM	Male	16-34	A, B, C1	Mid-twenties core
Men's Health	Male	25-44	A, B, C1	Intelligent men who want to improve their physical and emotional life

(Source BRAD www.intellagencia.com)

Advertisements in the sample that had been analysed using semiotic analysis by the researcher offered a starting point for discussion for the individual semi-structured interviews. The focus of the interviews explored men's attitudes towards facial skincare products to understand the influence this has on identity constructions. The preliminary recruitment was by means of a convenience sample using networks of male colleagues who fell into the relevant demographic. From this, a snowballing sampling was triggered via contacts of those initially approached through partners, friends and ex-students. This continued until I managed to recruit ten male respondents between the ages of 18-34 fitting the lifestyle descriptors outlined in Figure 2. The sample of the initial respondents included one Black British respondent and nine White British male interviewees. Whilst the sample was predominantly from a white ethnic background, there was some sexuality diversity to offer some context of wider masculinities (see Appendix Two for details). Whilst sexuality was not key to this research, the views from heterosexual and

homosexual men offered a more holistic consideration of men's attitudes towards facial skincare. The importance of the gay market as more experienced and accepting consumers of facial skincare has been noted in Chapter Four. Time elapsed, but I revisited the same participants (excepting one who had emigrated) with a new set of advertisements. I employed the same approach to ascertain how the market had changed, how advertisers were representing men and how the respondents' attitudes differed with the passage of time.

Initial interviews with participants commenced in 2007. Recruitment for interviews initiated with work colleagues from various departments and occupations willing to participate who fitted the age and professional category as described by BRAD (2006) for the readership profile of the magazines that the advertisements appeared. An appeal to recruit male participants to take part in these interviews was sent via a staff email that was sent to the faculty and this attracted a few responses. In addition, participants included a male partner of a colleague who wished to contribute to the study, post-graduate students, graduates that colleagues were still in touch with and friends or relations of friends on a snowball sampling approach.

Phase One and Two Interview Discussion Schedule

The interview discussions followed a similar schedule of topics and questions to elicit responses. Initially participants were asked to consider each advertisement that had been analysed initially by the researcher. A direct question was posed as to whether the interviewee bought this product or any one similar to this? Participants were then asked to comment on the overall impact of the advertisement and consider how it made them feel. In relation to models that were used in advertisements, interviewees were directed to look initially at the face by examining the facial features, facial hair and comment on whether they considered them to be good looking. The expression and gaze of models and what this suggested, along with the hair, hairstyle and use of hair products or accessories was also identified for discussion in the interviews. How the model's eyes were directed such as staring at the reader, looking away, behind sunglasses and what this conveyed to interviewees was explored. Participants were asked to look at the overall pose and posture of the model, clothing and how it was used as an effect. The

assumed age of the model and ethnicity and who was the intended audience/s for the advertisement based on the model, the brand, the product was also considered as a discussion topic.

Participants were asked to look at the product image, if this was the main image that was used and discuss how it was presented. The words employed within the text and their intended meaning and the name of the brand/product and what this suggested to respondents was considered. The interview discussions continued around the assumed target audience, particular words that stood out within the advertisements and the overall layout of model, copy and product image and colours used and what this suggested. The use of websites and how prominent this was, if it was useful and whether the interviewee would use a website for skincare products completed the schedule for discussion. The final question was whether participants had anything to add or comment upon further.

In 2013, I analysed another sample of advertisements available at the time for men's skincare products. Whilst the study was not longitudinal, there was an element of charting changes over a period of time as the original participants were re-interviewed in 2013 after I had changed my direction of study and was completing my research in the Department of Sociology. I found that participants had become more aware of men's skincare products over the time period. Some participants remarked that they now felt more comfortable using skincare whilst others did not feel the need to use it.

The schedule used to provide a structure around discussions in phase two was similar to phase one but the inclusion of TV and blog sites necessitated differing questions from the first set of interviews. In addition, participants were asked to comment on any changes they noticed with the intervening time from 2006 advertisements to those in 2013. Additional questions included what body type the model had. This was due to recent research that was focusing on the trend towards body-building and fitness as a key feature of improving appearance (see Vokey *et al.,* 2013). Another addition to this set of questions was whether there is obvious make-up on the model and if so, what did it suggest? This was as a result of Matthew Hall's (2013) work on men's make-up as an increasing trend. With regards to TV advertisements, participants were asked to reflect

on how the voiceover supported the key benefits of the product. Interviewees were requested to consider typical settings and whether these resonated with their lifestyle. The addition of music in the television advertisements was discussed in terms of whether it added or detracted from assisting the positioning of the product favourably to the target audience. The scenes, colours used, tone of voice, language and anything else that participants wished to comment upon was considered.

Participants in the Phase Two interviews were asked to compare Phase One and Phase Two advertisements and highlight the key changes they may have seen between the two phases. Any changes in attitudes and buying behaviour towards male skincare since the last interview in 2007 were discussed with participants. With regards to the advertisements, participants were asked if the language had changed and whether the colours used were any different. They also considered if they had noticed anything about the model or product image in comparison to the 2006 adverts. Participants use of social media, blogs, websites for information on grooming and/or skincare was queried. Finally, participants were asked if there has been a gender blurring between how the products were promoted between 2006 and 2013.

Phase One and Two Participant Recruitment

The first interviewee was 'Mac' a White British 26 year-old operations manager who was a partner of a female work colleague. The interview took place in March 2007. He disclosed that he regularly used *Nivea for Men* for his neck and *Clinique Skin Supplies* for his face. He often purchased *FHM* and occasionally *Zoo* magazines. In his spare time he played PS2 games, went swimming and was a season ticket holder at Manchester United. When he was re-interviewed in October 2013 'Mac' had similar hobbies and had been promoted to Area Manager. His skincare regime had changed as he now used *Clarins* in the intervening time suggesting a refinement in his taste.

The second interviewee was 'Al' a White British 33 year-old area manager and masters graduate who had kept in touch with a colleague. The interview took place in March 2007. 'Al' was living with a female partner. He regularly bought car magazines such as *Evo* and *Octane.* He described himself as a 'man's man' and said that he did not use

skincare products. His hobbies included skiing, running, drinking and socialising. 'Al' could not be re-interviewed in 2013 as he had emigrated and all contact had been lost.

The third interviewee was 'D' a White British 27 year-old marketing manager who was a post-graduate student that a colleague knew. The interview took place in April 2007. At the time 'D' was single. He liked reading *FHM* and for his hobbies he socialised by drinking pints, clubbing and reading. He used *L'Oreal Men Expert* as a moisturiser. When he was re-interviewed in June 2013 'D' was living with his male partner. His reading had changed as he said he now liked to read *Attitude* an online magazine targeting a gay audience and his drink of choice was vodka. He now used *Olay Skincare* and *Olay Night Skincare* which were the female product versions as he felt this was better for his skin.

The fourth interviewee was 'Dom' a White British single 24 year-old development manager. The interview took place in May 2007. 'Dom' liked to read *Triathlon 220,* a publication aimed at what he described as 'serious amateurs'. His hobbies unsurprisingly were revealed as taking part in triathlons, trekking and reading. He said that he used *Aloe Vera* as a moisturiser to protect his skin from the outdoor sporting pursuits he undertook. When I interviewed 'Dom' again in September 2013 he was engaged to be married to his female fiancé and was now a marketing manager. He was still pursuing his sporting activities but had changed his publication of choice to *National Geographic,* reflecting his love of travel that he was enjoying with his new career. He now was using *Clarins* skincare as recommended to him by his fiancé.

The fifth interviewee was 'Oz' a Black British 25 year-old marketing co-ordinator. The interview took place in May 2007 and he was recruited via a colleague who had kept in touch with him after his graduation. He lived with his girlfriend and played football in his spare time as well as supporting Manchester United at their home games. 'Oz' did not read any magazines but liked to read books. He disclosed that he used *St. Ives Skincare* which was a unisex product as well as *Vaseline Intensive Care* as he liked his skin to 'look good'. When I interviewed 'Oz' in June 2013 he was now married and his career had progressed. He was now a public policy manager and liked to read the *Economist* to keep up to date with current affairs. He was still supporting Manchester United, playing

football and had started to swim regularly to keep up his fitness levels. He still used *St. Ives Skincare.*

The sixth interviewee was 'Jake' a White British 22 year-old recent graduate who was still in touch with the researcher and the interview took place in May 2007. 'Jake' was working as a marketing assistant and liked reading *Sunday Times* magazine supplements and *FHM.* He was a supporter of Aston Villa Football Club and disclosed that he used *Nivea for Men* to keep his skin looking younger. When interviewed again in June 2013, 'Jake' was now a marketing manager and had kept the same pastimes as well as enjoying scuba diving and skiing on a regular basis when he holidayed with friends. He now used *Boots No 7* in his skincare regime as he felt this was more effective for his skin.

The seventh interviewee was with 'Pete' a White British 25 year-old information systems officer who had responded to the email advertisement and worked within the faculty. The interview took place in June 2007. 'Pete' was single. He read *Viz* and liked drinking and going to the gym in his spare time. 'Pete' used *Nivea for Men* and *King of Shaves* face scrub. When I interviewed 'Pete' in June 2013 he was living with his girlfriend and had a daughter. He had been promoted to IT manager, had stopped socialising due to family commitments, and generally watched TV in his spare time. His skincare regime entailed using whatever products had been bought for him as gifts at Christmas and his birthday.

The eighth interviewee was with 'Q' in June 2007, a White British 35 year-old colleague who lived with his girlfriend. He liked reading *BBC Good Homes Guide, Cycling Weekly* and *Decanter* (a wine guide magazine). His hobbies included cycling and enjoying good food and wine. He had used *Nivea for Men* but had stopped using it as he disliked the greasy feeling on his skin. When I re-interviewed 'Q' he was working in another institution, had married and had a daughter. He now read *Gardener's World* as well as his cycling magazine but his hobbies revolved around his family and he had acquired a taste for whisky. He had ceased to use skincare products preferring to 'age gracefully'.

The ninth interviewee was 'Laurie' a White British 33 year-old information systems officer who was living with his boyfriend. He liked to read Sunday supplements, history books and walking with his partner when he had time. He did not use skincare products, as he perceived no reason to do so. When I re-interviewed him 'Laurie' was in a civil

partnership with his male partner and had started playing football to keep fit as well as continuing to enjoy walking and reading history books. He had subscribed to *BBC History* magazine. He still did not see any reason to use skincare products.

The tenth interviewee was 'Davie' a White British 31 year-old computer operator who was single. He was a brother of a neighbour who fitted the sampling criteria as he was an avid reader of *FHM*. The interview took place in June 2007. His hobbies included going to the gym, running, cycling, playing snooker, shopping and socialising. He did not use skincare products. When 'Davie' was re-interviewed in September 2013 he was living with his girlfriend and had a young son. He no longer had time to read or socialise and his only hobby was going to the gym and the occasional game of snooker. He still did not use skincare products but his girlfriend had started to recommend some to him.

Phase Two Focus Group

A decision was taken to explore the views on the sample of advertisements from a different group of males encompassing a wider age range. Focus groups provide a different forum to discuss themes that may emerge. The focus group dynamics differed from the individual semi-structured interviews. A moderator cue was used in terms of showing the various advertisements from the two phases to the participants and asking for their views on the approach used by advertisers. The questions asked included the following for discussion prompts: did anyone use male skincare products and if so which ones were they and what were their reasons for using these? The participants were asked to look at the adverts and provide comments on the use of models, product image and name, colours used and language used and whether this appealed to them. The group discussed whether advertisers were using the right techniques to appeal to male audiences and what would they may do differently. Participants considered what sort of characteristics they thought the target audience for these brands would have and whether they thought skincare products were currently important to males in society as key discussion cues.

Phase Two Focus Group Participant Recruitment

The focus group was conducted in July 2014 with male participants gathered from a variety of backgrounds and ages in an area local to the researcher. Permission was given to the researcher to place a notice in the café area of the community hall in South Manchester. The participants were recruited on the basis of those being aged 18 and above and willing to participate in a discussion surrounding attitudes towards and use of men's skincare products. Potential participants were requested to contact the researcher via her work email. The aim of the focus group was to understand whether themes that had emerged from the two phases of semiotic analysis undertaken by the researcher and interviewees could be expanded upon further.

'John' was a White British 18 year-old student who used *Nivea for Men* and was confident about discussing why he 'liked his skin to look good'. He talked about how his girlfriend recommended products to him.

'Ash' was a British Asian 47 year-old accountant who also used *Nivea for Men* but showed his growing discernment of brands by disclosing how he preferred to use *Dolce* a high-end product that he preferred due to the scent. 'Ash' discussed how his wife bought all his products for him.

'Mike' was a White British 50 year-old plasterer whose wife was an *Avon* representative so he used *Avon for Men* skincare products. He stated that he did not really want to use skincare but his wife persuaded him to do so. I felt that there was an element of trying to play down his use of skincare as he felt uncomfortable discussing it with other males in the group. He brought up the fact that his job as a plasterer meant that his skin was often dry as a way to bring in the functional reasons for using skincare.

'Tony' was a Chinese British 42 year-old Information Technology Manager who used *Nivea for Men* bought for him by his wife. He did not mind using skincare as he understand that skin can age easily and he used products as a defence against ageing.

'George' was a White British 59 year-old retired male who was married and avoided using skincare products perceiving no benefit in changing his routine of soap and water to keep his skin 'fresh'.

Phase Three Research Synopsis

Phases One and Two of the data collection had focused on advertising and how producers seek to position skincare as a masculine product to male audiences. This approach fitted well with my research focus within the Business School. My transfer of studies to the Department of Sociology supported an increasing emphasis that the research had taken towards exploring consumption of and consumer attitudes towards men's skincare products. Thus, Phase Three of the research moved away from advertising towards understanding of how consumers and non-consumers of men's skincare felt about this product sector as part of a wider reflection of changing ideals for masculinities. I sought the views of a range of grooming professionals, beauty experts and practitioners and those involved in the skincare product industry to understand how consumer trends were changing. In addition, I wished to understand views from younger males who were the ones most likely to use men's skincare products according to Mintel (2016). Recruitment from industry experts was achieved by using a 'foot in the door' approach. I visited a number of beauty outlets in person, requesting interviews at a convenient time. Many of those visited could not or would not spare the time. Those that did participate agreed to do so providing that I would suspend the interview if they were needed by customers. Younger males were recruited from asking friends, colleagues, family and neighbours to enquire if any males aged 18-21 years old were interested in taking part in an interview about use of skincare products.

Phase Three Interviews – Industry Representatives

A series of ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals within the grooming or beauty industry. The rationale was to provide an insight into industry and consumer trends and participant's views in relation to drivers and barriers to men's consumption of facial skincare products. The busy nature of the environment grooming professionals operate within required that the interviews took place within the work place in order that any disruption to operational requirements was minimal. General noise and interruptions made the interviews difficult but this was a necessary issue to contend with in order to gain access to professionals. In addition, interviewing within the practitioner's workplace offered the additional opportunity to interview some clients and therein provided some additional insights from various male participants.

It was difficult to access industry professionals who were able to participate in interviews due to the busy environments within grooming salons. Impromptu visits to a variety of beauty salons, barbershops and health spas were followed up by phone calls to secure a suitable time for interviews with those who agreed to participate. Men and women participated in the interviews and roles ranged from salon owners, airport retail, barbers and clients, grooming sale professionals, a tattooist, and skincare consultants (*Clarins* and *Clinique*). Industry professionals from two women's beauty salons offering men's facials, plus *REM UK, Gentry Grooming Company* and *Flannagan's* offering a men-only grooming experience were all interviewed as part of this research.

The sampling rationale was based on access to the industry professionals willing to participate. The selection basis prior to the contact was based on the extent to which the business provided services that involved any form of facial skincare grooming such as barbering, facials, moisturising or sales of products for men's facial skincare. The interviews were recorded with permission and transcribed by the researcher to ensure that relevant details were not missed. No advertising or visual cues were used in phase three. However, the key themes that had emerged from the first two phases of the research were used as a starting point for discussion to allow further ideas to emerge organically. Interviews were built around emerging ideas elicited from previous interviews to explore wider considerations of consumption, identity, representation and influencing trends relating to men's face skincare.

Phase Three Industry Participants Recruitment

The first interview took place in June 2015. Recruitment took place via a friend who worked at the airport. 'Gemma' was a White British female 35 year-old promotions manager who was responsible for the skincare brands within the duty free shops at Manchester Airport. I approached 'Gemma' with the request to interview her due to her expertise selling skincare for men and made arrangements to her meet at a suitable time.

The second interview took place in a barber's shop in South Manchester in June 2015. Access was gained by calling into the shop and requesting an interview. Permission was granted by 'Tommo' a male White British 30 year-old barber, who was the manager of the establishment. When the interview started there were no customers and as customers

came in for haircuts or a shave. Two clients served by 'Tommo' allowed me to interview them about their attitudes towards and use of men's skincare products. 'Andy' had come in for a haircut and was a White British 38 years old male and employed as an architectural illustrator. He used *E45 Cream* that his gran got for him from her free prescriptions and he said that if he had to pay for skincare himself then he would not bother to use it. 'Andy' talked about different girlfriends that had tried to get him to use men's skincare brands. 'Theo' had come in for a shave and haircut and was a 20 year-old White British male student who was confident talking about his use of skincare. He disclosed that he started to use *Bio Oil* as he had a scar on his face from a fight that he was involved in about 4 years previously. 'Theo' also used *Aloe Vera* moisturiser to keep his skin 'looking good for the ladies'.

The third interview took place in Southampton in June 2015. A comment from the interview with 'Gemma' had suggested that regionality played a big part in men's attitudes towards skincare and men from the South of England were more receptive to using products. I was in the area for a few days and took the opportunity to request interviews with various grooming professionals. The first to agree to be interviewed was 'Daniel' a White British male 32 year-old barber whose shop was quiet as I had called in the night before at closing time and he asked to me return when the shop reopened in the morning. 'Daniel' used *Nivea for Men* bought for him by his female partner. He did not know if there was any difference between men's attitudes and use of skincare regionally as he had never travelled 'north'.

The fourth interview also took place in Southampton later that day in June 2015 with 'Sewerwyn' a White Romanian male 33 year-old tattooist. I requested an interview with him by calling into his shop on the off-chance he would take part and he agreed. 'Sewerwyn' made it clear that he had never used skincare on his face as he did not like the greasy feel it left on his skin. He did value the use of moisturiser on tattoos as this kept the colours stronger for longer. 'Sewerwyn' commented on how he how had a difficult life growing up and men using skincare was something that would be frowned upon back home amongst his family. He asserted his traditional views on masculinity and perceived skincare as something that should mostly be used by women.

The fifth interview took place in June 2015 in Southampton with 'Stuart' an openly gay White British male 52 year-old skincare consultant for *Clinique.* As the store was not particularly busy, 'Stuart' agreed to be interviewed. With regards to whether there are regional differences on men's attitudes and consumption of skincare 'Stuart' commented on how men were much more likely to buy from males who provided advice in a professional capacity.

The sixth interview took place later in the evening in Southampton in June 2015 with 'Ashleigh' a White British 33 year-old female skincare consultant for *Clarins.* 'Ashleigh' talked about how men liked the privacy of the salon to 'enjoy a bit of a pamper'.

The seventh interview took place in November 2016 in South Manchester with 'Lin' a White British female owner of a beauty salon specialising in skincare treatments. I managed to interview 'Lin' after several failed attempts as the salon was very busy. Eventually we managed to find a time of the day and week when she had extra staff in and no clients scheduled for her. 'Lin' talked about how she had decided to train in skincare as she realised that many young males were self-conscious of their skin appearance especially during their teenage years when acne was a particular problem for some. Her male partner was a firefighter and she remarked on how he was often made fun of by those on his watch as they knew that he used the skincare that 'Lin' provided him with.

The eighth interview was with 'Thomas' a White British 28 year-old openly gay male skincare consultant and barber based in the centre of Manchester. It took a few weeks of negotiating via telephone, email and visits to the salon to agree upon a time that it would be convenient for the interview to take place. 'Thomas' commented on how his clients were happy to have skincare products applied by him after he had completed a wet shave. He thought that being in the city was an advantage as the high prices that were charged attracted a more discerning male customer who understood the value of using skincare products.

The ninth interview was with 'Sam' a White British 28 year-old male barber based in South Manchester. Access for the interview was gained by calling into the barbershop at a quiet time in January 2016 and asking staff if they were available and willing to

participate. The only member of staff who was free to take part was 'Sam'. 'Sam' used *Nivea for Men* but disclosed that he had only started using it as his girlfriend had bought it for him.

The tenth interview took place in South Manchester with 'David' a White British 58 year-old openly gay male who ran a beauty salon with his male partner. I managed to get access to interview 'David' after popping into the salon a few times to find a convenient time. 'David' found a time in the diary when he would be free the interview took place the agreed time in January 2016 on a quiet day. 'David' used *Nivea for Men* to try and stop his skin ageing and could not understand why all men did not use skincare. He commented on how celebrity culture had created a positive effect on the use of skincare by men.

Phase Three Interviews – Younger Males

Given that Mintel (2016) identified younger males as more likely to use facial skincare products, a series of semi-structured interviews with participants aged 18-22 years of age took place. Convenience and snowball sampling was used to gain access to males in upper sixth or undergraduate university students willing to participate. One interview was conducted via a telephone interview due to the distance involved. All interviews were recorded after consent was given and transcripts were typed by the researcher in order that she might keep close to the data. Key questions such as whether facial skincare products were used by respondents and views towards facial skincare, influences and peer discussion surrounding the topic were central to all interviews. The influence of celebrity culture was a key topic that was discussed. Similar to the interviews with grooming industry experts, any emerging ideas were added to the list for discussion.

Phase Three Younger Males Participant Recruitment

The first interview was with 'Drew' an 18 year-old White British undergraduate male student and took place in December 2015. I had posted an announcement on a student forum requesting undergraduate males to participate in interviews. 'Drew' responded via email and agreed to be interviewed. 'Drew' was willing to take part as he realised that it was valuable experience in preparation for when he would need to undertake data

collection as part of his studies. He used *Simple Moisturiser* and disclosed how the Gay Village had played a part in his decision to come to university in Manchester.

The second interviewee was 'Tom' an 18 year-old White British student in upper sixth at college. Tom was the son of a family friend who agreed to take part in the research as he felt comfortable talking to someone who he knew. When he was interviewed in January 2016, 'Tom' said that he liked drinking, playing rugby and avoiding using any creams on his face apart from spot cream. He was keen on having a girlfriend but was currently single. His mum had tried to get him to use skincare but he did not want his younger brother to make fun of him if he did start using it.

The third interviewee was 'Matthew' a White British student who was 19 years old and in his second year at university. He was recruited through a family friend and agreed to be interviewed when he was home from University in the Christmas holidays in January 2016. He was currently using *Nivea for Men* as he had received it as a gift at Christmas. During his recent time at university, 'Matthew' had started to use cheaper unbranded versions from discount stores as his student finances were low.

The fourth interviewee was 'Michael' a White British 18 year-old male who was in upper sixth form college with 'Tom' and had been encouraged to take part in the interview by him. In the interview in January 2016, 'Michael' said he used *Aveeno* skincare as he suffered with particularly dry skin.

The fifth interviewee was 'Brad' a White British 19 year-old university student who was the son of a friend. The interview took place in January 2016 and 'Brad' said that he used *Bulldog* and *Nivea for Men* to keep his skin 'looking good'.

The sixth interviewee was 'Mike' a 20 year-old White British second year undergraduate student who was the nephew of a family friend. He used *Nivea for Men* and talked about how increasingly friends were using products but generally would suggest that skincare was not important to them.

The seventh interviewee was 'Mich' a 22 year-old White British final year student who was approached by the researcher whilst he was sat in the café area of the Business

School and agreed to take part as he had a couple hours spare between his seminar and lecture. 'Mich' was from the North East and said that in his household there were mixed responses to men using skincare. His mum had bought *Clinique for Men* which he regularly used, whereas his dad and granddad thought that he was 'letting the side down' by using 'woman's products'. 'Mich' mentioned how a previous girlfriend thought he spent too much money on skincare.

The eighth interviewee took part in response to an email that I sent to work colleagues asking if they knew of any 18-22 year old males who wished to take part in research surrounding skincare products. 'Paul' was a White British 18 year-old undergraduate student who was the godson of a colleague. The interview took place in January 2016 via phone as 'Paul' was based in Bristol. 'Paul' used *Dove Men Care.*

The ninth interviewee was 'Tim' a White British 18 year-old student in upper sixth at college who was interviewed in January 2016. 'Tim' was openly gay and was suggested as a good respondent by 'Tom' and 'Michael' whom he was friends with. 'Tim' used *Lush* as he liked their products. Interestingly, 'Tim' said did not feel comfortable talking about skincare with other males as he felt it was still not easily accepted as a men's topic of conversation so was glad that it was an interview rather than a focus group.

The tenth interviewee was 'Adam' a White British 18 year-old student in upper sixth at college who was a son of neighbour who agreed to take part in the interview during his Christmas break in January 2016. He was friends with another neighbour's son who did not want to take part in the research but recommended that I ask 'Adam'. 'Adam' used *Clearasil* to treat any signs of acne as he was conscious of trying to maintain clear skin to maintain his confidence around girls.

Phase Three Focus Group

Social media had emerged as an influence for an increased focus on men's appearance and a focus group of males aged 19-26 years old was arranged to consider this further. Given the likelihood that they would be concerned with their skincare regime I interviewed a group of water polo players aged 18 and above. The questions centred around the consumption and attitudes towards men's skincare with a greater emphasis

on the use of social media and vlogs. The participants were chosen as water polo is a particularly physical sport and I wanted to explore the views from a group of men who play in a high-impact sport that is seen as physically challenging and exhibits a great deal of male bravado. I visited Manchester Aquatics Centre in April 2017 and sought permission from their coach to approach the men's team that were getting ready to start their land training prior to going in the water. There were four members of the squad who were willing to take part. Interestingly, the dynamics of interviewing in a group produced some friendly teasing amongst those contributing to the focus group.

'Gaz' was a White British 27 year-old in media sales. Despite regularly playing water polo he said that he did not see the need for skincare although his girlfriend was trying to get him to use it.

'Bez' was a White British 26 year-old playworker (a title that the others derided him for as being 'girly'). 'Bez' adopted a very traditional view of how men don't need skincare as he left that to 'her indoors'. He said he did not use skincare and left that to 'Loz' as he was the 'pretty boy'.

'Loz' was a 19 year-old Greek student who said that he used a Greek brand of moisturiser *Protakas*. He was happy to talk about how he liked to 'look after his skin' but the others were laughing at him whilst he was discussing this. He countered any suggestion that this was demeaning his masculinity by saying that 'it hasn't done him any harm getting the ladies to like him' thus asserting his heterosexual status.

'Dec' was a 20 year-old White British professional water polo player. He did not use skincare and was very careful to ensure that his traditional views on how men do not need to 'use stuff' on his face.

Identifying Themes for Analysis

After transcription was completed, the text was clustered to identify a limited number of grouped subjects deemed similar and any relationships that arose from the data (Guest *et al.,* 2012). Key quotations from participants to support relevant themes were identified. Codes relating to the themes that emerged were developed iteratively by the researcher

re-reading transcripts in order to identify key issues emerging from the data in order to produce a codebook to work from (Guest *et al.*, 2012). After each interview or focus group had taken place, key themes were noted and any new facets were added to the moderation list for subsequent discussions. The themes were placed into categories and sub-categories and verbatim comments from the 39 interviews and two focus groups were collected. These explored emerging concepts relating to representation, masculinities, consumption, external influences and demographics. The approach started with open coding to understand emerging themes and to provide a deeper analysis using selective coding after the initial trawl through of the data (Urquhart, 2013). A key difficulty lay in deciding upon which ideas were most important in positioning facial skincare as a masculine practice. I have given priority to those themes that I feel provide the most influence.

Research Ethics and Sexuality of Participants

I experienced what Calvey (2008) has referred to as a type of 'moral fix' during my ethical research journey. Whilst it was easy to capture details such as age, gender, occupation, skincare use, hobbies and other lifestyle factors, I avoided overtly asking participants to disclose their sexuality. A guiding principle of my research was situated ethics. The approach used in recruiting participants and the ensuing discussions within interviews and focus groups was to create and maintain an ethical integrity that was more dependent on sensitivity to people than it was on ethical principles and codes (Simons and Usher, 2000). The sexuality of the participants was not a key focus of the research, however masculinity forms part of a spectrum of masculinities and heterosexual and homosexual descriptors are provided to offer greater context to the discussions within the interviews and focus groups. An ethical decision was taken by the researcher to not openly ask the participants about their sexuality. Whilst the research was not covert, the question concerning sexuality was not openly asked but participants were categorised into homosexual and heterosexual descriptors by the researcher without their knowledge. Calvey (2008) draws attention to how in the research setting the researcher can find himself or herself in a blurred situation concerning confidentiality and consent. Whilst consent was not given by the respondents to disclose their sexuality, the descriptor provides further context in the discussions presented in the findings and

analysis in Chapters Seven and Eight. From Phase One and Two interviews, 'D', 'Jake' and 'Laurie' were openly gay. The other seven participants were surmised as being heterosexual given their references to past and present female partners. The first focus group participants were all in heterosexual marriages with the exception of 'John' who had a girlfriend. The sexuality of respondents in Phase Three interviews with industry was surmised as predominantly heterosexual excepting 'Thomas', 'David' and 'Stuart' who were openly gay. Similarly, only 'Drew' and 'Tim' identified as gay amongst the younger male interviewees. The focus group participants were all surmised to be heterosexual as they mentioned female partners and girlfriends although this does not preclude any participants from identifying as bisexual.

Simons and Usher (2000: 2) highlight how situated ethics is specific to "local and specific to particular practices – it cannot be universalized". There is no clear directive on how researchers conducting qualitative empirical research should make decisions based on a particular situation. I felt that overtly recruiting participants on the basis of their sexuality may result in a skewed sample or respondents being more guarded about their responses. An understanding of whether sexuality played a part in attitudes towards men's skincare products ensured that the outcomes of the research was not confined to the views of a dominant heterosexual or homosexual sample.

Simons and Usher (2000) discuss the importance of being sensitive and fair in situated ethics and taking account of the diversity and uniqueness of different research practices. Many of the respondents were discreet about their sexuality. These participants may not have taken part in the research if they were recruited on the basis of their sexuality. The approach taken during the interviews was to gain trust from participants by starting with a general discussion about advertising approaches. I would then move towards a more particular discussion about the specific ways that masculinity was represented by advertisers. Calvey (2008) highlights the 'blurred reality of research' where some elements of data capture are discreet to ensure that trust and more open discussions are facilitated. Where participants were open about their sexuality with specific references to their identity then the decision to identify my respondents as homosexual or heterosexual was straightforward. The problem arose where sexuality was unknown or

ambiguous. In these cases respondents were surmised to be heterosexual although this may not be the case.

Ethical Considerations

All participants within this study were provided with an information sheet outlining the objectives of the research. A participant consent checklist was completed and signed once respondents were happy to take part. No one under the age of 18 years participated so there were no issues concerning research with children. All interviews and the focus groups were recorded with permission and a transcript sent for approval afterwards. Once the transcript was complete, the original recording was deleted to reflect Data Protection guidelines.

Everyone taking part in the research did so of their free will and were able to cease participation at any point during the research. Names were anonymised to protect identities and are only identified by first letter of their name, with their age, gender, sexuality and ethnicity detailed in the profiles in Appendix Two and Six. No one was coerced or pressurised to take part and many of those participating commented on how the process had provided more insight and reflexivity around the notion of men's skincare. Figure 3 presents an overview of the research over time and a description of the various methods used.

Figure 3 Overview of the Research

Date	Method
January – July 2004	**Pilot research** for analysis of print magazine advertisements using a Piercean (1977) approach and Goffman's (1979) gender coding. A feminising of masculinity in advertisements was identified triggering an inquiry to explore male representations with a particular product.
June 2006	**Phase one** – content analysis using Neuendorf's (2002) coding of a sample of male lifestyle magazines revealed facial skincare as a focus for the study.
November 2006	Semiotic analysis using Williamson (2002) and van Leeuwen (2005) in a sample of six advertisements to understand how advertisers mediated skincare as a masculine product to male audiences.
29th March – 11th June 2007	Ten interviews with participants to provide male perspectives on the analysis conducted by the researcher. Men aged between 24 and 35 years old were recruited as those identified as target audience and socio-economic readership profile for the magazines (BRAD, 2006).
March 2013	**Phase two** - research continued with advertising as a focus to explore changes that had taken place in the sector after a period of time had elapsed. Content analysis revealed a shift in media towards online and TV advertising for men's skincare products.
May 2013	A sample of print, TV and online advertisements were semiotically analysed by the researcher exploring changes from phase one in how skincare was presented to male audiences.
June – October 2013	The original phase one male participants were re-interviewed to explore how their attitudes had changed towards skincare consumption and any differences they identified from advertising approaches. There was a shift in discussions from participants towards skincare and male identity.
July 2014	Participants for a focus group were recruited from an advertisement placed in a community hall to recruit a more diverse age range of male skincare consumers. Both phases of advertisements were used as an initial discussion focus leading onto male identity and skincare consumption emergent themes to explore further.
July 2015 – January 2016	**Phase three** - ten industry key informant interviews from beauty and grooming salons acquired by a 'foot in the door' approach and follow up meetings. The key themes revealed the importance of celebrity culture and females in the consumption influencers of men's skincare.
December 2015 – January 2016	Interviews with ten teenage skincare consumers from upper sixth form colleges and first year university students were conducted to understand how skincare use was initiated with social media emerging as a key influence.
April 2017	A focus group with water polo players as a traditionally tough sport were recruited to explore the influence of social media and vloggers on skincare use and male identity.

Reflecting upon Limitations of the Research

Getting men to discuss such a personal subject as facial skincare is problematic. Most males who use face skincare products do so in a discreet way. Respondents attested to this in the final phase of the research and highlighted it as a key issue (see Chapter Eight). However, as a female researcher I often found that males were at ease talking to a woman about facial skincare rather than discussing it with other men. This was indicated in some of the comments arising at the end of interviews. Participants identified facial skincare as a subject men would not naturally talk about with other men. This echoes experiences detailed by Hall *et al.* (2012) and Ojala *et al.* (2016) in their research.

Within the first two phases of this research, twelve advertisements were selected and nineteen interviews conducted with male participants and a focus group was also undertaken in order to explore the 'resources' provided by advertisers at two particular time periods. Whilst the number of advertisements and respondents is not considered large in relation to some studies exploring big data sets, the rationale behind this was not to produce a large-scale response but to explore methods used to convey masculinity and the attitudes surrounding this. The third phase again entailed ten interviews with industry respondents and ten with younger males and a further focus group again to gather personal perspectives rather than to seek statistical outcomes.

The lack of availability of advertisements in the second phase of the research necessitated a change to the print media used in the first phase of data collection. The decision to use results from an optimised search engine to look for blogs and television advertisements, although not ideal, was the preferred solution at the time. The medium of communication is in itself subjective as people can interpret and respond to different media in differing ways. Thus, the use of a television advertisement or website as opposed to a magazine advertisement may alter perceptions. Moreover, the mediation of facial skincare brands through a different system can radically change how people think (Hall, 2012). In addition, a participant from the original ten respondents was not available for inclusion within phase two so only nine were used within the second phase. It was decided not to recruit a substitute tenth respondent as this would not allow for continuity between the two phases in terms of reflection and reflexivity on changes that had taken place between interview phases.

The mix of male participants in phase one and phase two of the interviews were predominantly White British (nine White British and one Black British) and were mainly surmised as being heterosexual (with the exception of three gay respondents) which does not provide a representative view of a grooming practice that is targeted at a diverse population of men. Likewise, the socio-economic skew was more middle-class given the sampling approach used which identified males who were likely to be readers of men's lifestyle magazines and therefore belonging to higher socio-economic groups (BRAD, 2006). A focus group with a more diverse mix of age and ethnicity sought to provide a wider scope of male respondents. An additional focus group explored social media influences.

A complication in relation to updates on the website used in the sample for phase two advertisements occurred as a *Maleskin* banner image displaying models with products that was shown to some interviewees was changed before all the interviews were conducted. For that reason, the comparison of the same models was not possible for the last four participants who were asked to comment on the two male models displayed at the time of their interviews. Preferably, all participants would have been shown the same banner images. Some participants used facial skincare products whilst others did not. As a result, relative consideration produced a diverse attitudinal response to the relative merits of representation, adoption and usage of men's facial skincare. The third phase of the research proved extremely difficult to interview skincare specialists due to the busy nature of the environments they worked in. Initially it was planned to interview clients within beauty salons however, all the establishments contacted about this refused to allow access to their customers with the exception of one male grooming salon. Access to grooming salons was achieved by persistently emailing, phoning or visiting various outlets until those respondents willing to participate granted permission. Nonetheless, the participants from industry offered a different perspective on men's attitudes and behaviour in relation to use of facial skincare products.

In terms of collecting further data to support the outcomes of this study, this was achieved through using a laddering technique after the various interviews to add newly emerging topics for discussion. Towards the end of the series of interviews with various groups of male respondents and industry participants, there were themes that emerged

on a regular basis. Such themes were often unprompted suggesting a saturation of information over time (McGivern, 2013). The use of the same respondents in phase two from those interviewed in the first phase offered a form of control group to provide a platform to interpret differences in how respondents felt their attitudes and consumption behaviour had changed during this period.

In this chapter I have presented a range of methods designed to interrogate how to best understand the relationship between male skincare and the reproduction and representation of masculinities. In the following chapters I will begin to consider and reflect upon the data emerging from this methodological approach.

Chapter Six. Findings I: Semiotic Analysis of Advertisements

Introduction

The extent to which advertisers inform ideals of masculinity and how this may have an influence on male identity is explored in this chapter. The focus on facial skincare products in advertisements provides a way to understand how beautifying products are presented to men. Particular approaches used by advertisers suggesting notions of gender linked to facial skincare also inform ideals of masculinity. I explore advertising images in order to understand how a source of 'capital' may be gained by improving appearance whilst protecting orthodox ideals of masculinity. I refer to this as a form of 'looking-glass capital'. Whilst not a primary focus for this study, the sample explored in this chapter reveals a lack of ethnic diversity represented by models in facial skincare advertisements. This is not an oversight in the data collection as the only advertisements that were available were those including white male models. McClintock's (1995) seminal work highlights the influence from British colonial ideals on how race was depicted in early advertisements. Her work along with bell hooks (2015) provides a useful context for this invisibility of ethnically diverse models within the sample of advertisements analysed in this chapter. I suggest that advertisers fail to reflect social reality in contemporary Britain and this has implications for broadening the appeal for men's use of skincare.

The data collection for this study took place in three distinct phases of time as described in Chapter Five. When considering how best to present the analysis I decided to dedicate one chapter to exploring how advertising informs attitudes in relation to facial skincare. The first two phases that use semiotic analysis of advertisements in the sample conducted by the researcher are presented in this chapter offering an insight to my original analysis before commencing interviews with male participants. I present both sets of advertisements (12 in total) in the sequence initially analysed by the researcher with analysis and reflection linked to each advertisement. At the end of each phase of semiotic analysis there is a section investigating the written copy analysis in relation to particular linguistic techniques used by advertisers to position a product specifically for gendered reading position (Goddard and Patterson, 2000), whether the advertisement was obviously gender specific (Talbot, 2003) and van Leeuwen's (2005) semiotic analysis.

Semiotic Analysis Phase One

Figure 4 Advertisement 1: Clinique Skin Supplies For Men (Men's Health, November 2006 p.7)

Moisture restored. Lines defeated.

Skin Supplies For Men
Maximum Hydrator.
An anti-ageing
powerhouse that hydrates,
then goes on to help
trigger skin's ability to
build and retain
moisture. Helps minimize
the look of fine lines,
helps firm up skin.
All without a greasy
after-feel. Brings skin back
to a more healthy-looking
state. A place where even
very dry skin feels
comforted, satisfied.
At ease.
Allergy Tested.
100% Fragrance Free.
cliniqueformen.co.uk

CLINIQUE
skin supplies
for men

maximum hydrator
hydratant maximum

minimizes fine lines
réduit les ridules

NORMAL TO DRY SKIN
PEAU NORMALE À SÈCHE

© Clinique Laboratories.

Figure 4 (advertisement 1) uses a dramatic splash down effect whereby the product (sign/connotation) is crashing down onto surface water (signifier/denotation), conveying a sense of its power and strength (signified/synchronic). The brand has a rich heritage in offering high-quality facial skincare to consumers. The social context using power as a metaphor is common practice to engage men in products that advertisers wish to reinforce as being masculine (Gough, 2006). 'Hyper-masculinity' is suggested by the synchronic use of sheer power evoked by the product seemingly crashing down (Vokey *et al.*, 2013). The particular choice of dark, monochrome colours are typical of advertisers attempting to convey masculine connotations (McNeill and Douglas, 2011) for 'hegemonic masculine' appeal (Connell, 2003). The choice of colour may suggest an undertone of the analogy of power with black men's strength drawn from colonial times (hooks, 2015) to imply the potential strength of the product to deliver powerful results to men's facial skin.

The product name 'skin supplies for men' suggests something for inclusion in a man's kitbag using practical reasons to use skincare products. French text is included and is a common technique within cosmetics that helps to convey a French '*chic*' appeal to English readers although this suggests more of a middle-class link with the product that may serve to alienate some men. The inclusion of 'for men' in the product name helps to reinforce this as a product that legitimises usage by males as highlighted by Coad (2008). The headline of 'Moisture restored. Lines defeated' conveys a key benefit alongside a metaphor that draws upon a war analogy. Gough (2006) has previously highlighted the use of military analogies to express hegemonic ideals for men in an 'alien habitus'. This reveals a way for advertisers to counter the suggestion that skincare for men is feminising.

The opening copy asserts that this product is 'an anti-ageing powerhouse that hydrates'. Anti-ageing has been a key feature of women's facial skincare (Catterall and MacLaran, 2001) and seemingly this pressure is now placed on men, thus the copy underscores how men need to avoid signs of ageing. Other key features highlighted for the audience are minimizing 'the look of fine lines without a greasy after feel'. This suggests the practical value of reducing the signs of ageing without others knowing you have used skincare. An important feature as men do not want their facial skin to look or feel like it has

moisturiser on it (Ojala *et al.,* 2016). As a result, the use of this product remains discreet, which is important in terms of protecting identity for men.

The unique buying point is 'a place where even very dry skin feels comforted, satisfied. At ease.' This implies that this particular facial skincare product is supporting a pursuit of good-looking skin in a manner that aligns with men's expectations. Men need assurance that there is a clear improvement and 'at ease' additionally conveys the idea that the skin will appear normal as a result. The underlying ideal is that the skin as a result of using the product with little or no effort required will have the appearance of typical looking skin for men rather than problematic dry skin. This offers a form of power to those men using the product as they overcome dermatological issues and control them. 'Looking-glass capital' can be gained as a result of the decision by the male viewer to use this product. The overall signification of the advertisement is of the potential power of the product to transform facial skin for the target consumer.

Figure 5 Advertisement 2: Nivea for Men (Men's Health, November 2006 p. 150)

Figure 5 (advertisement 2) is a *Men's Health* double-page promotion that addresses the reader in a friendly, instructional manner with a supposed solution to help get them back to looking good after a 'night on the tiles' which has an implied reading position for men that has a 'hegemonic masculine' appeal (Connell, 2003). This uses a scenario appealing to 'laddish' behaviour, but equally endorsing this as a social norm for men (Nixon, 2003). The model is shown using half a face close to the camera with only one eye revealed which uses the image technique of 'synecdoche' where part of the face stands in for the

whole (Johnson, 2008). This is a form of advertising 'shorthand' so that the male face is close-up for scrutiny suggesting that men should be examining their face in the mirror and seeking to improve their appearance. The advertisement positions facial skincare as a way of gaining a form of enhanced appearance, without diminishing ideals of masculinity that I suggest can be provide a form of 'looking-glass capital' for men. There is little evidence of lines on his face so this possibly presents the post-remedy stage (sign/connotation) for the audience. On the other hand, it could be symptomatic of the 'myths' presented by advertisers often using models that bear little resemblance to ordinary looking people (Johnson, 2008). There is facial stubble, a little tightening of the skin around the eye and an orange peel effect on the cheek. This lack of perfection could also serve to indicate more of a 'rugged man' appeal to link to 'hegemonic masculine' ideals (Hirschman, 2003).

The headlines use strong alliteration adjectives of 'restore, recharge, revitalise' (signifier/denotation) as a call to action. Whilst the sub-heading addresses the reader as a friend who can help implying a 'matey' approach to the reader (Goldman and Papson, 1998). Colloquial terms are adopted to relate to the target audience such as 'sort out your skin', 'more baggage than the average WAG', referring to how footballer's wives and girlfriends like to spend on beauty and fashion. The approach used in the style of writing addressing the reader as a 'concerned friend' resonates with what Goldman and Papson (1998) identify as a 'knowing wink' to the audience to bring the reader 'on side'. War metaphors are used in relation to having the product 'maintain your defences' and 'great weapons to have in your arsenal' and locates the male using the product to fight back and empower himself (a 'hegemonic masculine' concept) by use of *Nivea* skincare (Connell, 2003). Scott (1994) suggests this style of metaphor 'combating' ensures that the product is accepted as a traditional male pursuit.

There is some scientific information regarding 'Coenzyme Q10' which makes the product appeal in a technical way for men (von Logue Newth, 2013). A conspiratorial aside that 'it might sound like a member of a secret agent's support team', subtly addressing a supposedly informed audience using irony (signified/synchronic). The social context is the use of an advertorial in *Men's Health* to suggest that men should be monitoring their skin appearance and seeking to improve it. However, the choice of a white model fails to

include the diverse number of various men identifying as non-white ethnicity. At best, this demonstrates a lack of sensitivity on the part of the advertiser. At worst, it suggests a deeper ideology that presents whiteness as the norm for advertisers. This may be an oversight or suggest the persistence of some colonial ideals as identified by McClintock (1995) where power is represented as residing predominantly with white men.

Figure 6 Advertisement 3: L'Oréal Men Expert (GQ, November 2006 p. 131)

Figure 6 (advertisement 3) shows two images of a male model (sign/connotation), one full face and the next one a close-up highlighting his left eye and nose as a form of synecdoche (Johnson, 2008). This suggests to the reader that you need to look closely at every feature of your face as others are looking at you with a critical eye in a society that values image (Hall, 2015). The product image is positioned bottom right corner with the brand name and strapline 'because you're worth it too', below this. The inclusion of 'too' draws upon the extension of this brand from the female sector to the male grooming market. The idea of men being 'worth it', is two-fold (Blackburn, 2014). The market for men was recognised in the potential for economic worth. However, the potential for men to enhance their appearance has provided the rationale to suggest that an improved face relates to a man's worth in the eyes of others. This approach suggests that men should consider their self-image as part of their importance. It also associates 'worth' or value with appearance. Although serving to undermine confidence for men in their appearance, this approach helps to sell more products for the brand, which is the main reason for the advertisement.

The model has a distinctly unshaven look and appears youthful (little evidence of fine lines) but is dark under the eyes suggesting that a remedial intervention is required to address this 'problem' (signifier/denotation). The colours used are a white background with orange mirroring the brand colours and suggesting energy and vibrancy. The text asks the reader to consider their sense of self from the corresponding gender's perspective – 'you think you look the business? She thinks you look overworked' (signified/synchronic). This assertion engages the reader with an assumed reading position that the advertiser understands the audience and assumes the role of advisor. The assumption is that men should be concerned with their image as a critical eye is placed on their appearance. This approach serves to undermine men who may be satisfied with their appearance by prompting those viewing the advertisement to scrutinise their face for flaws. 'Problems' such as tired looking eyes as suggested by this advertisement are solved by use of products mediated as necessary by advertisers. The trigger words are used to present the problem 'tired, worn out, not getting enough sleep' and then a war metaphor of 'fight back!' A war metaphor is used to align the product with traditional male affiliations (Hakala, 2006). The text imbibes the user that skin is 'recharged', 'healthy', 'revived' and then the unique selling propositions are 'non-greasy',

'non-sticky' and the final sign off that skin 'feels soothed'. The social context is that men who wish to be serious about their appearance should consider their facial skin more through a more critical discerning eye. However, the specific choice of a white male model coupled with the notion 'because you're worth it' strikes a chord with McClintock's (1995) exploration of race in advertising. The omission of ethnically diverse models linked to the suggestion that the viewer is 'worth it' creates a problem and serves to alienate a large segment of the potential audience for such products. Whether this is intentional is unclear.

The overall signification of the advertisement triggers a reflexive question for the target audience to consider whether their face skin is acceptable without the intervention of this product. Thus, moisturising allows men to gain a form of 'looking-glass capital' by improving facial skin and guarding against signs of ageing and this is framed by advertising using 'hegemonic masculine' ideals (Connell, 2003). This approach is further discussed by a number of studies such as Schroeder and Zwick (2004) and Elliott and Elliott (2005) where men are challenged to empower themselves by considering their looks as part of an ongoing identity project.

Figure 7 Advertisement 4: Biotherm Homme Care (GQ, November 2006, p. 143)

In figure 7 (advertisement 4) the model looks at the reader in a confident manner (sign/connotation) with eyes narrowed and mouth closed, depicting a bronzed hue. Whilst he appears clean-shaven thus not suggesting a 'rugged man' appeal (Hirschman, 2003), he does present a powerful image (signifier/denotation). The colours used are

grey and black predominantly for the model and background. This provides a strong contrast for the product image of red/orange suggesting vitality. The headline commands the reader to 'energize your skin'. The sub-heading in red asserts 'hit high recharge', which suggests a military type of command. All text (apart from the boxed bullet points and contact details all in white) appears in capital letters almost shouting at the reader. Trigger words used include 'recharge', anti-fatigue', 'non-stop' and the benefit is 'smoother, healthier-looking skin that's ready for anything' (signified/synchronic). The boxed points use a combination of scientific rationale such as 'engineered for men', 'formulated', 'energizing'. These link to technical descriptors for men. The overall signification of the advertisement is using the trope of a male who could be a boxer. Terminology similar to preparing a car for a race challenges the target audience to strive towards achieving good facial skin. The metaphors suggest that men can take charge of tired looking facial skin by using the skincare product and so continue to reaffirm their 'hegemonic masculine' status (Connell, 2009) whilst suggesting this as a social ideal.

The particular use of this model suggests a 'hyper-masculine' physique (Vokey *et al.,* 2013) possibly to appeal to younger, lower social class males to emulate. He presents an idealistic macho image that suggests he is commanding authority by his looks. The choice of a white male to convey this is positioning a strong looking man gaining benefit from using facial skincare products. 'Other' men are not represented and thus are excluded from this similar to many images used in advertisements to place white men in positions of power (hooks, 2015). This suggests that the main audience is white and they are ones who can access 'looking glass capital' from using this product. The potential for men to retain ideals of masculinity is offered by the overt use of a 'manly' model linked to facial skincare products to suggest he is not emasculated by using such grooming practices. The choice of model also serves as a comparator for appearance ideals selected by advertisers that most men fail to emulate triggering issues for self-esteem (Farr, 2013).

Figure 8 Advertisement 5: Hugo Boss (GQ, November 2006 p. 336)
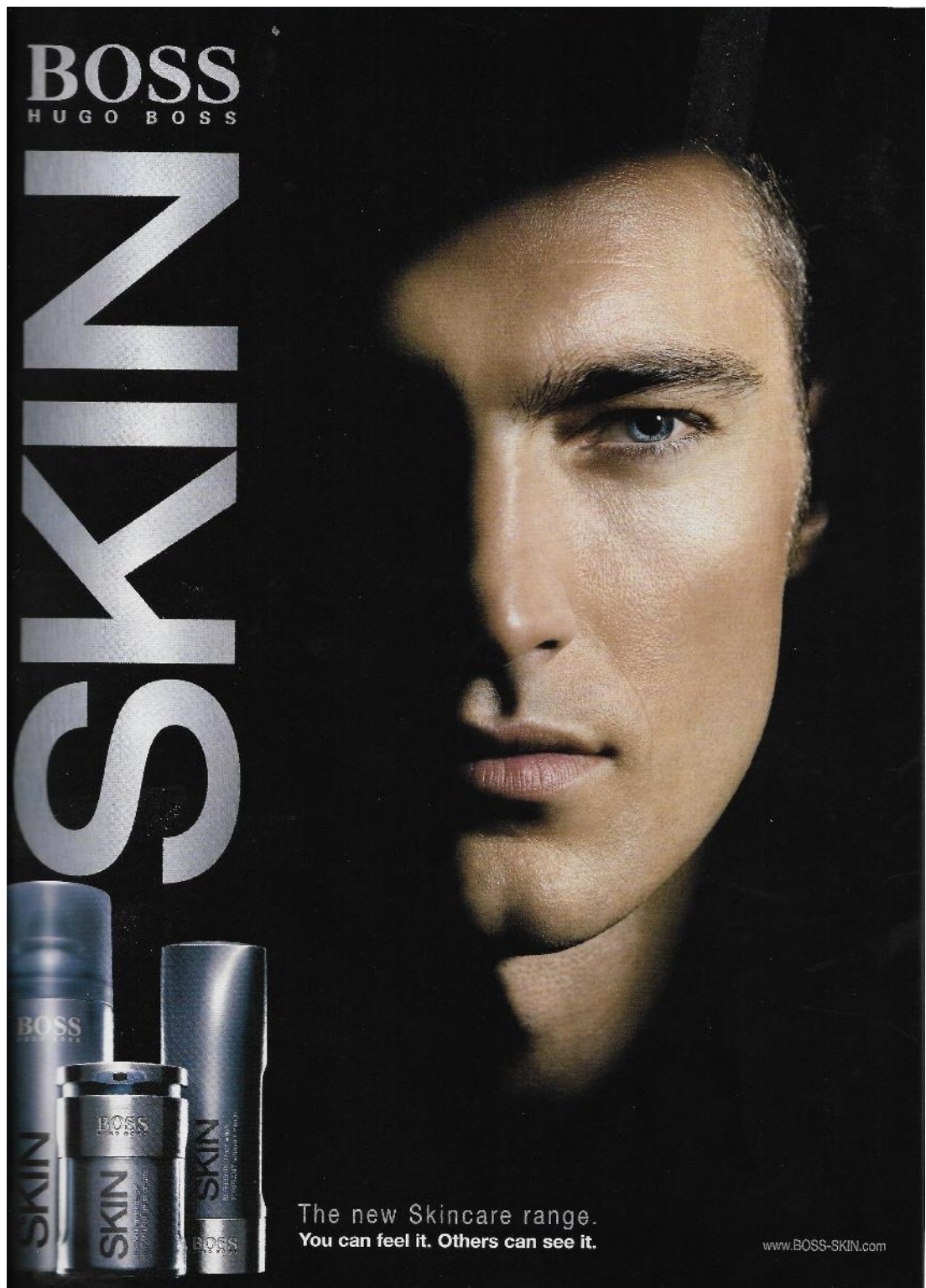
Figure 8 (advertisement 5) depicts only half a male model's face using synecdoche again (Johnson, 2008). This is used to draw attention to part of the face to stand for the whole (sign/connotation). The other half fades into the black background as the backdrop for the image. The model does not display emotion. He has slightly narrowing eyes, closed

lips, and presents a commanding look to the reader (signifier/denotation). The colours used are black and silver, commonly linked to 'masculine' products (Johnson, 2008). The model's face is displayed as being in the shadows and suggests a slightly mysterious and enigmatic presence. The product images (three in all) appear on the bottom left corner. The only text presented is 'the new skincare range' providing the reason to communicate to the audience. 'You can feel it. Others can see it' (signified/synchronic). This suggests a personal enhancement for how you feel and improved appearance in the eyes of others. The potential for 'looking-glass capital' is implicit for men in this positioning statement. This style of address also suggests that a critical eye is being placed on men's appearance as part of a wider expectation that men should be improving their facial skin. However, the inculcation of these expectations by advertisers serve to undermine self-confidence for those who lack natural beauty and the economic ability to buy products to assist their appearance. The web address appears in the bottom right corner indicating that men can seek further details on skincare products. The social context normalises skincare as masculine behaviour as the image denotes this product has contributed towards improving the appearance of the model's facial skin. Whilst the choice of the model implies that using the product is synonymous with producing a natural and attractive look for males who want to appear 'manly'.

The overall signification of the advertisement is one of mystery, hegemonic ideals of masculinity and normalizing the use of facial skincare for the target audience. However, the use of a white male alienates the potential for those men who identify other than white ethnicity. An advertisement that augments a product as part of a routine for men is not representing this to a wider audience in terms of ethnicity that are suggested as 'invisible' in beauty media by hooks (2005). The clear steer that the product provides personal benefits (you can feel it) as part of self-concept suggesting a form of enhanced 'looking-glass capital' to the user. The overall suggestion for the male reader (others can see it) links to the notion that men need to improve their image by using skincare products as their facial skin appearance is being judged by others. The air of mystery and secrecy suggest a parallel with how men may want to have good skin but not overtly disclose that they use facial skincare products.

Figure 9 Advertisement 6: Lab Series (GQ, November 2006 p. 81)

Figure 9 (advertisement 6) depicts a young-looking male model grinning
(sign/connotation). He is orientated side on to the camera, up close but with his hand as
a barrier to the viewer. He is 'self-touching' his chin which is described by Goffman
(1979) as a more feminine form of caress suggesting a softer version of masculinity

supposedly to demonstrate the smoothness of his chin (signifier/denotation). The headline asserts 'expect more', which implies that men should seek to improve their appearance when they look in the mirror. A sub-heading '2 new ways to a better shave' provides a rationale with relevant information (signified/synchronic). The social context is the placement of the advertisement in *GQ* with appeal to younger males whilst the copy challenges the audience to improve their current grooming repertoire to gain a better appearance. The brand name '*Lab'* implies that the product is scientifically proven, providing a practical rationale as a masculine ideal for men to defend their consumption of facial skincare. Perhaps the use of science is the new concept to convey cleanliness and hygiene. However, the choice of a white male model to represent the brand perpetuates an invisibility of 'others' in advertising (hooks, 2015). The overall signification of the advertisement is that the target audience should be seeking to improve their facial skincare experience. Thereby, working towards a better facial skin to maintain youthful looks, as ageing is associated negatively in society where image is increasingly valued (Ojala *et al.,* 2016).

Gendered Language Summary

Written advertising copy offers another way of presenting facial skincare as a practice that men should be adopting to improve appearance. However, the choice of language by advertisers offers an insight into advertisers' notions of masculinity. With regard to the layout techniques employed by advertisers within the advertisements, there seems to be a tendency to place the product image towards the bottom right corner of the page, or centre with no model. Only *Hugo Boss* counters this approach by adopting the bottom left position. The strategy of positioning the model left of the product image supports Godeo's (2005) notion of presenting anything 'new' right of a masculine image.

The majority of images reflect how typically a reader's eye tracks across adverts to the bottom-right hand corner third as highlighted by Ali's (1997) work on psychology and advertising. *Hugo Boss* is deviating from this strategy although this different approach means that it may stand out within this genre of advertising. French text appears in half of the sampled advertisements to evoke French '*chic'* grooming rationale to the approach thus implying a 'French' metaphor of sophistication and luxury. There are different

approaches by the advertisers depending on the gender of the audience and how they addressed the reader. There is a direct contrast to the findings in Hogg and Garrow's (2003) study, where they stated that men could not deal with sub-categories within advertising messages and as such required a very focused, simple message, approach. Advertisements contained procedural information although the *Hugo Boss* was minimalist in copy content, whereas advertisement *Lab Series* is similar to *Nivea for Men* and *L'Oreal Men Expert* adopting a half-face (synecdoche) smiling model to suggest that use of facial skincare products provides better self-esteem for those men that use them.

Another theme that arose in the adverts was that of adopting scientific jargon to support advertising claims. Fighting metaphors were incorporated into advertisements. The reading position of the viewer used command phrases which supports Hogg and Garrow's (2003) study outcomes suggesting that males need a focused message. Use of a strong headline to direct the reader was evident in all advertisements. Ali (1997) borrowing theory from Strong's (1925) AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) identified the importance of a strong headline to grab attention which was later reinforced by Cramphorn (2011) and Noseworthy *et al.* (2011). The use of monochrome colours dominates four out of six male advertisements supporting typical use in men's products to signal gender (McNeill and Douglas, 2011). The reading position with regards to the assumed prior knowledge of the audience on the use and benefits of the product suggests an informed reader. Advertisements tended to use a 'best mate's' tone of voice similar to how advertisers use a 'knowing wink' to male audiences to suggest a shared understanding from the male viewer's point of view when the product sector is unfamiliar as discussed in Goldman and Papson's (1998) work on advertising strategies.

The use of metaphors in relation to war and power highlighted by Gough (2006) (fight, arsenal, weapons) and adjectives such as 'hydrate', 'maximise' were used by advertisers to position products to their intended male audience. There is a tendency towards adopting action verbs in male advertising copy that was found also by Goddard and Patterson (2000) and Johnson (2008). This initial study of six advertisements seems to indicate that a clear directive is targeting males, informing the reader of an emerging need to change their behaviour in regards to male grooming products without compromising their masculine image. This resonates with the need to ensure a stable

hegemonic appeal for males highlighted by Connell (2005) and Berggren (2014). It appears that there is a distinct language framework adhered to in relation to male audiences. This serves to direct a stereotypical manner in how language is placed in a specific gender context in advertising explored within Goddard and Patterson's (2000) study of direct and indirect gender markers.

Semiotic Analysis Phase Two

An analysis of advertisements within the second phase of data collection provided an opportunity to revisit the original participants and to understand how attitudes towards men's facial skincare products may have changed during this period. This enabled a discussion with interviewees to ascertain stylistic changes that may have taken place over time to signal 'gender' to audiences.

The presentation of data follows a similar approach to phase one with the inclusion of each advertisement and a discussion of the semiotic analysis conducted by the researcher. However, the focus here explores a shift in advertising media used for men's skincare advertisements towards the inclusion of websites and television as opposed to purely magazines.

Figure 10 Advertisement 7: New Pro + LS All-In-One Face Treatment (Men's Health, June 2013 p. 61)

Figure 10 (advertisement 7) adopts a primarily black and white background. The sign (connotation) of a white model wearing a white shirt potentially draws upon how cleanliness was suggested in colonial times as a sign of control over lack of hygiene (McClintock, 1995). The model challenges the reader to use the product by staring at the

target audience in a non-threatening but direct manner. This draws the male reader to appraise the appearance of the male model's facial skin as part of what Patterson and Elliott (2002) term the 'inversion of the male gaze'. The 'hegemonic' appeal of the man translates ideals of skincare to a wider spectrum of masculinities but fails to represent all men. The model wears a white shirt opened displaying a slight show of chest hair. This is not overly obvious to suggest a 'retrosexual' (Simpson, 2006) version of masculinity but equally is present suggesting a more 'manly' version for the viewer. His body is set side-on to the camera angle as a stylistically posed image. The advertisers have 'staged' the model in the best manner to suggest the product has benefited his skin. As such, advertisers present idealistic versions of models that often cannot be attained by those viewing the advertisement (see Peracchio and Meyers-Levy, 2005). I suggest that use of the product implies that the user can gain an improved appearance and sense of self as a form of 'looking-glass capital'.

'Shop Now at labseries.co.uk' presents a call to action via an online retail channel and supports Hall *et al.'s* (2012) findings that men are increasingly seeking support online for grooming. A *Facebook* icon linking to social media serves to connect males as a 'community' of facial skincare users (Warde, 2005). The use of an imperative 'connect with us: *LAB Series UK*' offers a key networking reinforcement for males seeking advice online Hall *et al.* (2013). Whilst the headline '<u>NEW</u> PRO + LS All-In-One Face Treatment' presumes that men's faces require extensive treatment that this product simplifies. Copy beneath this declares in uppercase text 'shouting' again, 'IT'S SKINCARE MADE EASY. FAST. EFFECTIVE. JUST THE WAY YOU WANT IT' and implies a shared understanding of the target audience. The use of full stops in 'HIGH TECH. HIGH PERFORMANCE. SKINCARE FOR MEN. ONLY.' provides an approach akin to morse code using a 'need to know' basis (Williamson, 2002). The reinforcement that the product is exclusive to men is aligning the product in a purely masculine domain (Gough, 2006). The signifier (denotation) using the strapline 'one. And you're done' invites the male consumer to have a streamlined approach to facial skincare and stresses the functionality aspect of the product as a desirable trait for men (Nishi, 2002). The signified (synchronic) is that using this product completes the male user whose grooming routine is declared 'done' when this product is used. Those who avoid use are incomplete in regards to expectations for

modern men hence, the social context is that this places a pressure upon men to improve their facial appearance as a requirement imposed by advertisers.

Figure 11 Advertisement 8: Men's Moisturisers Banner (May 2013, http://www.maleskin.co.uk)
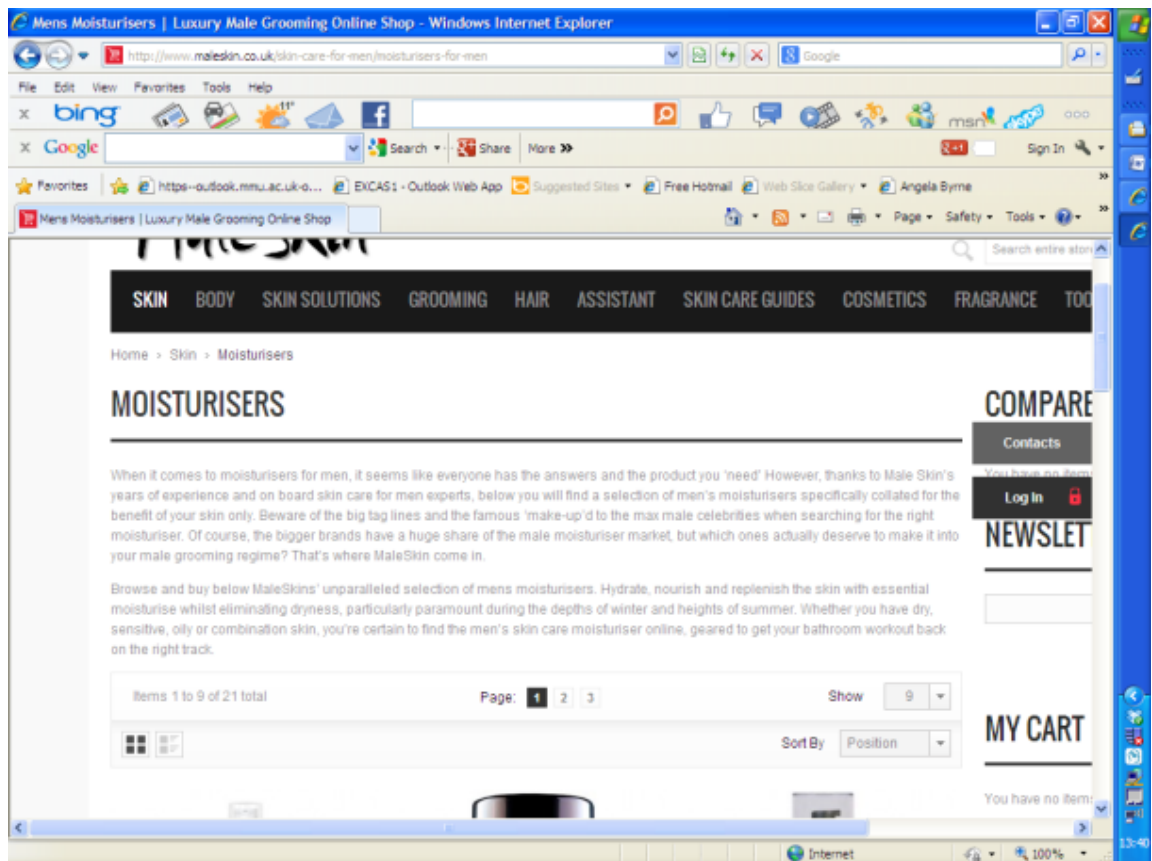
Figure 11 (advertisement 8) depicts a banner poster for *Maleskin* blog and the blog page appears below. Blogs are an important mediator offering online advice to males on facial skincare as talking to men face-to-face is more of a taboo issue (Hall *et al.,* 2013). The blog copy describes the range of facial moisturisers and leads onto a variety of products to serve as potential solutions for facial skincare issues outlined therein. The image used for the banner advert is one of a male with partial beard formation, dark-haired suggesting a 'rugged man' appeal (Hirschman, 2003). Whilst the beard is not full it is certainly well established and resonates with current fashions and reasserting heteromasculine values (Hall, 2015). He is oriented looking away from the camera angle almost detached from the moment suggesting 'licensed withdrawal' from the audience (Goffman, 1979) so that he is not perceived as overly concerned with skincare and his appearance.

City images appear in the background suggesting an urban setting. The copy appears at the bottom. 'Men's' is in red, highlighting a separate domain for facial skincare for men. The association of red also links with danger, promotion and passion (Williamson, 2002). The sign/connotation is that this is for real men as suggested by the rugged appearance of a young, attractive, professional urban and 'hegemonic masculine' looking male (Connell,

2003). The signifiers (denotation) are the beard, clenched fist and apparent nonchalance by orienting away from the camera. This suggests that the model is not interested in facial moisturisers in terms of efficacy but more for a functional need. Signification (synchronic) is that men's facial moisturisers are part of a 'real man's' repertoire (Williamson, 2002). Key words from the blog instruct men to: 'hydrate, nourish and replenish the skin with essential moisturiser whilst eliminating dryness, particularly paramount during the depths of winter and heights of summer. Whether you have dry, sensitive, oily or combination skin, you're certain to find the men's skin care moisturiser online, geared to get your bathroom workout back on the right track'. Seemingly, men cannot and should not try to escape the virtues of using moisturiser as 'essential' implies that all men should be enhancing their appearance with such products to gain capital.

An engineering metaphor 'geared' suggests an association with men's technical prowess, which is identified by Mellstrum (2002) as a key hegemonic male quality. An expertise in the facial skincare market is implied in the text throughout. The social context is that this is a blog dedicated to male facial skincare and suggests that facial skincare forms part of a wider practice (Warde, 2005) for men. Again the dominance of white males pervades on the blog and serves to alienate 'others' (hooks, 2015) from the 'looking glass capital' potential of these facial skincare products. The site serves to maximise the potential of using facial skincare 'equipment'. This particular choice of word implies a masculine context for use of such products. The overall signification is an expert knowledge of the issues faced by males and optimum solutions supplied in a sensitive manner.

Figure 12 Advertisement 9: Dove Men Plus Care UK TV Advertisement

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chLA0peskfE
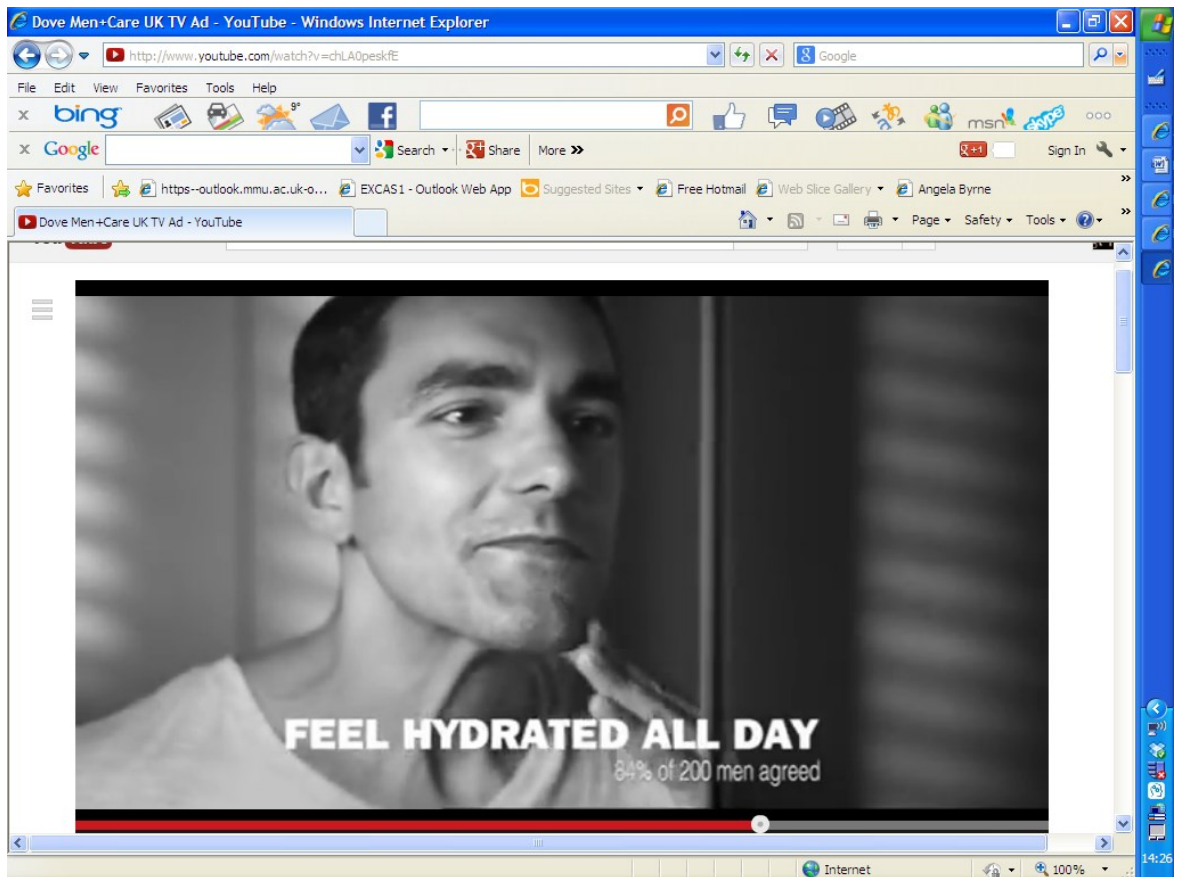
Figure 12 (advertisement 9) is a television advertisement for *Dove Men Plus Care* which starts with a male Caucasian mid-thirties/forties voiceover 'your face says it all'. This normalises the idea that men's faces need to be scrutinised and implies that men should be taking action maintaining their facial skin. Visual text graphics and the *Dove* logo appear above on the screen. The voiceover is followed up with a series of statements implying a shared knowledge of the target audience's lifestyle (sign/connotation). Namely, 'when you're late' (the image shows a man waking up in bed and looking at the alarm clock, hence starting the day and getting up). This is followed by 'when you win' (this image depicts a different man raising his fists upwards in celebration at a football match that he is playing in thus presenting sports as an example in relation to using the product). The next phrase and scene is 'when you meet friends' (an image of three men aged around 30 years chatting amiably in a bar setting suggesting the need to look good in social settings). This also links to the implication that enhancing your appearance is important for social settings.

In the next scene, the voiceover states, 'when you are lost' suggesting the need to consider your appearance in all situations. The scenario depicts a black male assumed to be aged around 30, dressed in crew neck top, in a car with the windscreen wipers clearing rain and the man's eyes mimicking the windscreen wiper movement going from left-to-right observed as a rear mirror shot. It may be coincidental that a black model was chosen for the scene where the protagonist has lost direction and therefore lacks control over the situation. However, this does underpin the notion of how in colonial times, white actors in images were seen as the ones with power over black models (McClintock, 1995). The extent to which the underlying context for this suggests that the intended audience is predominantly white remains elusive.

The need to improve appearance for a man's significant other is emphasised in the next scene. The voiceover states, 'and when a long day ends'. The on-screen image is a kitchen scene. A male is holding a mug, supposedly containing a hot drink and is seen to be embracing a female whom we assume to be his partner and kissing her full on the mouth. The camera then pans towards the man shown to be raising his eyebrows, in anticipation of a romantic evening together (signifier/denotation). The screen image triggers reflexivity and resonance for the target audience: 'your face says it all'. This is an important remark that serves to undermine any outdated concept that men do not need to be concerned with their facial skin appearance. The face is suggested as a site for improvement and potential amongst heterosexual men. A close-up image of a male with a slightly puffy face and a jaded look is shown staring introspectively in the mirror. Thus, the mirror is included for how men are 'required' to scrutinise their appearance thoroughly (Blackburn, 2014). The near-camera shot heightens the importance of the face and the need to judge this. The actor is wearing an open necked, tieless shirt and has a slight double chin with diminished good looks compared with all the previous models depicted. The use of an 'everyman' (Feasey, 2009) type of a figure suggests that all men regardless of their appearance should be using facial skincare products. The implication that lifestyle stressors show on the skin for males serves to create insecurity in the target audience that the product can then offer to remedy. Next comes the imperative 'so take better care of it with new *Dove Care Plus* moisturiser'. 'New' in blue text flashes onto screen, the camera zooms into the product image and a plus sign flickers for increased effect suggesting that the product offers something in addition to other

products. The packaging text is then highlighted with blue font similar to that used for the product-branding image emphasising the key benefit of 'hydrate' to the audience. The scientific rationale is then underpinned by 'our unique formula' as a voiceover whilst moisture-locking formula is flashed onto screen. The scene shows lotion being rubbed onto hands with ring finger on left hand showing a wedding ring suggesting the model used depicts a married man.

Various typologies offered in the advertisement help to reinforce the notion that all men *should* be using skincare to improve their appearance. The next voiceover declares that the product 'keeps skin' and shows a male rubbing moisturiser onto his face. Then the voiceover states, 'non-greasy' and the image of a male oriented away from the camera and rubbing in the moisturiser in a functional manner flashes onto the screen. Thus, skin is improved without others knowing that you have used skincare products to produce the effects. 'Feel hydrated all day 84% of 200 men agreed' appears next with a close-up shot of the male model.

The closing scenes reinforce the need for men to review their facial appearance as part of their daily repertoire. The male voiceover emphasises, 'so at the end of the day your skin still feels good' (the shot shows a small boy in pyjamas jumping onto the male model who is assumed to be the father and is shown sat on a sofa in a contemporary style lounge and there is a close-up shot of the man smiling). The next scene depicts three product images of shaving gel, moisturiser and post shave gel and the repeat of the slogan 'your face says it all' on the copy and voiceover. An imperative, 'take better care of it with new *Dove Men Plus Care*' is offered as the signified/synchronic for the audience. The signs are various typical scenes showing males in daily scenarios that would affect the skin such awaking, socialising, stress, romance. The potential for 'looking-glass capital' for how men need to consider their appearance as viewed by others is exemplified in the examination of the actor's face in the mirror. His skin is suggested as an area to be maintained and *Dove Men Plus Care* is provided as the signifier of a solution to moisturising and hydrating.

The final scenes of relaxation and enjoying family life show that a fulfilling life is signified by the use of the product (Williamson, 2002). Such scenes imply the 'success' that can be achieved by men using such products. These are ideals for men. The social context is the

television advertisement is screened at peak viewing times for the target audience and where possible during football match screening intervals to fit with lifestyle hobbies. The overall signification of the advertisement is that use of the product allows a normal, fulfilling lifestyle for the target audience by improving image on an ongoing basis. The use of a family setting of heterosexual male with children and a professional career conveys 'hegemonic masculine' ideals (Connell, 2005) offering an authentic reason for men to use facial skincare products to improve their appearance and protect masculine identity.

Figure 13 Advertisement 10: New Nivea for Men Skin Energy TV Advert

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIF9L7vINpc
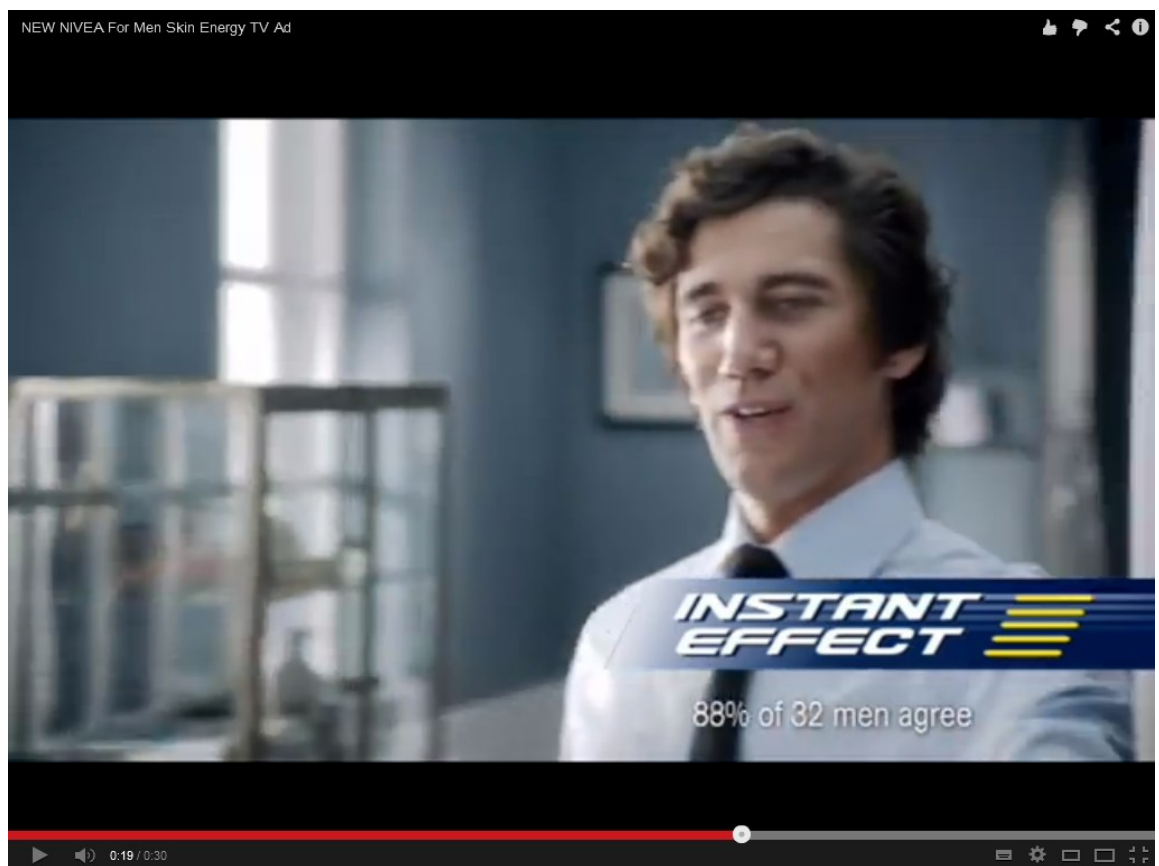
Figure 13 (advertisement 10) is a 30 seconds television advertisement which opens in a bar with a night time setting. The opening scene features a group of males and the protagonist is seen looking at his watch and stating in a Mediterranean European accent, against the pulsing background beat 'gotta go guys... big day tomorrow' to which the music stops and the whole bar exclaims sounding deflated 'ahhh!' This disappointed paralanguage is echoed in various surreal settings, first with his drinking 'buddy'. Then

the camera pans to a trio of girls one with blond pigtails, the middle with an afro style and the third with styled flicked out strawberry blond hair. The next scene goes to two black men dressed in suits. One of whom is possibly mid-forties or early fifties with a goatee, thickset and looks to be a doorman who echoes the 'ahhh'. Then we witness a surreal clip of a man riding an ostrich sighing 'ahhh'. A man in a spacesuit, assumedly in space, quickly follows this. He appears to be defying gravity. He is hooked up to life support outside the spacecraft, again uttering 'ahhh'. The next scene shows a group of four males who appear to be his friends. They are dressed in smart casual clothes, one with sunglasses hooked over the V-neck of his t-shirt suggesting bright weather outside the bar. Another is wearing a pork pie hat on his head. They all resound with 'ahhh' once more. An eclectic mix of individuals possibly serving to divert from any suggestions of 'beautifying' aspects of facial skincare. They serve to disrupt expectations for the audience and present an absurd selection of males in unusual settings. This shows how humour is used to deflect from a context that may undermine patriarchal ideals of masculinity (Gulas *et al.,* 2010).

An asterisk appears on screen at the bottom with the copy 'Euromonitor International Ltd; *Nivea* by global brand name are No. 1 in the category Men's Skin Care; retail value terms 2011' as an endorsement of the brand's prestige. This remains on screen for several seconds throughout the next couple of scenes. At this point, the protagonist responds with laughter 'sure I'll be fine... I'm staying'. After the silence which had prevailed before this remark, the bar noise resumes with some seen to be applauding and he sits down once more. The leading male actor used has dark brown, curly hair, slightly longer than a crew cut. He has dark facial stubble, very white, bright teeth, dark brown eyes and chiselled cheeks. He is dressed in a check shirt, dark jacket and jeans. He suggests a 'rugged man' appeal (Hirschman, 2003). At this point the scene cuts to the actor seen getting out of bed in the morning wearing a plain white t-shirt and hitting the alarm clock which displays 7.00 am and the voiceover who has a British male accent states 'don't cut your weeknights short'. The suggestion being that men who have used this product they should be able to socialise until late and not look the worse for it in the morning at work.

The next scenario shows the male using the product squirting the moisturiser into his hand before rubbing into his face in a functional manner. The voiceover continues 'instantly energise your skin to look fresh'. Text using *Nivea's* blue *Pantene* colour and yellow/gold font displays 'instant effect' as a benefit for a quick solution to improved skin appearance. Copy appears on screen declaring that 88% of 32 men agree. The product appears on screen in packaging to the right and out of packaging left of this in a silver can with the signature blue *Nivea* brand colouring for text *Nivea for Men*, Skin Energy Moisturiser, Instant Effect Q10. The next image is a blue background (*Nivea* colour tone) and white font World's No 1 Skincare Brand* with voiceover declaring 'the world's number one skincare brand'. The model is depicted in a shirt and tie smiling and looking confident. The next image uses the Football Association England emblem to the left with *Nivea for Men* to the right and England supplier underneath this and the strapline 'PREPARATION IS EVERYTHING' set against a dark blue background (*Nivea* colour). This serves as a call to action for male consumers to use skincare in readiness for any situation.

The music changes to a techno beat and two silvery white vector lines fade into the scene with a *Philips* digital alarm clock displaying 6.59 am play now to win prizes at *Facebook*.com/niveaformenuk.   In the top left hand corner is a logo showing *Nivea for Men* in a silver background vertically displayed adjacent to a vertical display of 'morning energy' shown in silvery white and 'challenge' in yellow beneath this. A yellow caption quotation is tagged onto the alarm clock stating 'play now'. The scene has dark blue and silver diamond shapes on the wallpaper background. The *Facebook* page centres mostly around football games, sample giveaways and key events such as Mother's Day. A featured post was, 'Face the week feeling fresh and up for anything' with the following image appended underneath. The engagement themes are skincare routines and products although some of the postings are from social media trolls and have not been addressed by *Nivea.* The sign (connotation) is that use of the product is essential to allow men to continue to socialise even on weeknights, the signifier (denotation) being that correct use of the product energises and signification is the need for skin to be prepared for any situation whereby a man's appearance may be under scrutiny. The overall signification (synchronic) is of a fulfilling lifestyle that can be achieved by using the product as a remedial and proactive facial skincare regime for the target audience.

The inclusion of random and eclectic elements in the advert are intended to resonate with the male audience. This approach uses contemporary humour to suggest 'laddish' larks that may happen on a night out (Nixon, 2003). The use of the England football team, which is a traditionally male-dominated sport, is used to position facial skincare as heteronormative. The implied suggestion is a wide range of men typically uses facial skincare. The advertisement premises that by using facial skincare products, men can still maintain 'hegemonic' traits (Connell, 2003) such as sporting prowess. Men are expected to improve their appearance but 'hegemonic masculine' ideals are used in support of this.

Figure 14 Advertisement 11: L'Oréal Men Expert Hydra Energetic Gel (Men's Health, June 2013 p.154)

Figure 14 (advertisement 11) displays, central to the page, a powerful fan appearing as part of an integral metal housing unit. The fan is not switched on. The colours generally within the advertisement comprise of grey, black and white and are often used to align

products to male domains (Maguire and Stanway, 2008). The use of the fan (sign/connotation) suggests that the product will have a cooling effect on the skin. The specific choice of fan offers modern, industrial style masculine *chic* suggesting improved aesthetics in appearance in a context designed to appeal to men. Thus, an underlying suggestion may be that facial skincare for men is practical. Similarly, the signifier of the fan is that this product gives a functional cooling, refreshing effect without diminishing masculinity. The association of 'air-gel technology' is declared by the copy and packaging. The signifier/denotation is cooling the skin similar to a fan and the matt steel finish fits with the 'no shine' text on the packaging and 'without shine' bullet point on the advertisement. The signified/synchronic idea to the target audience is that this is a functional, powerful product that refreshes by 'non-stop hydration'.

An important benefit is the discreet nature of the product that reduces the potential for 'shine', a possible euphemism for sweat. The social context is that this is a product to appeal to modern men whilst the industrial link draws on historical connections to men's roles as breadwinners and labourers possibly (Oleskar, 2015).

Figure 15 Advertisement 12: Bulldog Skincare for Men Moisturiser (Men's Health, June 2013 p.142)

Figure 15 (advertisement 12) is set against a striking white almost clinical background with a lime green headline declaring the imperative assertion that men should 'Be Loyal To Your Skin'. This white background resonates with the way this conveys cleanliness as a

key appeal to audiences in Victorian Britain (McClintock, 1995). The tagline of 'man's best friend' is a play on the loyalty provided by dogs being synonymous with the moisturiser being a friend. The allegory of the brand adopts a dog breed for the signature name and connotes that this product can be as loyal and trustworthy as a dog and owner dynamic. Loyalty is another trope used when appealing the anthromorphism of dogs (Sorrentino, 2014). Copy appears in small text in the right hand corner as follows starting with a rhetorical question: 'How do you face your problem if your problem is your face? This isn't the whole answer, but it's a start.' Thus, the advertising copy explicitly calls for the male reader to critically appraise his own facial skin as a potential 'problem' as part of their self-concept. This implies that men should take responsibility for maintaining and gaining a better facial skin appearance. The overall sign/connotation is the traditional loyal trope of the British bulldog used as a metaphor. This signifies/denotes that this brand is drawing on heritage and is natural and to be trusted. The signified/synchronic is of a traditional moisturiser, made for men that suggests the target audience should maintain a facial skincare regime using this product daily. The icons used at the bottom right corner of the advertisement confirm that the product is British made. This helps to underpin the notion of Britishness suggested by the link to a British Bulldog implied by the brand. Another icon displayed states that animals are not used in research for the product.

The overall signification is for males to look after their face skin. This is aligned to being loyal to your skin in the same way you would expect a dog to be loyal and faithful to their master. The suggestion is that you will not be disappointed by the results. The use of a bulldog has ties with an 'edgier' side of street life in modern Britain of fighting dogs and those men exhibiting a presence on the streets that have a bit of 'swag' and 'attitude' (Diedrichs, 2015). The use of the specific breed of Bulldog for the brand name implies a strong, powerful slightly edgy feel that may appeal to men who wish to identify as having a strong presence and suggesting the potential for aggression. This brand is a less expensive price and possibly appeals to males wishing to improve their skin without the economic power to buy the more expensive products. The avoidance of feminising practices such as using skincare links to 'hyper-masculinity' highlighted by Vokey *et al.* (2013). The association of facial skincare with the image of a bulldog links to younger men striving to acquire more 'body capital' through development of a more muscular

'masculine' body (Bridges, 2009). This suggests that using a version of 'hard' masculinity can bridge the use of facial skincare positively with men. This resonates with the need to 'fit in' with peer expectations for young boys so looking good becomes a prerequisite of teenage life (Diedrichs and Lee, 2010; Holmqvist *et al.,* 2015).

Gendered Language Summary

In relation to the written copy used by advertisers, phase one skincare advertisements used an informed approach in five out of six of the advertisements suggesting that initially the approach taken by advertisers was one that assumed that men understood the advantages offered by using facial skincare products (Appendix Four). In contrast to this, phase two sample of advertisements targeting males tends to take an uninformed reader approach in four out of six of the sample introducing the problems associated with facial skin and exposure to environmental, climatic and societal elements (Appendix Five). This suggests that advertisers are assuming that men still need to be educated in respect of the advantages offered to them through using facial skincare products. There was an increase in the use of scientific jargon and statistics to offer credibility to product claims in the later sample as all six advertisements included this tactic. This strategy follows the appeal used for women who tend to want more proof that the products work. The first sample did have some use of statistics or technical descriptors in two out of six advertisements but tended to rely on the overall image of a model to convey the potential offered by use of the product. A transition in how metaphors were used as the earlier sample used war, power and technology metaphors whereas the more recent sample presented loyalty to skin and cooling effects and maintained some shared engineering allegories that the first phase used also.

The emphasis in the second phase was more towards enabling a good-looking skin and maintaining a good social life, living up to societal expectations of what is considered good skin. Websites were included in all advertisements in the second sample and social media using *Facebook* in two out of six, whilst only four out of six advertisements used websites in the first sample. This highlights the continuing shift towards Internet based media and social media. Interestingly, the second sample had to source from television and websites to collate six examples as the media spend had shifted from print-based

towards online and television in this period. There appears to be a shift in the advertiser's approach as advertisements in the first sample adopted more metaphors and reading approaches which appealed to lifestyles. Whilst the emphasis in the latter sample was more on resonating with typical scenarios and direct product benefits. The creative advertising appeal is more towards particular unique selling propositions of brands as opposed to the actual use of the generic product group.

In Summary

There appears to be a shift in the language which is used in skincare advertisements in male-targeted magazines which is leading to more 'gender blurring' such as the use of 'nourish' being used. This resonates with Kacen's (2000) findings and Anderson's (2009) contention that society is becoming more accepting of what were considered more feminising practices such as men using cosmetics. The copy techniques have also seen changes in the layout for male facial skincare advertisements, such as the use of truncated sentences or singular words with a full stop for emphasis on the delivery of the phrase producing almost a telegramatic, minimalistic style for male audiences. Male-targeted copy has seen an increased use of capital letters for emphasis on headlines and within the body copy. The reading approach for male advertisements has maintained the 'matey' commentary similar to Goldman and Papson's (1998) 'knowing wink', suggesting that the narrator or writer knows the lifestyle issues that the reader encounters and can find solutions by using the product in their daily routine.

The premise of anti-ageing properties as a key benefit in facial skincare has been a key selling benefit for women's beauty products for some time. Catterall and MacLaran (2001) and Ojala et al. (2016) highlight that signs of ageing are synonymous with loss of status in a society that values body image so much. Men still seek functionality as a benefit to defend heteronormative values. In the advertisements sampled, the idea of normalising behaviour amongst the peer group of males by suggesting that facial skincare is an important contributor to a fulfilling life is the standard key message for males.

There is a trend towards more of a mix in terms of lighter colours and bright shades (Bulldog) in the phase two sample of advertisements. Although generally male advertisements are still using dark colours, reinforcing traditional views of gender colours

(McNeill and Douglas, 2011). The products have changed in terms of descriptors more openly describing the moisturising properties of the products. Overall, there is a clear distinction in terms of the brand names, colours, use of model and overall approach to gendered audiences by advertisers. I suggest that by drawing upon traditional ideals of masculinity, facial skincare is positioned in a manner that conveys 'hegemonic' notions to male audiences to reduce any feminising links. The approach taken by advertisers also suggests that men should be scrutinising their face and considering how best to improve their appearance. With this in mind, when men look in the mirror and see the benefits on their skin of using facial skincare products then an improved appearance can also boost self-esteem. The mirror analogy offers a reflection of an individual's improving appearance and a wider trend towards the assumption that men need to strive to attain healthier facial skin (and body image). Men can moisturise and when they look in the mirror and perceive how they have improved their appearance as part of their personal grooming routine without compromising their male identity ideals men acquire 'looking-glass capital'. However, the invisibility of men who do not identify as white is evident. This suggests a potential mis-judgement on the part of advertisers. They are failing to engage with a significant number of potential consumers and perpetuating a myth of white, male dominance in society (hooks, 2015).

In Chapter Seven, the potential for 'looking-glass capital' is further explored through my analysis of a series of interviews with respondents using the advertisements discussed in this chapter. I will therefore go on to discuss how it is that advertising influences attitudes towards facial skincare for men, alongside themes that emerged from the interviews to reveal that respondents identify and respond to a greater pressure placed on them to improve their appearance.

Chapter Seven. Findings II: Analysis of Advertisements Discussion

Introduction

Recurring themes identified from the semiotic analysis I outlined in Chapter Six formed the basis of a discussion plan for interviewees to explore how advertisers use 'gender cues' to position facial skincare products for men. The observations by interviewees offer additional insight from a male perspective for this study. Various 'referents' (Williamson, 2002) emerge from the two phases of data, recognised as signifiers for masculinity that suggest how a form of 'looking-glass capital' protects masculine identity whilst men use facial skincare products. 'Hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2003) traits are identified by respondents in this chapter as a key way of aligning facial skincare products with men. Advertisers can be said to use this approach to divert from any feminising implications that may arise from linking facial skincare with men. In addition, the idea that men should be seeking to improve their appearance as a current ideal for success is highlighted by the data.

The key ideas identified by the researcher arising from the interviews are used as sub-headings within the following sections and extracts from discussions are provided as an illustration. These are included to offer further context for the various ways that men's use of facial skincare products is presented as a masculine practice as highlighted by respondents. There were some surprises in the data in relation to how participants found certain advertising techniques off-putting that were designed to engage men. Participants are identified by a pseudonym and with reference to their sexuality where this was considered to be relevant to their particular viewpoint.

Masculinising Referents for Facial Skincare

My respondents identified a number of ways that advertisers place signifiers around typified notions of masculinity in men's facial skincare advertisements. This suggests that advertisers seek to present skincare in ways that reinforce men's use of such products as something that is acceptable for men.

The first phase of interviews highlighted how men's skincare was generally presented as a masculine ideal as reflected upon by 'Jake', a gay participant,

> "they need to make this so that they get over the thing that it's not masculine to use moisturiser" (Interview 6).

However, the links with women seemingly persist as suggested by 'Mac',

> "when they are talking about creams and skin stuff it is quite feminine" (*Clinique for Men,* Interview 1).

Whilst the ingredients within the products are essentially the same for women and men (Fury, 2016), 'Oz' a Black British respondent suggested how the particular appearance of models were used to imply the benefits of using facial skincare for men,

> "the usual good-looking guy… fashionable masculine… got a bit of stubble maybe his hair is probably going to be a bit too nice to be known as masculine" (*Nivea for Men,* Interview 5).

Interestingly, 'Oz' does not refer to the white model referred to as the 'usual good-looking guy' in terms of race. Seemingly, the invisibility of black men in advertisements is instilled as an expected advertising practice (McClintock, 1995). My respondents identified some key signifiers of how men are expected to look that offered a more typified media version of masculinity (Johnson, 2008). 'Pete' reflected on how although he used skincare, he liked the advertisements that suggested a more traditional version of masculinity that reflected his male identity.

> "He's a 'I'm a rugged hunk' sort of bloke which I suppose if you delve into a bloke's psyche most blokes would probably like to be so they'd like to be able to grow a decent set of stubble like that" (*L'Oréal for Men Expert,* Interview 7).

Certain criteria seem to be used when selecting male models to use in advertisements concerned with 'beauty' hence 'D' an openly gay partcipant suggests,

> "a good jawline on a male is especially what makes them good looking" (*L'Oréal for Men Expert*, Interview 3).

This is something more typical of a 'manly' face and helps to locate skincare as a form of 'capital' whilst not diminishing masculine ideals. Whereas the selection of particular models serves to normalise use of skincare for 'Q' a heterosexual respondent, "the eyes are quite striking" (*L'Oréal for Men Expert,* Interview 8) observing the model in a similar way to how male bodies are displayed to be admired in paintings and sculptures (see Shroeder and Zwick, 2003).

A few respondents singled out David Beckham as having iconic looks they wished to emulate. This affirms Beckham's currency as a leading signifier of masculinity as previously identified (see Cashmore, 2002; 2004; 2006; Gee, 2014). He blends the traditional ideals of masculinity with attractive looks. He does not come across as too effeminate, which was considered important by 'D' a gay interviewee,

> "metrosexual but not too homosexual… David Beckham obviously 'erm well heterosexual but he looks pretty good for it but not, not camp… there's slight imperfections and that makes him quite good looking and quite masculine" (Interview 3).

This resonates with Robinson *et al.'s* (2011) findings of how gay men do not want to be personified as 'camped up' stereotypes. These slight imperfections suggest that men should not look too groomed in order to offer traits that are more acceptable as a referent of masculinity. The models that appealed most tended to be placed in settings that participants could identify as a typified referent (Williamson, 2002), such as men dressed in office attire suggesting a professional occupation. 'D' a gay respondent liked images that resonated with his understated traditional style of clothing,

> "looks like a young, professional male, which again relates directly to me" (*L'Oréal for Men Expert*, Interview 3).

This particular creative approach suggests that 'men like me' use facial skincare products for male audiences (Warde, 2005). In turn, this allows the audience to feel that when they use facial skincare products they are not alone but form part of a wider community. The suggestion that there is a more widespread use of facial skincare by male consumers helps to normalise the idea of using such products for those men who may feel that it may compromise their notions of how men should be less concerned about their

appearance from a 'beauty' perspective. The implausibility of images used to promote facial skincare for men was noted as lacking credible representations that resonate with male audiences as commented upon by 'Jake', a gay participant.

> "The falseness of that image is something you would probably associate more with a female moisturizer or something like a good looking woman posing" (*Lab Series for Men,* Interview 6).

Clearly, not convinced by the transformative magic of men's facial skincare, 'Pete' who identified as a typical heterosexual male remarked on how the myth offered by advertising is selling false hopes.

> "Your average bloke on the street isn't a good-looking model type guy so you say when they're pushing this advert it's again to say use this product and you'll be a big hunk" (*Lab Series for Men*, Interview 7).

The focus on vanity was perceived as providing a trigger for unhealthy obsessions as suggested by 'Q' who failed to see the need for skincare despite his girlfiend suggesting he use it,

> "what worries me about these products once you're sort of pulled into using them it's a bit like a drug addiction you feel you may have to use them all the time else you'll have to revert to something far worse than you started out with!" (Interview 8).

Thus, the imposition of advertising ideals may trigger insecurities for men as highlighted by Farr (2013). In phase two of the research, familiar tropes persist in the choice of models for the adverts as highlighted by 'Pete',

> "a handsome sort of chap… pretty standard sort of bloke you'd… see in these adverts" (Interview 12).

This suggests there is no real difference between the two phases in this respect especially in the normalisation of white models to convey positive values for appearance identified in hooks's (2015) observations of how race is presented in society. Interestingly, the use of background music in a television advertisement similar to a gaming environment

evoked a familiar context for males (although males do not solely undertake gaming) as noted by 'D'.

> "Quite masculine again like the background thing is almost like a computer game… something you would associate with a male audience" (*Dove for Men,* Interview 11).

Trampe *et al.* (2010); Noseworthy *et al.* (2011) and Cramphorn (2011) have previously highlighted the way that gender can be evoked by the use of sensory cues as referents such as music association for products.

In summary, when offering a change in accepted grooming practices to males, similar to Eleni Frank's (2014) findings, my data suggests that respondents identified with traditional values aligned with how men look. Nevertheless, some respondents referred to the 'stereotypical' use of models which failed to resonate with them and seeming 'tokenistic' in their use by advertisers similar to findings highlighted by Anstiss and Lyons (2014). Idealistic traits of traditional ideals of masculinity were suggested using referents to suggest 'strong features' such as jawline, stubble and striking eyes to align men's skincare use with 'hegemonic' ideals (Connell, 2003). Such ideals link to their own notion of identity. Hence, when men look in the mirror they align with ideals offered in advertising images. These ideals suggest skin should be improved by the use of men's facial skincare products. Thus, the need for men to acknowledge their face as a site for scrutiny is presented as a norm by advertisers. The potential to improve facial skin is offered as a form of 'exchange value' (Featherstone, 1982) that has currency for men. An offset for the feminising potential of facial skincare for men is provided by the 'hegemonic' ideals of masculinity highlighted by respondents.

Patriarchal Tropes of Masculinity

The use of 'hegemonic' tropes of males in men's facial skincare advertising bring into line traditional notions of masculinity with a potentially feminising product. This positioning technique provides a positive reinforcement of male identity for men in their attitudes towards consumption of facial skincare products. In phase one, a big build, muscular,

slightly aggressive, strong and challenging (stare) were all noted as antecedents to masculine characteristics as characterised by 'Jake'.

> "He comes across as the most masculine model... he's got like a skinhead... a built
> guy... quite muscular... broad shoulders thick neck so he just represents that sort
> of typical you know masculine man's man" (*Biotherm Homme,* Interview 6).

This suggests the model as a 'hypermasculine' (Vokey *et al.,* 2013) type associated with a traditionally male-dominated sport as noted by 'Dom' a triathlon enthusiast.

> "He looks very masculine really. He could be a rugby player but a very good
> looking one who hasn't taken many hits" (*Biotherm Homme,* Interview 4).

To retain 'hegemonic' notions of masculinity (Connell, 2003), the adverts tend to adopt a heteronormative system of communicating that the products resonate with contemporary men. Men identify with ideals of masculinity differently. Advertisers are mediating their ideals of masculinity that seem to place emphasis on extreme forms of feminine masculinity or 'hypermasculinity' (Vokey *et al.,* 2013). There is also a prevailing emphasis on whiteness of males used (hooks, 2015), hence the models selected by advertisers fail to represent the diversity of modern men.

In phase two, celebrity endorsement was highlighted as a way of positioning facial skincare as a heteronormative practice for men. This reinforces the increasing influence of celebrity on consumption (Gee, 2014). However, choosing the right endorser is sometimes problematic. The England football team as an endorser was raised, possibly in a sarcastic manner, as a reason not to buy the brand. Whilst football presents a traditional link as a male-dominated sport, 'Q' wished to assert his view that not all men associate with the implied meanings suggested by the way the team attracts attention for the wrong reasons at times with hooliganism,

> "anything that uses the England football team to convince me that it's a
> worthwhile product to consume rather turns me off" (*Nivea Skin Energy,* Interview
> 15).

Referents used by advertisers to suggest facial skincare in a 'staged setting' (Goffman, 1979) promoting masculinity were identified by 'Oz',

> "very urban setting... possibly trying to promote a more grittier image" (*Maleskin,* Interview 14).

This also resonates with how facial skincare use has become a source of 'capital' by younger males who have lost traditional outlets to gain autonomy in post-industrial towns highlighted by Diedrichs (2015). Key signifiers of male traits remain suggesting a 'rugged man' appeal (Hirschman, 2003) were identified by gay participant 'Jake',

> "got a bit of stubble... so he looks more natural and rugged in terms of masculinity" (*Maleskin*, Interview 17).

Masculine traits similar to 'hegemonic' ideals of masculinity (Connell, 1995; 2003; 2005) persist as key referents for men worthy of note by gay participant 'D',

> "he's quite well-built by the looks of it... a rugged type" (*Maleskin,* Interview 11).

There was a significant reduction in the use of models noted by respondents from those analysed in phase one, to those seen in phase two advertisements sample. The suggested reasons behind this change varied from maybe reducing the cost of the creative element of the advertisement to creating more of a focus on the product image to trigger recall in the retail environment as suggested by (Mills, 2015). Stevens and Ostberg (2011) have previously highlighted this approach of omitting models in advertising images as serving to 'push' products so that audiences recognise brands instore. Perhaps advertisers are reflecting the trend towards online searches for advice prior to purchase (Jin and Phua, 2014). 'D' reflects,

> "In the magazines, there's definitely a common format that the product is in the front of the ground. There's no models anymore – they've taken the models out and it's just the product..." (Interview 11).

A possible reason for a lack of models in the sample is that advertisers no longer know how to pitch an image that resonates effectively with men.

In summary, the male body has provided a focus for other men to gaze providing it is perceived as a more of 'hypermasculine' ideal to be emulated (Gill et al., 2005; Vokey *et al.,* 2013). The selection of more traditional versions of masculinity serves to suggest that use of facial skincare products does not make men more effeminate and reasserts masculine identity. However, some models represent a more feminine version of masculinity going against traditional notions of masculinity (Nayak and Kehily, 2006).

Femininised Versions of Masculinity

As a counter to traditional ideals of masculinity, my respondents noted various referents in the sample of advertisements that suggested a more feminine version of masculinity was emerging in the way that skincare was promoted to men. Interestingly, a more feminised model suggested to some respondents that the depiction lacks credibility as a 'typical' man. 'Al' as a heterosexual male who did not see the need for skincare, failed to relate to a model, "some pretty boy who's had a very, very good shave" (*Lab Series,* Interview 2). This potentially alienates male acceptance of facial skincare as too feminine. Negative elements surrounding the use of make-up were also raised. Respondents thought that the use of make-up on the male model in the advertisement made the image less credible. As a result, the lack of a natural look on the model suggested that the product might not be as effective for those who use it. Hence, 'Davie' felt that the models were not typical men that resonated with him as a heterosexual male,

> "he looks sort of a handsome guy… but he's obviously probably made up… there's some make-up on there!" (*Biotherm Homme,* Interview 10).

The idea of make-up on men was a step too far for some respondents conflicting with Hall's (2015) study that highlights how men's make-up is becoming more accepted. 'Jake' felt that the way that some models were used was patronising to men,

> "I don't see why a man posing like that in I suppose what's meant to be a mirror would appeal to a male audience because… yeah I just think it's a bit, a bit cheesy… the falseness of that image is something you would probably associate more with a female moisturiser" (*Lab Series,* Interview 6).

This remark reflects the need for men to not be overtly narcissistic about their looks in order to maintain masculine status (Adams et al., 2010). Moreover, this also reveals the perception held by this particular gay respondent of how he feels that men should be depicted in a non-feminising manner. It is a good example of the overt attempt by advertisers to draw men towards the mirror to scrutinise their face as a pressure on men to improve their appearance (Blackburn, 2014). The mirror offers an opportunity for men's introspection. Suggested ways to improve appearance such as use of facial skincare should reassure men that their masculine identity is not undermined as a result of using such beautifying products. Clearly, the use of a more feminine male detracts from reinforcing traditional ideas of masculinity. Respondents revealed their personal ideals of how masculinity should be portrayed. Some models were identified as being too camp or effeminate, as 'Al' felt was moving too far from his traditional, heterosexual identity, "he's almost quite feminine looking" (*Hugo Boss,* Interview 2). Feminine masculinity traits appeared to be at odds with traditional values of masculinity (Connell, 1995). A particular model was off-putting for 'D' as a gay man who felt that the perceived effeminate pose of the model was unnecessary.

> "This one looks a bit too camp. He looks a bit gay if I can say that and puts me off a bit but he looks a bit too cheesy… too well pruned and trimmed for a heterosexual I would suggest" (*Lab Series,* Interview 3).

Respondents treated male models that looked too feminine with reservation. 'Dom' reflected that he failed to see the model as someone he could identify with as a heterosexual male,

> "very effeminate really you know the eyes… they're very much like a girl's eye" (*Hugo Boss,* Interview 4).

There is a degree of negativity towards overtly gay representations of men by respondents possibly implying homophobia, although 'D' as a gay respondent disliked this approach too. However, gender identity is part of a wider spectrum of how masculinities are defined (Butler, 2004; Robinson *et al*., 2011). It seems that some respondents prefer traditional versions of masculinity. 'Dom' notes the fusion of masculine and feminine

features on a model that he perceives as an attempt to appeal to heterosexual men like himself,

> "He's got sort of effeminate eyes which they've used with the kind of beard you know the unshaved look... They don't want him to look too... effeminate I don't think or even too concerned about the way he looks" (*L'Oréal for Men Expert,* Interview 4).

The blending of traditional signifiers of 'manliness' such as an unshaved appearance with more effeminate features suggests that advertisers recognise the problematic issues presenting beautifying products to a male audience. When advertisers used male models that were considered overly concerned with their appearance then these were viewed as too vain as suggested by 'Dom' a heterosexual participant,

> "looks I'm going to say kind of homosexual, typically the way... he looks really, really trimmed like he's overly concerned with his appearance" (*Lab Series*, Interview 4).

Being overly concerned with appearance such as 'pampered', 'pruned' or 'trimmed' conflicted with what 'Dom' perceived as heterosexual norms suggesting that heteronormative values masculinity prevail as ideals. This was highlighted by Bridges (2014) in his observation of how men revert to 'hegemonic masculine' ideals. This is when men are placed in situations that have the potential to suggest a more feminine dimension of masculinity. Using men that appear more feminine in adverts fails to connect with those men who have traditional ideals of masculinity.

In summary, the identification of images that use men with more feminine looks provides a context for how advertisers are trying to appeal to a more diverse audience of men possibly. My data suggests that respondents identifying as heterosexual and homosexual favoured a more traditional version of masculinity linked with the use of facial skincare for men. This serves to reinforce ideals of masculinity. Without this approach, men may perceive the consumption of such products as undermining their identity. My data suggests that men seemingly distance themselves from being too involved in the consumption of men's facial skincare products.

Women's Role in Men's Skincare

By suggesting that facial skincare is more naturally located with women, men can protect heteronormative ideals of masculinity suggesting that females are 'naturally' more concerned with facial skincare in relation to vanity. My respondents identified a number of ways that women were advisors or purchased men's skincare on their behalf. This suggests that women provide a way for men using skincare without undermining masculine ideals. My data suggests that men are not the primary initiators in the purchase of facial skincare products. Female influence in respect of improving appearance is important for 'Mac' as a consumer of *Clinique* who reflects how his girlfriend has more influence on his skincare purchase choice than the advertisement he was considering in the interview,

> "if someone gave it to me... I might use it... if she was trying to persuade me to do it then she would" (*Nivea for Men*, Interview 1).

By distancing the buying process and involving women as agents in the purchase of facial skincare, my study highlights respondents maintain traditional notions of being less concerned about their facial appearance than women are. 'Jake' contradicted the notion that as a gay man he was confident talking about and exerting expertise in skincare choice and use as suggested by programmes such as *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* (Clarkson, 2005).

> "You'd be more likely to talk about it (moisturising) with a girl friend... than your friends I suppose because you see them as the oracle or the expert... if you were concerned or wanted some product advice you'd see them as the person with the greater source of knowledge" (Interview 6).

Interestingly, 'Al' suggests that it is women that the advertisers are targeting,

> "a picture of a good-looking man and I wonder whether the aim is potentially for women... to get this" (*Biotherm Homme*, Interview 2).

Possibly, due to the gender origins of such products, women provide legitimate participants for discussions surrounding facial skincare products for 'Jake' a gay respondent.

"I wouldn't (talk to friends about moisturiser) but I suppose products like this with girls it's something you might like say 'oh have you tried this?' Whereas I wouldn't sit in the pub with my mates and say 'oh yeah try this it worked really well for me' type thing because I really worried you know about them bags" (Interview 6).

This also reinforces women as the gender with greater knowledge traditionally concerning facial skincare products (Oleskar, 2015).

In summary, by locating the natural habitus of facial skincare with women, my data suggests that men can distance themselves from seeming to be overly engaged with the potentially feminising connotations this may suggest. Women offer a way for my respondents to improve their image and identify with heteronormative ideals of masculinity. Facial skin appearance is enhanced but my data suggests that gay and heterosexual respondents are not seemingly overly involved in this transformation.

Gendered Colours for Facial Skincare

In the move to position facial skincare as a heteronormative practice for men, Hall (2015) noted advertisers as using techniques to link with traditional signifiers of masculinity. My data has highlighted how models serve as key referents to locate facial skincare products as a normative practice for men. Respondents also referred to how colours were another resource to locate facial skincare products for 'typical' men. 'Oz' commented,

"I think the dark colours again give a fairly masculine look" (*Biotherm Homme,* Interview 5).

The participants' views on whether the choices contribute in a positive or negative manner suggests that colours can act as a key resource in aligning skincare products to the male domain. 'Dom' perceived,

"the difference is the colouring really… but I wouldn't say masculine colours - orange (*L'Oréal for Men Expert,* Interview 4).

It seems that many of the colours used to convey gender association are easily identifiable as suggested by 'Pete',

"blue which is the colour for boys traditionally so yeah they've stuck a masculine colour on it I mean if it was pink blokes probably wouldn't buy it even if it had *for men* written on it" (*Nivea for Men,* Interview 7).

However the selection of a particular colour not always seen as offering a positive link to the product's attributes as they seem predictable and clichéd as reflected upon by 'Al',

"it seems to be quite stereotypical of the men's adverts, that we go for almost like a monochrome look" (*Biotherm Homme,* Interview 2).

Colours connoting 'hardness' were associated with traditional forms of masculinity such as 'Mac's comment, "black is more of a hard and male look" (*Clinique for Men,* Interview 1). Van Leeuwen (2005) highlights how colour aligns gender norms and expectations within society. Interestingly, the use of grey and silver were associated negatively as reminiscent of ageing, which is perceived as something to avoid in a somatic society (Ojala *et al.,* 2016). 'D' failed to see how grey suggested a benefit to skin appearance,

"grey also says to me looking older grey hair I associate with it" (*Lab Series*, Interview 3).

The association of gender with colour reinforces the findings of various studies exploring what constitutes a male or female hue (see Goddard and Patterson, 2000; McNeill and Douglas, 2011). The age of the target audience is suggested by the hue of the colour by 'Oz',

"aimed at a young male audience because of the colours that it uses… dark blue" (*Nivea for Men,* Interview 5).

Colours used to denote masculinity are perpetuated in advertisements such as the dark colours, silvers, blue and grey mentioned by respondents. For example, 'Dom' saw this an attempt by advertisers move skincare away from assocations with the women's sector.

"Trying to make it more acceptable for a man to be using moisturiser and make it more mainstream I guess by using more cues that a male will pick up on and associate with more typical masculinity I guess" (Interview 4).

Colours then become a semiotic mode to convey meaning (van Leeuwen, 2005). As a result, the use of such colours also suggested luxury as suggested by 'Dom',

> "kind of up-market with the blacks, kind of slate grey and all the whites just suggesting class" (*Clinique for Men,* Interview 4).

In phase two, respondents identified certain colours that they associate cognitively with male facial skincare products similar to the findings in phase one. 'D' again highlighted the persistent use of such colours that he failed to connect with,

> "the greys and the darkness… viewed as the way to market male grooming products as a way to keep it as masculine" (Interview 11).

Grey used as a common colour to signify masculinity in the first phase was noted in negative terms by respondents of being dull and adverse comments persist in phase two of this research. Again 'D' perceived "the image of the guy in grey isn't overly attractive" (*Pro Plus LS,* Interview 11) which is not necessarily a reflection of his status as a gay man but more of an identification of a clichéd approach by brands. Grey seems a poor choice to suggest healthy looking skin, hence 'D' further reflects,

> "greyness puts you off because grey, pale looking skin isn't something that you want" (*Dove Men,* Interview 11).

This suggests that using grey is considered in terms of unattractive skin colour as what Featherstone (1982) terms the 'exchange value' offered in the advertisement. Colour was also highlighted in relation to the importance this has for 'mother brands' (Jung and Lee, 2006) to reduce feminine connotations as commented upon by 'Dom',

> "I associate *Dove* more with female products but they've kind of ticked all the boxes with their masculine colours" (Interview 18).

Colour helps to translate social norms signifying products for the male domain so that the use of facial skincare for men becomes an accepted repertoire (van Leeuwen, 2005), such as the referent identified by 'Mac', "dark blue – male product" (Interview 19). Advertising forms a social artefact reflecting and resonating with societal expectations (Belk and Pollay, 1985). Colour is an important resource conveying current expectations

such as blue for masculinity as highlighted by 'Jake', "it's quite masculine… grey and blue" (*Dove Men,* Interview 17). Green was a colour associated with the origin of the ingredients by 'Q',

> "I like the greens make me think there's something natural in that" (*Bulldog*, Interview 15).

The spectrum of colours available offer a referent to locate facial skincare within the male domain as suggested by 'Dom'.

> "Darker colours to make you think that the products will sit on your bathroom shelf and look cool... almost to give you that appearance of being a modern man" (*Lab Series for Men,* Interview 18).

New hues and colours were noted in phase two suggesting more natural links with facial skincare products to denote masculinity. 'Jake' commented on the introduction of "icy blue… cool colours like spearminty" (L'Oréal Men Expert, Interview 17) and "brown – quite earthy" (*Bulldog,* Interview 17). Respondents recognised the need to make the colours suggest credibility in the product's effectiveness. 'Q' perceived how colours were used effectively at times,

> "greys, light blues you know this kind of clinical, medical feel that they're trying to put across" (*Dove Men*, Interview 15).

'Jake' also identified,

> "technical, clinical with the greys and the blues so get the impression that almost there's more science behind the product" (*Pro Lab Series,* Interview 17).

Likewise, my respondents perceived negative connotations from this as 'D' commented,

> "the colour it looks too drab for me and too clinical" (*Pro Plus LS*, Interview 11).

In summary, traditional notions of masculinity continue to be used as signifiers in relation to expected ideas of masculinity. What is not clear is to what extent it is men, or the advertisers that perpetuate these ideals. Colours used to ascertain facial skincare as a masculine product conveys a key 'resource' to signal to audiences that the product is

gender specific. Gender expectations helps towards reinforcing ideals of masculinity. This suggests that facial skincare products for men are acceptable as part of acquiring a better appearance. The responses suggest that those colours used are typically linked with men, but my respondents note they do not necessarily provide a positive connotation such as grey being synonymous with ageing.

Enhanced Male Skin as an Ideal

Respondents highlighted the various ways that advertisers were presenting skincare as a requirement for men as a more critical eye was placed upon them. Facial skincare for men is challenging men to look at themselves, suggesting that others judge a man on his image. In particular, 'Al' a heterosexual respondent raises the notion of how appearance is linked to how others view your appearance,

> "it's about you know how other people see you so that's perhaps touching on another part of your psyche" (*L'Oréal Men Expert,* Interview 2).

 Clarkson (2005) highlighted the societal expectation that men should consider their improving appearance as an ongoing project in relation to the influence from the television programme *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. 'Oz' also noted shifts in the way that men are expected to improve their appearance,

> "it probably signifies 'erm maybe a bit about society and the changing roles of males" (*Lab Series,* Interview 5).

The idea of men improving their image to attract women (a heteronormative value) was highlighted as a way of helping to gain greater acceptance of men's facial skincare products as noted by 'Jake' a gay respondent.

> "Perhaps they've done their research and what they've found out they know that perhaps with their products or with grooming products overall the reason men are using them is to look good, to impress girls" (*L'Oréal for Men,* Interview 6).

The way that a brand is linked to more materialistic concepts relating to identity by advertisers was noted in terms of buying an expensive brand to impress others (Bagwell and Bernheim, 1996). 'Jake' reflected on the 'value' of brands for skincare products,

"you're not going to buy it because you think it's a good moisturizer, you're buying it because it says *Hugo Boss* on the jar… the person who buys this is probably a bit like a label whore" (*Hugo Boss,* Interview 6).

The fear of looking older is a reason for using facial skincare products by men. 'Q' a heterosexual participant in his defence for not using skincare reflected, "what's wrong with growing old gracefully you know?" (Interview 8). However, this position is in opposition to the notion that ageing is a negative feature in a society that places greater value on youthful appearance as an ideal (Jankowski *et al.,* 2016). 'Q' reflected upon a potential trigger for introspection in relation to his image.

"I suppose I would only be pulled in if I felt particularly ugly one day and I saw an advert on telly that promised to get rid of my bags under my eyes and my wrinkles" (*Lab Series for Men,* Interview 8).

This reflects upon the need to retain youthful looks for longer and also identified by respondents in the study conducted by Ojala *et al.* (2016). 'Jake' identified how advertisers play on insecurities for male audiences.

"They're going for someone slightly who's more concerned about the lines they've got… stopping getting them!" (*Clinique for Men,* Interview 6).

However, an assertion that using facial skincare products for anti-ageing does not align with typical male values was raised by 'Al'.

"I am the typical male that doesn't believe in grooming products and facial products… grow old gracefully as opposed to patch yourself up to make yourself look something that you are not" (Interview 2).

Some respondents rejected the use of facial skincare for men as a required defence against ageing. 'Laurie' as a 33 year-old gay interviewee reflected,

"If you need these products when you are 15, 16 or whatever these people are meant to be then you need help 'erm what's wrong with being comfortable about yourself at that age" (Interview 9).

Equally, when discussing the use of advertising language to link skincare to male audiences 'Al' saw this as an example that goes against traditional male ideals.

> "Hydrates and helps firm up skin and fine lines… that's just not something that I would, you know, I'm sure that there are blokes out there that are interested in their feminine side and would care about fine lines but I'm in the genre of sort of grow old gracefully" (*Clinique for Men,* Interview 2)*.

This heterosexual respondent clearly does not want to be considered effeminate through the consumption of men's facial skincare. Advertising language is important in terms of how masculinity is contemplated. However, the avoidance of ageing is a key ploy used by advertisers to suggest that men should be avoiding older-looking skin (Ojala *et al.,* 2016). Ideals of beauty are socially constructed and are subject to what is considered fashionable at a given time. The use of conventionally handsome models for men's facial skincare product advertisements was highlighted by my respondents regardless of their sexuality. 'Jake' as a gay respondent commented,

> "you can have good looking men because they represent the brand well and they represent the product well and men might think yeah you know I use that, make myself better looking, whereas girls generally are more bitchy and jealous. Like men aren't really bothered by - you wouldn't feel threatened by a good looking man" (Interview 6).

Whether this is due to a difference in gender attitudes towards appearance is uncertain. It may be a reflection of a lack of interest in how other men look. However, this conflicts with the recognised trend of the so-called 'inversion of the male gaze' that contends men are increasingly interested in emulating their appearance in relation to males they perceive as attractive (Patterson and Elliott, 2002). The advent of men's facial skincare is calling men to scrutinise their appearance in relation to how other men look. In contrast, 'Jake' a gay respondent said it was not about a man's sense of self but more to do with practical reasons when using skincare products. This is identified as a key 'hegemonic' defence of men's facial skincare product use in Chapter Eight.

"Someone buys that product because they are really interested in what it does for their skin as opposed to what the brand might do and represent for them – it's not an identity thing it's more a functionality thing" (*Garnier Skincare,* Interview 6).

The importance of the tag 'for men' on facial skincare for men was raised by 'Pete' a heterosexual respondent who was defensive of protecting his sense of masculinity whilst admitting to using skincare.

"I think a lot of blokes still have to have the 'for men' written on it and I fell foul of that for a while because (adopting a Yorkshire accent) 'I'm a bloke, it's for men isn't it?' So I think a lot of blokes are still like that!" (*Nivea for Men,* Interview 7).

'Pete' made a contentious suggestion that advertisers should use heteronormative tropes that objectify women to improve facial skincare sales for men.

"If you got an advert with a bloke in it and a load of scantily-clad women draped over him and he'd used a moisturiser a lot of blokes might say 'oh I might use that then because obviously that's going to happen to me" (Interview 7).

This draws upon the objectification and sexualisation of women in advertising and although less accepted as an approach this still does occur (McRobbie, 2016). My respondents highlighted the idea that facial skincare products impose the notion of appearance having value as 'Q' notes,

"someone that needs to be told how to be successful, how to feel successful… how to create the idealised version of themselves" (*Biotherm Homme*, Interview 8).

Thus, facial skincare is suggested as offering a form of empowerment for men as a form of 'looking-glass capital' presented in this study. Interestingly, a different concept to the approach used for women was identified in relation to how advertisers position skincare for men using heteronormative values. 'Laurie' a gay respondent reflected,

"it's the whole point isn't it that you are selling products to men to make them look beautiful and you are trying not to tell them that at the same time so trying

to make people feel fine about buying it without sounding a bit gay to be honest!" (*Clinique for Men*, Interview 9).

The pressure to conform to ideal looks and how this affects self-esteem was also raised by 'Oz'.

> "I think in this advert the *L'Oréal* one it's... I think it's the first advert I've looked at where the advert is trying to get men to think about what women are thinking about men which is quite a significant difference I think. So while a guy could be genuinely happy with their own appearance I think what the advert is trying to say 'but you are not trying to impress yourself' (*L'Oréal Men Expert* – Interview 5).

This suggests a critical judgement of men's appearance by others. Moreover, it aligns with changing notions that men are more successful if they are actively engaged with improving their appearance.

In phase two, a product name such as *Bulldog* was suggested as a way to epitomise masculinity and was seen as a key signifier to assign gender to facial skincare. 'Oz' identified,

> "*Bulldog* itself is the only thing which strikes you as something quite masculine" (Interview 14).

Hence Alexander (2003) and later Tungate's (2008) notion of 'branded masculinity' helps to locate products with what Vokey *et al.* (2013) suggest is a form of 'hyper-masculinity'. The aggressive connotations of the brand '*Bulldog*' suggest that the product is firmly in the male domain. Products are positioned for men using various techniques so as to suggest facial skincare as a natural consumption practice to men. Advertising was noted as potentially preying on any insecurities that men may have concerning their appearance to stimulate the consumption of facial skincare products by 'Laurie' a gay respondent.

> "Young people go out, they party, they look tired the day after let's sell them the products to benefit them as a result of what they can do naturally and the insecurities that people will have as part of that lifestyle" (Interview 13).

However, such products are presented as enhancing appearance as a complementary feature of busy lives men lead. A greater awareness of the need to protect skin from the sun was recognised by 'D' a gay respondent.

> "We are getting more educated on skincare I think the industry has made us more aware of the issues with the sun in terms of ageing and stuff like that so I would say I'm not embarrassed to buy it at all it's not a problem you know I think everyone does it now" (Interview 11).

Defence against the ageing and damaging effects of the sun on men's faces provides another legitimate reason for men to use facial skincare. The age of models used in the second sample of advertisements were commented upon as being older than the first sample by 'Laurie'.

> "I wonder if the age has changed I vaguely remember them being younger models" (Interview 13).

In addition, 'D' commented some models were "a bit older and got a bit of stubble" (*Maleskin,* Interview 11). This may be an attempt by advertisers to appeal to 'hegemonic' ideals that may still be held by older men in relation to the use of facial skincare (Duncanson, 2015). Goffman (1979) highlighted a few decades ago that it was older men in society who tend to lag in adoption of new grooming products.

In summary, participants considered they were being pressured to conform to new ideals suggesting a man should be taking care of his facial skin by using moisturiser. An increased focus by advertisers suggesting that men need to be more contemplative in relation to their appearance is presenting an underlying trend towards men's vanity. This is notionally drawing men towards scrutinising their face more and seeking to improve their appearance. However, many of the premises used by advertisers such as how women are supposedly 'critiquing' a man's appearance were criticised for undermining men's self-esteem. A key issue that serves to reduce the effect of advertising on normalising the use of facial skincare by men is highlighted by my respondent's reluctance to discuss such practices.

Skincare Discourse

Facial skincare is not discussed with contemporaries to protect traditional expectations that men should not be overly concerned with their image. 'Al' a heterosexual participant reflected upon his reticence to speak about skincare with other men.

> "That's not a conversation that you are going to have with your mates about the new *Clinique* product for men is it? You know because us blokes do talk about you know stuff and this guy recommended me… try this because you'll feel your skin will be much more elasticity I would have thought he would have taken some drugs, some funny juice!" (Interview 2).

Men do not talk about facial skincare to ensure that others do not judge them in terms of being too vain and thereby not behaving in ways that men are traditionally expected to behave as highlighted previously by Waling (2016) and reflected by 'Al' comments,

> "you don't have a conversation about it… you talk about it in a masculine way because blokes don't necessarily feel confident talking about facial products" (*Clinique for Men*, Interview 2).

There was a consensus amongst respondents that men would not discuss facial skincare as it is seen as a topic that is not 'natural' for men. Discussions revolved around the idea that any mention of facial skincare use by men may serve to suggest that this is not a 'safe' topic in terms of traditional notions expected of men. By not discussing this, heteronormative ideals in relation to masculinity are retained, as facial skincare is still perceived as something feminising by some men.

In summary, facial skincare does not appear to be a 'natural' discussion topic amongst men. On the other hand, women are perceived as 'legitimate' sources of information in relation to men's facial skincare. Men may be looking in the mirror and using facial skincare to improve their appearance. They are doing so in discreet ways so that they are not accused of being vain and therein less traditionally masculine. To align facial skincare as an acceptable practice for men, other resources also serve to reinforce 'hegemonic masculine' (Connell, 2003) ideals. Respondents identified advertising copy as one such resource used to suggest facial skincare products as a normative masculine practice.

Concluding Thoughts

My data analysed in two phases has explored how advertisers seek to mediate men's facial skincare products as an accepted masculine practice. What is clear is that advertisers do not assume that facial skincare as a natural domain for men. The intervening period between phases suggests that advertisers continue to represent men's facial skincare products in ways that offer 'hypermasculine' traits to (over) compensate for this. Advertising influences what men buy however, the approach used for men's facial skincare by advertisers suggests that the juxtaposition of overtly masculine ideals to overcome the feminising potential of these products typically fails to resonate with my participants. Interestingly, the male models used in phase two sample appear to be older than those in the first sample analysed. This suggests that advertisers are attempting to appeal to older males as the avoidance of ageing skin appearance is presented as a normative pursuit for men by advertisers. This suggests that younger-looking skin is more valued. The notion of the 'looking-glass self' introduced by Cooley (1902) is suggested in the increased use of images of men looking in the mirror to assess their appearance. A more feminised masculinity is evident in some of the models selected by advertisers. My data suggests that a strategy that conforms to ideals of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2003) is required to reinforce acceptance of facial skincare as part of 'looking-glass capital' for men.

Interestingly, there was no real difference in how heterosexual and homosexual respondents discussed their views on how men's skincare was presented by brands and advertisers in certain ways to appeal to men. The colours used were seen as unappealing and models who were perceived as too feminine were highlighted by 'D' and 'Laurie' as gay men who did not wish skincare to be mediated in a clichéd way for male audiences. Gay and heterosexual respondents commented upon the rugged appeal of some male models. Furthermore, there was no difference between gay and heterosexual respondents in their views that skincare was not a topic that was discussed with other men.

In this chapter, I have discussed the views of male respondents on facial skincare using the themes identified through semiotic analysis by the researcher in Chapter Six. Responses from participants in this chapter provided important male viewpoints that

added to understanding how male facial skincare is conveyed by advertisers as an acceptable product for men. The next chapter places an emphasis on the people and initial triggers most likely to influence men's consumption of facial skincare. The constructions of masculinity are also discussed to understand what influences men's attitudes in relation to facial skincare products. Findings are presented from phase three of the research with younger consumers and industry professionals along with a focus group with men to widen the perspective further.

Chapter Eight. Findings III: Younger Males and Industry Perspective

Introduction

The final phase of data analysis for this study moves the focus away from advertising in this chapter. A wider perspective is sought for a greater understanding towards the consumption of men's facial skincare products. Views from younger males and grooming industry experts explore attitudes and influences that shape men's outlooks towards facial skincare products. One such stimulus is the guidance of females. As previously highlighted in Chapter Seven, women are shown as providing significant direction in the buying process as they have greater expertise in this sector. Women practitioners from the beauty industry offer their perspectives on male facial skincare. In addition, male respondents highlighted the important role their female relatives and friends provide in guiding their attitudes and consumption of facial skincare products.

Sexual identity appears to be significant in terms of acceptance of men's facial skincare. Openly gay men are perceived by my practitioner respondents to be confident and proficient users who exhibit expertise similar to that accredited to women in relation to facial skincare products. Nevertheless, this observation by those in the grooming industry does little to reinforce facial skincare as an acceptable masculine practice. Conversely, younger gay male respondents showed no perceivable difference in their attitudes and confidence in using skincare products than heterosexual male respondents. Ideals shaping male identity continue to emerge for younger men to emulate. My data also suggests that celebrity culture changes attitudes to men's facial skincare. Younger male and industry respondents again note David Beckham as a worthy celebrity for conveying ideals of masculinities. Respondents highlight his pervading embodiment of masculinity in contemporary society. Pierce Brosnan endorses the *L'Oréal for Men Expert* skincare product campaign and similar to Beckham his metrosexual ideals of using skincare to improve his facial skin are blended with 'hegemonic masculine' notions. Beckham's footballing background embodies traditional ideals of masculinity and Brosnan is known for his role as a strong male protagonist playing James Bond. Using men with physical prowess that also pay attention to their appearance such as Brosnan and Beckham has helped to amass male facial skincare consumers (Barbalova, 2012).

Elements suggesting traditional notions of how men are expected to not be concerned with facial skincare products persist amongst younger men. One example of this is revealed in my respondents' reluctance to discuss facial skincare with other males as it is not considered as a natural discussion topic for men. Thus, facial skincare continues to present a conflict in traditional ideals relating to male identity.

My data shows how the notion of men needing to consider how to improve their facial skin is increasingly accepted and this is especially noted by younger male respondents. It seems that younger male respondents are more conscious of the supposed pressure to improve appearance as an ongoing 'project', posting images as a means of communicating with contemporaries on social media apps such as *Snapchat* and *Instagram,* as highlighted by Tiidenberg and Cruz (2015). This places the face as a site for scrutiny by others in a shared digital space. Traditional notions of identity play an important role in how younger males relate to appearance-enhancing products. My data suggests that some men frame their use of facial skincare products for purely practical or functional purposes. This aligns with how men desire to appear unconcerned about their appearance for 'beauty' reasons. In recognition of the perceived need to improve appearance, I outline how the potential for 'looking-glass capital' offers a way forward for men's use of skincare products that is acceptable for their identity. Younger males are seemingly embracing the idea of a more fluid approach to male grooming practices, as previously discussed by McCormack (2014). In contrast to this, my respondents suggest that older men are more reticent to embrace such practices.

Illusory Advertising

Interviewees were asked about the importance of advertising to stimulate consumption of men's skincare. Advertising as a 'system of significance' (Barthes, 2009) appears to have some influence suggesting that facial skincare is a normative practice for men as noted by 'Brad' a heterosexual student respondent,

> "the adverts… probably just made guys more comfortable wearing stuff like that, using stuff like that" (Young Male, 5).

On the other hand, advertising continues to lack credibility as suggested by 'Gemma' a brand manager for skincare products at Manchester Airport,

> "it's like they're trying to sell to what they think a man would want rather than listen to what they do (want)" (Industry Representative, 1).

'Tim' a gay sixth former highlighted an example in how advertising was misleading or irrelevant at times.

> "Not completely honest because you'll see like a spot cream advert it's always someone with one spot and then someone with like their skin is perfect but in reality it doesn't happen overnight… it seems to be represented as easier than it actually is to maintain a perfect skin" (Young Male, 9).

This suggests advertising is part of an 'illusory system' (Barthes, 2009) that serves to create the myth that men need to use facial skincare as a requirement of modern life. However, authenticity is a problem in the digital age as indicated by 'Sam' a male barber's sceptical comment,

> "they do have a big influence but I'm always thinking when I see something on the adverts on in the magazines I always think *Photoshop*" (Industry representative, 9).

This respondent is highlighting an important issue that has implications for how men perceive skincare as an effective aid to improve appearance. Hence, unrealistic images are often misleading and unrepresentative as previously noted by Gentry and Harrison (2010). Whilst advertising clearly presents a 'cultural frame' (Williamson, 2002), it often lacks credibility. An example of this is how male models are using make-up to enhance their facial appearance whilst suggesting this is as a result of using products as cynically observed by 'David' a 58 year-old beauty salon owner who identified himself as gay,

> "there's no advertisement out there with the men that doesn't have make-up on models" (Industry Representative, 10).

Du Plessis (2008) contends that it is very important to ensure advertising works credibly. Some advertisements are seen as pure 'puffery' and lacking substance for younger male

respondents especially. 'Michael' an upper sixth form student rejected the notion imposed by advertising that certain brands were better quality than retailer own-label products,

> "I couldn't care who's on the adverts and stuff… I don't believe half the claims on them because it generally means it's going to be more expensive and basically I'm just very happy with what I've got" (Young Male, 4).

Seemingly, believable images are important for advertising to work (see Hariharan *et al.,* 2015) as suggested by this sixth form respondent 'Adam',

> "they're trying to get you to buy the product but I think most people understand that it doesn't work quite like that… the advert is a bit misleading" (Young Male, 10).

On the other hand, celebrity culture was perceived as an important mediation for acceptance of men's facial skincare amongst younger male respondents.

Celebrity Influence on Male Skincare

When discussions concerning advertising reached redundancy, respondents were asked for their views on the influence of celebrities on the use of skincare by males. Societal expectations with regards to an increasing emphasis on improving men's overall appearance in a society concerned with image are increasingly important (Hall, 2015). This transfers to ideals for younger males that are difficult to replicate as suggested by 'Mike' a heterosexual second year undergraduate university student,

> "you see celebrities as complete, flawless in every way so the expectations are higher from everyone around" (Young Male, 6).

This seemingly, has implications for ordinary men aspiring to attain skin similar to celebrities and failing to achieve this. Diedrichs (2015) noted a lack of self-confidence as one outcome of this, as confidence is linked strongly to appearance (Mintel, 2017). 'Gemma' commented on how celebrities influence younger males especially,

"my 15 year-old nephew is interested in all this and celebrities to a little extent will sell to him whereas, it won't to an older generation because they're not really bothered" (Industry Representative, 1).

In a similar vein to McCracken's (2012) culturematic proposition, my respondents cited reality stars as part of celebrity culture as providing a vehicle for acceptance of facial skincare product use. McCracken (2012) contends that popular culture provides a more fluid way of naturalising societal ideas surrounding trends such as men's facial skincare. Reality television for example plays a role here as 'Ashleigh' a *Clarins* consultant reflects upon,

"*The Only Way is Essex* for instance, they groom themselves on there and it's kind of portraying you don't have to be afraid to put on your moisturiser or a tan or anything like that" (Industry Respondent, 6).

However, some of the respondents contended that reality television stars were probably using products to promote their own brands as 'Mike' a geography undergraduate cynically suggests,

"people (reality TV) that appear in them are fake anyway so any product that they seem to promote doesn't seem genuine" (Young Male, 6).

Fleck *et al.* (2012) and Harmon-Kizer (2014) have previously highlighted the value of celebrities reinforcing particular consumption behaviours. This can stimulate a desire to emulate the appearance of celebrities as noted by 'Adam' a sixth former,

"celebrities have the perfect skin… if you're comparing your face to a celebrity's face… you want to look how the celebrities look" (Young Male, 10).

However, improving the appearance of skin similar to some celebrities was deemed as impractical for many without the appropriate economic resources. 'Tim' a sixth former on a tight budget remarked upon the disparities that arise thus,

"I assume they have like high end products… like you always look at someone and think wow I wish my skin was that good and look like them" (Young Male, 9).

Use of celebrities suggested as a positive link in advertisements, in reality may offer a different social signifier for the audience (Kamins, 1989). Hence, footballers from the 'wrong' team can serve as a disruptor so that men avoid a particular facial skincare brand. 'Matthew', a student and Manchester United supporter provides an example of this,

> "Joe Hart (former Manchester City goalkeeper) on it and that would be a reason not to buy Nivea!" (Young Male, 3).

McCracken (1989; 2012) highlights how social acceptance of good facial skin on celebrities transfers meaning suggesting a wider acceptability for audiences. The inversion of the male gaze of men on men is supposedly providing an impetus for men to improve their appearance (Patterson and Elliott, 2002). However, 'Tim' a sixth form college student countered this notion by his remark,

> "I'm not too sure about using celebrities because men don't really look at another man and think oh his skin looks good" (Industry Respondent, 9).

By avoiding looking at male celebrities with too much introspection, this respondent is maintaining a position in which they think men are expected to behave in order to protect identity. His view conflicts with Anderson's (2009) notion of inclusive masculinities which suggests that men are less concerned that they may be labelled as being gay for their actions. Indeed this respondent identifies himself as gay but does not wish his attitudes towards skincare to be defined by his sexuality. However, male identity is framed in various ways.

David Beckham's Influence on Skincare

One celebrity in particular David Beckham continues to maintain a wide appeal, uniting diverse opinion on masculinity (see Diedrichs, 2015). 'Lin' a female salon owner championed his wide-ranging appeal to male audiences,

> "David Beckham is that sort of person. Fabulous for the male branding… it's someone they look up and if they're masculine enough. Particularly people like David Beckham… he's got it all sort of thing and still masculine and looking good. I think he's done the male market a world of good" (Industry Respondent, 7).

Arguably, Beckham maintains his masculine status whilst embracing grooming more associated with feminine practices. This underpins Whannel's (2002) concept that he offers an example of flexible masculinity. An example of this is identified in the way that he blends 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2003) ideals such as his athleticism alongside good looks identified by 'Matthew' a heterosexual university student,

> "David Beckham seems genuine and is a good influencer… he's a physical man who looks good… and seems like he's the full package" (Young Male, 3).

Beckham appears to maintain authenticity as noted by Cashmore (2004), as respondents highlight his wide appeal to manual labourers (Rahman, 2004) and professionals alike (Kelting and Rice, 2013). 'Thomas' a gay respondent running a men's grooming salon noted Beckham's unique appeal inspiring clients to emulate his skincare practices,

> "it doesn't matter if they see them with moisturiser because they're David Beckham. So for your average guy – a builder or a lawyer or whatever I still think that they've got that step knowing that it's OK. But once they do they're absolutely fine… Celebrities like Beckham continue the trend towards skincare grooming" (Industry Respondent, 8).

Beckham continues to blend ideals of masculinity and thereby deflects any potentially feminising connotations associated with men's facial skincare as a male practice. 'David' an older, gay respondent in a busy salon for men's grooming suggested that David Beckham fails to engage with older men as a role model for facial skincare use to the same degree as for younger males,

> "everyone thinks that David Beckham is masculine but I think things are happening. His skincare is different than a lot of elderly football fans that are on the stands" (Industry Respondent, 10).

The suggestion that attitudes towards men's skincare are less about gender and more about an age perspective reflects the observation by Twigg (2013) in how men tend to be perceived as 'ageing' at a later age than women. Cashmore (2002; 2004) and Gee's (2014) assertions of Beckham's ability to enchant society as a key protagonist in embodying new ideals of masculinities may not appeal to all men. In the discourse of my

interviews, most respondents perceived Beckham as retaining appeal as reflected by 'Michael' an upper sixth former,

> "David Beckham he's respected but he's not famous for just his football but someone with a modelling background is probably better… well-groomed… and he would hit a wider audience" (Young Male, 4).

Beckham presents as an authentic celebrity figure with diverse role as father, footballer and model however, he may hold less influence since his recent public rant about not receiving a knighthood (Rayner, 2017). In terms of his image, David Beckham offers a way for men to retain hegemonic male identity and gain physical benefit when using facial skincare products. Cashmore and Parker (2003) suggest that Beckham's own grooming practices have a positive impact on consumers. This is supported by a consensus by respondents that gaining skin like Beckham is acceptable as highlighted by 'Thomas' a men's grooming salon professional,

> "the amount of people that come and show the guys a picture and say I want to look like David Beckham" (Industry Respondent, 8).

Beckham seems to transcend celebrity status as he mediates an ideal of masculinity that appeals to audiences regardless of age or sexuality hence heterosexual student 'Mike' attests,

> "I would follow more what a footballer did more than someone off reality TV I suppose… well David Beckham… a higher image" (Young Male, 6).

Fans of David Beckham have seen how he has come from working-class roots to become a leading footballer. His charity work suggests integrity, although this has been challenged recently suggesting that he is using it for tax evasion purposes (Raynor, 2017). Beckham offers a legitimate reason for men to be more concerned with their facial skin appearance. However, not all men are Beckham. Male identity may be compromised by an overt use of facial skincare products. Whilst Beckham may be an inspiration to improve appearance for some men in their use of facial skincare products, for others he may be seen as outdated and reminiscent of metrosexuality as a descriptor for those men who were deemed as most concerned with their appearance.

Metrosexuality as an Outdated Label

Simpson's (2004) concept of 'metrosexual' has been presented as a rationale for the facial skincare market being increasingly accepted by men (Hall *et al.,* 2012). However, my data shows that metrosexuality fails as a descriptor for men using facial skincare. When asked about changing client perceptions on men's skincare grooming 'David' a male salon owner who identifies as gay sees a descriptor such as metrosexuality is less clearly defined as a way of understanding current trends.

> "It's being redefined so I think the last era of the withery, dry looking heterosexual male is probably going to wither away and people are going to be seeing maybe more of a metrosexual or you are not going to be able to see the difference between the different groups because we're all blending into that" (Industry Respondent, 10).

Metrosexuality as a descriptor does not offer a comprehensive rationale for the acceptance of facial skincare product use by men. Labels as expressions of masculinity have less currency as constructions of masculinity are fluid (Anstiss and Lyons, 2014). 'David' remarked negatively on the use of labels thus,

> "the metrosexual is all of a sudden now a box that we can put humans – seem to like our little boxes to put people in… this feminisation of the human race it's getting more of a softening of the male. The macho male is now considered to be like a Neanderthal" (Industry Respondent, 10).

This view conflicts with the notion that 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2003) is an ideal for all men. However, there are residual patriarchal ideals that persist and offer a form of capital as there is a growing recognition of the need to improve appearance by using facial skincare products by men. A younger gay male respondent 'Tim' reflected upon this,

> "I think skincare is becoming a bit more in society. Everyone just seems to be taking more steps towards like dealing with masculinising it a bit" (Young Male, 9).

Das and Loach's (2011) findings indicate that those who look better, get ahead in the job market as highlighted by 'Mike' a heterosexual university student,

"I think in the modern day the guys… needs to look after himself" (Young Male, 6).

The concept of 'gender blurring' (Kacen, 2000) and more of an acceptance of facial skincare, especially by younger males, was a common theme in interviewees' responses as commented upon by 'Stuart' a gay male respondent who managed a *Clinique* counter.

"The whole skincare and make-up market is slowly becoming more androgynous… men are becoming more and more accustomed to skincare and not being too bothered about covering up a spot with a bit of concealer" (Industry Respondent, 5).

'Thomas' a gay respondent who managed a men's grooming salon in Manchester suggested specifically that the use of facial skincare by men is becoming less about gender,

"well it definitely doesn't make guys more feminine or anything like that… I think that's a big concern as in if I start to moisturise my face I might become effeminate. I think it's more and more acceptable" (Industry Respondent, 8).

Men Deferring to Women's Expertise

Women serve to deflect from the suggestion that men are overly interested in facial skincare product use. Men can suggest that they are not overly interested and thereby distance themselves to avoid links suggesting that use of such products may be feminising. This is another important means by which men protect their identity from the potential conflicts with masculine ideals that may arise from use of facial skincare products. As suggested by data from respondents highlighted in Chapter Seven, women retain important roles in influencing men's use of facial skincare products to improve their appearance. Societal views of 'acceptable' notions of masculinities are changing as the concept of a gender continuum replaces traditional norms of gender in modern society (Thorpe, 2010). When men feel out of their depth in making consumer choices such as facial skincare products, they have deferred to females to make decisions and influence the purchase (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2006). However, in terms of actual purchases there seems to be a continuing reluctance by men to shop for facial skincare in

person. 'Gemma' highlighted her experience at Manchester Airport in the duty free store,

> "it's dead rare you'll get a man go in and buy it (facial skincare products)" (Industry Respondent, 1).

In addition, 'Mike' a plasterer who took part in the male focus group participant reveals his reticence to enter what he perceives a feminine province,

> "I don't go to the shops – I don't do shops… she orders it… she's an *Avon* rep… it's what my wife would buy, that's what most men would come up with – what their other half would buy" (Focus Group, 3).

Diedrichs (2015) also asserts that women are the key influencers in men's facial skincare product purchases, and this was a theme that also featured strongly in my data. Women often provide an initial referral into a professional zone such as in the case of 'Lin' as an owner of a South Manchester facial salon catering mostly for women she highlighted,

> "if they can have an excuse to come in with their wives then it's easier than actually popping in by themselves" (Industry Respondent, 7).

Females seem to have an important influence in the initial decision to buy men's facial skincare (Hall *et al.,* 2012). Likewise, when facial skincare purchases are made on behalf of men, then consumption remains discreet. In this way, traditional notions of how men and women should act are retained such as women being the 'natural' consumers (Gupta and Gentry, 2016). Mothers and partners are seen as influential sources of advice on how to solve problems with facial skin due to their experience of using facial skincare for longer than men according to Souiden and Diagne's (2009) findings. My data endorses this as mothers are highlighted in how they play an important role in initiating facial skincare product purchase as suggested by 'Thomas' a manager of a men's salon specialising in skincare when asked about how do males start their use of skincare products.

> "I think a lot of guys start their product life with their mothers" (Industry Respondent, 8).

Although not all men wish to continue use with products after this initial introduction as they are sceptical of the benefits as suggested by 'Dec' when discussing skincare in a focus group with fellow water polo players,

> "my mum tried to get me to use it but then I stopped and it didn't make any difference" (Focus Group, D).

Schneider *et al.* (2013) discovered that women are the primary decision makers influencing grooming purchases as they are seen as having greater experience and expertise in this market. 'Matthew', a university student noted the experience of women seeking out price promotions as influencing future decision-making,

> "mum bought it – I'm not sure on what basis – probably because she saw it on offer… and then I just bought mine because it was cheaper that's the only reason" (Young Male, 3).

Hence, my data suggests that women are facilitators and educators in the consumption of male skincare. As the market for women's facial skincare is more established it makes sense that men would seek advice from females. Females therefore reduce what Beck (1999) highlights as the risk element involved by entering into a new grooming practice. Commenting upon this, 'Gemma' a skincare brand advisor suggested,

> "you'll always find that the woman will make the decision for the man",

whilst further noting the role women play in the purchase of skincare products for men she highlighted, "I would market to the wives, to women for men" (Industry Respondent, 1). The reticence of males to try 'beauty treatments' was commented upon 'Ashleigh' a female *Clarins* beauty consultant.

> "Men don't tend to book in for their facials – their wives or partners tend to buy it as a gift… and they realise that we're not scary people and they do really like it so they tend to re-book back in*" (Industry Respondent, 6).

By deferring to female partners and relatives, those men who have access to a female 'guide' are distancing themselves from suggesting they are overly concerned with improving their face. 'Lin' as a salon owner reflected upon how in her experience men tended to defer to their female partners expertise.

"Wives can tell them what to do and they feel the wife is going to have a better understanding of the skin" (Industry Respondent, 7).

As a result, men are retaining traditional notions surrounding vanity being more of a female concern. When mothers and wives are not available for advice, 'Drew' a gay undergraduate student highlighted how it would be out of the comfort zone for many males to ask male friends. When asked whether male friends would talk to each other about skincare he responded,

"I know lots of them… would feel embarrassed… female friends they would ask them… like their mum they'd probably feel more comfortable" (Young Male, 1).

Equally, some of the advice provided by women to men about facial skincare is seemingly unwanted by men who do not want to use products. 'Gaz' a media sales respondent in his twenties commented in the focus group with fellow water polo players how this was the case when he worked in a big office,

"there was a lot of girls and they often gave tips and advice that I didn't have to listen to but they gave it anyway" (Focus Group, G).

My data suggests that men defer to women for advice and avoid discussion with other men about facial skincare product use. Any initiated conversation around facial improvement and skincare seemingly serves to threaten male identity.

Skincare Discussions and Men

Respondents were asked if they would discuss skincare with other males. The general consensus was that men avoid talking about facial skincare. The topic is perceived as something that falls outside of men's natural conversations skincare retains a feminising connotation. Hence, 'Tim' a gay male student emphasised,

"I just don't think it's a very masculine thing to talk about skincare and moisturisers and stuff just because like there's a stigma around it all. It's quite a feminine subject so it's not something that boys talk about" (Young Male, 9).

Adams *et al.* (2010) highlight that men maintain status by avoiding any suggestion of feminising or narcissistic behaviour, similarly, 'Andy' a young male heterosexual client in a barbers remarked, "it's not the conversation you would have" (Industry Respondent, 2 Client An). By avoiding discussion of what can be perceived as a feminising topic, males are defending traditional ideals of how they should act. 'Sewerwyn' a Romanian heterosexual tattooist revealed his reluctance to speak about skincare,

> "I have a few friends, I know they use it then but we never really talk about it" (Industry Respondent, 4).

Asserting that facial skincare is not a discussion for men serves to reinforce hegemonic principles of how men are traditionally expected to behave. 'Drew' a young gay male student commented about whether he thought it was acceptable to talk about skincare with friends,

> "we wouldn't discuss it. They wouldn't admit it but they probably do use it... skincare products are usually traditionally related with females and not males... it's quite a recent thing for males to use it more... maybe in 5 or 10 years... it may be perfectly acceptable and it will be discussed but not at this stage it's not" (Young Male, 1).

The reluctance to talk about facial skincare has antecedents with Connell's (2011) observation of 'social embodiment'. This suggests that men understand the boundaries of acceptable subjects relating to masculine discourse. In view of this, 'Michael' a heterosexual sixth former recognised this was a 'culturally delicate' (Hall, 2015) topic for friends to enter into with him, but one that he was receptive to if broached.

> "They wouldn't know how you would react to them maybe because of the past stigma to it... would cause them to be uncertain about my reaction... I would say it's quite acceptable" (Young Male, 4).

Younger males remain conflicted about how they *should* behave to protect male identity (McCormack, 2014). Hence, 'Mike' a heterosexual undergraduate student highlights,

> "we talk about other stuff... I don't think lads come across it talking about it. Maybe they talk more about hair gel but not moisturiser" (Young Male, 6).

It seems that discourse outside of the normal boundaries between men continues to exist, as facial skincare is still perceived as 'antithetical' or taboo as a natural topic for discussion (Hall *et al.,* 2013). However, when discussed in the focus group in the community hall, this was not personally perceived as problematic by 'Tony' a 42 year-old Chinese British heterosexual IT manager,

> "it's not a taboo subject for me but it's not something that blokes talk about skincare" (Focus Group, 4).

However, the participant clearly accepts skincare is not an accepted topic for men generally. By not discussing facial skincare with contemporaries, men are retaining traditionally accepted notions of how they are expected to behave. Likewise, 'Tim' an openly gay male sixth former highlighted the boundaries that exist in accepted topics amongst males,

> "it's just not really a boy thing to talk about in theory... we don't really talk about it at school or whatever... I have spoken to people in the past about skin and everything but it's not like a regular thing" (Young Male, 9).

The prevailing position that men do not speak to other men about facial skincare unless it is on a functional advisory basis suggests that men do not seem to be able to disassociate with traditional ideals of how men should perform currently (Thorpe, 2010). An exception to skincare not being discussed amongst males is when a problem occurs with skin as highlighted by 'Tim',

> "if they've got something up with their skin I'll say you should try this but safe to say we don't really discuss it" (Young Male, 9).

The notion offered by respondents that males should never discuss facial skincare unless it is related to a problem resonates with how 'sticky masculinity' (Berggren, 2014) is used

for how emerging practices for men are problematic for traditional expectations for how men behave. 'Brad' reflects on how discussions about skincare are usually avoided,

"If it came up in conversation yeah but I wouldn't purposefully bring it up unless there was a need to… if they had been complaining that they had dry skin or like getting spotty or something I'd say that I'm using this and it's OK" (Young Male, 5).

Interestingly, 'Tommo' a barber pragmatically likened the use of facial skincare as only for remedy rather than as an ongoing practice.

"If I've not got a problem I'm not going to need to fix it" (Industry Respondent, 2 To).

Whilst men may use facial skincare products to retain looks, they avoid discussing the subject unless there is a legitimate need such as 'problem' skin and thereby retain ideals of masculinity. In response to whether he would ever have a conversation discussing skincare with other males, 'Tom' stated "it wouldn't really come up, only if I've got a spot" (Young Male, 2). 'Dec' a heterosexual male who participated in the focus group with water polo players gave his reasons for avoiding any discussion or use of facial skincare.

"I do think with like skincare for men it's not really a masculine thing to do so I don't do it myself but I can understand why younger men like younger boys especially wouldn't do it because it's not seen as the masculine thing to do so it's like a gender difference really" (Focus Group, D).

His disclosure of how he protects his male identity by avoiding any association with facial skincare as it is perceived as a feminine product is important. He does not wish to compromise ideals of masculinity that in his view would make him seem less masculine in the eyes of others but this may be an extreme example given that he is a water polo player. In view of the reluctance of men to openly discuss the benefits gained from using facial skincare products any enhanced knowledge a man may acquire from his expertise

gained from researching and using facial skincare products has to be downplayed to ensure he is not perceived as being vain or effeminate. As a result, improved self-confidence gained by better looking skin is internalised. This is appreciated when he looks in the mirror and admires the benefits of using facial moisturiser. Younger males may be more open to using facial skincare products. Nevertheless, men still recognise that it remains a topic that does not naturally align with male identity. However, they are seemingly more aware of the perceived scrutiny on appearance. Use of facial skincare products offers potential for improved appearance. The heightened social media presence has created an increased pressure amongst younger males to consider their facial skin more critically.

The 'Selfie' and Men

Younger generations are more aware of the perceived need to constantly improve appearance as highlighted by Mintel (2017). Respondents were asked specifically about their use of social media and the effect this may have on attitudes towards using skincare. 'Mich' a heterosexual upper sixth form respondent notes changing attitudes towards using skincare amongst younger males but does not link this to social media specifically,

> "I quite like to look after myself I like to keep myself active and look after my skin… I feel it's more of a natural thing to do. Look after yourself and I guess it's just like natural now going out through the generations" (Young Male, 7).

The advent of 'selfies' has, meanwhile, triggered a need for males to look good for the camera and has been focussed upon by a number of researchers (for example, Pounders *et al.,* 2016; Hakim, 2016). Some respondents demonstrated an awareness that good-looking skin offers better responses for images posted on social media. 'Tim' a gay sixth former commented on how insecurities about appearance arise when posing for 'selfies'.

> "Your skin's all red and spotty it's not something that you then want to put out into social media… people post pictures all the time of them looking great and then if you take a picture of yourself and there's spots or whatever you just don't feel like this is going to get as many likes" (Young Male, 9).

This highlights how those capturing the image seek to create an acceptable appearance as a form of 'impression management' as highlighted by Pounders *et al.* (2016). Confidence was an issue amongst some respondents in regards to taking 'selfies'*.* 'Bez' commenting in the focus group with water polo players said he felt it was too narcissistic to post an image of just himself, "I take photos with my mate but not selfies*"* (Focus Group, B). Whilst 'Dec' responded to this comment by admitting to taking 'selfies' but not sharing them,

> "I wouldn't upload it anywhere I just take it on my phone I don't upload it to anywhere to be honest… maybe to Facebook and maybe to *Twitter*" (Focus Group, D).

Although denying posting a 'selfie' to social media sites, 'Dec' considers sharing on *Instagram* as a more obvious self-promotion than other social media platforms. Hence, he contends,

> "*Instagram* you look good that's the whole purpose of it; *Facebook* I upload it so that my mum can see it because she likes to keep tabs on me" (Focus Group, D).

A lack of assurance was raised by 'Bez' in the focus group amongst water polo players,

> "I don't really have the confidence to stand there with my phone and take a selfie with my self so I just think well if you want to do it, do it but it doesn't really bother me" (Focus Group, B).

Whilst this respondent says he is not bothered, he does disclose how his self-evaluation of his appearance prevents him from posting 'selfies'. This reflects a wider culture that places pressure upon men to perfect their looks before sharing images online (see Tiidenberg and Cruz, 2015). Better facial skincare and the 'pressure to look good' has been highlighted as improving prospects for job opportunities (Das and Loach, 2011). A general need to consider appearance was noted by 'Mich' an undergraduate student,

> "you want to look good because the pressure is there mainly but it's also good too… people are more conscious of their image" (Young Male, 7).

It also provides more confidence to share 'selfies' with social media as highlighted by Jin and Phua (2014). The particular staging of 'selfies' before they are shared was noted by 'Gaz' in the focus group with water polo players,

> "they take like a hundred pictures of themselves to make them look in the best light and then just post them up to show off" (Focus Group, G).

The need to prepare a perfected image before it is shared highlights how important it is to create an illusion of perfection to others as part of identity. Identity issues are key to how younger males negotiate the value of facial skincare in enhancing their overall appearance as 'Tim' a gay student respondent indicates, "you want to have nice, clear skin" (Young Male, 9). The proliferation of 'selfies' were highlighted in a negative way as the pervasiveness of 'selfie' culture is seen as a problem by 'Gaz' in response to a general discussion in the focus group amongst water polo players about how it seems unnecessary,

> "I had it at the train station yesterday blocking my way" (Focus Group, G).

Interestingly, 'selfie' taking is likened to not being part of the 'real world' so more part of an illusory practice by 'Bez' a water polo player in the focus group,

> "it like gets in the way of doing stuff in the real world that winds me up" (Focus Group, B).

Watching vloggers on YouTube was highlighted as a way of gaining confidence by 'Loz' in the focus group discussion although this was met with some hilarity by fellow players,

> "daily blogs about his life… he is quite motivating for every day and he gives you guidance and helps you to get better with your life" (Focus Group, L).

When asked if he would view vloggers for tips on facecare he refuted this. Seemingly, vloggers were not perceived as being as influential as the pressure placed on men to look good for 'selfies' amongst the respondents in my research. Equally, it could be that 'Loz' felt that he would be ridiculed by his team mates if he commented further on his use of vlogs. However, this is an important media influence for some as highlighted previously (for example, Maguire, 2015; Snelson, 2015) and provides a way of normalising the use of skincare for men.

Younger Males and Skincare

The shift towards younger male consumers understanding the importance of improving their appearance is recognised by the industry (Mintel, 2017). Interestingly, this is commented upon by my respondents as a way of influencing change within older generations too, similar to the expertise currently held by women. 'Mich' an undergraduate student reflects,

> "I think people are more conscious of their image now and everything like that… it will change as my generation end up buying them and suggesting they use them for the older generation for parents and grandparents. Men will start using them more" (Young Male, 7).

Looking good is increasingly a major component of teenage life (Cavendish, 2015). 'Gemma' a female skincare brand advisor notes how younger males are more conscious of their appearance.

> "The younger generation are becoming more aware of their skin so you'll find that early to late teens, early twenties are now actively buying skincare… younger men are quite open to looking after themselves" (Industry Respondent, 1).

Diedrichs and Lee (2010) have highlighted a greater trend amongst younger male using skincare which retains currency by 'Ashleigh' a *Clarins* skincare consultant, "younger men are using it more than older men definitely!" (Industry Respondent, 6). The younger audience have a growing realisation of the potential offered to enhance their appearance as previously highlighted by Hall (2015). Yoo *et al.* (2012) also found that teenagers are less inhibited about the use of grooming products and more knowledgeable of the benefits as suggested by 'Matthew' a heterosexual undergraduate student. "I basically use it because I need it" (Young Male, 3). The grooming rituals suggested by McCracken (1986) hold increasing sway as men use more products. 'Tim' a gay sixth form student highlights changing grooming practices of what is considered accepted as masculine behaviour.

> "I feel like society is becoming more acceptable to things… the progression of skincare will become like something that doesn't have the feminisation with it, it

will just be something that everyone does as part of your daily routine" (Young Male, 9).

The increased use of make-up by younger males noted by respondents resonates with Frank (E. 2014) and Anstiss and Lyons's (2014) contention that heterosexual males are increasingly embracing more feminised beauty consumption practices. 'David' a male grooming salon owner who identifies as gay remarked upon how male use of makeup especially amongst footballers is influencing male grooming.

> "Conventions are breaking down. You see a lot more in the younger males that are actually using eyeshadow, eyeliner, they're accentuating their eyes and they're still footballers" (Industry Respondent, 10).

The active consumption of facial skincare products by younger consumers demonstrates a movement away from traditional ideals of older consumers such as men don't wear make-up (Goddard and Patterson, 2000). This presents opportunities to change their embodied self through treatments and make-up (Ricciardelli *et al.*, 2010). 'Stuart' a gay male advisor for *Clinique* highlighted shifting grooming practices that conflict with hegemonic ideals for men,

> "younger men are more into using things like masks, treatment products as opposed to just wash and moisturise… that's growing" (Industry Respondent, 5).

Thus, reinforcing Beasley's (2012) suggestions that men are forming their own notions of gender identity in deciding whether to embrace facial skincare product use. A move towards greater introspection in relation to image and expectations amongst peers has resulted in more awareness of facial skin as a liminal feature creating a greater desire for men to strive for healthier looking skin. Hence, 'Matthew' a heterosexual student highlights the need for constant scrutiny of appearance,

> "there's like more pressure to look your best most of the time" (Young Male, 3).

As a result, respondents suggest that facial skincare products are a legitimate feature of grooming with younger males as suggested by 'Michael' a heterosexual sixth former,

"it's more accepted for younger people to be more conscious of their appearance in general and then skincare is part of that and past generations don't seem to care too much for their appearance" (Young Male, 4).

Nevertheless, this increased focus on appearance for younger males creates further pressure on the need to conform to ideals as part of identity for males. Critically, unattainable ideals for younger males to emulate have been suggested as a trigger leading to body dysmorphia issues (see Farr, 2013) and is highlighted by 'Lin' a beauty salon professional.

"Teenage boys market... they've been linked to bulimia, anorexia, how shattering it is for their confidence, etc. that's actually what got me into beauty therapy because a good friend had acne at school... and the boy will come in and he won't like it so much but they are bothered underneath about having the skin problems" (Industry Respondent, 7).

Indeed, facial skincare could be part of what Bauman (1968) refers to as a 'rite of passage' for contemporary younger males. The need to avoid ageing is a concern that younger men may not consider but 'Thomas' a gay manager of *The Gentry* a male grooming salon highlighted how a growing awareness that ageing is considered in a negative light will change behaviour.

"Younger men that want to prevent wrinkles in the future... they will buy it" (Industry Respondent, 8).

Facial skincare product use for men holds less of a stigma for younger males. This suggests that traditional notions that it is a feminising practice hold less sway with this age group. Certainly, using facial skincare products offers a way of differentiating them from their father's generation. The younger generation can exercise their knowledge and use of facial skincare products more freely. Younger males can use men's facial skincare products without being overly concerned about traditional expectations and attitudes in relation to how men *should* avoid any practice that diminishes masculinity. When discussing gender differences to skincare attitudes and consumption, an interesting point was raised by 'Adam' a heterosexual sixth former highlighting how men's facial skincare is becoming more acceptable for the younger male generation.

> "I would say the discrimination there is more with age than with gender… I know
> with moisturisers and that sort of thing I would still go towards the 'for men'
> section" (Young Male, 10).

Hence, how age influences attitudes towards men's facial skincare use is highlighted by my data.

Older Skin Concerns

The prevention of signs of ageing provides a legitimising factor in relation to younger men accessing facial skincare products (Ojala *et al.,* 2016). This is in contrast to a perceived expectation that older men are not expected to be as engaged with facial skincare practices. 'Hegemonic' ideals that may still be held by older men, are seen as outdated by younger males that may be embracing an array of beauty treatments (Duncanson, 2015). When discussing the potential of age as a factor in using men's skincare, 'Drew' a gay undergraduate student commented upon how he perceived that there are generational differences in attitudes towards use of facial skincare products.

> "Dad's just a man's man… my Grandad gives me a funny look – he's like what are
> you doing? I think as we get older it will be acceptable then because we've grown
> up with it being acceptable" (Young Male, 1).

The older market may still perceive the market as 'culturally delicate' (Hall *et al.,* 2013). 'David' a gay older beauty salon owner surmised that older men failing to engage in the use of facial skincare products have been left behind.

> "The older ones that are 65 plus they are probably in a ditch somewhere. They
> haven't kind of followed through" (Industry Respondent, 10).

This can equally be a defence of traditional notions of how men should act by distancing themselves from facial skincare for men. Older men may be retaining 'hegemonic masculine' (Connell, 2003) principles by resisting consumption of such products. Hence, 'Thomas' who identifies as gay reflected on how younger males are more likely to come in for facials into the men's salon he manages,

"the older generation are a bit scared in a way of moisturising because it's just not what you would do. It's not a manly thing in their eyes" (Industry Respondent, 8).

The decision to use facial skincare products literally sorts the men out from the boys as suggested by 'Ashleigh' a female *Clarins* consultant, "my Dad… he doesn't think it's manly" (Industry Respondent, 6). As a result, fathers seem to cling to traditional ideas that men should eschew facial skincare and suggests as commented upon by 'Mich' an undergraduate who lives in the North East,

"my dad's… generation would be more 'oh we don't need that and it's a woman's thing' and very stereotypical about looking after your skin" (Young Male, 7).

Whilst, the younger generation of sons are more readily embracing facial skincare routines. A more 'inclusive' notion of masculinity by some males is clearly contrasted by the 'safer' ideals of masculinity sought by others (Anderson, 2011). There is a clear steer towards the trend for heterosexual men becoming 'agents for change' (Jarvis, 2015). This is evidenced by respondents who perceive little difference between various masculinity labels as expectations for men blur. Hence, 'Paul' an undergraduate at Bristol notes,

"I think perhaps it's the last kind of macho, masculine generation that doesn't really mind about taking care of skin… I think it was associated with quite a female thing to use moisturisers and things. Now I think males would think more about their appearance" (Young Male, 8).

The use of facial skincare provides an influence in changing ideals for masculine identity.

Conflicting Masculinity Ideals

How men attain better facial skin whilst protecting identity remains problematic. The facial skincare market is still perceived by some to create 'identity vulnerability' for consumers (Tuncay and Otnes, 2008). Use of such products therefore should be avoided to protect traditional male values (Ulrich, 2013). My data suggests that generational notions linking to identity have contributed towards some men not using skincare products. In relation to his father and grandfather's avoidance of facial skincare products, 'Drew' a gay undergraduate student suggests,

"they just maybe feel uncomfortable about it – maybe judged… they might consider it effeminate like and challenges their masculinity… stop messing with that! That's not what man does!" (Young Male, 1).

Differences in facial skincare use suggest that constructs of 'norms' in society possibly held by older men (Goffman, 1979) are challenged by changing attitudes of younger males. Ideals linked to how men are viewed in relation to facial skincare have changed over time, as noted by 'Daniel' a (heterosexual) male barber,

"I think they were brought up maybe not using certain products on their face and it was normal for a bloke to wash his face and that was about it" (Industry Respondent, 3).

However, gender identity is a malleable construct (Connell, 2009) and those men using facial skincare products are perceived as manipulating current ideas as suggested by 'Daniel',

"they are more after looking after their selves aren't they but then again this day and age I think it doesn't matter too much" (Industry Respondent, 3).

It seems that men who embrace facial skincare are contesting outdated views. Some respondents noted that men who feel that their masculine ideals are compromised might perceive facial skincare products as a feminising influence as suggested by 'Mike' as a second year geography student.

"I'd say that there's a bit of a stigma to some degree in terms of like masculinity but apart from that I would say it's personal choice" (Young Male, 6).

There was a realisation that full acceptance of male facial skincare may be years away, highlighted by 'Lin' a female beauty salon owner.

"They think it's too female orientated… not macho enough for them… it's just going to be a few more years to keep changing attitudes… I think it's the macho image that's the hardest" (Industry Respondent, 7).

This draws out the importance of O'Neill's (2015) notion that whilst men may look different they still may not think differently. There seems to be an undercurrent of

traditional values in relation to facial skincare being something that men are not traditionally associated with. This resonates with Simpson's (2006) retrosexual typology of men pursuing 'manly' activities to assert their masculine status. Whilst my data does not suggest that men act in a retrosexual manner in their use of skincare, the descriptor is useful to place a context around how men may 'hype' traditional ideals of masculinity to counter any suggestion that they are more feminised by using such products. There are a spectrum of ideas in terms of men's skincare use still being 'girly' as suggested by 'David' a gay owner of a beauty salon.

> "There's still that group of people maybe that don't want to use anything on their skin or their hair because they find it emasculating – de-masculine" (Industry Respondent, 10).

This is in contrast to the other extreme highlighted by 'Ashleigh' as a *Clarins* consultant who reflected upon trends she was recognising in men's use of skincare and of men wanting to indulge themselves with grooming.

> "Their feminine side… some men do like to have a little bit of a pamper as well" (Industry Respondent, 6).

The practice of men using facial skincare products offers a cultural norm for a new 'hybridized' 'hegemonic masculine' ideal as suggested by Bridges (2014) in how newly emerging beautifying practices are blending with 'macho' posturing by some men. However, 'Tommo' a barber surmised as heterosexual commented upon the need for simplicity in routines.

> "I needed a moisturiser my problem was that I wasn't going to be able to incorporate a moisturiser into my regular routine because I'm a man" (Industry Respondent, 2 Client To).

Conflicting approaches towards the use of men's facial skincare in my data may be as a result that gender is multifaceted (Robinson *et al.*, 2011) and men constantly reappraise ideals of how men should behave. 'Stuart' a gay male *Clinique* consultant highlighted how in his view there was a relaxing of attitudes towards gender identity and facial skincare.

"The whole perception that skincare is girly has kind of gone out the window with the whole kind of gender identity kind of breakdown. People don't care so much these days" (Industry Respondent, 5).

Butler (2004) contends that masculinity has to be 'denaturalised' to understand why men want to look good whilst being aware of the issues this may trigger in terms of suggesting 'vanity' or 'girly' behaviour. In addition, *Clinique* advisor 'Stuart' raised the visual and self-esteem benefits of using facial skincare,

"skincare is there to be used because it makes your skin feel better and it makes it look better" (Industry Respondent, 5).

This links to the potential for gaining improved skin appearance that contributes to men's self-confidence as part of 'looking-glass capital' whilst retaining identity. Ojala *et al.* (2016) highlights the importance of using facial skincare products as a defence against ageing, which is seen as leading towards loss of power in society, and my respondents raised anti-ageing and trying to look good longer as the key trigger to consume skincare. 'David' light-heartedly reflected on his use of skincare as a defence against ageing, highlighting how he liked the discreet benefits it provided.

"I use skin cream, skin care… hopefully it's making a difference but it's not noticeable that I've got something on… as money gets more readily available persons prioritise and the whole idea of chasing after youth" (Industry Respondent, 10).

The importance of the moisturiser not being noticeable by this gay respondent is important to note. Seemingly, men want to improve their appearance but how this is achieved is personal to the product user. Again, this links to the discreet nature of the mirror as a way of contemplating improving skin whilst retaining identity. Nevertheless, there are still those staunch resistors towards using facial skincare products, as it is not considered important in terms of what a man needs to do to maintain their image. 'Andy' discussing his opposition to men's skincare with the researcher whilst in the presence of 'Tommo' his barber took a defensive attitude towards why he thought it was not necessary.

"Your skin just looks like what it does... I think it's vanity" (Industry Respondent, 2 Client An).

Younger men are using facial skincare as a form of empowerment to challenge outdated constructs of gender. By doing so, they are informing accepted practices in society and therefore, as Beasley (2012) suggests, they are thereby contributing towards gender constructs at a given time and within a cultural context. Gay men are apparently noted for their greater knowledge and expertise in relation to seemingly more feminised practices (Hall, 2015). However, in relation to facial skincare products for men, a greater expertise conflicts with how men are traditionally expected to behave.

Gay Men's Skincare Expertise

The gay market does not contend with the fear of being labelled effeminate and men can actively pursue products to enhance their looks with products such as facial skincare. Gay men therefore offer a powerful audience to market to (Ulrich, 2013). Participants were asked about their thoughts on whether gay male consumers had differing attitudes towards men's skincare. Themes emerged concerning perceptions held by industry respondents and in particular, 'Tommo' a male barber surmised as heterosexual suggested gay men are more feminised,

"if you're gay the chances are that you've got more of an effeminate outlook so the chances are you would be more inclined to use more products" (Industry Respondent, 2 Client To).

However, this viewpoint clearly fails to appreciate that not all gay men within a gender spectrum identify the same. Some respondents recognised the notion of gay men not being compartmentalised by 'gender' and being more at ease with a whole range of facial skincare and cosmetic products. There seems to be a greater confidence in improving self-image without the need for assigning this to expected norms of gender constructs previously highlighted by Thorpe (2010). The semantic interplay of what is considered male or female behaviour is suggested as having less influence for gay men by 'Stuart' a gay male *Clinique* consultant who highlights the fact that,

> "the gay market is much more open to kind of buying a lot more products – a lot
> more skincare and a lot more kind of vanity type products" (Industry Respondent,
> 5).

The willingness of gay men to venture into using a range of beauty products has been
highlighted by Ulrich (2013). This is further commented upon by 'Lin' a beauty salon
owner,

> "the gay market – stunning because they are so product-oriented and they have
> regular facials and they do all their homecare themselves. We just need to
> educate our males more" (Industry Respondent, 7).

Facial skincare has provided an opportunity for gay men at ease with their sexuality to
become more proficient in their knowledge and use of products as part of what O'Neill
(2015) terms the new 'gender scape'. This suggests a greater openness or 'embodiment'
of individual ideals of men as identified by Anstiss and Lyons (2014). The gay market was
coined 'the pink pound', a phrase devised by the Guardian newspaper in 1984 to describe
the purchasing power of the LGBT community due to the amount of disposable income
spent on products concerned with appearance (Quest, 1998). Gay men are seen as early
adopters of fashions and innovations adoption of various practices such as the use of
make-up increasingly by men (Ulrich, 2013). 'Gemma' in her expertise of male skincare
consumer behaviour at the airport reflects,

> "the gay market is obviously very aware of skincare... I mean you know the gay
> market will even purchase bronzers… they are very comfortable with who they are
> and much more comfortable in their own skin and they want to look good and feel
> good – they don't have the same sort of… I suppose 'gender' is the right word"
> (Industry Respondent, 1).

Many of the respondents highlighted how gay consumers seem to be moving beyond
mere facial skincare and using the underpinning scientific rationale as a key influencer in
purchase decisions. 'Lin' a female beauty professional remarked thus:

> "in the gay world they're starting to look at the science side of it… I've got a lot of
> gay friends and they're forever sending me snaps of them and they've had a

beauty night and they're wearing green masks and things like that" (Industry respondent, 7).

This also highlights the influence of *Snapchat* for sharing images in a positive manner on social media (Snelson, 2015). As previously highlighted in Chapter Seven, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* places gay men in positions of authority on how to improve appearance for heterosexual men which suggests that gay men have a form of 'capital' that they are using to influence others. Societal notions linking gay men with femininity (Connell, 2003) offer a legitimising rationale enabling gay men to be more expert than heterosexual counterparts in relation to skincare for men. Thus, facial skincare is something that traditional men can use but need not to not seem to be overly concerned with. However, men benefit from an improved facial skin and can translate as a personal form of capital suggested in 'looking-glass capital'. Gender identity is not compromised in relation to gay men using and exhibiting greater expertise concerning facial skincare products. Gay men are behaving in a manner that aligns with expected societal gendered norms as a gay man. Openness about the use of facial skincare products is less accepted as a traditional ideal of masculinity.

Facial Skincare as a Discreet Male Resource

By using facial skincare products in a discreet way, men protect their gender identity and they directly benefit from using such products. In consideration of a question on whether men are becoming more open about their use of facial skincare, 'Lin' a female beauty salon owner, offered optimism for future change, but raised the continued need for discreet use of male facial skincare products.

> "It's still that very secret thing isn't it? Ten years' time it's going to be different again" (Industry Respondent, 7).

At present, men may see the need to use facial skincare to improve their appearance but they also understand the importance of retaining traditional notions of how men are expected to behave. In respect of their father's need for secrecy when using facial skincare, a 'Gemma' offered an interesting comment,

> "he would use it but he wouldn't be seen to be using it" (Industry Respondent, 1).

This ensures that traditional ideals of masculinity are not compromised whilst benefiting from a healthier skin as a form of 'looking-glass capital'. There is a continuing reluctance to purchase men's facial skincare instore and the need to maintain secrecy identified by respondents highlights the appeal of online purchases for male audiences (see Niu, 2013). Thus, males can purchase grooming products secretly without the fear of recrimination from others. Buying online is an easier option to overcome any reticence about openly shopping instore highlighted by Hall *et al.* (2013). Peer reviews are also a relevant tool to support men in deciding which skincare brands and products to buy (Hall *et al.,* 2012). This is highlighted by 'Brad' commenting thus,

> "I tend to stay with online shop and Amazon and Tesco. Their own reviews… illustrates that someone has actually bought it" (Young Male, 5).

The Internet is a key source of information for younger male skincare consumers and offers a more discreet way of purchasing products (Hall *et al.,* 2012; 2013). The trend towards online purchases was highlighted by 'Thomas' a manager of a male grooming salon,

> "we see more products bought online than actually in the salon… there's a lot of guys out there that are buying it so… a bit too shy to go in the shops to buy it but there's a lot of guys experimenting with the products out there seeing the results" (Industry respondent, 8).

Not only are younger males buying facial skincare products online, as Niu (2013) suggests, but they are also seeking advice from testimonials posted on the internet for skincare (Segal and Podoshen, 2012; Hall *et al.,* 2013). 'Tim' a gay upper sixth former searched for specific types of facial skincare online that he perceived as being better for his skin,

> "just doing research on the Internet …. It's all natural and supposedly can be more effective I bought it myself originally but my parents do buy it for me now*"* (Young Male, 9).

'Ashleigh' drawing upon experience as a *Clarins* beauty practitioner predicted the practice would become easier once the initial resistance to men's facial skincare consumption was overcome.

"Once they start buying it they love it then they continue coming back to it" (Industry Respondent, 6).

A key defence for men using skincare products was the functional properties offered through usage.

Skincare's Instrumental Use

Many respondents identified their use of facial skincare products as a purely functional element of consumption possibly appealing to heteronormative ideals of how men should negotiate the idea of buying facial skincare products (Elliott and Elliott, 2005). 'Gemma' suggested that in her experience of men buying skincare in the airport shop,

"Men don't really think about age prevention… functionality will sell a product to a man! Simplicity as well" (Industry Respondent, 1).

This comment from a female brand advisor's experience of men's consumer habits was endorsed by 'Drew's' view,

"I just use a moisturiser and that's it – *Nivea* – because I've got dry skin - that's the only reason why I use it" (Young Male, 1).

Traditional expectations of how men are expected to behave in relation to facial skincare products suggests that use by men for practical rather than for beauty purposes aligns with traditional versions of masculinity. Metaphors such as facial skincare products playing a supporting role as 'sporting equipment' emerged. This descriptor resonates with what Vokey *et al.* (2013) term 'hyper-masculinity' where traditional ideals of masculinity are adopted to maintain accepted bodily modes of behaviour (Nayak and Kehily, 2006). Hence, 'Gemma' reflects on various male travellers that seek her advice when buying from the airport shop,

"they are quite individual in the way that they want to buy… skiers, snowboarders… they see it is actually a piece of sporting equipment – it isn't skincare, it's not a toiletry now it's like having my snowboard or my skis" (Industry Respondent, 1).

'Loz' a water polo player drew upon the functional benefits that moisturiser provided him,

> "it's oily and good for my skin… to protect it from the chlorine and also from outside" (Focus Group, L).

Martens (2009) contends that consumption activities are gendered so this purely functional approach by men is typical as men generally feel out of their depth when it comes to facial skincare consumption. A recurring reason for initiating the use of facial skincare was to cure or prevent dry skin. This was seen as more important than use for age prevention or vanity purposes. Such a functional and rational approach resonates with the instrumental reasons provided by men reflecting on their purchase decision (Segal and Podoshen, 2012). 'Drew' a gay undergraduate student reviewed his reasons for starting to use skincare,

> "I use moisturiser 'erm Simple moisturiser… when I started shaving because I started getting dry skin… I thought my skin's not meant to be like this so I need something" (Young Male, 1).

Skin conditions and medical needs were offered as another reason for use as commented upon by 'Matthew' an undergraduate student,

> "I use moisturisers and things like that and eczema things… I get really dry skin especially after shaving… if needs must then I'll buy it" (Younger Male, 3).

By adopting a perceived physical need such as dry skin as the reason for using facial skincare, men are retaining traditional associations linking men's body image as something for functionality rather than vanity.

> "To stop my skin from being dry after because I manual shave" (Focus Group 4).

If men are seen as using facial skincare products to improve image rather than as a stated need then this compromises heteronormative ideals linked to masculine identity as suggested by 'Adam' a heterosexual upper sixth former,

> "I've got one friend… he's vain, you would describe it as feminine the way he is" (Younger Male, 10).

A perceived need such as alleviation of dry skin offers a legitimate reason for men to moisturise, however if friends place too much emphasis on the beautifying benefits this is perceived in a negative manner as in the example by this young respondent. Buying for practical reasons such as to alleviate skin problems is recognised as a rationale used by men especially true when men buy products that are outside of the established buying repertoire associated with males (see Segal and Podoshen, 2012). 'Tim' a gay upper sixth student when asked what reasons would he buy skincare for reflected thus,

> "I think a man would only go out to buy if there was something wrong because that's essentially how a man works!" (Younger Male, 9).

How men identify with gender and role attitudes is important to functionality. Men may seek to assert their masculinity when they consume in a realm that has antecedents in the female domain. They do this by adopting a pragmatic and functional attitude to products such as male facial skincare (Ulrich, 2013). 'Tim' demonstrates a growing confidence in his choice of facial skincare products.

> "It was initially for like how to get rid of spots and stuff and then through that I started using the *Lush* moisturiser as well – a good brand" (Younger Male, 9).

Functionality as a key consumption trigger by males has been identified by numerous authors (for example, Featherstone, 1982; Bocock, 1993; Mort, 1996; Ritzer, 1999; Souiden and Diagne, 2009) and is argued to be the main impetus for many men buying facial skincare. Goddard and Patterson (2000) and Kim *et al.* (2002) highlight how functionality is often raised as a key rationale for consumption by men when they are buying products as opposed to purchases linked to hedonic values (White, 2000). Nonetheless, functionality is perceived as being secondary to pleasure in consumption (Bauman, 2012). It may be that men are proffering functionality as a key traditional rationale. By doing so, men are aligning their use of facial skincare products with accepted notions of how men *should* behave in relation to retain identity while enjoying the benefits of the products.

Concluding Thoughts

There seems to be a change taking place amongst younger male consumers who readily embrace the practice of facial skincare. However, whilst younger males may use facial skincare products they are still reluctant to openly talk about this or seek advice from friends. Advice on facial skincare is generally sought from those in the industry in a professional capacity much like approaching a doctor or dentist. Facial skincare for men seemingly remains a secretive practice that younger males assume their counterparts use but it is not a natural topic for discussion.

Facial skincare for men remains 'culturally sensitive' (Hall, 2015) in terms of implying a more feminising version of masculinity by using such products. My findings highlight how heterosexual men can retain identity by deferring to women or gay men for advice on products. Thus, facial skincare retains a 'natural' habitus with women or gay men. This helps to retain traditional notions of how men should naturally behave (Bourdieu, 2002). In terms of those people encouraging younger males to buy facial skincare, a key source triggering the purchase in the first place tends to be mothers or girlfriends. This suggests that not only do women hold greater knowledge and expertise on skincare but also distances men from what may be perceived as a female concern so that traditional societal ideals associated with masculinity are maintained. External influences that may lead towards how facial skincare forms a part of male consumption such as advertising and celebrities often lack credibility for male consumers. Celebrities and models are perceived as having better access to extensive high-end grooming products and their images in the media may be digitally enhanced. This may lead to a sense of disenchantment with the viewer's own sense of self.

Functionality is a tenet of how men rationalise their consumption choices so that facial skincare becomes acceptable in terms of how it is not for vanity or narcissism but purely on a practical need basis for heterosexual men. However, vanity does enter insidiously as a reason for using facial skincare products by men. This has been triggered, specifically by the emergence of 'selfies' fuelling a perceived need amongst men to scrutinise their appearance. Better looking skin can improve the number of 'likes' attracted linked to images posted on social media. This is an important trend especially followed by younger

audiences and thus contributes towards how the face is contemplated as a site for ongoing scrutiny in a digital space.

On reflection, a key consideration when looking at my data is the question of sexuality. Specifically, whether or not my respondents' sexuality equalled a propensity to embrace a skincare regime actively and openly. There was no real difference in attitudes towards skincare use by heterosexual and homosexual respondents. The notion that gay men are more open and expert in their knowledge of skincare products was not evident in my data however this may be as a result of younger males who were interviewed were still not experienced in their use of products. Heterosexual and homosexual participants alike acknowledged the need for discreet use and avoidance of any discussion of skincare with other males. 'Looking-glass capital' articulates how my participants regardless of their sexuality enjoy the benefits of using skincare discreetly.

In terms of any differences that group dynamics may have played in the openness of responses given by participants I felt that the one-to-one interviews facilitated a more frank and honest exchange of views than focus groups. The first focus group in the community hall facilitated an open and frank exchange of ideas amongst participants who did not know each other. Interestingly, the social dynamics of the second focus group were reflected in how contributors clearly responded to one another, often through humour. The various interjections and quiet asides that were exercised by three of the participants in the focus group with water polo players meant that 'Loz' failed to embellish further on his use of skincare products or discuss how vlogs helped improve his self-esteem. In the interview in the barber's shop, it was interesting to discuss skincare with 'Andy' whilst 'Tommo' was present. Equally 'Theo' also in 'Tommo's' presence created a different dynamic to the discussions. There was a defensive repartee at times where any suggestion that skincare was being used for vanity was underplayed. 'Theo' emphasised his scar gained from fighting as a reason to use *Bio Oil* as a way of minimising its' prominence.

Key themes that have emerged from this study are further considered and discussed in the final chapter in which I shall return to the concept of 'looking-glass capital' in order to highlight how a feminising product is consumed without it damaging ideals of masculinity.

Chapter Nine. Discussion and Conclusion

> *"We always imagine, and in imagining share, the judgements of the other mind. A man will boast to one person an action – say some sharp transaction in trade – which he would be ashamed to own to another"* (Cooley, 1902: 165).

Introduction

This thesis draws attention to how heteronormative ideals of masculinity are challenged by the inception of facial skincare products available to men. Having established this as an under-researched area, the intention of the study has been to enlighten our understanding of how men's facial skincare is negotiated in the context of male identity. Therefore, this research contributes to understanding how men protect masculine ideals in relation to evolving pressures placed upon them to use appearance-enhancing products. Any suggestion that males are too concerned with their appearance as a result of using facial skincare products is avoided. Neoliberal ideals encouraging greater freedoms for individuals to transform their body as a site for development, through a range of products and services, has triggered a discourse surrounding appearance and what this may mean for evolving masculinities. Looking good matters in contemporary society. However, if men place too much emphasis on seeking to improve their appearance then they are in danger of being deemed to be narcissistic, vain and less masculine as a result. In this final chapter I thus reflect upon the notion of 'looking-glass capital' to describe how males use facial skincare, framed in acceptable terms for 'the self' as part of their masculine identity.

Looking-Glass Capital

Cooley's (1902) 'looking-glass self' has been developed in this thesis to incorporate Connell's (2003) notion that men may be denoting 'hegemonic masculinity' traits when they use a potentially feminising product (facial skincare). Male skincare serves as an example of changing ideals for masculinity. Men's skincare use may suggest a more feminised masculinity however, 'looking-glass capital' provides a rationale for men to use such products and protect their identity. These two ideas combined offer a way to avoid any suggestion that male facial skincare consumption compromises masculine ideals. I

have highlighted the reasons why 'gender capital' which Bridges (2009: 93) suggests "allows us to discuss the ways in which some things count as masculine or feminine" is not appropriate to rationalise male use of facial skincare products. Male onlookers applauded the body capital that was created by male body-builders expressing hegemonic ideals by building strong, muscular bodies (Bridges, 2009). My data indicates a consensus amongst my respondents that facial skin improvement is not a natural discussion topic amongst men. Skincare use for vanity or narcissistic purposes contradicts currently accepted ideals for males. Thus, my respondents adhered to discussion topics that are more accepted and expected for masculine behaviour. The exception indicated in my data is for 'appropriate' or 'legitimate' discussions involving specific problems with facial skin. It is still considered a 'feminine' subject with stigma attached to it. 'Cultural capital' as part of 'gender capital' is not appropriate to explain the way that men accrue a form of 'capital' as a result of using facial skincare products. The suggestion that men would openly exhibit their education and knowledge of skincare in acknowledgement of 'cultural capital' would undermine traditional notions of masculine ideals. As highlighted in Chapter Eight, men's facial skincare use is discreet, is not discussed openly unless prompted, and remains understated. This helps men to use facial skincare products without conflicting with notional 'orthodox' expectations for masculinity. Vanity may indeed form a key driver for men using facial skincare products however this is underplayed in order that men can maintain their masculine status. Hence, 'gender capital' does not adequately describe how male use of facial skincare products provides an appropriate sense of 'self' personally and in the eyes of others.

When men are placed in environments that conflict with ideals of masculinity, 'sticky masculinity' (Berggren, 2014) has been used as a descriptor to highlight the difficulties that persist with male identity. This exemplifies how men continue to be associated with hegemonic principles (Connell, 2003) in so far as that bodies are entwined with culturally established signs of masculinity. Some men will dominate and subordinate others, hence hegemonic masculinity suggests power over other men which is seen as a sign of success in a neoliberal context (Lindisfarne and Neale, 2016). I argue that 'looking-glass capital' offers males a defence when expectations of gender are conflicted. I have illustrated how men rationalise their use of skincare in various ways to gain acceptance through their

male grooming routines. Whilst men may indeed beautify themselves, the experience is justified in hegemonic terms and this allows men to retain their masculine status.

Traditionally it has been acceptable or even expected for women to improve their looks. The increased focus on 'aesthetic labour' (Elias *et al.* 2017) whereby neoliberal ideals surrounding greater freedom for the individual to 'improve' themselves has increased the pressure on women to look beautiful. The emphasis on enhancing looks is not articulated in the same way for men, hence they frame their use of skincare in instrumental terms that deflect from any suggestions that they might be vain. As previous studies have suggested, there are many benefits that an improved skin appearance may offer men such as greater opportunities in the workplace (Aldin, 2007), enhanced salaries (Blackburn, 2014) and arguably better prospects for relationships (Ojala *et al.,* 2016). These provide 'acceptable' reasons for men to venture into the beauty zone that also fit with traditional expectations of men that can translate as a form of capital.

Rationalising Male Skincare Use

Cooley's (1902) notion of the 'looking-glass self' was developed over a century ago and the importance of a critical appraisal on a person's appearance by others has not changed. Men are increasingly aware of the apparent requirement to improve their facial appearance but are doing so on their own terms to ensure that they are not perceived as less masculine as a result. Masculinities have changed greatly in the neoliberal era (Lindisfarne and Neale, 2016). In Chapter Three masculinities were explored in consideration of how gender is socially constructed and fluid. The focus on male beauty and improving appearance has blurred the lines between traditional notions of how men and women are expected to behave. Consumers in a neoliberal economy have been encouraged to define their perception of success in terms of material goods and an ongoing desire to create the 'perfect' body which is then no doubt shared on social media platforms for the approval of others (Eager and Dann, 2016). Gender is most defined when someone or something makes you aware of yourself as a man or woman. Facial skincare use is a practice that serves to create 'turbulence' in respect of ideals of masculinity. 'Hegemonic masculinities' define successful ways of being a man and those men not conforming to this 'ideal' are then suggested as inadequate or inferior

masculinities. In Chapter Three, I explored how subordinated men who were disenfranchised in part due to the economic downturn in traditional working-class manufacturing environments sought to gain a form of control within their lives through the development of their bodies as an expression of capital (Hakim, 2016). This is also a form of 'gender marking' whereby men are seeking to redefine their behaviour in acceptable terms for traditional notions of masculinity (Lindisfarne and Neale, 2016). I contend that my respondents potentially are using a form of 'looking-glass capital' to ensure that traditional masculine status and privilege remains secure. Thus, notions of 'hegemonic masculinity' are used to underpin reasons for their skincare use.

I suggest that the 'looking-glass self' provides a context for how better facial skin can also help towards a form of improved sense of well-being. This can translate to a form of capital as my data suggests that men can benefit from looking good and feeling better, thus improving their sense of self-esteem. As a result, the improved self has a positive impact on men's self-confidence offering a form of 'worthiness' relating to appearance. The values associated with an increasingly entrepreneurial, arguably self-centred neo-liberal context mean that younger looking skin comes to represent a sign of success. Potentially, men may gain an improved sense of their self-worth when they look in the mirror and see the benefits to their appearance that facial skincare products are providing. A form of 'looking-glass capital' is achieved on a personal level for men who seek to improve their appearance by using such products. When men use facial skincare products, skin has the potential to be reinvigorated. A more youthful-looking skin suggests more vitality and provides a perceived benefit to those men who wish to hold positions of authority for longer (Aldin, 2007). Neoliberal values place younger looking skin as a sign of success as we are all encouraged to partake in practices to avoid signs of ageing. However, any suggestion that men have used skincare products to achieve a better facial skin contradicts currently accepted masculine behaviour.

Male facial skincare serves as a disruptor for expected gender norms. When faced with practices that fragment masculine ideals, men can choose to remove themselves from this in order to preserve a particular sense of identity. On the other hand, men may frame their facial skincare practices in a way that suggests they are still maintaining masculine ideals. Both approaches by men can be argued to be valid in order that they

might protect male identity. I reason that those men who use men's facial skincare often draw upon hegemonic ideals to defend their use of such products. Hegemonic masculine ideals continue to offer a key defence for masculinities under neoliberalism (Cornwall *et al.,* 2106). As 'social actors', males are subverting the idea that facial skincare for men is a feminising practice. Connell (2003) contends that when men feel insecure in regards to their image, they seek to develop their masculine self. Men are still gaining an improved appearance and better self-esteem. This improved confidence does not compromise masculine ideals as men use facial skincare privately and discreetly. The perceived judgement of others is important for men's use of facial skincare as part of their self-concept. The attitude of other men, on men that use facial skincare products remains an uncertain topic.

Social structures surrounding facial skincare linked to beauty has significance for men's identity. How men view facial skincare products in relation to ideals of gender is important. So providing that men draw upon conventional reasons to improve their image, then they are accepted by the wider membership of men. A perceived lack of concern with facial skincare products by men is a recurring mantra that is employed to protect masculine identity. 'Manliness' is a relational concept. It is constructed in deference to women and other men. As part of identity, it has to be protected from veering too far from the acceptable boundaries of masculinity. This is achieved by the regulation of norms of how men should act or be seen to act.

This thesis locates Cooley's 'looking-glass self' (1902) as a way of understanding changing conventions surrounding expectations for men to improve their appearance. Facial skincare for men has the potential to become part of a legitimate practice that suggests a man is accumulating 'looking-glass capital'. The 'field of masculinity' has associations with typical ideals of masculine traits suggesting that men should not be concerned with beauty products. This leads to a social conditioning of symbolic aspects of masculinity suggesting that facial skincare is more naturally a female habitus. The market for facial skincare for men is still in transition as a sector entrenched in female lifestyles where women maintain expertise.

Embracing Male Facial Skincare

A new system of classification of how men should act is emerging. Societal expectations of how a 'real man' should act are changing with the advent of products aimed towards beauty for men. Male facial skincare forms part of a wider range of products and services that serve to challenge men to look at themselves in somatic terms, suggesting that expected norms of masculinity are changing in how others increasingly judge a man on his image. The societal expectation that men should consider their image as an ongoing project is gathering pace. The need for introspection in relation to image is continuing to place pressure on men in relation to their appearance.

Interestingly, how advertising language emphasises the pursuit and maintenance of beauty as a key benefit for women was raised in terms of the notion of facial skincare for men is suggested using more 'orthodox' masculine terms. Heteronormative values such as war, power and technical metaphors are used to position facial skincare products suggesting 'hegemonic masculine' (Connell, 2003) ideals for men. Men want to look good, whilst being aware of the issues this may trigger in terms of suggesting 'vanity' or 'girly' behaviour. My data suggests that younger men especially value the use of facial skincare to improve their appearance especially when sharing images online. Similar to the pressures placed upon women, men are increasingly exposed to advertising language that suggest men need to 'complete' themselves through use of beautifying products. The beauty economy is driven by a relentless pursuit of profit achieved through how individuals are encouraged to improve, challenge and gain success in newly defined 'freedoms' offered by neoliberal ideals. Cultural norms for men are seemingly shifting as 'capital' and the potential for success is linked to appearance through improved skin on the face.

Cooley (1902) highlights how the imagination of men's appearance to others and the perceived judgement of this was important over a century ago. This notion retains currency in terms of how men negotiate the improvement of their body image that fit with contemporary ideals of masculinity. If the cultural norm is that men are critiqued in terms of how they are constantly improving their image, then using facial skincare products becomes more of a necessity. The cultural appropriation of facial skincare products for men offers a discreet improvement to appearance and whilst products are

not noticeable on the face they offer improved self-esteem through enhanced skin. The looking-glass becomes increasingly important as a way of identifying improvement in a man's facial skin appearance. This can translate to acquiring a form of capital linked to image. Men who use beautifying products arguably enhance their opportunities in a society that places an increasing importance on younger and better-looking skin. Hence, 'looking-glass capital' describes the benefits gained for men seeking to perfect their facial skin in an acceptable context for contemporary masculine ideals.

New Ideals for Masculinities

The need for men to have good facial skin is gaining currency as a cultural ideal in a neo-liberal age (see Cornwall *et al.,* 2016; Elias *et al.,* 2017). This thesis has demonstrated that there is an increasing pressure on men to use facial skincare products. As a source of social communication, advertising imposes the notion that men should be concerned with their image. I suggest that at present the male facial skincare market is not fully accepted as a legitimate masculine practice amongst men. This thesis has highlighted how men are seeking to benefit from using facial skincare products but are drawing upon traditionally masculine traits in order to protect their identity.

In recent times, how we consider body image has shifted so that appearance is no longer a natural evolution. There are embodied historical structures in relation to how we comprehend our perceptions and appreciation of men's expected behaviour. Image has become a form of an ongoing project influenced and informed by mediating agents within society, such as advertising and celebrity culture (Cashmore, 2006). Whilst advertisers are proactively locating facial skincare using traits suggesting 'hegemonic masculine' (Connell, 2003) appeal, men are defending facial skincare product consumption by simultaneously drawing upon traditional masculine traits. Respondents identified their use of facial skincare products as a purely instrumental element of consumption. This appeals to heteronormative ideals of how men should not seem to be overly concerned about the beautifying elements of facial skincare benefits. Men are using facial skincare as a from of capital rationalising their use of such products by practicality, whilst enjoying the benefits of improved appearance in a society that values this. The 'looking-glass' that was used as an analogy by Cooley (1902) has morphed into an online image offered for

scrutiny via the use of social media 'selfies' and images posted online. Appearance can be critiqued by anyone viewing online posts. The pressure is now upon men to look good without seeming to be concerned about their looks. Herein lies the rub.

Concluding Thoughts

I started this research journey considering myself as an observer of gender related representations and concepts surrounding how men relate to facial skincare as essentially a female product. How and why men maintain privilege in relation to dominant ideals of masculinity was explored in the context of the potentially feminising connotations surrounding the consumption of facial skincare products. 'Patriarchal' ideas of masculinity are not compromised in regard to how facial skincare is consumed and generally avoided as a discussion topic by male consumers.

Not all women are preoccupied with their image. Nevertheless, the concept continues to dominate as an accepted social norm. Within a patriarchal society, women continue to be judged on their appearance. Men who seek to gain better skin vitality benefit from better chances for career promotion which is considered as a sign of success as part of neoliberal ideals. This juxtaposition of gender in relation to facial skincare offers an improved image and/or confidence as a norm men are entitled to. Whilst the notion of beauty as a required norm subjugates women to being overly concerned with image for image's sake. However, in relation to the title of this thesis, I suggest that whilst men are recognising the need to improve their image, they still feel compelled to subvert their consumption of products such as facial skincare in order to maintain traditional ideals of masculinity. Society is seemingly not quite ready for men who are overly concerned with their appearance. However, the increasing number of 'selfies' shared on social media has helped to present the face as a site of scrutiny. Appearance is important. Nevertheless, the mechanics of how this achieved should be discreet to maintain traditional ideals for men.

Reflections on the Research

In reflecting on the above analysis it is important to recognise that my research is limited in some respects, for example given that my participants were mostly from

professional/middle-class backgrounds. Furthermore, the sample largely consisted of White British males. Improvements could no doubt be made in order to produce a more representative data set. Nonetheless, the paucity in advertisements that included participants from other ethnic backgrounds reinforces the question of invisibility raised by McClintock (1995) and suggests that advertisers are failing to represent the diversity of contemporary masculinity. This study could also be built upon by broadening the sample and focusing on the specific question of age and how age intervenes in men's consumption of facial skincare. Eventually, men may be able to freely use facial skincare as an expression that relates positively to constructs of male identity. To this end, this thesis has offered 'looking-glass capital' as a means by which we can explain how men rationalise their consumption of men's facial skincare products. 'Looking-glass capital' reflects masculine ideals for men who seek to improve their facial skin by use of facial skincare products by drawing upon 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 2003) traits. The diversity of products have dislocated traditional ideals for masculinity. Social change therefore plays a key role in changing men's relationship with their appearance. New ways of life have led to changing expectations for men and the judgement of others upon men's identity. The diversity of products linked to improving men's appearance suggests that that image *is* important for men. Ideals presented by advertising and celebrity images reflect additional reasons for men to use the mirror as a mechanism to contemplate their reflection as seen through other's eyes.

Younger males are demonstrating a shift in cultural norms with more of a natural affinity towards improving their appearance. Men are adapting but this will take time. I note how outdated practices and preconceptions of how men *should* behave and be *seen* persist. My data exploring advertisements indicates how advertisers are constructing and reinforcing 'hegemonic masculinity' as a key ideal for men. However, the underlying influence surrounding men cannot solely be attributed to advertisers. Masculinity has changed but expectations are slower to adapt. Men are adopting image-enhancing practices but are currently in a period of transition in respect of how this is understood. Cooley (1902) stresses the importance of the 'self-idea' of 'our appearance to the other person' and how this is perceived by others. Men appear to use facial skincare products in a discreet manner to improve their appearance in order to retain ideals that are acceptable to orthodox notions of gender identity. The greater focus placed on men's

faces as a site for improvement creates a greater introspection by men in relation to their image when they look in the mirror as part of their grooming routine.

The intention of this research was to consider attitudes towards men's facial skincare products and how this links to male identity. Cooley (1902) recognised that we are constantly exposed to conflicts, the resolution of which makes up a core element of our experience. These conflicts are as a result of differing attitudes and expectations in specific practical situations. Men's facial skincare products conflict with more stable predictable ideals of masculinity. Changing expectations of how men should be seeking to care for their facial skin and their overall appearance leads to personal conflict. The supposed judgement of others in relation to ideals of masculinity continue to present turbulence in relation to whether men should be seen to be improving their skin with facial skincare products as part of changing social ideals. Equally, traditional masculine ideals may prompt men to avoid such practices.

Men may introspectively gaze in the mirror in contemplation of their improved appearance gained from using facial skincare products. I suggest that the self-confidence gained from improved skin appearance offers 'looking-glass capital' and benefits men in ways that are currently accepted as ideals of masculinity. Increasingly appraised in terms of their looks as part of a wider trend within contemporary social structures, men's imagined self is informed by the perceived judgement of themselves by others. Cooley (1902) recognised that the dynamics involved in conflict between individuals could often lead to what he termed a 'hostile sympathy' in each other's viewpoint. Male facial skincare use presents an internalised conflict for those who recognise the growing imposition that men should be concerned with improving their appearance but wonder about the effects this may have on how others perceive this.

In conclusion, men continue to define their identity through their relationships with family and those whose judgments they deem to be important. As this community adapts, other image-enhancing products such as make-up for men may garner greater acceptance as a male practice. Men will continue to be a site for gaze by others and more importantly for how they may become more aware of 'required improvements' as part of 'aesthetic labour' (Elias *et al.,* 2017) for their own appearance in the mirror. Patriarchal notions underpin the need to protect masculine ideals which deflect from any suggestion

of vanity for men. The looking-glass reflects the potential benefits offered in improved life chances as a result of better-looking facial skin for men but is imposed by the supposition that men *need* improvement. Males protect their identities by rationalising their reasons for using appearance-enhancing skincare products in ways that conform to ideals of 'orthodox' masculinity. Men retain status and enjoy the benefits offered by their use of skincare. They fashion their use of skincare in ways that are widely acceptable to current norms of masculinity. But they do so on their own terms.

References

Adams, A., Anderson, E. & McCormack, M. (2010) "Establishing and Challenging Masculinity: The Influence of Gendered Discourses in Organized Sport", *Journal of Language and Social Psychology,* 29, (3), pp. 278-300.

Aldin, B. (2007) "Why men do need skincare", FT.com, Aug 31, p.1.

Alexander, S.M. (2003) "Stylish Hard Bodies: Branded Masculinity in Men's Health Magazine", *Sociological Perspectives*, 46, (4), pp. 535-554.

Ali, M. (1997) *Copywriting*, London: Butterworth Heinemann.

Alsop, R., Fitzsimons, A. & Lennon, K. (2002) *Theorizing Gender,* Oxford: Polity.

Anderson, E. (2005) "Orthodox and Inclusive Masculinity: Competing Masculinities among Heterosexual Men in a Feminized Terrain, *Sociological Perspectives,* 48, (3), pp. 337-355.

Anderson, E. (2008) "Inclusive Masculinity in a Fraternal Setting", *Men and Masculinities,* 10, (5), pp. 604-620.

Anderson, E. (2009) "The Maintenance of Masculinity Among the Stakeholders of Sport", *Sport Management Review,* 12, pp. 3-14.

Anderson, E. (2011) "Inclusive masculinities of university soccer players in the American Midwest", *Gender and Education,* 23, (6), pp. 729-744.

Anderson, E. (2011a) "The Rise and Fall of Western Homohysteria", *Journal of Feminist Scholarship,* 1, pp. 80-94.

Anstiss, D. & Lyons, A. (2014) "From men to the media and back again: Help-seeking in popular men's magazines", *Journal of Health Psychology,* 19, (11), pp. 1358-1370.

Arnould, E.J. & Thompson, C. (2005) "Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research, *Journal of Consumer Research,* 31, (4), pp. 868-882.

Atkinson, M. (2008) "Exploring Male Femininity in the 'Crisis': Men and Cosmetic Surgery", *Body and Society,* 14, (1), pp. 67-87.

Bainbridge, J. (2008) Sector Insight: Men's toiletries – skincare leads the way", *Marketing,* 23rd July, p. 28.

Barbalova, I. (2012) "Do Men Really Care About Beauty?", *Men's Report: Men's Care,* Euromonitor International.

Bagwell, L.S. & Bernheim, B. D. (1996) "Veblen Effects in a Theory of Conspicuous Consumption", *The American Economic Review,* 86, (3), pp. 249-373.

Baker, P. (2003) *No effeminates please: a corpus-based analysis of masculinity via personal adverts in Gay News/Times 1973-2000,* in Benwell, B. (Ed.) (2003), *Masculinity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Bakewell, C. & Mitchell, V.W. (2006) "Male versus female consumer decision making styles", *Journal of Business Research*, 59, pp. 1297–1300.

Banet-Weiser, S. (2017) *'I'm Beautiful the Way I Am': Empowerment, Beauty, and Aesthetic Labour,* in Elias, A.S., Gill, R. & Scharff, C. (Eds.) (2017) *Aesthetic Labour Rethinking Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism,* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Baudrillard, J. (1998) "The Consumer Society, Myths and Structures", London: Sage.

Barber, K. (2008) "The Well-Coiffed Man Class, Race, and Heterosexual Masculinity in the Hair Salon", *Gender and Society,* 22, pp. 455-476.

Barnard, M, (2001) *"Approaches To Understanding Visual Culture",* Hampshire: Palgrave.

Barthes, R. (1972) "Mythologies", London: Vintage Classics.

Barthes, R. (2009) "Mythologies", London: Vintage Classics.

Bauman, Z. (2005) "Chasing Elusive Society", *International Journal of Political Culture Society,* 18, pp. 123-141.

Bauman, Z. (2007) "Collateral Casualties of Consumerism, *Journal of Consumer Culture,* 7, (1), pp.25-56.

Bauman, Z. (2001) "Consuming Life", *Journal of Consumer Culture,* 1, (1), pp. 9-29.

Bauman, Z. (2012) "Fuels, sparks and fires : On taking to the streets, *Thesis Eleven,* 109, (1), pp. 11-16.

Bauman, Z. (1983) "Industrialism, Consumerism and Power", *Theory Culture and Society,* 1, (3), pp. 32-43.

Bauman, Z. (1968) "Semiotics and the function of culture", *Social Science Information,* 7, pp. 67-80.

Beasley, C. (2012) "Problematizing contemporary Men/Masculinities theorizing: the contribution of Raewyn Connell and conceptual-terminological tensions today", *The British Journal of Sociology,* 63, (4), pp. 747-765.

Beck, U. (1999) *World Risk Society,* Cambridge: Polity.

Belk, R.W. in Miles, S., Anderson, A. & Meethan, K. (Eds.) (2002) "The Changing Consumer Markets and Meanings", London: Routledge.

Belk, R.W. and Pollay, R.W. (1985) "Images of Ourselves: The Good Life in Twentieth Century Advertising, *Journal of Consumer Research,* 11, (March), pp. 887-897.

Belkaoui, A. & Belkaoui, J.M. (1976) "A comparative analysis of the roles portrayed by women in print advertisements: 1958, 1970, 1972", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 13, (2), pp. 168-72.

Bennett, E. & Gough, B. (2012) "In pursuit of leanness: The management of appearance, affect and masculinities within a men's weight loss forum", *Health,* 17, (3), pp. 284-299.

Benveniste, E. (2000) "Subjectivity in Language" in Du Gay, P., Evans, J. & Redman, P. (Eds.) (2000), "Identity: A Reader", London: Sage Publications.

Benwell, B. (Ed.) (2003) *Masculinity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Berger, A.A. (2012) *Media Analysis Techniques, Fourth Edition,* London: Sage.

Berger, A.A. (1998) *Media Analysis Techniques, Second Edition,* London: Sage.

Berger, A.A. (2000) *Media and Communication Research Methods: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches,* London: Sage.

Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. (1966) *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge,* London: Penguin Books Ltd.

Berggren, K. (2014) "Sticky Masculinity: Post-structuralism, Phenomenology and Subjectivity in Critical Studies on Men", *Men and Masculinities,* 17, (3), pp. 231-252.

Berney-Reddish, I.A. & Areni, C.S. (2006) "Sex differences in responses to probability markers in advertising claims", *Journal of Advertising*, 35, (2) pp.7-16.

Berthon, P., Robson, K., & Pitt, L. (2013) "The Theory and Practice of Advertising: Counting the Cost to the Customer", *Journal of Advertising Research,* 53 (3) pp. 1-8.

Bittar, C. (2004) "Men's grooming: past the surface: despite the hype, men's skincare market still pales in comparison to women's though more brands are diving in. Will their names be mud?" *Brandweek,* 13 December, p. 24.

Blackburn, S. (2014) *Mirror, Mirror The Uses and Abuses of Self-Love,* Oxfordshire: Princeton University Press.

Bocock, R. (1993) *Consumption*, London: Routledge.

Boni, F. (2002) "Framing Media Masculinities, Men's Lifestyle Magazines and the Biopolitics of the Male Body", *European Journal of Communication*, 17, (4), pp. 465-478.

Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*, London: Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (2001) *Masculine Domination,* Oxford: Polity.

Bramley, E.V. (2017) "Instagram beauty boys are the new face of makeup", *The Observer :* London, 12th February 2017, p. 10.

Branchik, B.J. & Chowdury, T.G. (2012) "Self-oriented Masculinity: Advertisements and the Changing Culture of the Male Market", *Journal of Macromarketing,* 33, (2), pp. 160-171.

Bridges, T.S. (2009) "Gender Capital and Male Bodybuilders", *Body and Society,* 15, (1), pp. 83-107.

Bridges, T.S. (2010) "MEN JUST WEREN'T MADE TO DO THIS Performances of Drag at "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" Marches", *Gender & Society,* 24, (1), pp. 5-30.

Bridges, T.S. (2014) "A VERY "GAY" STRAIGHT? Masculinities, Sexual Aesthetics, and the Changing Relationship between Masculinity and Homophobia", *Gender and Society,* 28, (1), pp. 58-82.

Bridges, T. & Pascoe, C.J. (2014) "Hybrid Masculinities: New Directions in the Sociology of Men and Masculinities", *Sociology Compass,* 8, (3), pp. 246–258.

Brierley, S. (1995) *The Advertising Handbook,* London: Routledge.

Brumbagh, A.M. (1993) "Physical Attractiveness and Personality in Advertising: More Than Just a Pretty Face?", *Advances in Consumer Research,* 20, pp. 159-164.

Calvey, D. (2008) "The Art and Politics of Covert Research: Doing 'Situated Ethics' in the Field", *Sociology,* 42, (5), pp. 905-918.

Carrigan, T., Connell, B. & Lee, J. (2002) *Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity,* in Adams, R. & Savran, D. (Eds.) (2002) *The masculinity studies reader,* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Cashmore, E. (2002) *Beckham,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Cashmore, E. (2004) *Beckham Fully Revised and Updated*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Cashmore, E. (2006) *Celebrity/Culture,* Oxon: Routledge.

Cashmore, E. & Parker, A. (2003) "One David Beckham? Celebrity, Masculinity, and the Soccerati", *Sociology of Sport Journal,* 20, pp. 214-231.

Cassidy, R. (2014) "'A place for men to come and do their thing': constructing masculinities in betting shops in London", *The British Journal of Sociology,* Vol 65 (1), pp. 170-191.

Catterall, P. and MacLaran, P. (2001) "Body Talk: Questioning the Assumptions in Cognitive Age", *Psychology and Marketing,* 18, (10), pp. 1117- 1133.

Cavendish, L. (2015) "Not just a teenage dirtbag baby: Gelled, glossed, groomed – new figures reveal that there's a male beauty boom. And Lucy Cavendish only has to look at her son's bathroom shelf for the proof", *Stella, The Telegraph,* 4th October 2015, p. 48.

Clarkson, J. (2005) "Contesting Masculinity's Makeover: *Queer Eye,* Consuming Masculinity, and "Straight-Acting" Gays", *Journal of Communication Inquiry,* 29, (3), pp. 235-255.

Coad, D. (2008) *The Metrosexual: Gender, sexuality, and sport,* New York: State University of New York Press.

Coles, T. (2008) "Finding space in the field of masculinity: Lived experiences of men's masculinities", *Journal of Sociology,* 44, (3), pp. 233-248.

Coles, T. (2009) "Negotiating the Field of Masculinity The Production and Reproduction of Multiple Dominant Masculinities", *Men and Masculinities,* 12, (1), pp. 30-44.

Connell, C. (2010) "Doing, Undoing, or Redoing Gender?: Learning from the Workplace Experiences of Transgender People", *Gender and Society,* 24, (1), pp.31-55.

Connell, R. (2009) "Accountable Conduct: 'Doing Gender' in Transexual and Political Retrospect", *Gender and Society,* 23, (1), pp. 104-111.

Connell, R. (2010) "Lives of the Businessmen. Reflections on Life-history Method and Contemporary Hegemonic Masculinity", *Hauptbeitrage,* 35, (2), pp. 54-71.

Connell, R. (2011) "Southern Bodies and Disability: re-thinking concepts", *Third World Quarterly,* 32, (8), pp. 1369-1381.

Connell, R. (2011a) "Sociology for the whole world", *International Sociology,* 26, (3), pp. 288-291.

Connell, R.W. (2003) *Gender,* Oxford: Polity.

Connell, R.W. (2005a) "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept", *Gender & Society,* 19, (6), pp. 829-859.

Connell, R.W. (2005) *Masculinities Second Edition,* Oxford : Polity.

Connell, R.W. (2000) *The Men and the Boys,* Oxford: Polity.

Cooley, C, H. (1902) *Human Nature and the Social Order*, rev. ed. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Cooley, C. H. ed. Schubert, H. (1998) *On Self and Social Organization,* The University of Chicago Press: London.

Cornwall, A. (2016) "Introduction: Masculinities under neoliberalism", in (Eds.) Cornwall, A., Karioris, F.G. & Lindisfarne, N. *Masculinities Under Neoliberalism,* London: Zed Books.

Corrigan, P. (1997) *"The Sociology of Consumption",* Sage: London.

Coslett, R.L. (2013) "It's my face – why wouldn't I take it seriously?", *The Guardian,* Saturday 14th September 2013 pp. 48-49.

Couldry, N. (2003) *Media Rituals: A critical approach,* London: Routledge.

Coupland, J. (2007) "Gendered discourses on the 'problem' of ageing: consumerized solutions, *Discourse & Communication,* 1, pp. 37-61.

Courtney, A.E. & Lockeretz, S. W. (1971) "A woman's place: an analysis of the roles portrayed by women in magazine advertisements", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 8, (1), pp. 92-95.

Cramphorn, M.F. (2011) "Gender Effects in Advertising", *International Journal of Advertising Research,* 53, (2), pp. 147-170.

Crotty, M. (1998) *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process,* London: Sage.

Darley, W.K. & Smith, R.E. (1995) "Gender differences in information processing strategies: an empirical test of the selectivity model in advertising response", *Journal of Advertising*, 24, (1), pp. 41-57.

Das, J. & De Loach, S.B. (2011) "Mirror, mirror on the wall: The effect of time spent grooming on earnings", *The Journal of Socio-Economics,* 40, pp. 26-34.

Davis, A. K., Roger, L. E. & Bryson, B. (2014) "Own It! Constructions of Masculinity and Heterosexuality on Reality Makeover Television", *Cultural Sociology,* 8, (3), pp. 258-274.

De Boise, S. (2015) "I'm Not Homophobic, 'I've Got Gay Friends': Evaluating the Validity of Inclusive Masculinity", *Men and Masculinities,* 18, (3), pp. 318-339.

De Cassanova, E. M., Wetzel, E. E. & Speice, T. D. (2016) "Looking at the label: White-collar men and the meanings of 'metrosexual'", *Sexualities,* 19, (2), pp. 64-82.

De Certeau in Lee, M. (Ed.) (2000) "The Consumer Society Reader", London: Blackwell Publishers.

De Visser, R. O., Smith, J. A. & McDonnell, E. J. (2009) "'That's not masculine' Masculine Capital and Health-related Behaviour", *Journal of Health Psychology,* 14, (7), pp, 1047-1058.

Derrida, J. (1972), "Difference" in Du Gay, P., Evans, J. & Redman, P. (Eds.) (2000) Identity: A Reader, London: Sage Publications.

Diedrichs, P. C. and Lee, C. (2010) "GI Joe or Average Joe? The impact of average-size and muscular male fashion models on men's and women's body image and advertising effectiveness". *Body Image*, 7 (3). pp. 218-226.

Diedrichs, P. C., Atkinson, M. J., Steer, R., Garbett, K., Rumsey, N. and Halliwell, E. (2015) "Effectiveness of a brief school-based body image intervention Dove Confident Me: Single Session when delivered by teachers and researchers: Results from a cluster randomised controlled trial", *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 74. pp. 94-104.

Duffy, B.E. & Hund, E. (2015) "Having it All" on Social Media: Entrepreneurial Femininity and Self-Branding Among Fashion Bloggers", *Social Media + Society,* July-December, pp. 1-11.

Duncanson, C. (2015) "Hegemonic Masculinity and the Possibility of Change in Gender Relations", *Men and Masculinities,* Vol 18, (2), pp. 231-248.

Du Plessis, E. (2008) *The Advertised Mind: Groundbreaking insights into how our brains respond to advertising,* London: Kogan Page.

Eagar, T. & Dann, S. (2016) "Classifying the narrated #selfie: genre typing human-branding activity", *European Journal of Marketing,* 50, 9/10, pp. 1835-1857.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Jackson, P. (2012) *Management Research Fourth Edition,* London: Sage.

Eisand, M. (2010) "A meta-analysis of gender roles in advertising", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science,* 38, pp. 418-440.

Eisand, M. & Langner, T. (2010) "Immediate and delayed advertising effects of celebrity endorsers' attractiveness and expertise", *International Journal of Advertising,* 29, (4), pp. 527-546.

Elberse, A. & Verleun, J. (2012) "The Economic Value of Celebrity Endorsements", *Journal of Advertising Research,* 52, (2), pp. 149-165.

Elias, A.S., Gill, R. & Scharff, C. (Eds.) (2017) *Aesthetic Labour Rethinking Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism,* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Elliott, J. & Wootton, A.J. (1997) "Some ritual idioms of gender in British television advertising", *The Sociological Review,* pp. 439-452.

Elliott, R. & Elliott, C. (2005) "Idealized images of the male body in advertising: a reader-response exploration", *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 11, (1), pp.3-19.

Entwistle, J. (2000) *The Fashioned Body,* Oxford: Polity.

Entwistle, J. (2004) *From Catwalk to Catalog: Male Fashion Models, Masculinity and Identity,* in Thomas, H. & Ahmed, J. (Eds.) (2004), *Cultural Bodies: Ethnography and Theory,* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Euromonitor International (2015) *Beauty and Personal Care: Beiersdorf AG,* November 2015, http://www.warc.com/PDFFilesTmp/9f64dd7a-2698-4bf0-b8bd-fb0f6f4d34bb.PDF, last accessed 1.3.16.

Evans, G. (2011) "Big Man System, Short Life Culture", in Amit, V. and Dyck, N. (Eds.), *Young Men in Uncertain Times,* New York NY: Berghahn.

Falk, P. (1994) *"The Consuming Body",* Sage: London.

Farr, D. (2013) "Introduction to the Special Issue: Fat Masculinities", *Men and Masculinities*, 16, (4), pp. 383-386.

Feasey, R. (2009) "Spray more, get more: masculinity, television advertising and the Lynx effect", *Journal of Gender Studies*, 18, (4), pp. 357-368.

Featherstone, M. (1982) "The Body in Consumer Culture", *Theory, Culture Society,* 1, (18), pp. 18-33.

Featherstone, M. (1991) *"Consumer Culture and Postmodernism",* Sage: London.

Firat, F.A., Dholakia, N. & Venkatesh, A. (1995) "Marketing in a postmodern world", *European Journal of Marketing,* 29, (1), pp. 40-56.

Firat, F.A. & Venkatesh, A. (1995) "Liberatory Postmodernism and the Reenchantment of Consumption", *Journal of Consumer Research,* 22, pp. 239-267.

Fitchett, J.A., Patsiaouras, G. & Davies, A. (2014) "Myth and ideology in consumer culture theory", *Marketing Theory,* 14, (4), pp. 495-506.

Fitzgerald, M. & Arnott, D. (1996) "Understanding demographic effects on marketing communications in services", *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 7, (3), pp. 31-45.

Fleck, N., Korchia, M. & Le Roy, I. (2012) "Celebrities in Advertising: Looking for Congruence or Likability?", *Psychology and Marketing,* 29, (9), pp. 651-662.

Fleck, N., Michel, G. & Zeitoun, V. (2014) "Brand Personification through the Use of Spokespeople: An Exploratory Study of Ordinary Employees, CEOs, and Celebrities Featured in Advertising", *Psychology and Marketing,* 31, (1), pp. 84-92.

Frank, E. (2014) "Groomers and Consumers: The Meaning of Male Body Depilation to a Modern Masculinity Body Project", *Men and Masculinities,* 17, (3), pp. 278-298.

Frank, S. (2014) "David Beckham's re-invention of the winger", *Soccer and Society,* 15, (5), pp. 742-750.

Furedi, F. (2010) "Celebrity Culture", Symposium: Celebrity Culture Around the World, *Sociology,* 47, pp. 493-497.

Furnham, A. & Thomson, L. (1999) "Gender Role Stereotyping in Advertisements on Two British Radio Stations", *Sex Roles*, 40, (1/2), pp. 153-165.

Fury, A. (2016) "Is gender skin deep?", *i ,* Friday 13th May, 2016, London: Johnston Publications Limited, pp. 45-45.

Gabriel, Y. & Lang, T. (1995) *"The Unmanageable Consumer Contemporary Consumption and its Fragmentations",* London: Sage.

Garvey, J. (2015) Radio 4 Woman's Hour, *Teenage Boys Discussing Appearance,* 24th November, 2015 http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06qhqxh#play (last accessed 8.12.15).

Gee, S. (2014) "Bending the codes of masculinity: David Beckham and flexible masculinity in the new millennium", *Sport in Society,* 17, (7), pp. 917-936.

Gentry, J. W. & Harrison, R. (2010) "Is advertising a barrier to male movement toward gender change?", *Marketing Theory,* 10, (1), pp. 74-96.

Gergen, K.R. (1999) *An Invitation to Social Construction,* London: Sage.

Gergen, K.R. (2001) *Social Construction in Context,* London: Sage.

Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age,* Oxford: Polity.

Gill, R., Henwood, K. & McLean, C. (2005) "Body projects and the regulation of normative masculinity", *Body & Society,* London: Sage Publications, 11, (1), pp. 37-62.

Goddard, A. (1998) *The Language of Advertising, Second Edition,* London: Routledge.

Goddard, A. & Patterson, L.M. (2000) *Language and Gender,* London: Routledge.

Godeo, E.G. (2005) "Male-perfume advertising in men's magazines and visual discourse in contemporary Britain: a social semiotics approach", The Visualization of the Subaltern in World Music. On Musical Contestation Strategies (Part 2) / Images in Advertising, 11. Last

accessed online 19.2.16

http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/worldmusicb_advertising/godeo.htm

Goffman, E. (1979) *Gender Advertisements*, London: The MacMillan Press Ltd.

Goffman, E. (1957) "Alienation from Interaction"*, Human Relations*, 10, (1), pp. 47-60.

Goldman, R. (1992) *Reading Ads Socially*, London: Routledge.

Goldman, R. & Papson, S. (1998) *Nike Culture,* London: Sage.

Gough, B. (2006) "'Real men don't diet': An analysis of contemporary newspaper representations of men, food and health", *Social Science and Medicine,* 64, pp. 326-337.

Gough, B. (2013) "Introduction The Psychology of Men's Health: Maximising Masculine Capital", *American Psychological Association,* 32, (1), pp. 1-4.

Gough, B., Hall, M. & Seymour-Smith, S. (2014) "Straight guys do wear make-up: Contemporary masculinities and investment in appearance." *Debating Modern Masculinities: Change, Continuity, Crisis?* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 106-124.

Gough, B, Seymour-Smith, S. & Matthews, C.R. (2016) "Body Dissatisfaction, Appearance investment, and Wellbeing: How Older Obese Men Orient to "Aesthetic Health", *Psychology of Men & Masculinity,* 17, (1), pp. 84-91.

Goulding, C. (2003) "Issues in representing the postmodern consumer", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 6, (3), pp. 152-159.

Gray, D.E. (2004) *Doing Research In The Real World,* London: Sage.

Grbich, C. (2007) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction,* London: Sage.

Grbich, C. (2013) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction Second Edition,* London: Sage.

Grugulis, I. & Stoyanova, D. (2012) "Social Capital and Networks in Film and TV: Jobs for the Boys?", *Organisational Studies,* 33, (10), pp. 1311-1331.

Guest, G., MacQueen, K.M. & Namey, E.E. (2012) *Applied Thematic Analysis,* London: Sage.

Gulas, C.S., McKeage, K.K. & Weinberger, M.G. (2010) "It's Just A Joke Violence Against Males in Humorous Advertising", *Journal of Advertising,* 39, (4), pp. 109-120.

Gupta, S. & Gentry, J.W. (2016) "Construction of gender roles in perceived scarce environments – Maintaining masculinity when shopping for fast fashion apparel", *Journal of Consumer Behaviour,* 15, pp. 251–260.

Hakala, U. (2006) *Adam in Ads: A thirty-year look at mediated masculinities in advertising in Finland and the US,* Publications of the Turku School of Economics.

Hakim, J. (2015) *'Fit is the new rich':* male embodiment in the age of austerity in Soundings: A Journal of Politics and Culture, 61, pp. 84-94.

Hakim, J. (2016) *"'The Spornosexual': the affective contradictions of male body-work in neoliberal digital culture",* Journal of Gender Studies, DOI: 10.1080/9589236.1217771 last accessed 2.11.16.

Hall, M. (2014) "'It's a Metrosexual thing': A discourse analytical examination of masculinities", *PhD Thesis Nottingham Trent University.*

Hall, M. (2015) *Metrosexual Masculinities,* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hall, M., Gough, B. & Seymour-Smith, S. (2012) "I'm METRO, NOT Gay!": A Discursive Analysis of Men's Accounts of Make-up Use on YouTube", *The Journal of Men's Studies,* 20, (3), pp. 209-226.

Hall, M., Gough, B. & Seymour-Smith, S. (2013) "Stake Management in Men's Online Cosmetics Testimonials", *Psychology and Marketing,* 30, (3), pp. 227-235.

Hall, S. (Ed.) (1997) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices,* London: Sage.

Hardin, C. (2014) "Finding the Neo in Neoliberalism", *Cultural Studies,* 28, (2), pp. 199-221.

Hariharan, V.G., Talukdar, D. & Kwon, C. (2015) "Optimal targeting of advertisement for new products with multiple consumer segments", *International Journal of Research in Marketing,* 32, pp. 263-271.

Harman-Kizer, T.R. (2014) "The effects of schema congruity on consumer response to celebrity advertising", *Journal of Marketing Communications,* pp. 1-14.

Haynes, K. (2012) "Body Beautiful? Gender, Identity and the Body in Professional Services Firms", *Gender, Work and Organization,* 19, (5), pp. 489-507.

Hirschman, E.C. (2003) "Men, Dogs, Guns, And Cars The Semiotics of Rugged Individualism", *Journal of Advertising*, 32, (1), pp. 9-22.

Hotchkiss, J. (1996) "Marketing haircare and skincare to men", *Drug and Cosmetic Industry,* April, p. 56.

Hogg, M.K. & Garrow, J. (2003) "Gender, identity and the consumption of advertising", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 6, (3), pp. 160-174.

Holmqvist Gattario, K., Frisén, A., Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, M., Ricciardelli, L.A., Diedrichs, P.C., Yager, Z., Smolak, L., Franko, D., Smolak, L. (2015) "How is Men's Conformity to Masculine Norms Related to Their Body Image? Masculinity and Muscularity across Western Countries", *Psychology of Men and Masculinities,* 16 (3), pp. 337-347.

Holt, D.B. & Thompson, C.J. (2004) "Man-of-action heroes: the pursuit of heroic masculinity in everyday consumption", *Journal of Consumer Research,* 31, (2), pp. 425-441.

hooks, b. (2015) *Black Looks Race and Representation,* London: Routledge.

Hoover, S.M. & Coats, C.D. (2011) "The Media and Male Identities: Audience Research in Media, Religion, and Masculinities", *Journal of Communication*, 61, pp. 877-895.

Huberman, A. M. & Miles, M.B. (2002) *The Qualitative Researcher's Companion,* London: Sage.

Hughes, L.D. (2015) "Narcissism, Consumerism and Capitalism", 6th October http://leedanielhughes.blogspot.co.uk/2015/10/narcissism-consumerism-and-capitalism.html (last accessed 23.5.16).

Hung, K. (2014) "Why Celebrity Sells: A Dual Entertainment Path Model of Brand Endorsement", *Journal of Advertising,* 43, (2), pp. 155-166.

Huppatz, K. & Goodwin, S. (2013) "Masculinised jobs, feminised jobs and men's 'gender capital' experiences: Understanding occupational segregation in Australia", *Journal of Sociology,* The Australian Sociological Association, 49, (2-3) pp. 291–308.

Jackson, J.D., Nielsen, G.M. & Hsu, Y. (2011) *Mediated Society: A Critical Sociology of Media,* Ontario: Oxford University Press.

Jarvis, N. (2015) "The inclusive masculinities of heterosexual men within UK gay sport clubs", *International Review for the Sociology of Sport,* 50, (3), pp. 283-300.

Jameson, F. (1991) *Image as Commodity* in Manghani, S., Piper, A. & Simons, J. (Eds.) (2006), *Images: A Reader,* London: Sage.

Jobling, P (2014) *Advertising Menswear Masculinity and Fashion in the British Media Since 1945*, Bloomsbury: London.

Johnson, F.L. (2008) *Imaging in Advertising: Verbal and Visual Codes of Commerce,* London: Routledge.

Jones, J.P. (1990) "Advertising: Strong Force or Weak Force? Two Views an Ocean Apart", *International Journal of Advertising*, 9, pp. 233-246.

Jones, J.P. (2004) *Fables, Fashions, and Facts About Advertising: A Study of 28 Enduring Myths,* London: Sage.

Kamins, M.A. (1990) "An Investigation into the "Match-up" Hypothesis in Celebrity Advertising: When Beauty May Be Only Skin Deep", *Journal of Advertising*, 19, (1), pp. 4-13.

Kamins, M.A., Brand, M.J., Hoeke, S.A. & Moe, J.C. (1989) "Two-Sided Versus One-Sided Celebrity Endorsements: The Impact on Advertising Effectiveness and Credibility", *Journal of Advertising,* 18, (2), pp. 4-10.

Keddie, A., Mills, C. & Mills, M. (2007) "Struggles to subvert the gendered field: issues of masculinity, rurality and class", *Pedagogy, Culture & Society,* 16, (2), pp. 193-205.

Kervin, D. (1990) "Advertising Masculinity: The representation of Males in Esquire Advertisements", *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 14, (51), pp. 51-70.

Kim, H, Damhorst, M.L. & Lee, K, (2002) "Apparel involvement and advertisement processing", *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management,* 6, (3), pp. 277-302.

Kolbe, R.H. & Albenese, P.J. (1996) "Man to Man: A content Analysis of Sole-Male Images in Male-Audience Magazines", *Journal of Advertising*, 25, (4), pp. 1-20.

Kress, G. & van Leeuwen, T. (1996) *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design,* London: Routledge.

Jackson, P., Stevenson, N. & Brooks, K. (2001) *Making Sense of Men's Magazines*, Oxford: Polity Press.

Jankowski, G. S., Diedrichs, P. C., Williamson, H, Christopher, G. & Harcourt, D. (2016) "Looking age-appropriate while growing old gracefully: A qualitative study of ageing and body image among older adults", *Journal of Health Psychology,* 21, 4, pp. 1-26.

Jankowski, G., Slater, A., Tiggemann, M. and Fawkner, H. (2016a) "The appearance potency of gay and straight men's websites". *Psychology of Sexualities Review*, November.

Jin, S-A.A. & Phua, J. (2014) "Following Celebrities' Tweets About Brands: The Impact of Twitter-Based Electronic Word-of-Mouth on Consumers' Source Credibility Perception, Buying Intention, and Social Identification with Celebrities", *Journal of Advertising,* 43, (2), pp. 181-195.

Johnson, F.L. (2008) *Imaging in Advertising, Verbal and Visual Codes of Commerce,* London: Routledge.

Johnson, P. & Duberley, J. (2000) *Understanding Management Research,* London: Sage.

Jones, J.P. (1990) "Advertising: Strong Force or Weak Force? Two Views an Ocean Apart", *International Journal of Advertising*, 9, pp. 233-246.

Jones, J.P. (2004) *Fables, Fashions, and Facts About Advertising: A Study of 28 Enduring Myths,* London: Sage.

Jones, M. & Jones, E. (1999) *Mass Media,* Hampshire: Palgrave.

Jung, K. & Lee, W. (2006) "Cross-gender brand extensions: Effects of gender of the brand, gender of the consumer, and product type on evaluation of the cross-gender extensions", *Advances in Consumer Research,* 33, pp. 67-74.

Kacen, J.J. (2000) "Girrrl power and boyyy nature: the past, present, and paradisal future of consumer gender identity", *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 8, (6/7), pp. 345-355.

Kelting, K. & Rice, D.H. (2013) "Should We Hire David Beckham to Endorse our Brand? Contextual Interference and Consumer Memory for Brands in a Celebrity's Endorsement Portfolio", *Psychology and Marketing,* 30, (7), pp. 602-613.

Kolbe, R.H. & Langefield, C.D. (1993) "Appraising gender role portrayals in TV commercials", *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research,* 28, (7-8), pp. 393-418.

Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. (2002) "Colour as a semiotic mode: notes for a grammar of colour", *Visual Communication,* 1, (3), pp. 343-368.

Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. (1996) *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, London: Routledge.

Lagrange, H. (1999) "The construction of male identity and its vicissitudes", *Agora Debats Jeunesses Special Edition,* 18, pp. 155-170.

Lambert, A. & Desmond, J. (2013) "Loyal Now, but Not Forever! A study of Narcissism and Male Consumer-Brand Relationships", *Psychology and Marketing,* 30, (8), pp. 690-709.

Lanzi, T. & Mathis, J. (2011) "How to consult an expert? Opinion versus evidence", *Theory,* 70, pp. 447–474.

Lasch, C. (1978) *The Culture of Narcissism,* New York: Norton.

Lash, S. & Urry, J. (1994) *Economies of Signs and Space,* London: Sage.

Layder, D. (2006) "Understanding Social Theory", Second Edition, London: Sage.

Leiss, W., Kline, S. & Jhally, S. (1997) *Social Communication in Advertising: Persons, Products and Images of Well-Being,* London: Routledge.

Leit, R.A., Gray, J.J. & Pope, H.R. (2002) "The Media's Representation of the Ideal Male Body: A Cause for Muscle Dysmorphia?", *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 31, (3), pp. 334-338.

Lim, W.M. (2016) "Understanding the selfie phenomenon: current insights and future research directions", *European Journal of Marketing,* 50, 9/10, pp. 1773-1788.

Lindisfarne, N. & Neal, J. (2016) "Masculinities and the lived experience of neoliberalism", in (Eds.) Cornwall, A., Karioris, F.G. & Lindisfarne, N. *Masculinities Under Neoliberalism,* London: Zed Books.

Lury, C. (2011) "Consumer Culture" Second Edition, Cambridge: Polity.

Lysonski, S. (1985) "Role Portrayals in British Magazine Advertisements", *European Journal of Marketing*, 19, (7), pp. 37-55.

MacInnes, J. (2001) "The Crisis of Masculinity and the Politics of Identity", in Whitehead, S. & Barrett, F.J. (Eds.) *The Masculinities Reader,* Oxford: Polity.

MacLaran, P. & Stevens, L. (2009) "Magners Man: Irish Cider, Representations of Masculinity and the 'Burning Celtic Soul'", *Irish Marketing Review,* 20, (2), pp. 77-87.

Magaraggia, S. (2012) "Open space gender in theory and practice: an interview with Raewyn Connell", *Feminist Review,* 102, pp. 116-124.

Maguire, E. (2015) "Self-branding, Hotness, and Girlhood in the Video Blogs of Jenna Marbles, *Biography,* 38, 1, pp. 72-86.

Maguire, J.S. & Stanway, K (2008) "Looking good consumption and the problems of self-production", *European Journal of Cultural Studies,* 11, (1), pp. 63-81.

Manning, P.K. (1987) *"Semiotics and Fieldwork",* Qualitative Methods Series 7, London: A Sage University Paper.

Marketing (2006) "Branding News: Waitrose enters men's skincare", *Marketing,* 21, 21 June 2006, p. 9.

Marketing Week (2004) July, 22, 2, Issue 30, p. 7.

Martens, L. in Parson, E. & Maclaren, P. (2009) *Contemporary Issues in Marketing and Consumer Behaviour,* Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.

McClintock, A. (1995) *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest,* London: Routledge.

McCormack, M. (2014) "The intersection of youth masculinities, decreasing homophobia and class: an ethnography", *The British Journal of Sociology,* 65, (1), pp. 130-149.

McCormack, M. & Anderson, E. (2010) "'It's Just Not Acceptable Any More': The Erosion of Homophobia and the Softening of Masculinity at an English Sixth Form", *Sociology,* 44, (5), pp. 843-859.

McCracken, G. (2005) *Culture and Consumption II, Markets, Meaning, and Brand Management,* Bloomington: Indian University Press.

McCracken, G. (1986) "Culture and consumption: a theoretical account of the structure and movement of the cultural meaning of consumer goods," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13, (1), pp. 71-84.

McCracken, G. (1988) *Culture and Consumption. New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

McCracken, G. (2012) *Culturematic,* Harvard Business Press Review: Boston, Massachusetts.

McCracken, G. (2006) *Flock and Flow Predicting and Managing Change in a Dynamic Marketplace,* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

McCracken, G. (2009) *How to Create a Living, Breathing Corporation Chief Culture Officer,* New York: Basic Books.

McFall, L. (2004) *Advertising: a cultural economy,* London: Sage.

McGivern, Y. (2013) *The Practice of Market Research An Introduction,* Pearson: Harlow.

McLeod, C., O'Donohue, S. & Townley, B. (2009) "The elephant in the room? Class and creative careers in British Advertising", *Human Relations,* 62, (7), pp. 1011-1039.

McLeod, C., O'Donohue, S. & Townley, B. (2011) "Pot Noodles, Placements and Peer Regard: Creative Career Trajectories and Communities of Practice in the British Advertising Industry", *British Journal of Management,* 22, pp. 114-131.

McNeill, L.S. & Douglas, K. (2011) "Retailing masculinity: Gender expectations and social image of male grooming products in New Zealand", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services,* 18, pp. 448-454.

Mellstrum, U. (2002) "Patriarchal Machines and Masculine Embodiment", *Science, Technology, & Human Values,* 27, (4), pp. 460-478.

Messerschmidt, J.W. (2012) "Engendering Gendered Knowledge: Assessing the Academic Appropriation of Hegemonic Masculinity", *Men and Masculinities*, 15 (1) pp. 56-76.

Meyers-Levy, J. & Sternthal, B. (1991) "Gender Differences in the Use of Message Cues and Judgments", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 28, (Feb), pp. 84-96.

Mick, D.G. (1997) "Semiotics in Marketing and Consumer Research", in Brown, S. & Turley, D. (1997) "Consumer Research Postcards from the Edge," London: Routledge.

Mick, D.G. (1986) "Consumer Research and Semiotics: Exploring the Morphology of Signs, Symbols, and Significance", *Journal of Consumer Research,* 13, (Sept), pp. 196-213.

Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994) *An Expanded Sourcebook: Qualitative Data Analysis,* London: Sage.

Miles, S. (1998) *Consumerism – as a Way of Life,* London: Sage.

Miles, S. (2001) *Social theory in the real world,* London: Sage.

Miles, S. (2010) *Spaces For Consumption,* London: Sage.

Miles, S. & Miles, M. (2004) *Consuming Cities,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Milestone, K. & Meyer, A. (2012) *Gender & Popular Culture,* Cambridge: Polity.

Miller, F.M. & Allen, C.T. (2012) "How does celebrity meaning transfer? Investigating the process of meaning transfer with celebrity affiliates and mature brands", *Journal of Consumer Psychology,* 22, pp. 443-452.

Mintel, March (2006) *Male Toiletry Market UK.*

Mintel, October (2011) Men's *Grooming and Shaving Products UK*.

Mintel, May (2013) *Facial Skincare UK Report.*

Mintel, May (2015) *Men's Facial Skincare UK Report.*

Mintel, May (2016) *Men's Facial Skincare UK Report.*

Mintel, February (2017) *Women and Men's Beauty and Grooming Routines UK Report.*

Mintel, June (2017a) *Men's Facial Skincare UK Report.*

Moisander, J. & Valtonen, A. (2006) "Qualitative Marketing Research: A Cultural Approach", London: Sage.

Morril, H. (2017) "Music's beauty boys: when he wore it decades ago, Little Richard may not have been able to know just how big the male makeup industry would become", *Billboard,* 129, 4, February, 18th 2017, p. 54.

Morris, G.P. & Cundiff, E.W. (1971) "Acceptance by Males of Feminine Products", *Journal of Marketing Research,* 8, August, pp. 372-4.

Morrison, M.A., Haley, E., Sheehan, K. B. & Taylor, R. E. (2002) *Using Qualitative Research in Advertising: Strategies, Techniques, and Applications,* London: Sage.

Mort, F. (1996) "Cultures of consumption, Masculinities and social space in late Twentieth-Century Britain", London: Routledge.

Mulvey, L. (1975) "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", *Screen,* Oxford Journals, 16, (3), pp. 6-18.

Munro, R. in Edgell, S., Hetherington, K. & Warde, A. (Eds.) (1996) "Consumption Matters", Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Nakayama, M., Wan, Y. & Sutcliffe, N.G. (2011) "How Dependent are Consumers on Others When Making Their Shopping Decisions?", *Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations,* 9, (4), pp. 1-21.

Nayab, A. & Kehily, M.J. (2006) "Gender undone: subversion, regulation and embodiment in the work of Judith Butler", *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 27, (4), pp 459-472.

Neuendorf, K. A. (2002) *The Content Analysis Guidebook,* London: Sage.

Nishi, D. (Jan 2002) "Get your snow skin: protect your hide from harsh winter weather, whether you're riding fresh powder or navigating slushy urban streets", *Men's Fitness,* Weider Publications, 18, (1), p. 40.

Niu, N.J. (2013) "Cyber peers' influence for adolescent consumer in decision-making styles and online purchasing behaviour", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 43, pp. 1228–1237.

Nixon, S. (2003) *Advertising Cultures,* London: Sage.

Norman, M. E. (2011) "Embodying the Double-Bind of Masculinity: Young Men and Discourses of Normalcy, Health, Heterosexuality, and Individualism", *Men and Masculinities,* 14, (4), pp. 430-449.

Noseworthy, T.J., Cotte, J. & Lee, S.H. (2011) "The Effects of Ad Context and Gender on the Identification of Visually Incongruent Products", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38, (Aug), pp. 358-375.

Oblong, J.E. (2012) "Male skin care: Shaving and moisturization needs", *Dermatologic Therapy,* 25, pp. 238-243.

O'Neill, R. (2015) "Whither Critical Masculinity Studies? Notes on Inclusive Masculinity Theory, Postfeminism, and Sexual Politics", *Men and Masculinities,* Vol. 18, (1), pp. 100-120.

O'Neill, R. (2016) "Homosociality and heterosex: patterns of intimacy and relationality among men in the London 'seduction community'", in (Eds.) Cornwall, A., Karioris, F.G. & Lindisfarne, N. *Masculinities Under Neoliberalism,* London: Zed Books.

O'Shaughnessy, J. & O'Shaughnessy, N.J. (2004) *Persuasion in Advertising,* London: Routledge.

Ojala, H., Calasanti, T., King, N. & Pietila, I. (2016) "Natural(ly) men: masculinity and gendered anti-ageing practices in Finland and the USA", *Ageing and Society*, 36, (2), pp. 356 – 375.

Oleskar, M. (2015) "The Rise and Rise of the Spornosexual", http://www.esquire.co.uk/culture/features/7588/the-rise-and-rise-of-the-spornosexual (last accessed 27.9.15).

Orbach, S. (2017) "Foreward: The Making of the Body", in Elias, A.S., Gill, R. & Scharff, C. (Eds.) (2017) *Aesthetic Labour Rethinking Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism,* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Patterson, M. & Elliott, R. (2002) "Negotiating masculinities; advertising and the inversion of the male gaze", *Consumption, Markets and Culture,* 5 (3), pp. 231-46.

Patterson, M., O'Malley, L. & Story, V. (2009) "Women In Advertising: Representations, Repercussions, Responses", *Irish Marketing Review,* 20, (1), pp. 9-22.

Peracchio, L.A. & Meyers-Levy, J. (2005) "Using stylistic properties of ad pictures to communicate with consumers", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32, (1), pp. 29-41.

Perloff, R.M. (2017) *The Dynamics of Persuasion Communication and Attitudes in the 21st Century,* Sixth Edition, Oxon: Routledge.

Pffeiffer, A. (2015) "The Hipster is dead. Long live the hipster", https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/oct/03/hipster-social-phenomenon-commercial-success (last accessed 1.8.17).

Pierce, C.S. (1977) *Semiotics and Significs,* Ed. Charles Hardwick, Bloomington I.N.: Indiana University Press.

Pilcher, J. & Whelehan, I. (2004) *50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies,* London: Sage.

Pitt, M.J. (1994) "A Practical Guide to Gender Neutral Language", *Management Decision*, 32, (6), pp. 41-44.

Putrevu, S. (2001) "Exploring the Origins and Information Processing Differences Between Men and Women: Implications for Advertisers", *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, 10, pp. 1-14.

Quest, R. (1998) *Business: The Economy The Pink Pound,* BBC News Online Friday, 31st July, 1998, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/142998.stm (last accessed 13.3.2017).

Quinlan, C. (2011) *Business Research Methods,* Andover: South-Western Cengage Learning.

Rahman, M. (2004) "David Beckham As A Historical Moment In The Representation Of Masculinity", *Labour History Review,* 69, (2), pp. 219-233.

Raun, T. (2015) "Video blogging as a vehicle of transformation: Exploring the intersection between trans identity and information technology", *International Journal of Cultural Studies,* 18, 3, pp. 365-378.

Raynor, G. (2017) "David Beckham 'has given up hope of a knighthood in the near future", *The Telegraph,* online 'http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/07/david-beckham-has-given-hope-knighthood-near-future/ last accessed 8.6.17.

Redfern, C. (2016) "The Rise of the Male Beauty Bloggers", *The Sun,* London, 11th September 2016, p. 12.

Ricciardelli, R., Clow, K.A. & White, P. (2010) "Investigating Hegemonic Masculinity: Portrayals of Masculinity in Men's Lifestyle Magazines", *Sex Roles,* 63, pp. 64-78.

Richins, M.L. (1991) "Social Comparison and the Idealized Images of Advertising, *Journal of Consumer Research,* 18, June, pp.71-83.

Ritson, M. & Elliott, R. (1999) "The Social Uses of Advertising: An Ethnographic Study of Adolescent Advertising Audiences", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 26, (3), pp.260-277.

Ritzer, G. (1999) *Enchanting a Disenchanted World: Revolutionizing the Means of Consumption,* London: Pine Forge Press.

Robinson, B. (2008) "Men's Luxury Skincare Market Grows", *Science Letter,* 29 April, p. 5283.

Robinson, V., Hall, A. & Hockley, J. (2011) "Masculinities, Sexualities, and the Limits of Subversion: Being a Man in Hairdressing", *Men and Masculnities,* 14, (1), pp.31-50.

Rohlinger, D.A. (2002) "Eroticizing Men: Cultural Influences on Advertising and Male Objectification", *Sex Roles*, 24, (3/4), pp. 61-74.

Rojek, C. (2001) *Celebrity,* London: Reaktion Books.

Rossiter, J.R. & Smidts, A. (2012) "Print advertising: Celebrity presenter", *Journal of Business Research,* 65, pp. 874-879.

Schneider, H., Schonenberg, I. & Ferie, F. (2013) "The distribution of influence in purchase decisions by male homosexual couples", *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 12, pp. 345–357.

Schroeder, J.E., (2006) "Masculinity, Images and Brand Culture", in Schroeder, J.E., Senic, N., Podnar, K., Kaiser, S., Solomon, M., Hethorn, J., Englis, B., V.D. Lewis, Kwon, W., Rinallo, D (2006) "Special Session: What Do Men Want? Media Representations, Subjectivity, and Consumption", *Gender and Consumer Behaviour,* 8, eds, pp. 367-371.

Schroeder, J.E. & Zwick, D. (2004) "Mirrors of Masculinity: Representation and Identity in Advertising Images", *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, 7, (1), pp.21-52.

Scott, L. (1994) "Images in Advertising: The Need for a Theory of Visual Rhetoric", *Journal of Consumer Research,* 21, (2), pp. 252-273.

Scott, L.M. (1992) "Playing with Pictures: Postmodernism, Poststructuralism, and Advertising Visuals", *Advances in Consumer Research*, 19, pp. 596-612.

Segal, B. & Podoshen, J.S. (2012) "An examination of materialism, conspicuous consumption and gender differences", *International Journal of Consumer Studies,* 37, pp. 189–198.

Senic, N. & Podnar, K. (2006) "The Gradual Transformation of Man from Intellectual Subject into Sex Object: The Representation of Men in the Slovenian Print Ads" in Schroeder, J.E., Senic, N., Podnar, K., Kaiser, S., Solomon, M., Hethorn, J., Englis, B., V.D. Lewis, Kwon, W., Rinallo, D (2006), "Special Session: What Do Men Want? Media Representations, Subjectivity, and Consumption", *Gender and Consumer Behaviour,* 8, pp. 372-376.

Shannon, B. (2004) "ReFashioning Men: Fashion, Masculinity, and the Cultivation of the Male Consumer in Britain, 1860-1914", *Victorian Studies.*

Silverman, R. (2015) "Is the woman who killed the lad mag?", *The Daily Telegraph* 21.11.15 p. 31.

Simons, H. & Usher, R. (2000) *Situated Ethics in Educational Research,* London, Routledge.

Simpson, M. (2003) "Metrosexual? That rings a bell...", *Independent on Sunday 22.6.03* http://www.marksimpson.com/pages/journalism/metrosexual_ios.html (last accessed 6.10.2004).

Simpson, M. (2006) "Who are you calling hummersexual?", *The Guardian,* 10th October 2006.

Simpson, M. (2007) "The Death of the Retrosexual", http://www.marksimpson.com/blog/2007/08/28/the-death-of-the-retrosexual/ (last accessed 27.9.15).

Smeesters, D. & Mandel, N. (2006) "Positive and negative media image effects on the self", *Journal of Consumer Research,* 32, (4), pp. 576-583.

Smeesters, D., Mussweiler, T. & Mandel, N. (2010) "The Effects of Thin and Heavy Media Images on Overweight and Underweight Consumers: Social Comparison Processes and Behavioral Implications", *Journal of Consumer Research,* 36, (April), pp. 930-949.

Snelson, C. (2015) "Vlogging about school on YouTube: An Exploratory Study", *New Media and Society,* 17, 3, pp. 321-339.

Sorrentino, M. (2014) "Creative Advertising: An Introduction", London: Kogan Page.

Souiden, N. & Diagne, M. (2009) "Canadian and French men's consumption of cosmetics: a comparison of their attitudes and motivations", *Journal of Consumer Marketing,* 26, (2), pp. 97- 109.

Spence, J.T. (1993) "Gender-related traits and gender ideology: Evidence for a multifactorial theory", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 64, pp. 627-635.

Stanczak, G.C. Ed (2007) *Visual Research Methods, Image, Society, and Representation*, London: Sage.

Steger, M.B. & Roy, R.K. (2010) *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stern, B.B. (1996) "Textual analysis in advertising research: construction and deconstruction of meanings", *Journal of Advertising*, 25, (3), pp. 61-74.

Stern, B.B. & Schroeder, J.E. (1994) "Interpretative Methodology from Art and Literary Criticism: A Humanistic Approach to Advertising Imagery", *European Journal of Marketing,* Vol. 8, (8/9), pp. 114-132.

Stevens, L. & Ostberg, J. (2011) *Gendered Bodies: Representations of femininity and masculinity in advertising practices in Marketing Management, A Cultural Perspective* (Ed) Peñaloza, L., Toulouse, N., & Visconti, L.M., London: Routledge.

Stevenson, N., Jackson, P. & Brooks, K. (2000) "The politics of 'new' men's lifestyle magazines", *European Journal of Culture Studies*, 3, (3), pp. 366-385.

Strong, E.K. (1925) *Theories of Selling,* Journal of Applied Psychology, 9, pp. 75-86.

Sturrock, F. & Pioch, E. (1998) "Making himself attractive: the growing consumption of grooming products", *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 16, (5) pp. 337-343.

Swain, J. (2004) "The Resources and Strategies That 10-11 Year-Old Boys use to Construct Masculinities in the School Setting", *British Educational Research Journal*, 30, (1), pp. 167-185.

Szmigin, I. (2003) *Understanding the Consumer,* London: Sage Publications.

Szmigin, I. & Carrigan, M. (2000) "Does advertising in the UK need older models?", *The Journal of Product & Brand Management,* 9, (2), pp. 128-143.

Talbot, M. (2003) *Language and Gender: An Introduction,* Oxford: Polity.

Taylor, A.K. (2013) *Strategic Thinking For Advertising Creatives,* London: Laurence King Publishing.

Taylor, R. (2008) "Beauty: Unevenly Applied", *New Media Age,* July, 31st 2008, p. 21.

Tenerelli, M.J. (2001) "Men's Skin Care 2001: The millennium man wants more than a close shave; he seeks skin-enhancing and anti-aging products that provide immediate results", *Global Cosmetic Industry*, 168, (3), pp. 22-32.

Thomas, K. D. (2013) "Deconstructing Hegemonic Masculinity: Understanding Representations of Black and White Manhood in Print Advertising", *Advertising and Society Review,* 14, (2), pp.

Thompson, C.J. & Hirschman, E.C. (1995) "Understanding the Socialized Body: A Poststructuralist Analysis of Consumers' Self-Conceptions, Body Images, and Self-Care Practices", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22, (2), pp. 139-153.

Thorpe, H. (2010) "Bourdieu, Gender Reflexivity, and Physical Culture: A Case of Masculinities in the Snowboarding Field", *Journal of Sport and Social Issues,* 34, (2), pp. 176-214.

Thota, S., Hermosillo, S.N., Keyhani, N.N. & Walker, J.A. (2014) "Male Grooming: An Ethnographic Research on Perception and Choice of Male Cosmetics", *Academy of Business Research Journal,* 4, pp. 24-33.

Tibbs, A. (2010) *Advertising: Its business, culture and careers,* London: Routledge.

Tiidenberg, K. & Cruz, E. G. (2015) "Selfies, Image and the Re-making of the Body", *Body & Society,* 2, (4), pp. 77-102.

Trampe, D., Stapel, D.A. & Siero, F.W. (2010) "The Self-Activation Effect of Advertisements: Ads Can Affect Whether and How Consumers Think About the Self", *Journal of Consumer Research,* 37, (April), pp. 1030-1045.

Tuncay, L. & Otnes, C.C. (2008) "The Use of Persuasion Management Strategies by Identity-Vulnerable Consumers: The Case of Urban Heterosexual Male Shopper", *Journal of Retailing,* 84, (4), pp. 487-499.

Tungate, M. (2008) *Branded Male, Marketing to Men,* London: Kogan Page.

Tungate, M. (2011) *Branded Beauty,* London: Kogan Page.

Turner, G. (2004) *Understanding Celebrity,* London: Sage.

Twigg, J. (2013) *Fashion and Age: Dress, the Body and Later Life,* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Uhlmann, A.J. & Uhlmann, J.R. (2005) "Embodiment below discourse: The internalised domination of the masculine perspective", *Women's Studies International Forum,* 28, pp. 93-103.

Ulrich, I. (2013) "The Effect of Consumer Multifactorial Gender and Biological Sex on the Evaluation of Cross-Gender Brand Extensions", *Psychology and Marketing,* 30, (9), pp. 794-810.

Urry, J. (2000) *Sociology Beyond Societies Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century*, London: Routledge.

Urquhart, C. (2013) *Grounded Theory for Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide,* London: Sage.

Van Leeuwen, T. (2005) *Introducing Social Semiotics,* London: Routledge.

Vanderbosch, L. & Eggermont, S. (2013) "Sexualisation of Adolescent Boys: Media Exposure and Boys' Internalization of Appearance Ideals, Self-Objectivation, and Body Surveillance", *Men and Masculinities,* 16, (3), pp. 283-306.

Vokey, M., Tefft, B. & Tysiaczny, C. (2013) "An Analysis of Hyper-Masculinity in Magazine Advertisements", *Sex Roles,* 68, pp. 562-576.

Von Logue Newth, T. (2013) *The Ad-Makers How the Best TV Commercials are Produced,* London: Ilex.

Waling, A., (2016) ""We Are So Pumped Full of Shit by the Media": Masculinity, Magazines and the Lack of Self-identification", *Men and Masculinities,* pp. 1-26.

Warde, A. (2005) "Consumption and Theories of Practice", *Journal of Consumer Culture,* 5, (2), pp. 131-153.

Waters, J. & Ellis, G. (1996) "The Selling of Gender Identity", in *Advertising and Culture: Theoretical Perspectives,* Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Watson, J. (2015) "Multiple Mutating Masculinities", *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities,* 20, (1), pp. 107-121.

Wedgewood, N. (2009) "Connell's theory of masculinity – its origins and influences on the study of gender", *Journal of Gender Studies,* 18, (4), pp. 329-339.

Whannel, G. (2002) *Media Sports Stars: Masculinities and Moralities*, London: Routledge.

Wignall, R. (2016) "From Big Man to Whole Man: Making moral masculinities at the YMCA", in (Eds.) Cornwall, A., Karioris, F.G. & Lindisfarne, N. *Masculinities Under Neoliberalism,* London: Zed Books.

Williamson, J. (2002) *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising,* London: Marion Boyers.

Windels, K. & Lee, W. (2012) "The construction of gender and creativity in advertising creative departments, *Gender in Management: An International Journal,* 27, (8), pp. 502-519.

Wolheter, M. & Lammers, H.B. (1980) "An Analysis of Male Roles in Print Advertisements Over a 20-Year Span, Advances in Consumer Research", 7, pp. 760-761.

Wolin, L.D. (2003) "Gender Issues in Advertising – An Oversight Synthesis of Research: 1970-2002", *Journal of Advertising Research*, March, pp. 111-129.

Woodruffe-Burton, H. (1998) "Private desires, public display: consumption, postmodernism and fashion's "new man", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 26, (8), pp. 301-310.

Wright, L. (1997) *The Bear Book: Readings in the History and Evolution of a Gay Male Subculture*, New York: Haworth Press.

Yoo, J.J., Jacob, J. & Baier, M. (2012) "Adolescent boys' grooming product use and perceived health risks: An exploration of parental influence", *Health Education Journal,* 71, (30), pp. 299-308.

Yorkston, E. & de Mello, G.E. (2005) "Linguistic gender marking and categorization", *Journal of Consumer Research,* 32, (2), pp. 224-235.

Appendix One Phase One Target Audience Interview Key Discussion Schedule

Introduction

This interview should normally take between 30 minutes and one hour. It forms part of a wider PhD research project which is considering how males (primarily) are represented within printed advertisements currently. The interviews are being recorded with your permission, so that the discussion can be interpreted as part of a mediated discourse analysis which allows respondents to become co-researchers within the research. You will be contacted via email in the future with a copy of the transcript for your reflection and comments on the process and this will also form part of the research input.

Method

You will be shown a series of 6 male-targeted advertisements with a guidance sheet of factors for consideration of which you may add to. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded for further analysis and you will be acting as a co-researcher within this study.

Researcher details

Angela Byrne Senior Lecturer Marketing and Retailing Division

Manchester Metropolitan University Business School

Aytoun Street Manchester M1 3GH Telephone: 0161 247 6068

Email: a.byrne@mmu.ac.uk

Guidelines for analysing advertisements

Consider the advertisement – do you buy this product or any similar to this? Please comment on the overall impact of the advertisement.

How does it make you feel?

Model (if applicable)

Face - Examine their facial features, facial hair. Do you consider them to be good looking?

Look at their expression and gaze – what does this suggest to you? Consider the hair, hairstyle and use of hair products or accessories.

Look at the eyes – how are they used – staring at the reader, looking away, behind sunglasses – what does this convey to you?

Look at the overall pose and posture of the model, clothing and how it is used as an effect?

Consider the age of the model and ethnicity.

Who is the intended audience/s for this advertisement based on the model, the brand, the product?

Product image

If this is the main image used – how is it presented? Reflect upon the words employed within the text and their intended meaning.

Consider the name of the brand/product – what does this suggest to you? Who do you think is the target audience?

What words stand out within the advertisement? Look at the overall advertisement layout of model, copy and product image and please comment.

Look at the text within the advertisement. Is this used to convey meaning?

What colours are used and what does this suggest to you? Website – how prominent is this? Is it useful? Would you use a website for moisturising products?

Data Capture

Name:

Age:

Profession:

Marital status:

Current magazines purchased:

Hobbies:

Moisturiser used and impetus for purchase:

Appendix Two Profile of Phase One and Two Semiotic Interview Participants

Inter view	Participant Name, ethnicity, sexuality[1]	Age	Profession	Marital Status	Current magazines purchased	Hobbies	Moisturisers Used	Interview Location	Interview Date
1	'Mac' – W, H	26	Operations Manager	Living with female partner	FHM, Zoo every now and then	PS2, football (season ticket at Manchester United), swimming, going to the gym	Main creams used for my neck Nivea I've tried Clinique, I've tried also other brands	Researcher's office 1106a Aytoun MMUBS	29.3.07
19	'Mac'– W, H	33	Area Manager	Living with female partner	FHM	Manchester United season ticket holder	Clarins	Participant's workplace	29.10.13
2	'Al' – W, H	36	Project Manager	Living with female partner	Car magazines, Octane, Evo	Running, skiing, drinking/socialising	None	Researcher's office 1106a Aytoun MMUBS	30.3.07
3	'D' – W, G	27	Marketing Manager	Single	FHM	Drinking pints, clubbing, days out and reading	L'Oreal for Men Expert	Researcher's office 1106a Aytoun MMUBS	17.4.07
11	'D' – W, G	33	Senior Lecturer	Living with male partner	Attitude - online gay magazine	Drinking vodka, socialising and reading.	Olay skin cream and Olay night cream (female)	Participant's office 6.08 MMU New Building	11.6.13
4	'Dom' – W, H	24	Development Manager	Single	Triathalon 220	Triathalon, trekking, reading.	Aloe Vera	Researcher's office 1106a MMUBS	1.5.07

[1]A – British Asian; B- Black British; C – Chinese British; W- White British ethnicity; H – Heterosexual, G – Homosexual sexuality

18	'Dom' – W, H	31	Coffee Industry	Engaged	National Geographic	Triathalon, trekking, reading	Clarins	Participant's workplace	30.9.13
5	'Oz' – B, H	25	Marketing Coordinator	Living with girlfriend	None	Playing and supporting Manchester United, reading	St. Ives (unisex) and Vaseline Intensive Care	Researcher's office 1106a MMUBS	10.5.07
14	'Oz' – B, H	31	Public Policy Manager	Married	The Economist	Swimming, football and reading	St. Ives Moisturiser	Researcher's office 6.16 MMU New Building	27.6.13
6	'Jake' – W, G	22	Marketing Assistant	Single	Sunday supplement magazines (Times), FHM	Socialising, playing and watching football (Aston Villa)	Nivea for Men	Researcher's office 1106a MMUBS	18.5.07
17	'Jake' – W, G	9	Marketing Manager	Single	Sunday supplement magazines	Scuba diving, skiing, socialising, playing and watching football (Aston Villa)	Boots No7	Researcher's office 6.16 MMU	26.9.13
7	'Pete' – W, H	25	Information Systems Officer	Single	Viz	Drinking and going to the gym	Nivea for Men, King Of Shaves exfoliating face scrub	Researcher's office 1106a MMUBS	1.6.07
12	'Pete' – W, H	33	IT Professional	Living with girlfriend and daughter	None	None – watching TV	Uses post shave moisturiser was given for Christmas – can't recall	Researcher's office 6.16 MMU new building	14.6.13

8	'Q' – W, H	35	Lecturer	Living with female partner	BBC Good Homes Guide, cycling weekly, Decanter (wine magazine).	Hobbies: Riding bike (cycling), food and wine.	Tried some but don't like the greasy feeling on skin – used Nivea for Men	Researcher's office 1106a MMUBS	1.6.07
15	'Q' – W, H	41	Lecturer	Married with child	Gardener's World, Cycling Weekly	Family, whisky, wine, cycling, kayaking	None	Researcher's office 1106a MMUBS	3.7.13
9	'Laurie' – W, G	33	Information Systems Officer	Living with male partner	Sunday supplement magazines	Hobbies: Reading and walking.	None	Researcher's office 1106a MMUBS	11.6.07
13	'Laurie' – W, G	40	IT Manager	Civil Partnership	BBC History, Guardian Supplement Magazine	Football, walking, history.	None	Researcher's office 6.16 MMU new building	14.6.13
10	'Davie' – W, H	31	Computer operator	Single	FHM	Gym, running, cycling, snooker, shopping, socialising	None	Researcher's home at the kitchen table	11.6.07
16	'Davie' – W, H	37	Computer operator	Living with female partner	None	Gym, snooker occasionally.	None	Participant's dining room	9.9.13

Appendix Three Phase Two Target Audience Interview Schedule Key Discussion Schedule

Introduction

Welcome back and thank you for agreeing to take part in this follow up discussion. This interview should normally take between 30 minutes and one hour. It forms part of a wider PhD research project which is considering how males (primarily) are represented within printed advertisements over a period of time. The interviews are being recorded with your permission, so that the discussion can be interpreted as part of a mediated discourse analysis which allows respondents to become co-researchers within the research. You will be contacted via email in the future with a copy of the transcript for your reflection and comments on the process and this will also form part of the research input.

Method

You will be shown a series of 6 male-targeted advertisements with a guidance sheet of factors for consideration of which you may add to. With your permission, the interview will be recorded for further analysis and you will be acting as a co-researcher within this study.

Researcher details Angela Byrne Senior Lecturer

Department of Marketing, Operations and Digital Business

Manchester Metropolitan University

Business School

Oxford Road Campus

Manchester

M15 6BH

Telephone: 0161 247 6068

Email: a.byrne@mmu.ac.uk

Guidelines for analysing advertisements

Consider the advertisement – do you buy this product or any similar to this?

Please comment on the overall impact of the advertisement.

How does it make you feel?

Model (if applicable)

Face - Examine their facial features, structure, facial hair.

Do you consider them to be good looking?

Look at their expression and gaze – what does this suggest to you?

Consider the hair, colour, hairstyle and use of hair products or accessories.

Look at the eyes, their colour – how are they used – staring at the reader, looking away, behind sunglasses – what does this convey to you?

Look at the overall pose and posture of the model, clothing and how it is used as an effect?

Consider the age of the model and ethnicity.

Who is the intended audience/s for this advertisement based on the model, the brand, the product?

What body type does the model (if applicable) have?

Is there obvious make-up on the model and if so, what does it suggest?

Product image

If this is the main image used – how is it presented?

Reflect upon the words employed within the text and their intended meaning.

Consider the name of the brand/product – what does this suggest to you?

Who do you think is the target audience?

What words stand out within the advertisement?

Look at the overall advertisement layout of model, copy and product image and please comment.

Consider the spatiality of the image overall – white space – what does this suggest?

What typefaces are used and to what effect?

Look at the text within the advertisement – headlines, straplines, tone, style.

Is this used to convey meaning?

What colours are used and what does this suggest to you?

Website – how prominent is this? Is it useful?

Would you use a website for moisturising products?

<u>Phase Two – Television advertisements</u>

How does the voiceover support the key benefits of the product?

What do you feel about the choice of models used?

Are these typical settings that resonate with your lifestyle?

Does the music add or detract from assisting the positioning of the product favourably to the target audience?

Is there anything about the scenes, colours used, tone of voice, language, etc. that you wish to comment upon?

<u>Phase Two – Website</u>

Do you use blogs? If so do you use grooming/skincare blogs?

Please consider the colours, font, language, tone of voice, layout, product images used.

Is there anything you would change about the blog if you were able to do so?

<u>Comparison Phase One and Phase Two</u>

What, if any, are the key changes you have seen between the two phases (show adverts from Phase One) that you have noticed?

Have you changed your attitudes and buying behaviour towards male skincare since the last interview in 2007?

Has the language changed?

Are the colours used any different?

Have you noticed anything about the model or product image in comparison to the 2006 adverts?

Do you use social media, blogs, websites for information on grooming and/or skincare?

Has there been a blurring between how the products are promoted towards males?

Appendix Four Summary of Findings Phase One Male Skincare Advertisements Sample (Written Element)

Advert - Male copy analysis	FHM p.5 Clinique skin supplies for men	Men's Health p. 150-1 Nivea for Men Advertorial	GQ p. 81 Lab Series	GQ p. 131 L'Oreal men expert	GQ p.143 Biotherm Homme	GQ p. 336 Hugo Boss
Gender neutral/specific / Biased Talbot (2003)	Gender Specific (men) (2) Defeated, anti-ageing, Powerhouse, trigger (4)	Men Specific (6) Restore, recharge, revitalise, sort out skin, WAG, weapons, arsenal (7)	Men Specific (4)	She thinks you look overworked Biased (1) Business, overworked, hydra, energetic, anti-fatigue, recharged, energy, revived, hydration (9)	Male specific Energise, hit high recharge, anti-fatigue, engineered, formulated (7)	Men implied specific (1)
Goddard & Patterson (2000) Reading position Well-Informed reader/informed/ uninformed	Informed: Assumes reader's awareness that they need to moisturise their skin, highlights hydration without greasiness as unique position.	Uninformed: narrator to narratee approach. Unique buying rationale for recovering 'stressed skin'.	Informed: Improvements to well-known problems. Scientific rationale suggests understanding.	Informed/uninformed: Reconsider self-image from female's viewpoint – use of 'gender script'.	Implied informed reader with very positive positioning of product's 'recharge' buyer positioning. Metaphors scientific (engineered) power	Informed reader – narrator/narratee approach assumes you know you need a moisturiser and others will know that you use it
Semiotic Analysis van Leeuwen (2005)	Sign - product Signifier – crashing onto surface water Signified – power and strength	Sign – remedy product Signifier – restore, recharge, revitalise Signified – solution to problem	Sign – male model. Signifier – dark under eyes. Signified – reconsider your look in the eyes of opposite sex.	Sign – aggressive looking male model Signifier – powerful image Signified – healthier skin with use of product.	Sign – model's face Signifier – commanding look at reader Signified – personal enhancement of skin with product	Sign – grinning model Signifier – smoothness of chin Signified – change post shaving expectations

Appendix Five Summary of Findings Phase Two Male Skincare Advertisements Sample (Written Element)

Advert – Male Copy Analysis	New Pro+LS All-In-One Face Treatment (Men's Health, June 2013, p. 61).	Men's Moisturisers Banner Maleskin (May, 2013, http://www.maleskin.co.uk)	Dove Men Plus Care UK TV advertisement (http://www.youtube.com/watch:v=chLAOpeskrE)	New Nivea for Men Skin Energy TV advert (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glF9L7vlNpc)	L'Oreal Men Expert Hydra Energetic Quenching Gel (Men's Health, June 2013, p. 154).	Bulldog Skincare for Men Original Moisturiser (Men's Health, June 2013, p. 142).
Gender neutral/specific/ Biased Talbot (2003)	Specific (3) 'men' – 'One. And you're done. Emphasises convenience appeal using minimalistic copy style for reinforcement.	Neutral but products and models indicate these are male products. Trigger words used 'hydrate', 'nourish', 'replenish', 'eliminate'.	Gender specific – men (2) reference to product brand. Imperative 'your face says it all' and directive to respond to the remedy to this. Trigger words are 'hydrated', 'moisture locking', 'unique formula'.	Specific – men (5), 'morning energy', 'challenge', 'energise', 'fresh', 'instant effect', '88% of 32 men agree'.	Gender (3) – Men. 'switch', 'hydra energetic'(2), 'quenching', 'air-gel technology', 'no shine', 'men expert' (2)	Gender specific (3) 'man', 'men' – '*Bulldog* is man's best friend'. '*Bulldog* skincare for men.' Loyalty tropes used.
Goddard & Patterson (2000) Reading position Well-Informed reader/informed/ uninformed	Well-informed 'Just the way you want it'. Minimum information assuming reader understands the product benefits – *Facebook* used to 'connect with us' and website for online purchase.	Uninformed - 'hydrate, nourish and replenish the skin with essential moisturiser whilst eliminating dryness, particularly paramount during the depths of winter and heights of summer' suggesting this is not previously understood by the target audience.	Uninformed - 'don't cut your week nights short', 'instantly energise your skin to look fresh', 'instant effect', 88% of 32 men agree.	Uninformed - 'don't cut your week nights short'. No. 1 in the category Men's Skin Care; retail value terms 2011' as an endorsement of the brand's prestige. Website and *Facebook.*	Informed – suggests that men know that cooling moisturisers can leave a sticky effect but need to understand the key benefits of 'air gel technology' to negate this.	Uninformed – 'how do you face a problem if the problem is your face? This isn't the whole answer, but it's a start'. An imperative of 'be loyal to your skin' is used as a call to action.

Semiotic Analysis van Leeuwen (2005)	Sign – use of short descriptors and full stops. Signifier – suggests a 'need to know' approach. Signified – a fast way to perform skincare routine. Social context – appeals to men who want a 'quick fix' skincare product.	Sign - A metaphor to engineering is used 'geared'and 'bathroom workout'. Signifier – good skin must be worked at similar to gym routines. Signified – technically supports male skincare. Social context –males can construct a good skincare routine by using these products.	Sign – No. 1 skincare brand and 'preparation is everything'. Signifier – provides confidence in the product's effectiveness to maintain looks the next day. Signified – you can look good and still go out late at night socialising. Social context – you can have a work-life balance with this product.	Sign – men shown in various social situations. Signifier – all have environmental effects on skin. Signified – Nivea is number one skincare brand. Social context – whatever your skin type *Nivea* will keep skin looking good.	Sign – Short adjectives used to convey cooling properties on skin. Signifier – cools the skin with 'air-gel technology' without a sticky residue. Signified – skin that feels cool similar to cooling effect of an industrial fan. Social context – men need to retain good skin looks even when it's hot.	Sign – logos for BUAV, made in UK and natural ingredients, 'Be loyal to your skin'. Signifier – natural product endorsements and a suggestion that you should not let your skin down. Signified – a natural product which your skin will appreciate and reward you by looking good. Social context – British made and *Bulldog* brand provides a heritage hook.

Appendix Six Focus Groups, Industry Professionals and Younger Male Participant Profiles

Interview	Participant Name, ethnicity, sexuality[2]	Male/ Female	Age	Profession	Moisturisers Used	Interview Location	Interview Date
Focus Group	1 'John' – W – H	M	18	Student	Nivea for Men	Altrincham Methodist Church Hall	18.7.14
Focus Group	2 ' Ash' – A – H	M	47	Accountant	Nivea for Men and Dolce	Altrincham Methodist Church Hall	18.7.14
Focus Group	3 'Mike' – W- H	M	50	Plasterer	Avon for Men	Altrincham Methodist Church Hall	18.7.14
Focus Group	4 'Tony' - C - H	M	42	IT Manager	Nivea for Men	Altrincham Methodist Church Hall	18.7.14
Focus Group	5 'George' – W – H	M	59	Retired	None	Altrincham Methodist Church Hall	18.7.14
Interview 1 Industry	'Gemma' – W - H	F	35-40	Promotions Manager Synergie	N/A	Manchester Airport	3.6.15
Interview 2 Industry and Older Males	'Andy' – W - H 'Tommo' – W - H 'Theo' – W - H	M M M	38 30 20	Architectural Illustrator Men's Barber Student	E45 Aloe Vera and Bio Oil Aloe Vera Moisturiser	Close Male Grooming, Altrincham	10.6.15
Interview 3 Industry	'Daniel' – W - H	M	32	Barber	Nivea for Men	Mr Edwards Barber Shop, Southampton	25.6.15
Interview 4 Industry	'Sewerwyn' – W - H	M	33	Tattooist	None	Askaard Tattoo Parlour, Southampton	25.6.15
Interview 5 Industry	'Stuart' – W - G	M	52	Skincare Consultant	Clinique	Boots Store, Southampton	25.6.15

[2] A – British Asian; B – Black British; C- Chinese British; W- White British ethnicity; H - Heterosexual, G - Homosexual sexuality

Interview 6 Industry	'Ashleigh' – W - H	F	33	Skincare Consultant	Clarins	John Lewis, Southampton	25.6.15
Interview 7 Industry	'Lin' – W - H	F	55	Skincare Consultant	N/A	Face Values, Hale	25.11.15
Interview 1 Younger Males	'Drew' – W - G	M	18	Student	Simple Moisturiser	MMU	17.12.15
Interview 2 Younger Males	'Tom' – W - H	M	18	Student Upper Sixth	Spot cream	Researcher's Home	23.12.15
Interview 3 Younger Males	'Matthew' – W - H	M	19	Student Mechanical Engineering Undergraduate	Nivea For Men	Researcher's Home	2.1.16
Interview 4 Younger Males	'Michael' – W - H	M	18	Student Upper Sixth	Aveeno	Researcher's Home	2.1.16
Interview 5 Younger Males	'Brad' – W - H	M	19	Student Computing Undergraduate	Nivea for Men and Bulldog	Researcher's Home	4.1.16
Interview 6 Younger Males	'Mike' – W - H	M	20	Student Geography Undergraduate	Nivea for Men	Participant's Home	5.1.16
Interview 7 Younger Males	'Mich' – W - H	M	22	Student Business Undergraduate	Clinique for Men	MMU Cafe	5.1.16
Interview 8 Industry	'Thomas' – W - G	M	28	Skincare Consultant and barber	Gentry Products	The Gentry Male Grooming	5.1.16

Interview 8 Younger Male	'Paul' – W - H	M	18	Student Neuroscience	Dove Men Care	By phone	6.1.16
Interview 9 Younger Males	'Tim' – W – G	M	18	Student Upper Sixth	Lush	Researcher's Home	7.1.16
Interview 10 Younger Males	'Adam' – W – H	M	18	Student Upper Sixith	Clearasil	Participant's Home	10.1.16
Interview 9 Industry	'Sam' – W, H	M	28	Barber	Nivea for Men	Flannagan's Barbers, Hale	12.1.16
Interview 10 Industry	'David' – W, G	M	58	Beauty Consultant	Nivea for Men	REM UK, Altrincham	15.1.16
Focus Group	'Gaz' – W, H	M	27	Media Sales	None	Manchester Aquatics Centre	13.4.17
Focus Group	'Bez' – W, H	M	26	Playworker	None	Manchester Aquatics Centre	13.4.17
Focus Group	'Dec' – W, H	M	20	Professional Water Polo Player	None	Manchester Aquatics Centre	13.4.17
Focus Group	'Loz' – W, H	M	19	Student	Protakas (Greek Brand)	Manchester Aquatics Centre	13.4.17