

Multiple and Unstable Masculinities: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Masculine Identities in Pullout Magazines in Kenya

Research
article

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Abstract

Many media analysts have pointed out that magazines are an important site for construction of gender. In Kenya, however, most gender studies focus on women, and little critical examination has been done to show how men are represented in the media (Ligaga 2020; Rotich and Byron 2016). This article seeks to fill this gap by analyzing how men are discursively constructed in newspapers' pullout magazines in Kenya. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and the social constructionist view of gender, this article critically analyzes five masculine identities that are constructed in these pullout magazines. The article selected four pullout magazines from the two leading newspapers in Kenya: The Nation and The Standard. From these magazines, a total of five articles are examined. The study reveals that socially constructed reality is presented in a largely essentialist manner, through claims of universality, normativity and naturalness. The analysis, in addition, exposes multiple masculine identities which are at times contradictory. The study concludes that this is in keeping with a postmodern view of gender that underlines multiplicity, fluidity, contradiction and instability.

Keywords

Critical Discourse Analysis; hegemonic masculinity; multiplicity; instability; pullout magazines

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INTRODUCTION

The mass media plays a critical role in the construction of reality, and it is therefore not easy to distinguish between the ideological and the real (Newbold, Boyd-Barrett and Van Den Bulck 2002). Again, “media discourse is important in propagating modern lifestyles which are templates for the narratives of the self” (Gauntlett 2002, 103). Thus, there is a clear connection between gender construction and the media. To begin with, the media have an acknowledged power to represent ‘socially acceptable’ ways of being or relating to others, as well as to allocate, or more usually withhold public recognition, honour and status of groups of people.

Magazines in Kenya have over the years tended to focus on women and their issues. Magazines such as *Drum*, *True-love*, *Parents*, and *Pregnant* have been visible in the media landscape mainly because of their focus on women. Citing research by Target Group Index, Kimutai (2009) reveals that the readership of magazines such as *Drum*, *Adam*, *True Love* etc. has been on the decline. This may explain the popularity of pullout lifestyle magazines inserted in major newspapers.

Kenya has a number of daily newspapers which include the *Daily Nation*, *The Standard*, and *The People*. The leading daily is undoubtedly the *Daily Nation* in terms of readership followed by *The Standard*. According to the BBC Trust (2006), all other dailies fall far below these leading newspapers in readership. The BBC Trust further notes that as of 2006, the *Daily Nation* and *Sunday Nation* had a 74.2 percent readership followed by *The Standard* at 23.4 percent readership. In the months of February and March 2019, according to Kenya Audience Research Foundation (KARF), the *Daily Nation* had a readership of 48.3 percent and 48.5 percent respectively. *The Standard* was a distant second at 25.3 percent and 26.9 percent during the same months (Business Daily 2019). It follows that their pullout magazines have an equally big readership and this is why this article focuses on pullout magazines from these two dailies.

Pullout magazines have tended to give men more attention than before. A cursory glance through their pages reveals that magazines such as *Saturday (Saturday Nation)*, *DN2 (Daily Nation)*, *Woman Instinct (The Standard)*, *Woman Essence (The People Weekend)*, and *Crazy Monday (The Standard)* also cover a wide range of issues about men which include sports, interviews, adventure, fashion and grooming. Columns such as ‘Man Talk’ (*Saturday*), ‘Guy IQ’ (*The People Weekend*) and ‘Menonly’ (*Woman Instinct*) specifically target men. Such columns are important sites for analyzing the way men are constructed in lifestyle magazines because of their obvious directness. Equally important are columns such as ‘Female Speak’ (*Saturday*) which focuses on women because, inadvertently, issues of men and masculinity are raised. These types of magazines have the potential to reach a wide audience as they are marketed and distributed with the parent paper.

Unsurprisingly, much of what has been written and studied about gender and the media revolves around women because of their obvious marginalization, especially in the third world. As Macnamara observes, it is only recently that gender discussion has begun to focus on men (Macnamara 2006). This is an obvious gap that this article seeks to fill by focusing on representations of men and masculinities in the media.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Fairclough argues that to fully understand what discourse is and how it works, analysis should show the form and function of the text, the way the text is related to the way it is produced and consumed and the relation of this to the wider society (Fairclough 2015). He proposes that the analysis should start with the text then gradually build outwards to include more complex discursive and social practices. Analysis of a text, according to Fairclough, should involve linguistic analysis in terms of vocabulary, grammar, semantics and cohesion—organization above the sentence level (Fairclough

1995). In this study, the lexical and grammatical choices are analyzed with a view to uncovering how pullout magazines construct men. In addition, the study examines the way writers of pullout magazines draw on already existing discourses and discourse genres to create text. This is because discourse analysis involves an analysis of texts as they are embedded within, and relate to, social conditions of production and consumption.

Fairclough's CDA framework also recommends an analysis of the text's "socio-cultural practice" or "the social and cultural goings—on which the communicative event is part of" (Fairclough 1995, 57). We should, for instance, ask: "What does this text say about the society in which it was produced? What impact do we think the text may have on social relations? Will it help to continue inequalities and other undesirable social practices, or will it help to break them down?" (Richardson 2007, 42).

Gender Performativity

This study is considerably influenced by Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity. Butler disagrees with the notion of gender as an attribute which is fixed and is part of a person's self (Butler 1999). Instead, she sees gender as a fluid variable that can change in different contexts and at different times. This brings us to Butler's core argument that gender is performance. Gender, is therefore not a universal attribute that people have but what they do at a particular time in a specific context. She emphasizes that gender is performative and seeks to show that what people take to be an internal essence of gender is a product of sustained acts (Butler 2004). She further contends that what people take to be an internal attribute of themselves is actually what they anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts of naturalized gestures. Butler also significantly contends that the same individual performs different gender roles at different times. This nullifies the notion of gender as something fixed. This is quite illuminating in the analysis of masculine construction in pullout magazines, as it follows that there is no identity that is better than another neither is there a real or a normal or an abnormal identity. It is therefore of critical interest when pullout magazines elevate some male identities above others, or construct some as normal and others as abnormal. Of concern in this study, therefore, is the fluidity and multiplicity of masculine constructions in these pullout magazines.

Hegemonic Masculinities

The central features of hegemonic masculinities are the plurality of masculinities and the hierarchy of masculinities (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). They report that multiple patterns of masculinities have been identified in many studies in many settings. Again, widespread research has shown that certain masculinities are more central or more powerful than others. They also argue that the concept of hegemonic masculinity presumes the subordination of non-hegemonic masculinities (Messerschmidt 2018). Key also to this concept, according to the two, is the notion that the hierarchy of masculinities is a pattern of hegemony not simple domination based on force. They also document cultural consent, discursive centrality and institutionalization as key features of dominant masculinities. An interesting argument about the concept, is that hegemonic masculinity doesn't have to be the commonest pattern in everyday lives of boys and men. They explain that it works in part through enactment of exemplars of masculinity, for example, sports stars and media celebrities. These are symbols of authority despite the fact that many men do not live up to them. The concept of hegemonic masculinity is relevant in studies on media representations of men, as in this study, because it helps make sense of selectiveness of images. The concept also makes a contribution in trying to understand representations of different masculinities in pullout magazines.

In the media, for example, hegemonic masculinity constructs men as powerful and domineering. Stereotypical phrases in the media such as 'acting like a man' and 'man enough' may encourage men to

engage in risky activities while at the same time shunning passive and sensitive roles which are deemed feminine (Howson 2006).

Construction of Gender Identity

Identities may be more complex than they at first appear. From one perspective, they define who somebody is according to traits (During 2005). It could be a physical feature, a belief, a genealogy or a cultural preference. This results in lumping individuals into groups of people who share a similar trait. This means that one's identity as a man both defines him as an individual and also puts him together with fifty per cent of the population. This radically reduces a person's individuality.

A number of commentators have pointed out that identities also have boundaries. Barker, for example, notes that subjects are formed through differences, so that we are in part defined by what we are not (Barker 1999). We are defined in part by being differentiated from 'how they are' (Fairclough 2015). Again, the distinctions of 'us' and 'them' are characterized by 'them' embodying a negative connotation (Van Dijk 1995). 'They' are mainly presented as problematic and difficult, thus the media may try to legitimize certain constructions of male identities while vilifying others. During concurs by observing that the terms used to define identity do not describe traits and groups neutrally (During 2005). He emphasizes that they are culturally inflected and are determined by power relations in society between those using the identity descriptor and those to whom the descriptor applies.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Pullout magazines have become increasingly popular in Kenya in the last twenty years or so. Some of them cover a wide range of issues relating to men, for example, style, fashion, design and relationships. These magazines can be considered fruitful sites for the gathering of data on modern male identity (Jerome 2008). *The Nation* and *The Standard* newspapers were purposely selected. The two have a truly national readership so their ideas are likely to reach all corners of the country. The leading daily in Kenya in terms of readership is the *Daily Nation* followed by *The Standard*. All other dailies fall far below these leading newspapers in readership. Newspapers published between February, 2012 and January, 2013 were selected because they were the most current at the time of collecting data.

Pullout magazines for the months of February, 2012 to January, 2013 were purposely selected. This was mainly because the male identities that would emerge were likely to represent the most current trends in the conceptualization of masculinities. A full year focus would reflect all seasons, special occasions, holidays and monthly trends that may be significant. Purposive sampling was used since only information rich magazines were relevant. Consequently, relevant articles from *Saturday (Saturday Nation)*, *Lifestyle (Sunday Nation)*, *Woman Instinct (Standard on Saturday)* and *The Dude (Standard on Sunday)* were selected. These pullout magazines were chosen because they directly talk about gender issues.

The pullout magazines potentially available for study were many; therefore, it was necessary to limit the number to be studied in a reasonable manner. Scholars have pointed out that the success of a study in discourse analysis is not dependent on the sample size. A large sample does not necessarily indicate a more rigorous or worthwhile study, indeed, it may simply add to the labour without adding anything to the analysis (Potter and Wetherell 1987, cited by Soden 2009). In light of this argument, five articles were selected.

Saturday magazine is colourfully designed and published on Saturday by the *Daily Nation*. It has several columns that raise issues related to men. Some of the articles are written from a male

perspective while others are written from a female perspective. Similarly, *Lifestyle* pullout magazine, distributed inside the *Sunday Nation*, focuses on issues of men from the perspectives of both genders. *Woman Instinct* and *The Dude* are published by *The Saturday Standard* and *The Standard* respectively. As the title suggests, *Woman Instinct* is women's magazine, but inevitably many issues revolving around men are also raised. *The Dude* targets young men especially teenagers and those in their twenties. Categories of analysis were generated after reading through magazines' articles. CDA and the social constructionist frameworks were used to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section delves into an in-depth analysis of five masculine identities discursively constructed by pullout magazines selected. This article is part of a larger project, and five articles have been selected to illustrate the aforementioned identities.

Men as Wielders of Power

Van Dijk presents the persuasive argument that power involves one group controlling other groups (Van Dijk 1995). He further correctly contends that power is enacted in a more effective way by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation to change the minds of others in one's own interest (Van Dijk 2017). Consequently, this section seeks to expose the implicit means through which men's dominant position is maintained and reinforced by pullout magazines. The notion that men should wield power over other groups comes out in a number of articles.

Let us begin by analyzing the following article from the *Saturday Nation*. The article is titled '*A skill-set for every modern man*', November 7, 2012. The writer, Jackson Biko, writes from the perspective of a man, and a journalist. His position as a journalist gives him access and legitimacy to write in a pullout magazine, and also makes him credible in the eyes of readers. Being a man also gives him authority to write about issues related to men. These positions put him in a dominant position vis-à-vis the reader.

The article falls within the genre of argumentation. Argumentation seeks to increase or decrease the acceptability of a controversial standpoint for the reader by advancing propositions intended to justify a writer's position (Van Eemeren et al 1996, cited in Richardson 2007). This article qualifies to be an argumentation because as Richardson argues, it aims at exerting an influence on the opinions and attitudes of the readers about what makes a 'modern man' (Richardson 2007). The title is followed by a subtext 'In addition to buying a Swiss knife and a leather jacket, every modern man should know some important things, like how to tell a truthful lie'.

Some attributive adjectives trigger presuppositions as in 'modern' in the noun phrase 'every modern man'. The adjective presupposes that a modern man exists which fits in with the writers ideological agenda that men need to evolve new methods of domination. The generic noun phrase 'every modern man' in both the title and the subtext implies that all modern men need the skills the writer is talking about. Furthermore, the writer uses the same noun phrase to attempt to legitimize telling a lie. The writer further legitimizes telling a lie by categorizing lies among 'important things'. Paradox (truthful lie) is also used to justify telling a lie, a culturally unacceptable thing. When one reads further, it becomes apparent that the reason behind a man telling a lie is considered a good thing has to do with wielding power.

This time, he legitimizes his assertions through the use of intertextuality:

A few moons ago I ran into some helpful story written by revered journalist and author Charles Onyango-Obbo, about the things every modern man should possess. It included, among other items, a leather jacket, a Swiss knife and such-like manly gizmos.

The concept of intertextuality is predicated on the argument that texts are a product of interacting with other texts (Wong 2008). Richardson also argues that a text cannot be viewed in isolation from other texts because they are not produced or consumed in isolation (Richardson 2007). Importantly, Fairclough holds that the notion of intertextuality invites us to view discourses and texts from a historical perspective and emphasizes that intertextual analysis helps to pinpoint which other texts are drawn upon in the text being analyzed (Fairclough 2015). Wong argues that journalists tend to make reference to people of 'high status' to give force to their arguments (Wong 2008). Charles Onyango-Obbo is described as a 'revered journalist and author' to give credence to Biko's argument. The underlying implication is that since Onyango-Obbo is a revered journalist, then he is an expert in matters relating to men and, thus, the reader should believe what he says. 'A leather jacket' and 'a Swiss army knife' evoke images of military or physical power and are also described as 'manly gizmos' which presupposes that such items cannot be carried by women. The writer then makes the claim that men have lost their power to women and need to reclaim it:

And the modern man's world is not what it used to be; it's not as large as it was, when say, Kool and the Gang was all the rage. Now it's been infringed upon by the opposite sex and the playing room is much smaller.

The noun phrase 'The modern man's world' is used here as a metaphor to refer to the contemporary life of men. The definite article 'the' and the adjective 'modern' presuppose an earlier time for men when things were much better, thus, the writer is trying to persuade his male readers to reinvent the good old days. The notion of hegemonic masculinity is being invoked here as the writer nostalgically longs for the times when men wielded more power. The metaphor 'playing room' connotes the idea of a game in the way men wield power over women. This is a strategy of convincing readers that for men to be all powerful is a harmless thing. It also suggests competition for power between men and women. The verb 'infringe' implies that it is men's legal right to wield power and it is illegal for women to contest it. The readership is therefore made to feel that men are legally entitled to wield and exercise power in society.

The Irresponsible man

In a number of the articles under study, men's irresponsibility is constructed through various perspectives ranging from sexually irresponsible men, irresponsible fathers and irresponsible drunkards.

Let us start by analyzing how Njoki Kaigai, in the column *Femalespeak*, (Saturday Magazine, March 17, 2012) handles this. She writes from the position of a woman, who is a journalist. Her status as a single woman who has experience about men gives her credibility to discuss men's irresponsibility. Additionally, her position as a journalist also gives her authority to make certain claims with authority. These positions put her in a dominant position in relation to the reader. This article is also a form of argumentation where the writer attempts to convince the reader that men are generally irresponsible.

The article is titled *Playing with fire? Expect a Burn*. On reading the article, the reader realizes that the title is metaphorical. The writer is warning men that once they engage in unprotected sex with women, then, they should be ready to take responsibility of the resultant child. The construct of irresponsibility is highlighted by this choice of metaphor. In many societies children are advised not to

play with fire because they will get burned. This is a case of infantilization as men are relegated to the level of children who are ignorant that by playing with “fire” they will get burnt. Moreover, men are depicted as if they perceive responsibility as an unpleasant thing since taking care of the baby is equated with “a burn”.

In the subtext that follows, the writer declares: “only a man with no moral backbone would walk away from a child who bears 23 of his chromosomes.” This text is written in bold for emphasis. Again, the metaphor “moral backbone” is used to reinforce the notion that a man who abandons his child is morally weak. The writer then makes the claim that many men are irresponsible in the following text written in bold: “most men are high on sex drive and low on responsibility.” The phrase “high on” suggests that male libido is uncontrollable and it is like a drug, thus men are incapable of sexual responsibility. The writer does not make reference to any statistical information to back her claim that most men are irresponsible. She constructs male identity in a largely biological or essentialist manner. It is as if men are identical in their sexual behaviour, yet as West and Zimmerman observe, gender is a social construct and, hence, norms of masculinity are reproduced and regulated by society (West and Zimmerman 1987). The writer then uses intertextuality to stress her claims that men are indeed irresponsible:

A certain gentleman who writes in this magazine made some outrageous accusations a few weeks ago. He claimed that single motherhood is now a choice that women are making. He cited many reasons. Skewed to illustrate his point, but failed to point out the one glaring truth: For every single mother, there exists an absent father who has elected to ignore or avoid his duty to his spawn.

Wong (2008) has shown that it is possible to use intertextuality to create distance with the source referred to. The writer tries to distance herself with the male writer whom she refers to as “a certain gentleman who writes in this magazine.” This implies he is not important and even his views should not be taken seriously. Indeed, forms of address are sensitive indicators of how people view those they address (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003). Thus, the reference “a certain gentleman” is aimed at showing distance and absence of solidarity between the writer and the addressee. Additionally, readers are being asked to view him as an outsider. She then uses negative adjectives such as “outrageous” and “skewed” to discredit his argument. She tries to legitimize her own argument, that men are irresponsible, by using the noun phrase “one glaring truth”, yet this is merely an opinion. It is indeed not true as she claims that “for every single mother there exists...” a man who has ignored his responsibility, for as the male writer argues, there are women who choose to raise their children without the help of the men who sired them. She further suggests that men’s irresponsibility has led to social decay as can be seen in the following text:

Part of the social decay that we are experiencing is housed in the cavalier attitude many men have towards the babies that they have helped create. In some quarters, men like to regale friends and hangers-on with tales of how many babies they have sired across counties.

In this text the writer claims that men actually enjoy being irresponsible. The word “regale” clearly shows that men view telling stories of children they have sired and abandoned as entertainment. It is also suggested that men are idle as they tell these stories to “hangers-on”. The text also implies that men are insensitive and cruel. Men’s sexual irresponsibility is further highlighted in the following text:

Most men will come running at the speed of light when promised some midnight booty action expecting the woman, who is providing both the venue and pleasure, to give them food, drink and in some cases the latex tools of trade.

The writer turns to informal language by using the slang term “booty”. Stylistic variation in media discourse should not be taken for granted (Fairclough 2015), for example, use of ‘booty’ is an indicator that the writer seeks to create familiarity with the reader. This kind of informality makes the reader feel close to the writer while at the same time vulgarizing men sexual desire. Once again, men’s untamed sexual desire is contrasted to their lack of responsibility. The metaphor ‘at the speed of light’ illustrates this uncontrollable desire. The writer also portrays men as selfish and uneconomically endowed as they cannot even afford a home or food, creating the image of parasites. They are not even responsible for their own health as they cannot purchase condoms euphemistically referred to as “latex tools of trade”. The metaphor “trade” constructs the frame of transaction which implies that men view sex as a commodity, yet, ironically, they are not ready to contribute anything in its acquisition. The writer also deliberately objectifies women in this article in order to emphasize men’s irresponsibility. Men are constructed as viewing women as objects of their pleasure and comfort.

The Responsible Man

There are also columns and features in pullout magazines that emphasize a new form of masculinity where men are expected to act responsibly and sensitively. The column *Man Up* in *The Dude* magazine (The Standard, July 11, 2012) is a good example. The writer seeks to persuade his readers through argumentation. The article under analysis is titled: *Want to be a Gentleman? Stay on Top*. The writer, Simon, begins by explaining to the reader what “manning up” is all about:

The thing about manning up is that it is not an explicit decision you make to be or not to be a gentleman. It is the things you do in your stride which determine which side of the coin you are. There must have been a reason, a dividing factor that led to the definition of two classes of the ‘male-man’-a man and a gentleman. The distinction is almost as clear as the difference between sheep and goats.

First, through the use of expressive modality in sentences like “manning up *is*” the writer presupposes that a concept like “manning up” exists. This justifies not giving evidence to back his assertion. The writer then claims that there “must have been a reason”, “a dividing factor” that brought about two types of men. The auxiliary “must” gives authority to the writer’s claims, and significantly, agency is unclear in the sentence. We thus do not know who came up with these two categories of men. Then, through the use of juxtaposing metaphors, like “which side of the coin” and “between sheep and goats” he constructs the two types of men: gentlemen and those that are not gentlemen. The writer seems to lose the reader through the claim that “manning up” is not an “explicit decision” that one makes. He pursues the argument further in the following text:

Further, manning up is not an outward decision, its elements lie within and are founded on certain principles and values. It cannot be forced or made up and is not a status, it is a lifestyle. The fact that it comes from within implies that it has to be built from inside before it can manifest outside.

If manning up is not an “outward decision”, then it can only mean that it is a naturally or biologically occurring phenomenon. From a social constructionist point of view, it is hard to see how this can be the case since our actions and lifestyles are influenced by social experiences. Additionally, if

it is a natural thing what would make some men become gentlemen and others not? The writer also seems to contradict himself by claiming that “manning up” is inward yet he goes on to say that it is founded on “certain principles and values”. Principles and values are culture specific, thus cannot be from within an individual. Barthes argues that myth is a situation where the values of a historically and socially specific class are presented as natural (Barthes 1986). Similarly, the writer of this article tries to persuade the reader that his view (and that of his class) of what constitutes a gentleman is a natural fact. The writer also seeks to persuade the reader through the use of words like “fact” that his argument cannot be contested. Again, he uses negation in the second sentence to emphasize his argument as in ‘cannot be forced’ and “is not a status”.

The Gay Man

It is important at this juncture to turn attention to the gay male identity which is also subordinated with regard to hegemonic masculinity. Within the hegemonic masculinities framework, gay men are subordinate to heterosexual men. Hegemony as a belief system has an emotional angle, where strongly held beliefs mixed with emotion make certain actions to be viewed as natural or normal, and others as unnatural or abnormal (Fairclough 2015). The feature article titled: *Confessions of a gay, married man* (Saturday Magazine, November 3, 2012) is particularly illuminating. The word “confession” in this article has the connotation of ‘criminal’. This relates to Foucault’s argument that sex was brought into the public sphere by Christianity in the 17th century when it was decreed that all desires be brought into the public limelight through confession (Foucault 1978). He further argues that the obligation to confess is so deeply ingrained in people that they no longer perceive it as a result of a power that constrains them.

Significantly, the question of gay men should be discussed in the context of how the practice is viewed in Africa and Kenya in particular. Reacting to calls for gay rights, the late Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe, advised his people to shun homosexuality. He was widely reported to have said that he would never allow gay rights in his country. Mugabe went further to brand homosexuals as being worse than pigs and dogs. In November 2010, the Kenyan Prime minister, Raila Odinga was reported to have called for the arrest of homosexuals. Addressing a rally in Kamukunji, the PM condemned the practice as unnatural. The media has reported several cases where people suspected of being gay are attacked by members of the Kenyan public. Reports also abound in the Kenyan press of people arrested and charged for being gay. Evan Mwangi notes that in Kenya the digital-media venues contain a lot of homophobia both in intensity and quantity (Mwangi 2014). Indeed, the Kenyan constitution also outlaws marriages involving homosexuals as article 45 (2) stipulates that “every adult has the right to marry a person of the opposite sex, based on the free consent of the parties” (The Kenyan constitution 2010).

As can be seen from the following text, homosexuals themselves believe that they are guilty or inferior to heterosexual men. This resonates with Foucault in *The History of Sexuality* where he contends that social constructions of sexuality are internalized by people leading them to see sexuality as the possibly shameful “truth” about themselves. Foucault concludes that this makes it unnecessary for sexuality to be regulated by the state because people are very careful to monitor their own behavior (Foucault 1978). Nathan, the subject of the story reveals:

Nathan’s story is one fraught with pain and confusion. ‘As a young boy, I was shy and felt more comfortable relating with girls. I played kati and preferred to cook or knit instead of playing football. I felt weak around the boys and they usually made fun of me. Once, in primary school, a group of boys surrounded me and pinned me to the ground to check if I was really a boy.’

It is important to note the way the writer of the article quotes verbatim what Nathan has to say. Direct quotations tend to give force and objectivity to claims made by an author. The writer uses the word “pain” to explain Nathan’s feelings. People feel pain when they are hurting as a result of illness; therefore, homosexuality is constructed as illness in this instance. In the quotation, Nathan seems to suggest that being gay is equivalent to being feminine and therefore weak. He claims to have been “shy” and also enjoying roles which he associates with femininity. He positions himself as weak in relation to other boys; for example, he is an object of bullying. As Fairclough observes, positioning of people is a social process that happens progressively (Fairclough 2015). His “confession” is also in keeping with the notion that homosexuality lies within the orbit of subordinate masculinities in relation to hegemonic masculinities. In the following text, the writer seems to question the notion that homosexuality is unnatural:

After he was circumcised, the community’s expectation was that the subsequent “natural” step for the young man would be to show more interest in girls in preparation for courtship and marriage. It did not occur to any one that Nathan, unlike his age-mates, felt no desire to follow this mapped route.

The word “natural” implies that the society regards heterosexuality as the natural practice while homosexuality is unnatural. This is antithetical to Foucault’s observation that today’s practices may be just one option among many and the way we understand ourselves does not necessarily represent the truth (Foucault 1978). Foucault has thus given clarity to the argument that the total domination of society by heterosexuality does not arise from nature but from history and convention. Indeed, the quotation marks on the word “natural” seem to suggest that even the writer questions the belief that heterosexuality is the natural practice. Heterosexuality is described indirectly in this article using the metaphor “mapped route”. This implies some powerlessness on the side of the individual; that subjects are at the dictates of society and have no agency. Thus, the question of one’s sexual orientation has already been predetermined by the society. This resonates with Barthes’ notion of myth where socially constructed reality is presented as natural and universal (Barthes 1986). He adds that myth transforms history into nature. Butler concurs with Barthes by asserting that “if sexuality is culturally constructed within existing power relations, then the postulation of a normative sexuality ‘before’, ‘outside’ or ‘beyond’ power is a cultural impossibility” (Butler 1999, 30).

The Style and Image Conscious Man

Butler recommends that rather than seeing gender as a fixed attribute in a person, we should see it as a fluid variable which can shift in different contexts and at different times (Butler 1999). This may explain why we see a shift in the way men are increasingly being pressurized to partake in consumption in a way that was reserved for women. There is an increased emphasis on fashion and grooming for men (Macnamara 2008; Magalhães 2005). In a number of the magazines under study the promotion of consumerism and preoccupation with appearance, stereotypically associated with femininity is evident. Fairclough has observed that consumerism mirrors modern capitalism which is a shift in ideological focus from economic production to economic consumption (Fairclough 2015)

In the following article from *Lifestyle Magazine* Sunday, September 23, 2012 titled *The shift in male style* by Carol Odero, the writer brings out this new man who is very concerned about his appearance. The following text exemplifies this new man:

It is understandable to think of fashion as a female sport. And why not? It pretty much keeps the world afloat. However, according to fashion analysts at this year's New York Fashion Week, male fashion is projected to grow at 14 per cent a year.

The writer tries to persuade us that male fashion is growing through the use of intertextuality. She seeks to legitimize her claims by attributing this disclosure to "fashion analyst". Analysts are conceived as experts, thus, what they say may not be questioned. The writer also seeks to universalize a local event since this "growth" is in New York, yet, she is writing in the Kenyan context. The use of percentages should also be seen as manipulative, thus, ideological. Percentages can be used to hide or exaggerate the real picture. In this case, the claim of 14 percent growth in male fashion is not predicated on any data.

Consumerist objectives are further pursued in the following text: "I mentioned that male fashion would soon become 'low-hanging fruit' ripe for the picking by whoever has the audacity to step in first." Male fashion is described metaphorically as "low-hanging fruit". The idea of a fruit reinforces the consumerist theme. This is aimed at persuading men and business people to indulge in male fashion. She continues to persuade men to take part in consumption in the following text:

...men are beginning to step up, dressing the part. And there is the rise of not just male fashion bloggers, but of male readers online. These are men who are keen on fashion, who pick up tips and who glory at this access.

The writer attempts to persuade her readers to buy into the argument that men's taste in fashion is growing using phrases like "beginning to step up" and "the rise of". This growth is also described as positive using lexical items like "keen on fashion", "pick up tips" and "glory". This seeks to call upon men who are not fashion conscious to feel that something is missing in their lives and must now start indulging in this kind of consumption.

CONCLUSION

The analysis reveals that pullout magazines in Kenya represent men in various ways. Sometimes they are represented as wielders of power in society, irresponsible, feminine and gay, violent and insensitive, gullible as well as being conscious of style. This is in keeping with a postmodern view of multiple masculinities that are fluid and unstable. Gauntlett has indeed observed that media messages are "diverse, diffuse and contradictory" (Gauntlett 2002). Another significant finding is that these male identities are either constructed positively or negatively depending on the position of the writer. Some male writers, for example, present sexual irresponsibility as a positive thing that is natural to all men. Conversely, many female writers, though arguing that sexual irresponsibility is natural to men, do condemn it.

The analysis has also uncovered various strategies that are used by writers of these magazines to justify or rationalize these constructions. These strategies reveal that the writers attempt to position the readers in different ways in order to buy their arguments. Articles written from male perspectives generally try to justify men's dominant position in society by presenting highly contentious opinions as common sense. The analysis has, for example, shown how various linguistic features and rhetorical tropes (e.g. metaphors) are used to justify men's sexual irresponsibility. Conversely, female writers use generic devices to present men largely in negative ways. A particularly pervasive strategy used by both male and female writers is presenting men as diametrically opposed to women, followed by the 'us'

versus 'them' approach. The attendant linguistic features are chosen carefully to either lionize or demonize men to reflect the position of the writer.

These findings clearly show that from an ideological point of view the question of hegemony is central to the way masculine identities are constructed in Kenyan pullout magazines. Gay men, for example, are constructed as 'Other' while heterosexual men belong to the in-group or 'Us'. It is hoped that this study will make a contribution to research in discourse, media and masculinities in Africa. The study clearly underlines the fact that the media is an important site for studying how men are represented.

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