DANIELA SOREA



LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SCHEMATA:
GENDER REPRESENTATIONS IN BRITISH MAGAZINES

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INTRODUCTION

1.0. Motivation of the present study

In 1997, I was watching Peter Greenaway's movie 'The Tempest' with a group of first year female students. They had all come to the video room in good faith, having read the play and being curious about an 'alternative' reading to it. Only ten minutes had passed, when I heard moaning in complaint and teeth grinding in outrage. A quarter of an hour later, one student whispered in my ear: "If my mum could see me now, the way we study Shakespeare at this university, she would beg me to go home for good..." Several asked for permission to leave while the others put on a heroic face yet kept asking questions like "Is the whole movie about naked people and things coming out of their bodies?" A huge collective sigh of relief was heard when the movie ended. One student approached me and said "After I've seen this filth, I'll never be able to look at people in nudist camps, on a beach, I'm afraid I'll never be able to undress in front of another human being..." I was appalled by the inhibitions and prejudice these young women, otherwise bright students and voracious readers of classical literature, revealed on that occasion.

One year later, while browsing women's magazines at Woolworth's in Lancaster, I came across several texts which openly discussed male bodies, male sexuality and exhibited semi-naked men. My first thought was to try to guess the reaction of the girl fearing that her mother might catch her in the act of contemplating a male body and reading about the male mystique. This made me contemplate the perspective of investigating young Romanian women's receptions of Western representations of masculinity.

The present chapter will discuss the motivation and the purpose of my study. I will attempt to locate the study in the Romanian post-totalitarian socio-cultural background while highlighting certain issues that this context raised for the line of investigation pursued in this study. I will also provide an overview of the thesis by introducing the main topics dealt with in each of the following eight chapters.

1.1. Purpose of the present study

The purpose of the present study is to investigate whether evidence can be supplied as to the activation of gender schemata by young Romanian female readers during their textual encounter with a text about male bodies and masculinities, '*Men in*

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Trunks' published in the British magazine '*Zest*' (August 1998) and to the potentially schema-refreshing effect such a text could have upon the readers in question. For responses to entitle me to hypothesise about the schemata likely to have been activated at various stages of reading as well as about the potential schema-refreshing effect of the selected text on the community of readers who interacted with it, I will devise an adequate methodological instrument in the form of a comprehension tasksheet specifically designed for the selected text. I also expect language clues in responses to the tasksheet to be indicative of (lack of) accommodation of the allegedly expectation-challenging representations of masculinity presented in Wald's article in respondents' existing social schemata.

Hopefully, my research instrument, i.e. the comprehension tasksheet, will be devised so as to contribute some refinement to schema theory along two basic directions:

1) to provide comprehenders with appropriate guidelines meant to successfully elicit relevant clues in relation to the categorisation procedures and criteria they resort to, the lines of inferencing they take in order to instantiate the social schemata meant to facilitate their comprehension of a British text on non-hegemonic masculinities.
2) to highlight the relationship between attitude measurement and degree of accommodation of schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity.

Such a contribution will involve performing a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the readers' responses to schema-elicitive tasksheets, intended to operationalise concepts such as 'schema-reinforcement' and 'schema-refreshment' (Cook 1994, Semino 1997, 2001). I hope that the findings of my analysis manage to integrate both interpretative variability and consensual tendencies within that particular group of readers, i.e. young female students of English. Even if the comprehension tasksheet does not justifiably indicate the potential schema-refreshing effects of the selected text on the respective group of readers I initially anticipated, I regard it as a useful instrument meant to highlight either the schema-refreshing or the schema-reinforcing effect a specific text is likely to have upon a specific group of readers.

Discussing the gender dimension in the schemata likely to be activated by the above-mentioned group of readers, i.e. young Romanian female undergraduates majoring in English, may provide some insight into the language and social practices Romanian young female readers engage in as members of a 'community of practice'. Along this line of investigation, the present study might bring a local contribution to the 'community of practice' network of language and gender researches. Concomitantly, it may shed light on the reception of Western hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities within an Eastern-European, post-communist cultural environment. I hope that the findings will reveal either of the two following facts:

a) young Romanian female intellectuals such as those I investigated are still conservative and espouse schematic representations of masculinity, thus being likely to experience schema-refreshing tendencies during their encounter with an expectation-challenging text such as *Men in Trunks*.
b) such readers, which I regard as representative for the Romanian educated youth career-wise and mentality-wise, are psychologically ready to

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conceptualise masculinity as non-normative and non-monolithic and to acknowledge the pluralisation of masculinities, thus being less likely to undergo any schema-refreshing effect after their encounter with a text such as *Men in Trunks*.

1.2. Areas addressed by the present study

The present study draws on several fields of interest, among which I would mention cognitive approaches to language and language comprehension, gender studies and the teaching of English as a foreign language.

My research might be of interest for cognitive linguists who endeavour to refine and expand schema theory so as to enhance its utility as an analytical tool. Providing a schema-based analysis of readers' receptions of a particular text could also interest scholars in cultural studies who believe that schemata, while being individual mental structures, need to be extrapersonal or shared in order to explain collective interpretations and adoptions of values and beliefs in the process of text understanding within specific communities of readers.

My study also endeavours to fill in a niche in contemporary feminist readings of masculinities and femininities, more specifically to shed some light on how Eastern Europeans from an ex-communist country like Romania decipher and assimilate Western constructions of masculinities and femininities. It may also address researchers in 'community of practice' approaches to gender and language by providing a local ethnographic study, which also leaves some room for generalisability beyond age and class constraints.

The instrument devised for the specific investigation carried out in this study may prove to be a flexible and rewarding pedagogical device, for teachers as well as for designers of instruments working in the field of teaching English as a foreign language.

1.3. Locating the present study: the Romanian communist and post-communist socio-historical background

In the pages to come I will attempt to provide a concise description of the Romanian socio-historical background before and after the fall of communism, in December 1989. I believe this presentation will justify the need to carry out a study like the present one and will simultaneously locate the study in the wider societal and cultural Romanian context. To this end, I will endeavour to outline the way femininity and masculinity were intended to be perceived in and by the discourses of the communist regime, a political regime inflicted by the Soviet Union in 1944 and exacerbated into one of the cruelest forms of national-communism by the diehard communist leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and later by the dictator Nicolae Ceausescu (Boia 1998: 359–369, Tismaneanu 1999: 155–173, Roman 2001, La Font 2001).

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I will point out why, in my view, such perceptions could not readily change after the advent of democracy. I will also argue why masculinity was not redefined and revisited in the early days of the post-totalitarian society. Finally I will highlight some of the most significant differences in the perception of both femininities and masculinities with the Romanian population in the early, mid- and late nineties, and at the beginning of the new millenium. It is not my intention to discuss the whole plethora of events, cultural policies and scholarly or media influences that may have contributed to such alterations of gendered perceptions. I will confine myself to mention a few cultural facts and artifacts that I personally regard as contributory to the change of mentality as far as gender roles and expectations are concerned.

1.3.1. 'The loathesome legacy' of the communist ideology

Along with other prejudices and discriminatory patterns of thought, constituting the 'loathesome legacy' of communism, the post-1989 Romanian mentality inherited from the totalitarian regime the proclivity to perceive society as homogenous and to efface individual differences (Miroiu 1997: 12, Boia 1998: 14–15)[1]. The communist propaganda used to promote the devaluing of individual identities and the backgrounding of any outstanding personality for fear such a personality might outshine the monumental figure of Nicolae Ceausescu, as 'Father of the nation' (*'parintele natiunii'*) (Barbu 1998: 177). Every citizen was to be solely defined by their appurtenance to the 'working masses' (*'masele muncitoare'*) whose 'collective destiny' Ceausescu alone was empowered to forge (Barbu 1988: 176–184). According to the communist propaganda, the ultimate life goal of every citizen should be that of becoming 'the new man' (*'omul nou'*), conceived of as the embodiment of anti-individualism, anti-elitism and anti-intellectualism (Cioroianu 1998: 42–44)[2]. This genderless and gender-blind paragon of virtue was the ideal outcome of the 'many-sidedly developed socialist society' standing for the new 'golden age' of history (Miroiu 1997: 21, Zub 1998: 91)[3].

---

[1] The uniformisation of the Romanian society was intensified after Ceausescu's visit to China and North Korea. This visit was to inspire him with the pursuit of other inhumane political imperatives such as: the rationing of food, the worship of the state leader in mega-parades and encouraging an increasingly suspicious attitude towards Western values.

[2] The concept originated in the early fifties and was initially tantamount to *homo sovieticus*, the communist overachiever, to be also understood as 'the collective man' (see Cioroianu 1998: 43).

[3] No source is specified for many quoted expressions (see also Sorea 2002). Most such expressions were annoyingly frequent in official discourses, then extracted out of that official context and used in 'ironical echo' (Sperber and Wilson 1996) as their being sonorous to the point of being unbearably pompous only made more salient the incongruity between the alleged loftiness of such expressions and the dire reality the Romanians used to live in. The blatant mismatch between reality and the discourse allegedly representing it was both intriguing and ridiculous to most Romanians, who used to draw on verbal irony in order to highlight this incongruity (Gibbs 1994: 362).
Famous verbal clichés from Ceausescu's speeches describing Romanians as having reached 'the highest peak of civilisation and progress' struck the ear as incongruous to the point of grotesqueness in the face of the shortages and constraints Romanians had to put up with every

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1.3.2. 'The new man' as substituted by 'the minimalist citizen': 'manly' working men and asexual working women

After the collapse of Ceausescu's totalitarian communist regime owing to the events in December 1989 – events which constitute the only revolution involving bloodshed among the 'velvet' transitions to democracy in Eastern European countries - the communist ethic was replaced by a pre-modern, peasantist, essentially patriarchal ethic (Roman 2001). The revival of such a pre-war quasi-feudal ethic strengthened the self-perception of the individual as a 'minimalist citizen', striving to keep a low profile in a 'society of survival' (Pasti, Miroiu and Codita 1997). The prototype of the 'minimalist citizen' seems to have replaced the communist ideal of 'the new man' by perpetrating the same imperative of self-effacement:

> Hence, a 'minimalist citizen' mentality is created, with low self-esteem, distrust for institutions and the law, fear of public servants, and a tendency to suffer from a persecution complex regarding hierarchical inferiority. This prototype of citizen is unaware of the language of contractual democracies – rights and liberties – and his/her only wish is to live invisibly (Roman 2001: 4).

Despite the pre-1989 party and state policy promoting women into higher positions in the political hierarchy, such promotion was achieved artificially and relied on no meritocratic criteria (Lotreanu 1996: 97). Women having achieved leading positions were commonly perceived as asexual (Petre 1998: 259, Nicolaescu 2001: 49, Roman 2001: 12) since sexuality and emotion were commonly assumed to be potential barriers in acquiring the status of a worthy, reliable citizen, loyal to the policy of the communist party. To be able to occupy jobs measuring up to their qualifications, white-collar women were secretly advised to wear 'decent', low-key garments (Roman 2001: 5), similar in drabness and lack of allure to the uniforms most people in Asian communist regimes were compelled to wear:

> Another example of previously normative yet unpopular images haunting the memories of women in the nineties are that of the party activist, dressed in ugly North Korean types of suits. This kind of woman is nowadays given as a negative example of positive discrimination: she is said to have been promoted to high political and administrative position largely on the ground of her very unattractiveness. Negative and deeply threatening images such as these, when recirculated in the post-communist press, serve to demonise women and legitimise their present marginalisation from the public sphere (Nicolaescu 2001: 49).

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single day. Food was rationed, milk, bread and toilet paper were hardly available on the market, electricity, heat or running water were cut off for several hours daily without any apparent reason, censorship was imposed by the state policy at all levels and no visas to Western countries were granted. Since freedom of speech was denied, Romanians were left only with the right to practise ironic echo. Consequently, derisive reiteration of official propaganda and slogans was regarded as a survival strategy (Kligman 1994).

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Blue-collar women were strongly advised to keep a low profile as far as their femininity was concerned, to the point of being hardly distinguishable from their male 'comrades', by putting on unflattering overalls and hiding their hair in scarves. The woman driving the tractor and the woman working on a lathe, both absorbed by the functioning of their machines, used to be the embodiment of commitment and diligence. If images of working men displayed certain bodily features of hegemonic masculinity (salient muscles, broad shoulders) it was only because those bodily parts had proved helpful in exceeding previous production rates (artfully boosted by official statistics). The sweat on their brows together with the impenetrability of their muscled bodies indicated complete dedication to their work and refusal to indulge in 'decadent', distraction-inducing capitalist leisure practices. It so happened that such bodily indicators of labour and lucrativeness coincided with dominant attributes pertaining to hegemonic masculinities.

Such coincidences did not occur in the case of women's bodies, which needed to look asexual, i.e. hardly distinguishable from men's, in order to display affiliation to the party's policy of ceaselessly improving working standards. Emancipation could only be achieved via masculinisation. Worthy women had to 'adhere' to the 'mobilising' discourses of the communist party and could reach a heroic status if they took up masculine jobs and participated in the communist emulation shoulder to shoulder with their male comrades (Petre 1998: 259)[4]. As LaFont puts it,

> Work was a duty, not a right, and low wages necessitated both wives' and husbands' incomes for family survival. The equality that the communist governments proclaimed translated into women working like men in the labor market. Importantly, no counter "equality" existed for men's involvement in the domestic domain. Pre-communist patriarchy remained intact, with women shouldering the burden of economic and domestic labor. Instead of truly liberating women, state communism turned into a system that doubly exploited women in their roles as producers and reproducers (La Font 2001).

While designated as men's working 'comrades' for their lifetime, women were also evaluated in terms of their capacity to bear and rear future citizens, invested with the lofty mission of building up 'the vast edifice of the many-sidedly developed socialist society' (Sorea 2002). As Peto (1994) argues, women's official glorification, represented in the communist propaganda was far from mirroring their real lives. The communist regime under Ceausescu performed a monolithic institutionalisation of motherhood by grotesquely eulogising fertility as *the* means to enhance the size and strength of the nation. Once motherhood became a state-controlled institution, Romanian women were deprived of any right to exert control over their own bodies (Kligman 1994, Baban 1996: 60–61, Petre 1998: 265–271, LaFont 2001). Although motherhood was publicly glorified, the somatophobic, patriarchal discourse practised by the communist ideological apparatus excluded pregnant bodies from public imagery. Paradoxically, glamorous bodies were excluded too, being regarded as oozing with immoral, unhealthy and decadent sexuality.

[4] The artificial promotion of women into such a heroic status involved relinquishing their femininity, a practice rooted in the Soviet paragons of virtue such as the 'commissar' woman or the revolutionary steelworker (Petre 1998).

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1.3.3. Resisting change in post-totalitarian representations and perceptions of masculinity

When I wonder why hegemonic images of masculinity were not questioned in the early days of the transition period in Romania, i.e. in the early 1990s, the first reason that comes to mind is general reluctance to the very act, for men, of questioning their masculinity, since such questioning risked being regarded as an indicator of sexual insecurity. Still conservative and imbued with residues of patriarchal prejudice and discrimination, the Romanian post-1989 mentality was not prepared to deconstruct gender polarity or to regard the masculine and the feminine otherwise than in dichotomous terms.

Feminism itself was either readily rejected or regarded with utter scepticism as just another 'ism' imported from the west or, even worse, a Western import designed to destabilize the traditional Romanian social order and national ethos, a 'conspiracy' intent on abolishing men and undermining their socio-economic and political power, as well as on making homosexuality and lesbianism mandatory (Roman 2001: 9).

For men, acknowledging one's gendered identity as a context-dependent and historically-flexible social construct was highly likely to be regarded as a proof of psychological instability and as a display of unflattering weakness, attributes which the traditional Romanian mentality finds incongruent with acknowledged 'normal', 'healthy' representations of masculinity. Taking into account the homophobic tradition perpetuated in most conservative-minded Romanian milieus and fostered by an educational system promoting intolerance towards sexual ambiguity and different sexual orientations, feminised men and especially homosexual men have been the object of public ridicule, scathing contempt and radical discriminatory and homophobic discourses (One such extreme discursive manifestation were the leaflets of the New Right distributed on and off from 1990 up to the present).

If, for almost fifty years, society had accepted and even fostered the double-gendered standard for women, perceived as engaging in male-like behaviour at one's workplace and in exclusively nurturing feminine tasks at one's home (cooking, cleaning, child-bearing and upbringing), it took an utterly distinctive position with respect to men. When engaging in domestic activities – including tasks implying the use of technology and high-tech appliances – men have been far from appreciated by their male and, more surprisingly, female peers (Miroiu 1997: 17). On the contrary, the helpful husband has tended to become the embodiment of sissiness, marital submissiveness and outrageous docility. All these features projected a construction of the henpecked husband (*'barbat sub papuc'* in Romanian, literally meaning 'under-the-(wife's)-slipper husband'), lacking traditional attributes of manliness, consequently not 'man enough' and liable to alienation from the community of 'manly men'. Discourses on men's active participation in household chores, guidelines towards sharing domestic responsibilities between spouses and commercials portraying men engaged in nurturing activities (baby-feeding or bathing), in addition to their previous peripheral role of 'father as baby entertainer' (Sunderland 2000: 261–262) entered the public space only in the late 1990s. Such discourses still arouse murmurs of displeasure or even protest among traditionally-minded viewers.

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However, because young women in Romania have been exposed to both conservative-minded, traditional gender representations and to recent, tradition-challenging, emancipatory discourses on gender expectations and gender roles, they might experience conflicting conceptualisations of non-hegemonic femininities and masculinities. The present study is intended, among other things, to provide some insights into such conflicting cognitive and affective tendencies.

1.4. Overview of the thesis

The present thesis consists of eight chapters. In the pages to come I will briefly present the main issues each chapter addresses.

Chapter 2, *Male Bodies and Masculinities,* is a review of literature on anti-essentialist views on gender with primary focus on the pluralisation of masculinities and on configuring masculinity as a process (Connell 1995, Johnson 1997, Petersen 1998, Watson 2000, Habelstram 1998, Benwell 2000). Several anti-essentialist views are presented, with particular emphasis on defining the body as a social and discursive construct (2.4.), on the performativity of gender (2.5). and on embodiment as situated, 'lived' practice (2.6.)

I align myself with the scholars who contest the Cartesian mind/body dichotomy and the hierarchies fostered by such binarism. Consequently, I also come to question the hegemonic status which the muscular, tight, impenetrable male body holds in Western cultures, being regarded as an insignia of containment and restraint (Dutton 1995, Lupton 1998). The *objectification* and *instrumentalization* of 'ideal' male bodies revolves around contemporary globalised representations of white, healthy, virile, masculinity (Grogan 1995, Edwards 1997). Hence the need to dismantle such idealised and institutionalised hegemonic masculinities and to more insightfully explore the permanent re-enactment of gender in newly emerged historical contexts (Hanke 1998, Bordo 1999, Watson 2000).

Chapter 3, *Prototype theory, schema theory, social schemata and stereotypes,* discusses several theoretical perspectives on cognition which are cornerstones for my research. Once I emphasise the fundamental role concepts play in the process of comprehension, I will present the main claims of the '*prototype*' approach to categorisation. Degrees of membership, representativeness in terms of salient attributes and of prototypical exemplars will be illustrated by using the three categories of men on the beach in the article '*Men in Trunks*'.

Schemata as higher-order cognitive structures enabling comprehenders to systematise and simplify existing knowledge and to accommodate incoming input are further discussed. Several versions of schema theory are briefly presented, while stressing the relevance of each for my own study. Devising comprehension tasksheets as methodological instruments and resorting to language evidence (responses to the tasksheet) to accurately hypothesise about the social schemata respondents may have activated during the textual encounter requires special insights into the relationship between linguistic input and cognitive processes such as expectation-building, inferencing and schema-suspension.

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An important section is devoted to clarifying the distinction between *schema-reinforcement* and *schema-refreshment* as well as the directions of operationalisation of schema-refreshment. I present some socio-cognitive approaches to emotions and attitudes because the operationalisation of schema-refreshment substantially depends on the respondents' acknowledging changes in attitude as well as strong emotional reactions at various stages of textual encounter.

Social schemata are defined and exemplified in section 3.4, which points out that social cognition is organised in higher order mental structures which simplify social knowledge and provide *expectations* regarding people, relationships, states of affairs. (Fiske and Taylor 1984, Augoutinos and Walker 1996). Person, role, self and event schemata are defined and exemplified with instances from my own study. Other examples from my research are intended to illustrate the difference between category-based versus person-based processings of social information (Culpeper 2001).

Certain social schemata are shared to a higher extent within a given community and certain social factors or cultural institutions speed up the dissemination of certain social schemata, thus facilitating the acquisition and dissemination of certain stereotypes. Stereotypes as social schemata and social representations are discussed in section 3.5. Special attention is given to the relation between stereotype acquisition and schema-refreshing or schema-reinforcing cognitive processes.

The last part of the chapter is devoted to the way gender is incorporated into schematic representations as a cognitive category. To this end, I will supply a critical review of Bem's important yet highly problematic paper on 'gender schema theory' and 'gender (a)schematic' processing (1983).

Chapter 4 has three main foci: supplying a genre description of women's magazines, presenting my own analysis of the text '*Men in Trunks*' in terms of language, prototype theory and social schemata, highlighting the relevance of my own text analysis for the clarification of the research questions, and describing the participants in the study, i.e. the young Romanian' female students of English, in terms of a 'community of practice' (henceforth CofP) approach.

The review of literature regarding women's magazine as a genre centres round the promotion of gender-role expectations and stereotypical images of masculinity and femininity such magazines foster. (McRobbie 1991, Peirce 1997, Talbot 1995, Mc Loughlin 2000). Views which regards female consumers of such magazines as passive, easily brainwashable recipients are criticised, since I concur with Mills that the readership is not homogeneous and that readers may choose between 'affiliation' to some 'dominant reading' or engagement in 'subversive' reading against the grain (Mills 1995).

I will further attempt to demonstrate why '*Men in Trunks*' may prove atypical for the genre it belongs to, i.e. advice columns and should rather be read as a parodical replica of such advice columns. Section 4.4. provides my own analysis of the text '*Men in Trunks*' in terms of membership rankings, attribute salience and exemplar representativeness. When discussing social schemata. I insist on expectation-challenging, therefore schema-refreshing, associations between male bodies and masculinity images and, for instance, fishing devices or cartoon characters (4.4.5). The ultimate goal of my analysis of the text will be to provide landmarks for the elucidation of my research questions (4.4.6.).

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Before describing the respondents' behaviour in the pilot and main studies, I will supply a description of the participants in my study, i.e. of the Romanian young female undergraduates in English. This description is intended to abide by the main tenets of a CofP approach, namely mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire (Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999). I will provide a classification of Romanian students in English in order to come up with some plausible motivation for members of each category to engage in the practice of reading British magazines.

Chapter 5, *The pilot study: developing and adapting the comprehension tasksheet for the main study,* is mostly dedicated to the modifications the tasksheet designed for the Pilot Study (carried out in May 1999) underwent for the Main Study in order to elicit more focussed and more articulate responses from the respondents. The analysis of five sets of pilot responses being indicative of certain flaws in response elicitation, I endeavoured to remedy these by modifying the formulation of certain questions and by carefully weighing the efficiency of each (sub)-question so as to minimise the number of inadequate or superfluous responses.

Chapter 6, *Main study: data collection and data analysis,* starts by describing the methodology of tasksheet design, the logistics of comprehension tasksheet administration, completion and processing, as well as a brief presentation of the participants in the Main Study, conducted in May 2000.

The much larger section dedicated to data analysis is organised according to the matching between certain sets of responses and certain research questions or combinations of research questions as follows:

- Tasksheet questions related to attitude measurement as predictive of the potential schema-refreshing effect of the text upon the readers
- Tasksheet questions indicative of the respondents' classification and anticipation strategies, inferential processes and evaluative tendencies as employed in the assessment of the categories of men proposed by the writer
- Tasksheet questions indicative of (lack of accommodation) of assumed schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity
- Tasksheet questions highlighting prototypical features and exemplars and the role they play in indicating comparative degrees of accommodation of schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity at various stages of reading
- Tasksheet questions illustrative of the implications of gradual exposure to the multimodal text.

The joint discussion of both question rationale and the findings related to responses to each question enabled me to continually check whether responses successfully served the aim of the question, or, on the contrary, failed to provide the expected information. Accommodation of newly encountered masculinity schemata was at least partially signalled by constantly comparing measurable items potentially indicative of schema-reinforcement or schema-refreshment (attitudes, strong emotional

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reactions, (dis)agreement, changes in mentality) at various stages of textual encounter. Quantifiable findings, as well as speculative claims will be organised according to landmarks of analysis such as:

- remembered vs expected traits with all the three categories of men
- classification criteria, comprising respondents' own classification of men on the beach and their evaluation of Wald's categorisation.
- the designation of prototypical exemplars within each category and the salient gendered and non-gendered features attributable to such exemplars.
- the explicit expression of (dis)agreement, emotional reactions and challenged expectations in relation to the three categories of men, masculinity-related issues dealt with in the article, and the writer's style.

Chapter 7, *Discussion*, summarises the findings of the data analysis presented in Chapter 6 and highlights several findings which I found particularly promising for my line of investigation:

1) the unexpected associations the text brings to mind
2) linguistic clues indicative of some respondents' tendency to accommodate images of non-hegemonic masculinity as inferable from textual chunks and of some other respondents' inclinations to resort to traditional stereotypes of hegemonic masculinity.
3) the role of attitude measurement when hypothesising of schemata likely to have been activated by responses during textual encounter

Chapter 8, *Conclusions*, will discuss the contribution the present study intends to make to schema theory: devising a schema-elicitive instrument intended to indicate the way a specific group of respondents activate certain gendered schemata. In addition, the final chapter will highlight the methodological contribution of this thesis as well as the contribution of this local survey on Romanian female intellectuals to 'community of practice' approaches. This chapter will also underline some theoretical, methodological and pedagogical implications of the present study and will subsequently propose a few directions for further investigation.

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MALE BODIES AND MASCULINITIES

2.0. Introduction

The purpose of the present chapter is to supply a review of literature on anti-essentialist views on gender with primary focus on the conceptualisation of the body (2.2.). Espousing an anti-essentialist stance myself, I endorse the views of those scholars who (re)configure gender as a process, as embodied experience and as contextually-dependent performance (2.3. to 2.6.). Such reconfiguration will be approached from the standpoint of several contemporary views which advocate the pluralisation of femininities and masculinities. A redefinition of masculinities in the light of such theories will be provided, accompanied by a brief account of the construction and dissemination of 'ideal' masculinities (2.9 and 2.10).

2.1. Masculinity revisited

Although the English term 'masculine' can be traced back to the 14th century (derived from the French *masculin* and the Latin *masculinus*, meaning simply 'male'), endeavours to define the notion of masculinity in terms of bodily contrasts became widespread only in the 18th century (Petersen 1998: 42). Male bodies and masculinities were not however addressed by the social sciences until the 1990s (Connell 1995, Seidler 1997, Watson 2000) when research when research started being carried out in relation to men's health, sexuality, emotions, social roles, relationships with parents, partners and co-workers proliferated. Apart from issues related to pornography, sexual harassment, violence against women, pre-90s feminist scholars had viewed men as relatively invisible. There was little investigation into how and why heterosexual masculine identity had become institutionalised as the ideal male identity. Few efforts were made to challenge the fixity of masculine identity or to problematise its normativity. The 1990s witnessed the emergence of a new epistemology of masculinity as a key-concept in investigations related to 'men's studies', which posed a challenge to traditional essentialist assumptions about male bodies and identities and questioned the age-long view of masculinity as an undesconstructable essence (Petersen 1998, Watson 2000).

Refusing to regard the masculine as the normative gender calls for a need to reinscribe it as a complex, dynamic and heterogeneous concept. Scholars such as Connell (1995) and Watson (2000) argue that in the social organization of gender, the

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construction of masculinity is *a project*, a *process* of configuring social practice through time, a style in which the agency of bodies asserts itself in specific historical circumstances and by specific social discourses (Connell 1995: 71, Watson 2000: 37). Far from being a 'monolithic' or 'monomorphic' entity, masculinity is constituted by "an interplay of emotional and intellectual factors – an interplay that directly implicates women as well as men, and is mediated by other social factors, including race, sexuality, nationality, and class" (Berger *et al* 1995: 3). Admitting that masculinity has erroneously been regarded as a universally assumed and acknowledged construct, largely defined in opposition to and through the 'othering' of women and gay men (Benwell 2002) has paved the way towards *pluralising masculinity*. Masculinity has ceased to have a single, coherent meaning, and rather constitutes an umbrella term subsuming both mainstream and marginalised masculinities (Watson 2000: 35).

Reconceptualising masculinity in terms of its embodied plurality implies taking an anti-essentialist stance as well as deconstructing monolithic and hegemonic understandings of masculinity. As Johnson puts it:

> The main concern of anti-essentialist approaches is [...] to deconstruct the notion of a single, distinctive form of masculinity across time and space. Instead, theorists emphasize the nature of masculinity as socially constructed, highly contextualized, hence fluid and variable (Johnson 1997: 19).

In consonance with Johnson's proposal, with which I can only align myself, the following section will present some ground-breaking feminist views in favour of the de-essentialisation of concepts such as 'body' and 'gender' and their relation to discourses as social practices.

2.2. Anti-essentialist feminist stances: reconceptualising the body

Any anti-essentialist stance revolves around the need to redefine gender as something we 'are' or we 'do' rather than something we 'have':

> Feminist anti-essentialism distrusts all attempts to locate gender in fixed and fundamental qualities instilled in women or men, whether by nature or nurture. It disputes there is *one* version of femininity or masculinity, and that any single story (e.g. about how girls relate to their mothers) can encompass the experience of every woman. More radically, some anti-essentialists dispute that we have a fixed gender identity at all. They prefer to talk about doing' or 'performing' gender, which implies that gender is not a thing but a process, and one which is never finished. It also implies that in principle we may 'do' or 'perform' gender differently in different contexts – even at the level of the individual woman or man, there is not necessarily any core of gendered behaviour that cannot vary and change (Cameron 1999: 16).

In the light of Cameron's perspective, I believe that espousing an anti-essentialist view on gender imperiously requires deconstructing the main tenets of essentialist views

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which define gender as a fixed given, articulated in terms of mutually exclusive binary oppositions. As I will highlight in the following sections, dismantling such binarisms paves the way for several alternative, anti-dualistic views, advocating the redefinition of gender as performativity, embodied experience and dynamic individual process.

2.2.1. Essentialist views of the mind/body dualism

Essentialism is "classically defined as a belief in true essence – that which is most irreducible, unchanging and therefore constitutive as a given person or thing" (Fuss 1989: 2). Most post-structuralist and post-modern thinkers regard it as a distortive fabrication of reality. As Stanley and Wise observe, far from being built around some demonstrable 'essence', essentialism is rather the invention of social scientists and philosophers (Stanley and Wise 1993: 209). Sayer contends that the take-up of anti-essentialism is therefore indispensable to present-day social investigation since it operates the transition from a deterministic framework to the flexible framework of social constructionism (to be discussed in section 2.4.):

> Whether they are talking about cultural identity, economic behaviour or gender and sexuality, anti-essentialists have argued that people are not creatures of determinism, whether natural or cultural, but are socially constructed and constructing (Sayer 1997: 454).

As an essentialist form of knowledge, Western philosophy has emerged via a 'disavowal of the body' and by viewing mind as 'a disembodied term' (Grosz 1994: 4). The two phenomena are rooted in the ancient Greek dualistic conceptualisation of the body, as Hadassah and Kotzin's comprehensive history of essentialist ideas on the body reveals (2000: 2-20). In *Cratylus* Plato pictures the human being as a spiritual, noncorporeal being trapped in a bodily prison. Reason rules over the body and masters its irrational urges[1]. The Platonic outlook on matter/body and form is taken up by Aristotle in *Timaeus*, where the male principle is regarded as the effective and active element, meant to mould the shapeless, passive matter supplied by the female principle. Bordo emphasises that such binary views

> [...] are at the very heart of sexism – not simply because they conceptualise reality in terms of a gendered duality (active male/passive female) but, more importantly, because they so powerfully privilege the active over the passive (Bordo 1993: 719).

Separating the mind not only from the body but also from nature was later the endeavour of Descartes, who distinguished between two kinds of mutually exclusive and mutually exhaustive substances: a thinking substance (*res cogitans*, mind) and an extended substance (*res extensa*, body). *Res extensa* alone were part of nature and the

[1] Imbued by somatophobia, ancient Greek philosophy saw the body as a potential source of danger and of interference into the successful functioning of reason. To the extent to which Matter is an imperfect version of Idea, the body is a prison of the soul and the mind.

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body was regarded as "a self-moving machine, a mechanical device, functioning according to causal laws and the laws of nature" (Grosz 1994: 6). The Cartesian tradition makes a clear-cut separation between consciousness and what consciousness can reflect on: the body, nature, objects and their attributes.

Unlike traditional Western epistemologies, revolving around the 'masculinisation of thought' (see Gatens in Jaggar and Young 2000: 23–25) and obscuring the corporeality of knowers (Grosz 1994, Code 1996), feminist epistemologies insist on the sociality and historicity of the knowing (gendered) subject while critiquing the following tendencies of essentialist trends:

1. To make absolute separations (e.g. mind/body, male/female, subject/object)
2. To assign atemporal, universal essences to things and beings
3. To install and perpetuate hierarchies (e.g. reason above emotion, male above female)

To my mind, any anti-essentialist pursuit is worth undertaking since it aims to undermine both *biologism*, i.e. defining 'essences' in terms of biological capacities (e.g. women in terms of their reproductive and nurturing abilities) and *naturalism*, i.e. the postulation of a fixed nature for women and men (e.g. women depicted as 'naturally' caring and men as 'naturally' aggressive). Anti-essentialist feminist thinkers have found it imperative to question the belief that certain features which supposedly make up either women's or men's 'essences' are shared by all women or respectively by all men, in all times and locations (Gatens 1996, Braidotti 1994, Brook 1999).

2.2.2. Feminist epistemological projects

Attacking the essentialism of those modern epistemologies which imply a universal human nature common to all knowers, feminist epistemologists such as Lorraine Code define knowledge as "a construct produced by cognitive agents within social practices and [which] acknowledges the variability of agents and practices across social groups" (Code 1996: 191) (see also 4.5. on communities of practice). The crux of Code's argument is that there is no knowledge beyond knowers, hence the need to "take subjectivity into account", i.e. to analyse knowledge in terms the motivation of the knowers, their emotional involvement, their background assumptions and the role played by the structures of authority and expertise in the process of knowledge (Code 1996: 201).

Haslanger (1996) considers that any meaningful sense of reality must be 'perspectival', or 'epistemically conditioned' and that the very notion of 'objective' reality is itself a social projection (Haslanger 1996: 91). Importantly, in her view, our classifications and judgements of value may not simply mirror facts but may equally perpetuate social meanings. I would further sustain her claim by stating that our linguistic and conceptual resources may not only capture pre-existing differences but also create them.

In addition to Haslanger's argument in favour of reality being socially definable and comprehensible, Farganis regards knowledge of the world not only as socially constructed but also as gendered: "for if gender patterns who we are it also patterns how

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we think" (Farganis 1989: 207). In her critique of the alleged objectivity and (gender) neutrality of science, Farganis emphasises the need to uproot the gender bias that permeates any kind of epistemology.

2.2.3. Dichotomies and hierarchies: anti-dualist feminist views

Western essentialism aligns man with mind and takes a reductionist stance by ignoring the interaction between mind and body. In the process of knowledge the mind is assigned hierarchical superiority and is to rule over nature, implicitly over the nature of the body (for an exhaustive critique of Cartesianism see Gatens in Jaggar and Young 2000: 21–29).

Jay's work *Gender and Dichotomy* (1981/1991) is one of the first texts to address the androcentrism of the binary philosophical oppositions which Western philosophical thought employs as self-evident categorisation principles. By analysing Durkheim's sacred/profane opposition in primitive religious communities, Jay extends her analysis to other polarities that have been hierarchised within mainstream thought: nature/culture, male/female, mind/body. Her work reveals that such polarities are implicitly sexualised and insidiously pervaded with sexual and political values, which inevitably hierarchise and prioritise one term with respect to its opposite (Jay 1991: 97).

Lloyd's critique of Cartesianism (1984/1991) revolves around the refutation of the rigid separation between mind and body. In Lloyd's view, Descartes aligns the mind/body distinction with the reason/non-reason distinction, thus situating reason outside any body specificity and implicitly assigning reason a universality underlain by masculinity. Recent echoes of such early anti-dualistic views are particularly resonant in contemporary attacks against the mind/body split, as those enunciated by 'corporeal feminism':

> The 'essentialist' definition of women's bodies in many areas of early second-wave feminist writing, and in some of its later developments, has been frequently described in the contemporary writing identified with 'corporeal feminism' as symptomatic of the stranglehold of binarism, and particularly, of the mind/body split, in western thought. That is, while feminist critiques were being made of binarism, the general direction of much feminist theorising has itself been divided between the binaries of privileging either the mind and its transcendence, or the body and its immanence (Brook 1999: 8).

A major proponent of 'corporeal feminism', Grosz (1994) endorses the fundamental claim set forth by Jay and Lloyd that Cartesian dichotomies such as: mind/ body, thought/ extension, reason/ passion, psychology/ biology inevitably imply hierarchisation, and that, consequently, one of the binary terms is the privileged one while the other becomes the subordinated one. The privileged term 'alienates' the subordinate term, which can only be defined by negation, denial or absence of the privileged term:

> Body is thus what is not mind, what is distinct from and other than the privileged term. It is what the mind must expel in order to retain its 'integrity'. It is implicitly defined as unruly, disruptive, in need of direction and judgement, merely incidental to the defining of characteristics of mind, reason or personal identity through its opposition to

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consciousness, to the psyche and other privileged terms within philosophical thought (Grosz 1994: 3).

Taking corporeality into account prompts scholars such as Grosz (1994) and Gatens (1996) into building a non-essentialist, anti-Cartesian theory on the body based on Spinoza's monism, a philosophical system which provides a non-oppositional understanding of difference.[2] Both Grosz's (1994) and Gatens's (1996) views are crucial for present-day conceptualisations of the body: in their Spinozist framework, bodies do not have a "true nature" of their own but should be looked upon as *processes*, as lived practices whose meanings and capacities vary across concrete determinations and interactions. (Various views on the body as the site of lived experience are presented more fully in section 2.6.).

As the feminist philosophical views discussed in the present section have highlighted, the rejection of the mind/body dualism entails effacing the boundary between nature and culture and defining bodies within a non-dualistic and anti-essentialist framework as "historical, social, cultural weavings of biology" (Grosz 1994: 12). Issues regarding the social construction of the body and gendered identities are more amply dealt with in sections 2.3. and 2.4.

2.3. Towards a new sociology of the body

In the late nineties, Bryan Turner (1996) coined the term 'somatic society' in his endeavour to describe a society within which major political and personal problems are both problematized in the body and expressed through it. Combining various claims made by Marxism, psychoanalysis, feminism and anthropology, Turner's approach to investigation of the centrality of bodily experience in human life revolves around the reasons why bodily life in the Western tradition has been kept within the realm of both the unseen and the unspoken[3].

Starting from the premise that the body's extensive and perpetual state of experience has been taken too little into account and that the body endures all the physical sensations that only the mind is allegedly able to assimilate and communicate, it was claimed that a renewed sociology of the body should envisage the investigation of the body as a reformulated sociological project (Grogan 1995:2)[4]. Such a new sociology of the body intended to provide "a significant point of departure for transcending or blurring

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[2] Spinoza's monism focuses round the notion of an absolute and infinite substance, God, which is expressible both in thought and in extension, since it is mental to the same extent as it is corporeal: "The mind is the idea of the body to the exact degree that the body is an extension of the mind" (Grosz 1994: 12). There is a mode of extension corresponding to every mode of thought.

[3] Such reasons are closely related to the battle against paganism, the rise of Christian asceticism, and the enduring tyranny of Cartesian thought, as well as to specific issues including the history of anorexia and agoraphobia.

[4] Sociology of the body deals with bodily self-perception, eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa, 'phantom limb' phenomena, while investigating not only body images in themselves but also the groups that provide social information regarding 'ideal' body images.

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the conventional opposition between nature and culture" (Scott and Morgan 1993: 6). Among other things, it should strive to answer questions pertaining to a new epistemology of masculinity, i.e. how male bodies become objects and sites of power, how men's subjectivities are constructed through discourse as an effect of power/knowledge relations, why some male bodies are invested with more power and more visibility than others. Section 2.4. will discuss social constructionist approaches to the body and to gender roles. The newly emerged sociology of the body "brackets out the individual" (Watson 2000: 54), since *the embodied individual* becomes the primary locus for the enactment of social order. Embodiment in relation to the reproduction and regulations of bodies will be the object of section 2.6.

The sections dealing with social constructionism, embodiment as lived practice, and body typologies will be followed by an attempt to highlight the relevance of the previously discussed theories for the contemporary investigation of masculinity.

2.4. The body as a social and discursive construct

As an alternative to essentialist approaches to knowledge, social constructionists regard the body as the locus of social praxis and as culturally inscribed text (Jaggar 1989). Along the line of thought inaugurated by Foucault (1979), identity is never imposed on pre-social subjects but is constituted through discourses, within specific contexts of history, culture and power. Social constructionist approaches aim to demonstrate that the body is, at least to a noticeable extent, *shaped*, *constrained* and even *invented* by society.

In a Foucauldian frame of thought, bodies are constantly habituated to external regulation, subjection, and transformation. The subject assimilates and actively draws on discourses that are not only repressive but also constitutive, since they construct conceptions of normalcy and deviance. It is not the physical, material bodies that are exclusively constituted via discourse and praxis, but the "meanings attributed to the body, and the boundaries which exist between the bodies of different groups of people, [which] are social products" (Shilling 1993:70). The subject gets 'enmeshed' in practices that enhance subjection to socially imposed norms, disseminated by means of culturally acknowledged representations of femininity and masculinity[5].

A major issue debated by social constructionist feminists is the sex/gender differentiation. Farganis places gender at the crossroads between biological givens and socio-historical junctures:

> Gender is constructed and reconstructed within a framework that interacts with biological considerations; yet, it is not unalterably controlled or contained by that biology. Although each of us comes into the world with certain features – sex organs, eye color, hair texture,

[5] Undeniably, there is always the danger, especially with feminists espousing a 'radical discourse' position of falling into *sociological reductionism*, which considers that bodies and gendered identities are solely produced by public discourses and institutionalized practices, and that biological matters as well as mental structures play no role in the acquisition of identity.

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> hormonal balances and imbalances, maybe even cognitive aptitudes, skills and aggressive tendencies – their shaping and assessment is a consequence of social and historical conditions (Farganis 1989: 215).

According to her definition, gender 'interacts' with biological sex since biological attributes are not only inherited but also culturally shaped.

Unlike Farganis, who sees the biological and the social as complementary, Nicholson situates gender in opposition to sex. Gender describes what is socially constructed as opposed to sex, which is restricted to what is biologically given (Nicholson 1994: 79). In her '*<coatrack> view of self-identity*', Nicholson explains how "the body is viewed as a type of rack upon which differing cultural artifacts, specifically those of personality and behaviour, are thrown or superimposed" (Nicholson 1994: 81). Although sustaining that certain biological constancies are responsible for certain social constancies (a claim often related to biological determinism), Nicholson's view equally emphasises that such social constancies are not immutable.

In her critique of the sex/gender distinction, Gatens (1996) starts from psychiatrist Robert Stoller's thesis that biological sex tends to augment, not to determine the appropriate gender identity of a person. A person's gender identity is primarily the result of postnatal psychological influences, and those influences can sometimes override biology, as in the case of transsexuals. As historical, embodied beings, human subjects are socially shaped to various extents by what Bourdieu (1977) calls *habitus* or "our embodied history, internalized as a second nature" (Gatens 1996). Habits and social regulations invest bodies with culturally accepted norms of femininity and masculinity and thus bodies become 'docile' and regulated by the habits and practices of social life: "through the organization and regulation of the time, space and movements of our daily lives, our bodies are trained, shaped and impressed with the stamp of prevailing historical forms of selfhood, desire, masculinity, femininity" (Jaggar and Bordo 1989: 14).

Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* is employed by Bucholtz to clarify the relationship between language and embodied gender identities in terms of the concept of 'communities of practice' (see also 4.5.1.). From the viewpoint of the linguist, *habitus* is "the set of dispositions to act (e.g. speak, walk, read, or eat) in particular ways which are inculcated in each individual through implicit and explicit socialization" (Bucholtz 1999: 205), while *hexis* is defined as "the individual's habitual and socially meaningful embodied stances and gestures" (Bucholtz 1999: 205). Bucholtz agrees with Bourdieu that nonlinguistic practices may provide linguistic information, and the other way round. Nevertheless, she objects to Bourdieu's viewing of the individual as an unconscious disseminator of social practices, a reproducer of previously established social arrangements rather than a free agent. Criticising Bourdieu for attenuating the role of agency, Bucholtz proposes – rightly in my view – Certeau's (1984) approach which defines social practice as "an appropriation, an act of agency" (Bucholtz 1999: 206). She considers that the agentivity Certeau considers individuals to be endowed with should be regarded as their ability to exploit culturally available resources (including language resources) as means to fulfil the social needs of individuals. If agentivity is taken into account, social practices tend to be seen as produced and reproduced by certain individuals while resisted and subverted by others.

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In her discussion of the 'discursive body', a notion which encompasses the interactional dimension of individual identities, Yerian (2002) criticises Bourdieu as well:

> While work such as Bourdieu's links individual behaviour to wider patterns, it lacks the particularity of interactional analyses, which can demonstrate, for example, how bodily hexis is constructed and reproduced in a variety of communities (Yerian 2002: 390).

Yerian considers that stronger stress should be laid on the body as a site of interaction, continually employing communicative resources in order to 'strategically shape' one's embodied social self. Social practices, which in my view should include Yerian's 'strategic construction' of interactional discursive bodies, fall into two main categories:

a) negative identity practices, employed by individuals in order to dissociate themselves from an undesired identity
b) positive identity practices, actively taken up by individuals in order to construct an identity of their choice (Bucholtz 1999:211).

Linguistic practices interplay with other types of social practices, bodily practices such as gesturing, dressing, walking, included, in order to enable individuals to choose an identity and to make that identity accessible within the community as well as outside it.

The next sections will focus on the pluralisation of gender and the role of performance in the social construction and recognition of the gendered bodies.

2.5. Body pluralism and performing gender

Drawing on the Foucauldian view on the 'production of the subject' by systems of powers operating in a historically defined society, Butler's seminal book *Gender Trouble* (1990) offers a detailed and controversial insight into the sex/gender split. The author regards the alleged 'naturalness' of sex as the cultural product of scientific discourses and sustains that sex is a cultural construct to the same extent as gender. Like Braidotti (1994), Butler contests the unity of the subject: she defines gender as 'a multiple interpretation of sex', a definition which implies discarding the dichotomous, mutually exclusive nature of categorisations such as male/female and man/woman. Butler argues that a sexed body can produce several culturally constructed genders, which are not bound to bear a mimetic relationship to projections of biological givens:

> If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way. Taken to its logical limit, the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders...The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it. When the constructed status of gender is theorised as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one (Butler 1990: 6).

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An opponent of humanist-essentialist conceptions of the subject, Butler rejects any univocal signification of gender. In her view, gender is not an attribute of a person and personhood is not essentially characterised by a genderless, disembodied universal capacity for reason, moral deliberation and language. Gender is rather the locus of multiple identities, manifestable in a whole plethora of performances.

Interpreting gender not as a binary but as a multifaceted category has been also espoused by scholars specializing in language and gender issues. Bing and Bergvall argue that:

> Feminist scholars have pointed out that although the majority of human beings can be unambiguously classified as either female or male, there are actually more than two sexes and/or sexualities; a binary division fails to predict purportedly sex-based phenomena such as behaviour, sexual orientation and even physiology. because the terms *female* and *male* insufficiently categorise our experience, English also includes *tomboy, sissy, bisexual, gay, lesbian, hermaphrodite, androgyne, transvestite, transsexual, transgendered individual*, etc. The negative connotations often associated with these words suggest that although such a multiplicity exists, these are aberrations and departures from a basic dichotomy: female and male. The simple belief in 'only two' is not an experiential given but a normative social construction (Bing and Bergvall 1996: 2) (authors' italics).

While contesting the reductionistic assumption that anatomy is destiny, Bing and Bergvall (1996: 5–19) consider that language practices may mirror and consolidate essentialising, taken-for-granted, gender polarities or, on the contrary, contribute to the construction of people's multiple identities. Bing and Bergvall's claim echoes Cameron's, who states that while gender shapes the way women and men use language, language also reinforces or even reshapes gender differences (Cameron 1992). This view is equally endorsed by Johnson, who claims that, among other social practices, language contributes to the multiplicity of gender identities and to the redefinition of femininities and masculinities as "on-going social processes dependent upon systematic restatement" (Johnson 1997: 22).

Along the same line of thought, Susan Gal argues how linguistic categories such as women's or men's speech, powerful or powerless speech are culturally shaped to the same extent to which categories such as feminine and masculine are 'culturally constructed within social groups; they change through history and are systematically related to other areas of cultural discourse such as the nature of persons, of power, and of a desirable moral order" (Gal 1995: 171). She criticises the variationist sociolinguistic tradition which used to dissociate between male-specific and female-specific language practices and resources, and implicitly to promote normative, hegemonic configurations of femininity and masculinity by automatically linking male linguistic and cultural practices to toughness and working-classness while also subsuming female talk to 'gentility' and 'high culture' (Gal 2001: 423).

Butler's *Excitable Speech* (1997) reinforces her radical constructionist view on the relationship between language and the gendered body as the site for performative acts. While boldly stating that "speaking is itself a bodily act", Butler insists on the inseparability between speech and the body, taking into account that the speech act may mean more than it says without knowing what it is performing. As an act performed by the speaking body, speech suppresses "the metaphysical dichotomy between the domain

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of the 'mental' and the domain of the 'physical', breaks down the opposition between body and spirit, between matter and language" (Butler 1997: 11).

2.6. Embodiment: the 'lived body'as a site of experience and performance

Although both sexes possess traits and preferences associated with both the same and the other sex, the extent to which they tend to use those gender-congruent characteristics is highly variable from one individual to another. Concepts of masculinity and femininity are fluid and people display different aspects of the self depending both on their cultural legacy and the situational context in which gender-congruent characteristics are foregrounded or backgrounded. Some social constructionist approaches (see section 2.4.) have neglected the embodied experiences undergone by individuals and consequently the investigation of gendered bodies as lived entities. Scholars such as Csordas attempted to reconcile views of the body as an exclusively cultural construct with the approaches defining it in terms of experiential materiality alone, consequently defining the body as "perceptual experience and the mode of presence and engagement in the world" (1993: 135).

Connell conceptualises embodiment as the everyday location of gendered practice, a location which allows "the interweaving of personal life and social structure" (1987: 61). His reconciliation of the material and the cultural relies on Merleau-Ponty's conception that the body is the person's point of insertion into the world (1962: 70), a sentient being, mediated through physical presence and perceptual meaning, Connell points out that the physiological body impacts upon the social self as much as the body assimilates or discards the inscription of certain social norms and practices.

A major issue emerging in the discussion of embodied practices is that of gendered identity. For Butler, " 'persons' only become intelligible through becoming gendered in conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility" (Butler 1990: 16). Attributes such as coherence and continuity of practices are socially instituted norms of intelligibility, since common practices delineate and accept as *intelligible genders* only "those which in some sense constitute and maintain relations of coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice and desire" (Butler 1990: 17).

Starting from Austin's notion of 'performativity' (1962), Butler argues that gender is 'a corporeal style', constituted in time and instituted in space by means of "a stylized repetition of acts" (Butler 1990: 140). Gender identity is performatively constituted by iterative expressions which consist in "the repeated stylization of the body, *a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame* that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (Butler 1990: 33) (my emphasis). In Butler's view, subversive and emancipatory body practices can free gender from its 'congealing' into a system of rigid procedures established and perpetuated by power regimes of masculine and heterosexist oppression. The solution for getting disengaged from such oppressive practices is to regard sex as *a performatively enacted signification* (Butler 1990: 33). The body is not to be seen as a surface awaiting signification, but as a set of individual and political boundaries transgressible via "the parodic proliferation and subversive play of gendered meanings" (1990: 33).

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Femininity and masculinity are similarly defined in terms of performativity by Lupton, who regards the gendered body as "a dynamic project of the self "(Lupton 1998: 105), implying the constant espousal and rejection of various masculinities and femininities, since:

> We perform gender as part of our techniques of the self and the body, including at the most obvious level our dress and hairstyle, our ways of walking and speaking and of otherwise moving and decorating our bodies. The ways in which we experience and express emotions may also be considered part of the performative practices of the gendered self (Lupton 1998: 105).

Any consideration of masculinity or femininity as 'a dynamic project' should incorporate emotion in addition to concepts such as everyday practice and embodiment. Seeing gender in terms of performativity also underlies the works of linguists such as Johnson (1997) and Cameron (1998). While arguing that the notion of fixed, hegemonic masculinity (see also 2.9.) marginalises not only women but also 'atypical' men (Johnson 1997: 20), Johnson concurs with Butler on the fluidity of gender identities:

> What cannot be overlooked is that performances of gender will certainly involve many men and women drawing upon linguistic resources which they *perceive* to be appropriate to their gender group – in the same way that the two sexes may dress in a manner which conforms to gender expectations. This is why, over time, ways of speaking and dressing will come to be associated with one sex or the other, although they may, of course, be resisted by some groups and individuals (Johnson 1997: 23) (author's italics)

In Johnson's view, men strive to 'put on' hegemonic masculinities to avoid any deviation from norms of linguistic behaviour regarded as typical of and suitable for manly patterns of social interaction. As Benwell's study of the self-conscious definition of dominant hegemonic masculinity in opposition to both femininity and homosexuality (Benwell 2002) reveals, adherence to hegemonic masculinities may entail eluding those norms of linguistic behaviour that are regarded as appropriate for feminine or gay male communities.

Cameron specifies that, when treating gender as performance, the likelihood of deliberate performance needs to be envisaged since men and women become "active producers rather than passive reproducers of gendered behaviour" (1999: 49-50). Such awareness may entail deliberately adopting flexible gender identities and refusing to accommodate pre-established patterns of gendered behaviour, linguistic or otherwise. 'Doing gender' adequately is regarded by as a pursuit common to men and women alike:

> Performing masculinity or femininity 'appropriately' cannot mean giving exactly the same performance regardless of the circumstances. It may involve different strategies in mixed and single-sex company, in private and in public settings, in the various social positions (parent, lover, professional, friend) that someone might regularly occupy in the course of everyday life (Cameron 1999: 60).

In other words, 'performing' gender identity and achieving gender adequacy and congruence is an individual, context-dependent process, liable to undergo remarkable shifts across socio-historical contexts and socially situated interactions. Performativity is one of the foci of Hall and Bucholtz' s collection *Gender Articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self* (1995), where several chapters discuss the gender 'performance' chosen

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by the members of a specific community (e.g. trangendered individuals, phone sex workers, Indian *hijras*). In addition, Butler's notion of 'performativity' of gender underlies recent linguistic theories centred around the concept of 'communities of practice' (see also 4.5. on CofP), which lay considerable – and in my view justified – emphasis on the role played by the body and implicitly on embodied knowledge:

> What is innate, what is socially constructed locally, and what is ideologically constructed: All three avenues of investigation must be used in the study of the body and its interaction with gender (Bergvall 1999: 285)

CofP approaches define gender in terms of three facets:

a) the *innate*, related to dichotomised and oppositional inborn physical differences between sexes;
b) the *achieved*, focusing on the linguistics means and resources speakers as agents employ to construct their gendered status via negotiated engagement in discursive and social practices; and
c) the *ascribed*, assessing the role of ideology and belief systems which 'thrust', i.e. socially ascribe upon speakers certain assumptions regarding gender-roles and gendered behaviour (Bergvall 1999 273:293).

In her discussion of the 'innate', the 'achieved' and the 'ascribed' facets of gender, Bergvall reiterates issues related to the distinction between sex and gender that Cameron had previously questioned (Cameron 1998):

1) Sex is invariable and fixed, gender is socially mediated according to biological givens
2) Gender symbolises sex in a "freer relationship to biology"
3) Gender is the fundamental perspective and gender constructs sex, not the other way round

Otherwise put, concepts such as 'body' and 'gender' need to be redefined in terms of biological legacy, social praxis and the local impact of collectively entertained systems of beliefs. Regarding body as an indispensable cognitive category is necessary in order to perceive gender as a variable that cannot be disentangled from the other social variables such as race or age. Wary of the body-related dualisms espoused and disseminated by most societies, Bergvall signals that

> There is some degree of expectation of difference based on societies' relentless dualization, particularly sedimented around the body in the practice of procreation/ recreation (Bergvall 1999: 289).

This realistically implies acceptance of variation, since gender-related expectations translate differently in accordance with different societal expectations and assimilated assumptions, beliefs and stereotypes.

Endorsing the warnings of Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) and of Holmes (1996), Bergvall mentions the dangers of "premature or excessive generalisation" (Bergvall 1999: 280). Her position substantiates Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's proposal

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(1992) to redefine gender identities in terms of local manifestations of social practices so as to avoid sterile abstractisation:

> To think practically and look locally is to abandon several assumptions common in gender and language studies: that gender can be isolated from other aspects of social identity and relations, that gender has the same meaning across communities, and that the linguistic manifestations of that meaning are also the same across communities (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992:462).

To conclude, CofP approaches to gender have a twofold aim:

1) to substantiate "...the assumption of variability in gendered practices and identities, challenging the dualized differences between putatively homogenous groups of females vs. males" (Bergvall 1999:278)
2) to view the process of acquiring a gendered identity liable to fluidity and flexibility, by "...moving from peripheral or novice participation in linguistic action to a central or more experienced enactment" (Bergvall 1999: 278).

In other words, in compliance with CofP approaches, gender is to be envisaged in its embodied variability (1) as well as its fluctuant performative enactment (2). Since variability is a key-concept in anti-essentialist stances, the following section will deal with several body typologies, defined by other means than the nature/culture polarity.

2.7. Between nature and culture: some body typologies

The present subsection will deal with the new conceptualisation of the body as the locus of interaction between the natural and the cultural, the site of 'mediation' between what is accessible to the subject alone and what is publicly observable (Grosz 1994: 20). Several types of bodies will be discussed in terms of their proximity to nature and/or culture or their (re)location in an in-between area.

In terms of their potential appropriation to either nature or culture, Lupton (1995) distinguishes between a *'civilised'* and a *'grotesque'* body. The 'grotesque' body is rather unruly and undisciplined, unlike the 'civilised' body which displays self-control and successful management of normative-disciplinary practices. Certain bodies tend, at least in Western or Western-like societies, to be readily labelled as grotesque (those of overweight, old or lower class people) while others fall into the civilised category (white, heterosexual bodies). Similar distinctions are made by Stallybrass and White (1986) as well as Featherstone (1991) who oppose *classical* and *grotesque* bodies. If the 'grotesque' body represents the symbolic power of the natural, and a potential for violence and physical domination, the 'classical' body represents the power bestowed by self-control and control over others.

Lupton further specifies how the *open* body, prevalent in pre-modern times, used to be a source of corporeal pleasure, subject to few regulations and constraints. Characterised by an "open, unfinished nature, its interaction with the world" (Bakhtin 1884: 281 in Lupton 1998:73), the 'open body' corresponds to the 'grotesque' body. On the contrary, the late modern age has been glorifying a body that needs to be "hard,

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impenetrable, closed-off from the outside world and dry" (Lupton 1998: 86). Its being 'sealed off' from any contact with other bodies likens it to the 'classical' body. Section 2.9. will expand on the significance of the modern impenetrable body as an icon of hegemonic masculinity.

In her distinction between *the social* and *the physical body*, Mary Douglas (1982) states that in the context of social experience, the body's expressive resources are utilized to articulate symbolic meanings. Constrained by the social body, the physical body remains a restricted medium of expression since social forms intervene in the imposition of corporeal control. Nevertheless, symbolic systems are not fixed, and bodily expression has accordingly been a means to culturally organize and order experience.

Claiming that the Western tradition has ignored the corporeal aspects of being human, Gatens insists on the need to investigate what she calls *the imaginary body*:

> An imaginary body is not simply a product of subjective imagination, fantasy or folklore. The term 'imaginary' will be used in a loose but nevertheless technical sense to refer to those images, symbols, metaphors and representations which help construct various forms of subjectivity (Gatens 1996: 2).

Gatens views the imaginary body as the site where power, domination and sexual difference intersect the lived experience of humans (Gatens 1996: 70). Notions such as 'masculine' and 'feminine' do not imply a fixed essence, but a historically codified specificity. As far as the imaginary body is concerned, femininity and masculinity form antithetical yet complementary relations. By contrast, actual men and women display both feminine and masculine traits, femininity and masculinity being a matter of degree rather than of kind.

Gatens's view has particular significance for my research, which regards the constitution of body images as part of the social life of individuals. As members of post-totalitarian 'communities of practice', I assume that young Romanian female undergraduates have been influenced in the acquisition and adoption of images such as ideal or flawed male bodies by the experiences, social models and cultural resources made available to them in the specific post-communist Romanian context.

2.8. Relevance of anti-essentialist views for the investigation of masculinity: male bodies and the reason/emotion shifting threshold

As pointed out in the previous sections, a first step in reconceptualising the concept of 'body' and consequently the concepts of 'male body' and 'masculinity' would be to espouse a de-essentialising stance. A fundamental task of anti-essentialist approaches will be the pluralisation of masculinities, implying the deconstruction of the category 'men', and of the way different constructions of 'men' have emerged historically and become interwoven with racialised, sexualised and classist meanings (Petersen 1998: 6).

Historical deconstruction approaches to the body with proponents such as Laqueur (1990) and Schiebinger (1989) play a vital part in undermining the

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essentialistic 'naturalisation' of the body[6], as they argue that bodies undergo remarkable historical and cultural variation and are far from being endowed with stable, immutable properties and capacities. Such deconstructions challenge the traditional premise underlying the epistemology of masculinity as regards the existence of stable bodily 'essences' and the taken-for-granted assumptions of clear-cut boundaries between the normal and the pathological.

Privileging mind over matter and endeavouring to achieve impartial, 'disembodied' knowledge has been seen by many feminist epistemologists as a 'masculinist' way of perpetrating the domination of men over women, culture over nature and European over non-European thought (Petersen 1998: 123). The Cartesianism inherent to mainstream western thought has equated masculinity with reason and prevented men from defining themselves in terms of (individual) perceptions and emotions. The emotional has been banned from the realm of manhood as it has come to be culturally associated with vulnerability, a notion which contradicts the strength and impenetrability of the ideal muscular body:

> The inextricable relationship between the emotions and embodiment is part of the meanings of irrationality that have tended to accompany the emotions. In western cultures, the embodied nature of humanity has historically been a source of consternation. The body has constantly been presented as threatening to overcome the pureness of thought (Lupton 1998: 3).

As Lupton explains, the rationality of knowledge and the irrationality of emotions have been posited antagonistically in Western essentialist thought. In Seidler's view (1997), emotions have been banned from masculine modes of expression and masculinity has been equated with a profound sense of control. Crippled by the fear of and inability to express their emotions, aware of their clumsy manipulation of language when it comes to express feelings, men are only feebly in touch with their somatic identities. Their bodies have been regarded as instruments destined to serve practical ends rather than entities whose signals are worth deciphering:

> Learning to think of the body within dominant white masculinities in mechanistic terms as something that needs to be trained and disciplined, men are often left with little inner connection to their bodies. We often give up whatever authority we might have in relation to our bodies, accepting that our bodies have little connection with our identities as rational selves. We learn that the body has to be subordinated to the mind and that we have to exert a rigorous control in relation to it (Seidler 1995:173).

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[6] As both Laqueur and Schiebinger point out, starting with the Enlightenment bodies became increasingly scrutinised as they were thought to disclose essential features pertaining to men and women. The standard for assessment and comparison was the idealised European male body, an ideal borrowed from ancient Greek aesthetics. The rationalist philosophy of the Enlightenment saw differences between the sexes as a matter of degree rather than kind in both the one-sex and the two-sex models, with the women appearing as the imperfect variant of the flawless man. Schiebinger explains how woman's inferiority was thought to be caused by difference in body humours and temperature (Schiebinger 1989:160–165).

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Seidler's analysis of men's disconnection from their bodies revolves around the claim that, by and large, men's socialisation obeys patterns that favour an essentialist view of identity and a subordination of emotion to reason. Alienation from emotion and from the bodily is redolent of the age-long mind/body dichotomy and of the opposition between a pre-social, fixed self and a biologically established, emotion-laden body. The perpetuation of such dichotomous patterns can only be achieved by critically interrogating the dualistic order and exploring its cultural and historical roots (Petersen 1998: 92) (see also 2.2.2.).

Having touched upon the role played by patterns of gendered socialisation, I will devote the next section to the discussion of idealised 'body images' and of ideal masculinities.

2.9. The social construction of masculinity: 'body images' and ideal masculinities

The term 'body image' was first used by the psychologist and sociologist Paul Schilder, who argued that a body image is not just a cognitive construct but a way to reflect attitudes towards the body: "the picture of our own body which we form in our mind, that is to say, the way in which the body appears to ourselves" (Schilder 1950:11). Schilder believed in the 'elasticity' of such body images since they encompass elements such as body size estimation (perception), evaluation of attractiveness (thoughts), emotions related to body shape (feelings). Starting from the premise that all humans have an investment in their own bodies as well as in other people's bodies, Gatens (1996: 38) regards the *body image* as a product of the human ability to reflect upon the self as if it were an other, to have the self projected into past and future situations and eventually to achieve 'deep complicity' between self and other.

Such complicity between self and other underlies most attitudes people entertain about their own bodies and those of their peers, which are indicative of the high degree of normativity bodies are assigned in Western cultures. Because they live in cultures that are highly prescriptive as to the range of acceptable body shapes and sizes, men and women often find their perceptions of their own bodies to be a source of anxiety, prejudice, and lack of self-confidence.

Prescriptive impositions as regards 'ideal body' perceptions are amply dealt with by Susan Grogan in her brief yet captivating history of body images that, with time, have constituted insigniae of ideal masculinities (Grogan 1995: 16–19). In ancient Greece, the male body was worshipped and regarded as more harmonious and enticing than the female body. Male figures often appeared in the nude, while women were wrapped either in cloaks (*himation*) or undergarments (*chiton*). Greeks in the 7th century BC idealised the so-called 'Daedalic' male figure – after Daedalus of Crete, the first Greek sculptor who became legendary – whose rippling muscles were carved onto shiny marble surfaces. Roman art in turn regarded the supple, muscular warrior as the epitome of beauty. The muscular naked male body continued to be idealised in Renaissance works such as Michelangelo's nudes. The male body dominated the scene of artistic representation until

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the 18th century when artists such as Courbet wrought a change of focus from the male to the female naked body.

In modern times, the idealisation of the finely-toned, muscular male body recurred with the Nazi propaganda for the Teutonic ideal as the reproduction machine of the chosen nation. Muscularity here is largely associated with both physical beauty and moral virtue. An association of manliness with strenuous physical work may also reside in the Protestant ethic (Petersen 1998: 49). By extension, Grogan claims, the association of physical work with muscularity triggered the association of men with the public sphere – the man was seen at work, unlike the feeble-bodied Victorian woman.

Post-war gender representations arguably exacerbated gender role polarisation by foregrounding hyper-masculinised men (Rock Hudson, Marlon Brando). Such exhibition of 'macho' masculinities emerged as the natural counterpart of hyperfeminised female stars (Doris Day, Jayne Mansfield) in an attempt to revive nuclear families. If male Hollywood idols of the 50s displayed some partial nudity to exhibit their muscularity or to emanate some defiant 'bad boy' appeal (see Bordo's descriptions of Brando and James Dean 1999: 107–129), the semi-naked and naked male bodies became increasingly mediatized in the late 80s and 90s, blurring the traditional boundary between men as viewers and women as viewees (Grogan 1995: 18–19, Bordo 1999: 153–167). Cultivating the ideal male bodies promoted and shaped by public institutions such as athletics, scouting, clubs, sports competitions and military establishments, all of which are largely recognised as sites for disciplining supposedly unruly bodies, nevertheless disseminated images of masculinity prevalently defined in terms of bodily strength, vigour and competitiveness[7]. The muscular body as the ideal male body in modern discourses of masculinity is an emblem of power, pleasure and perfection in Western cultures (Dutton 1995)[8]. The slender ideal is relatively recent as far as male images are concerned, as only in the late 80s has increasing slimness been extolled by way of the diet industry as well by the glorification of body-building, e.g. the advent of the 'male waif' in advertising (Grogan 1995: 6–24). In Lupton's view, male bodies are closer to the late-modern ideal of the tight, hard, impenetrable and dry body than are female bodies, more prone to 'overflows' of fluids. Consequently, the powerful, muscular body becomes idealised because it represents containment and restraint (Lupton 1998: 119–120).

As Petersen (1998) points out, achieving an ideal muscular body entails *objectification* and *instrumentalization* of one's own body. The subject strives to control an imperfect body and to use it as an instrument to acquire and display highly valued attributes: good health, strength and stamina, protectiveness and fearlessness (Petersen 1998: 51). As studies on men's (dis)satisfaction with their bodies point out, men are far from experiencing boundless delight, especially in relation to such body parts as the mid-torso, the biceps, shoulders, chest and muscle tone. To amend their body shapes men tend

[7] The belief in the contribution of sports and Spartan lifestyles to the building of manly bodies and implicitly manly characters is rooted in the tradition of the Greek gymnasium, a site meant to assist young boys to become good citizens through the disciplining of their initially frail, imperfect bodies.

[8] The cultural shaping of ideal 20th century masculinity is rooted in 19th century Darwinism, the master narrative of thought about the social world (Rotundo 1993).

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to exercise rather than diet, but also to take anabolic steroids to speed up muscle development (Grogan 1995: 59–79). The valorisation of the ideal – or at least perfectible – body is likely to generate intolerance of non-normative body types, culminating for instance in the Nazi propaganda aiming at the persecution and extermination of 'foreign' bodies: homosexuals, Jews, Gypsies and blacks (Dutton 1995: 207–208).

Although masculinity has come to acquire an increasing number of facets, "from the military virility of Rambo to the anguished passivity of Merchant Ivory, from Mel Gibson's and Bruce Willis's lovable roguery to Tom Cruse's and Brad Pitt's toyboy cuteishness" (Edwards 1997: 40), most contemporary globalised representations revolve around a white, muscular, healthy, virile, strong-jawed and clean-shaven male appearance. Images of white, middle-class, heterosexual masculinities – with the central representations of 'the corporate power look' and the 'outdoor casual' look – are still hegemonic despite the growing impact of the 'sensitive new man' (Barthel 1992, Edwards 1997: 39). As Hanke points out, masculinity is hegemonic whenever it gets established in terms of physical force and control, occupational achievement and patriarchal family relations (Hanke 1998: 3–15). The next section will focus on the co-existence of hegemonic and alternative masculinities in present-day Western cultures.

2.10. Hegemonic versus alternative masculinities

Hegemonic masculinity is not to be understood as the "male role" but as a particular variety of masculinity to which women and others (young, effeminate, or homosexual men) are subordinated. Hegemonic masculinity thus refers to the social ascendancy of a particular version or model of masculinity, namely the one generating and legitimising positions of dominance, power and control, which, while operating on the terrain of "common sense" and conventional morality, defines "what it means to be a man". In contemporary Western cultures, hegemonic masculinity is a composite of physical strength, exclusive heterosexuality, suppression of "vulnerable" emotions such as remorse and uncertainty, economic independence, authority over women and other men, and intense interest in sexual "conquest". While most men do not embody all of these qualities, hegemonic masculinity benefits from institutional(ised) support (Connell 1995, Hanke 1998).

The ascendancy of hegemonic masculinity in Western societies is no longer achieved through violent coercion but rather through cultural processes in which masculinism is created and maintained through the denial of femininity and the inferiorisation of gay and effeminate men (Connell 1995). The exorcisation of the feminine from the male body is supposed to convincingly construct a masculinity where achievement and success are central ingredients. Nevertheless, hegemonic masculinity cannot be seen as a constant given:

> Hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same. It is, rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable (Connell 1995: 76).

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Institutionalised forms of dominant masculinity are likely to shift contextually, as domination and the hegemonic representations associated with it 'rarely go uncontested' both in terms of form and cultural content (Gal 2001: 424). Along the same of argument as Connell (1995) and Gal (2001), Benwell (2002) discusses the hegemonic masculinities in relation to the 'new laddism' discourses in men's magazines. She endorses the view that hegemonic masculinity is primarily conceptualised in opposition to feminisation and homosexuality:

> Hegemonic masculinity in men's magazines refers to a culturally-ascendant gender identity which primarily defines itself in hierarchical contrast to subordinate groups or constructs, e.g. femininity, women, gay men, hippies. In addition, this masculinity embraces qualities of physicality, violence, autonomy, wit and irony (Benwell 2002: 11).

This 'hierarchical contrast' between hegemonic masculinities on the one hand, and femininity and 'less manly' masculinities on the other is amply analysed by Halberstam in her book *Female Masculinity* (1998). The author convincingly argues that despite the wide consensus that femaleness does not automatically produce femininity and maleness does not produce masculinity, very few people seemed to be considering the effects of disassociating sex and gender, which has been particularly visible in the sphere of masculinity:

> Masculinity in this society inevitably conjures up notions of power and legitimacy and privilege: if often symbolically refers to the power of the state and to uneven distributions of wealth. Masculinity seems to extend outward into patriarchy and inward into the family; masculinity represents the power of inheritance, the consequences of the traffic in women and the promise of social privilege (Halberstam 1998: 2).

Halberstam pursues her argument by emphasising that since femininity generally signifies the effect of artifice, the essence of "performativity", it tends to be more easily understood as transferable, mobile, fluid. On the contrary, masculinity has an altogether different relation to performance, the real and the natural, and consequently appears to be far more difficult to decipher. According to Halberstam, saying that gender is "performative" may be particularly helpful when thinking about femininity but less useful in relation to masculinity. Masculinity, in fact, often presents itself as non-performative or anti-performative, since what has come to be denominated "dominant" or even "heroic" masculinity has been exclusively defined in terms of the *naturalisation* of the white male body endowed with legitimised power, meant to arouse publicly acknowledged recognition and respect.

Halberstam proposes a transgression of this narrow conceptualisation of masculinity and an exploration of alternative masculinities in a cutting-edge endeavour "to depathologize gender variance and to account for the multiple genders that we already produce and sustain" (1998: 27). Dismissing the offhand construal of 'excessive masculinities' in relation to the prejudice of the oversexed black male body as well as that of 'insufficient masculinity' commonly associated with Asian male bodies or upper-class male bodies (1998: 2–3), Habelstam engages in a well-articulated and richly illustrated description of female masculinity. In her view, female masculinity disrupts contemporary

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accounts of masculinity which confine the latter to the social, cultural and political effects of male embodiment and male privilege. Halberstam dwells with a plethora of instantiations of masculinity such as: tomboyism, butch/femme representations in lesbian communities, transgender dykes, as well as Hollywood stone butches and drag kings.

As a conclusion, at the core of hegemonic masculinities lies their alleged normativity, defined as different from the deviancy eschewed by femininity and homosexuality. There is a general tendency in mainstream western cultures to regard men as healthy and male sexual desire as natural, simple and straightforward in contrast to female pathology. Hegemonic masculinity basically revolves around averting feminine behaviour while engaging in strenuous, risk-incurring activities whose ultimate purpose is achieving success in an emotionally distant manner. Despite recurrent conceptualisations of masculinity as the normative and mandatory exclusion of potential feminisation, no society succeeds in excluding the generation and dissemination of several, often strikingly different and occasionally contradictory masculinities within the same social framework.

Since gender relations conventionally revolve around relations of dominance, marginalization and complicity, any hegemonic form of masculinity witnesses other masculinities arrayed around it. Any particular form of masculinity is itself internally complex, even contradictory: if "masculinity" simply meant the characteristics of men, we could not speak of the femininity in men or the masculinity in women (except as deviance), and gender would cease to be a dynamic, hence contradictory process. Bordo's fascinating book *The Male Body* (1999) minutely explores such contradictory ideals while asking herself and the reader/voyeuse intriguing questions ranging from the 'size matters' issue to the co-existence of the 'masculine' and 'the beautiful' (the vacillation between vaguely effeminate male ideals such as Brad Pitt or Di Caprio and the domineering machos of the Schwarzenegger and Stallone type). By analysing several cultural signifiers from Ken dolls to Calvin Klein semi-nude vulnerable male youths, Bordo highlights the co-occurrence of contradictory idealisations of masculinity within most displays of male beauty.

A current example of contradictory masculinities is the often perceived and occasionally ridiculed contrast between the *New Man* and the *New Lad*. The New Man is amply analysed in publications such as *Achilles Heel* promoted by anti-sexist male scholars such as Berger, Wallis and Watson (1995), Craig (1992) and Edwards (1997) which endeavour to interrogate constructions of fatherhood, male sexuality, authority and economic power. Such endeavours rely on the assumption of the existence of 'new men' who have been influenced by feminist ideas and are sympathetic to a notion of masculinity strikingly different from the traditional 'male chauvinist pig' variety. An offspring of the 70s, the 'new man' is socio-economically, sexually and racially specific: more often than not he is professional, usually white, heterosexual and between 25 and an indeterminate middle-age. He is also having something of an identity crisis as his girlfriend(s) discover(s) feminism and, in some cases, green politics and non-penetrative sex.

As a backlash against the feminist-friendly 'new man', the emergence of 'new laddism' in lifestyle men's magazines such as *Loaded* may heavily exploit, among other things, a comeback to conservative models of masculinity, which do not refrain from indulging in misogyny and homophobia, and disseminate messages meant to acknowledge and value the manliness in the 'ordinary reader' (Benwell 2002: 150–152). Along the same

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line of argument, Whelehan's *Overloaded* offers a well-documented insight into the popular culture of the 90s, which unveils how notions such as 'laddism' or 'laddettes' are indicative of how anti-feminist ideas are packaged as ironic and popular.

In her amply illustrated discussion of 'laddishness' and the cult of the 'girlie' in film, TV, advertising, music literature and politics, Whelehan argues that we live in an age of *retrosexism* where media images of men in crisis and neurotic single women abound, and where any criticism of such images arouses a roar of postmodern ironic laughter. In her view, the emergence of the 'new lad' as popularised by magazines such as *Loaded*, a personage that is 'almost always white; part soccer thug, part lager lout, part arrant sexist', is intended to highlight man's natural state of being and, consequently, the equally natural division of gender roles. With the new lad, the gross amplification of aggressive masculine traits and offensive behavioural penchants is nevertheless shielded by the mask of irony. Since the allegedly male attributes are powerfully exhibited within an exclusionary 'gang mentality' ranging from 'lavatorial humour to descriptions of sex as the act of silencing shrill women', they are meant to delineate a masculine personal space which fences off any female intrusion while concomitantly dismissing the 'dull, ineffectual, emotional and possibly effeminate new man' (Whelehan 2000: 61). The noisy self-sufficient childishness the new lad proudly displays confines this masculinity to a 'boy-zone' (Whelehan 2000: 63) where (self)-irony jocularly bars the access of women - particularly feminists, dismissed by the new lads as persons devoid of any sense of humour. The combination of aggressiveness and childishness and its new wrapping in an irony-tinged package is likely to lead to 'a nostalgic revival of old patriarchy' (Whelehan 2000: 8).[9]

Benwell concurs with Whelehan as to the crucial role of irony in the construction of 'new lad' identities in men's magazines:

> Humour and irony, therefore, like the negotiation of gaze and image, may be yet another means by which hegemonic masculinity is able to accommodate social change. The "stylised repetition of acts" is a crucial prop in the upholding of stable gender identity, but it is nonetheless in conflict with the imperatives of a consumer magazine which is continually in search of the creation of new identities, new markets. Humour and irony (and also gaze) are thus chiefly employed in making these necessary adaptations and additions to masculine identity palatable and congruous with a more traditional model. Arguably then, they serve a reactionary, conservative role, rather than a subversive, unsettling one (Benwell 2002: 170).

Ironic self-reflexive comments are likely to shield explicit displays of hegemonic masculinity from resistant or critical readings. By evincing an alleged incongruity between what is uttered/written and what is contextually meant, irony enables the disclaiming of responsibility for 'politically incorrect' statements, liable to be accused of promoting sexist, racist or homophobic attitudes.

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[9] In Whelehan's view, the 'ladette' reinforces even more strikingly the vulgarity and objectification proffered by a rigid division of genders:
The ladette offers the shallowest model of gender equality; it suggests that women could or should adopt the most anti-social and pointless of 'male' behaviour as a sign of empowerment (Whelehan 2000: 11).

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Having stressed the co-occurrence of hegemonic and alternative masculinities, the following section will emphasise the contribution that embodiment-focused approaches are likely to bring to a thorough investigation of masculinities.

2.11. Relevance of embodiment-centred approaches for the investigation of masculinity

If, lately, female bodies have been reclaimed and reassessed in terms of individual, emic experience (Brook 1999), the study of male bodies has largely been situated in the 'unproblematic' area of abstraction and generalisation (Watson 2000: 60). To rescue masculinity from the domain of abstract silence, scholars such as Connell (1995) and Watson (2000) argue that the notion of embodiment situates the relation between structure and agency at an individual level, since "the embodiment provides the ground on which the dynamics of gender are made personal and the tensions of agency and structure are realized" (Watson 2000: 109).

While concurring with Gatens that the body is not a finished product (1996: 57), Connell considers that "any one masculinity, as a configuration of practice, is simultaneously positioned in a number of structures of relationships, which may be following different different historical and cultural trajectories" (Connell 1995: 74). Resorting to individual experience and to the 'lived body' in order to bring practice into the focus of gender investigation is also claimed by Gottfried (1998: 465): "an excavation of lived practices can make visible the gendering process and ground analysis of specific forms of male power in relationship to class and other hierarchies". In Watson's view, the body provides the ideal site for such excavations, since investigating the lived body is likely to direct the study of masculinities away from the vagueness of cultural and ideological vacuum towards the individual manifestations of the bodily (Watson 2000: 41).

Associating men with reason has favoured entertaining the belief that men's capacity to think is independent of any historical and corporeal context, that men are 'effectively disembodied' (Harding 1998: 77)[10]. Scott and Morgan (1993: 70–71) analyse modern masculinities as simultaneously 'embodied and non-bodied'. On the one hand, physical strength and firmness indicate manliness – and a specific one, that of the 'man of action' – while on the other hand, reasonable men seem to be represented as devoid of their bodies, denial of the body being tantamount to refutation of emotional vulnerability.

This brief presentation of newly emerged positionings of masculinity is relevant for my own research, which probes Romanian readers' accommodations of non-hegemonic masculinities as well as their perceptions of westernised icons of masculinity. My line of investigation will hopefully highlight both consensual tendencies and individual variations regarding hegemonic and alternative masculinities in a parodical

[10] The masculine disembodiment Harding analyses is confined to the idealised disembodiment of the few privileged males (Western white, heterosexual, middle class) whose thinking and controlling activity depended upon the embodiment of those who were engaged in battle and manual work. I find her idea of selective disembodiment both unrealistic and overgeneralising.

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text from Zest as a result of the specially elicited responses on the part of young Romanian female students.

2.12. Concluding remarks

As I have striven to point out in this chapter, abstraction and overgeneralization in dealing with the gendered body can be avoided if the male or female body is therefore perceived as *individually experienced* within the dynamic boundaries of existing *socio-cultural structures*. Far from being a unitary, static entity, the body is a process within which relationships are established and challenged between the individual and the society and culture that provide the context for that individual's everyday experiences. The lived experience of the body is therefore to be deciphered within the constraints and opportunities of each gendered person's socio-cultural context (Watson 2000: 144–145).

A more systematic analysis of the relationship between everyday bodily experience and cultural practices is however needed in order to reveal how certain bodies, i.e. Caucasian, heterosexual male bodies, become 'naturalised' as different from female bodies and 'normative' with respect to other male bodies, such as those of black men or gay men (Petersen 1998: 39–41). This line of investigation needs further focus on the analysis of dominant and marginal masculinities in terms of consumers' receptions and on the cultural factors that contribute to the prevalence of certain types of masculinities over others within specific cultural communities.

Having presented several perspectives on male bodies and masculinities, Chapter 3 will deal with the tenets of schema theory, social schemata and the gender dimensions of social schemata and stereotypes. These notions serve as crucial guidelines in my further discussion of Romanian readers' schema-(in)consistent representations of masculinity.

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PROTOTYPE THEORY, SCHEMA THEORY, SOCIAL SCHEMATA AND STEREOTYPES

3. 0. Introduction

The present chapter will discuss some theoretical perspectives which are pivotal for my research since they have enabled me to establish the landmarks of data analysis and interpretation. In order to smoothly follow the line of exemplification accompanying the line of theoretical argumentation throughout the chapter, readers are invited to look at the text *'Men in Trunks'*, selected for my research (Appendix I) and at the comprehension tasksheet specially designed for this text and used in the Main Study (Appendix III).

After a brief introduction to the role played by concepts in the process of comprehension, I will expand upon the *'prototype'* approach as the main theory contesting classical categorisation theories (3.2.). Several examples from the text *'Men in Trunks'* (published in the British magazine *Zest,* August 1998) illustrate the key-concepts of the 'prototype' theory (3.2.1.). Other examples from the same text are provided to stress the role played by the context in establishing cognitive categories (3.2.2.). Schema theory is dealt with in section 3.3. starting with the selected definitions of the term *'schema'* (plural *'schemata'*) and clarifying the distinctions from terms that designate similar concepts (3.3.1.). Aspects or terms pertaining to several versions of schema theory are discussed to the extent to which they bear partial relevance for my own research (3.3.1.2. to 3.3.1.4.). Section 3.3.2. lays special emphasis on the relation between linguistic input, background knowledge and schema activation, while section 3.3.3. discusses processes such as expectation building, inferencing and schema-suspension, and their relevance for my own investigation.

An important distinction is made between the concepts of *'schema-reinforcement'* and *'schema-refreshment'* (3.3.4.) while specifying how I intend to operationalise the concept 'schema-refreshment' in my own research (3.3.5.). Since such an operationalisation heavily relies on acknowledging affective and attitudinal changes, I found it necessary to deal with socio-cognitive approaches to emotions and attitudes (3.3.6.). The directions of my operationalisation of 'schema-refreshment' are specified (3.3.7.), followed by the acknowledged limitations of such an enterprise (3.3.8.).

Social schemata are defined and exemplified in section 3.4, with particular stress on the definition and exemplification of person, role, self and event schemata (3.4.2.2.). A thorough approach to social categorisation involves elucidating distinctions such as

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category-based versus person-based processings of social information (3.4.3.), which are illustrated with examples from my own study. Stereotypes as social schemata and social representations are discussed in section 3.5. Special attention is given to the relation between stereotype acquisition and schema-refreshing or schema-reinforcing cognitive processes (3.5.2.). Finally, section 3.6. considers the issue of gender in relation to schematic cognitive representations. This section provides a critical review of Bem's seminal paper on 'gender schema theory' and 'gender (a)schematic' processing of social information (1983).

3.1. The importance of concepts and categories

Concepts or conceptual categories are mental representations of objects, entities and events stored in memory (Roth and Bruce 1995). Without coining thoughts into concepts, humans would fail to interact properly with objects, entities and events, as they would retain all trivial information and would consequently be unable to separate superfluous information from essential information (Aitchinson 1995, Lakoff 1987). Without concepts, human beings would also be unable to communicate successfully, i.e. to verbalise mental representations of objects, situations and events or to make sense of their interlocutors' verbalisations. Both filtering information and sharing representations involve categorization, the mental activity of grouping similar things together into conceptual categories or classes.

> Categorisation, the process by which distinguishable objects or events are treated equivalently, is an inherently pragmatic function, an act of the body, speech, or mind. It is one of the most basic functions of living creatures. Humans live in a categorisation world: from household items to emotions to gender to democracy, objects and events, although unique, are acted towards as members of classes (Rosch 1999: 51)

Categories serve to represent objects, events and entities with maximum information and minimum cognitive effort; therefore they can be regarded as satisfying the human need for cognitive economy.

3.2. Against classical categorization: the 'prototype' approach

As I am interested in investigating the way young Romanian female readers classify male holiday makers and evaluate classifications of men as made by the author of an article from a British magazine, I shall need to specify that my investigation will be carried out in the light of 'prototype' theory as opposed to the traditional Aristotelian theory of categorisation. Promoters of 'prototype' theory (Rosch 1975, 1999, Mervis and Rosch 1975, Rosch and Lloyd 1978, Tsohatsidis et al 1990 and Ungerer and Schmid 1996) contest the Aristotelian view according to which every category is associated with a set of membership criteria or defining attributes, which are both necessary and sufficient. This contestation relies on two major arguments:

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1) For most natural categories, it is impossible to draw up a set of necessary and sufficient conditions
2) The members of a category do not all have equal status. Certain members, the prototypical members, have a privileged status as they enjoy full membership of the category. Less prototypical or more marginal members are assigned a lesser degree of membership, depending on how closely they resemble the prototype.

Hence the following two perspectives that prototype theorists espouse in relation to prototypicality and categorisation:

1) One perspective looks at the relation between a category and its constitutive members, which are rated according to their *degree of membership* or *rank of typicality*
2) The other perspective describes a category or concept in terms of the *prototypical features* its members display (Roth and Bruce 1995).

I will illustrate the above claims with examples taken from the article '*Men in Trunks*', which I used for my research (see Appendix I). I assume that my respondents' mental representations of male swimsuit wearers are based upon characteristics of the *typical* members of the class, i.e. men loitering on the sands, wearing various bathing outfits, relaxing, getting tanned. Since typicality is central to the way we represent everyday categories, many categories have an *internal structure*, i.e. they are not homogenous in member typicality or *representativeness*. With male holiday makers on the beach, typical members wear some kind of swimsuit, while atypical ones may come to the beach fully dressed or nude.

Typicality differs with each individual perception of a category: e.g. some readers (presumably those bred in more conservative, 'prudish' communities) may regard boxer-wearers as typical, while others may consider men in skimpy trunks as typical (presumably those bred in more liberal communities or in communities where achieving an ideal body shape and displaying it are considered significant). In addition, typicality undergoes cross-cultural variation (e.g. 'skimpies' would be regarded as atypical by elderly Romanian holiday makers while American or British onlookers might not consider them as such).

Degrees of membership or typicality ratings depend on the degree of resemblance of certain members with the prototypical members, as well as on the number of shared prototypical attributes. If 'good' examples share many attributes with other members of the same category and are maximally different from members of other categories, 'bad' or 'marginal' examples share only few attributes with members of the same category, yet may possess several attributes that may belong to members of other categories.[1]

[1] Gradients of membership must be considered psychologically important because such measures have been shown to affect virtually every major method of study and measurement used in psychological research (Rosch and Mervis 1975; Rosch 1975, 1978). Gradiency can apply to any kind of category: perceptual categories such as *red,* functional categories such as *furniture*, biological categories such as *woman,* social categories such as *occupation*, political categories such as *democracy*, formal categories such as *odd number* (Rosch, 1999).

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Gradients of membership are of particular importance for my own research for two main reasons:

a) I am interested in the ranks or degrees of membership respondents assign to males supposedly representative of a certain category of trunk-wearers described in the article since such membership gradients may be indicative of the respondents' schematicity of representation.
b) I intend to measure the degree of typicality respondents assign to certain attributes (e.g. being '*appealing*' or being '*disgusting*') supposedly representative of the members of the three categories of trunk-wearers presented in the article since I regard typicality as equally indicative of schema-consistent or schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity.

3.2.1. Variants of Rosch's prototype theory

Rosch's prototype theory (1975) claims that the conceptual representation of a given category is lodged in a prototype, which combines in a single mental entity the attributes of the most typical category members. Categories are internally structured, i.e. some members have a higher degree of typicality, while others are regarded as less representative, marginal members of the category. Boundaries between categories are fuzzy or ill-defined rather than clear-cut. Intercategorial boundaries change according to the context in which perceivers operate categorisation (Rosch 1975, Roth and Bruce 1995: 31–42).

Three main variants of Rosch's prototype theory have been proposed:

1. ***The typical feature model*** which claims that there is a list of *typical properties* that enable comprehenders to distinguish one category from others
2. ***The exemplar model*** which asserts that for each category, there are representations given by *specific exemplars* that a comprehender has encountered
3. ***Mixed approaches***, sustaining that categories are represented by a combination of typical features and exemplar information.

According to the typical feature model, properties of objects are 'weighed' in terms of their typicality and consequently assigned *'a cue validity'* "which indicates how characteristically the feature is associated with the concept" (Roth and Bruce 1995: 43). Typical category members possess those features with the highest cue validity (Rosch and Mervis 1975, Rosch 1975, Roth and Bruce 1995). Thus, 'sweet' or 'juicy' are high cue validity features when typicality of members of the class 'fruits' is assessed. With the class of vegetables, 'sweet' and 'juicy' are, obviously, low cue validity features. While being a low cue validity feature with fruits, 'crunchy' is a high cue validity feature with a class such as bakeries or groceries. In the article *'Men in Trunks'* being *'narcissistic'* is typically associated with the category of men called by the writer "Self-obsessed Skimpies", while a feature like being *'blue-eyed'* isn't. Hence *'narcissistic'* has a high cue validity for wearers of revealing swimsuits. By contrast, *'blue-eyed'* has a low cue validity for the same category since it does not provide a decisive clue whether a man on the beach is a member of it or not.

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The exemplar model variant (Rosch 1978) states that category representation consists of individual representations of certain exemplars an individual has encountered and stored in their memory. Thus, the men typically included by the author of the article *'Men in Trunks'* in the category of wearers of Burt Lancaster trunks may differ from the ones Romanian readers anticipate to be members of the same category. In addition, what a Romanian reader might envisage as typical of a specific category of male holiday-maker is likely to differ from what a British reader regards as highly representative for the same category.

Mixed approaches combine feature-based information and exemplar information in achieving categorisation (Roth and Bruce 1995). Coming back to *'Men in Trunks'*, the categories of male trunk-wearers suggested by Wald combine feature-related information (e.g. boxer-wearers are shy) with knowledge of specific exemplars (the French boy she met in Cannes, Australian soap stars, surfers). Romanian readers are prompted to use such approaches as they are required to list both (expected) typical features (see Q 8.2., App. III)) and (expected) typical exemplars (Q 8.3) (App. III).

3.2.2. Context-dependence and goal-directed categories

Which attributes or exemplars are perceived as prototypical depends on the perceiver's existing categorisation system as well as on the context of categorisation. As pointed out in sections 2.2 to 2.5, gender is also a context-dependent, fluid, dynamic category, since both femininity and masculinity are historically constructed and contextually situated. Context can alter the significance of attributes regarded as relevant for a certain category – gender included – or highlight attributes that are not commonly associated with representative exemplars of a specific category (Ungerer and Schmid 1996, Hinton 2000).

The same men Wald describes in *'Men in Trunks'* would have been shown to display different typical attributes if described – even by the same author – in a different context. The 'beach' context urges the describer to make salient certain features related to body aspects – muscle shape and size, flatness of abdomens, vigour of legs – which would not have been regarded as representative or useful for the description of the same men when, let's say, they are working in their office or trying to fix their car in the garage.

Apart from undergoing individual differentiation, categorisation is also flexible with respect to the goal the categoriser pursues as well as the context in which categorisation occurs. Thus, taxonomic categories, which arise from (directly or culturally acquired) experience are to be contrasted with *goal-directed categories* (Barsalou 1982), which arise from functional necessities. The most typical members of taxonomic categories are those with the most representative properties. The most typical members of goal-directed categories are those which best satisfy the functional purpose described by the category.

Going back to *'Men in Trunks'*, having a 'finely-sculpted body' may be a representative attribute for a category like 'eligible men on the beach' provided the goal of the female watcher is to admire, pick up or even seduce male holiday-makers. An attractive body would nevertheless not make up a significant attribute for categories such as 'blood donors' or 'honest accountants'.

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3.2.3. Concluding remarks on categorisation

As Ungerer and Schmid (1996: 19) point out, a few basic issues need to be taken into account when dealing with categorisation:

1. Most concepts are either '*vague*', i.e. represent entities which cannot be assigned clear-cut margins (such as: mountain and most landscape forms, knee and most body parts, fog and most weather phenomena), or *'fuzzy'*, i.e. they get grouped into blurred-edged categories that 'merge' into one another. In the case of '*Men in Trunks*', '*Bashful Boxers*' could be regarded both by Wald and by respondents as a *'fuzzy'* category in terms of the attractive/disgusting opposition, while 'Burt Lancaster Trunks' and 'Self-obsessed Skimpies' are much more likely to be labelled both by author and respondents as respectively '*attractive*' and '*disgusting*' (see Appendix I and Appendix III)
2. Cognitive categories are not arbitrarily set, they arise from human experience or are *experientially-grounded.* Both writing and comprehending an article like '*Men in Trunks*' involves some familiarity with holidays on the beach, people sunbathing and swimming in their bathing suits, as well as direct or mediated experience suggesting a possible connection between spending one's vacation on the seashore and having a romantic affair.
3. Cognitive categories are not homogeneous but *anchored in conceptually salient prototypes.* In the case of the article '*Men in Trunks*', I believe it is the author's intention to display salient prototypes of masculinity in the photos that accompany the written text.
4. Members of cognitive categories are rated according to their being 'good' or 'bad' exemplars of the category (according to their *goodness-of-fit* or *typicality gradient*). For instance, in Wald's article, Burt Lancaster or men who buy their outfits at Armani's are a 'good' exemplar of fashionable BLTs, while skinny-legged Jarvis Cocker is indicated to be a 'bad' exemplar.

3.3. Schema theory

Like prototype theory, schema theory equally deals with simplified mental cognitive structures, stored in memory and activated whenever comprehension of an input requires retrieval of those representations. In contrast with prototype theory, which is hyponymy-based (i.e. based on class-inclusion) and envisages single categories or simple hierarchies of categories, schema theory considers clusters of concepts organised in *complex spatio-temporal structures*. By enlarging the scope of prototype theory, schema theory deals with the effects the application of a specific category has on cognitive processes such as perception, information storage and inference.

The present section is intended as a review of the basic tenets of schema theory formulated by cognitive psychologists such as Bransford (1979), Rumelhart (1980),

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Eysenck and Keane (1990), Krahe (1990), Eysenck (1993), Ungerer and Schmid (1996), by applied linguists such as, Cook (1994), Clapham (1996) and Semino (1995, 1997, 2001), and by cultural analysts such as Schmidt (1991) and Hoijer (1992, 1998). Special emphasis is laid on those tenets that bear relevance to the present study.

3.3.1. Adopted definitions and terms designating germane concepts

Throughout the present chapter as well as in the chapters dedicated to data collection and analysis (Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7) I will be using the term '*schema*' (plural '*schemata*') as it is defined and conceptualised by theorists such as Rumelhart and Ortony:

> Schemata are data structures for representing the generic concepts stored in memory. They exist for generalized concepts underlying objects, situations, events, sequences of events, and sequences of actions. Schemata are not atomic. A schema contains, as part of its specification, the network of interrelations that is believed to generally hold among the constituents of the concept in question (Rumelhart and Ortony 1977: 101).

A more recent and more concise, yet comprehensive definition is that provided by Eysenck and Keane:

> A schema is a structured cluster of concepts; usually, it involves generic knowledge and may be used to represent events, sequences of events, precepts, situations, relations and even objects (Eysenck and Keane 1990).

The term *schema* is to be distinguished from the terms *frame* and *script*, widely used by researchers in the field of artificial intelligence and often employed to refer to organised mental structures. *Frame* was introduced by Marvin Minsky (1975) and was later employed by linguists such as Tannen and Wallat (1999: 346–365) as designating stereotypical knowledge about settings and situations. Other researchers, such as Emmott (1997) used frame to refer to a system that 'monitors' the presence of characters in a specific fictional location at various stages of a story. *Script* was introduced by Schank and Abelson (1977) in order to define sequences of actions used in the comprehension of complex events (e.g. knowledge about going to a restaurant).

In their Relevance Theory, Sperber and Wilson (1986) use the term '*encyclopaedic entries*' to designate recurrent 'chunks' of experience. Commenting on Abelson's notion of 'scripts' or 'vignettes' and regarding 'invocation of scripts' as indispensable to comprehension, Forceville (1996) defines them as "a kind of *blueprints* that help people, often subconsciously, to decide how certain events are likely to unfold, and to evaluate events" (Forceville: 1996, my emphasis).

Schemata enable comprehenders to retrieve generic concepts from memory and accommodate incoming input into existing conceptual structures. As 'cognitive misers' (Fiske and Taylor 1984: 12), humans need to be equipped with mental shortcuts that not only simplify reality but also empower them to actively construct it. In the following section I will discuss those versions of schema-theory that bear some significance for my own research and illustrate the operationalisable concepts with examples from my own study.

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3.3.1.2. Schemata as higher-order cognitive structures: Rumelhart's "building blocks of cognition"

Cognitive psychologists such as Rumelhart regard schemata as higher-order cognitive structures defined as "fundamental elements upon which all information processing depends" (Rumelhart 1980: 33). Schemata constitute the 'building blocks of cognition'. During the process of comprehension humans activate higher-order mental structures which involve *variables*, *variable constraints* and *default variables* related to the situation/object/event/person to be conceptualised (Rumelhart 1980: 35–39). Rumelhart likens variables in a schema to characters in a play. Different *values* can *realise* the same variable; the same way different actors can play the same character. The *variable constraints* specify the 'typical values of the variables and their interrelationships' (Rumelhart 1980: 35). Variable constraints enable comprehenders to operate a shortcut search for elements that realise the variables in a schema they instantiate. As for variables that are not explicitly specified in an input, constraints enable comprehenders to supply missing values or default values meant to fill in the gaps in the activated schema. (Rumelhart 1980: 36). Such '*default values*' can be inferable on the basis of shared expectations, i.e. expectations that are common among a group of individuals. Rumelhart states that default variables are suppliable because schemata are not rigid, but flexible structures, whose suppleness springs from the human propensity to tolerate vagueness, and imprecision (Rumelhart and Ortony 1977:11).

The total set of schematic cognitive structures instantiated by a comprehender while processing a certain input yields the comprehender's model of the encountered situation/object/event/person (Rumelhart 1980: 37). Since I will be using Rumelhart's 1980 version in my analysis of the text used for my research, I will illustrate the previously discussed terminology with a BEACH schema. Normally, a BEACH schema involves, among others, variables such as 'people temporarily located on the beach' and 'ongoing beach activities'. Depending on the context, the 'people' variable can take values such as 'holiday makers' (i.e. people getting a tan, swimming, loitering in the sands) or 'fishermen' (i.e. people preparing their fishing instruments on the beach before going out to sea to catch fish). Likewise, the 'activities' variable could take different values according to the context. A 'holiday' context would make comprehenders realise this variable by such values as: swimming, sunbathing, playing ball, building sandcastles. A 'fishing' context would imply different values meant to realise the 'activities' variable: checking a fishing net, hurling it on to a boat during a pre-fishing stage and separating the fish from the residuals during a post-fishing stage. Regarding the variable constraints of a BEACH schema in a 'holiday' context, the values realising the 'holiday makers' variable would be 'human beings' (and not animals or plants). The same constraint applies to the 'fishing' context.

Default variables in the BEACH schema (e.g. sand, waves, shells, etc) are easy to supply whenever there is some familiarisation with the concept 'beach'. However, cross-cultural variations are likely to occur. Thus, unlike a British person for instance, a Romanian activating a BEACH schema would not consider ebb and flow as a default variable, as there are no tidal phenomena in the Black Sea bordering the south-eastern Romanian coast.

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3.3.1.3. Rumelhart's Parallel Distributed Processing

A subsequent version of schema theory set forth by McClelland and Rumelhart suggests an alternative model of cognition called Parallel Distributed Processing (PDP) (1986). According to this alternative cognitive model, knowledge is not separated into higher-order blocks but arranged into networks of neurone-like units. Schemata are described not as structures permanently stored and structured in memory, but as patterns involving activation of units within a specific network. Each activated unit may involve either the co-activation or the blocking of other connected units. For my own study, the notion of co-activation has proved useful in discussing cultural associations between variables in the BEACH schema and variables pertaining to other schemata, such as cartoon characters or a butcher's shop (see 4.4.5.), normally unlikely to be concomitantly instantiated with the BEACH schema.

Not regarding schemata as permanently stored in memory but as being assembled during the processing of a particular input, has proved helpful in my attempt to hypothesise what schemata my respondents may have instantiated and what 'assembling' strategies they may have used at various stages of textual encounter.

3.3.1.4. Schank and Abelson's scripts

The prevalent term used by Schank and Abelson in their Scripts, *Plans, Goals and Understanding* (1977) is *script*. The term designates "stylized everyday situations" which consist of "a predetermined, stereotyped sequence of actions that defines a well-known situation" (Schank and Abelson 1977: 41). Although I will not be using the term *script* in my analysis, I will rely on another term Schank and Abelson introduced, namely that of *headers*. *Headers* or *triggers* are textual elements likely to trigger the activation of a script on the part of a specific comprehender or an envisaged group of comprehenders. Headers are meant to guide comprehenders in their search for relevant textual input and save them the instantiation of useless scripts, thus enabling comprehenders to be cognitively economical.

As the analysis in Chapter 6 will show, I applied the concept *'header'* throughout my data analysis. I devised several questions on the comprehension tasksheet with a view to eliciting responses that are indicative of the activation of masculinity schemata as triggered by specific textual clues.

3.3.2. Relevance of schema theory for my own research: linguistic input, background knowledge and schema activation

My research attempts to reveal the relationships between the textual clues provided by a text on the male body published in the British magazine *Zest* and the schemata my respondents, young Romanian female undergraduates of English, supposedly instantiated during the process of text comprehension. The relationship

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between textual input and allegedly instantiated schemata will be discussed in terms of its relevance for the formulation of my research questions in the next Chapter, more specifically in section 4.5. I will specify that, to highlight the afore-mentioned relationship and to be able to see its degree of generalisability, I formulated my overarching content research question as follows:

> *When Romanian undergraduate female readers are presented with a multimodal text on the male body published in the British magazine Zest, is there any evidence that the textual input either (a) reinforces or (b) clashes with the readers' schematic representations of masculinity?*

My hypotheses about which schemata were instantiated at various points of the textual encounter rely on linguistic data since they consider individual responses to tasks or questions on a comprehension sheet specifically designed for the text '*Men in Trunks*'. Such responses supply linguistic indications which are – although indirectly – indicative of cognitive processes that might have occurred in respondents' minds: categorisation (sorting out representative attributes and designating prototypical exemplars for anticipated categories), inferencing and activation of (social) schemata, basically masculinity schemata. Highlighting those cognitive processes enables me to get some insight into the clusters of background knowledge my respondents resort to during the respective processes, as well as to receive some indications as to their having accommodated newly-encountered representations of masculinity.

The joint role played by linguistic input and by background knowledge in achieving coherence of text interpretation is highlighted by Semino:

> It is one of the basic tenets of cognitive psychology that comprehension crucially depends on the availability and activation of relevant prior knowledge. We make sense of new experiences – and of texts in particular – by relating the current input to pre-existing mental representations of similar entities, situations and events (Semino 1997: 123).

Readers embark upon inferencing whenever "particular elements in the text trigger the activation of certain schemata (bottom-up), and [whenever] activated schemata generate expectations that fill in what is not explicitly mentioned in the text (top-down)" (Semino 1997:125). Besides drawing inferences, schema activation enables comprehenders to 'capitalise on relevant knowledge' (Eysenck 1993: 83), i.e. to develop expectations and/or predictions about incoming input and consequently incoming mental representations. Once textual elements trigger the activation of certain schemata in the readers' minds, expectations are generated and the (dis)confirmation of those expectations is anticipated. Halasz (1991) stresses how the process of text comprehension involves the reader in accessing (via 'reminding') not only personal experience but discursive – including fictional intertextual – experience as well. This view is also endorsed by Schmidt (1991: 275) who states that understanding is "a subject-dependent, strategy – guided, intentional, and flexible process oriented towards efficiency" (Schmidt 1991: 275) and that text comprehension arises from the interaction between the readers' knowledge and text information.

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Developing expectations and making predictions are important issues for my own research which aims, among other things, to indicate whether and how the newly encountered representations of masculinity in the text *'Men in Trunks'* might have been accommodated within the readers' existing gender schemata. Hence the formulation of the second empirical research question:

> *E2: Do readers' responses contain linguistic clues indicating that textual representations of different types of masculinities are consistent or inconsistent with the readers' existing schemata?*

I expect that response analysis will reveal that individual sets of responses to the comprehension tasksheet are an insightful research instrument, providing me with language clues meant to indicate which social schemata are likely to have been activated by respondents during the textual encounter. Hence the formulation of my second methodological research question:

> *M2: Does the designed tasksheet elicit readers' responses which indicate the respective readers' accommodation of schema-inconsistent masculinities?*

Bearing in mind that " schema theory links cognition to the very concrete social lives of human beings" since they "exist in the minds of individual subjects as psychic structures, but they are linked to the socio-cultural and historical realities" (Hoijer 1992: 289), I assume that the elicited responses will clarify the connection between avowed attitudes and (lack of) accommodation of newly-encountered representations of masculinity. Hence the formulation of my third methodological research question:

> *M3: Do readers' acknowledged changes in attitudes during their interaction with the text constitute evidence as to their (lack of) accommodation of schema-inconsistent masculinities?*

I hope that this research question will reveal whether and how attitudinal changes may be indicative of cultural associations, the adoption of cultural models and the espousing of specific values and beliefs, all of which may widen the scope of schema theory.

3.3.3. Suspending schemata, building expectations and drawing inferences

Schema activation involves expectation-driven processing (Rumelhart 1980: 41–42). Expectations are not 'simply reduplicative, but constructive' (Bartlett 1932: 204 quoted in Semino 1997: 126). By using their perceptive and recalling skills, comprehenders tend to achieve 'conceptual coherence', i.e. to group entities into sets that 'make sense' to the observer (Eysenck and Keane 1990: 286). Thus, responses to expectation-eliciting questions (Q6) should be indicative of the achieved or achievable textual coherence on the part of respondents, with special focus on their conceptualisation of masculinities.

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Eysenck regards '*inference drawing*' as tantamount to '*gap filling*', as he claims, rightly in my view, that "it is one of the prime uses of scripts or schema to allow inferences to be drawn in a way which is usually accurate and helpful for comprehension" (Eysenck 1993: 87). Starting from Semino's claim that "[...] schema theory provides a remarkably flexible and powerful framework for the explanation of inference, expectations, default assumptions and the perception of coherence in comprehension" (Semino 1997: 148), I will discuss the flexibility of schemata by taking into account cognitive processes such as developing expectations, inferencing and suspending schemata and by emphasising their utility for my own research.

As far as my own research is concerned, the lines of inferencing supposedly taken by my respondents are likely to be highlighted by their responses to Q2 (once they are informed of the title of the article to be read) and Q7 (once they are informed of the names of categories assigned by the author of the article to men on the beach).

Once credible evidence has been gathered against the utility of a certain schema for comprehension purposes, the reader '*suspends*' that schema and allocates their mental resources towards a 'more promising schema' (Rumelhart 1980: 42). Suspension of unsuitable or incongruent schemata prevents distortion via what Bruner and Potter call "the debilitating effect of premature commitment to a particular schema" (Bruner and Potter (1964) in Rumelhart 1980: 47).

One of my main concerns in the response analysis is to identify evidence of suspension of activated schemata. For example, after their encounter with the visual text, most readers are likely to activate a SPORTS schema, which they probably suspend later as they start instantiating various male body and masculinity schemata.

3.3.4. 'Schema-refreshment' versus 'schema-reinforcement'

As high-level cognitive structures, schemata facilitate coherence of to-be-comprehended input by supplying simplified and prototypical clusters of knowledge on situations, objects, events, persons. Serving the purpose of cognitive economy, schemata enable perceivers to select those portions of existing knowledge and to develop those expectations that normally provide smoother and shorter paths towards the successful processing of incoming social stimuli. As 'cognitive misers', people generally tend to remember information that confirms their schemata and forget information that disconfirms them (Fiske and Taylor 1984: 162). Schema-consistent information is favoured by normal retrieval processes, while schema-inconsistent information requires painstaking integration into memory. As people spend less time and make less effort in decoding and interpreting information that is *consistent* with their expectations, it is natural to assume that schema-consistent information generally requires less effort in processing than schema-inconsistent information (Augoustinos and Walker 1996: 45).

On the other hand, as Eysenck and Keane (1990: 279) argue, comprehenders may also spend less time and pay less attention to those elements they find familiar and dedicate more time and focus more on the unexpected elements:

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> Since there is no need to spend very long looking at expected objects, this frees up resources for processing more novel and unexpected aspects of any given scene (Eysenck and Keane 1990: 279).

Processing of schema-consistent versus schema-inconsistent information in relation to comprehenders' processings of texts have been discussed by linguists such as Cook (1994) or Semino (1995, 1997) in the light of two concepts: schema-reinforcement and schema-refreshment. Schema-reinforcement largely accompanies the processing of schema-consistent information, while schema-refreshment relates to the processing of schema-inconsistent information.

Whenever an input, be it textual or not, can be accommodated within existing schematic representations of events, situations, persons, and the comprehender's expectations are relatively readily met with, there is likelihood for the comprehender to undergo 'schema-reinforcement', i.e. strengthening schema-consistent representations. According to the nature of discourses which operate such reinforcements, Cook divides schema-strengthening or expectation-confirming discourses into three categories:

1) 'schema reinforcing', i.e. discourses which consolidate previous schemata
2) 'schema preserving', i.e. discourses which confirm previous schemata
3) 'schema-adding', i.e. discourses which prompt comprehenders to incorporate new elements in previous schemata (Cook 1994: 10).

Paradoxically enough, *because of* their simplified stereotypical nature, schemata can sometimes be potential barriers to understanding, especially when the text fails to comply with the reader's *'schematic expectations'* (Cook 1994: 10). Whenever the textual input fails to match the comprehender's previously internalised norms of world and text representation, schemata are likely to undergo disruption or refreshment. The degree of schema change depends on each reader's willingness and ability to alter their previous schematic representations of reality or to draw new connections between existing schemata. While emphasising that schema-refreshment is a reader-dependent quality, Cook classifies texts according to the degree to make this quality manifest: schema-preserving, schema-reinforcing and schema-disrupting:

> We may contrast schema-refreshing discourse with discourse which is 'schema preserving', leaving existing schemata as they were, and discourse which is 'schema reinforcing', leaving existing schemata stronger than before (Cook 1994:192).

Along the same line of argument, DiMaggio distinguishes between '*automatic cognition*' and '*deliberative cognition*' (DiMaggio 1997: 4–6). Automatic cognition is regarded as a routine type of cognition exploiting recurrent schemata, whose instantiation is likely to readily supply default assumptions about persons, relationships, events and their consequences (Di Maggio 1997: 4). In contrast to automatic cognition, deliberative cognition involves overriding existing patterns of conceptualisation, while critically and reflexively contemplating existing mental structures in the light of expectation-challenging inputs. Deliberative cognition is not likely to be employed frequently as deliberation rejects the shortcuts automatic thinking offers. Nevertheless, people are

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strongly motivated to appeal to deliberation whenever existing schemata fail to adequately account for new inputs.

Cook (1994) regards schema-refreshment as inextricably linked to the effect of unexpectedness or unfamiliarity that is generally brought about by literary texts (unlike, he claims, advertising texts, which tend to be schema-reinforcing). The schema-refreshing effect of a text upon a reader involves destabilising the reader's old schemata, followed by either building up new schemata or drawing new connections between existing schemata. Cook discusses three types of schema-refreshing processes: schema-destroying, schema-constructing and schema connecting:

> Existing schemata may be destroyed. New ones may be constructed. New connections may be established between existing schemata. I shall refer to these three processes as 'schema refreshment' (I shall also use the term 'schema disruption' to describe a general effect on existing schemata. Disruption is a pre-requisite of refreshment.) (Cook 1994: 191).

According to Cook, schema-refreshment may occur both with respect to world schemata and with respect to text or formal schemata. Otherwise put, schema-refreshment may consist of the alteration of reader's 'world' schemata as well as their 'formal' schemata if the readers need to accommodate some expectation-challenging input. Along this line of argumentation, Cook tends to associate schema-refreshment with deviation from textual norms and implicitly with literariness (Cook 1994: 182).

Cook's view is partially criticised by Semino, who proposes that texts – be they literary or non-literary – should be located along a continuum whose two ends are schema-reinforcement and schema-refreshment:

> If a text reinforces the reader's schemata, the world it projects will be perceived as conventional, familiar, realistic and so on. If a text disrupts and refreshes the reader's schemata, the world it projects will be perceived as deviant, unconventional, alternative, and so on (Semino 1997: 155).

Semino refines Cook's definition of 'schema-refreshment' by underlining that, in her experience, there are hardly any texts which might result in schema destruction, neither are there texts that demand the creation of new schemata, at least on the part of adult readers. She rather inclines to state that schema refreshment, as she experienced it in relation to poetical texts, rather included "unusual instantiations of schemata and/or the simultaneous activation and interconnection of schemata, that, in my case at least, were not normally activated together" (Semino 2001: 350–351).

While rejecting Cook's claim that comprehension of literary texts typically and unavoidably results in schema-refreshment, Semino highlights the potential of certain texts – be they literary or not – to contribute to either refreshment or reinforcement of the reader's schemata. The schema-reinforcement and the schema-refreshment potential of a text can account for the "degree of alternativity, possibility, conventionality, etc., that readers attribute to text worlds" (Semino 1997: 176). Semino insists on regarding schema refreshment as a potential and in most cases non-predictable effect of the text upon the reader's pre-existing knowledge structures, since, she argues, readers may ignore expectation-challenging textual elements or may accept them solely for purposes of text

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comprehension (Semino 1997: 213). Later on, taking on board Jeffries's criticism as to the presence of a cline with schema reinforcement at one end and schema refreshment at the other (Jeffries 2001), Semino proposes introducing the notion of a schema-refreshment cline as an analytical tool. Such a cline would have "no schema refreshment at one end and dramatic schema refreshment at the other" (Semino 2001: 352).

While keeping in mind Jeffries' critical account of Cook and Semino prioritising the 'typical' or 'intended' reader to the detriment of the actual, possibly subversive reader, empowered with alternative schemata than those commonly activated within mainstream culture (Jeffries 2001: 331), I still heavily rely on the construction of meaning depending both on the reader and on the text and being subject to the language constraints imposed by the text. Of course, to account for 'interpretative variability' (Semino 2001: 348) does not exclude expecting "some degree of consensus about textual meaning between readers with shared cultures" (Jeffries 2001: 332).

In compliance with Mills and White's view, I believe that an analysis of the schemata a reader uses in her understanding of a text may unveil her "experience in the past which conditions the contents of the schemata enlisted" (Mills and White 1997: 232). In other words, hypothesising about the activation of certain schemata may shed light on the cultural experience that is likely to have contributed to some schema-(in)consistent reading of the article *'Men in Trunks'*, an aspect which I will attempt to elucidate in Chapter 7.

3.3.5. Schemata and affect

Bartlett's proposal (1932) that schemata should be related to emotional phenomena blazed the trail for research that emphasises the relationship between cognition and affect. A comprehensive theory of the mind should envisage not only cognition but also imagination and affect and should rely on factors such as emotions, concerns and attitudes (Miall 1989, Halasz 1991, Semino 1997, Augoustinos and Walker 1996, 1998).

Schema-refreshing discourses effect changes in existing schemata, most of which are likely to be sometimes related to emotional reactions and attitudinal changes: "Sensations of pleasure, escape, profundity, and elevation are conceivably offshots of this function" (Cook 1994: 191). I agree with Cook's view as I myself use acknowledgements of strong emotional reactions and changes in attitudes as potential candidates for the indication of schema refreshment (Q12 or Q15, see App. III).

The possibility for attitude measurement to indicate potential schema-refreshing effect of the text upon the readers having acknowledged the respective attitudes is an issue addressed by my third methodological question :

> *M3: Do readers' acknowledged changes in attitudes during their interaction with the text constitute evidence as to their (lack of) accommodation of schema-inconsistent masculinities?*

Consequently, a discussion of the relationships between attitudes and schemata will be provided in the next subsection.

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3.3.6. Attitudes and schemata

Attitudes are concomitantly a part of cognitive life and a part of social discourse (Augoustinos and Walker 1996: 14–15). Attitudes denote a person's orientation to some object of reference that acts as a stimulus to that person's evaluation of the object in question (Augoustinos and Walker 1996: 13). Since attitudes involve judgements of the 'like/dislike' or 'good/bad' kind, they inevitably trigger an affective or emotional response in individual attitude-holders. Consequently "an attitude intervenes between an observable stimulus and an observable response, providing the necessary link" (Fiske and Taylor 1984: 340). In addition, attitudes display cognitive dimensions because they imply categorisation as a necessary stage prior to evaluation:

> We regard an attitude as the categorization of a stimulus object along an evaluative dimension based upon, or generated from, three general classes of information: (1) cognitive information, (2) affective/emotional information, and/or (3) information regarding past behaviors or behavioral intentions (Zanna and Rempel 1988: 319).

In the light of the above definition, categorisation is not only a cognitive process but also an evaluative one. Affect and evaluation may be instantly cued by categorisation and social categories are inherently value-laden because they instantly fit an object/event into a schema that bears emotional connotations (fear of dentists, disgust inspired by demagogical politicians, Moscovici 1984). The relationship between categorisation and affect will be explored in my own research, mainly with the aid of 'quantitative' or attitude-measuring questions.

Evaluative stances towards categories of men on the beach are repeatedly elicited in the comprehension tasksheet I designed for both the Pilot and the Main studies. Such questions imply both attitudes avowed by respondents with respect to anticipated categories (Q 7.1 – see App. III) and retrospectively avowed attitudes, towards the categories described by the author in the text (Q 9.3, App. III).

The explanatory and justificatory role of attitudes facilitates the orientation of the individual in the social world since attitudes are group-defining and grant individuals a sense of identity derived from the collective sharing of that specific set of attitudes and beliefs (Augoustinos and Walker 1995: 18-19). Hopefully, my analysis of the respondents' avowed attitudes will shed some light on certain social norms, beliefs and representations respondents espouse as individuals and as members of a social group, i.e. that of young Romanian female undergraduates.

In the view of Fiske and Taylor (1984), attitudes are situated at the crossroads between cognition, affect and behavioural propensities. Attitudinal changes impact upon subsequent cognitive processes to the extent to which perception and inferencing are related to the processing of attitude-consistent or attitude-discrepant input:

> [...] the inference process is often conservative, straying on the side of accepting preexisting beliefs over new and counterintuitive ones. It is also self-centred, drawing on personal experience and beliefs over information provided from other sources, especially social ones (Fiske and Taylor 1984: 247).

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In other words, people occasionally tend to avoid cognitions that are inconsistent with attitudes they normally hold. Moreover, social inferences are likely to be prompted by pre-existing attitudes and to overlook expectation-challenging elements in compliance with the general tendency of comprehenders to engage in the processing of schema-consistent information (see section 3.3.4.).

Taking such (in)consistencies into account, I anticipate response analysis to provide useful landmarks for the identification of inferencing processes triggered by visual, verbal and multimodal textual input. This aim of my investigation is formulated in the third empirical research question:

> *E3: What are the implications of the multimodality of the text on the types of schemata activated by readers when gradually exposed to visual, written and combined visual and written input?*

In addition, the relationship between respondents' inferencing lines and accommodation of schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity on the one hand and their acknowledged attitudes towards the newly-emerged textual descriptions of masculinities on the other hand is addressed by the third methodological research question:

> *M3: Do readers' acknowledged changes in attitudes during their interaction with the text constitute evidence as to their (lack of) accommodation of schema-inconsistent masculinities?*

The question will be addressed and more fully dealt with in the 'Discussion' (Chapter 7), once the relationship between attitude measurement and accommodation of schema-inconsistent representations has been provided by the findings of my analysis.

3.3.7. Operationalising the concept of 'schema-refreshment' in my own research.

As formulated in the overarching content research question of my study, the purpose of my research is to establish whether evidence can be supplied as to texts on the male bodies and masculinities published in British magazines targeted at young women such as *Zest* constitute an input which strengthens or which clashes with Romanian readers' schema-consistent representations of masculinity. Language clues in responses to the tasksheet are expected to be indicative of (lack of) accommodation of potentially schema-refreshing representations of masculinity into respondents' existing social schemata. This issue is addressed by my first empirical research question:

> *E1: Do readers' responses to comprehension tasks suggest potential schema-refreshment in relation to their likely schematic representations of masculinity?*

The starting point in my attempt to operationalise the concept of 'schema-refreshment' with Romanian readers was the assumption that texts on the male body from British magazines for young women such as *Zest* were likely to involve at least some potentially schema-refreshing elements, which might lead not so much to faulty

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comprehension but to strong emotional reactions (such as shock, disgust, outrage) and to avowal of expectation-challenging attitudes on the part of undergraduate female readers. When choosing the text and devising the comprehension sheets for the pilot and the main studies, I anticipated such textual input both to partially clash with the readers' existing schematic representations of masculinity and/or to operate a 'surprise' or 'shock' effect upon the readers because of their perceiving the writer's language and style as unconventional to the point of being eccentric and defiant.

There are two main directions along which I have operationalised the concept of potential schema-refreshment:

1) The potential of the selected text – namely '*Men in Trunks*' (*Zest*, August 1998) to cause schema-refreshment. This relates to my own analysis of the selected text in terms of schema theory, highlighting those elements I myself found potentially schema-refreshing.
2) The indirect, linguistic evidence of any (lack of) accommodation of newly emerged textual representations of masculinity as indicated by the response analysis. This direction involved performing a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the readers' responses to tasksheets specifically designed for the text in question, which comprised, among others, questions eliciting recognition of challenged expectations, acknowledged changes in mental representations of masculinity, rankings of attitudes and emotional reactions regarding the descriptions of male bodies and classifications of masculinity in the selected text. The comprehension tasksheets I designed contain redundancy tasks and involved approaching the same issue from different angles (e.g. Q12, 13 and 15) so as to avoid miscompletion of the tasks relevant for issues even obliquely related to the accommodation of presumably schema-inconsistent representations and eventually to indication of potential schema-refreshment.

As I will acknowledge later, contrary to my initial assumption, data analysis has not indicated visible schema-refreshing potential of the text upon the respondents. As I will show in section 8.2., this does not invalidate attitude measurement and schema-elicitive tasksheets as instruments which can reliably indicate either schema-reinforcement or schema-refreshment as possibly to be undergone by a specific group of readers during a specific textual encounter.

3.3.8. Anticipated limitations of operationalising the concept of 'schema-refreshment'

An issue that needs to be elucidated before embarking on the analysis proper is that since I cannot possibly access what is going on in the respondents' minds, I can only hypothesise as to their activation of certain schemata during the textual encounter on the basis of their responses to the questions on the comprehension tasksheet specifically designed for the article '*Men in Trunks*'. Such responses provide me with language

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evidence indicative of the schemata respondents might have activated at various stages of encounter with the article. Apart from the language evidence in the sets of responses entitling me to *hypothesise* about schemata activated by my informants, indirect evidence on potential schema-refreshment or on schema-reinforcement is likely to be supplied by the informants' report on their having (or failing to have had) undergone changes in their mental representations. If some such changes are quantifiable (Q12 or 15), with responses to open-ended questions (such as Q13) there is considerable risk of not getting an honest feedback from respondents for two reasons:

a) The respondents refuse to be affected or resist accommodating whatever they perceive as expectation-challenging – therefore potentially schema-refreshing – and choose to simply ignore schema-refreshing aspects of the text. They prefer to focus on the expectation-confirming elements so as to achieve faster and smoother comprehension.
b) The respondents will not admit that certain elements are unexpected and hard to accommodate within their existing schemata as they are unwilling to appear prejudiced, backward or discriminative.

3.4. Social cognition: on the interaction of intrapersonal cognition and extrapersonal culturally shared knowledge

If early cognitive approaches focused on computational and artificial intelligence approaches to texts, contemporary cognitive research focuses on the integration of individual text reception into wider societal processes (Graesser, Gernsbacher and Goldman 1997). Researchers like van Dijk (1997) revise the definition of mental processes as being exclusively triggered by textual stimuli:

> The mental representations derived from reading a text are not simply copies of the text or its meaning, but the result of strategic processes of construction or sense-making which may use elements of the text, elements of what language users know about the context, and elements of beliefs they already had before they started to communicate (van Dijk 1997: 18).

In van Dijk's view, cognition is always context-sensitive. Confining schema-theory to the investigation of mental systematic structures would entail examining cognition without exploring the interaction between the individual mind and the social world. Ignoring the interdependence of the cognitive and the social would be as erroneous and limited as deliberately separating cognition from emotion and motivation. Understanding texts on gender representations thus involves combining individual stored knowledge structures with socially acquired experience. Understanding is a self-organising process relying on the embedding of subject-dependent, active, flexible, efficiency-oriented cognitive processes into situational and socio-cultural contexts, in other words on "the structural coupling of cognition and communication" (Schmidt 1991:

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283). Such successful interlocking between individual cognition and communication is likely to be fostered by what Schmidt calls 'media offers' such as books, films, TV shows, radio plays, printed texts, all of which are acknowledged to belong to specific genres and relate to familiar discourses (1992: 273–283).

Along the same line of argument, Shore proposes locating individual cognitions within wider networks of social representations such as shared opinions, beliefs and ideologies, which manage to bridge the gap between personal and cultural experience (Shore 1996: 170). Such a claim is intended to enlarge the scope of schema theory by investigating the way individual mental schematic representations interweave with publicly shared norms and representations. Extending schema-theory so as to include social influences and institutionalised cultural models has also been advocated by Hoijer (1998), who claims – rightly in my view – that an improved schema theory would involve building a bridge between cognition and culture, since individual cognitions are shaped by socio-cultural processes:

> If our minds were developed only on hereditary dispositions and our own direct experiences as the basis for knowledge of the world, we certainly would not reach far beyond the level of Neanderthal man. Instead we meet and assimilate culturally experiences formed by generations after generations and inherit language, behaviour, ways of life, social institutions, and so forth. We are included in history and culture by a multitude of social connections (Hoijer 1998: 169).

I expect acknowledged attitudes on the part of my respondents to indicate emotional reactions (approval, admiration, amusement,) as well as attitudinal stances (disagreement, displeasure, rejection), closely related to the moulding and preservation of certain intrapersonal mental representations. Such representations are likely to have been structured by practices that are recurrent in the cultural environment of the comprehender, i.e. in the extrapersonal, social realm (Quinn and Strauss 1997: 45). Certain schemata, among which I would include gender schemata, are more likely to have been 'appropriated and internalised'. Persistence of certain stereotypes is, at least in the case of gender stereotypes, the outcome of regularities of interaction between individual schemata and those cultural meanings reinforcing the respective schemata among people who share similar histories (Quinn and Strauss 1997: 82).

Consequently, my research is intended to shed some light on the way my respondents accommodate newly-encountered representations of masculinity, starting from the premise that this process is largely influenced by the cultural factors and the 'media offers' (Schmidt 1992) which had contributed to the internalisation of certain stereotypes of masculinity and to the rejection of others. I would also add that gender schematic representations espoused by the community of young Romanian female students who constitute my informant group need to be analysed in terms of the interface between individual mental representations and publicly available 'instituted models' (Shore 1996: 179) of femininity and masculinity, gender-specific norms, roles and expectations. As Quinn and Strauss (1997) also point out, meanings can be mental while being – explicitly or implicitly – learned from the public sphere. Internalising cultural knowledge in the form of systematic representations or cultural models does not exclude flexibility of adapting newly emerged cultural objects and situations (Quinn and Strauss 1997: 82–84).

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The reasons why I prefer notions such as beliefs, attitudes and societal norms to the use of the term 'ideology' and my disengagement from an ideology-laden line of investigation such as Critical Discourse Analysis will be more fully explained in the following section.

3.4.1. Schematic representation, socially shared knowledge and ideology

In this thesis, I do not intend to use the term 'ideology' since it carries a sense of brain-washing apparatus which urges people to indiscriminatingly espouse creeds and internalise particular patterns of thought and behaviour. Along with Augoustinos, I discard Jost and Banaji's claim (1994) that stereotypes perpetuate existing ideologies because they reflect 'false consciousness'. I fully share Augoustinos and Walker's counter-argument that ideology should not be equated with *false* beliefs or *distorted* knowledge and should not be defined as 'a matrix of falsehoods'. Moreover, admitting the existence of 'false consciousness' would seem to entail the existence of 'true consciousness', which only essentialist beliefs could entertain (Augoustinos 1999: 295–312).

In rejecting the Marxist tradition, which, in Foucault's view (1980) and mine, overrated the role of economic structures in the exertion of power, I argue that, in the contemporary world, power is not simply embodied and exerted by the economic institutions of the capitalist state. Power can pervade all societal layers by means of discursive practices and behavioural habits and rituals which come to be internalised as norms. Subjectivities are moulded by people's (un)aware compliance with such dominant discourses and the mainstream representations they perpetuate (Foucault 1980, Augoustinos 1999: 300). However, there is always, in principle at least, the option to subvert such dominant discourses and to counter the dominant ideologies that underlie them:

> Theories of ideology which treat people as passive and gullible pawns, duped by an array of ideological managers and institutions which serve the interests of the dominant classes, fail to acknowledge and recognize that people do not necessarily accept values uncritically and without conscious deliberation. People may not endorse or reject dominant views, but rather develop complex configurations of thought in which some dominant ideological elements find expression in conjunction with individual and group-based understandings (Augoustinos 1999: 303–304).

While wholly agreeing with Augoustinos's argument, I would add that people can and do develop strategies and utilise social resources (including language) with a view to challenging and undermining dominant representations and discourses. In post-totalitarian Romania (from 1989 up to the present), human agents were, for the first time after half-a century of totalitarian communist regime, confronted with the option of engaging in transformative practices, intended to subvert an uncritical acceptance of mainstream institutionalised views (see section 1.4.).

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It is not within the scope of this thesis to study ideologies as contributors to the dissemination of existing power relations or to societal improvements as suggested by Fairclough's definition:

> [Ideologies are] significations/constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities), which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation or relations of domination (Fairclough 1992: 87).

The focus of my research will not be on the social practices of production, consumption and distribution largely reified by Fairclough's detailed insights into socio-cognitive processes of text understanding (Fairclough 1992: 62-73). Moreover, as far as I am concerned, the term 'ideology' has come to acquire a distorted meaning: during the communist regime in Romania, it used to be considered tantamount to an imposed normative set of pseudo-beliefs and overemphatic statements proffered and inflicted by the communist party in its position of supreme ruling authority. Being apprehensive of the exaggerated role concepts such as 'power' and 'ideology' tend to play in Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) approaches, I also endorse Widdowson's claim that analysts drawing on CDA tend to use texts, whose language supports their own beliefs while deliberately ignoring texts likely to supply evidence to contradictory or even alternative interpretations:

> And to be critical about discourse is to be aware of this; to be aware of the essential instability of language and the necessary indeterminacy of all meaning which must always give rise to a plurality of possible interpretations of text. And this means that to foreclose on any interpretation must be to impose a significance which you are disposed to find. And here, I think, is the central problem of CDA, and the reason why it is so influential while being so obviously defective. It carries conviction because it espouses just causes, and this is disarming, of course: it conditions the reader into acceptance. If you can persuade people by an appeal to moral conscience, you do not *need* good arguments. But such persuasion deflects attention from questions of validity. It thus inhibits intellectual inquiry and ultimately undermines its integrity in the interests of expediency. The work that appears in these books exemplifies a whole range of problems about the analysis and interpretation of text, which it persistently fails to examine. Indeed, the overall impression that is given is that there *are* no problems of any note. In this respect what is distinctive about Critical Discourse Analysis is that it is resolutely uncritical of its own discursive practices (Widdowson 1998: 150).

What Widdowson thus regards as a main flaw of CDA is, paradoxically, its not being 'self-critical'. The lack of explanations in much CDA work as to how producers or consumers of texts are likely to invest their texts with alternative meanings can be seen as constituting a threat to the validity of CDA itself. According to Widdowson, CDA analysts seem to solely rely on their own interpretation, assuming representative status in deciphering and voicing the ideological standpoints of their communities (for a more detailed discussion on the Fairclough – Widdowson controversy see Preoteasa 1999).

As far as my own research is concerned, I refrain from utilising CDA as an analytical tool because I find it unrealistic to engage in 'social struggle' with a view to increasing public awareness and responsibility towards sensitive societal issues. Furthermore, I believe that

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CDA is not likely to provide the most successful insight into a plurality of individual interpretations – such as young Romanian female students' comprehensions and assimilations of hegemonic and alternative masculinities and into the way such plurality may have been shaped by the ceaseless interaction between individual cognitive representations and shared cultural models. Along this line of investigation, I found it more appropriate to draw on approaches that focus more closely on the complementarity between individual cognitive structures and shared cultural representations, since I agree with Quinn and Strauss that schemata are cultural to the extent to which they are 'humanly mediated' (Quinn and Strauss 1997: 7). In their cognitive theory of cultural meaning, Quinn and Strauss (1997) argue that the role of interpretation in assigning meaning is crucial for evincing the cultural dimension of cognitive schemata. In their view, which I fully endorse, meanings arise from the interaction between *intrapersonal* mental structures (schemata, understandings or assumptions) and *extrapersonal* world structures, based on shared cultural experiences and institutionalised models:

> The relative stability of our world and our schemas has the effect that both in a given person and in a group of people who share a way of life, more or less the same meanings arise over and over. Our definition also makes meanings psychological (they are cognitive-emotional responses), but highlights the fact that meanings are the product of current events in the public world interacting with mental structures, which are in turn the product of previous such interactions with the public world (Quinn and Strauss 1997: 6).

Because humans build and activate schemata in the process of making meaning, meanings are both psychological states and social constructions or 'cultural models'. According to d'Andrade's comprehensive definition (1987: 112), "a cultural model is a cognitive schema that is intersubjectively shared by a social group". Cultural models are 'presupposed, taken-for-granted models that are widely shared' (Holland and Quinn 1987: 4). Although they do not exclude alternative models of representing reality, such models contribute to shaping patterns of understanding of the world and of actively interacting with the world according to certain more or less systematically observed intra-communal norms and regulations.

Having said this, I need to admit that one of the limitations of schema theory is its having insufficiently exploited the interconnection between intrapersonal and socially shared knowledge. Starting from Shore's view that: "The human ability to create mental models as ways of dealing with reality has two distinct dimensions: personal and cultural" (1996: 46), I feel entitled to believe that, together with evidence as to accommodation of newly encountered representations of masculinity into existing gender schemata, acknowledged attitudes may be indicative of success or failure on the part of each respondent's reuniting of their personal and cultural identities (Shore 1996: 46, Hoijer 1998: 169–171).

3.4.2. The role of social schemata

Acting as a link between text comprehension and construal and social phenomena, social cognition is more complex than object categorisation as social objects

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are shifty, dynamic and less predictable, given their deep social embeddedness (Augoustinos and Walker 1996: 35). Like object categorisations, social categorisations equally rely on the salience of certain members and marginality of others, on clusters of representative features and fuzziness of category boundaries. Social categorisation is a process largely based on the perception of one's peers as members of social groups rather than as individuals. Social cognition is organised in higher order mental structures which schematise social knowledge and comprise *expectations* and *hypotheses* concerning people, relationships, states of affairs (Fiske and Taylor 1984: 13). Certain cognitive structures are shared to a higher extent within a group and certain social and ideological institutions have contributed to this 'sharedness' (see 4.5. on CofP).

Augoustinos and Walker give the following definition of a social schema:

> A schema is conceptualised as a mental structure which contains general expectations and knowledge of the world. This may include general expectations about people, social roles, events and how to behave in certain situations. Schema theory suggests that we use such mental structures to select and process incoming information from the social environment (Augoustinos and Walker 1996: 32).

As cognitive structures providing systematically stored knowledge of the social worlds, schemata allow for general or generalisable expectations learned through socialisation and inspire humans with some sense of predictability about incoming social happenings and behaviours (Augoustinos and Walker 1996: 33–35).

3.4.2.2. A typology of social schemata

Social schematic categorisation comprises four main types of social schemata: person schemata, self-schemata, role schemata and event schemata (Fiske and Taylor 1984, Culpeper 2000, 2001). I will briefly discuss each of them in the lines to come.

Person schemata. Individuals tend to be categorised in terms of their prevalent personality traits (Cantor and Mischell 1977) and of goals as 'situation-specific intents' (Fiske and Taylor 1984:152). Person schemata facilitate outlining the paths along which certain traits are seen as corresponding to the behaviour of a certain person (Cantor and Mischell 1977, Fiske and Taylor 1984). Personality traits may function as conceptual prototypes that humans employ when processing information about peers. An example from the article '*Men in Trunks*' would be the way in which personality traits make up the conceptual prototypes in the three categories of men described by Wald. For instance, exaggerated body disclosure and narcissistic proclivities are the traits that best define 'Self-obsessed Skimpies'.

In addition, familiarity with the goals pursued by a specific person is likely to bias perception of that person in the direction of goal-consistent information (Fiske and Taylor 1984: 152). To use 'Self-obsessed Skimpies' again as an example, I would say that such a category is defined, among others, in terms of a main goal or pursuit shared by the category members: ceaselessly and obsessively improving their self-image.

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Self-schemata. Self-schemata are cognitive structures by means of which humans conceptualise themselves. They provide "cognitive generalisations about the self, derived from past experience, that organise and guide the processing of self-related information contained in the individual's social experiences" (Markus 1997: 64).

If individuals regard a certain trait or dimension as central or salient for their self-schema, they are said to be 'schematic' along the respective trait. If the respective trait or dimension is marginal to the self-schema, the individual is 'aschematic' with respect to the trait (see Bem's 1983 discussion on gender-schematic versus gender-aschematic individuals in 3.6.1.). Being 'schematic' or 'aschematic' in relation to certain clusters of features is a worthy clue towards achieving self-definition and a sense of identity (Fiske and Taylor 1984: 155).

Self-schemata may be useful to my own research to the extent to which respondents are likely to achieve some sense of identity with a virtual community of female holiday makers willing to assess men on the beach according to their swimsuits.

Role schemata. Role schemata are cognitive structures related to norms and behaviours typically associated with role positions in society. Since they are built around a behavioural core, role schemata are similar to person schemata since both are 'situationally evoked' and 'emotionally activated' (Di Maggio 1997: 12).

Role schemata relate both to 'achieved' roles, i.e. mainly occupational roles acquired through training (e.g. doctor, teacher) and to 'ascribed' roles, i.e. roles individuals have little control over (e.g. roles socially ascribed by virtue of age, sex, race). (on the difference between the innate, the achieved and the ascribed see Bergvall 1999 – section 2.6.). Role schemata could prove significant for my own research as respondents are required to specify the 'achieved' roles of the male personae in the captions (Q 8.4.) as well as to anticipate or evaluate the roles they are 'ascribed' by Wald. Thus, wearers of 'Burt Lancaster' trunks are 'ascribed' the role of seductive males, potential objects of admiration and desire, wearers of skimpy swimsuits are a source of mockery and revulsion, while boxer-wearers play the part of the (collective) character with hidden talents.

Event schemata. Like scripts (see 3.3.2.3.), event schemata involve shared understandings of the typical sequential organisation of events that take place on specific occasions (e.g. birthday parties, political meetings). Event schemata involve goal-setting and plan-making, therefore they cannot be said to completely exclude person- and role-related behavioural elements.

While reading '*Men in Trunks*', respondents may activate several event schema in the light of the goals (e.g. picking up a partner for a summer romance). They may also have activated plans (such as using specific strategies to seduce the eligible partner). Activation of such event schemata occurs once readers conventionally identify with the community of female watchers in search of holiday romance.

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3.4.3. Category-based versus person-based processings of social information

Fiske and Neuberg (1990) suggest that social information processing should be regarded as a continuum, involving *category-based* approaches and individuating *piecemeal approaches* at its poles. Their view is endorsed by (Augoustinos and Walker 1996: 46) and by Culpeper (2001: 83–86), who contend that the prevalent human tendency is to interpret the specific in terms of the general and therefore to simplify life's complexities.

Category-based impressions rely on simplification and generally lack complexity and personalisation. Targets are perceived solely in terms of their belonging to a certain category and asssignation to the respective category satisfies immediate cognitive needs. In my research, the respondents are repeatedly required to provide category-based impressions. Thus, in their answers to Q6 (see App. III) respondents are required to anticipate or speculate on the features possessed by the three categories of men on the sole basis of category denomination. With Q 7.1. (see App. III), once respondents have read the summative paragraph introducing each category, they are required to supply a new set of category-based impressions. Their final category-based impressions may be indicated in their responses to Q 9.3. (see App. III), requiring post-reading impression summarising.

Person-based or *attribute-based* impressions a thorough, detailed, attribute-based scrutiny and assessment of the target, which is to be achieved by the comprehender's piecemeal processing of individual attributes pertaining to the target. As Culpeper points out:

> Category-based and person-based impressions have very different characteristics: categorisation entails simplificationand, as a consequence, a category-based impression loses much of the richness, complexity and personalisation of detail that a person-based impression has (Culpeper 2001: 83).

In my study, person-based impressions are elicited from respondents when asked to supply captions to the photos in the article (Q5 – see App. III). The same kind of impressions are elicited from respondents when they are required to specify salient attributes pertaining to various male personae (Q8.4., see App. III).

Culpeper (2001: 84) argues that category-based processes prevail over person-based processes for reasons related to cognitive economy. He mentions the occurrence of four stages of categorisation along the continuum from category-based to person-based processes:

1. ***initial categorisation*** (generally occurring at a first encounter with the target person). Such a process is likely to happen when a perceiver glances at someone's picture in a poster or magazine cover or when she makes eye contact with a stranger.
2. ***confirmatory categorisation*** (if subsequent information fits initial categorisation). Confirmation or invalidation of initial category-related impressions occurs if one's initial impressions are reinforced by behaviours which are

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congruent with that impression (e.g. noticing a nurse's impeccable cleanness may make a patient qualify her as competent; a skillful procedure she subsequently administers to that patient is likely to confirm the initial impression).

3. ***recategorisation*** (if subsequent information fails to fit initial categorisation, but is categorisable in terms of a new category). Initial impressions are liable to change if the target engages in behaviours incongruent with initial expectations (e.g. one may believe a hairstylist is dexterous because she has an alluring haircut herself, but if her hands tremble while she is handling the scissors, she may be recategorised by her clientele as clumsy, inefficient, even dangerous).
4. ***piecemeal integration*** (if subsequent information fails to fit any existing category). Piecemeal integration is likely to be achieved once a person is no longer assessed in terms of their group identity but in terms of clusters of individual features whose salience varies considerably according to the context of interaction between perceiver and target, as well as to the perceiver's goal and motivation in observing the target (e.g. if one goes out on a date with a dentist, one wants to know more about the dentist's personality traits than about their professional qualifications).

Culpeper (2000, 2001) concurs with Fiske and Neuberg (1990) that, broadly speaking, person impressions are initially schema-consistent or category-based, and regards category-based processing as the 'default option'. Since perceivers either lack the time or the motivation to perform more individuating, person-based strategies, numerous mundane judgements are category-based, hence associated with stereotypes. Respondents are likely to use such schema-consistent information when specifying their evaluative impressions on the three categories of men in terms of the '*appealing*' / '*disgusting*' opposition at various points of textual encounter.

If the target under scrutiny is however ambiguous in some respects or incongruous with expectations, individuals are likely to go beyond category-based processing and embark upon person-based impression formation. Recategorising the target occurs whenever social information supplied by the target defies categorisation or when there is motivation on the part of the perceiver for reassessing the target.

3.5. Stereotypes

The previously described stages of impression formation are smoothly experienced by the cognitively 'busy' comprehender if one resorts to stereotyping:

> There is evidence to suggest that there are two modes of human mental processing: first, conscious attention that takes time and effort but can operate flexibly, systematically and logically; and, second, automatic processing that is fast and relies on practised responses or heuristics but is inflexible. Heuristic thinking may result in a pragmatic solution to many problems but can also result in illusory correlations and illogical and probabilistic reasoning. Stereotypes can be considered as a form of heuristic thinking as they are processed quickly and efficiently and may be activated automatically. However, people

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may not be viewed stereotypically if the perceiver is motivated to pay attention to individuating information such as information that is inconsistent with the activated stereotype (Hinton 2000: 79–80).

Among the various approaches to stereotype definition, formation and acquisition[2], of particular significance for my own investigation are the cognitive approach and the discursive approach, which I shall briefly present in the section to come. Social cognitivists argue that stereotyping arises from our need to simplify reality, therefore their status is very much similar to that of schemata:

> Stereotypes act as schemas, directing mental resources and guiding the encoding and retrieval of information from memory. They merge from a fundamental cognitive need to simplify the social environment by categorizing individuals into groups. Social categorization is primarily based on salient and identifiable features of a person such as age, gender, race and social status. Stereotypes are generalised descriptions of a group and its members emerge inevitably from the categorization process (Augoustinos and Walker 1998: 631).

According to Stangor *et al*, (1996: 8), "group prototypes are mental representations consisting of a collection of associations between group labels (e.g., Italians) and the attributes that presumably characterise the group (e.g., Italians being 'romantic'). Viewing stereotypes as prototypes is efficient because:

1) stereotypes can be measured in according to the degree of association between prototypical traits and category labels
2) predictions can be made as far as stereotype-consistent or stereotype-inconsistent information is likely to be remembered (Hinton 2000: 44–48).

Because they are generative of expectations and hypotheses regarding roles that persons are ascribed in social situations, stereotypes could be equally regarded as *role schemata*.

> One can think of stereotypes as a particular type of role schema that organizes people's expectations about other people who fall into certain social categories (Fiske and Taylor 1991: 119).

Along the same line of thought, Mackie *et al* maintain that a stereotype is a cognitive structure that comprises a perceiver's or a group of perceivers' *knowledge, beliefs and expectations* with respect to another human group (Mackie et al 1996: 42).

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[2] Stereotypes have been approached from several perspectives, among which the following are noteworthy :
- the cognitive approach of contemporary social psychology (Fiske and Taylor 1991),
- the definition of stereotypes as psychologically valid perceptions (Tajfel 1979, Oakes et al 1994),
- the definition of stereotypes as symbolic social representations meant to proliferate within particular political milieus at particular historical moments, (Moscovici 1984),
- the view on stereotypes as ideological representations meant to strengthen established societal arrangements and disseminate dominant world views (Jost and Banaji 1994, Yzerbyt, Rocher and Schadron 1997) and
- the view on stereotypes as discursive constructions (Potter and Wetherell 1987).

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For discourse analysts, stereotypes are not merely neutral mental pictures or 'pictures in the head' (Lippman 1922), since they play an active role in organising social information, accommodating new stimuli within existing mental structures, and revealing the strategies people employ in order to efficiently perform categorisation and stereotyping. Like categorization, stereotyping is 'discursive action', a social deed the perceiver engages in. Stereotypes tend to become pervasive and commonsensical because of their strong explanatory force (Potter and Wetherell 1987: 74–77).

The emphasis laid by discourse analysts on 'doing' stereotypes brings to mind Fiske and Taylor's 'role schemata' (1984: 161), which, unlike 'cold' person- and self-schemata, are more likely to incorporate affective and behavioural information. In my own research (see Chapter 6), incorporation of affective and behavioural information is used to analyse respondents' anticipations in relation to the three categories of men on the beach in '*Men in Trunks*' as well as their justifications of the evaluative judgements passed on members of the three categories.

3.5.1. Mechanisms of stereotype formation

Mackie *et al* (1996: 43) discuss four major categories of stereotype formation mechanisms: cognitive, affective, socio-motivational and cultural.

Cognitive mechanisms of stereotype formation primarily revolve around *categorisation*. In his attempt to explain group behaviour in terms of salient group attributes, Tajfel (1978) argues that stereotypes arise from a process of categorisation meant to simplify and order complex variation. Categorisation favours stereotype formation by the accentuation of intragroup similarity and intergroup difference, which in their turn engender evaluative discrimination regarding such differences.

As a peculiar cognitive mechanism, *self-categorisation* provides a "general analysis of the functioning of categorisation processes in social perception and interaction which speaks to issues of individual identity as much as group phenomena" (Oakes *et al* 1994). Self-categorisation highlights the relationship between individual cognitive processes (mainly categorisation) and ingroup and outgroup norms, attitudes and beliefs.

Another powerful mechanism in stereotype acquisition is '*correspondence bias*' (Mackie *et al* 1996: 50), by means of which perceivers make predictions about behavioural acts as corresponding to group-specific patterns of behaviour and subsequently attribute such behavioural acts to certain groups and not others. As Mills points out, culturally inculcated attributions of certain traits to males and of other traits to females predispose readers to interact with texts from a pre-established, often sexist position:

> The association between certain terms and males/masculinity or females/femininity seems to operate at a stereotypical level, but because they are simply associations rather than explicitly linked within a text, they may set up implicit cues for the reader which will lead to them reading the text in a particular way (Mills 1998: 243).

In my opinion, the kind of associations specified by Mills prompt my respondents to perform '*correspondence bias*' and speculate about attributes representative of each

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category of men when displaying a dispositional inference of the type: "If, as men, they dress so-and-so, they are likely to display manly attributes such as x, y or z ".

'Illusory correlation' (Mackie *et al* 1996: 50) is a mechanism of stereotype formation which implies that perceivers tend to establish relationships between sets of variables that are not actually related and that provide no reason for association. The co-occurrence of unrelated stimuli produces the illusion that they are causally linked or at least correlatable (Mackie *et al* 1996: 50). A blatant instance is correlating teenagers with rebellious and riotous behaviour, and old age with feebleness and despondency (Montepare and Zebrowitz 1998: 101–102).

While cognitively functional because they simplify the complexity of social life, stereotypes equally contain affective information and potential emotional associations (Culpeper 2001: 78), which facilitates congruency of representation of a stereotyped group. Analysing the *affective mechanisms* of stereotype formation contests the traditional view of stereotypes as purely cognitive structures. Since affect is inherently present in the acquisition of stereotypes, attitudes are impossible to separate from the set of beliefs attached to a stereotyped group (Mackie *et al* 1996: 52) (see also section 3.3.7.).

Beyond emotional urges, belonging to a specific community entails among other things learning and at least partly sharing beliefs entertained by that community with respect to its constitutive groups and with groups situated outside it. Stereotypic perceptions of groups are socially inherited or "acquired ready-made and packaged" (Mackie *et al* 1996:60). Stereotypes are learned by way of observation and imitation, as well as by parental imposition and assimilation of mediatised stereotype-embedding representations. Zebrowitz insists on the need to investigate the *cultural mechanisms* of stereotype formation and preservation which implies probing into:

> the origins of the documented beliefs regarding various groups' attitudes. These beliefs – the content of group stereotypes – are certainly fostered by cultural images, but this explanation begs the question of how these images have arisen in the culture in the first place (Zebrowitz 1996: 80).

If earlier work (Lippman 1922, Allport 1954) concentrated on individual stereotypes, regarded as exaggerated, prejudice-laden and prejudice-perpetuating, 'corrupted' mental pictures of social groups, Tajfel (1978) identified a combination of individual and social functions of stereotypes. Recent approaches (Zebrowitz 1996, Stangor *et al* 1996) have resumed Tajfel's distinction while highlighting the need to weigh stereotypes from two complementary perspectives:

> From one perspective stereotypes are represented within the mind of the individual person. From the other perspective, stereotypes are represented as part of the social fabric of a society, shared by the people within that culture (Stangor 1996: 4).

If individual approaches focus on the cognitive systems that enable perceivers to acquire, store and retrieve stereotypes, collective or cultural approaches sustain that the locus of stored knowledge is society itself and that stereotypes are publicly shared pieces of information regarding groups belonging to a specific culture. Consequently, "[c]onsensual stereotypes represent one aspect of the entire collective knowledge of a

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society. This knowledge includes the society's customs, myths, ideas, religions and sciences" (Stangor *et al* 1996: 10). While individual approaches envisage the mental articulation of stereotypes, cultural approaches examine the impact consensual stereotypes have upon beliefs and norms of behaviour:

> When group members willingly (or unwillingly) act in stereotypic ways, their behaviour justifies and perpetuates the stereotype. Second, even if particular group members wish to act in ways inconsistent with the norm, their ability to do so may be constrained by the norm-based expectations of others via behavioral confirmation effects (Stangor *et al* 1996: 14).

Compliance with or defiance of stereotype-related attitudes and norms of behaviour plays a crucial part in the social dissemination of stereotypes, which are culturally inculcated along with other social constructs and practices. My research attempts to reveal respondents' stereotype-rooted attitudes and acceptable norms of behaviour (see the discussion in Chapter 7) such as rejection of scantily-clad men or admiration for fashionably-dressed men. Such attitudes and norms of behaviour may be explainable by the respondents living in a culture where alluring attire, elegance and good taste in garments are highly valued and believed to be faithfully indicative of an individual's personality and social position.

3.5.2. Stereotypes in relation to schema-reinforcement and schema-refreshment

Stangor *et al* (1996) discuss how schematic stereotypical representations of social groups attract attention to relevant items and spare the perceiver the unnecessary processing of useless details. If external clues are likely to bring in stereotype-disconfirming – or, I would say, potentially schema-refreshing – stimuli, perceivers are likely to accommodate them to quite a remarkable extent as they are able to get "quite attuned in their use of situation-appropriate strategies" (Fiske and Neuberg 1990: 62). Regarding storage, stereotype-confirming – or I would say schema-reinforcing – information is more easily assimilated into previous schemata than stereotype-disconfirming – or potentially schema-refreshing – information. Stereotypes foster passing judgements about social groups, initiate responses and predictions structured around stereotype-consistent clues.

As my findings will point out (see Chapter 6 and section 7.1. in Chapter 7), preservation or consolidation of initial expectations as to good-looking males reveals the respondents' tendency to easily assimilate stereotype-confirming rather than stereotype-disconfirming information into their existing schematic representations of masculinity. Stereotype-disconfirming information, such as assessing a man by the 'inner architecture' of his boxers is not easily accommodated into such previous representations (as the

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response analysis reveals, most respondents regard the passage on the inside of boxers as a shocking or at least intriguing text).

3.6. Schema theory and gender

Since my study will investigate the schemata instantiated by Romanian young female readers while comprehending texts on the male body, I find it necessary to discuss Bem's paper on 'gender schema theory' and 'gender-schematic processing' (1983), a seminal text that amply discusses one of the cornerstones of my research: the nesting of gender prototypes within schemata. My study heavily draws on Bem's claim that the development of gender prototypes is rooted in social practices and conventions and that the ceaseless processing of such prototypes via schematic representation consolidates their prototypicality and restrains the opportunity for alternative perceptions.

3.6.1. Bem's Gender schema theory and gender-schemating processing: a critical review

Bem's 1983 article, published in the feminist journal *Signs*, is a broad interdisciplinary approach whose avowed purpose is to familiarise feminist scholars focused on areas others than psychology with *gender schema theory*, a cutting-edge psychological theory on sex-typing which supplements the findings of three other previous theories: psychoanalytic theory, social learning theory and cognitive-developmental theory[3]. Bem criticises the afore-mentioned theories for granting cognitive primacy to sex and for taking for granted the human endeavour to achieve gender-congruence in terms of acquired attributes and behaviours. Underlying the quest for gender congruence is sex-typing, a process defined as "the acquisition of sex-appropriate preferences, skills, personality attributes, behaviours, and self-concepts" (Bem 1983: 598).

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[3] The basic assumptions and the major flaws of the three formerly mentioned theories are presented by Bem as follows :

a) **Psychoanalytic theory** insists on the idea that the basic mechanism of sex-typing is the child's early identification with the same-sex parent. The theory has two main flaws: it inclines to espouse the "anatomy is destiny" tenet of biological foundationalism and it is difficult to test empirically.

b) **Social learning theory** attributes sex-typing to the social practices of communities, which are essentially sex-differentiated, since, in most cultures, sex is the basis of differential socialisation. The view could be criticised for its treating the child as a passive recipient of social forces rather than an agent-comprehender striving to make sense of the surrounding world.

c) **Cognitive-developmental theory** lays exclusive emphasis on the child as a primary agent of their own socialisation, while arguing that sex-typing is unavoidable when allegedly universal principles of cognitive development are applied. Children label themselves in terms of their sex because of their constant need for cognitive consistency, which is achievable by engaging in gender-congruent activities, striving towards the acquisition of gender-congruent attributes and seeking the company of gender-congruent peers.

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Bem elaborates her own theory, called *gender schema theory*, in order to establish a causal link between sex-typing and gender-schematic processing. Gender schema theory defines gender-schematic processing as

> a generalized readiness on the part of the child to encode and to organise information - including information about the self – according to the culture's definitions of maleness and femaleness (Bem 1983: 603).

In Bem's view, sex-typing is inculcated and amplified by the crucial role cultural definitions of maleness and femaleness play in the child's cognitive development. Bem claims that in the individual's endeavour to achieve personal and public meaningfulness in compliance with culturally assimilated gender schemata, the individual cannot help sorting attributes and behaviours into masculine and feminine categories or into categories founded on metaphorical gender. This readiness to process information according to clear-cut sex-linked associations encourages gender-schematic processing, out of which sex typing inevitably derives.

While exploring the causes of the readiness to organise information in terms of gender as a salient category used in conceptualisation, Bem endeavours to answer the question of how and why certain social categories become cognitive schemata. She further argues that a given social category becomes the nucleus of a readily processable cognitive schema depending not on the *content* of the category itself but on the *social context* in which the given category is assessed. There are two instances that Bem highlights as typical for the conversion of a category into a schema:

1) the ideology that dominates a specific social context, which facilitates the association of the respective category with numerous other attributes, behaviours, concepts and categories;
2) the functional salience granted to the respective category by the social context[4].

> [...] gender schema theory proposes that a category will become a schema if: *a)* the social context makes it the nucleus of a large associative network, that is, if the ideology and/or the practices of the culture construct an association between that category and a wide range of other attributes, behaviors, concepts, and categories; and *b)* the social context assigns the category broad functional significance, that is, if a broad array of social institutions, norms and taboos distinguishes between persons, behaviors and attributes on the basis of this category (Bem 1983: 608).

[4] The relationship between schemata and categories is also highlighted by Haslanger's concept of '***classificatory schemes***'. In her analysis of social construction, Haslanger discusses the normative dimension and the reinforcing character of classificatory schemes which "may do more than just map pre-existing groups of individuals; rather, our attributions have the power to both establish and reinforce groupings that may eventually come 'to fit' the classifications. In such cases, classificatory schemes function more like a script than a map" (Haslanger 1996: 86). Classificatory schemes are themselves socially constructed, as their use is not determined by some intrinsic objective features of the objects classified but by social factors the classifier has been exposed to.)

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Consequently, gender owes its cognitive primacy over a number of other available social categories to culture. Culture teaches the child that both gender-related associations and the male-female dichotomy are relevant cognitive instruments. Bem suggests that gender-schematic behaviour is learned and therefore can be avoided by raising children in a gender-aschematic spirit. Bem suggests several basic strategies for the inculcation of gender-aschematic processing into children's cognitive representations:

1) biological sex differences should be learned irrespective of their cultural associations, which are to be postponed for a later stage in the child's development;
2) parents should provide alternative or 'subversive' schemata' in order to enable their children to correctly decode and critically interpret the gender-linked associations and prototypical representations that communities provide them with (Bem 1983: 613–615)
3) children need be provided with a sexism schema in the form of "a coherent and organised understanding of the historical roots and the contemporaneous consequences of sex discrimination" (Bem 1983: 615) so that they should feel empowered to oppose sex-typing and any gender-related perceptual constraints.

3.6.1.1. Some critical remarks on Bem's gender schema theory

Given the presumed feminist readership of *Signs*, Bem assumes her readers to be fully sympathetic with her view on gender schemata as distortive instruments of cognition. This may be the reason why she never explicitly labels them as morally and cognitively detrimental yet consistently assumes that the reader considers them so:

> The gender schema becomes a prescriptive standard or guide, and self-esteem becomes its hostage. Here, then, enters an internalised motivational factor that prompts an individual to regulate his or her behaviour so that it conforms to cultural definitions of femaleness and maleness. Thus do cultural myths become self-fulfilling prophecies, and thus, according to gender schema theory, do we arrive at the phenomenon known as sex typing (Bem 1983: 604–605).

There is a streak of biological reductionism in Bem's article which ends in her vehement reassertion that the categories 'male' and 'female' are to be exclusively defined biologically and physiologically, more precisely in terms of anatomic differences between genitalia[5]: "In short, human behaviors and personality attributes should no longer be linked with gender, and society should stop projecting gender into situations irrelevant to

[5] That biological categories are themselves culturally constructed is a thesis sustained by Ludmilla Jordanova, who, in her fully-documented analysis of the biomedical discourses in the 18th and 19th centuries, emphasises the interconnectedness of biology and its own cultural construction: "Through habit and custom, physiological changes took place which had been socially induced, with the result that each human body was a tangled composite of nature and culture" (Jordanova 1989: 26).

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genitalia" (Bem 1983: 616). Without warning the reader against the limits of generalising personal experience, Bem claims that gender-centred categorisations distort human conceptualisation yet provides no rationale for suppressing gender as an epistemological instrument. It is surprising, at least to me, to find out that Bem omits to underline that gender-based differences are not harmful in themselves but potentially harmful if accompanied by hierarchical assessments (see anti-essentialist views in 2.2.)[6].

Later on, in '*Defending <The Lenses of Gender>*' (1994), Bem acknowledges her oversimplifications, some misplaced emphases and the utopian nature of some of her educational suggestions. She also emphasises that gender schema theory opposes the hierarchy-generating dichotomies specific of the Enlightenment thought while fruitfully perpetuating the romantic tradition refuting dichotomisation (Bem 1994: 251–252).

Despite its utopian claims and the danger of overgeneralisation, Bem's 1983 paper is a thought-provoking application of schema theory to gender role assignment which fulfils the uneasy task of explaining gender-schematic processing and the way it mediates sex-typing. It equally uproots the causes of gender-schematic processing and seeks to pin down the factors that facilitate the transformation of social categories into cognitive schemata.

3.6.1.2. Gender-schematic processing and 'the lenses of gender'

In 1993, Bem expanded her initial thesis on gender schema theory by proposing a thorough investigation of three kinds of '*lenses of gender*', which foster a gender-schematic conceptualisation of the world and obstruct Western thought from achieving a gender-aschematic view. These lenses of gender are:

1) *gender polarisation*, which superimposes the male/female dichotomy on all aspects of human life, with alarming detriment brought to sexual experience and the conceptualisation of sexual desire.
2) *androcentrism*, which regards males and male experience as the norm, pitting them against females and female experience, regarded as the deviation from the norm.
3) *biological essentialism*, which legitimises the previously mentioned lenses by considering them natural consequences of the intrinsic biological differences between women and men (Bem 1993).

Were such lenses removed, Bem advocates that gender binarism and compulsory heterosexuality should no longer dictate normative socialisation: dress styles, ways of

[6] If imposed hierarchisation does not interfere in the cognitive process, Bem's project of gender-aschematic education bears an alarmingly close resemblance to the forced homogenisation of thought practised by communist regimes (e.g. Firestone's 1979 'cybernetic communism', an aberrant project sustaining the neutralization of all sexed individuals). Grosz (1994) and Gatens (1996) strongly disapprove of the simplistic suggestion repeatedly set forth by degendering feminists as to the elaboration of a programme of re-education meant to achieve homogenisation of humankind via the neutralisation of the sexed bodies within the so-called programmes of equalization.

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expressing emotions, sexual desire and social roles. 'Turning the volume down' when it comes to the revelance of sex in our social life (Bem 1993: 196), concepts such as femininity, masculinity, androgyny, heterosexuality or homosexuality would no longer belie our cultural consciousness, which would result in maintaining a cultural environment free of androcentrism, essentialism and normative hegemonic patterns of gendered behaviour (Bem 1995: 329–330).

3.7. Concluding remarks

The present chapter has provided both a discussion and an exemplification of certain theoretical cornerstones which are crucial for my data analysis and interpretation. The main variants of the prototype theory and schema theory have been presented in sections 3.2. and 3.3. Exemplifications from the text '*Men in Trunks*', selected for both the pilot study and the main study, have been supplied. Section 3.4. has dealt with social schemata, with special focus on the relationship between schemata and attitudes (3.3.7.). Typologies of social schemata, as well as the role played by attitudes in the acquisition and dissemination of social schemata and in impression formation have been illustrated with examples from my own study. Moreover, I have endeavoured to underline the relevance of the concepts for the clarification of my empirical and methodological research questions.

Since gender is a fundamental dimension in my investigation of young Romanian female students' schemata of masculinity, section 3.6. has offered a critical review of Bem's 1983 gender schema theory, followed by a brief presentation of the 'lenses of gender' Bem analysed ten years later. This sub-section has been intended to complete the theoretical framework on the socio-cultural construction of gender and implicitly of masculinity supplied in Chapter 2. Having discussed the theoretical landmarks of my investigation, in Chapter 4, I will now move on to providing a genre description of women' magazines, an analysis of the text selected for my study in terms of prototype and schema theories, followed by a presentation of the participants in the study as a 'community of practice'.

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GENRE CONSIDERATIONS, TEXT SELECTION AND ANALYSIS, RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4.0. Introduction

The first part of the present chapter will provide a review of literature on women's magazines as a genre which many researchers (McRobbie 1982/1991, Talbot 1992, 1995, McLoughlin 2000) regard as substantially contributing to the construction and dissemination of gender stereotypes. I will point out several reasons why the text I selected for both the Pilot and the Main studies, '*Men in Trunks*' by Deborah Wald can be regarded as potentially schema-refreshing for the participants in my study (4.3.).

Section 4.4. provides my own detailed analysis of the text '*Men in Trunks*' in terms of prototype theory as well as in terms of social schemata. Special emphasis will be laid on cultural associations performed within masculinity schemata which are likely to be expectation-challenging, therefore schema-refreshing (4.4.5). The analysis facilitates making predictions about the possible effects of the text upon my respondents, which will lead to a discussion of the relevance of this analysis for the elucidation of my research questions (4.5.).

Finally, in order to accurately describe the participants in my study, I provide a presentation of young Romanian female undergraduates of English in the light of a community-of-practice approach (hereafter CofP) (4.6.). While proposing a classification of the student body, I will underline the importance of such a local survey to the scope of CofP theory (4.6.3.).

4.1. Mediatising gender stereotypes

There is a substantial body of research regarding the role of the media in promoting and perpetuating stereotypical images of masculinity and femininity and in restating, if not reinforcing, gender-role expectations. Walkerdine (1990) states that the gender-specific practices of heterosexual romance and the constant waiting for 'the prince to come' as presented in short stories targeted at adolescent females establish clear-cut boundaries for 'good' and 'bad' femininities and masculinities (Walkerdine 1990: 87–103). In her analysis of fictional stories in seven women's magazines, Peirce (1997) amply discusses and exemplifies the stereotypical roles, attributes and occupations of the protagonists:

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> Gender-role expectations are the behaviours, attitudes, emotions and personality traits deemed appropriate for each sex and depend on a socially constructed reality. What is female and what is male is transmitted to individuals by various societal forces, according to this perspective. These forces include family, school, media, church, and peers (Peirce 1997: 581).

The social construction and dissemination of expectations related to gender roles underlies Peirce's analysis of stereotypes of femininity and masculinity. Such gender-role expectations and stereotypical images of masculinity and femininity are likely to be easily accommodated by media consumers if congruence among media representations is achieved. (Peirce 1997)[1]. The higher this congruence, the speedier the accommodation of gender stereotypes. Peirce's discussion of counter-stereotypes and their potential to foster subversive readings is more fully dealt with in section 4.2.3. Nevertheless, the reader may choose between 'affiliation' to some 'dominant reading' (Mills 1995: 61) of a given text or engagement in 'subversive' reading, anticipating predictability of stereotypes and showing readiness to deconstruct such stereotypes. Readers are not passive recipients of pre-established gender expectations and of stereotypical gender images, but are able to 'read against the grain' and constitute themselves as 'resisting readers' (Mills 1995: 73–75).

As illustrated by Douglas in her study of the shaping of femininity by the post-war American media (1994) or by Kang in her Goffmanian analysis of images of femininity in Japanese adverts (1997), congruence among media representations augments the degree to which symbolic meanings are shared, thus speeding the potential dissemination of accepted/able gender-specific behavioural patterns. The maintenance and strengthening of gender stereotypes by way of reading teenage and women's magazines is dealt with in Hudson's analysis of adolescence and femininity (Hudson 1984). Partly as a consequence of teenage magazines reinforcing gender stereotypes, "attributes of femininity/ masculinity are generally seen as dichotomised, either/or conceptions" (Hudson 1984: 37–38). For instance, in Western cultural environments, stereotypical males are envisaged as prevalently independent, adventurous, self-confident, ambitious, while stereotypical females are mainly seen as dependent, lacking ambition and self-confidence, yet tactful, gentle, caring, able to express their feelings.

4.2. Young women's magazines as multi-modal texts: a review of recent literature

In the sections to come, I will provide a genre description of magazines targeted at a female readership in terms of the relation intended to be established between

[1] Peirce explains preference for stereotypical gender portrayals and behaviours in terms of two theories: Klapper's (1960) 'Reinforcement theory', according to which the media may not change what people think or do but they do have the power to strengthen existing thoughts and actions (Peirce 1997: 591) and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's 'Spiral of Silence Theory' (1992: 252 in Peirce 1997: 592-3), which claims that the media are powerful owing to three main characteristics: cumulation, ubiquity and consonance. In other words, when the media present a unified picture of an event/person, people tend to look at that event/person the same way the media do.

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writer/text producer and reader, as well as in terms of the major characteristics which seminal studies (McRobbie 1982/1991) and recent investigations (Talbot 1992, 1995, Hayashi 1997, Hermes 1995, Duffy and Gotcher 1996) assign to such magazines: normativity, prescriptiveness, fantasy and empathy. I will also deal with the centrality of heterosexuality in relation to these genre characteristics.

4.2.1. Women's magazines: a combination of authority and sorority

Like most feminist scholars in the early 1980s, McRobbie is concerned with the absence of femininity as an object of study in male-dominated academic work. By urging feminists to engage in both intellectual and political work, while recognising both the value and the limitations of such an enterprise, McRobbie grounds the study of adolescent female culture by investigating the consumption of teenage magazines as a form of teenage socialisation. McRobbie wants to "combine a clear commitment to the analysis of girls' culture with a direct engagement with youth culture as it is constructed in sociological and cultural studies" (1991: 17). Undeniably, McRobbie's "*Jackie*: Romantic Individualism and the Teenage Girl" prompted researchers in children's and adolescents' literature to engage with cultural texts more critically by intensifying and diversifying researches into the reception of such texts by their consumers. The way in which McRobbie analyses various codes of teen magazines and suggests possible results of those codes upon readers[2] has encouraged me as a researcher to incorporate a greater variety of perspectives and interpretive strategies in relation to the comprehension of one text.

The impact women's magazines are likely to have upon the behaviours, world views, and self image of their readers has been described as alarming to the point of being threatening by McRobbie, who regards magazines as powerful brain-washers, devised so as to create a 'false totality' and who vehemently claims that

> *Jackie* addresses 'girls' as a monolithic grouping, as do all other women's magazines, serves to obscure differences, of class for example, between women. Instead it asserts a sameness, a kind of *false* sisterhood, which assumes a common definition of womanhood or girlhood (McRobbie 1991: 265) (author's italics).

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[2] McRobbie discusses four codes (i.e. arrangements of visual and narrative signs) which prevail in teenage magazines such as Jackie:

1. the code of romance
2. the code of personal/domestic life
3. the code of fashion and beauty
4. the code of pop music.

With the exception of the code of pop music, meant to promote 'resistant' counterstream values, the codes of romance, personal life and fashion rely upon the need to find a boy and display him as a romantic (not a sexual) object or simply an object of contemplation (the case of pop idols). All three codes revolve around the feeling of anxiety arising from the prospect of being virtually dispossessed of the boy of one's dreams by a more knowledgeable girl, as well as that of failing to counter such anxiety by measuring up to specific beauty, fashion and behaviour standards under the expert guidance of the editors.

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Because female readers are addressed *en masse*, as a homogeneous monolithic group meant to share interests that narrow down to the field of romance, makeup and fashion, they may arguably be successfully manipulated by editors into assimilating "an ideological bloc of mammoth proportions, one which *imprisons* them in a claustrophobic world of jealousy and competitiveness, the most unsisterly of emotions, to say the least" (McRobbie 1991: 265, author's italics).

Along McRobbie's line of argument, Talbot maintains that the urge for self-fashioning through the adoption of male-enticing behavioural habits, enticing clothes and flaw-erasing cosmetics is tailored not for the actual reader but for an ideal implied reader (Talbot 1992: 146). As Ballaster *et al.* (1991) claim, the implied reader "does not coincide with any embodied social person" but rather designates a depersonalised receiver and consumer of a matrix of intersected texts, located in a world of intertextuality (Ballaster et al 1991: 27–28). Such intertextuality is, to my mind, an effective means of reinforcing ongoing media messages and enhancing congruence among representations promoted by such messages.

Coming back to Talbot's view, such an implied reader is constructed as a member of an imaginary community, "a bogus social group" where members are bound by a "surrogate sisterhood" (Talbot 1995: 147). Talbot advocates that under the guise of a close sorority where dialogues mimicking 'best buddy' gossip are initiated, such bogus communities foster unsisterly urges such as competing for men by strictly observing self-maintenance instructions and striving to cope with imposed standards of beauty. In congruence with Talbot's argument, Hayashi (1997) emphasises that writers for women's magazines concomitantly use two contrasting discursive strategies:

- to promote an *asymmetrical, hierarchical relationship*, by means of which "magazine writers identify themselves with their role as helpers, and readers identify with their position as being helped"
- to promote a *symmetrical relationship*, established by a conversational style meant to engage the reader in a friendly interaction with the writer (Hayashi 1997: 361).

This co-occurrence of the asymmetrical and symmetrical relationships discloses two types of social meanings in women's magazines: *hierarchy* and *solidarity*. Hierarchy implies the writer's constructing imaginary identities and establishing subject positions for her readers, who thus become discursively manipulated/able by the writers (Talbot 1992: 175; Hayashi 1997: 363). Despite the establishment of such hierarchical relationships, writers camouflage their position of authoritarian and patronising personae in the guise of friendly conversation, meant to convey solidarity with the reader by personalising messages.

McLoughlin regards the informality between writer (whom she would rather call 'text producer') and reader as a discursive device meant to concomitantly minimise the social distance between the two and empower the text producer 'to mould a like-minded reader' (McLoughlin 2000: 73). Such emphasis on informality and a non-serious attitude toward subject matter is also identified by Hermes when she describes the 'putdownability' and relaxation-inducing properties of women's magazines (Hermes 1995: 31–35).

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Directly addressing the reader and using an informal, laid-back register create intimacy and identification between reader and writer, thus attempting to establish a 'sisterly' confidentiality-based bond (Leman 1980: 63–64). Such intimacy of address brings about "the cosy invocation of a known commonality between 'we women'" (Ballaster *et al.* 1991) and such commonality may well inspire a feeling of belonging to an 'empathy network' (Hayashi 1997: 365–367). Other authors, such as Duffy and Gotcher regard the writer's address to the reader as 'a mockery to supportive conversation' (Duffy and Gotcher 1996: 43) meant to deviously attract readers into communities of like-minded people only to exploit their need for belonging.

4.2.2. Empathy and fantasy

If Hayashi claims that empathy is achieved by engaging the reader in a conversation with the writer, Duffy and Gotcher (1996) regard readers of women's magazines as self-acknowledged members of certain rhetorical communities, cohering around discourses that urge readers into sharing certain 'fantasy themes' and identifying with certain behaviours and lifestyles. As several scholars have pointed out (Winship 1987, Christian-Smith 1990), fantasy, especially when related to love and sexuality as in popular fiction, can make a major contribution to the shaping of the social and emotional self. While likely to encourage reflection on everyday life issues, fantasy may well offer the reader alternatives to existing roles and pre-established patterns of behaviour[3].

Once the readers can indulge in fantasising about alternative roles and lifestyles, they are inspired with a sense of ingroup belonging (Duffy and Gotcher 1996: 42). As a result of women relishing such fantasy themes, most of which revolve around the pursuit of eligible males, an illusory friendship is created between writer and reader, which Duffy and Gotcher, quite bluntly, liken to the 'ersatz affection of a salesperson whose devotion is fueled only by the desire to sell' (Duffy and Gotcher 1996: 43). In Duffy and Gotcher's view, providing readers with allegedly adequate knowledge about exerting feminine attraction over desirable males inspires them with a false feeling of empowerment. Unlike Talbot (1995), Hayashi (1997) or Duffy and Gotcher (1996), Hermes regards "the repertoire of practical knowledge" as enabling readers to acquire, at least temporarily, a sense of empowerment and self-mastery in the face of actual or predictable hardships (Hermes 1995: 31–41).

On the other hand, Hermes's notion of 'connected knowing' is tantamount to Hayashi's 'empathy network' as well as to Duffy and Gotcher's 'sense of belonging'. All terms designate the effect of sharing and confessing about life experiences, an effect which involves achieving empathetic understanding of/with the reader. Unlike Duffy and Gotcher, Hermes does not regard connected knowledge as a way of attracting non-discriminating readers to a community based on surrogate affective bonds, but as an

[3] In her analysis of Harlequin romance stories, Modleski (1982) equally underlines the crucial part played by fantasy, which, together with the pursuit of romantic pleasure conceals anxiety and validates the desire for revenge. Fantasy and pleasure reconcile gothic fiction with feminine hysteria and turn women into addictive consumers of popular fiction. Such an addition involves, in Modleski's view, a mixture of pleasure and pain.

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incentive meant to enhance the readers' capacity for empathy (Hermes 1995: 44–45). By resorting to the repertoire of connected knowing and to that of practical knowledge, Hermes argues, readers of women's magazines tend to regard texts published in magazines mainly targeted at a female readership "as a stock of visions rather than an absolute authority" (Hermes 1995: 44). In most cases, readers are likely to be aware that the empowerment conferred to them by such readings is only temporary:

> Both the repertoire of practical knowledge and the repertoire of connected knowing may help readers to gain (an imaginary and temporary) sense of identity and confidence, of being in control or feeling at peace with life, which lasts while they are reading and dissipates quickly when the magazine is put aside (Hermes 1995: 48)[4].

I tend to agree with Hermes' viewing the process of reading women's magazines as "a quest for understanding" (Hermes 1995: 44), likely to enable readers to gain better control over their lives, to feel confident about doing 'the right thing', to feel less insecure and frightened about unexpected events that might shatter the complacent routine of their everyday lives. This view is also endorsed by Bucholtz who argues that women are not participants 'in their own oppression' and they "do not unthinkably consume cultural forms but construct their own meanings and identities in relation to such forms" for confronting conflicting representations with a selective mind (Bucholtz 1999: 349–350). I would rather consider readers discriminating, able to discern which texts may serve their personal short-term purposes – among which entertainment ranks first – and which texts may potentially inveigle the allegedly gullible readers into experiencing a false sense of belonging to a community of like-minded people.

4.2.3. Normative versus self-improvement messages: the contradictory construction of the reader

In her analysis of *Jackie* as the prototypical teenage magazine, McRobbie argues that the world of young female readers centres round the quest of romance, the fierce competition against other girls such a quest entails, and the imperative of self-beautification required by eligibility for romantic relations:

> Boys and men are, then, not sex objects, but romantic objects. The code of romance neatly displays that of sexuality which hovers somewhere in the background appearing fleetingly in the guise of passion, or the 'clinch'. Romance is about the public and *social* effects of and implications of 'love' relationships (McRobbie 1991: 276).

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[4] Along the same line of thought, Radner (1995) argues that, paradoxically, women's magazines catalyse resistance to patriarchal norms more powerfully than academic feminism since they provide a pedagogical model of behaviour and practice :
I would like to suggest that as feminists we might learn from the women's magazine as a pedagogical model, one that meanders yet remains contained, that offers information within a heteroglossia of narratives rather than from a univocal position, that accumulates rather than replaces, that permits contradiction and fragmentation, that offers choice rather than conversion as its message (Radner 1990: 135).

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Continuing McRobbie's discussion of romance, Talbot emphasises that beautification for manhunting purposes to turn out fruitful implies the construction of femininity as a man-devised, heterosexuality-based commodity. Talbot regards the editors' distributing 'useful feminine knowledge' about man-enticing strategies (Talbot 1992: 29) as a manipulative, personality-effacing tool, meant to homogenise readers, inspire them with a feeling of inadequacy when it comes to pre-established standards of femininity and isolate them from non-readers: "Within this female community, which appears to *ghettoize* women, magazines are targeted at different socioeconomic groups" (Talbot 1995: 147, my emphasis) (for instance *Jackie* is targeted exclusively at a young, working class readership). In Talbot's view, "feminine identity is achieved in consumption and in relationships with men" (Talbot 1995: 162). Fortunately, Talbot admits, not all actual readers uncritically identify with the implied reader, and some choose to distance themselves from such a reader (Talbot 1995: 146).

Other researchers have equally underlined how the primacy of beauty and of compulsive heterosexuality as promoted by women's magazines turns into an imperative for the female reader to look attractive, find a boyfriend, and ultimately take care of home and hearth. Peirce (1990) and McLoughlin (2000) argue that because of their 'media dependency', stereotypical views held by women readers, especially by young girls and especially in relation to the mandatory nature of heterosexuality, are to be partially attributed to messages in magazines.

In the view of researchers such as Durham (1998), articles in women's magazines are meant to channel women's sexuality in socially prescribed directions. Women's magazines exercise a regulatory, prescriptive function in the governance of women's behaviour since "they are intended, quite clearly, to guide readers in making decisions about their personal relationships" (Durham 1998: 19).

Despite their proliferation in women's magazines, seemingly emancipatory themes (becoming a successful career woman, acquiring financial independence) are nonetheless underlain by the assumption that the road to happiness is to attract males – and eventually 'get' Mr. Right – via physical self-embellishment (see also Christian-Smith 1990: 43–55 on 'the code of beautification' and McCracken 1993: 135–172 on the utopian and transgressive nature of fashion). Along the same line of argument, Duffy and Gotcher consider that despite the emancipatory lure of most articles, women's magazines tend to constrain gender roles within traditional limitations:

> Women are taught that their access to power is through the purchase of clothing, cosmetics, or by implementing manipulative strategies. The fantasy types of power through knowledge and costuming relentlessly reinforce this rhetorical vision which keeps women in their traditional economic place, suggesting that they have the capacities only to attract males, not to accomplish objectives based on independent action (Duffy and Gotcher 1996: 45).

As Duffy and Gotcher see it, articles prompting readers into acquiring self-confidence, independence and powerful social status are a veiled urge to obey the rules and regulations imposed by the alleged need to purchase adequate garments and cosmetics, as well as to implement the most efficient seduction strategies. Duffy and Gotcher reinforce Ferguson's claim (1983) that such texts provide a paradoxical construction of femininity: the reader is prompted to be self-confident and self-reliant

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while being constantly reminded of "the primacy and constancy of Man as goal" (Ferguson 1983: 44). The overarching imperative of finding a man (whom they eventually aspire 'to have and to hold' – see Hollway 1984) leads to the promotion of an aggressive type of heterosexual identity, since glossy magazines such as *Cosmo* are designed to 'tutor women in aggressive strategies for voracious sexual appetites', though still abiding by acknowledged male criteria for female desirability (Durham 1998: 26). Ballaster *et al* (1991: 9) insist on the tension between acknowledging men as important and desirable and viewing them as the source of anxiety and disparagement (from their being lazy or untidy to their being physically aggressive and misogynist).

Importantly, longitudinal studies on the content of teen magazines and their consequences for the socialization of teenage girls, demonstrate that traditional messages (centred on appearance, household and romantic relationships) tend to decrease in favour of feminist messages (i.e. messages advocating independence and self-confidence inspired by the proven ability to take care of oneself without relying on a man for fulfillment) whenever feminist political events polarise public attention. (e.g. in the 70s and 90s). (Pierce 1990, Schlenker *et al* 1998)[5].

If permanent exposure to stereotypes reinforces compliance with traditional patterns of gendered behaviour, counterstereotypical gender representations undermine traditional assumptions about gender-specific traits and societal roles[6]: "Counterstereotypical media content can also be used to increase women's self-confidence and independent judgment" (Peirce 1993: 66). Pierce believes, rightly in my view, that providing counterstereotypes can enable readers to renounce their traditional pursuits and discard stereotyped occupations.

4.3. *'Men in Trunks'*: (non)-observance of genre requirements and the schema-refreshing potential of the text

In this section I will point out why I find the text selected for my study, *'Men in Trunks'* by Deborah Wald (see Appendix I) atypical as to its abiding by genre conventions. I will explain why Wald's describing men as sexual objects and her promoting counter-stereotypes of masculinity makes the text promising in point of view of its schema-refreshment potential.

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[5] In their complex analysis of the content of 17 women's magazines, Schlenker and collaborators classified messages into six categories, the first three designating ' traditional' messages, and the last three 'feminist' messages :

1. appearance
2. male-female relations (advice columns, hunk of the month)
3. home
4. self-development
5. career development
6. political/world issues.

[6] An example of counterstereotypical femininity is provided by Douglas in her discussion of Jackie Kennedy (see Douglas 1990: 40–41).

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4.3.1. The reader-writer symmetrical relation: no deploring of 'false sorority'

As I see it, any magazine reader, whether British or Romanian, regular or occasional, needs to temporarily adopt the convention that the article is not tailored for the actual reader but for the 'implied ideal reader' (Talbot 1995: 146, Ballaster *et al* 1991). To my mind, most readers hardly expect to integrate into the 'bogus community' of 'surrogate sisterhood' (Talbot 1995: 147). Neither is it likely that they might be so gullible as to regard the writer as the epitome of debonair omniscience, being rather prepared to take her advice with a large grain of salt. Like any reasonable readers, young Romanian students of English are likely to engage in the short-term convention defined by McLoughlin as follows: "the text producer speaks with the voice of experience, she has the knowledge for which the reader is thought to be in need" (McLoughlin 2000: 229).

The readers accordingly *pretend* to see the writer as the one who 'knows all the ropes' about picking up the right guy for the perfect holiday romance and to suspend skepticism by feigning to pay full heed to her guidance while reading the article. Being knowledgeable enough about genre conventions, readers in the late 1990s rather agree to temporarily establish a 'symmetrical relationship' (Hayashi 1997: 361) with Wald and simulate enjoying commonality of purpose (Ballaster *et al* 1991). I do not envisage such mutual pretence as either display of hypocrisy or consent to being manipulated, but rather as a camouflaged bargain struck between writer/text producer and readers.

4.3.2. Pre-packaged fantasy

'*Men in Trunks*' does exploit a recurring fantasy (getting Mr. Right), thus confirming McLoughlin's critique of the monogamous heterosexual assumptions underlying all romance- and sex-related articles in young women's magazines:

> A moral theme which permeates texts is that heterosexuality is the order of the day. It is taken as axiomatic that the reader's partner is male and preferably in a monogamous relationship [...]. Young women are counselled that sex should ideally take place within a loving relationship (McLoughlin 2000: 239).

Nevertheless, '*Men in Trunks*' is quite likely to be considered a parody of such fantasy-based discourses on the pursuit of the ideal male. Unlike Talbot (1992, 1995), Durham (1998) and Duffy and Gotcher (1996), I believe that a subversive reader may adopt a sceptical stance towards such articles and may consequently regard them as simply 'a mockery to supportive conversation' (Duffy and Gotcher 1996: 43): unhelpful, yet not disempowering[7]. As McLoughlin points out:

[7] I tend to concur with Moss (1989: 54) as to female readers not consenting to be 'passive helpless victims' of dominant readings and consequently negotiating meanings everytime they engage in text reading:

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> We all bring our own particular baggage to an interpretation of a text, which may be influenced by our age, sex, class, ethnicity and race. In analysing texts the notion that there is one valid and unitary meaning of a text ought to be critiqued. The unequal relationship between the text producer and the reader has been highlighted but it must be remembered that the reader is the one who is ultimately in control since she can stop reading at any time and can switch loyalty from one magazine to another at whim (McLoughlin 2000: 79).

Concomitantly, such 'resistant readers' are unlikely to discard such articles and may nevertheless feel tempted to read them if only for their 'putdownability' and relaxation-inducing effect (Hermes 1995: 31–41). As a reader of such magazines and an observer of other female readers – most of whom are sceptical and subversive – I find it hard to believe that the average single heterosexual female Romanian reader finds texts about the successful exertion of female charm upon desirable men debasing and manipulative, especially when written in an exacerbated parodical tonality.

4.3.3. Men as sex objects

'Men in Trunks' does not comply with McRobbie's claim that in women's magazines, men are represented as romantic objects and never as sex objects (McRobbie 1991: 276). Neither does it fit McLoughlin's description of most love and sex articles in young women's magazines as frank and explicit urges to engage in 'safe' and 'healthy' heterosexual practices (McLoughlin 2000: 230–233). Wald does represent men as sex objects and enjoys imparting this view to her potential readers, yet there is no explicit encouragement of their discarding romance and practising sex during their holiday.

To my mind, a text like '*Men in Trunks*' is not so much intended to empower the reader by arming her with handy tips for choosing Mr. Right, but to provide a parodic replica of the 'get-your-guy' discourses imbuing popular romance discourses such as Mills & Boon love stories. Typically, in such popular romance texts, "women are presented in perpetual, self-defeating struggles for self-control in their attempts to suppress the irresistible attraction of the forceful male" (Talbot 1997: 107). A parodic text '*Men in Trunks*' is likely to provide its readers with subversive positions against traditional romance discourses and to enhance empathy (Hayashi 1997) owing to the humorous effect such a parodical subversive position is highly likely to arouse. Such an empathetic humorous reaction – which I regard as highly predictable – could smoothly annihilate the effect of any homogenising or even 'ghettoizing' (Talbot 1995:147) strategies allegedly enacted by the writer upon the reader. In addition, '*Men in Trunks*' is subtle enough to count as a parody of the earnest yet imperative 'sex special' columns (McLoughlin 2001).

If meaning has to be re-established in any one context, I do not consider that the rehearsal of a particular form brings with it for the writer a firm grasp or the outright acceptance of a particular set of values. Writing alone does not shape what we think. We bring what we know to the text and try to push it into shape (Moss 1989: 105).

Moss' position is discussed by Swann (1994: 183–185) as a 'pro-female' standpoint which rejects the negative evaluation of girls' language and the victimisation of female readers as practised by earlier anti-sexist initiatives.

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4.3.4. Counter-stereotypes of masculinity

In my opinion, Deborah Wald's article does not achieve congruence with the prevalent gender-role expectations and stereotypical representations of masculinity that women's magazines promote and that, inevitably, media consumers tend to accommodate (Pierce 1997). Although the article undeniably belongs to the 'get-your-man' category of discourses (Durham 1998), its topical focus is getting the female reader familiar with the criteria of eligibility as applied to male holiday-makers rather than instructing her on the tactics of conquering male sunbathers. Although dividing men into the categories of eligible or non-eligible is not unexpected, the criteria suggested by the writer are non-conventional and expectation-shattering, hence potentially schema-refreshing when it comes to representations of masculinity.

I find it hard to characterise '*Men in Trunks*' as a normative-prescriptive text, since, far from obeying the pattern of behaviour-imposing and norm-regulating discourses (Durham 1998: 19), it rather *parodies* such discourses. Moreover, the article does not exploit any code of female beautification (Christian-Smith 1990, McCracken 1993). First, it describes some 'counterstereotypes' of masculinity, more specifically some flawed embodiments of masculinity (specially 'Self-obsessed Skimpies' and 'Bashful Boxers') which prompt the reader into dismantling the 'highly eroticised and utterly irresistible' images of hegemonic masculinity permeating traditional romance (Talbot 1997: 107). If, when reading traditional romance, women willingly engage in an eroticised struggle for the conquest of the towering man (Talbot 1997: 118–119), when browsing Wald's article, they are likely to accommodate caricatures of such representations.

The promotion of such counterstereotypical images of masculinity may prove as beneficial as that of counterstereotypes of femininity advocated by Pierce with a view to augmenting the force of feminist self-fulfilment messages (Pierce 1993: 66). Accommodating such counterstereotypical, even caricature-like representations of masculinity should require flexibility and open-mindedness on the part of Romanian readers. While finding one's man is not rejected as a primary goal in the article, I see no construction of contradictory femininity (Ferguson 1983: 44, Durham 1993: 26). On the contrary, the promotion of a seductive type of femininity is itself ironical, therefore counterstereotypical, especially when Wald provides a tongue-in-cheek description of the sexual voracity of female watchers (see 4.4.5.).

To conclude, I considered that Wald's article did not only promote counterstereotypical, schema-inconsistent gender roles, behaviours and attitudes, but was likely to produce a potentially schema-refreshing effect upon the reader by setting them at ease during their encounter with the parodical version of the normative 'get-your-man' discourse and with mock portrayals of hegemonic masculinities.

The next section will provide my own analysis of the text '*Men in Trunks*' in terms of prototype and schema theory, with a view to highlighting its schema-refreshing potential both with the 'implied' reader and with the readers participating in my own investigation.

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4.4. *"Men in Trunks"*: an analysis in terms of linguistic triggers, prototypes and social schemata

The present section will provide my own interpretation of '*Men in Trunks*', which will be channelled along two lines of discussion:

1) Wald's categorisation of men on the beach in terms of prototypical exemplars, representative attributes and social schemata
2) My analysis of the implications of Wald's categorisation in terms of cognitive theories (prototype theory, schema theory and approaches dealing with the activation of social schemata).

I will highlight how my comprehension of Deborah Wald's article has been facilitated by my activation of adequate 'genre' and 'multimodal' text schemata. I will point out what I regard as indications of a schema-refreshing potential of the text. Such indications are provided on the one hand by schema-inconsistent attributes or clusters of attributes regarded as representative of certain categories of men, and on the other hand by the unexpected cultural associations the writer makes between certain aspects of masculinity and other domains of cognition (fish, infancy, cartoon characters).

4.4.1. The GENRE schema

Knowing that the selected text belongs to a specific genre influenced my expectations, guided my inferences and prompted me to instantiate certain schemata and suspend others during the process of reading. As Fishelov stresses, genres display 'family resemblances' and, as generic categories, become "part of a community's shared linguistic and cultural knowledge" (Fishelov 1991: 133). At first sight, '*Men in Trunks*' is what Cameron calls 'a genre with a gender', which achieves congruence with other 'self-help' or 'personal growth' discourses:

> There are many reasons for this proliferation of advice, not all of which are directly related to changes in women's social position. It is significant, for example, that there has been a proliferation of media in which to disseminate advice. Although the tradition of advice to women is an old one, late twentieth-century women are faced with a continual barrage of advice, contained in mass-market paperbacks, women's magazines, television talk-shows and radio phone-ins (Cameron 1995: 171).

Nevertheless, constructing the implied female reader as helpless and confused, badly in need of advice as regards matters of self-improvement and romance, needs to be analysed and recognised "as a construction which they [the readers] have the choice whether to accept or not" (Mills 1995: 194)[8]. Indeed, the article bears 'family

[8] Mills (1995) points out that most texts published in women's magazines conform to the 'narrative schema' of women reading expert advice and of editors thoughtfully providing it:
The representation of women as having problems and as writing to someone to ask for advice means that the image of women becomes one of 'there to be advised'. Throughout women's magazines,

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resemblances' to most articles published in women's magazines whose main aim is to share some domain-specific 'useful knowledge' with the reader, and consequently empower the reader with the confidence and expertise required by future situations. The parodic tonality the article resounds with empowers the implied reader not to take Wald's advice for granted, but rather to regard the article as a parodic replica of advice columns. The writer herself 'subverts' the 'dominant writing' of such texts by overstating her role as an expert from the very first paragraph:

> But by far the most entertaining diversion this summer is watching the men go by and *drawing (completely correct) conclusions about their entire life, self-image and level of conceit, based upon the size, shape and fabric of their swimming trunks*". (my emphasis).

Wald *pretends* to behave as somebody actively engaged in watching and assessing male holiday makers and expects her readers to acknowledge such pretense She feigns being extremely knowledgeable about men and holiday romances, an expert in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each category of men, and overwhelmingly thoughtful towards her readers (especially when issuing warnings) while being unhesitantly sarcastic when highlighting male flaws.

Despite its seeming 'affiliation' to advice columns (Mills 1995: 61), '*Men in Trunks*' can be regarded as a potentially schema-refreshing text due to the unorthodox way the writer has chosen to exploit putdownability and relaxation and to her parodying both schematic perceptions of masculinity and the normative-prescriptive 'get-your-guy' discourses commonly published in women's magazines.

The next section will briefly mention the role played by my familiarisation with a mutimodal text, without providing an exhaustive analysis of notions such as 'relay' or 'anchorage' (Barthes 1964, Kress and van Leeuwen 1996).

4.4.2. The MULTIMODAL TEXT schema

Looking at the first page photograph (Figure 1) of the tilted, upside-down figure of a man, his hands thrust into the sand, one leg of his trunks shorter than the other, seascape for a background, I could have activated any or all of the following schemata: HOLIDAY schema, GYMNAST schema, CHILD ENTERTAINER schema or several others. The verbal text narrowed the set of schemata to two: the MEN schema and the TRUNKS schema, both embeddable into the HOLIDAY schema. The first question

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even in the less traditional ones, there is a tone of advice which pervades all the information which is given, from cookery to cosmetics. There is no such tone in magazines which are aimed specifically at males. In fact there is no real equivalent of women's magazines. What are termed 'men's magazines' generally are considered to be soft pornography or special interest magazines on such subjects as photography or motor-cycles. There is no text which systematically advises men on their personal conduct and appearance in the same way as women, or which implicitly carries the message that they have problems which need to be resolved (Mills 1995: 194).

I agree with Mills that such narrative schemata need to be deconstructed instead of being rejected offhand so as to pin down the social and cultural factors that have contributed to the storage and dissemination of such schemata among specific communities of readers.

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"*What does his beachwear say about him*?" appeared to me both as a promise to initiate the reader into the art of deciphering "trunks" semiotics, and as an invitation to share girlie secrets about the male mystique of trunk-clad beach loiterers. Being written on the right hand side of the page, the question appears to be in a relation of anchorage (Barthes 1964) to the visual text as "from a multiplicity of connotations offered by the image, it selects some and thereby implicitly rejects the others" (Burgin 2000: 48).

The second question "*And what could be in it for you?*" prompted me to embark upon a new line of inferencing, expecting instantiation of a ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP schema: not only is the female reader promised to be generously granted the clues to read men's secrets, but also to benefit from allegedly expert guidance throughout her discoveries. Consequently, the verbal input enabled suspension of certain scripts likely to have been triggered by the visual input alone, such as scripts involving men who somersault to make their kids laugh, gymnasts who practise routine exercises, holiday makers who remember their childhood stunts, and so on. Therefore I feel inclined to regard this second question as a way of further 'anchoring' the visual text[9]. (Barthes 1964, Burgin 2000).

Such anticipations of the MEN, TRUNKS and HOLIDAY schemata at such an early stage of textual encounter were considerably facilitated by my 'formal' schema for such a text, more specifically by my acquaintance with multimodal texts specific to magazines for young women. I was able to develop suitable expectations and suspend irrelevant scripts partly because I was familiar with the complementarity between the verbal and the visual text in what Kress and van Leeuwen call "a grammar of contemporary visual design in Western cultures" (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 3).

In the sections to come I argue that once the textual encounter became focused on the categorisation of men on the beach, my comprehension was augmented by the readiness with which I was able to temporarily accommodate Wald's categorisation of eligible males. Such accommodation required recognition of the criteria Wald employed and these criteria can be divided into two main sets:

a) criteria exploiting prototypical attributes and prototypical exemplars
b) criteria pertaining to social categorisation and person/group integration.

At this point of word of caution needs to be made in relation to the term 'schema'. I will use this term to refer to any coherent cluster of knowledge relating to a specific entity (from an object to a complex situation, from an event to a relationship), which is likely to be stored in a comprehender's long-term memory. Such clusters of knowledge need to be seen in close and continuous connection with other clusters of knowledge, since, in neurological terms, they correspond to parts of intricately connected neural networks in our brains. For the sake of simplicity, both in my discussion of my own schemata and in the analysis of the schemata likely to have been activated during the respondents' encounter with the text (Chapter 6), I will therefore name whatever I may

[9] This is not the case with the captions on the next pages, which rather function as a 'relay' to the visuals, since:
In relay, the image and the linguistic text are in a relation of complementarity: the language message explains, develops and expands the sign of the image (Burgin 2000: 48–49).

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reasonably regard as a structured cluster of background knowledge a 'schema'. For instance, a STANDING MAN schema will refer to the comprehender(s)' conceptualisation of an entity (i.e. man) in a certain (situation (i.e. vertical stance). I am well aware there is considerable risk that the term 'schema' might be used in excess. Such risks are enhanced when it comes either to highly specific mental configurations (e.g. a SHOWER CAP schema) or to very vast abstract notions (e.g. a HUMAN LIFE schema)

4.4.3. *'Men in Trunks'*: a prototype-related analysis

In compliance with the prototype approach (Rosch 1975, 1978, Krahe 1990, Tsohatsidis 1990, Ungerer and Schmid 1996, Bruce and Roth 1996), entities in a given category can be described and identified according to their 'goodness-of-fit' with respect to the prototypical exemplar of that category, and to their scoring 'family resemblance' above a perceptible threshold (see 3.2). The categories of men on the beach as described by Wald, namely *'Tasty BLTs'*, *'Self-obsessed Skimpies'* and *'Bashful Boxers'*, comprise central, more representative members as well as marginal, less representative members. Prototypical exemplars include icons of hegemonic or schema-consistent masculinity together with emblems of present-day alternative or schema-inconsistent masculinities. At this point I need to specify that I will be using the terms 'schema-consistent' and 'schema-inconsistent' having in mind my own masculinity schemata and those that an 'implied' (Talbot 1995) or 'intended' reader (Semino 2001) is likely to instantiate during the textual encounter.

Wald's categorisation utilises salient attributes or attributes displaying 'high' or low' 'cue validity'. As pointed out by Bruce and Roth, the 'cue validity' assigned to a particular typical feature "indicates how characteristically the feature is associated with that concept" (Bruce and Roth 1995: 43, e.g. with the concept 'fruit', 'sweet' or 'juicy' are high cue validity features, while 'crunchy' is a low validity feature). In other words, within a given context of significance, the entities under observation display features that weigh more or less according both to their internal constituency and to the purposes the observer pursues. Hence, "properties can be hierarchically ordered in terms of importance" (Lehrer 1990: 368). The male personae in Wald's article comprise both high and low cue validity attributes when assessed in terms of their appeal, more precisely they display traits assignable to hegemonic or schema-consistent masculinities as well as traits assignable to alternative or schema-inconsistent masculinities. Schema-consistent conceptualisations of masculinities are likely to comprise attributes like macho protectiveness, stateliness, muscular bodies, stylishness of attire, all of which indicate hegemonic representations of masculinity. Schema-inconsistent conceptualisations of masculinities are likely to include 'less manly' attributes, such as flawed bodies, infantile behaviour, shyness or clumsiness, doubtful taste in choosing clothes, which tend to hint at alternative or marginal representations of masculinity (see 2.9. for several definitions of hegemonic masculinities such as those supplied by Hanke 1998, Connell 1995 or Benwell 2002).

The category of *'Tasty BLTs'* (from now on BLTs) is mostly defined in terms of its prototypical exemplars. The most prototypical member is the "young Burt Lancaster" himself (the initials of the famous male icon of the fifties are punned against the acronym

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of the Bacon-Lettuce-Tomato sandwich). Closely resembling the mixture of macho protectiveness and stylish vulnerability of the Burt Lancaster prototype, the persona of the footballer David Ginola is suggested for inclusion in the BLT category. Wearers of Armani garments are equally included in the BLT category, since they supposedly share the 'propensity for good taste', which is a salient attribute of this category. Since some Armani fans nevertheless do not display any 'family resemblances' with Burt Lancaster with respect to build and charisma, they could be regarded as more marginal members of the category. An additional reason why some of the Armani fans are likely to be regarded as peripheral members of the BLT category is their display of doubtful taste when it comes to colours (such as 'insipid pastels').

As far as '*Self-obsessed Skimpies*' (from now on SOSs) are concerned, members of this category are defined in terms of salient attributes rather than prototypical exemplars. With SOSs, the attribute bearing the highest cue validity is boundless narcissism, a trait rather pertaining to schema-consistent masculinities. The most prototypical SOSs would then be inferred to be profusely in love with themselves and eager to publicly exhibit their intimate parts in body-hugging, flimsy swimsuits. The wearers of skimpy beachwear constantly fail to notice they are the target of female derision, while in their ridiculously pompous declaration of self-love they come to rival cartoon characters. Consequently, excessive narcissistic and exhibitionistic tendencies are associated with other high cue validity attributes: self-delusion and the tendency to become prone to public derision, attributes which are generally assignable to schema-inconsistent masculinities.

'*Bashful Boxers*' (from now on BBs) are defined both according to prototypical exemplars and to salient attributes. Surfers, Australian soap stars and a French boy the author allegedly had a crush on, constitute the set of prototypical exemplars for the 'Boxers' category. A 'high cue validity' attribute of the category is bodily prudery, more specifically the boxers' desperate endeavour towards 'considerable concealment of flesh', a trait attributable to schema-inconsistent masculinities. An additional schema-inconsistent attribute, displayed by some peripheral members only, would be unawareness of being put in embarrassing situations caused by the unquestioned adoption of a garment whose 'complicated, nappy-like, repellent inner structure' is likely to expose their intimate parts. Whether intentional or not, tendency towards exposure becomes a trait that BBs and SOSs have in common. While with SOSs, bodily display is an admitted, even ostentatious pursuit, assignable to hegemonic or schema-consistent images of masculinity, with BBs, exposure of bodily parts tends rather to be regarded as a despicable tendency, showing infantile lack of self-control. If SOSs are likely to become the laughing stock of female watchers because of their aggressive exhibitionism, BBs risk becoming the object of public mockery because of their outrageous carelessness in relation to their own bodies and to bodily exposure, a trait which is assignable to the realm of alternative or schema-inconsistent masculinities.

Wald's classification of men in terms of prototypical exemplars and prototypical attributes implies both schema-consistent and schema-inconsistent categorisation as achievable by the 'intended' female educated reader and as achieved by myself. If BLTs largely comprise schematic attributes of hegemonic masculinity (attractiveness, protective charisma), BBs and SOSs are a mixture between expected and unexpected masculine

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features, thus revealing combinations of schema-consistent and schema-inconsistent clusters of features. Thus, boxer-wearers are a blend between appealing and repellent features, while SOSs, the thong-aficionados, despite their seemingly displaying all attributes of hegemonic masculinity, are too self-centred to appear enticing to potential aspirants to romance.

4.4.4. *'Men in Trunks'*: an analysis in terms of social schemata

The multimodal message conveyed by page 1 of 'Men in Trunks' entitled me to predict that categories of trunks, namely T*asty Blats, Self-obsessed Skimps, Bashful Boxers,* metonymically designate categories of wearers. Furthermore, in compliance with genre conventions, I anticipated the afore-mentioned categories to be expectation-challenging and the author to provide textual clues meant to facilitate accommodation of schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity. In the following sections, I will deal with the categorisation employed by Wald.

4.4.4.1. Wald's criteria of social categorisation

My activation of social schemata triggered by Wald's description of men on the beach was eased by my understanding and conventionally sharing her criteria of social categorisation and her parodic evaluation of such categories. Wald categorises trunk-wearers according to both hyponymic (i.e. class-inclusion) and partonomic (i.e. part-whole relationship) criteria. Hyponymy, also called class-inclusion, accounts for the relationship between a superordinate term, e.g. flower, including several subordinate terms, e.g. tulip, rose, which are co-hyponyms, i.e.members of a class designated by the same superordinate term (see Palmer 1976: 77–78, Cruse 2000: 150–153). Partonomy, also called 'meronymy ' (Chaffin in Tsohatsidis 1990: 253–287) defines the part-whole relationship existing between entities, in which the part does not differ in terms of substance, form and purpose from the whole (e.g. wheel-car versus slice-pie, more details see Chaffin 1990: 265–273). If taxonomies enable inferencing about properties shared by various objects/persons on the basis of number of prototypical features and degree of exemplariness, partonomies open up inferences on the basis of two additional criteria: perceptual salience and functional significance (Tversky in Tsohatsidis 1990: 341–342). As already pointed out, the taxonomy of male swimsuit-wearers is established according to the type of beachwear they display. More specific criteria in the categorisations Wald operates are: cut, colour, trendiness, and degree of concealment/exposure.

Wald's categorisation equally abides by partonomic criteria, set up in accordance with norms that culturally assess certain parts of the body in terms of their functionality, i.e. of their being (in)adequate for representations of male attractiveness. Being both a reader, who activated certain schemata in the process of text comprehension, and an analyst, trying to predict which schemata are more likely to be activated by other intended readers, I would venture to say that Wald's mention of body parts is likely to trigger activation of one or several of the variables in a MALE BODY schema, obviously embedded in a more comprehensive MEN schema:

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The LEGS variable: Legs are reliable indicators of male attractiveness. If designated by means of derogatory metaphors of puniness such as 'weedy quads' or 'knitting needles' – the owners of the legs in question are expected to be unattractive too. Provided the 'limbs' show some 'finely sculpted muscle', the fortunate owner will be labelled as attractive to the female watcher.

The STOMACH variable: The owner of the flat, athletic stomach – the 'pulled in' and 'slimmed down' stomach with muscles neatly ranged in an enviable 'six pack' – will fall into the attractive category. Should the stomach resemble 'an inflated Lilo' or a 'beer gut' the owner is bound to belong to the flabby, overweight, repellent group.

The MALE GENITALIA variable: Linguistic headers activating this schema are metaphorical terms: 'his essentials', 'posing pouches', 'family jewels', whose ironic use suggests that this anatomical part is not worthy of the importance it is commonly granted. Moreover, this derogatory designation suggests that size and salience need not always be the decisive criteria in valuing 'hunkiness'.

4.4.4.2. Person schemata, self-schemata, role schemata, event schemata

In this section I shall discuss Wald's three categories, BLTs, SOSs and BBs in terms of Taylor and Fiske's (1984) and Culpeper's (2001) typology of social schemata.

As pointed out in 3.4.2.2., *person schemata* revolve around behavioural tendencies, personality traits and "goals as situation-specific intents" (Fiske and Taylor 1984, Culpeper 2001). With BLTs, behavioural tendencies comprise the endeavour and ability to choose swimsuits whose style "does flatter the male figure quite unexpectedly" and whose design testifies to good taste and subtle allure. The goal of the typical BLT would be to hide bodily flaws and display an irresistible strong-muscled body, boasting 'finely sculpted legs' and a 'six-pack' stomach, meant to impress female watchers. The traits inferable from such dispositional behaviours and pursued goals would be: being fashionable (having a keen 'eye for fashion') and eager to invest in improving one's self-image (given BLTs' considerable 'dose of vanity').

Concern with appearance and a penchant for trendiness may be not only the object of admiration but that of ridicule as well: the writer warns the readers against BLTs' potential inability to match the colour of their skin (either undertanned 'blue, white skin' or overtanned, 'lobster-red') with that of some trendy hues of Armani swimwear, basically greys or 'insipid pastels'. The risk of becoming ridiculous because of the mismatch between the colour of the skin and that of the beach apparel is nevertheless compensated for by the BLTs' alleged generosity and unostentatious wealth, likely to materialise in the expensive presents they might lavish on their would-be girlfriends ("his trunks may be an indicator of more Armani in the wardrobe and, ultimately, more in yours, too").

With SOSs, the main behavioural dispositions include adopting a body-revealing style and imitating manly models ("the smouldering sexuality emanating from the man in the moody black-and-white picture on the swing tag") without realising the discrepancy between an image attached to a price tag and their actual looks in the all-disclosing

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merciless sunlight. Consequently, there is one major goal SOSs strive to attain: that of ceaselessly contemplating their own image cloned after certain contemporary icons of masculinity. Hence, the traits which make SOSs a distinctive group are exhibitionism, lack of realistic self-appraisal, narcissistic tendencies accompanied by an inability to develop (self) critical judgement and reluctance to take advice.

In terms of behaviour, the prevalent tendency on the part of BBs is to hide as much flesh as possible, in accordance with their main goal, that of keeping a low profile and minding their own business (mostly surfing). The traits that are likely to be associated with such behavioural habits and goals are decency and unobtrusiveness. BBs resemble both BLTs in that they display some fashionable tendencies ('these trunks come in dazzling colours from designers as vaunted as Ralph Lauren') and SOSs in that they are unaware of risking becoming the laughing stock of watchers. Unlike SOSs, who are mocked because incurably absorbed with their own person, BBs are likely to be labelled as an unappealing group because of their carelessness in picking garments, more specifically garments that display an embarrassing sartorial architecture ('a bizarre and repulsive secret: the polyamide net') and can at any time reveal the owner's intimate parts.

In addition to behavioural tendencies, personality traits and pursued goals, a discussion of 'achieved' and 'ascribed' roles in '*Men in Trunks*' would be welcome. As already specified, ***role schemata*** (see 3.4.2.2.) are cognitive structures linked to social norms, behaviours and positions which individuals take up or are assigned in specific social environments (Fiske and Taylor 1984, Culpeper 2001). In Wald's text, 'achieved' roles are rather implied then mentioned, as the persons' names or images (in the captions) are thought to be evocative of their occupational roles. Most 'ascribed' roles are related to the men's eligibility and to their odds of becoming the target of female ridicule once they fail the eligibility test. Thus, BLTs are described as good candidates of a summer romance, since they are subtly fashionable and careful about constantly amending their self-image. They are also regarded as potential sponsors for an expensive wardrobe. The description of SOSs is intended to dismantle the stereotype of the irresistible body-builder in a G-string. Uncontrolled exposure of body parts (the swimsuit makes the male sexual organs look like a 'moulded sack'), as well as lack of realism when it comes to self-assessment, are likely to prompt the reader to ascribe them the role of the 'all brawn no brain' machos. As uninspired choosers of inadequate swimsuits, the role of SOSs narrows down to being the target of ridicule for the commonsensical female watcher. If, at first blush, BBs seem to be assigned the role of acceptable candidates for holiday romance, they are subsequently recast in the role of spoilsports and targets of ridicule, given their serene unawareness of bodily exposure and unavoidable arousal of embarrassment.

Although prevalently descriptive, Wald's text provides textual triggers that enable the instantiation of ***event schemata***, namely goal-setting and plan-making (see 3.4.2.2.). Goal-setting obviously amounts to the 'getting-the-guy' discourse that analysts find central to women's magazines (Talbot 1995, Durham 1998). Plan-making in relation to such a goal involves observing and assessing men on the beach according to their beachwear, followed by elimination of uninspired choices ('Beware the man who approaches you wearing anything thong-like. He's not after your body; he's just spotted your brand-new Lancaster suncream and is dying to try it on'). Such plans are only preliminary steps in achieving the prioritary goal presumably pursued by female holiday-

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makers: finding a man with whom to have a passionate affair. Such a goal is ironically overstated after Wald has enumerated the typical beach events:

> "Reading. Paddling. Humming along tunelessly to your Walkman. But by far the most entertaining diversion this summer is watching the men go by and drawing (completely correct) conclusions about their entire life, self-image and level of conceit, based upon the size, shape and fabric of their swimming trunks".

4.4.4.3. Category-based versus person-based integration in *'Men in Trunks'*

There are two processes of impression formation that I experienced during my reading of *'Men in Trunks'* and which I could realistically predict like-minded 'intended' readers might employ in order to interpret Wald's classification of men: *category-based integration* and *recategorisation*.

Category-based integration (Culpeper 2001), mainly consisting in simplification and the interpretation of the specific in the light of the general (see 3.4.3.), is likely to be undertaken by the intended reader throughout their encounter with Wald's text. Person-based or attribute-based integration, involving piecemeal processing of attributes pertaining to specific individuals may occur only sporadically, mostly in the captions bearing no subsequent confirmatory textual evidence. An exception would be the visual clue of Burt Lancaster in the 'clinch scene' of *'From Here to Eternity'*, which is verbally reiterated in the section on BLTs. Confirmation of initial categorisations provided by category denominations may be substantiated by verbal clues provided in the descriptive paragraphs accompanying each category. On the other hand, initial categorisation provided by visual clues (photographs) may not be confirmed by the descriptive paragraphs in question.

Recategorisation (see 3.4.3.) is likely to be undertaken by the intended reader whenever Wald attempts to challenge alleged pre-existing views on male sexuality by confiding to her readers that brawn simply means beefiness and that limitless narcissism is no source for erotic reverie. The trunks themselves are designated by derogatory phrases: 'exhibitionist skimpies', 'the barely-there trunk', 'anything thong-like', announcing the derision that this category is likely to arouse in female watchers. All expectations triggered by linguistic clues such as 'smouldering sexuality' and 'eroticism of the style', are suspended by expressions hinting at gross egocentrism: 'these Narcissi of the summer season', 'their declarations of self-love'. Adversative or concessive syntactic constructions, generally introduced by conjunctions such as 'but' or 'although', cancel out stereotypical assumptions about muscle-men. It is predictable that the members of a group initially assumed as irresistible can be recategorised as dispiriting companions because of excessive self-love.

Recategorisation is equally likely to occur with BBs, a group that are initially portrayed as promising, then cast in an unfavourable light by supplying a detailed description of the inside of their trunks in terms of fishing lexemes and by highlighting the risks of bodily exposure in terms of marine species.

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4.4.5. Potentially schema-refreshing associations within social schemata of masculinity

The TRUNKS and MALE BODY schemata I initially activated as well as the social schemata I instantiated at various reading stages nested certain associations, which, to my mind, are likely to refine stereotypes of masculinity and to inspire the intended reader with expectation-challenging, schema-inconsistent and potentially schema-refreshing views on masculinity. Such cultural associations highlight mappings between domains most readers do not find usually connected. Such innovative mappings have led me to believe that the text, especially certain passages, has some schema-refreshing potential, at least in terms of enabling the reader to accommodate schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity.

1) ***Sex appeal conceptualised as food***. Several linguistic headers: 'tasty', 'menu', 'lobster', 'insipid', 'butcher's shop' prompted me into conceptualising men and masculine appeal in terms of food[10]. The very denomination of a category of people, BLTs, by a sandwich acronym is highly indicative of sexual attractiveness in terms of appetite. Although conceptualising desire as hunger is common in Western and Eastern communities, the mappings in Wald's text involve the highlighting of unexpected items belonging to the target domain of 'food'. Thus, BLTs are regarded as enticing specials listed in the 'beachwear menu'. Surprisingly, along the same line of conceptualisation, 'lobster' does not correspond to some sophisticated aspect of masculinity, it merely designates the repulsive tinge of untanned skin. The unexpected association of the inside of a man's boxers with 'a butcher's shop' highlights as a common feature to the source and target domains 'the large number of cuts'. Highlighting such a feature is quite unexpected in the description of men on the beach, and therefore might contribute to the schema-refreshing potential of the respective paragraph.
2) ***Associating muscular masculinity with cartoon characters***. Those parts of the body which traditionally entitle men to become sex symbols in a culture that celebrates the triumph of the fashioned body owing to undefeated willpower and self-control are grotesquely exaggerated in Wald's parodic text. Far from hinting at sex-appeal, linguistic expressions such as 'posing pouches', 'high-cut legs' and 'distinctive moulded sack' may remind the reader of cartoon-like mock virility images like those of Popeye and Bluto: "Shall we girls forever be denied the childish – nay, sadistic – pleasure of laughing like Bart Simpson at these Narcissi of the summer season?"
3) ***Associating masculinity with infants***. Linguistic expressions such as 'elasticated leg holes' and 'nappy-ish proportions' used in the description of

[10] Such conceptualisation would normally be effortlessly achieved since Western and Western-like cultural models often map sexual desire onto hunger. Thus, the DESIRE IS APPETITE metaphor is "conventionally focused on anticipation of pleasure, or pleasurable anticipation" (Deignan in Harvey and Shalom 1997: 32).

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the inner structure of the boxers brings to mind traits specific of infants such as helplessness and clumsiness. Such features clash with the previously suggested images of alluring teenage charm and the incongruity is likely to produce a humorous effect upon the reader.[11]

4) ***Associating male attire with fishing instruments and male genitalia with species of fish***. The humorous effect brought about by the previously discussed association is amplified by the expectation-challenging association between certain sartorial components of the boxers and of male genitalia with elements pertaining to the realm of fishing and marine species:

> "Designed to save a man's dignity (and spare a woman's blushes) if he splays his legs too widely, they work on the same principle as a net that stops dolphins getting caught by trawlermen fishing for tuna. In this case, the net allows seawater free access to the man, while ensuring his essentials do not swim off when he's not looking. After all, what with jellyfish, sharks and whales, we hardly need another sea predator".

The unexpected associations between the presumed fascination of masculinity and fishing paraphernalia favours recategorisation not only of the group of BBs but also a reconceptualisation of traditional 'romance', which necessarily involves:

- promoting a schematic representation of hegemonic masculinity: "Aggression, muscular build and great physical strength are the quintessentially masculine attributes in these stories" (Talbot 1997: 108)
- endorsing eroticisation of the difference between the man of initiative and the passive woman, unable to resist the 'macho' lure despite all strife for self-control: " The masculine aggression, muscularity and physical strength that we have already observed are contrasted, with varying degrees of explicitness, to feminine passivity, flaccidity and weakness" (Talbot 1997: 109).

In Wald's article, the initiative – be it mock-aggressive – is the woman's, while the potential objects of desire are carefully scrutinised before being labelled as worthy of taming and seduction. 'Romance' gets reconceptualised by the minute description of the sartorial details of boxers meant to annihilate the male mystique and prompt the female watcher into relinquishing any shred of romantic illusion and bracing herself to confront a down-to-earth, even repulsive sight: "Indeed, many a potential holiday romance has died in the water owing to the choice of Leif Garrett-style calf-length trews or trunks that have lost their elasticity". Recategorisation of masculinity as well as reconceptualisation of romance leave room for potential schema-refreshment. The same is true of novel associations between domains otherwise unrelated, such as male beauty and fishing devices or cartoon characters.

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[11] In the light of one of Attardo's theories of humour, the script-based theory, the text is compatible with two opposed or *'competing scripts'* (the latter term is borrowed from Raskin 1985). In her endeavour to comprehend the text, the reader may switch from one script to the other and employs her *'humorous competence'* in order to achieve conceptual coherence of the text despite the incongruity of the two scripts (Attardo 1994: 206)

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4.5. Text interpretation and research questions

My own comprehension of *'Men in Trunks'* was considerably eased by my being acquainted with the genre constraints, i.e. having internalised 'formal' schemata of multimodal texts published in young women's magazines. In addition, my comprehension was facilitated by my familiarisation with parodic texts. Last but not least, my smooth reading of the text heavily relied on my having acquired adequate schematic representations of certain situations (holidays on the beach), objects (trunks), events (drawing a sexy man's attention, winning him over) and especially persons (movie and rock stars, the 'hunk' as the traditional epitome of maleness, the scrawny or flabby man pigeonholed as repulsive). Likely to be shared with British readers, such schematic representations enabled me to make relatively appropriate predictions about masculinity schemata likely to be activated by a group of intended readers such as the participants in my study. In addition, my own schematic representations of masculinity enabled me to anticipate the categorisation processes and criteria, as well as the lines of inferencing likely to be employed by my respondents.

Although some research questions (henceforth RQs) were introduced in Chapter 3 in relation to some theoretical concepts that are particularly relevant for my research, at this point I will endeavour to highlight how certain issues related to my analysis of the text *'Men in Trunks'* are addressed in my RQs. My own comprehension and interpretation of the text has raised several issues in relation to schema-refreshment, accommodation of newly-encountered representations of masculinity within existing gender schemata, the role of multimodal input in the activation and suspension of social schemata, which I thought are worth taking into account when formulating my RQs.The set of RQs for this study comprises an overarching content RQ, three empirical RQs and three methodological RQs.

The overarching RQ is a content RQ which reads as follows:

> *When Romanian undergraduate female readers are presented with a multimodal text on the male body published in the British magazine 'Zest', is there any evidence that the textual input either (a) reinforces or (b) clashes with the readers' schematic representations of masculinity?*

This RQ addresses the potential contribution of my study to the understanding of readers' receptions of a specific multimodal text by the analysis of the language clues those readers provide in their responses to a tasksheet specifically designed for the respective text. Such language evidence is expected to indicate whether the representations of masculinity in the selected text reinforce or challenge the readers' existing masculinity schemata.

The three empirical RQs proposed by my study read as follows:

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

E1: Do readers' responses to comprehension tasks suggest potential schema-refreshment in relation to their likely schematic representations of masculinity?

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E2: Do readers' responses contain linguistic clues indicating that textual representations of different types of masculinities are consistent or inconsistent with the readers' existing schemata?
E3: What are the implications of the multimodality of the text on the types of schemata activated by readers when gradually exposed to visual, written and combined visual and written input?

The main purpose of these empirical RQs is to operationalise concepts such as potential schema-refreshment, accommodations of newly-emerged descriptions of masculinity in the process of textual encounter and the activation of social schemata during the respondents' gradual exposure to visual and written text. I will specify again that indications related to cognitive phenomena cannot benefit from direct observation on the part of the analyst, since I obviously have no access to the respondents' ongoing mental processes. The only indications that enable me to hypothesise in a substantiated way about processes such as schema instantiation, (lack of) accommodation of presumably unexpected textual input or likelihood for the text to have potential schema-refreshing effect on the respondents are certain language clues provided in their responses to the tasksheet.

Whether such responses provide useful and relevant indications for the issues addressed by the empirical RQs depends on the elicitation strategies in the instrument employed in the Pilot and Main Studies, i.e. the comprehension tasksheet devised for the selected text. In addition, the adequacy of the language clues provided in the responses depends on the methodology of data analysis (see Chapter 6) and interpretation of findings (see Chapter 7). To verify this adequacy, I formulated the following methodological RQs:

METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

M1: Are readers' sets of responses efficient instruments in indicating whether and how students accommodate assumedly schema-inconsistent representations of masculinities?
M2: Does the designed tasksheet elicit readers' responses which indicate the respective readers' accommodation of schema-inconsistent masculinities?
M3: Do readers' acknowledged changes in attitudes during their interaction with the text constitute evidence as to their (lack of) accommodation of schema-inconsistent masculinities?

The purpose of these methodological questions was to investigate whether comprehension tasksheets like the one I devised for '*Men in Trunks*' could be indicative of cognitive processes such as accommodation of schema-inconsistent gender representations and predictive of any potentially schema-refreshing effect a text like '*Men in Trunks*' might have upon respondents such as Romanian female undergraduates. Another important issue addressed by RQM3 is the relation between attitude measurement and accommodation of schema-inconsistent representations, a relationship which may contribute some refinement to schema theory as an analytical tool.

Both empirical and methodological RQs will be thoroughly examined in relation to those specific sets of tasksheet questions devised so as to elucidate one RQ or combinations of empirical and methodological RQs. The evaluation of some of the more

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prominent findings in Chapter 7 (see 7.1.) will aim to further clarify issues related to generalisability of the methodology, primarily addressed by the overarching RQ.

To elucidate several reader-related issues my RQs address, in the next section I will supply a description of the participants in my study, namely of young Romanian female students of English seen as a community of practice.

4.6. Young Romanian female undergraduate students of English as a CofP

Discarding the view of all female readers as espousing a unique, universal position, recent feminist approaches to text reception (Christie 1998, Mills 1998) emphasise the diversity of subject positions women take when engaging in the activity of reading. I concur with Mills that age, race, educational background, affiliation to certain groups and systems of values and beliefs contribute to the diversification of readers and of readers' receptions of the same text (Mills 1998: 239).

As already mentioned, it is my intention to see whether evidence as to potential schema-refreshment as provided by my data analysis can be generalised so as to draw some conclusions on the perceptions of Western masculinities with young female intellectuals from a post-communist country like Romania. In my opinion, any such generalisation requires prior description of young Romanian female students of English in terms of a 'community of practice' approach.

4.6.1. Defining Communities of Practice

The term 'community of practice' was introduced into gender and language research by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet who defined it as

> an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor. As a social construct, a community of practice is different from the traditional community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992: 464).

The definition was in its turn inspired by Lave and Wenger (1991), who regard the concept of CofP as not defined by its location or constitutive population, but by the flexible membership of the people constituting it. Membership is defined by three parameters:

a) ***mutual engagement***, typically built around regularity of interaction
b) ***joint enterprise***, referring to the processes of goal-sharing and of contribution negotiation
c) ***shared repertoire***, comprising the available shared resources members employ in order to negotiate meanings, including specialised terms and

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linguistic routines. (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992b: 95, Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999: 175–176).

Consequently, a community of practice is achieved not only in terms of membership but also in terms of practices entailed by that membership, of individual members' degree of engagement in the respective practices as well as of multifarious ways of exploiting available cultural and cognitive resources, including linguistic resources (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992b, Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999).

4.6.2. CofP approaches versus previous sociological and socio-psychological approaches

In their laudable attempt to clarify the definition and stress the utility of the concept of CofP for sociolinguistics, as well as germane domains such as gender studies and social psychology, Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) provide an enlightening comparison with four main theories, namely: Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (1978), Labov's 'speech community' theory (1990), Social Network Analysis and Social Constructionist Approaches.

Along the line initiated by Labov (1990)[12] and amended by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992a, 1992b), Bucholtz (1999) highlights the following flaws in the speech community approach:

- marginalisation of practices other than linguistic and understanding of language as disembodied and neglective of ' the physicality of speakers ' (Bucholtz 1999: 208) (see also 2.6. on embodiment)
- omission of marginal members, too little emphasis laid on heterogeneity, on individual purposeful choices and agency.
- failure to picture individual identities as 'fluid, not frozen' (Bucholtz 1999: 209) displayers of multiple selves, simultaneously emerging from the combined effects of mutuality and agency.
- invisibility of local interpretations (which are central in ethnographic approaches such as CofP).

Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999:179) summarise the differences between CofP approaches, and social theory and sociolinguistic approaches, as follows:

- CofP approaches center on the sharing of wider social practices and not solely on 'shared identifications' or 'shared norms',

[12] In his study "*The intersection of sex and social class in the course of linguistic change*" (1990), Labov insists on the necessity to achieve insightful understanding of sex differences in language use within communities of speech by minimising the effect of observation and maximising the picture of the social context. In Labov's view, local information is valuable to the extent to which it is representative, objective and generalisable. He suggests "This is best achieved by the full participation of the observer in the social scene, with an acute sensitivity to the norms of local culture and the local configuration of social interaction" (Labov 1990: 208).

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- CofP approaches maintain that membership is 'internally constructed'.
- CofP approaches claim that both personal and group identities are 'actively constructed' by group members and insist on the quality of ingroup and outgroup "regular and mutually defining interaction" (Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999:179).
- CofP approaches envisage mutuality of social and instrumental goals and focuses on the teleological dimension of communities. As regards maintaining or blurring intergroup boundaries, a CofP approach considers that boundaries are maintained but not necessarily defined in contrast with outgroups.

CofP approaches considerably overlap with social constructionist approaches, in that both approaches espouse an anti-essentialist stance and promote gender as a social construct, historically and actively shaped in the dynamics of interaction. CofP approaches, however, lay greater emphasis than social constructionist approaches on the embodied practices members engage in as well as in the bodily routines such members undertake by virtue of their membership (Bucholtz 1999). In CofP approaches, avoiding essentialisation of femininity and masculinity means that individuals observe or transgress normative-schematic representations of femininity and masculinity to different extents, consequently members of a community cannot be subjected to either homogenisation or marginalisation (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992a: 470–471).

Bucholtz's CofP-based study of a community of 'nerd girls' at a US high school (1999: 203–223) demonstrates the compatibility of ethnographic, activity-based research on gender and language practices with current theories of social identity. Her study strives to answer two research questions:

1) whether and how speakers use language practices to assert their gendered identities and
2) whether such gendered identities are interrelated with other social variables.

As pointed out earlier (see 2.4.), linguistic practices interplay with other types of social practices, be they negative or positive, in order to enable individuals to choose an identity and make it accessible within the community as well as outside it.

4.6.3. Intended contribution of the present study in terms of a CofP approach

In order to prevent "premature or excessive generalisation" (Bergvall 1999:280), CofP approaches lay considerable emphasis on the role played by local surveys. In the light of Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's proposal (1992): "Think practically and look locally", Bergvall insists on sharing sociolinguistic research with gender investigation from other fields of interest so as to foster cross-cultural applicability and to provide an efficient way to combine local investigation with broader comparative approaches and to preclude unsubstantiated generalisations (Bergvall 1999: 278).

As indicated, my own study attempts to describe the gender schemata and the schema-(in)consistent representations of masculinity activated by a local community of

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practice, namely one class of Romanian female students in English, when engaged in a specific practice: reading a text on the male body published in the British women's magazine '*Zest*'. It is my intention to highlight perceptions of Western masculinities with readers from a post-communist country in the light of the social schemata likely to have been triggered by textual headers in the article and as indicated by the language in the participants' responses.

In terms of a CofP approach, the participants in my study can be seen as belonging to the community of female Romanian first-year undergraduates majoring in English at the Faculty of Foreign Languages at a major university in Romania. A description of this community is as follows:

> **Gender:** The overwhelming majority of students in English are female. Most spent their high school years in a largely all–female environment, coming from high schools where girls were numerically prevalent, a common situation in high schools whose curricula lay emphasis on the study of foreign languages, history, pedagogy and what are traditionally considered 'women's professions'.
> **Age**: The students' age range was from 18 to 21. Most of them became students right after they graduated from high school and took their baccalaureate diplomas. (A few failed the entrance exam and passed after a second, third or even fourth attempt, while a few also used to study full-time in some other faculty).
> **Qualifications:** To be admitted as students at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, they need to have passed their baccalaureate, followed by an entrance exam specialising in English and another foreign language as a minor specialisation. There is a limited number of places, which are occupied by students in the order of the grades they get at the entrance exam test. Generally even the lowest grade for acceptance is relatively high, therefore students are assumed to be proficient in English.

4.6.4. Curricular and extra-curricular practices: sharing purposes and repertoires

In this section, I attempt to justify why the community of first-year female students majoring in English can be seen as a CofP in terms of Holmes and Meyerhoff's parameters (1999), namely: mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire (see section 4.6.1.). I will try to avoid engaging in offensive pigeonholing, passing judgements and overgeneralising. Such students spend about 30 hours per week attending courses and seminars, at most of which attendance is mandatory. Most exams (about 7 to 10 during each of the two sessions following each semester, more precisely in February and June) are scheduled on the same day for all students, which implies sharing worries, commenting upon the difficulty of the requirements, and expressing (dis)approval of the teacher's assessment. Elective courses are only offered in the senior year, when students tend embrace different areas of interest and interact less.

Since the Foreign language department benefits from only one library, companionship in the only available reading room is almost unavoidable. Scarcity of

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resources leads to frequent exchange of reading materials and lack of electronic equipment often ends up in some of the students visiting their colleagues who own a PC, so that they might be able to use the internet, and draft and print assignments. Consequently, most students become either friends or at least acquainted with most of their colleagues. In the lines to come I will argue that such mutual engagement is one reason which entitles me to regard Romanian students majoring in English as a community of practice.

Students' practices involving regularity of interaction triggered by mutual engagement in curricular activities include: attending classes (courses and seminars), exchanging information on both academic and non-academic topics, establishing seating patterns, anticipating and carrying out sequences of actions (photocopying materials, making library loans, making announcements, exchanging study materials, devising cheating and prompting strategies, tutoring friends). Extra-curricular practices largely involve hanging out in pubs, or discos, going for a snack or having a drink on a terrace, window-shopping and partying.

In terms of 'joint enterprise', i.e. commonality of goals, students share curricular goals such as displaying a reasonable amount of knowledge and domain-specific skills during their interactions with their tutors, passing exams, delivering assignments in time, passing the graduation exams and defending their graduation paper. As regards those enterprises that involve negotiation within a curricular frame, not all students feel free or entitled to engage in negotiatory exchanges either with one another or with their tutors. Moreover, there is always a nucleus of assertive people who are willing to be spokespersons both with peers and with tutors. Such people generally negotiate with teachers as to the amount of readings, the pace of teaching, the reasonableness of the demands, provided teachers are open to such negotiation (which, unfortunately, is still unfavourably perceived by a large majority of teachers in Romanian universities). The same student negotiators intervene in peer disputes, generally springing out of dilemmas such as whether or not to skip a course, to ask the teacher to reduce the reading requirements or, to a lesser extent, prevent certain peers from behaving in a disruptive, offensive or threatening way towards other students.

Most 'joint enterprise practices' are carried out in the extracurricular area, revolving around improvement of the self. Self-improvement mainly follows two main directions: widening horizons (which involves swapping books and videotapes, mainly related to the list of mandatory readings required by each specific course, going to concerts, theatres and libraries) and beautification. Romanians tend to value highly physical beauty, which is perceived as an invaluable asset especially in young women in their pre-marital years. The prevalently female academic environment seems to enhance rather than reduce anxiety over not being pretty enough to find a date, let alone a would-be husband. Fear of not dating and eventually of failing to find 'the right guy' are generated by the traditional, yet predominant mentality in Romania: heterosexual dating and legalisation of long-term relationships by way of marriage are still regarded as uncontestable societal norms, while gay relationships and alternative families are considered sinful, deviant or at least odd. Because a successful life is hardly ever conceived of outside marriage, seduction techniques and good looks are considered a must. Students in the English department are renowned for their attractive appearance as well as for their obsessive concern with their self-image. Paradoxically, the alleged aura

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of irresistible sex-appeal makes students worry even more about their not meeting these expectations. This constant pursuit of meeting requirements imposed by the Faculty's beauty standards entails carefully picking fashionable clothes, accessories and cosmetics, dieting, exercise, mutual advising on shopping and constant engaging in changing one's look and surprising one's peers with 'the new me'.

Since my concern is with Romanian students of English as occasional readers of British women's magazines, I need to specify that one of the students' aims of browsing texts from such magazines is to fulfil the goal of self-improvement pursued through curricular practices. Such magazines enable the students to brush up their English, learn new words and phrases and get acquainted with British cultural concepts. Yet, reading British magazines targeted at young women is an extra-curricular practice as well, since such magazines also provide self-help tips for beautification and fulfil recreational needs.

In terms of 'shared repertoire', i.e. linguistic and extra-linguistic routines engaged in, these Romanian students of English can be regarded as fluent and articulate speakers of English. Given the exigencies of the entrance exam, their command of the English language is highly advanced, if not excellent. All courses are taught in English, which together with the students' proficiency, may account for their frequent use of English expressions in everyday verbal exchanges, including those unrelated to academic topics. Quotes from fashionable writers or from writers that are being studied, mock echoes of politicians' words, and invocation of famous dictums or song titles are recurrent linguistic practices, and are not only the province of elitist students. Impersonation of public personae or teachers whose striking language and bodily stance are assumed to be shared knowledge is also widely practised. The consensual use of acknowledged linguistic expressions in both Romanian and English is reinforced by the students sharing a rich para-linguistic repertoire, which includes nudging (when showing disapproval or when signalling the need for prompting), shoving (in order to get a seat in a crammed room), hugging and kissing when meeting or parting, puffing at the same cigarette and sharing snacks and drinks.

4.6.5. Categorising the student body

I will now present a personal categorisation of the 28 first-year Romanian female undergraduates in English from an entirely personal perspective since, to my knowledge, no local ethnographic, sociological, psychological or linguistic studies have investigated this particular segment of Romanian youth. My categorisation of this part of the student body relies exclusively on the way I perceive students in terms of the social practices – linguistic practices included – they prevalently engage in. The language resources they employ in peer interactions as well as in teacher-student interactions have also been the object of personal longitudinal, informal observation (I have been teaching university students for the past 12 years), although it has not been the object of a rigorous and systematic empirical survey. Moreover, my attempt to categorise the group to which the participants in my study belong has also taken into consideration the discussions I had with two focus groups of first-year students before starting the Main Study. The respective discussions tackled issues related to the way such students classify themselves and the way the respective categories are believed to interact.

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If Bucholtz (1999) describes 'nerds' in an American highschool as, among others, displayers of cleverness, in the Romanian academic context nerds (*'tocilari'*) are largely described by their peers as over-assertive during classes, although not always academically proficient, overeager to ingratiate themselves with their teachers, selfish when it comes to sharing study materials (library resources, notes) and obsessed with getting maximal grades (straight 10's). Nerds are widely disliked because of their selfishness and tendency to learn parrot-fashion while trying to delude others into believing their IQs are remarkably high. Another category which is the object of general contempt is that of 'snobs' (*'snobi'*), including name-droppers, who tend to overuse English even in the most informal contexts and to ceaselessly quote from highbrow writings. Some students tend to include wealthy upstarts in this category as well, even though most of them often ridicule the snobs' display of expensive clothes, jewelry and cars, as well as the condescending way in which they address students coming from families of modest incomes, or in which they deal with topics thought to be out of other students' league (designers' clothes, parents' connections in the big business, luxurious holidays, etc).

Resembling Eckert and Ginet's 'burnouts' (1992) are the 'losers' (*'chiulangii'*), who are keener on finding a job and getting financial independence than on getting good grades. 'Losers' are in the habit of frequently missing classes, not attending exams, yet displaying trendy or defiant appearances (in the same way burnout girls put on a 'slutty' appearance – see Eckert 1989). Their linguistic routines deliberately omit language related to academic activities, and focus on thorough descriptions of job responsibilities, beauty tips and imparting of sexual experience, which such young women are thought by other students to have acquired to a higher extent than their class-attending colleagues.

The nearest Romanian equivalent of the American 'jocks' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992) would be the 'cool kids' (*'oamenii de gasca'*), a fuzzy category comprising those students who look acceptable to most of their peers, dress in a more or less fashionable way, are friendly, unobtrusive, helpful and humorous. The most popular 'cool kids' are those who publicly make fun of both mates and teachers, prove inventive as to cheating tactics and fabricate credible excuses for not delivering a paper on the day of the deadline. Generally, the 'cool kids' do well in exams although they pretend they do not study, since failing if one has studied is commonly regarded as a 'nerdish' proof of stupidity.

As in any CofP approach, this classification is not a cut and dried one. The salience of each category itself varies with every year's class. Furthermore, students switch categories and often preserve an 'in-between' status. Thus, during their senior years, 'nerds' tend to cut an increasingly lower profile while 'losers' seem to gain ground because an increasing number of students take up jobs during that period of their academic lives. (Such people keep being regarded as 'losers' since dropping out in favour of taking a job is commonly seen as a mistake, as Romanians tend to value a lot the benefits of tertiary education and the future career opportunities it is likely to offer to young people).

4.6.6. Significance of the student body classification for my research

I have provided the above personal classification of Romanian students in English in order to come up with some plausible motivation for members of each

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category to differentially engage in the practice of reading British magazines in their spare time. Observing these students during breaks and having had frequent private talks with them as well as two discussions with focus groups (see 4.6.5.) has led me to conclude that they read British magazines targeted at a female readership for purposes of 'practical knowledge' (Hermes 1995) consisting of tips, advice, suggestions as to coping with troublesome situations) and of 'relaxation' (reading something 'putdownable' after having struggled through Chaucer or Joyce). Most 'cool kids' admit reading such magazines or acknowledge such texts as a resource kit which will help them enhance their own coolness. Snobs and nerds are less likely to admit reading such magazines for purposes other than improving their English, since their alleged love for elitist art forms often prompts them into publicly deriding such 'trivial' texts.

Consequently, each of my respondents can be seen as belonging to one of two categories: regular readers of women's magazines – defined by means of positive practices (identifying with the community of magazine readers), or accidental or coerced readers of women's magazines – defined by means of negative practices (disidentifying with the community of magazine readers but agreeing to temporarily engage in the practice of reading not to displease me as their teacher).

4.7. Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have endeavoured to discuss women's magazines in the light of several requirements of this genre: the combination of authority and solidarity in the writer-reader relationship, the major role played by romance, fantasy and empathetic identification with both writers and protagonists, as well as the contradictory construction of femininity. Taking each of the afore-mentioned genre requirements into consideration, I have highlighted the atypicality of Wald's article, '*Men in Trunks*', which is a parodic replica to advice columns in women's magazines. Regarding this atypicality as potentially schema-refreshing, I have tried to further operationalise the concept of 'schema-refreshment' by highlighting several expectation-challenging associations the author of the article makes. Such associations have been discussed within the broader framework of an analysis of the text in terms of categorisation criteria and strategies, suggested prototypes of masculinity, social schemata of masculinity and the textual headers likely to enable instantiation of such cognitive structures.

Before starting the data analysis (see Chapter 6), I thought it necessary to supply a comprehensive description of the participants in my study, i.e. the young Romanian female undergraduates of English. This was carried out according to the main tenets of a community-of-practice approach, namely mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire. A division of the student body into several groups according to their prevalent curricular and extra-curricular practices paves the way for understanding social as well as individual differences between participants in the study in terms of linguistic and social enterprises, including reading British magazines as a habitual or occasional practice.

Chapter 5 will discuss some issues regarding the Pilot Study. The main focus will be on the modifications I made in the formulation of the tasksheet questions in order to improve the research instrument and successfully utilise it in the Main Study.

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THE PILOT STUDY: DEVELOPING AND ADAPTING THE COMPREHENSION TASKSHEET FOR THE MAIN STUDY

5.0. Introduction

The present chapter will briefly present the procedures utilised in piloting the comprehension tasksheet designed for the selected text, '*Men in Trunks*'. Most of the chapter will be devoted to the modifications undergone to the tasksheet I had initially designed. As a result of such modifications, I devised a more focused tasksheet for the main study, meant to elicit more informative and more articulate responses from the participants. I carried out a response analysis of the completed tasksheets belonging to a sample of five respondents. Readers are invited to look at the Pilot Study tasksheet (Appendix II)

5.1. Data collection: logistics

I conducted the pilot study in May 1999 and did not meet with any difficulties as regards either access to respondents or ethics of research (Aeginitou 1993). The respondents were 31 female first year students in English, my own students, a semi-captive audience. The completion of the tasksheets took place during one of the English Proficiency classes I used to teach the respective group of students on a weekly basis, during four-hour sessions. Once the comprehension sheets had been distributed, respondents were given no time limit for the completion of the tasks. Four of the 31 respondents did not complete the sheets. Most of the group took between 2 and 2.15 hours to finish the tasks. Responses to all tasks were provided in English.

Respondents were guaranteed anonymity and invited to attach a pseudonym to the completed tasksheet. I did not share much information about my line of research with them lest I should influence their answers. The atmosphere was relaxed and the respondents exchanged humorous remarks and shared a cheerful mood. After they handed in the completed tasksheets and expressed their curiosity about the aim of the study, I gave them a few details about my PhD programme, my own research and the purpose of tasksheet completion.

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5.2. Procedure

Once I collected the completed tasksheets, I numbered them, spread them on a table and drew five at random. I analysed those five sets of responses and subsequently reconsidered the relevance of the each question for the purposes of my investigation. In those cases when most responses failed to provide useful information for my research questions, the respective task or question was either left out or modified. As I show later, most modifications involved question reformulation, so as to elicit the most informative response with the least processing effort on the part of the informants.

5.3. Tasksheet design for the pilot study

Tasks or questions (from now on all referred to as questions) making up the comprehension sheet administered to respondents for the Pilot Study may be classified both in terms of the analysis they require and in terms of the type of responses they are likely to elicit. As shown in Table 5A below, qualitative questions prevail over quantitative questions.

Table 5A

Classification of questions in terms of type of analysis

Quantitative Qs	1.2, 4.2, 8, 10.3, 11, 12, 15.
Qualitative Qs	1.1, 1.3, 2, 3, 4.1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10.1, 10.2, 10.4, 13, 14

Concerning the type of elicited responses, as shown in Table 5B below, most questions were designed with a view to eliciting acknowledgement of attitudes and expectations as regards various text-related issues, especially concerning Wald's categorisation of men and her description of the three categories of male holiday makers. Only one question (Q7) was intended to elicit indication of categorisation strategies employed by respondents and one sub-question (Q 10.1) was designed to prompt respondents into justifying previous evaluations.

Table 5B

Classification of questions in terms of the type of responses elicited

Attitudinal Qs	1.2, 4.2, 10.3, 11, 12, 15
Classificatory Qs	7
Expectation-related (either expectation-building or expectation-confirming) Qs	1.1, 1.3, 2, 3, 5, 6, 13

5.4. Adapting the tasksheet for the main study

In the pages to come, I will identify the changes undergone by individual questions or sets of questions included in the pilot tasksheet in designing the tasksheet for the Main Study. As already mentioned, a number of questions needed to be modified in

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order to elicit better focused and more informative responses. I have chosen to discuss such modifications in relation to each set of tasksheet questions as follows: pre-reading questions, while-reading questions and post-reading questions. A summary of the main types of modifications will be presented at the end of this chapter.

5.4.1. Pre-reading questions

All subquestions making up Q1 were preserved in order to be introduced in the pre-reading tasks of the Main Study tasksheet:

Q1.1: *Look at the picture on Page 1, the first in a three-page article published in the August 1998 issue of the British magazine "**ZEST: for minds as well as bodies**" What does the picture show? (Don't turn over yet).*
Q1.2. *How do you find such a sight? Tick the box that best suits your opinion on the five-point scale from "utterly ordinary" to "very unusual" below:*
Q1.3: *What do you expect an article accompanied by such a picture to be about?*

The reason for preserving them as such was that the responses they elicited seemed to contain language clues indicative of schemata respondents were likely to have instantiated at this early stage of textual encounter. As responses to Q 1.2. point out, the visual input that triggered the instantiation of the SPORTS schema was estimated as a sight which appeared rather 'ordinary' than 'unusual' (range: 1–4, most frequent rank: 2, see Table 5.1.2.).

Table 5.1.2.

Q1.2 ordinary ⟷ unusual

range	1 – 4
mfr	2

Box No.	No. of Resp.	Percent %
1	1	20
2	2	40
3	–	0
4	1	20
5	–	0

Q2 was: *Turn over now. Read the title and the questions accompanying it: What do you expect an article with such headlines published in a magazine mainly read by young women of your age, to be dealing with?*

I preserved its formulation for the Main Study because, as the data analysis revealed, it managed to prompt respondents into activating an appropriate GENRE schema and subsequently develop genre expectations. Four respondents stated that their expectations about the article revolved around the main characteristics of 'advice'

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columns published in women's magazines: giving tips to the reader and sharing normative prescriptions with the reader for example:

> R3: The relationship between virility and men's underwear; how to find out things about men by studying their underwear/beachwear.

Apart from a GENRE schema, the fifth respondent, activated a PARODY schema, mostly in relation to parodic counselling on 'how to get your guy':

> R1: The headline reminds me of the parodical movie with the subtitle 'Men in Trunks' as a reference to Robin Hood and his gang. I would therefore expect an article on men but written in a mocking tone. The questions accompanying the title also seem ironical and the subsequent answers will probably discuss male behaviour and female expectations when the couple goes on a holiday at the seaside.

5.4.2. While-reading questions

Q3 was: *Do not turn over yet. This is the first paragraph of the article. Fill in the empty spaces with whatever lexical items you may think are suitable to the context*

Since most responses to Q3 provided commonsensical anticipations and there was noteworthy variety as to the lexical means of expressing such anticipations, I chose to preserve its formulation for the Main Study in order to see to what extent respondents' anticipations of certain key-words in the opening paragraph were correct.

Q4 was: *Identify similarities and differences between your words and Wald's.*

Respondents acknowledged the possibility of drawing connections between 'human traits' and 'trunk traits' and embarked upon the line of inferencing Wald jocularly invited her readers to take. As I thought that analysing myself the coincidences, similarities and differences between Wald's sets of NPs and the respondents' sets of NPs might save respondents considerable time and effort, which could be allotted to fulfilling other cognitive tasks, I decided to leave out Q4.1.

Q4.2 was: *Between each pair of adjectives below there is a five-point scale. Tick the box that best suits your opinion on the statement Wald makes in the last sentence in the paragraph above.*

daring ⟷ conservative

range	2–4
mfr	3

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	–	0
2	1	20
3	3	60
4	1	20
5	–	0

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Table 5.4.2.b.

unrealistic ⟷ realistic

range	3–5
mfr	3

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	–	0
2	–	0
3	3	60
4	1	20
5	1	20

Table 5.4.2.c.

alluring ⟷ unappealing

range	1–3
mfr	3

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	1	20
2	1	20
3	3	40
4	–	0
5	–	0

Table 5.4.2.d.

insightful ⟷ superficial

range	3–4
mfr	3

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	–	0
2	–	0
3	3	60
4	2	20
5	–	0

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Table 5.4.2.e.

silly ⟷ brilliant

range	2–3
mfr	2

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	–	0
2	3	60
3	1	20
4	–	0
5	–	0

As shown in Tables 5.4.2.a to e above, the question elicited responses indicative of respondents' attitudes regarding Wald's opening paragraph. As, in my opinion, the paragraph under discussion could be regarded as highly representative for the whole article, I estimated measurement of respondents' attitudes to be indicative, even at this early point of textual encounter, of their tendency to accommodate or dismiss claims and representations that may not fit pre-existing schema-consistent representations of masculinity. Consequently, I chose to preserve the formulation of Q 4.2. for the Main Study.

Q5 was: *Look at the pictures (captions covered) on the next two pages of the magazine article and suggest two possible captions for each in the blank spaces indicated for each picture on the respective page.*

Because I thought the responses Q5 elicited were indicative of social schemata readers supply when processing visual input as well as of their degree of acquaintance with captions in young women's magazines, I decided to preserve its formulation for the Main Study. At the same time, I thought that making myself the comparison between captions suggested by respondents and captions written by Wald would spare them the effort of engaging in a time-consuming and tedious task. This resulted in my decision to leave out Q6:

> *On the following pages, check your captions against Wald's. On a similarity scale between her captions and yours, where would you locate each of the captions you previously suggested?*

Q7 was: *Try to put yourself in Wald's... sandals and classify men on the beach into three categories according to the type of trunks they wear. Which would these be? What criteria would you use in your classification?*

Responses to Q7 generally indicated that, while defining categories of men on the beach, most respondents mistook criteria for characteristics of the respective category of trunk-wearers. Language clues in the responses provided textual evidence to the likely

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partial instantiation of social schemata of masculinity, possibly comprising one or several of the following variables:

- ***type of trunks***: 'daring beachwear in terms of design', 'mainly classic boxers', 'funny-looking beachwear' (R1), 'wear pretty horrible, out of time, out of place, out of fashion trunks', 'Wear trunks that actually suit them well' (R3), 'the latest fashionable trunks'(R4), 'long and large swimming trunks; pale or dark colours', 'decent colours, scanty trunks' (R5),
- ***build***: 'packs of muscles'(R2), 'they are fat',' body-building on the beach' (R3),
- ***appearance and behaviour attributes of trunk-wearers***: 'feline/prey animal-like(R1), 'self-confident attitude'(R2), 'they would do anything to draw female attention', 'embarrassed, a nerd usually, frightened by topless women, would keep their pants on if they could' (R3), 'They do not only disregard fashion but also the aesthetics?', R4).

The above-listed variables prompted me to supplement the question by the enunciation of two more focused tasks: one involving the enumeration of salient attributes, and one requiring an evaluation of each anticipated attribute in terms of its effect on the female observers. To avoid any confusions between categorised features and criteria of categorisation, I thought it necessary to replace '*What criteria would you use in your classification?*' by '*Enumerate their most salient characteristics*' for the formulation of the question to be more focused and respondent-friendly.

Q8 was: *Wald divides male sunbathers into the following three categories :...On a five-point scale from 'disgusting' to 'appealing', how do you expect Wald to assess each category? Tick the box that best suits your opinion.*

Table 5.8.a.

disgusting ⟷ appealing
BLTs

range	4–5
mfr	5

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	–	0
2	–	0
3	–	0
4	1	20
5	4	80

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Table 5.8.b.

disgusting ⟷ appealing
Self-obssessed skimpies

range	1 – 3
mfr	1

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	3	60
2	1	20
3	1	20
4	-	0
5	-	0

Table 5.8.c.

disgusting ⟷ appealing
Bashful Boxers

range	2–4
mfr	2

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	–	0
2	3	60
3	1	20
4	1	20
5	–	0

As Tables 5.8.a., 5.8.b and 5.8.c above show, the question managed to prompt respondents into ranking their attitudes towards the three categories of men. Consequently, I chose to preserve its formulation, while yet finding it necessary to supplement the directions with a requirement for justification of the given rankings. Therefore I formulated a justificatory sub-question (*Could you justify your expectations?)* and, to prevent confusion altogether, I also suggested a sample answer: (*I ranked Tasty BLTS as ... because...*). I anticipated such a justificatory supplementary question to elicit responses that highlight resorting to certain traditional stereotypes of masculinity in the process of justification of rankings.

Q9 was: *Make a list of points or write a few sentences showing how you would expect Wald to continue under the respective heading.*

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Responses to Q9 brought linguistic evidence as to the possible instantiation of several social schemata at this stage of textual encounter, among which the most likely to have been instantiated is a MASCULINITY schema. Various sub-schemata are reported to have been triggered in the respondents' minds, among which: a FASHION sub-schema, an EVERYDAY SCHEDULE schema including a participants, settings and and activities and, prevailingly, a HUMAN ATTRIBUTES subschema, made up of elements indicative of male tendencies or patterns of behaviour, especially in a potentially romantic context.

Given the complexity of schemata likely to have been activated and their remarkable diversity, I chose to split the question into two sub-questions in order to obtain more focused responses which could enable me to better systematise my analysis. Consequently, I chose to split Q9 into two sub-questions. The first, Q 9.1. read as follows:

Q9.1: '*In the light of the above 3 paragraphs, how do you expect Wald to assess the respective category? Tick the box that best suits your expectations.*

Tasty BLTs:	+	–	N
Self-obsessed Skimpies:	+	–	N
Bashful Boxers:	+	–	N

Its purpose was to provide evidence as to the (dis)confirmation of anticipated evaluations of categories of men as supplied in responses to Q7.

The second sub-question, Q 9.2., was formulated as follows:

Q9.2: *What other specific traits do you expect to be discussed/mentioned by Wald in the paragraphs to come?*

What public personae do you expect Wald to mention as representative of the category in question?

Which consequences/reactions on the part of the beach female watcher do you expect Wald to describe for each category?

Q 9.2. was intended to guide respondents towards envisaging three sets of key variables in the MASCULINITY schemata they might normally activate: prototypical exemplars, salient traits and expected effects upon female observers. In addition, Q 9.2. was thought to enable respondents to focus on salient variables instead of trying to write paragraphs they considered to be consonant with Wald's style

Q10.1 was: *Turn over to the article and read carefully the whole of the three sections describing Wald's three categories of trunk-wearers. Describe in your own words the type(s) of men that fall into the respective category according to Wald.*

I thought it might be necessary to reformulate the question so as to avoid both verbosity, for example:

> All-too fleshy appearances, when/re? No flesh demands to be seen. A sense of puritanism? No, just self-protection from the aggressiveness of the skimpies. Will beaches still be overwhelmed by the all too obvious presence and self-confidence of some narcissistic 'misreaders' of 'the Way to Erotic Assertion'? Especially since snobbery has become a merit. (R1 on SOSs)

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and laconicism, for example:

self-conceited, stupid, deplorable. Men to be laughed at, mocked and despised (R2 on SOSs),

which the response analysis disclosed. The newly-formulated question was:

Q10.1. *In hindsight, summarize the characteristics of the men that fall into the categories established and described by Wald. Mark with * those you find particularly surprising/ shocking or intriguing to mention. Tick the box that suits Wald's evaluation as you perceive it.*

Category	*Traits of category members*	*Evaluation (acc.to Wald)*		
Tasty BLTs		+	–	N
Self-obsessed skimpies		+	–	*N*
Bashful Boxers		+	–	*N*

I thought that this new formulation might not only prompt respondents into listing traits attributable to category members, but also elicit responses indicative of categorisation procedures employed by respondents and of their attitudes towards Wald's categorisation. Given the new formulation of Q10.1., I considered that Q10.2. *(Give Wald's criteria for including them in the respective category)* could be disposed of, since it would only provide a reiterated list of those attributes that would normally have been incorporated in the 'traits of category members' box.

Q10.3 was: *How do you think NOW Wald assesses each category on a five-point scale from 'disgusting' to 'appealing'? Tick the boxes even if your predictions in Q8 have not changed.*

I preserved its formulation for the Main Study because the question successfully elicited assessments that indicate confirmation of anticipated evaluations of the three categories of men initially provided. Moreover, respondents' expectations as expressed in answers to Q8 were confirmed in the sense that, in terms of male attractiveness, whatever was expected to be alluring was avowed to be even more alluring, and whatever was expected to be disgusting was found to be even more disgusting.

Table 5.10.3.a.

disgusting ⟷ appealing

BLTs

range	4
mfr	4

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	–	0
2	–	0
3	–	0
4	5	100
5	–	0

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Table 5.10.3.b.

disgusting ⟷ appealing
Self-obssessed skimpies

range	1–2
mfr	1

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	4	80
2	1	20
3	–	0
4	–	0
5	–	0

Table 5.10.3.c.

disgusting ⟷ appealing
Bashful Boxers

range	1–2
mfr	2

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	1	20
2	4	80
3	–	0
4	–	0
5	–	0

Q10.4 was: *Write down those words/phrases/text chunks that hamper you in understanding the article.* Responses to Q 10.4 were too vague, merely listing of English words *unknown* to the respondents. To achieve higher specificity, radical reformulation was needed. Therefore I chose to split the question into two self-standing questions. The first newly formulated question read as follows:

Here's a list of proper *names mentioned in the article. Who are the respective persons? Why does Wald mention them in the respective paragraph/caption?*

Name	*Who he is/What is he famous for*	*Why mention him?*
		(e.g. He symbolizes...)

This question was designed to elicit responses that could be indicative of the activation of person schemata. Such schemata are likely to have been triggered by the

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proper names in the text, most of which presumably designate prototypical members for certain categories of men.

The second newly formulated question reads as follows:

Make a list of lexical items you had not come across before reading 'Men in Trunks'. Is their meaning:

- *guessable from the context?*
- *important for the issue discussed in the paragraph/point made by Wald in the paragraph?*
- *Complete column 1 and tick the box that fits your opinion in columns 2 and 3.*

Lexical item	Meaning guessable		Meaning important	
	Y	N	Y	N
	Y	N	Y	N
	Y	N	Y	N
	Y	N	Y	N

This question focuses on the (lack of) cultural input in the facilitation or hampering of text comprehension. A subsidiary goal pursued by introducing such a question was to elicit responses that may reveal inferencing procedures (guessing meaning out of context) as well as signal whether respondents grant significance to those text chunks that cause hindrance in comprehension. This line of investigation could have been pursued within the framework of theories of reading in a foreign language (Alderson and Urquart 1984) but this pursuit was not encompassed within the scope of the present study.

Q11 was: *How do you find Wald's classification? Tick the box that best suits your opinion/attitude).* The response analysis (see Table 5.11.a, b, c and d below) revealed that it was an efficient redundancy question, having elicited further responses that had shed light on evaluative aspects and confirmed the rankings of attitudes provided in responses to Q4.2. (see Tables 5.4.2.a–e, pp. 129–130). I regarded responses prompted by this question as a possible basis for comparison between attitudes respondents had at some stage of partial encounter with the text and attitudes they espoused after reading the text. Consequently I inserted the question in the Main Study tasksheet without modifying it.

Table 5.11.a.

down-to-earth ⟷ unrealistic

range	2–3
mfr	3

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	–	0
2	2	40
3	3	60
4	–	0
5	–	0

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Table 5.11.b.

ingenious ⟷ unimaginative

range	1 – 4
mfr	1

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	3	60
2	1	20
3	–	0
4	1	20
5	–	0

Table 5.11.c.

man-bashing ⟷ man-flattering

range	1–3
mfr	3

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	1	20
2	1	20
3	3	60
4	–	0
5	–	0

Table 5.11.d.

boring ⟷ inspiring

range	2–5
mfr	4

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	–	0
2	1	20
3	1	20
4	2	40
5	1	20

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5.4.3. Post-reading questions

Q12 was: *In comparison with your previous images of men on the beach, do you find Wald's classification predictable/conventional vs: novel/original. Tick the box that best suits your attitude on a five-point scale.*

Despite responses indicating no apparent originality of Wald's classification of men on the beach (see Table 5.12 below), I preserved its formulation for the Main Study.

5.12

Table of responses

predictable ⟷ original

range	1–5
mfr	2

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	1	20
2	2	40
3	–	0
4	1	20
5	1	20

Q13 was: *Turn the article over and make a comparison between your own classification (Q7) and what you can recall from Wald's classification of men according to their beachwear.*

With the exception of one response (R1):

a) the conventionality of boxers
the audacity of eroticism
b) i) the elegance and appeal of BLTs (unfortunately, there's only one picture of them, and quite unclear to classify it from the very beginning. The ridiculously high esteem of skimpy proud wearers.
ii) the very dismissive attitude towards boxers which appear equally stupid and ridiculous as skimpies. And equally worthless.

there were no explicit formulations of issues upon which respondents (dis)agreed with the author. Consequently, I thought that the question needed reformulation. The incomplete sentences were therefore inserted in the directions of the newly formulated Q13, designed so as to closely guide respondents into specifying both sources of (dis)agreement with the author, and textual sources of strong emotional reactions related to various aspects of masculinity dealt with in the article. I considered that completing such sentences was likely to elicit responses that might indicate some schema-refreshing potential of the text upon the respondents. The reformulated Q13 reads as follows:

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Turn the article over and complete the following
Regarding the classification of men on the beach according to their trunks,
I agree with Wald when it comes to...
I disagree with Wald when it comes to...
I was really appalled /shocked /intrigued by
I've found Wald's idea of.../statement on.... very expectation-challenging
Having read Wald's article, I see things differently now with respect to ....

Q14 was: *Go back to the article and list the words, phrases and sentences that brought to mind issues which caused you to react strongly (feel surprised, indignant, shocked). If possible, specify the reasons for your reaction).*

The response analysis revealed that, despite respondents' having candidly reported on their emotional reactions while reading the article, few explicit responses pointed to any causal relationship between such reactions and Wald's descriptions of male bodies and categories of males, for example:

– shocked and fully entertained at the transparency and irony of the language.
– amused: " after all, what with jelly fish, sharks and whales,.... Predator"
– perverse thoughts of the author: "if he splays his legs...." (R2)

Since the purpose of the question was to elicit responses that might indicate some possible connection between potentially schema-refreshing effect (such as shock, indignation, etc) and Wald's tongue-in-cheek evaluation of categories of men, I split Q14 into two sub-questions as follows:

Q14.1: *Wald repeatedly refers to parts of the (male body) and to various aspects of masculinity. Make a list of those references that caused you an emotional reaction (disgust, amusement, admiration for the clever way the author put it). Specify your reaction next to each item mentioned. (Simply indicate number of lines).*

Reference to male body and masculinity	*Experienced reaction*	*Reason for experienced reaction*

Q14.2: *Indicate any other words, phrases and sentences that brought to mind issues which caused you to react strongly (feel surprised, indignant, shocked). If possible, specify the reasons for your reaction.*

Q14.1 was designed so as to elicit responses acknowledging strong emotional reactions presumably brought about by novel views on masculinity, or by unexpected ways of designating parts of the male body. In addition, respondents were requested to provide a reason for their strong emotional reactions, in other words to justify why certain ways of referring to the male body or certain representations of masculinity may account for the avowed reaction. Responses to Q14.2 were expected to elicit responses acknowledging emotional reactions caused by issues mentioned in the text other than masculinity-related issues (e.g. wealth, decadence, the patronising tone of the writer).

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I chose to preserve Q15 for the Main Study (*How did you find Wald's article? Tick the box that best suits your attitude on a five-point scale.*) because, as Tables 5.15 a and b below show

Table 5.15.a.

enjoyable ⟷ shocking

range	1–3
mfr	2

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	1	20
2	3	60
3	1	20
4	–	0
5	–	0

Table 5.15.b.

inspiring ⟷ boring

range	1–3
mfr	2

Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	1	20
2	2	40
3	1	20
4	1	20
5	–	0

this question successfully served the purpose it had been designed for, namely that of endorsing opinions and attitudes avowed in responses to Q12.

5.4.4. Summary of modifications to pilot study tasksheet

Table C below provides a synthesis of the broad modifications to the pilot study tasksheet with a view to adapting it for use in the Main Study.

Table C

Status of questions in newly formulated comprehension tasksheet

LEFT AS SUCH	SUPPLEMENTED	LEFT OUT	REFORMULATED
1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2, 3, 4.2, 5, 7, 11, 12, 15	8	6, 10.2	9,10.1,10.4, 13,14

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As shown in the table, most questions were preserved, five questions were reformulated, while two were eliminated and one was newly inserted. Table 5D below summarises the reasons justifying the modifications (column 2) as well as the types of modifications each question underwent (column 3).

Table 5D

Types and reasons for question modifications

Modified Q	Reasons for modification	Way(s) of modification
8	to elicit justification & provide guidance	Supplementing: justification-related Q + sample answer
9	to facilitate response grouping and enhance focus on expectations as indicative of possibly activated person schemata:	split into 2 sub-Qs: 1) expectation-ranking 2) eliciting expectations regarding 3 main directions involved in activation of person schemata: • attributes • prototypical exemplars • anticipated reactions of potential evaluators
10.1	to elicit 3 types of responses: • related to attributes • related to readers' attitudes • related to readers' perceptions of author's evaluation	expanded and tailored according to response-type
10.4	avoid mixing relevant knowledge on prototypical exemplars with lexical and cultural (lack of) knowledge	split into 2 sub-Qs: 1) eliciting responses on prototypical exemplars 2) eliciting responses on lexical and cultural difficulties encountered
13	to be respondent-friendly to guide respondents towards potentially schema-refreshing issues	completing missing parts in S with provided beginning
14	to separate strong emotional reactions related to male body and masculinity from emotional reactions caused by other issues	split into 2 sub-Qs: 1) focused on reactions related to text chunks dealing with parts of the male body and various aspects of masculinity 2) focused on reactions caused by other issues

As easily perceivable from the above table, the prevalent type of modification consisted in splitting questions into sub-questions, so that they became more reader-friendly and elicited more focused and informative responses. The rationale for each question in the Main Study tasksheet will be fully discussed in terms of its relevance to specific RQs or combinations of RQs in Chapter 6.

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5.5. Some implications of the Pilot Study: a few brief comments

In addition to the findings supplied by those sets of responses which subsequently enabled me to identify certain flaws in the tasksheet and reformulate the questions so as to better serve the purpose of my investigation, analysing the responses in the Pilot Study enabled me to anticipate certain problematic or attention-worthy issues concerning the Main Study, with special focus on the likely instantiation of certain schemata.

Responses to Q 1.1 entitled me to hypothesise that respondents had activated a SPORTS schema right after processing the visual part of the first page of the article. Responses indicate the presence of one or several of the following variables, justifiably present in a SPORTS schema:

- ***Agent***: 'a young man'(R1, R2, R3, R4, R5)
- ***Garments***: 'wearing a pair of trunks '(R1), 'wearing short pants'(R2)
- ***Position***: 'in a somewhat unbalanced position'(R1), 'head down, feet up'(R4)
- ***Location***: 'on the beach'(R1), 'on a beach near the ocean shore'(R2), 'on a beach or on the ground'(R3), 'on a beach'(R4, R5)
- ***Activity***: 'seems to be doing gymnastics'(R2), 'maybe trying to build up his muscles or practising a yoga posture' (R3), 'doing physical exercises'(R5).

Expectations regarding a SPORTS schema as suggested by responses to Q 1.1. seem to be strengthened in responses to Q 1.3., which provide further language indications regarding the activation of such a schema, specifically of the following additional variables:

- ***Goal***: 'improving one's physical or spiritual shape'(R3), 'establishing records' ('records of resistance – Guinness book-like')(R3), 'training... for a contest'(R4)
- ***Participants***: 'sportsmen'(R1), 'gymnasts'(R4)
- ***Means to achieve goal***: 'program', 'sacrifices'(R4).

When being required to state what they expect an article with such a title to be about (Q2), four respondents alluded to articles revolving around tip-giving and norm-sharing, and specified that they expect to read about the following topics: men's behaviour and its relation to male personality and/or to virility, female expectations with respect to men on the beach, actions female holiday makers engage in (conquering men, adapting strategies according to potential sartorial signals). One respondent acknowledged the article as being a parodic text.

Responses to Q4.2. show respondents' attitudes towards the opening paragraph written by Wald. This introductory statement in this paragraph was labelled as more '*daring*' than '*conservative*' (most frequent rank: 3). On the unrealistic/realistic scale, the statement lies, in the respondents' opinion, midway between '*realistic*' and '*unrealistic*' (most frequent rank: 3). Regarding the alluring/unappealing aspect of the statement, the same most frequent rank of 3 entitled me to conclude that respondents found it more '*alluring*' than '*unappealing*'. In terms of insightfulness/superficiality, the statement is regarded by respondents as lying midway on the cline (most frequent rank: 3). I did not

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take into consideration the values provided for the *'silly'/brilliant'* opposition, as one respondent did not tick any box. Although not strikingly high, I estimated that, at this point, the rankings of '*daring*' and '*appealing*' might be candidates for the indication of the schema-refreshing potential of the text at least with part of the respondents. Other qualifying adjectives that respondents employed to describe Wald's statement comprised: *experienced, professional, written in a connoisseur's tone, interesting, slightly far-fetched, strange, innovative.*

Responses to Q7 were indicative of respondents' classification strategies as applied to men of the beach and of the likely instantiation of social schemata such as the CLOTHES schema, the BUILD schema and the BEHAVIOUR schema (see section 5.4.2.). In the light of the schemata likely to have been instantiated while providing responses to Q7, Table 5.8. (see section 5.4.2.) shows respondents' estimated expectations and attitudes regarding the three categories of men as schematically conceptualised in terms of cognitive structures mainly centred around notions such as appearance, build, garments and behaviour. As the figures in the table indicate, respondents expected Tasty BLTs to be assessed as highly '*appealing*' (range 4-5, most frequent rank: 5), Self-obsessed skimpies as '*disgusting*' (range: 1-3, most frequent rank: 1) and Bashful boxers as situated somewhat midway between the '*appealing*' and the '*disgusting*' poles (range: 2–4, most frequent rank: 2)

Responses to Q9 provided me with several language clues which entitled me to hypothesise about certain schemata the respondents might have activated. Thus, R1 is likely to have instantiated a MASCULINITY schema, and cites Al Bundy as the prototypical exemplar of the chauvinist pig. She may have also activated a FASHION schema comprising the following variables: designer (Gaultier), event (MTV ceremony), outstanding displayer (Marylin Manson). When taking into consideration the category of 'bashful boxers', R1 may have activated an EVERYDAY SCHEDULE schema including a prevalent theme ('conformity'), participants ('next door neighbour') and activities suggesting lack of imagination ('rent a tape').

R2's responses indicate the possible activation of a MASCULINITY schema as she describes an allegedly prototypical exemplar: 'such a stylish, fashionable, attractive actor-like type of man'. As to the possible activation of a MASCULINITY schema in relation to the 'Skimpies', such a schema may have included the ridiculous appearance of the members of this category (the 'over-confident monkeys') as a key variable. The sentence suggested by R2 as a sequel to Wald's introductory paragraph to the 'Boxers' section is indicative of the possible activation of a genre schema, more specifically of a 'romance' schema inherent to textual expectations. 'Cuteness' and 'decency' are mentioned as attributes of the members of the category 'Bashful Boxers' and may be indicative of a MASCULINITY schema having been activated in the light of these salient characteristics.

R3 mostly enumerated attributes that bear considerable effect upon the watchers, be this effect favourable ('stand a good chance to stand out') or utterly annoying ('they will probably perpetuate this fashion throughout the centuries', 'extremes prove distasteful', 'these manage to provoke pity'). Thus, there is some likelihood that her MASCULINITY schema may have centred around the 'effect' variable.

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Like R2, R4 lists down attributes of the members of each category ('are to be looked for and praised', 'the will the ones to make a girl proud', 'are to be laughed at and mocked...', 'have their charm and may be promising companions'), all of which supposedly constituted key variables in an allegedly activated MASCULINITY schema.

R5 is likely to have activated a MASCULINITY schema built around two key variables: prototypical representatives and salient attributes. She mentions movie star Burt Lancaster, a prototypical exemplar of the category 'successful men'. The 'skimpies' and the 'boxers' are described in terms of certain (unspecified) attributes that are meant to arouse pleasure and induce curiosity with female watchers.

Language evidence in responses to Q10.1 reveals few variables pertaining to the male body or male beachwear schemata might be indicative of prudery on the part of the readers. Along the same line of investigation, rankings present in responses to Q10.3 (see Table 5.10.3.a, b and c) are illustrative of respondents' post-reading attitudes towards the three categories. Thus, BLTs are ranked as extremely '*appealing*' (range: 5, most frequent rank: 5), while SOSs and BBs are estimated as more '*disgusting*' than initially expected (SOSs: range: 1–2, most frequent rank: 1; BBs: range: 1–2, most frequent rank: 2).

Responses to Q11 (see Table 5.11.a, b, and c) showed that Wald's classification was found quite '*down-to-earth*' (range: 2–3, most frequent rank: 3), somewhat rather '*ingenious*' (range: 1–4, most frequent rank: 1), lying midway between '*man-bashing*' and '*man-flattering*' (range: 1–3, most frequent rank: 3) and, on the whole, more '*inspiring*' than '*boring*' (range: 2–5, most frequent rank: 4). Other adjectives respondents attributed to Wald's classification comprise *influential, feminist, ironical, up-to-date, entertaining, humorous, a little too sexist-feminist and reductive.* In accordance with most previously acknowledged attitudes, final estimations of Wald's article in responses to Q15 (see Table 5.15.) categorised it as definitely '*enjoyable*' (range: 1–3, most frequent rank: 2) rather than '*shocking*' and midway between '*inspiring*' and '*boring*' (range: 1–3, most frequent rank: 2). Other adjectives describing respondents' post-reading attitudes comprise *amusing, entertaining, ironic, original, man-mocking, feminist.*

5.5.1. Findings in relation to allegedly activated schemata and avowed attitudes: their impact on the tasksheet revision

Respondents seem to have effortlessly suspended the initial SPORTS schema activated while completing tasks in Q1.1. and Q1.3. A GENRE schema focusing on the advisory and parodic nature of the text '*Men in Trunks*' published in the British magazine '*Zest*' was adequately instantiated while completing task in Q3.

Responses to Q7 to 9 are likely to enable me to hypothesise both about person schemata and the categorisation strategies that the activation of such schemata generally involve. If possible overlaps between Wald's schemata and the respondents' schemata can be easily assessed in terms of similarity/dissimilarity, human traits make up an abstract and much more comprehensive category, where basic level instances are hard to delimit from superordinates and/or subordinates and where slots can be practically numberless. Therefore, splitting Q9 into sub-questions (see Main Study tasksheet, App. III) will enable

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eliciting both listing of defining attributes and mentioning of prototypical exemplars, which may supply a more comprehensive view on the person schemata likely to have been instantiated by the respondents. Furthermore, sub-questions in Q10 are designed to provide expectation-(dis)confirming evidence related to previously instantiated person schemata as well as introduce an 'evaluative' dimension.

In the Main Study, the prospect of readers undergoing potential schema-refreshing representations needs taking into account two cognitive processes that readers seemed to have experienced:

1. acceptance of fuzzy categories (e.g. "Bashful Boxers") and lack of rigid compliance with traditional dichotomous categories (e.g. attractive vs. unattractive males).
2. acquaintance with feminist perspectives and ability to take a critical attitude towards them (e.g. exposing 'reductive' instances of 'reverse sexism').

5.6. Concluding remarks

Piloting the comprehension tasksheet provided me with the opportunity to revise and improve it as an instrument of investigation. Analysing five sets of responses indicated certain flaws in the elicitive strategies, which I endeavoured to remedy by modifying the formulation of certain questions, adding others and splitting some into more focused, clearer sub-questions. Since attitudes and avowed emotional reactions needed a finer measurement, without overlooking the possibility that respondents might interpret the same value of items ranged on a scale differently (Block 1998), I chose to introduce a 7-point Lickert scale in the quantitative questions instead of a 5-point Lickert scale. I also devised simpler, more articulate formulations for questions directly addressing respondents' views and opinions on masculinity and male bodies at various points of textual encounter. Since the pilot analysis revealed a close link between categorisation strategies and justifications of such categorisations, I decided to repeatedly require respondents to provide justification for their evaluations of categories of men. I also thought that exploring the link between expectations, attitudes and justified categorisation procedures needed to be addressed and I consequently reformulated some questions so as to elicit responses indicative of such a link.

The newly devised Main Study tasksheet (see Appendix III) was intended to focus on specific issues related to (lack of) accommodation of masculinity schemata, attitudes towards male bodies and novel descriptions of masculinity, expectations and inferencing lines related to stereotyping and/or dismantling of stereotypes of masculinity. The next chapter will provide a discussion of both question rationale and a detailed analysis of the responses participants in the Main Study provided, with special emphasis on their contribution to the elucidation of the research questions.

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MAIN STUDY: DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

6.0. Introduction

In Chapter 5, I described the modifications undergone by the tasksheet employed in the Pilot Study so as to devise an allegedly more efficient tasksheet, intended to be used in the Main Study. I will now discuss methodological issues regarding data collection and data analysis for the Main Study. The largest part of the present chapter is devoted to providing the rationale and the findings for five sets of tasksheet questions, grouped according to the research question(s) or combination of research questions they addressed.

6.1. Data collection

The aim of the present section is to provide a description of the methodology of tasksheet design, the logistics of comprehension tasksheet administration, completion and processing, as well as a brief presentation of the participants in the Main Study. The description of young Romanian female undergraduates of English as a community of practice (see section 4.6) should already have shed some light on their magazine-reading practices, their proficiency in English and their cultural and behavioural background. I will here specify the circumstances of their participation in the Main Study. I will also attempt to clarify certain aspects regarding the behavioural habits and dispositions of the respondents, which, under different circumstances, might have resulted in different responses to questions on the tasksheet.

6.1.2. Logistics

I conducted the Main Study in April 2000. Potential participants were recruited among female first-year students in English, my own students. They were informed a fortnight in advance about the opportunity to contribute to an ongoing research study. I specified that I was doing this research in order to write my PhD thesis and gave them some general information about the PhD programme. I also specified that their contribution would be crucial for the success of my investigation and they appeared to

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feel flattered to be regarded as reliable to serve scholarly purposes. I also informed them that they would have to complete some tasks and answer some questions, all related to a text they might find entertaining. I added that there were no 'good' or 'bad' answers, and that all they had to do was to be candid and spontaneous. They were promised no reward, yet many said they were pleased to do me a friendly favour.

6.1.3. Respondents' behaviour

28 volunteers out of a possible 62 took part in the Main Study. They were a semi-captive audience since they were kindly required to complete tasksheets during one of my English Proficiency classes with the respective group. As with the Pilot Study, respondents were granted anonymity and invited to write a pseudonym on the tasksheets, which were completed in English. During the process of task completion, respondents appeared relaxed and laid-back. There was considerable giggling, nudging, blushing and exchanging of humorous remarks and meaningful glances. Pleased as I was with their feeling unstressed and cheerful, I would rather they had not exchanged remarks: I was concerned that this might influence individual responses.

Once I had distributed the tasksheets, it took the respondents less than two hours to complete the tasks, visibly less than the participants in the Pilot Study. Having handed in the completed tasksheets, respondents confessed to have been greatly amused by the text *'Men in Trunks'* and to be eager to read other texts of the same genre. In addition, they expressed curiosity about questionnaire design techniques, data analysis methods and wanted to know more about the purposes of my research.

6.2. Data analysis

In the sections to come I will report the various stages of my data analysis and the procedures I used for each stage. I will also acknowledge some inconsistencies related to tasksheet design and implicitly to response processing. Then I will provide a detailed analysis of responses grouped according to sets of tasksheet questions designed to investigate certain research questions or combinations of research questions (henceforth RQs).

6.2.1. Broad analytical procedures

To facilitate data processing, I numbered each individual completed tasksheet from 1 to 28. Respondents were to be subsequently referred to as R1, R2, and so on. During the first stage of my analysis, I organised the information provided by individual responses to each tasksheet question (henceforth Q) into tables. Thus, individual sets of responses were ordered starting with Q1 and ending with Q15.

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The second stage of my analysis involved synthesising the previously gathered raw data. With the quantitative Qs, I calculated ranges and frequencies as appropriate (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000). With the qualitative Qs, I 'immersed' myself in the data, developed data-driven categories (Glaser and Strauss 1987, Strauss and Corbin 1990) and grouped responses within each respective category.

The third stage focused on drawing comparisons between questions addressing similar issues (e.g. attitude measurement, categorisation strategies or prototypical features and prototypical exemplars assignable to established categories) at the various points of textual encounter. Such comparisons were thus made between responses provided at an early stage of textual encounter, in the middle of the reading process and at the post-reading stage. For the sake of clarity, comparative values were also presented in table form.

The fourth stage consisted of grouping several sets of responses to tasksheet Qs according to the RQ or combination of RQs which they were intended to address. Readers are invited to look at the Main Study Study tasksheet (Appendix III). It may be asked why I did not simply ask respondents whether they found the text expectation-challenging or whether the text may have changed their views on masculinity in one way or another. I anticipated however that if I had asked a question such as '*Did you enjoy the text? Why? What aspects did you find surprising or intriguing? Has this text changed your views/opinions/mentalities regarding masculinity?*' I risked receiving vague and uninformative answers which would not have proved illuminating as to the stages of text comprehension and gradual conceptualisation of newly-encountered masculinities on the part of my respondents. As already specified, my study focused on young Romanian female students' cognitive gendered representations at various stages of their encounter with a British text on the male body. In addition, comprehensive yet very broadly-focused questions like those suggested above would have been more suitable for interview-based research, which I did not embark upon for want of experience in this particular method of investigation. Questions envisaging the whole of the article and not focused on various stages of textual encounter and the feedback likely to be provided by participants during/after each such stage would not have enabled me to measure respondents' attitudes at specific stages of reading with respect to specific issues. I regard such quantifications as highly indicative of changes in attitude, consequently potentially indicative of schema-refreshing propensities.

I also considered that ordering both quantitative and qualitative questions according to pre-, while- and post-reading stages was likely to provide me with items of quantifiable information as to attitudinal changes as well as to modifications related to respondents' gradual assimilation (or lack of assimilation) of newly-encountered representations of masculinity as evinced by the process of reading a text like *Men in Trunks*. I chose to supply respondents with questions focused on the visual input before questions dealing with excerpts from the written text because my personal experience as a magazine reader and observance of other magazine readers' behaviour has largely indicated that:

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a) people tend to focus more on the visuals during a first browsing, then select to read those articles whose visuals they have found particularly alluring or intriguing.
b) pictures are often strategically inserted by editors in order to arouse readers' interest, which is expected to be satisfied by their subsequent encounter with the written text.

Focusing certain questions on the visual text and others on the written text was intended to elicit responses meant to indicate suspension of certain schemata when readers undergo an incomplete encounter with the multimodal text.

In the pages to come, I will supply an analysis of the data as provided in the informants' sets of responses, relating responses to RQs. Each section will address one or more major issues raised by the RQ(s) and illustrated by one of the five sets of responses expected to clarify the issue(s) under discussion. For each Q listed on the comprehension tasksheet (for the sake of economy I will refer to all tasks as questions), I explain the Q rationale before providing the findings related to responses to the respective Q. As an analyst, I thought that this procedure would further facilitate my verification (in addition to the satisfactory piloting) of whether responses managed to serve the purpose of the Q, or whether they failed to elicit the kind of information I expected.

6.2.2. Preparing the data for analysis: rank 'conversion'

When starting the analysis, I came across some lack of consistency in the tasksheet design in terms of the ranging of items indicative of potential schema-refreshment and of items indicative of potential schema-reinforcement. Items pertaining to each of these two sets should have been placed either on the left or on the right pole in every pair of opposites throughout the tasksheet. I decided that the solution to remedy this inconsistency for the purpose of my analysis was to re-arrange items according to a consistent positioning, i.e. items indicating potential schema-refreshment on the left and items indicating schema-reinforcement on the right. To this end, I reconverted the ranks respondents provided for the initial by calculating those ranks with interchanged ends. As they appear in the analysed sets of Qs, tasksheet Qs have thus been rearranged according to the afore-mentioned switch of poles.

6.3. Tasksheet questions related to attitude measurement as predictive of the potential schema-refreshing effect of the text upon the readers

The first set of analysed responses comprise those to Q 1.2, Q4, Q11, Q12 and Q15, which are intended to address RQE1 and RQM3 (see next page):

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E1: Do readers' responses to comprehension tasks suggest potential schema-refreshment in relation to their likely schematic representations of masculinity?

M3: Could the analysis of the readers' attitudinal changes during their interaction with the text constitute evidence as to the readers' accommodating or resisting to accommodate schema-inconsistent masculinities?

1.2. How do you find such a sight? Tick the box that best suits your opinion on the seven-point scale from "utterly ordinary" to "very unusual" below:

utterly ordinary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very unusual

4. Between each pair of adjectives below there is a seven-point scale. Tick the box that best suits your opinion on the statement Wald makes when she writes: *But by far the most entertaining diversion this summer is watching the men go by and drawing (completely correct) conclusions about their* ***entire life, self-image and level of conceit****, based upon the* ***size, shape and fabric*** *of their swimming trunks.*

daring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	conservative
unrealistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	realistic
alluring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unappealing
insightful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	superficial
silly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	brilliant

other [list your own idea(s) below]:

11. How do you find Wall's classification? Tick the box that best suits your opinion/attitude on a seven-point scale.

a)

down-to-earth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unrealistic

b)

ingenious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unimaginative

c)

man-bashing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	man-flattering

other [list your opinion/attitude]

12. In comparison with your previous images of men on the beach, do you find Wald's classification?

predictable/conventional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	novel/original

Tick the box that best suits your attitude on a seven-point scale.

15. How did you find Wald's article? Tick the box that best suits your attitude on a seven-point scale.

enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	shocking
inspiring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	boring

other [describe your attitude]:

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6.3.1. Tasksheet questions related to attitude measurement as predictive of the potential schema-refreshing effect of the text upon the readers: question rationale

Q1.2. was intended to elicit readers' anticipations regarding the content of the article. Responses were expected to provide clues as to whether readers perceived the picture on the front page of a man standing upside-down, his hands in the sand, as unusual. If the picture strikes them as unusual, readers may feel entitled to anticipate that the article may tackle rather unfamiliar aspects of masculinity or 'men's mysteries' that run contrary to commonplace expectations.

Q4 was designed bearing in mind that Wald's initial remark could be seen to summarise the theme of the article or even represents it in miniature. Certainly, the lightness of tone and the parodic voice used by the author, the hyperbolisation of declared purpose and the explicit statements about men as objects of seduction made me feel entitled to consider this opening statement as representative of the article. Consequently, I expected that respondents' reactions while processing this paragraph could be anticipatory of subsequent acknowledged attitudes (Q9, Q12 and Q15). High ranking of items such as '*daring*', '*unrealistic*', '*alluring*', '*insightful*' could indicate some schema-refreshing potential of the statement and anticipate similar schema-refreshing signallings during subsequent moments of textual encounter. Respondents' acknowledging of certain aspects of the text as '*daring*' or '*unrealistic*' may be indicative of schema-refreshment potential much more than aspects that readers regard as '*conservative*' or '*unappealing*'.

Nevertheless, a word of caution is necessary: a text can be alluring and insightful without necessarily restructuring readers' schematic knowledge of a certain referent. A text may in fact supplement existing cognitive structures along a schema-reinforcing, detail-adding line, and still be regarded as '*alluring*' or '*insightful*'. A textual chunk may be regarded as '*daring*' and '*unrealistic*' while not necessarily opening the gateway towards restructuring cognitive structures.

Q11 was designed to allow quantification of the readers' attitudes towards Wald's categorisation of men as well as towards the classification criteria she employs. (Respondents had had the opportunity to express such attitudes in their responses to Q6 to Q9). The readers' quantified attitudes towards the author's classification could indicate potential for schema-refreshment if, in addition to previously expressed evaluations (responses to Q6-9), rankings indicate that:

a) readers' acknowledged attitudes are reiterated as highly divergent or dismissive of the author's views
b) readers' acknowledged attitudes indicate their being highly surprised by the author's views (e. g. readers find Wald's views unexpected and innovative).

I regarded Q12 as a key question since it was meant to be not only an evaluative but also a confirmative (therefore redundant) question. Its aim was to elicit responses meant to restate and requantify attitudes towards Wald's classification of men already expressed in Q11. Q12 was also intended to elicit a more explicit evaluation than Q11.

Q15 was also designed as a confirmative and evaluative question, yet its scope was wider as it was intended to rank readers' attitudes not only towards aspects of masculinity, but towards issues addressed in the whole article, as well as towards Wald's writing style.

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6.3.2. Tasksheet questions related to attitude measurement as predictive of the potential schema-refreshing effect of the text upon the readers: findings

As shown in Table 6.1.2. below, responses to 1.2. show that most readers anticipated an article about sports. Not anticipating a text on male bodies or masculinities could be, among other things, indicative of the respondents' being somehow unfamiliar or uncomfortable with such topics.

Table 6.1.2.

Respondents' quantified evaluations of the image on the front page

Box no.	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	–	0
2	1	3.6
3	4	14.3
4	5	17.8
5	13	46.4
6	4	14.3
7	1	3.6

With a considerably wide spread (range 2-7) and with rank 5 reaching the highest frequency (13 respondents), responses to this question suggested that most participants found the picture of the man standing upside down on the sands a banal rather than a striking sight. At this early stage of textual encounter, partly because of respondents' predictions about the topic, there is no visible indication of potential schema-refreshing effects of the article upon the respondents.

Table 6.4.

Respondents' quantified evaluations of the opening paragraph

	daring		unrealistic		alluring		insightful		silly	
Box no.	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	3	10.7	1	3.6	5	17.8	2	7.1	1	3.6
2	9	32.1	1	3.6	11	39.3	3	10.7	1	3.6
3	8	28.6	3	10.7	7	25	5	17.9	2	7.1
4	6	21.4	4	14.3	1	3.6	8	28.6	13	46.4
5	1	3.6	4	14.3	2	7.1	6	21.4	8	28.6
6	–	0	12	42.9	2	7.1	1	3.6	2	7.1
7	1	3.6	3	10.7	–	0	3	10.7	1	3.6

As shown by Table 6.4. above, respondents' evaluations required by instructions in Q4 indicate the following. Wald's initial statement seems to have been estimated as '*daring*' (range: 1–7, most frequent rank: 2), and '*alluring*' (range: 1–6, most frequent rank: 2). Surprisingly, respondents associated the boldness and attractiveness of the assertion with its '*realistic*' nature, as Wald's statement was highly ranked as lifelike

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rather than '*unrealistic*' (range: 1-7, most frequent rank: 6). Concomitantly, respondents largely dissociated the appeal of this textual chunk from its insightfulness, which has been ranked midway between '*insightful*' and '*superficial*' (range: 1–7, most frequent rank: 4). I deliberately ignored the rankings along the '*silly-brilliant*' polarity as I regarded them as much less indicative of the schema-refreshing potential of the text than the other adjectives. I had included them initially in order to arouse readers' curiosity and to make them feel relaxed and free to express opinions candidly.

The statement was labelled by one respondent as '*unfortunately true*' (R22), although the respective respondent ranked it as 7, thus granting it the highest rank of realism. The statement was also found to be '*ironical*' by R24, who otherwise ranked it as '*daring*' (2), although '*unrealistic*' (6), '*unappealing*' (6) and midway between '*insightful*' and '*superficial*' (4). R26 considers Wald's remark a '*feminist, biased*' one, while associating it with insightfulness (2) and appeal (3) but not with audacity (4).

Table 6.11

Respondents' quantified attitudes towards Wald's classification of men

	DOWN-TO-EARTH		INGENIOUS		MAN-BASHING	
Box no.	**No. of Resp**	**Percent %**	**No. of Resp**	**Percent %**	**No. of Resp**	**Percent %**
1	–	0	**8**	28.6	**6**	21.4
2	**1**	3.6	**4**	14.3	**6**	21.4
3	**3**	10.7	**9**	32.1	**8**	28.6
4	**3**	10.7	**2**	7.1	**7**	25
5	**8**	28.6	**3**	10.7	**1**	3.6
6	**11**	39.3	**1**	3.6	–	0
7	**2**	7.1	**1**	3.6	–	0

Table 6.11. shows that, given the attitudes as expressed in responses to Q11, Wald's classification of male swimsuit wearers was prevalently regarded as both '*down-to-earth*' (range: 2–7, most frequent rank: 6). and '*ingenious*' (range: 1–7, most frequent ranks: 1,3). Lower ranges occur with assessment of Wald's classification in terms of its being '*down-to-earth*' (with a 4–7 range) and '*man-bashing*' (with a 1–4 range). A wider spread occurs when respondents assess Wald's classification in terms of its being '*ingenious*' (ranging from 1 to 7). The high scores for '*ingeniousness*' (1) could be an indicator of schema-refreshing potential. In other words, having read the article, respondents associated the realism of the author's approach to men-related issues with ingeniousness, which confirms the findings in relation to responses to Q4.

Contrary to my initial predictions, no connection appears as salient between supplying a 'man-bashing' discourse and taking an innovative standpoint. Taking into account the responses to Q4, I had wrongly anticipated conservative-minded readers would find Wald's views too '*emancipatory*', and therefore potentially schema-refreshing. I was equally wrong in my initial assumption that 'man-bashing' discourses could be labelled as potentially schema-refreshing by Romanian readers, whom I had expected to be fairly unacquainted with this kind of 'womanly talk' in the written press.

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Attitudes expressed in responses to Q12 strengthened informants' previous evaluations of 'novelty' and all notions somehow related to the possibility of schema-refreshment rather than schema-reinforcement, namely: appeal of the text, lack of realism, imaginativeness.

Table 6.12

Respondents' quantified attitudes as regards the predictability/originality of Wald's classification of men

	DOWN-TO-EARTH	
Box no.	**No. of Resp**	**Percent %**
1	–	
2	**3**	10.7
3	**8**	28.6
4	**6**	21.4
5	**5**	17.8
6	**2**	7.1
7	**4**	14.3

As the ranges and frequencies in Table 6.12. show, most respondents regarded the text as considerably closer to '*novel/original*' than to '*predictable/conventional*'. Frequencies (8 occurrences of rank 3, 6 occurrences of rank 4, 5 occurrences of rank 5) are likely to indicate schema-refreshing potential in some cases.

In hindsight, I perceive the formulation of Q15

Q15: *How did you find Wald's article? Tick the box that best suits your attitude on a seven-point scale.*

enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	shocking
inspiring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	boring

other [describe your attitude]:

as somewhat flawed, since I now do not regard the adjectives '*enjoyable*' and '*shocking*' as opposites. Despite this drawback, the question succeeded in eliciting responses which highlight the respondents' estimation of Wald's article as indicated by rankings in Table 6.15.

Table 6.15

Respondents' retrospective attitudes towards the article

	Enjoyable		Inspiring		Other	
Box no.	**No. of Resp**	**Percent %**	**No. of Resp**	**Percent %**	**No. of Resp**	**Percent %**
1	**10**	35.7	**7**	25		
2	**6**	21.4	**4**	14.3		
3	**8**	28.6	**10**	35.7		
4	**3**	10.7	**4**	14.3		
5	–	0	**2**	7.1		
6	–	0	–	0		
7	–	0	–	0		

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The high ranking of '*enjoyable*' (the most frequent rank is 1) consolidates the presumption of schema-refreshing potential, alongside alluring, imaginative and unrealistic aspects of the text assessed by readers in their previous sets of responses. Concomitantly, the high scores assigned to '*enjoyability*' reveal that respondents experienced amusement rather than shock during their textual encounter. The frequency of rank 3 (8 respondents) and 1 (10 respondents) for '*inspiring*' is at the very least indicative of lack of boredom on the part of respondents during their encounter with the text. The spread of responses for both '*enjoyable*' and '*inspiring*' is quite narrow (range: 1-5) and, surprisingly, extreme values (6 and 7), indicative of lack of schema-refreshing potential, were not chosen by respondents.

Most respondents who gave high rankings for both '*enjoyable*' and '*inspiring*' added further descriptions of their attitudes, which indicate that enjoyability springs from a combination of amusing and realistic elements. On the other hand, respondents who rated the article as rather '*boring*', i.e. as consequently potentially schema-reinforcing, explained their attitude in terms of their general dislike of articles published in women's magazines (R12) or of what they thought to be a patronising '*feminist*' text (R6).

6.4. Tasksheet questions indicative of respondents' classification and anticipation strategies, inferential processes and evaluative tendencies as employed in the assessment of the categories of men proposed by the writer

The second set of analysed responses comprise those to Q3 and Q6, which are intended to prevalently address RQE2 (see next page).

6.4.1. Tasksheet questions indicative of respondents' classification and anticipation strategies, inferential processes and evaluative tendencies as employed in the assessment of the categories of men proposed by the writer: rationale.

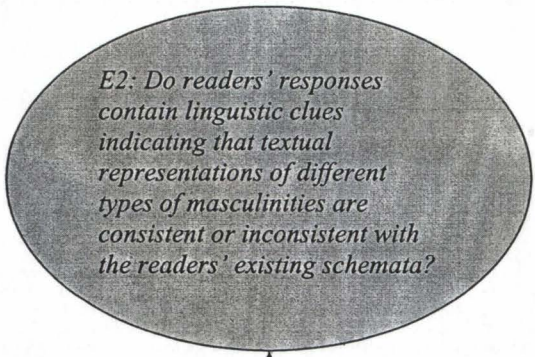
Q3 was designed to elicit language items that might constitute key indices to respondents' anticipations of the topic of the article. Responses to this question may constitute a basis for comparison with Wald's lexical clues, indicative of her classification of male holiday makers. The formulation of Q6 was intended to prompt respondents into providing language clues indicative of their partial activation of 'masculinity' schemata at this stage of textual encounter. I particularly hoped that responses would highlight:

a) their anticipated categorisation of men according to their beachwear
b) the saliency of traits within members of each category of trunk-wearers

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c) effects of the appearance and behaviour of members of each category upon potential female watchers.

Given the fundamental role played by categorisation in the activation of social schemata (see section 3.4), I searched for language clues indicating types of inferencing likely to have been employed by my respondents in order to group men on the beach into



3. (Do not turn over yet) This is the first paragraph of the article. Fill in the empty spaces with whatever lexical items you may think are suitable to the context (NP = noun phrase)

There's many an enjoyable pastime to be had on the beach. Reading. Paddling. Humming along tunelessly to your walkman. But by far the most entertaining diversion this summer is watching the men go by and drawing (completely correct) conclusions about their NP.....NP.....and NP....., based upon the NP.....,.NP.....and NP..... of their swimming trunks.

6. Try to put yourself in Wald's... sandals and classify men on the beach into three categories according to the type of trunks they wear. Which would these be? Enumerate their most salient traits. In order to anticipate how each trait is likely to be perceived by female watchers, tick one of the boxes under the heading "Effect on female observer" ([+] = positive; [-] = negative; [N] = neutral) (Do not turn over yet).

Categories	Traits	Effect on female watcher		
		+	–	N

other [list your opinion/attitude]

the categories they regarded as satisfactory for text comprehension purposes. I coded the key elements used by my respondents as follows:

- group, category (CAT)
- type of trunks (TT)
- attributes pertaining to appearance, attitude, behaviour-related attributes (AAB)

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In their turn, salient attributes were highlighted in terms of other key elements which I coded as follows:

- clothes (CL)
- body, build, looks (B)
- personality (intelligence, emotion) (P)
- behaviour (e.g. towards women or self, tendencies, attitudes) (BH)
- social status (SS)

I then divided salient traits into positively valued traits, negatively valued traits and neutrally valued traits (see Table 6.A below)

Table 6A

Respondents' anticipations regarding Wald's classification of men on the beach: criteria and representative traits

Categorisation criterion	Positively valued traits: no of mentions	Negatively valued traits: no of mentions	Neutrally valued traits: no of mentions
BH	13	24	1
P	8	3	3
CL	6	3	4
B	3	–	3

Having divided the traits into groups using the above codes, I was able to see which traits were related to clothes men wear, which were inspired by men's bodies or build, which pertained to the more abstract field of personality and which derived from the way men supposedly behaved.

6.4.2. Tasksheet questions indicative of respondents' classification and anticipation strategies, inferential processes and evaluative tendencies as employed in the assessment of the categories of men proposed by the writer: findings.

At an initial stage of reading, analysing the responses to Q3 enabled me to measure (dis)similarities between respondents' first guesses and the themes proposed by Wald in the opening paragraph of her article. Processing responses has revealed that there is noticeable similarity between the '*trunk*' traits mentioned both by respondents and by Wald yet striking dissimilarity between '*human life*' traits mentioned by respondents and by Wald. One commonsensical explanation for the higher resemblance of items pertaining to a TRUNKS schema could be that such a schema contains very few variables in comparison with a HUMAN LIFE schema. Nevertheless, the comparison of the two sets of NPs could indicate that, at this stage of textual encounter, the respondents had already embarked upon the line of inferencing Wald intended her readers to take.

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6.4.2.1. Respondents' categorisation strategies

According to the responses to Q6, I noticed that my respondents largely used the following categorisation strategies:

1) ***Attaching a label***, i.e. defining the category by labelling it in terms of the best defining attribute that its members display. Linguistically, the label appeared either as an adjective (three respondents) or as an adjective-noun combination, the noun being prevalently 'men' or 'type' (six respondents)
2) *Metonymy-based categorisation*, i.e. providing a nickname for the category in question by way of denominating the people included in the respective category by the type of trunks they wear (five respondents)
3) ***Extended description***, i.e. providing a more detailed linguistic depiction of the members of a specific category in the form of a relative clause (R28) or by labelling the category with the aid of a phrasal compound (R12)
4) ***Echo***, i.e.assigning the category a name by pretending to 'echo' an outsider's comment (R3)

My grouping of the respondents' categories is not entirely clear-cut, since there are a number of fuzzy cases (e.g. R5, R13, R26) of categorisation as well as instances of one category being either a hyperonym or a hyponym of another within the classification suggested by the same respondent (e.g. R6, R10).

6.4.2.2. Respondents' lines of inferencing

Having examined the relation between categorisation procedures and inferencing lines, I reached the following conclusions:

Very few categorisations were performed in terms of body types or relevant body parts and none were made having in mind the build of the trunk-wearers. There were only two instances of categorisation relying on the social status of the men included in the group. Most categorisations were achieved by drawing some connection between the types of trunks worn and the behavioural attributes likely to be displayed by the members of the respective category. This was the case of categorisations based on inferencing types 1 (*If x is a wearer of trunks y, x is likely to be so-and-so),* mostly relying on generalisation and 2 (*If x is so-and-so, x is likely to be a wearer of trunks y*), mostly relying on particularisation.

Some categorisations completely overlooked the possibility of mentioning types of clothes worn by men pertaining to that category and solely relied on behavioural and attitudinal attributes, which, in the respondents' views, were likely to generate other, presumably germane, attributes. In this sense, Inferencing type 3 (*If x pertains to category z, x is likely to be so-and-so*) could be regarded as somewhat similar to Inferencing Type 1, yet using a wider social category as the basis for generalisation instead of a rather restricted category, that of wearers of a certain garment.

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Although the closest to Wald's own procedure, i.e. mapping correspondences between 'trunk' traits and 'human' traits, Inferencing Type 4 (*If y is the type of trunks worn by members of category z, trunks y are likely to display characteristics a, b, c,...)* was visibly less often employed by my respondents. 'Mixed' categorisations, as well as fuzzy cases, hyperonyms or hyponyms, were also used, but I chose to disregard such cases because of their low frequency.

6.4.2.3. Respondents' perceptions of salient traits featuring Wald's three categories of men

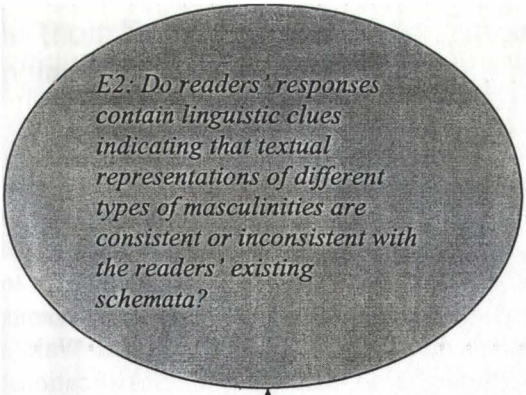
As Table 6A shows, neutrally valued traits were considerably fewer than positively and negatively valued traits. It is interesting to notice that most positive and negative traits were related to patterns of behaviour (13 positive traits and 4 negative traits). Behaviour-related traits visibly outnumbered personality-related traits (3 positive traits, 3 negative traits and 3 neutral traits). So did traits inferred in relation to types of clothing (6 positive traits, 3 negative traits and 3 neutral traits). Unexpectedly, there were only 3 mentions of positive body-related traits and 3 mentions of neutrally valued body-related traits.

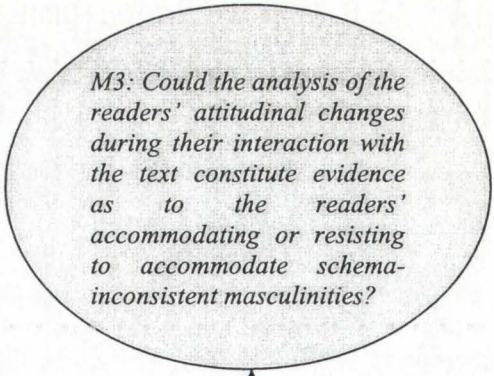
Respondents seem to have associated salient traits of a certain category of males to the personality and behaviour of those members rather than to their clothes and bodies. Nevertheless, certain traditional associations were made, such as putting in the same picture good looks, conceit and scanty bathing apparel on the one hand and lack of attractiveness, shyness and all-covering bathing apparel on the other. Culturally inculcated equivalences were also performed, such as equating '*shy*' or '*clumsy*' or '*easily embarrassed*' with being '*not manly*' (five respondents). Good looks were perceived in terms of self-confidence, which, nevertheless, only one respondent (R26) regarded as a quality meant to impress women. Much more frequently, self-confidence, especially when excessive, is negatively valued as a manifestation of arrogance and conceit (six respondents) or even stupidity (two respondents). In the few mentions of the role played by the body in the categorisation of men, it appears that being over- or underweight (R8), manifesting exaggerated concern with one's body (R25) as well as total lack of concern with one's body (R23) were prone to sanctioning.

6.5. Tasksheet questions indicative of (lack of accommodation) of assumedly schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity

The third set of analysed responses comprise those to Q7 and Q9.3., which are intended to address RQE2 and RQM3 (see next page).

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7. Wald divides male sunbathers into the following three categories:
a) Tasty BLTs
b) Self-obsessed skimpies
c) Bashful boxers

The following lexical explanations might help you get a clearer picture of the three categories:
BLTs = **B**urt **L**ancaster **T**runks, implicitly: wearers of trunks similar to those worn by Burt Lancaster in the beach scene from the movie "*From Here to Eternity*" (photo)
= a type of sandwich (acronym from Bacon + Lettuce + Tomato)
Self-obsessed skimpies: implicitly wearers of skimpy bathing suits, obsessed with the display of their own nudity (skimpy (coll.): "barely or not quite enough; somewhat less in size, fullness, etc, than is needed, scanty" - Webster Dictionary)
Bashful boxers: implicitly: bashful wearers of boxers
bashful = timid, shy easily embarrassed
boxers = men's undershorts with an elastic waistband and the loose, full cut of prizefighters' trunks - Webster's Dictionary)

7.1. On a seven-point scale from 'disgusting' to 'appealing', how do you expect Wald to assess each category? Tick the box that best suits your opinion.

Tasty BLTs	disgusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing
Self-obsessed skimpies	disgusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing
Bashful boxers	disgusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing

7.2. Could you justify your expectations?
e.g. I ranked Tasty BLTs as .... because

9.3. How do you think NOW Wald assesses each category on a seven-point scale from 'disgusting' to 'appealing'? Tick the boxes even if your predictions in Q 7.1. have not changed.

Tasty BLTs	disgusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing
Self-obsessed skimpies	disgusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing
Bashful boxers	disgusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing

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6.5.1. Tasksheet questions indicative of (lack of accommodation) of assumedly schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity: rationale

The introductory part of Q7 was intended to enable readers to clarify their understanding of certain lexical items and to fill in some possible cultural gaps. Such information was provided in order to avoid miscomprehension arising from insufficient lexical or cultural knowledge. The introductory part also announced Wald's categories to the readers. I supplied this introductory part starting from the assumption that respondents could infer attributes of the category from the category denominations, and that Wald's categories could be confirmative of or conflicting with respondents' classifications, already provided in their responses to Q6 .

With articles published in young women's magazines, the genre conventions include assessment of categories of persons (e.g. people in terms of being better or poorer mixers) or objects (e.g. shoes in terms of their being suitable for specific social events such as parties) in terms of certain salient traits. I thought that since most women's magazine provide advice as to how to learn more about men in terms of various parameters (appearance, daily habits, attitudes, patterns of behaviour) (Talbot 1992, Gotcher and Durham 1996, McLoughlin 2000), attractiveness is, expectedly, a prototypical trait women are prompted to judge men by when the latter are classified and evaluated in terms of their clothes. However, I did not explicitly specify whether respondents should rate the respective category as 'attractive' or 'repulsive' in terms of both looks and personality.

Q7.1. required respondents to locate each of the three categories of sunbathers devised by Wald on a 7-point scale ranging between '*disgusting*' and '*appealing*'. When I designed this sub-question, I considered that the names of the categories were illustrative enough of the essential traits possessed by the members of the category and would enable readers to develop adequate expectations in relation to each category as well as anticipate the writer's opinion on each category in terms of its degree of attractiveness.

I also assumed that ticking either 1 or 7 might indicate a conventional way of stereotyping men and a tendency to locate members of a specific category of men into the traditional roles of either 'lady-killer' or 'killjoy'. I anticipated that clinging to traditional stereotyping of men might later signal respondents' difficulty in accommodating unexpected, schema-inconsistent descriptions of men within their existing social schemata. On the other hand, initial categorisations of the traditional type do not necessarily imply that respondents would be unable, while becoming gradually familiar with the text, to accommodate novel, non-traditional categorisations of masculinity.

Q7.2. was intended to provide respondents with the opportunity to supply reasons for the rankings given in Q7.1. Such reasons might shed some light on the relationship respondents anticipated between high or low rankings of male appeal and certain traits pertaining to members of the category under discussion. Justifying previously expressed attitudes could also indicate whether readers' expectations were related to textual input or to existing social schemata of masculinity.

Q9.3. was designed in order to elicit the respondents' post-reading attitudes towards Wald's evaluations of the three categories of men – BLTs, SOSs and BBs – in

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terms of their degree of attractiveness. Graded evaluations of attitudes were seen as potentially indicative of attitudinal changes respondents might have undergone as a consequence of having read the article. Responses were expected to provide a basis of comparison meant to highlight the differences between the evaluations in terms of attractiveness for each category before and after reading Wald's article, i.e. between rankings provided in answer to Q 7.1. and to Q 9.3. respectively.

Table 6B

Respondents' pre-reading versus post-reading quantified evaluations of the three categories of men.

	BLT – pre-reading evaluation (Q7.1.)		BLT – post-reading evaluation (Q9.3)		SOS – pre-reading evaluation (Q7.1.)		SOS – post-reading evaluation (Q9.3)		BB– pre-reading evaluation (Q7.1.)		BB – post-reading evaluation (Q9.3)	
Box. no.	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	–	0	–	0	15	53.6	21	75	1	3.6	2	7.1
2	1	3.6	–	0	4	14.3	5	17.9	3	10.7	4	14.3
3	–	0	–	0	3	10.7	1	3.6	4	14.3	10	35.7
4	6	21.4	1	3.6	1	3.6	–	0	12	42.9	7	25
5	7	25	2	7.1	–	0	–	0	4	14.3	4	14.3
6	7	25	15	53.6	2	7.1	–	0	2	7.1	1	3.6
7	7	25	10	35.7	3	10.7	1	3.6	2	7.1	–	0

I regarded the comparison displayed in table 6B above as a helpful guideline, which enabled me to identify differences between expected evaluations and remembered evaluations as well as to seek confirmation or invalidation of the respondents' initial evaluations. In their turn, such instances of confirmation or invalidation could indicate some schema-reinforcing and respectively schema-refreshing potential effects the text may have had upon the respondents' social schemata of masculinity.

6.5.2. Tasksheet questions indicative of (lack of accommodation) of assumedly schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity: findings

Table 6.7.1 below displays each respondent's rankings of the three categories.

Table 6.7.1.

Respondents' expectations regarding Wald's categories

	BLT		SOS		BB	
Box No.	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	–	0	15	53.6	1	3.6
2	1	3.6	4	14.3	3	10.7
3	–	0	3	10.7	4	14.3
4	6	21.4	1	3.6	12	42.9
5	7	25	–	0	4	14.3
6	7	25	2	7.1	2	7.1
7	7	25	3	10.7	2	7.1

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The most frequent ranks (5, 6, 7 for BLTs, 1 for SOSs and 4 for BBs) and the ranges (2–7 for BLTs, 1–7 for SOSs and BBs alike) were quite informative as to respondents' expectations in relation to Wald's three categories of men. Thus, BLTs were expected to be described as an appealing group, while SOSs tended to be regarded as disgusting given the most frequent ranking 1 (ticked by 14 respondents). As to BBs, I suspect my respondents of having tried to convey a middle-of-the-road attitude, all the more because in Romanian the word 'neutral' (= *neutru*) means not only taking nobody's side but also locating something in an in-between position between two poles.

According to the way respondents formulated justifications for the above-mentioned ranges and frequencies, most of them drew on Wald's introducing relevant linguistic clues in the denominations of the three categories and relied on the evaluative adjectives '*tasty*', '*self-obsessed*' and '*bashful*' in order to develop socio-cognitive expectations about the three categories of men. With almost no exception, '*tasty*' was thought to announce a category of men highly promising in terms of its appeal, for example:

> 'a sandwich usually appeals to your stomach' (R2, ranking: 5)
> 'appealing because she [Wald] associates "tasty" with the trunks and food is a common metaphor for sex' (R10, ranking: 7),
> 'because firstly they are "tasty" and secondly they are worn by Burt Lancaster (R27, ranking 6).

On the other hand, '*self-obsessed*' was largely associated with arrogance, selfishness and stupidity. Such associations are sometimes formulated explicitly, for example:

> 'because "self-obsessed" has negative connotations' (R10)
> 'because of the adjective attached by her [Wald] (= self-centered, narcissistic, bearing negative connotations. I'm inclined to think she considers them disgusting by the attitude she has towards men from the beginning of her article' (R17).

As regards '*bashful*', opinions are divergent. For some respondents, the adjective '*bashful*' denotes a favourably assessed category, (e.g.: 'very appealing because they are attractive but reserved' – R12, ranking: 7), while for others, it rather anticipates a pitiable sight:

> 'because she [Wald] sounds rather pejorative '(R5, ranking: 2),
> 'because they do not produce a good impression, yet women feel a little sympathy for them' (R27, ranking 3).

I will next summarise the reasons provided by respondents for their rankings of the three categories of male trunk-wearers.

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6.5.2.1. Reasons why BLTs are expected to be described as 'appealing'

Regarding the reasons why BLTs are expected to fall into an 'appealing' category, equating '*tasty*' with 'appealing' as well as 'being endowed with good taste' is only natural. On the other hand, I believe that all the features listed below are the result of 'illusory correlation', i.e. the mechanism by which perceivers tend to establish relationships between sets of variables that are not actually related and are in no way substantiated (Mackie et al 1996: 50). The linguistic clues supplied by the denomination of the category alone do not necessarily entail sophistication, lack of exhibitionist tendencies, wealth or privileged social position.

1) BLTs are '*tasty*', i.e. they appeal to women as food appeals to the 'hungry'.
2) BLTs do not show off ('because she [Wald] seems to appreciate men who do not show off.'(R14; ranking: 7), neither are they obsessed with their looks ('[they] leave room to imagination. I expected Wald appreciated decent kind of men who don't look obsessed with their physical aspect' (R25, ranking: 4)
3) BLTs are the displayers of good taste since they avoid useless body exposure ('somewhat appealing because they are not a means of overt display, but show good taste.'(R18, ranking: 6)
4) BLTs emit enticing ambiguous signals since their bathing suits are concomitantly revealing and concealing ('because this kind of tights is really sexy: they cover and uncover at the same time' (R22, ranking: 7)
5) BLTs are worn by prototypically attractive male figures such as Burt Lancaster ('because firstly they are 'tasty' and secondly they are worn by Burt Lancaster.'(R27, ranking: 6)

6.5.2.2. Reasons why BLTs are expected to be described as 'disgusting'

A small number of respondents labelled BLTs as 'disgusting'. Such rankings were based on anticipations wholly sustained by their alleged personal experience and individual speculative tendencies, for example:

'because I do not find this kind of guys attractive at all '(R7, ranking: 2)
'less appealing because I don't like father figures' (R15, ranking: 5)
'what is intended as hidden attracts more' (R2, ranking: 7)
'I prefer bashful boxers because they seem more decent' (R13, ranking: 6)
'There may be a hidden treasure that somebody is too shy to show around' (R26, ranking: 4).

6.5.2.3. Reasons why SOSs are expected to be described as 'disgusting'

There were three main reasons for respondents to have expected SOSs to be a 'disgusting' category of men:

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1) Attributes of members of the SOSs category were generally inferred from the semantics of the compound adjective 'self-obsessed', for example:

> 'because she is rather explicit when using 'self-obsessed' as 'vain, sexist' (R6, ranking: 2),
> 'because of the adjective attached by her (= self-centered, narcissistic, bearing negative connotations). I'm inclined to think she considers them disgusting by the attitude she has towards men from the beginning of her article' (R17, ranking: 1)

Occasionally, SOSs' attributes were inferred from the semantics of the category descriptors, indicating, in the respondents' view, one of exhibitionists, even of sexually deviant persons, for example:

> 'because she seems to despise men who display their nudity, on the other hand she seems daring enough to appreciate 'courage'.'(R14, ranking: 4)
> 'not appealing from a psychological point of view. They must have a serious problem.'(R15, ranking: 2).

2) Traits featuring SOSs were also inferred by operating commonsensical shortcuts which come across as simplistic generalisations, for example:

> 'because they are ridiculous and make me sick '(R7, ranking 1)
> 'because men in this kind of trunks look awful, they're too obvious' (R22, ranking: 1)
> 'because they are too pushy, leaving no room for imagination or creativeness' (R18, ranking: 1).

3) Self-obsession and body disclosure tend to make room for culturally inculcated associations which I can only regard as 'illusory correlations' since they are not suggested by the denomination of the category as such. Although, to my mind, 'skimpies' might as well have been associated with lack of prejudice or an unconstrained lifestyle (e.g. hippies, nudists), they were rather associated with homosexuality, a gigolo status or with sexually deviant tendencies.

6.5.2.4. Reasons why SOSs are expected to be described as 'appealing'

Two of the respondents who rated SOSs as 7 provided no reasons for their high ratings. A third respondent (R25) admitted her personal preference for SOSs while conceding that showing off is a drawback ([they] "are attractive in spite of the obvious showing off".

6.5.2.5. Reasons why BBs are regarded as the 'in-between' category:

Few respondents unwaveringly described BBs as either 'disgusting' or 'appealing'. Only one respondent located BBs towards the 'disgusting' pole, considering that such a garment is not a swimsuit but a piece of underwear ('Because I think they

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should be worn simply as underwear' – R9, ranking: 2). Few reasons were provided why BBs are expected to be described as 'appealing':

1) The fascination with the unknown
   e.g. 'what is intended as hidden attracts more' (R2, ranking: 7)
2) the lure of aloofness
   e.g. 'very appealing because they are attractive but reserved' (R12, ranking: 7)
3) certain women's having a soft spot for bashful men
   e.g. 'because women tend to like timid guys' (R6, ranking: 5).

All in all, BBs were not readily labelled as either 'disgusting' or 'appealing', for example:

'BBs are neutral as they cannot give rise to reactions of disgust but neither can they be too sexy' (R18, ranking: 4)
'because owners of boxers are neither appealing nor disgusting' (R20, ranking: 4).

Respondents' reasons for BBs not being included in the appealing group referred to the BBs being prone to mockery, mirrored in Wald's pejorative tonality when describing them, for example:

'because she [Wald] sounds rather pejorative' (R5, ranking: 2)
'[they are] pretty appealing, but she [Wald] also makes fun of them' (R10, ranking: 6).

On the other hand, being '*decent*' and '*cute*' were regarded as satisfactory substitutes for what is traditionally regarded as '*appealing*', for example:

'I prefer bashful boxers because they seem more decent' (R13, ranking: 6)
'because if not very appealing, they tend to be quite cute in her opinion' (R28, ranking: 5).

The respondents' retrospective rankings of the three categories of men as expressed in their responses to Q9.3. are listed in Table 6C below

Table 6C

Respondents' pre-reading versus post-reading quantified evaluations of the three categories of men

	BLT – pre-reading evaluation (Q7.1.)		BLT – post-reading evaluation (Q9.3)		SOS – pre-reading evaluation (Q7.1.)		SOS – post-reading evaluation (Q9.3)		BB– pre-reading evaluation (Q7.1.)		BB – post-reading evaluation (Q9.3)	
Box. no.	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %	No. of Resp	Percent %
1	–	0	–	0	15	53.6	21	75	1	3.6	2	7.1
2	1	3.6	–	0	4	14.3	5	17.9	3	10.7	4	14.3
3	–	0	–	0	3	10.7	1	3.6	4	14.3	10	35.7
4	6	21.4	1	3.6	1	3.6	–	0	12	42.6	7	25
5	7	25	2	7.1	–	0	–	0	4	14.3	4	14.3
6	7	25	15	53.6	2	7.1	–	0	2	7.1	1	3.6
7	7	25	10	35.7	3	10.7	1	3.6	2	7.1	–	0

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As the figures show, BLTs benefit from the highest rank in terms of their attractiveness (see column 3 and 4) (most frequent ranks: 5, 6, 7, range: 2–7 at a pre-reading stage and most frequent rank: 6, range: 4–7 at a post reading stage) and SOSs score the highest rank in terms of repulsiveness (see column 5 and 6) (most frequent rank: 1, range: 1–7 at a pre-reading stage and most frequent ranks: 2, 1, range: 1–3 at a post-reading stage). BBs (see column 7 and 8) are considered as still located in between the two poles, although they might be regarded as lying closer to the 'disgusting' pole (most frequent rank: 4, range: 1–6 at a pre-reading stage and most frequent rank: 3, range: 1-6 at a post-reading stage). Ranges are much wider in the case of SOSs (1–7) and BBs (1–6) which shows that there is a divergence of opinions regarding these two categories, unlike BLTs where the narrower range (4–7) shows considerable consensus among respondents.

Comparative findings in this table could be regarded as indicative of a general strengthening of initial expectations as to the evaluations in terms of physical attractiveness of the members of the three categories of men. The occurrence of rank heightening, lowerings and maintainings is summarised in Table 6D and the prevalent type of modification within each group appears in bold:

Table 6D

Type of rank modification	BLTs (nr of occurrences)	SOSs (no of occurrences)	BBs (no of occurrences)
Lowerings	2	10	**16**
Heightenings	**15**	1	8
Maintainings	10	**17**	4

Thus, the initial estimation of BLTs (see column 2 of Table 6C) as likely to be depicted as an 'appealing' category is confirmed. Most individual evaluations have undergone 'heightening' (15) or 'maintaining' (10) of initial rankings. There have been only 2 cases of 'lowerings' and, among 'maintainings', 3 preserved the rank 7 and 4 the rank 6.

With SOSs, the degree of attractiveness is lowered by 1 (see column 4 of Table 6C above), which indicates that the location of this category gets closer to the 'disgusting' pole once the article has been read. 'Maintainings' of initial rankings are prevalent (17 occurrences out of which 14 specified the rank 1 both in answer to Q 7.1. and in answer to Q 9.3), while there is also a remarkable number of 'lowerings' (10), with 2 responses even indicating 'lowerings' from 7 to 1. There is only one instance of 'heightening' (from 1 to 2).

BBs also witness a closer location towards the 'disgusting' pole indicated by a narrowing of range by 2 points which also occurred (from 1–7 to 1–5). 'Lowerings' predominate within comparative evaluations of BBs (16, out of which special mention needs to be made of a lowering from 7 to 1 and another, of lowering from 7 to 3). Nevertheless, there are 8 cases of 'heightening' (not very dramatic) and 4 cases of 'maintaining'.

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6.6. Tasksheet questions highlighting prototypical features and exemplars and the role they play in indicating comparative degrees of accommodation of schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity at various stages of reading

The fourth set of analysed responses deal with Q8, Q9.1., Q9.2., Q10.1, Q13 and Q14, all of which address RQE2 and RQM2 (see next pages).

6.6.1. Tasksheet questions highlighting prototypical features and exemplars and the role they play in indicating comparative degrees of accommodation of schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity at various stages of reading: rationale

I chose to discuss the rationales for both Q8 and Q9 within the same section because the responses to both questions were intended to provide evidence regarding prototypical traits, prototypical exemplars and attitudes acknowledged by respondents in relation to the three categories of men at different stages of reading. Q8 was designed to provide such indications at an initial stage, right after readers had become familiar with the headlines of the article and the opening paragraphs of each section. Responses to Q9 were expected to provide similar indications at a final stage, once respondents had completed reading the article and were able to think about it in hindsight.

Responses to Q8 and Q9 provide a challenging basis for comparison. Such a comparison may be enlightening as regards the respondents' accommodation of newly emerged categorisations of masculinity since their responses may be indicative of social schemata they might be activating in the process of text comprehension. Consequently, comparing sets of prototypical features, prototypical exemplars and attitudes at an initial versus a final stage of text comprehension may eventually reveal whether social cognition is a useful framework for the investigation of young Romanian readers' reception of British magazine texts on the male body. Such comparisons may prove indicative of either change or resistance to change as to respondents' conceptualisations of hegemonic and alternative masculinities at various stages of textual encounter. It may equally shed some light on the way conceptualisations of masculinity become flexible during the process of text comprehension and whether initial, allegedly stereotypical representations of masculinity undergo (dis)confirmation.

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E2: Do readers' responses contain linguistic clues indicating that textual representations of different types of masculinities are consistent or inconsistent with the readers' existing schemata?

M2: Does the designed tasksheet elicit readers' responses which indicate the respective readers' accommodation of schema-inconsistent masculinities?

8. The following sentences are the beginning of each category-describing section.

Tasty BLTs:

This season, I can reveal, those men with an eye for fashion and not a small dose of vanity will have found it hard to resist the BLTs – Burt Lancaster trunks - on the beachwear menu. This retro style, made famous in the horizontal clinch scene with Deborah Kerr in 'From here to Eternity', seems to have caught the male holiday-maker's imagination.

Self-obsessed skimpies:

But does the BLT spell the end for men who prefer posing pouches and high-cut legs? Shall we girls forever be denied the childish - nay, sadistic - pleasure of laughing like Bart Simpson at these Narcissi of the summer season?

Bashful Boxers:

At the other extreme from the barely-there trunk is, of course, the long, baggy, boxer-short style popularised by surfers, Australian soap stars and, speaking rather more personally, a French boy I saw on the beach in Cannes.

8.1. In the light of the above three paragraphs, how do you expect Wald to assess the respective category Tick the box that best suits your expectations. (+ = positive; – = negative; N = neutral)

	+	–	N
Tasty BLTs	☐	☐	☐
Self-obsessed skimpies	☐	☐	☐
Bashful boxers	☐	☐	☐

8.2. What other specific traits do you expect to be discussed/mentioned by Wald in the paragraphs to come?

Tasty BLTs

Self-obsessed skimpies

Bashful boxers

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E2: Do readers' responses contain linguistic clues indicating that textual representations of different types of masculinities are consistent or inconsistent with the readers' existing schemata?

M2: Does the designed tasksheet elicit readers' responses which indicate the respective readers' accommodation of schema-inconsistent masculinities?

8.3. What public personae do you expect Wald to mention as the representatives of the category in question?
Tasty BLTs

Self-obsessed skimpies

Bashful boxers

8.4. Which reactions on the part of the beach female watchers do you expect Wald to describe for each category?

Tasty BLTs

Self-obsessed skimpies

Bashful boxers

9. Turn over to the article and read carefully the whole of the three sections describing Wald's three categories of trunk-wearers.

9.1. In hindsight, summarize the characteristics of the men that fall into the categories established and described by Wald. Mark with * those you find particularly surprising, shocking or intriguing to mention. Add Wald's supposed evaluation ([+], [–] or [N])

Categories	Traits	Evaluation (acc. to Wald)		
		+	–	N
1. Tasty BLTs				
2. Self-obsessed skimpies				
3. Bashful boxers				

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E2: Do readers' responses contain linguistic clues indicating that textual representations of different types of masculinities are consistent or inconsistent with the readers' existing schemata?

M2: Does the designed tasksheet elicit readers' responses which indicate the respective readers' accommodation of schema-inconsistent masculinities?

9.2. Give Wall's criteria for including them in the respective category.

Category	Wald's criteria
Tasty BLTs	
Self-obsessed skimpies	
Bashful boxers	

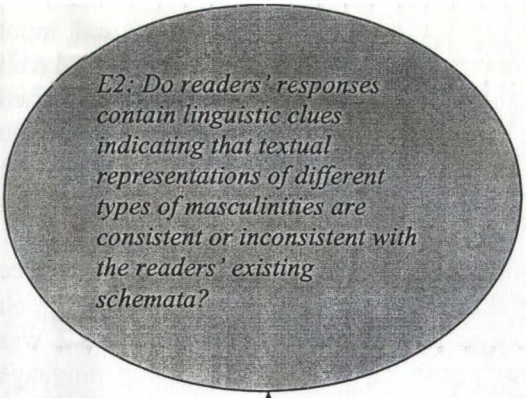
9.3. How do you think NOW Wald assesses each category on a seven-point scale from 'disgusting' to 'appealing'? Tick the boxes even if your predictions in Q 7.1. have not changed.

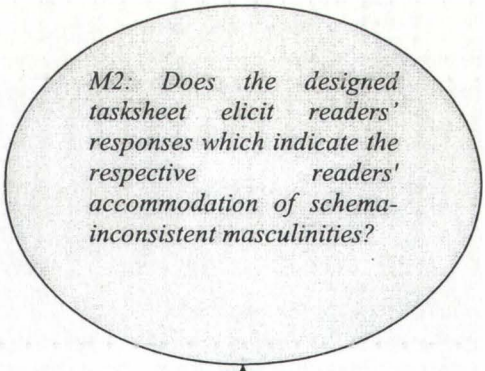
Tasty BLTs	disgusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing
Self-obsessed skimpies	disgusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing
Bashful boxers	disgusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing

10.1. Here is a list of proper names mentioned in the article. Who are the respective persons? Why does Wald mention them in the respective paragraph/caption?

Name	Who is he /What is he famous for?	Why mention him? (e.g. He symbolizes....)
Burt Lancaster.....		
Hugh Grant		
Sly (Stallone)		

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13. Turn the article over and complete the following:
Regarding the classification of men on the beach according to their trunks,
I agree with Wald when it comes to ....

I disagree with Wald when it comes to
I was really appalled/shocked/intrigued by .....
I have found Wald's idea/statement about .... very expectation challenging
Having read Wald's article, I see things differently now with respect to....

14.1. Walled repeatedly refers to parts of the male body and to various aspects of masculinity. List down all references that caused you an emotional reaction (disgust, amusement, admiration for the clever way the author put it). Specify your reaction next to each item mentioned.

Reference to male body and masculinity	Experienced reaction	Reason

14.2. Indicate any other words, phrases and sentences that brought to mind issues which caused you to react strongly (feel surprised, indignant, shocked). (Simply indicate number of line<s>, first and last word). If possible, specify the reasons for your reaction.

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The introductory part of Q8 was intended to supplement the textual input regarding the three categories of male sunbathers described by Wald. Once they had read the opening paragraph of each section, respondents were encouraged to express enriched expectations in relation to each described category, previously acknowledged in responses to Q7. At this initial stage of textual encounter, respondents were likely to have their initial expectations either strengthened or undermined, as well as their previous evaluations of the three categories of men either confirmed or invalidated.

Q8.1. invited respondents to predict whether Wald would assess each of the three categories positively, negatively or neutrally, taking into account that the initial paragraph of the sections dedicated to each category usually contains key linguistic items. Q8.2. was similarly designed, bearing in mind that initial paragraphs generally supply language clues meant to guide the reader through the remainder of the text. In Wald's article, the opening paragraphs mention certain traits typical of each category, additional to those which were inferable from the semantics of the category denomination (see instructions in Q7). I assumed that respondents were likely to make prototypical associations between traits explicitly mentioned in the text and traits inferable from the linguistic input, which they found attributable to the envisaged category. Q8.3. was designed with a view to eliciting those responses which would indicate the male public figures that respondents expected to be cited as representative members of each category. Q8.4. was a redundancy question, since its purpose was to enlarge upon the evaluative remarks or attitudes specified in responses to Q8.1.

If Q8.1 required an evaluation of each category, Q9.1.elicited an evaluation of those category traits that respondents supposedly found salient and that, during the post-reading stage, were remembered to have been presented by Wald as positive, negative or neutral. Q9.1. equally required respondents to specify which traits they found particularly surprising, shocking or intriguing, since such traits might be indicative of some schema-refreshing potential as regards the respondents' schemata of masculinity.

Q9.2. was formulated so as to elicit respondents' perceptions of the categorisation criteria used by Wald in her classification of men on the beach. Inaccuracies of such recall could be indicative of lack of accommodation of expectation-challenging elements into pre-existing social schemata of masculinity. Q9.3 provided the respondents with the post-reading opportunity to specify how Wald assessed each category of men. I expected responses to this sub-question to provide an interesting basis for comparison with responses to Q7.1., which had revealed respondents' expectations about Wald's categorisation before reading her article. Such a comparison could be enlightening as to whether respondents' anticipations and predictions had proved relatively accurate or thoroughly erroneous.

Q10.1. was designed with the purpose of finding out whether young Romanian female students were familiar with the male personae Wald refers to in her article, since lack of familiarity might have constituted a cultural hindrance to text comprehension. In addition, the question was designed to elicit answers that provided reasons why respondents thought Wald referred to the male personae in question. In other words, responses were expected to point out why the respective male personae were seen as representative of each category and owing to which particular attributes.

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Q10.1. was designed to provide indications meant to supplement information on the prototypical exemplars designated in responses to Q8.3., and the list of traits attributed to each category provided by responses to Q9.1. My picture of the respondents' activation of social schemata of masculinity at the post-reading stage became more fully-fledged once responses to Q 10.1. had supplemented previous indications of the respondents' perceptions of prototypical features, prototypical exemplars and expected attitudes in relation to each category of trunk-wearers, i.e. responses to Q8. and Q9.

Q13. was designed in order to elicit respondents' attitudes and opinions in relation to Wald's categorisation of men on the beach. I thought that, other things being equal, whatever makes the object of agreement was likely to have had a schema-reinforcing effect on the respondents' existing schemata of masculinity. Although disagreement does not necessarily entail a change in one's mental schematic representations, I supposed that whatever constituted the object of disagreement between the respondents' existing images of masculinity or existing criteria of classifying men and those provided by Wald's article could be a potential indicator of schema-refreshing processes. Another good candidate for indicating the schema-refreshing potential of the text was, in my opinion, whatever may have appeared as '*appalling*', '*shocking*' or '*intriguing*' to my respondents. Shock- and surprise-inducing textual elements are likely to involve some restructuring of existing mental representations more than are expectation-confirming elements.

The purpose of Q14. was to elicit responses that could enrich the indications of strong emotional reactions provided by responses to Q13., with special focus on the male body and aspects of masculinity the article deals with. In other words, answering Q14. required a specification of those issues in the text or those textual chunks that had caused respondents to experience surprise, shock, disgust or indignation. In addition, the directions required a more accurate specification of the emotional reaction brought about by each trigger. I hardly expected all reactions to be indicators of schema-refreshing potential, since there could be emotional manifestations – such as nostalgia triggered by a certain image or joy aroused by physical resemblance between a male persona and a significant other – likely to produce a rather schema-reinforcing effect upon the reader. In an oversimplified way, however, I was inclined to regard all reactions arising out of frustrated expectations as the consequence of an alleged clash between representations of masculinity as provided by the article and representations of masculinity existing in the readers' minds before the textual encounter.

6.6.2. Tasksheet questions highlighting prototypical features and exemplars and the role they play in indicating comparative degrees of accommodation of schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity at various stages of reading: findings

Responses to questions 8.1., 8.2. and 8.3 display individual perceptions of Wald's evaluation of the three categories, specification of further traits expected to be discussed by Wald in the remaining lines of her article, as well as listings of public male personae thought to be highly representative of each category. BLTs are expected

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by most respondents to be assessed positively by the author (22 indicated +, and only six indicated N). Higher consensus is achieved with respect to SOSs, rated as potentially negatively assessed by 27 respondents (and as neutral by only one). Expectations regarding the evaluation of BBs are heterogeneous; if most respondents envisage the category as still lying in an in-between 'neutral' area (17 respondents ticked N), seven anticipate a positive estimation of the category, while four expect it to be negatively assessed by the writer.

The traits that respondents expected to be specified by Wald in relation to each category of men are listed in the fifth column of the table, while the potentially prototypical male public personae believed to be most representative of each category are listed in column 6. With BLTs, sex-appeal and attractiveness (eight respondents) and good taste (five respondents) are prevalently mentioned as expected traits, while discretion, shallowness, romanticism, vanity and wealth are only sporadically mentioned. Prevalent expected traits mentioned in relation to SOSs are an obsession with sex, seen both as an exaggerated concern with their own sexuality and as a display of blatant sexual drive (five respondents), together with a tendency to appear ridiculous (five respondents). Selfishness, superficiality, defiance, vanity and stupidity are mentioned sporadically. Regarding BBs, decency (three respondents) and shyness (three respondents) are more frequently mentioned, in contrast with sporadically specified traits such as insecurity and repulsiveness.

For a more systematic view on the prototypical exemplars that respondents mentioned as potentially representative for each category see Table 6E below:

Table 6E

Social categories of men anticipated by respondents

PROTOTYPICAL SOCIAL CATEGORIES		
BLTs	**SOSs**	**BBs**
royalty (R8)	male models (R4)	surfers (R17)
politicians (R14)	Latino lovers (R8)	
actors (R14)	fighting champions(R17)	

As Table 6E shows, other respondents preferred to designate prototypical social categories that are likely to belong to the respective categories. Thus, royalty (R8), politicians and actors (R14) are deemed likely to wear BLTs; male models (R4), Latino lovers (R8) and fighting champions (R17) are likely to be SOSs; while BBs can only comprise surfers (R17).

Concerning respondents' familiarisation with the allegedly prototypical exemplars included in Wald's three categories of men, Table 6.8.3. below shows that the male persona mentioned by the largest number of respondents is Sylvester Stallone (expected by 17 respondents to be representative of the SOS category and by 1 to be representative of the BB category). In terms of frequency, all other mentions are considerably lower. As in the case of Stallone, the mention of certain male personae (e.g. Banderas: 4 mentions for BLT, 1 for SOS, 1 for BB; David Hasselhof: 3 mentions for

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BLT, 1 for BB) may have been inspired – intentionally or otherwise – by the photos of the respective stars accompanying the text. Except for Bill Clinton (regarded by three respondents as a good candidate for the BLT category and by another six as a good candidate for the BB category), Van Damme (1 mention for BLT, 4 mentions for SOS), Ricky Martin (4 mentions for SOS) and Leonardo di Caprio (1 mention for BLT, 1 for SOS and 3 for BB), all other male figures are mentioned only once or, occasionally, twice (e.g. Tom Cruise, Elton John). Interestingly, some respondents specified the names of Romanian politicians (Basescu, Ciorbea) as representatives of the BB category, although the odds of a British magazine writer using such names would obviously be nil.

Table 6.8.3.

Prototypical exemplars included by respondents in each category of men

BLTs		SOSs		BBs		Mentioned by Wald
Name	No. m	Name	No. m	Name	No. m	
Keanu Reeves	1	S. Stallone	17	S. Stallone	1	+
J-C van Damme	1	J-C van Damme	4	Nicholas cage	1	
A. Banderas	4	A. Banderas	1	A. Banderas	2	+
Brad Pitt	1	Brad Pitt	1	Brad Pitt	1	
Mel Gibson	2	Ricky Martin	4	Robin Williams	1	
Jack Nicholson	1	Boy George	1	Rod Stewart	1	+
Kevin Spacey	1	Michael Jackson	1	Michael Jackson	1	
Bill Clinton	3	Gary Barlow	1	Bill Clinton	6	
Paul Newman	3	Patrick Swayze	1	Woody Allen	1	
Pierce Brosnan	3	A. Swarzenegger	1	Andrew Shue	1	
George Michael	1	Mick Jagger	1	Pete Sampras	1	
Sean Connery	2	Jan Ziering	1	Tom Hanks	2	
Prince Alfred	1			Hugh Grant	1	
Luke Perry	1			George Bush	1	
Leo di Caprio	1	Leo di Caprio	1	Leo di Caprio	3	
Johnny Depp	1			Roberto Begnini	1	
David Hasselhof	3			David Hasselhof	1	+
Prince Charles	1			Pauly Shore	1	
Kevin Costner	1	Kevin Costner	1	Kevin Costner	1	
Tom Cruise	2			Traian Basescu	1	
Clint Eastwood	1			Victor Ciorbea	1	
Elton John	1	Elton John	2			

No. m = No. of mentions

Responses to Q8.4. reveal reactions that respondents anticipate members of each category of men arousing in female holiday makers. In relation to BLTs, 'admiration' is explicitly mentioned by ten respondents, out of whom only one explicitly specifies the object of this feeling and several either echo the female admirers' potential exclamatory remark or mention the possibility of wolf whistles and provocative glances accompanying the appearance of BLT-wearing men on the beach. 'Appreciation' is mainly specified as

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having been aroused by the stylishness of those men (R14, R28), while 'desire' (R6), even 'lust' (R26) are specified in relation to physical attraction (R20). 'Interest' (R15, R23), 'curiosity' (R15) and 'ecstasy' (R3) are also mentioned occasionally.

As far as SOSs are concerned, 'contempt' is the prevalent reaction. It is stated explicitly (three respondents) or indirectly suggested by words or word combinations that suggest the laughter-inducing effects of contempt ('amusement', 'mockery', 'irony', 'laughter') (seven respondents) or by echoing a dismissive expression presumably uttered by the female watcher ('Get lost!' – R4). 'Disgust' is also quite frequently mentioned, either explicitly (six respondents) or in combination with words pertaining to the semantic field of mockery (three respondents).

Regarding BBs, 'sympathy' is either explicitly stated (three respondents) or implied by suggesting the attitudes women are most likely to adopt. So is 'Curiosity' (two respondents), also mentioned in combination with 'temptation' (R6), or disillusion ('curious but then disillusioned' R15). 'Rejection' and 'disgust' as well as 'appreciation' (R3) and 'attraction' (R25) are only sporadically mentioned.

Expected features and remembered features listed in Tables 6.9.1.d.i., 6.9.1.d.ii., 6.9.1.d.iii., show remarkable consensus as to the cluster of traits remembered as typical for each of the three categories of men (see column 1). Remembered features are listed in order of frequency of their mentions (the feature is specified in column 1 and the frequency of mention in column 2), as are expected features (specified in column 1 and having their number of mentions inserted in column 4). Below, I shall comment upon the comparative mention and frequency of traits in relation to each category.

6.6.2.1. BLTs: remembered vs expected traits

An increase in the number of mentions occurred for the following four traits: '*fashionable*' (24 mentions), '*vain*' (16 mentions), '*rich*' (10 mentions) and '*appealing*' (9 mentions). '*Vain*' and '*rich*' witness a dramatic increase, as responses to Q8 only provided 1 mention of each (in comparison with 16 mentions of '*vain*' and 10 for '*rich*' in responses to 9.1). Items belonging to the semantic field of '*physically appealing*' are quite constant with responses to Q8 and Q9 (9 mentions vs. 8 mentions), while '*fashionable*' is specified by 24 respondents with Q9.1. (as compared to only 5 with Q8). Traits such as '*muscled*' and '*insipid*' have 5 mentions each although they were not specified in responses to Q8. All the other traits listed under the column 'remembered trait' witness only sporadical mentions (within the 1–2 range). If traits like '*romantic*', '*stylish*', '*imaginative*', '*self-confident*', '*decent*', '*shallow*' and '*interesting*' were also mentioned in responses to Q8, there is a small number of traits exclusively mentioned in responses to Q9: '*retro*', '*bad-looking*', '*snobbish*', '*self-centred*', '*preoccupied with improving looks*' and '*manly*'.

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Table 6.9.1.d.i.

BLT: comparison between remembered and expected traits

Remembered trait (9.1)	No. of occurrences	Expected trait (Q 8.1, Q 8.2, Q 8.3) identical to or synonymous with remembered trait	No. of mentions
fashionable	24	good taste (R3, R17, R21), up-to-date with fashion (R12), having good taste for clothes (R25)	5
vain	16	vanity (R14)	1
rich	10	rich (R25)	1
appealing	9	inviting (R1), absolutely irresistible (R2), guaranteed success with women (R6), good looks (R7, R18), sex-appeal (R10), sexy (R12), appealing (R21), attractive (R20)	8
wearers of so-and-so trunks	9	colour, waistband (R15), amateurs of low-cut trunks (R19)	2
muscled	5		
insipid	5		
retro	4		
bad-looking	2		
romantic	2	romanticism (R27)	
stylish	2	elegance, distinction (R3), stylish (R4)	2
imaginative	2	imagination (R6)	1
showing off/awareness of perfect body	2	self-conficence (R18)	1
snobbish	2		
self-centered	1		
preoccupied with improving their looks	1		
decent	1	discreet (R1), decent (R20)	2
fortune-hunter	1		
shallow	1	superficiality (R10)	1
interesting	1	suggestive (R20)	1
manly	1		

As the table shows, there are non-negligible cases of overlapping between expected traits and remembered traits within each category of trunk-wearers. Most prevalent traits, both expected and remembered, were thought to have been positively assessed by Wald. Very few negative or neutral evaluations were specified, and those generally relate to the snobbishness, shallowness and insipidness of the BLT-wearers.

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6.6.2.2. SOSs: remembered vs expected traits

The traits that score the highest number of mentions, '*narcissistic*' (24), '*unappealing*' (16) and '*exhibitionist*' were, interestingly, not mentioned as expected to describe SOSs in responses to Q8. Remembered traits mentioned with average frequency: '*self-centred*' (10), '*ridiculous*' (7), '*sexy*' (4), '*vain*' (3) were indeed mentioned as expected traits, yet with lower frequency. Surprisingly, '*disgusting*' decreases in number of mentions with remembered traits (3 vs. 4), while traits such as '*stupid*', '*superficial*' and '*showing off*' maintain themselves with the same range of mentions (1-2). Newly-mentioned remembered traits include: '*macho*', '*lascivious*', '*lacking style*', '*ill-inspired*' and '*displaying eroticism*'.

Table 6.9.1.d.ii.

SOS: comparison between remembered and expected traits

Remembered trait (9.1)	No. of occurrences	Expected trait (Q 8.1, Q 8.2, Q 8.3) identical to or synonymous with remembered trait	No. of mentions
narcissistic	24		
unappealing	16		
exhibitionist	13		
self-centered/ loving/ obsessed	10	exaggerated self-reliance (R3), self-absorbed (R15)	2
ridiculous/pathetic:	7	ridiculous (R1, R2, R10, R17), losers, failures (R25)	5
smouldering sexuality	4	insidious, always looking for affairs (R12), obsessed with sex (R18, R27), think they are sexy but they are not (R15), people whose only interest is to attract women (R25)	5
vain	3	vain (R21)	1
repulsive/disgusting	3	negative effect (R6), disgusting (R12, R17, R19), embarrass the eye (R18), pathetic (R20)	6
wearers of so-and-so trunks	2	amateurs of high-cut trunks (R19)	1
stupid (low IQ, fools)	2	stupidity (R7)	1
superficial	1	superficiality (R21, R27)	2
showing off	1	defiance (R3)	1
macho	1		
lascivious	1		
lack of style	1		
ill-inspired	1		
eroticism	1		

With the exception of two respondents who evaluated '*smouldering sexuality*' and '*showing off*' as positive traits, and 1 who valued '*lasciviousness*' neutrally, all traits listed in relation to SOSs were overwhelmingly remembered as negatively assessed by the writer of the article.

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6.6.2.3. BBs: remembered vs expected traits

The remembered trait that scores the highest number of mentions (7) is '*unappealing*', which was only mentioned by two respondents as an expected trait. Other remembered traits are mentioned sporadically or hardly ever occur in the list of expected traits: '*not preoccupied with sex*', '*adolescent shape*', '*well-shaped bodies*', '*dignified*', '*displaying bad taste*', '*embarrassed*', '*careless*', '*immature*', '*self-aware*', '*odd*', '*sloppy*', '*having a repulsive secret*', '*retro*', '*dangerous*', '*gay*'. Very few remembered traits were also specified as expected traits: '*deceitful*', '*seductive*', '*decent*', '*shy*', '*insecure*' (all showing a range of 1–5). Consequently, there is little overlap between the expected traits and the remembered traits in point of content and frequency.

Table 6.9.1.d.iii

BBs: comparison between remembered and expected traits

Remembered trait (9.1)	No. of occurrences	Expected trait (Q 8.1, Q 8.2, Q 8.3) identical to or synonymous with remembered trait	No. of mentions
unappealing	7	rather disgusting (R14, R19)	2
not preoccupied with sex	1		
adolescent shape	1		
well-shaped bodies	1		
deceitful	2	since their trunks are too large they may hide something small (R15)	1
sexy/ seductive/ appealing	4	indirectly provoking (R1)	1
decent	3	decent (R1, R3, R21)	3
shy/bashful	2	shy (R7, R13), timidity (R17), shyness (R27)	4
ridiculous	1		
sporty	5	sportivity (R17)	1
dignified	3		
repulsive	5		
wearers of so-and-so trunks	4		
opportunist/ materialistic	3		
bad taste	2		
embarrassed	1		
careless	1		
immature/ belated adolescents	2		
self-aware	1		
odd	1		
sloppy	1		
having a repulsive secret	1		
retro style	1		
dangerous?/ (to be avoided)	1		
not secure of own masculinity	1	insecurity (R10)	1
gay	1		

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Negative evaluations prevail with BBs, especially concerning repulsiveness, inadequacy of trunk colours and the details regarding the inner architecture of the 'elasticated hole' boxers. Oddness, insecurity and the preservation of an ugly secret are also negatively assessed. Surprisingly, given the neutrality initially expected with the category, few traits are labelled as neutral, more specifically features regarding build, immaturity and homosexual tendencies. A small number of expected traits were no longer mentioned as remembered traits, largely referring to '*fame*', '*youth*' and '*popularity*' with BLTs, '*snobbery*', '*fame*' and '*homosexuality*' with SOSs, and '*introvertness*', '*sensitivity*' and '*self-consciousness*' with BBs .

6.6.2.4. Classification criteria

The number of adequate responses to Q 9.2. was regrettably low: seven respondents provided no answer at all, while two mistook listing criteria for expressing concluding remarks. Another six respondents mistook criteria for category-specific traits and simply expanded or reformulated the traits listed in responses to Q 9.1. This indicates that the writer's classification criteria as perceived by respondents at the post-reading stage can be roughly grouped as follows:

BLTs: The prevalent criterion mentioned is compliance with fashion trends, more specifically the adoption of certain cuts, lengths and colours of trunks (nine respondents). Sex-appeal (R9, R10) and body allure (R12, R16) follow with a considerably lower frequency.

SOSs: The size and shape of the trunks is occasionally cited (R6, R23), while most respondents regard self-attitude (exaggerated self-confidence and exacerbated opinion about one's personality) as the key criterion employed by Wald in featuring this category of men (nine respondents). There is only one mention of women's reaction (R11) as an evaluative criterion for this category.

BBs: There is a mixture of acknowledged criteria in relation to this group and it is hard to identify a prevalent one. Among infrequently mentioned criteria, the following might be worth taking into account: shape and design (three respondents), effect upon lookers (4 respondents), motivation (the 'need to hide' – R16).

6.6.2.5. Prototypical exemplars and representative gendered and non-gendered attributes

Responses to Q10.1. comprise individual indications of recognition such as specification of the persona's occupational status (e.g. movie star, fashion model) as well as lists of salient traits attributable to each male persona. Most male personae were unanimously recognised (Lancaster, Banderas, Hasselhof, Armani, Bart Simpson, Narcissus, Rod Stewart, Hugh Grant, Stallone). One, Leif Garrett, was not recognised by any respondents, while Hulk Hogan was recognised by 20, Jarvis Cocker by 5, David Ginola by 3, Ralph Lauren by 13. No recognition was inaccurate, i.e. no male persona

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was attributed a different professional or public role than his actual one. Some male figures had been anticipated (in answers to Q8.3.) as likely to be included in one or several of the three categories devised by Wald (e.g. Banderas, Hasselhof, Stallone).

Instead of specifying a core characteristic of the respective male persona, some respondents only came up with the purposes Wald allegedly pursued in mentioning the name of the famous male or in printing his photo. Thus, Jarvis Cocker is mentioned 'to support her opinion that BLTs make men look better than they really do', Rod Stewart 'to give an example of not sexy, tasteless swimsuits', Hugh Grant: 'to give an example of vain men'. Other respondents tended to describe a certain male figure or pass a hasty comment on him. Thus, one can read comments about Hulk Hogan such as 'big is not always big', 'his body is in a ridiculous contrast with the small pair of trunks' or suggestions that Hasselhof '[must be] spend[ing] a lot of time on the beach'. There are also few instances of warning a fictitious reader against some unpleasant aspect of the male personae question: e.g. 'do not look inside his trunks' (about Banderas), 'you'll never know what you're going to get' (about Hasselhof).

A rough systematisation of responses to Q10.1 is, in my view, indicative of two essential aspects:

1) criteria of representativeness
2) gendering of representative features.

Tables 6F, G and H below list the gendered and the non-gendered features mentioned by the respondents. The right column specifies the overall number of mentions for each set of features.

Table 6F

Gendered traits (= traits explicitly related to masculinity by Rs)	**No. of mentions**
general 'ideal' masculinities : sex symbols	24
manliness/manhood/virility (explicitly mentioned but not defined)	19
traits related to body parts or body shape	18
force, physical strength	8
specific 'ideal' masculinities : the 'macho' figure	9
specific 'ideal' masculinities : the Latino lover	4
'the male saviour'	1
'the man of the sea'	1
'the adolescent'	1
the sensitive male	1
the gentleman	1
the rock legend	1
the gender-bender	1
Total score	98

Table 6G

Non-Gendered traits	**No of mentions**
moral qualities	15
moral flaws	12
traits related to IQ level	9
Total score	36

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Table 6H

Fashion-related traits	No of mentions
creators' traits	33
displayer's traits	32
Total score	65

While not claiming that such a classification is exhaustive, male personae mentioned in Wald's article are thought to have been included in one of the three categories according to the following criteria.

a) **Aspects of their masculinity.** Features dealing with aspects of masculinity make up the largest set of attributes mentioned by the respondents (98), all of which are gendered features. The set further divides into the following subsets of attributes:
   - ***manhood/virility/manliness*** (19 mentions), with the following individual mentions: Lancaster (6), Banderas (2), Hogan (3), Hasselhof (2), Grant (2), Stallone (4)
   - ***body parts (muscles) or body shape*** (18 mentions), with the following individual mentions: Lancaster's 'attractive body' (2) and 'athletic' handsomeness (1), Hogan's 'the power of muscles' (4) and well-shaped body (1), Hasselhof's muscles (1), Cocker's skinny legs (1), Ginola's 'bow legs' (1), Grant's 'nice buttock' (1)
   - ***handsomeness***: Lancaster (1), Banderas (3), Ginola (1), Grant: 'the embodiment of classical beauty' (1) vs ***ugliness***: Stewart (1), Cocker(1)
   - ***force/physical strength*** (8 mentions), with the following individual mentions: Hogan's force (5), Hasselhof's fit figure (1).
   - ***gender-bending aspects***: (1 mention: Cocker: 'the womanized man')
   - '***ideal' masculinities*** (24 mentions), which may be subdivided into
   - ***general***: present-day sex symbols: Lancaster (3), Banderas (7), Hasselhof (2), Grant (6), Stallone (1), or former sex-symbols: Lancaster (1), Stewart (1)
   - ***specific***: the 'macho' figure: Lancaster (1), Banderas (3), Hasselhof (1), Stallone (4), the Latino lover: Banderas (4), 'the male saviour': Hasselhof (1), 'the sensitive male' or 'the gentleman': Grant (1), the rock legend: Stewart (1)

b) **IQ level**. This criterion involved the mention of non-gendered features, although there is a stereotypical association between muscularity and stupidity which is only made in connection with muscle-laden males. Hulk Hogan is regarded as the most illustrative exemplar of the all-brawn-no-brain category, followed by Hasselhof and Stallone.

c) **fashion-related accomplishments**: This criterion comprises two sets of attributes, one related to fashion creators, the other related to fashion-displayers. Neither set appears to have been regarded as heavily gendered by the respondents. Among creators, two names seem to have been resonant with my respondents: Armani, mentioned in relation to 'haute-couture',

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classiness and style, and Ralph Lauren, whose name is associated with 'dazzling colours' (3), promotion of new fashion trends (2), haute-couture (4) and non-conformism (1). As far as fashion-displayers are concerned, Burt Lancaster is mentioned as the promoter of the BLT trunks (9) and as the epitome of retro style (4), as well as of elegance and laudable taste (2). Hugh Grant is also regarded as a male persona boasting elegance, style, taste (3), while being the promoter of the boxers (2). Rod Stewart and Stallone are mentioned (six and two mentions respectively) for their bad taste in wearing inadequate bathing apparel.

d) **moral qualities, commendable traits vs moral flaws, despicable traits.** This criterion involves mentioning Lancaster's romantic conduct (1), Banderas's marital faithfulness (4), Hogan's lack of talent (1), Hasselhof's righteousness (1) and courage (2), Stewart's and Stallone's exaggerated self-confidence, Grant's romantic sweetness (4).

Most features constituting this criterial set are not gendered, except for traits such as (not) being a womaniser (see Banderas) or being an exhibitionist (see Stallone). There are few traits that can be regarded as fuzzy edged, i.e. neither vices nor virtues (e.g. Grant's being 'childish', 'bashful', no longer sanctioned as 'unmanly' traits as in traditional views on masculinity).

The following sets of features which serve as criteria for representativeness for members of the categories under discussion have not been included in the Tables F, G and H above listing gendered and non-gendered features because the scarcity of the mention of each allows no room for generalisability:

e) ***financial standard***: Armani's wealth (3)
f) ***effects produced on others***: Banderas's fame, Grant's being the recent target of tabloid ridicule
g) ***objects or events typically contingent to the male persona in question***, e.g. movies/TV series: Hasselhof's part in '*Baywatch*' (5), Lancaster's scene on the beach with Deborah Kerr (1), Banderas's romance with Melanie Griffith (1), Rod Stewart's songs (2)
h) ***historical-cultural periods***: e.g. Rod Stewart's symbolising 'the mad 80s'(1)
i) ***national features***: e.g. Hugh Grant's embodying 'English innocence'(1).

Fictional male personae such as Bart Simpson and Narcissus are prevalently assessed in compliance with moral traits, with 14 mentions of positive traits and 32 mentions of negative traits. Narcissus is thought to solely embody flaws: his main recalled traits were self-love (16), obsession with own image (8), self-destruction because of excessive self-love (2). Although these traits are not necessarily gendered, narcissism is envisaged as a typically masculine proclivity. Obviously not a prototypical icon of masculinity, Bart Simpson could be regarded as combining amusement, hilarity (10), non-conformism (1), lack of hypocrisy (1), sarcasm (2), and lack of shame (2).

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6.6.2.6. Acknowledged (dis)agreement, emotional reactions and challenged expectations

In the following pages, I will summarise the types of responses to each requirement formulated in Q 13, focusing on topics for agreement and disagreement with the writer, expectation-challenging issues brought up by the writer as well as strong emotional stances experienced as a result of the textual encounter.

6.6.2.6.1. Topics of agreement

A large number of respondents stated that they agreed with Wald's categorisation of swimsuit wearers. Thus 23 out of 28 respondents endorsed her opinion on SOSs, some providing personal reasons for supporting either Wald's description or her attitude, for example:

'they are disgusting and never a turn-on' (R8)
'men who wear skimpies are unappealing, narcissistic' (R14)
'I share her ironic presentation of those men' (R16)
'she finds SOSs simply ridiculous and a laughing stock' (R25).

Three respondents (R6, R21, R26) emphasised that they shared Wald's view on both SOSs and BLTs, while only one shared her outlook on all three categories of trunk-wearers (R23). Other topics of agreement comprised vaguer aspects of classification, such as 'the general classification' (R18), 'her impressions about the three categories of men' (R27), the author's 'intuition of men's personality' (R28) or her claim that 'trunks are the only non-verbal a man has to communicate his personality' (R25).

6.6.2.6.2. Topics of disagreement

A considerable number of respondents (16 out of 28) stated that they disagreed with Wald's opinion of BBs. The exaggerated description of the 'inside' of the boxers was specifically the target of disapproval for one respondent (R17). Only two respondents discarded Wald's view on SOSs:

'calling the SOSs Narcissi, claiming that SOSs do not have sex-appeal' (R9)
'It is not taken into consideration that some women may find them attractive' (R18).

One respondent restated overall agreement with the author (R15), another objected to her 'classifying men in only 3 categories' (R27) and one disagreed with Wald's claim that 'wearing pastels is a sign of dull personality' (R20).

6.6.2.6.3. Sources of strong emotional reactions

Ten respondents out of 28 either provided no answer to this sub-question of Q13 or specified that nothing in relation to the article appalled, shocked or intrigued them.

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Four respondents confessed to have experienced strong reactions when reading the paragraph on the 'inside' of boxers, for example:

'found the "polyamide net" funny and sarcastic' (R2)
'the fact that she suggested looking inside a man's trunks' (R8).

Four respondents objected to the writer's use of strong language:

'the way in which she described each category of beachwear (but not the arguments she gives)' (R23)
'the strong language used to describe wearers of boxers' (R28).

Two were intrigued by the triviality of the topic:

'the ease and directness with which she approaches a topic such as a man's trunks and moreover, her choice of topic' (R17)
'the fact that she speaks about trunks as the most important issue' (R25).

Three respondents claimed to have experienced some emotional reactions in relation to the captions (R1, R3, R4) while only one confessed to have been somewhat disturbed by 'Wald's emphasis on the sexual aspect, on male sexuality' (R24). I can however only speculate about the kind and degree of these respondents' emotional reactions since they only specified issues or language occurrences in the article that caused strong reactions without explicitly stating what that reaction was.

6.6.2.6.4. Expectation-challenging ideas and statements

18 respondents out of 28 provided no answer to this sub-question of Q13, possibly because they thought they had covered the issue in their answers to previous sub-questions. Sometimes respondents replaced 'expectation-challenging' by other evaluative adjectives such as '*interesting*', '*funny*', '*right*', '*interesting and true*'. One respondent (R26) thought the captions were expectation-challenging and three others restated the intriguing nature of the description of the inside of the boxers by providing small, faithfully remembered, textual chunks from the fragment.

6.6.2.6.5. Post-reading changes of views

11 respondents out of 28 did not fulfil the last requirement and three explicitly acknowledged 'no change' to have occurred in their ways of conceptualising reality. Eight stated that they might have developed novel views on the relation between trunks, personality and signals given to watchers, for example:

'men's psychology and their strategies to attract women's attention' (R20)
'men's motivation for choosing a particular pair of trunks' (R25).

Two respondents asserted that their opinion on women's magazines had changed:

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' the true-to-life quality of the magazine' (R1)
'feminine [sic] magazines' (R3).

The *kind and degree* of the changes experienced by the respondents could not however be inferable from the provided responses.

6.6.2.6.6. Acknowledged emotional reactions specifically triggered by references to the male body or to various aspects of masculinity

Table 6.14.1.b. below is a summative display of individual reactions expressed in responses to Q 14.1.

Table 6.14.1. b

Emotional reactions in relation to explicit reference to body parts: a summary

Reaction	Overall no. of mentions	In relation to / aroused by	No. of mentions
AMUSEMENT	**35**	metaphors for genitalia: 'jewels', 'essentials'	**12**
		(skinny) legs	**12**
		(protruding) tummies	**6**
		(untanned) skin	**2**
		watching men	**1**
		ironical remarks	**1**
		sea predator	**1**
DISGUST	**18**	(skinny) legs	**1**
		(salient) genitalia	**9**
		(protruding) tummies	**2**
		(untanned) skin	**3**
		more general matters	**3**
ADMIRATION	**9**	metaphors for genitalia: 'essentials'	**2**
		men with an eye for fashion	**1**
		smouldering sexuality	**1**
		silky black lashes	**1**
		sculpted muscle	**2**
		smooth chest	**2**
WELL-FORMULATED/ CLEVER	**6**	genitalia	**1**
		protruding tummies	**1**
		skinny legs	**1**
		other	**3**
PLEASURE	**5**	sculpted muscle	**2**
		smooth chest	**1**
		tan	**1**
		adolescent shape	**1**
SHOCK	**2**	metaphors for genitalia: 'posing pouches', 'moulded sack'	
INDIGNATION	**1**	the para ' I beg you not to look too close...'	
REALISTIC	**1**	description of the 'Narcissi of the summer season'	

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SUGGESTIVE	1	'tanned as a walnut, hair plastered to his head' (R11)	
IRONICAL/ TONGUE-IN-CHEEK	1	the sieve-like container possesses all the sexiness of a hotel shower cap (R17)	
ORIGINAL (COMPARISON)	1	'as a net that stops dolphins' (R11)	

The table comprises: reactions as acknowledged by respondents (left-hand column), accompanied by the overall number of mentions of each reaction (central column) and by specifications of the textual trigger thought to have provoked the respective reaction (right-hand column). As the table shows, the prevalent reaction avowed by respondents was that of '*amusement*', with an overall number of 35 mentions. Most instances indicate that the textual items which caused this reaction were references to male genitalia in metaphorical form ('jewels', 'essentials' out of a total of 12 mentions) and the description of 'skinny legs' (12 mentions), followed by the description of the 'protruding tummies' (6 mentions), and 'untanned skin' (2 mentions).

The next prevalently acknowledged reaction was '*disgust*', mentioned by 18 respondents. References to male sexual organs, particularly to their protruding aspect in certain bathing outfits, were specified to have induced disgust in 9 instances. Other references to body parts having aroused revulsion in the respondents were: 'protruding tummies' (2 mentions), 'untanned skin' (3 mentions) and 'skinny legs' (1 mention).

There were 9 mentions of '*admiration*' and 5 of '*pleasure*' aroused by descriptions of appealing male bodies. Textual triggers indicating the object of admiration comprise explicit language indicators of body parts: 'sculpted muscles' (2 mentions), 'smooth chest' (2 mentions), 'silky black lashes' (1 mention) as well as metaphors for male genitalia (2 mentions). Like admiration, pleasure is acknowledged to have been caused by explicit language references to 'sculpted muscles', 'smooth chest' (2 mentions each), 'good tan' (1 mention) and 'adolescent shape' (1 mention).

References to the male sexual organs seem to have caused the greatest diversity of reactions. Six respondents expressed their favourable opinion of the '*clever*' or '*well-formulated*' way Wald had chosen to metaphorically designate these. Expression of appreciation as to Wald's cleverness also occurred in relation to protruding stomachs (1 mention) and 'skinny legs' (1 mention). The '*ironical, tongue-in-cheek tonality*' of the article was appreciated by one respondent in relation to the description of the boxers as 'the sieve-like container (which) possesses all the sexiness of a hotel shower cap' (R17). One respondent (R11) found the description of the French boy '*suggestive*' and the comparison of the boxers with 'a net that stops dolphins' '*original*'. There were only 2 mentions of '*shock*', both caused by metaphors employed to designate male genitalia ('posing pouches' and 'moulded sack'), and 1 mention of '*indignation*' aroused by the whole paragraph dealing with the description of the inside of the boxers.

Responses to Q14.2. provided a list of reactions experienced by individual respondents, accompanied by the lines in the article that triggered it and by comments concerning the reasons of the respective reaction. Ten respondents provided no answer to this question, possibly because they felt that they had already acknowledged their emotional reactions in their answers to the previous sub-question.

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Six other respondents indicated the textual chunks that caused them to react emotionally, without nominating the respective reaction. Most such textual chunks were extracts from the description of the exhibitionist skimpies or from the warning against taking a close look at the inside of the boxers.

Eight respondents acknowledged their reaction of '*surprise*' and two mentioned the mixture of '*surprise and amusement*' (R12) and '*surprise and shock*' (R27) respectively. The textual excerpts quoted as triggers of surprise belong either to the paragraph dealing with the narcissism of the SOSs or to the paragraph dealing with the possible invasion of the inside of the boxers. There is only one mention of '*disgust*' (R8) as caused by the mention of the 'distinctive moulded sack' (again a chunk from the paragraph of the SOSs' exhibitionist tendencies), one of '*amusement*' (R25) (caused by fragments from both the BLT and the SOS sections) and one of '*disagreement*' (made by the same R25) in relation to the last line of the BLT section.

To conclude, most strong emotional reactions were, as claimed to have been experienced by respondents, brought about by textual chunks belonging either to the description of the exhibitionist, self-loving SOSs, or to the unflattering description of potential exposure of genitalia with boxer-wearers.

6.7. Tasksheet questions illustrative of the implications of gradual exposure to the multimodal text

The fifth set of analysed responses discusses Q1.1, Q1.3, Q2, Q5 and Q10.1, all of which mainly address RQE3 (see next page).

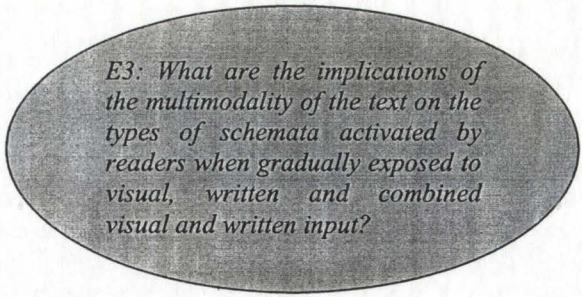
6.7.1. Tasksheet questions illustrative of the implications of gradual exposure to the multimodal text: rationale

Q1.1. and Q1.3 were designed in order to elicit responses that might entitle me to hypothesise on the schemata respondents could be activating at a first encounter with the text, more precisely at the moment the respondents made contact with the visuals. Q1.1 merely requires a description of the photo on the front page of Wald's article, given that the respondents did not know the title of the article and were only informed about the kind of magazine the article has been published in ('*Zest – for minds as well as bodies*') and on its publication date (August 1998). Q1.3 involved respondents in developing expectations about the themes to be dealt with in the article. At this point, their expectations could solely spring out of the speculations they felt entitled to make starting from the visual input they were required to describe in Q1.1. Responses to Q1.3 were intended to round off the description provided in responses to Q1.1. and to shed more light on respondents' expectations before any encounter with chunks of written text.

The purpose of Q2 was to elicit responses containing language clues which could testify to either enrichment of expectations acknowledged in responses to Q1.3. or to respondents' switching expectations once they had had their first encounter with the

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written text that accompanies the visual (i.e. the headline '*Men in Trunks*' and the adjoining questions accompanying it: '*What does his beachwear say about him? And what could be in it for you...?*')



1.1. Look at the picture on Page 1, the first in a three-page article published in the August 1998 issue of the British magazine "ZEST: for minds as well as bodies"
What does the picture show? (Don't turn over yet).

1.3. What do you expect an article accompanied by such a picture to be about?

2. Turn over now. Read the title and the questions accompanying it: What do you expect an article with such headlines published in a magazine mainly read by young women of your age, to be dealing with? (Do not turn over the next pages yet).

5. Look at the pictures (captions covered) on the next two pages of the magazine article and suggest two possible captions for each in the blank spaces indicated for each picture on the respective page.

10.2 Make a list of lexical items you had not come across before reading "Men in Trunks". Is their meaning:
- guessable from the context?
- important for the issue discussed in the paragraph?

Complete column 1 and tick the box that fits your opinion in columns 2 and 3.

Lexical item	Meaning guessable		Meaning important	
	Y	N	Y	N

Reading the words that 'anchor' (Barthes 1964) the photo on the first page of the article would be likely to create new associations between the visual and the verbal text, which may redirect expectations. Expectations are likely to be further narrowed down by the specification that the headlines belong to an article published in a magazine whose

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target readership consists of young women. Once familiar with both the visual and the verbal input, as well as with the genre the article belongs to, respondents may accurately predict which issues are to be dealt with in Wald's article.

Q5 required respondents to attach captions to the visuals in the text. For each picture, respondents were required to provide two versions of possible captions so as to enable me to benefit from a wider basis of comparison between Wald's captions and those suggested by respondents. A high degree of similarity between the respondents'captions and Wald's captions could be indicative of accuracy of respondents' expectations, while dissimilarity could indicate that respondents' expectations were to be challenged by the text of the article. In addition, similarity might indicate familiarisation of the readers with the genre, while dissimilarity might allow effects such as surprise, related to unexpectedness.

Q10.2 was designed with a view to clarifying whether potential lack of accommodation of certain 'male body' representations within existing respondents' schemata occurred as a result of strong emotional reactions or out of comprehension failure, i.e. by respondents not being familiar with language items referring to body parts or aspects of masculinity. Concomitantly, responses to this question are likely to indicate whether the meaning of such linguistic clues are, in the respondents' opinion, inferable from the context and whether they significantly contribute to overall text comprehension.

6.7.2. Tasksheet questions illustrative of the implications of gradual exposure to the multimodal text: findings

Responses provided to Q1.1 entitled me to hypothesise that at this primary stage of visual textual encounter, respondents activated a person schema, which I have called the STANDING MAN schema. Most responses indicated the occurrence of a 'position' variable as they described the upside-down posture of the man standing on his hands. Some of these descriptions were very concise (e.g. R5, R15, R24), while others were extremely verbose, presumably indicating the activation of supplementary variables. The language employed in the responses entitled me to regard 'location', be it spatial or temporal, as one of such supplementary variables. There were 17 mentions of 'locations', with obvious prevalence of the spatial location ('on the beach' – 15 mentions) over the temporal location ('early in the afternoon', 'on the beach', – 2 mentions).

As indicated by linguistic clues in the responses, I regarded the 'activity' variable as likely to have been instantiated in addition to the 'location' variable' (6 mentions). There are two prevalent values satisfying this variable: 'exercising' and 'yoga practising'. By providing an explanation for the young man's standing on his hands, two responses were indicative of the possible instantiation of an 'intention' or 'purpose' variable in association with the 'location' variable:

'He wants to have an upside-down image of the sea' (R9)
'A young man trying to keep fit and get rid of everyday stress' (R26).

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Ten respondents utilised language (adjectives or nouns indicating social or professional categories) indicative of the activation of more complex person schemata: e.g. 'a sportsman' (R3), 'a macho' (R4), 'a young man' (R9, R19, R2, R26).

The instantiation of complex person schemata was indicated by more elaborate descriptions, for example:

> 'The picture shows a good-looking man with well-shaped muscles, standing on his hands on the beach. He is probably working out.' (R8)
> 'The picture shows a very strong, trained person. He is very skilful at practising rather tough sports' (R18).

I have grouped expectations as explicitly acknowledged in responses to Q 1.3. according to what I regarded as the allegedly prevalent scene whose activation language clues in such responses appeared to signal. The number of responses justifying my supposition as to the instantiation of the respective scene is specified in the second column. The third column displays the individual responses which provided linguistic clues to the possible instantiation of the respective scene. The prevalent scene appears to be that of 'health', bodily as well as mental. Four respondents explicitly formulated their expectations:

> 'methods of keeping healthy, bodily and mentally' (R1)
> 'I expect it to be about techniques of relaxation, training the body and the mind' (R10)
> 'I expect it to be about physical training which improves mental states or activities' (R11)
> 'Mens sana in corpore sano' (R17).

Closely related to the 'health' scene are the 'sports' and the 'yoga' scenes, for example:

> 'The Olympic Games and the training period for sportsmen' (R3)
> 'The article should be about how people try to keep fit; about how healthy they feel when they work out their bodies' (R25)
> 'It might be about certain yoga techniques that strike a possible balance between the human body and mind' (R6)
> 'I think the article would be about yoga, how to get your mind and body purified and relaxed' (R19).

Only three responses contained linguistic clues entitling me to think about the likelihood of a 'clothes' or 'fashion' schema having been instantiated:

> 'a commercial for male underwear' (R4)
> 'an article about the latest fashion in beachwear' (R16)
> 'I expect the article to be about summer fashion' (R28).

A small number of responses contained linguistic clues indicative of the instantiation of an 'advert' scene, a 'holiday' scene and a 'human nature' scene. Interestingly, two responses explicitly indicated characteristics of genre and style of articles published in women's magazines, consequently entitling me to believe a 'genre' schema had very probably been instantiated:

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'Article giving advice to fat girls: "Work out, lose weight and you might get a hunk like that!" ' (R22)
'The article accompanied by such a picture could provide advice about newly discovered of beginning one's day so as not to be affected by stress at work' (R26).

I expected responses to Q2 to be indicative of several scenes likely to have been instantiated at this early point of textual encounter. I grouped such scenes into three basic categories:

1) masculinity and associated issues
2) relationships between men and women
3) health, sports and yoga practices

Most expected scenes belong to the 'relationships' category (25 instances), followed by 'masculinity' scenes (12 instances) and only a small number of 'health' scenes (4 instances). In their turn, 'masculinity' scenes could in turn be divided into several subcategories, according to the issues with which masculinity is associated by the respondent(s). The commonest association seems to have been made between *clothes, public image* and male *behaviour*:

'what the image says about the habits and behaviour of men in general' (R3),
'the eternal enigma of discovering a man's character by his way of dressing and of guessing as many things as possible about him out of the clothes he is wearing' (R12).

One respondent associates *beachwear* and *virility*:

'a test (that you might do for your boyfriend maybe) on the correspondence between beachwear of different types and virility' (R1).

Another respondent links together *sex-appeal* and *a good-looking body*:

'The article might discuss the relation between a man's very good-looking body and his sex-appeal' (R11).

At this early stage of textual encounter, three respondents already detected the pursuit Wald was to embark upon in her article, namely to provide a *classification of men* according to their beachwear:

'It probably deals with young men wearing different types (and sizes) of beachwear. If the guy is a macho, he may wear a very tiny piece of beachwear!'(R9)
'Such an article would deal with such issues as "What's your type?" matters.' (R25).

Scenes drawing on 'relationships' may be subdivided into:
– *seduction strategies* :

'sex, love, conquest' (R13)
'I think it could be dealing with the importance of physical attraction in relationships between men and women.' (R24);

– *sex, the discovery of sexuality and sexual fantasies*:

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'It may be about a young woman's fantasies, sexuality, relationships and maybe fears' (R6)
'How to deal with safe sex and good looks, which, though sometimes deceiving, are the ones that first draw the girls' attention' (R22)
'The article could be about having an affair at the seaside, or it could be just about sex' (R27);

– *women's comments on men's appearance:*

'nice butt, strong arms, good package' (R4)

or
– *women's hunches about men*:

'The article should deal with ways of discovering men's personality, i.e. what men don't want women to know about them' (R14)
'that type of womanly intuition which says: "if he has a briefcase he must be a lawyer"' (R15).

As far as responses to Q5 are concerned, it is not my intention here to pursue a more insightful or detailed analysis of the respondents' suggested captions as compared to Wald's because, with '*Men in Trunks*', captions are not particularly enlightening as to the potential activation of male body schemata or to the classification of masculinities. My analysis of the respondents captions merely indicated their relative lack of familiarity with captions as a genre.

A summary of the responses to Q 10.2. is provided in Table 6.10.2. below:

Table 6.10.2.

List of unknown words and phrases referring to parts of the body and/or aspects of masculinity

Words and phrases related to parts of the body or masculinity	meaning guessable	meaning not guessable	meaning important	meaning unimportant
posing pouches	11	2	10	3
weedy quads	11	7	11	7
smouldering sexuality	2	2	3	1
six pack		3	1	2
protruding tummy	1		1	
lithe	3		3	
'an inflated Lilo rather than a six-pack'		1	1	
Other words				
Lilo				
(calf-length)trews				
skimpy				
trawlerman				
swing tag				
clinch				
thongs				
sieve				
vaunted				
barely-there trunk				
to splay				

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Unknown words and phrases have been grouped according to their belonging (or not) to the semantic field of 'body parts'. As the upper part of the table shows, most unknown combinations of words refer to words and phrases designating – generally metaphorically – body parts. The most frequently cited combinations are '*posing pouches*' and '*weedy quads*'. Most respondents regard these word combinations as both *inferable* out of context (11 mentions for 'pouches' and 11 for 'quads') and *significant* for comprehension purposes (10 and respectively 11 mentions for each). Only two respondents believe the meaning of '*posing pouches*' is not inferable and three regard it as unimportant for reading purposes. Seven respondents regard '*weedy quads*' as not inferable out of context, but do not assign too much significance to its comprehension (7 mentions). Interestingly, these two syntagms are the most frequently mentioned in responses to Q 14.2 as being the textual triggerers of emotional reactions such as '*amusement*' or '*disgust*'. Sporadic mentions include '*smouldering sexuality*' and designations of the abdomen: '*six pack*', '*protruding tummy*', '*inflated Lilo*', most of which were equally mentioned in responses to 14.2 as a source of '*amusement*'.

At first sight, acknowledging a linguistic clue as unknown and indicating it as a source of emotional reaction may appear illogical. Nevertheless, an explanation could be as follows. The words and phrases under discussion may have been honestly acknowledged as triggers of emotional reactions because, as most respondents specify, their meaning is regarded as contextually inferable. The colourfulness of Wald's formulations may have required some further effort in comprehension, which, in turn, may have compelled respondents to better focus on the triggers of emotional reactions. The consequence of this extra focus may have been, among others, an emotional reaction partially provoked by respondents' having felt amused or intrigued by the unexpected way the writer had chosen to designate parts of the body.

6.8. Concluding remarks

The present chapter has dealt with data collection and data analysis for the Main Study. Apart from analysis procedures, I have also presented the rationale and the findings pertaining to specific groups of tasksheet questions, meant to elucidate specific RQs or combinations of RQs. The next chapter will resume the main findings of the response analysis and pave the way for the discussion of their relevance for the overall purpose of my research.

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DISCUSSION

7.0. Introduction

The present chapter will summarise the main findings of the data analysis presented in Chapter 6. It will also address the possibility of extending schema theory by having a closer, empirically grounded look at the interrelationship between individual mental cognitions and publicly shared representations (see 3.4.). Finally, I will discuss some changes in the Romanian post-totalitarian mentalities which, in my view, have had a considerable impact upon the perception and reception of gender identities, especially of non-hegemonic masculinities.

7.1. Summary of findings

In the pages to come I will present the main findings of my analysis, which will be discussed in the order in which they resulted from the five sets of responses constituted according to the research questions they were intended to address. The findings heavily rely on the analysis of the respective sets of responses with which readers are already familiar from the previous chapter.

7.1.1. Findings related to attitude measurement as predictive of the potential schema-refreshing effect of the text upon the readers

I regard responses to the questions analysed within the present study as indicative of the schema-refreshing potential of the text '*Men in Trunks*', primarily suggested by the findings concerning attitude rankings provided by the respondents and consequently addressing RQE1 and RQM3.

At a pre-reading stage, responses to Q 1.2. provided no indications as to schema-refreshing potential, since after the encounter with the visual text alone (the first page of the article without the headline), respondents did not perceive the respective image as expectation-challenging and predicted no surprises to be in store for them during some future reading of the article. At an early while-reading stage, responses to Q4 provided some helpful indications as to the readers' attitudes towards Wald's opening statement, a

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paragraph which I regarded as highly representative for the whole article. Most respondents estimated this statement as '*daring*', while surprisingly associating '*boldness*' of thought and expression on the part of the writer with '*realism*' of the topic. Since realism is generally not indicative of potential schema-refreshment (Cook 1994) and '*boldness*' could be indicative of novelty, hence it could announce a switch in readers' expectations and ultimately potential schema-refreshment effects upon the readers, I personally find this association contradictory. The juxtaposition of the two evaluative adjectives could be explained in terms of the respondents' tendency to regard a '*realistic*' text on the classification of men on the beach as promising to reveal some 'naked truth', i.e. some raw, intriguing facts about male bodies and male sexuality. Such disclosure can be regarded as '*daring*' in the Romanian conservative milieus, where issues related to nudity, bodily functions and sex are still taboo issues, offensive to prudish eyes and ears.

The previously discussed association is reinforced by an overwhelming number of responses to Q11 (see Table 6.11.), which grant similar rankings to the attributes '*ingenious*' and '*down-to-earth*' as appropriately describing Wald's categorisation of men on the beach according to their swimwear. If the prevalent high ranking of '*ingenious*' (1) could entitle me to predict some potential schema-refreshing effect of the text upon the readers, assessing such a categorisation as '*down-to-earth*' rather indicates schema-reinforcing tendencies with the respective readers. Again, the co-occurrence of the two adjectives in the respondents' rankings could be explained by young Romanian female readers tending to estimate 'plain', straightforward discourses on body matters, especially on male bodies and masculinity, as innovative, since a few years ago dealing with such issues in a publicly available text (such as a text printed in a magazine targeted at a young female readership) might have been regarded as outrageous by more conservative readers and as 'cutting-edge' by more emancipated readers.

However, in contradiction with both the association between innovativeness and pragmatism discussed above and with my assumption when designing the questionnaire, the respondents did not associate innovativeness of Wald's categorisation of men with its being '*man-bashing*'. This could be accounted for by the long-existing tradition in women-only gossip discourses of bringing up 'man-bashing issues' and relishing in elaborating on them. While highlighting men's drawbacks or mocking at certain stereotypical patterns of male behaviour, women seek for 'mutual support and cooperation' (Coates 1999: 120) via passing humorous yet observant and even scathing comments on men:

> Women's talk at one level deals with the experiences common to women: individuals work to come to terms with that experience, and participants in conversation actively support one another in that endeavour. At another level, the way women negociate talk symbolises that mutual support and cooperation: conversationalists understand that they have rights as speakers and also duties as listeners; the joint working out of a group takes precedence over individual assertions (Coates 1999: 120)

I fully agree with Coates that man-targeted gossip in all-women groups tends to efface personal points of view in favour of consensual opinions which are meant to increase solidarity among female gossipers. In the Romanian context, putting down

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men and verbally engaging in reverse sexism in 'closet' talk may be seen as a compensatory discourse for the overt and covert sexist language practices employed in relation to women in the public sphere, the printed press included (for exemplifications see Lotreanu 1997).

At a post-reading stage, responses to Q12 (see Table 6.12) were also expected to be confirmative of previously acknowledged attitudes towards Wald's classification of male holiday makers. Indeed, such responses indicated the readers' having evaluated Wald's article as '*novel, original*' rather than '*predictable*'. Along the same confirmative trend, responses to Q15 (Table 6.15) consolidate previous estimations of the text as '*inspiring*' and '*enjoyable*', which I regarded as potential indicators of some schema-refreshing effect of the text upon the readers, especially in terms of the unexpected associations the text brings to mind (e.g. describing male genitalia in terms of fish and fishing tools or portraying men as infants or cartoon characters). The 'enjoyability' of the text was accounted for by most respondents as the successful combination of realistic topics and amusing language.

7.1.2. Findings indicative of respondents' classification and anticipation strategies, inferential processes and evaluative tendencies as employed in the comprehension and evaluation of the categories of men proposed by the writer

The second set of questions analysed addressed RQE2 and focused on disclosing categorisation strategies and the assignment of specific attributes to members of those categories, as well as on tracking down inferential processes on the basis of enlightening language clues provided in the responses. Such language clues occurred in a gap-filling task (Q3) as well as in the list items provided in the table accompanying the instructions to Q6, comprising category denomination, traits attributable to category members and the anticipated effect of the respective categories of men upon female watchers.

The language cues provided by the respondents were indicative of their having chosen an appropriate and efficient line of inferencing, which could only smooth the process of text comprehension, defined by Schmidt (1991) as a sequential, strategic and hierarchically-structured process, aiming at achieving cognitive coherence and involving the reader's creativity.

Having coded both categorisation strategies and types of inferential processing has entitled me to draw several conclusions:

1) Categorisation strategies are not mutually exclusive
2) Some categorisation strategies prevail, namely labelling
3) Few categorisation strategies were made having in mind body types, body parts or build.
4) Few traits attributable to each category were assessed as neutral, while most positive as well as negative traits were defined in terms of behaviour rather than clothes, personality or body type.

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Linguistic clues provided by respondents indicate their tendency to accommodate images of masculinity as inferable from textual chunks at this early stage of reading within stereotypical representations of masculinity. Such a tendency is perceivable whenever respondents make traditional associations for both attractive and unattractive men. Thus, attractiveness is usually associated with wearing revealing bathing suits and being self-centred and conceited. Lack of attractiveness is associated with timidity and awkwardness, which old-fashioned, flesh-concealing trunks reinforce. At this point of textual encounter, most respondents seem to activate traditional, conservative schemata of masculinity, by making the culturally inculcated associations mentioned above.

Explicit mentions of the role played by the body in the evaluation of men on the beach are scarce. Nevertheless, the language used by the respondents who took body types or body parts into consideration indicates that both exaggerated concern with one's body and a total lack of concern with one's body are despicable tendencies in male holiday makers. Excessive weight and puniness are equally sanctioned because, in the respective respondents' views, they constitute attributes that may indicate a lack of manliness. Along this line of reasoning, such tendencies reveal how socially accepted models of masculinity have been internalised by the respondents and how such institutionalised models enable respondents to activate cognitive schemata consisting of traditionally accepted attributes of masculinity during their encounter with the text. In other words, the respondents' previous socio-cultural experiences in relation to schema-consistent representations of masculinity foster their activation of masculinity schemata which revolve around stereotypical attributes of manliness.

7.1.3. Findings indicative of (lack of accommodation) of assumedly schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity

The findings provided by the discussion of responses to Q7 supply respondents' evaluations of the three categories of men on the beach: '*Tasty BLTs*', '*Self-obsessed Skimpies*' and '*Bashful Boxers*' (referred to throughout as BLTs, SOSs and BBs) once the denomination of each category has been explained in the comprehension sheet. Such evaluations are accompanied by justificatory remarks meant to substantiate the respondents' reasons for the rankings they assigned to each category in terms of '*attractiveness*' versus '*repulsiveness*'.

Attractiveness is prevalently anticipated as high with BLTs. The most frequently mentioned reasons for such high rankings include:

a) good taste (with explicit mention of a prototypical exemplar: Burt Lancaster)
b) lack of obsession with one's appearance
c) avoidance of ostentatious display of flesh.

The above listed traits tend to describe behavioural habits rather than aspects of the body. I would venture to say that such traits are likely to make up a stereotype of traditional attractive masculinity, that of the distinguished, classy, unobtrusive man. As it appears from the analysis of the responses, the afore-mentioned stereotype provides a core of

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normativity in terms of appearance and social status and manners which imbues most Western representations of hegemonic masculinities, defined as health- and sexual desire-inspiring (see 2.10). Consequently, justifications for high rankings of BLTs as '*attractive*' are likely to reveal the tendency of most respondents to nest this category of men within existing, institutionalised models of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995, Halberstam 1998, Bordo 1999, Benwell 2002).

Repulsiveness scores high rankings with SOSs. The reasons specified for such high rankings of SOSs as '*repulsive*' were strongly suggested by the semantics of the adjective 'self-obsessed' (a personality trait) rather than the semantics of 'skimpies' (an attribute hinting at some high degree of body exposure). Self-obsession was rated as '*repulsive*' by its being associated with narcissism, exhibitionism or a desperate call for attention on the part of SOSs. Such traits are likely to belong to the traditional stereotypical representation of men as self-centred, vain, shallow beings, which, although opposed to the alluring, elegant and discreet masculinity of the BLTs, is nonetheless a stereotypical way to schematize 'the dark side' of manhood. There are also instances of associating the SOSs' self-obsession with attributes which are atypical of traditional heterosexual masculinities, such as engaging in homosexual or gigolo practices. The occurrence of such associations indicates that certain attributes suggestive of counter-stereotypical masculinities can be smoothly accommodated within respondents' existing schematic representations.

Unlike BLTs and SOSs, BBs are evaluated as an 'in-between' category, whose assessment seems to have involved the integration of atypical traits within respondents' masculinity schemata. Thus, features like 'reserved', 'shy', 'aloof', 'cute' are regarded as good substitutes for 'appealing'. Such replacements indicate that pre-established standards of hegemonic masculinity are likely to be transgressed while activating counter-stereotypical or alternative representations of masculinity. Integration of such counter-stereotypical categories of men may have been facilitated by Wald's jocular-pejorative tonality in describing the category of BBs, a tonality acknowledged as such by most respondents.

Confirmation or invalidation of expected traits as well as changes in evaluation of members of each category of men is enabled by comparing evaluations and lists of traits justifying such evaluations at an early stage of textual encounter with remembered evaluations at a post-reading stage (see Table 6C). As Table 6C shows, there is general strengthening of initial expectations and evaluations, which could be indicative of masculinity schemata to have been accommodated within respondents' existing schemata.

Measuring attitudinal changes has additionally revealed either strengthening or maintaining of initial evaluations passed on the three categories of men. Such measurements have provided evidence as to the readers' having smoothly accommodated the descriptions of men encountered in the text '*Men in Trunks*' within their existing representations of masculinity. Accommodations appeared effortless because most respondents might have made traditionalist associations, even 'illusory correlations' (Hinton 2000) between traditional 'manly' traits and degrees of likeability of the respective groups of men (e.g. associating self-obsession with repulsiveness, elegance with attractiveness, and shyness with both).

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Attitude measurement is likely to contribute to the enrichment of schema theory by facilitating the exploration of the emotional-evaluative dimension of schemata. Measuring attitudes may be indicative of slight or dramatic changes in the way comprehenders assess their flexible schematic representations of objects, persons or situations. The preservation of attitudes within similar ranges may indicate potential schema-refreshment, while visible variation in attitudes might anticipate potential schema-refreshment.

7.1.4. Findings highlighting prototypical features and exemplars and the role they play in indicating comparative degrees of accommodation of schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity at various stages of reading

My analysis of the set of questions addressing RQE2 relied on the assumption that responses to Q8 and Q9 contain verbal clues meant to provide evidence as to the prototypical traits and exemplars and to the attitudes acknowledged by respondents in relation to the three categories of men on the beach. On the basis of such clues I felt entitled to hypothesise on the respondents' having instantiated certain schemata of masculinity, since representative features and exemplars within a category get systematically and hierarchically organised into mental cognitive structures such as schemata.

Along this line of hypothesising, I made a comparison between masculinity schemata presumably instantiated at an initial stage (Q8) and a final stage (Q9) of textual encounter. This comparison is likely to reveal (dis)similarities between the masculinity schemata instantiated at the two stages of reading. Dissimilarities were not necessarily to be estimated as potentially schema-refreshing with respect to the readers and I considered that exploring differences between anticipated and reminisced representations of masculinity needed to be done in close connection with the respondents' acknowledged attitudes (Q 9.1). Only if dissimilarities co-occur with dramatic changes in attitudes, could responses be regarded as indicative of lack of accommodation of the textual descriptions of men into the respondents' existing schemata of masculinity. I considered the respondents' specifications of which traits they acknowledge as '*surprising*', '*shocking*' or '*intriguing*' as indicative of some schema-refreshing potential the article may have had upon them.

Responses to Q 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 confirmed respondents' expectations in relation to BLTs, SOSs and BBs as expressed in responses to Q6. There was remarkable consensus as to the positive evaluation of BLTs and the negative evaluation of SOSs, while assessment of BBs was still heterogeneous (with a majority of 'neutral' evaluations). Expected traits specified in responses to Q 8.1. strengthened previously formulated anticipations: thus prototypical traits with BLTs included sex-appeal and good taste, while SOSs were once again declared the object of contempt because of their absorption with their own sexuality and body display. With BBs, decency and shyness were the most frequently mentioned prototypical traits.

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In addition, as responses to Q 8.4. illustrate, acknowledged reactions to the three categories of men reinforced previous evaluations provided in responses to Q6. Thus, BLTs were expected to arouse positive reactions such as admiration, appreciation and desire, while SOSs were seen as worthy of disdain and ridicule. Regarding BBs, the 'in-between' category, reactions were to be located midway between positive and negative, since the most frequently mentioned descriptors were sympathy, curiosity and indifference.

Responses to Q 9.1. allow for a comparison between remembered traits and expected traits for the three categories of men. With BLTs, remembered traits widely overlapped with expected traits, which I regarded as indicative of respondents' having strengthened their previously instantiated schemata of masculinity. With this category, the consolidation of existing schemata was signalled by those responses which lexically reiterated features previously assigned to the category. Thus, adjectives such as '*fashionable*' or '*physically appealing*' maintained their number of mentions, while adjectives such as '*vain*' and '*rich*' underwent a visible increase in their number of mentions. Consequently, the initially instantiated schema of the distinguished, stylish gentleman was reinforced along a stereotypical line of representation associating good looks and attractiveness with wealth and vanity.

Overlapping between remembered and expected traits also occurred with SOSs, with traits such as '*self-centred*', '*ridiculous*' and '*vain*' being maintained within a similar number of mentions. Surprisingly, adjectives such as '*narcissistic*', '*exhibitionist*' and '*unappealing*' score high within the list of remembered traits, although they were not mentioned as expected traits. Because they were negatively assessed, they appeared to be congruent with the maintained traits. Such congruence indicates respondents' having strengthened initially instantiated schemata for this category, such schemata consisting of attributes like selfishness, stupidity, superficiality, all indicative of a rather stereotypical representation of 'bad' masculinity.

Unlike with BLTs and SOSs, the adjectives listed by respondents in relation to the 'in-between' category of BBs indicate little overlapping between expected and remembered traits. The most frequently specified remembered trait, '*unappealing*', was initially mentioned by only two respondents. Other adjectives rounding off the representation of BBs as a category of men lacking charisma are '*embarrassed*', '*immature*', '*sloppy*', '*outdated*', all of which were sporadically, if at all, mentioned in the list of expected traits. The initial 'neutral' representation of BBs came to be assessed negatively at a post-reading stage, partly because of the textual triggers in the intriguing paragraph dealing with the repulsive secret lying inside the boxers, a paragraph which also made the object of strong emotional reactions with a non-negligible number of respondents. Oddness, immaturity and homosexual drives enriched the respondents' schemata of masculinity regarding BBs. The language clues provided by respondents in the list of remembered traits indicated smooth accommodation of this newly emerged, counter-stereotypical representation of masculinity within their initially instantiated schema of the shy, harmless man.

By listing salience-conferring attributes, responses to Q10.1 provided language cues indicative of elements constituting respondents' schemata of masculinity activated at a post-reading stage, as well as of the respondents' focusing on certain prototypical

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exemplars and representative attributes. Response analysis reveals that most traits regarded as representative for the prototypical exemplars pertaining to each category were gendered, more precisely they indicated traits explicitly related to masculinity. The prevalent trait that allegedly granted salience to a male public persona is, in the opinion of most respondents (24), his '*being a sex-symbol*'.

A smaller number of respondents (9) mentioned certain male personae as the embodiment of what they perceive as 'ideal' masculinities: the 'macho' man, the Latino lover, the saviour, the sensitive man, the rock legend. The respondents' acknowledgement of the representativeness of prototypical exemplars in terms of their being the paragon of some 'ideal' masculinity is indicative of their tendency to activate 'essentialising' schemata of masculinity, i.e. schemata of men who display only stereotypical 'male' virtues (such as virility, force, handsomeness) and fulfil socially approved and even socially rewarded male roles (such as the passionate lover, the rescuer/protector, the gentleman).

As indicated by the language clues in the responses, the criteria of representativeness employed by the respondents were equally 'essentialising', since most of them revolved around ubiquitous aspects of masculinity. Among such aspects, manliness/virility was the most frequently cited attribute (19 mentions), closely followed by manly features related to alluring bodies or body parts (18 mentions). Because they seemed to perceive strength or physical force as an attribute indispensable for most prototypical exemplars, I felt entitled to conclude that respondents are likely to have activated schemata of masculinity built around stereotypical traditional 'manly' attributes and traditional male social roles.

In comparison with the previously mentioned gendered traits, non-gendered traits such as IQ level, fashionable looks and stylishness, moral virtues and vices were mentioned considerably less frequently. There were also few mentions of effects produced by the respective famous men on their audience or fans, of events or historical periods related to the stars in question, all of which had no explicitly specified gendered dimension.

The respondents' attitudes towards Wald's categorisation of men were explicitly stated in responses to Q 13. I regard attitude-designating language clues as good candidates for indicating the potential schema-refreshment of the text upon the respondents. I consider that disagreement with the writer's opinions, together with shock-inducing or expectation-challenging textual elements, may leave room for emotional shifts in the respondents' moods as well as for alteration of viewpoints, both of which might announce some schema-refreshing effect of the text with the group of respondents in question. Explicitly avowing changes in perceptions, mentalities and attitudes related to masculinity could be, to my mind, indicative of some schema-refreshment potential of the article upon the investigated readers.

Concerning strong emotional reactions, ten respondents out of 27 explicitly stated that there was nothing in the article to make them feel '*shocked*', '*appalled*' or '*intrigued*'. The most controversial textual chunk was the paragraph describing the inside of the boxers in terms of fishing lexemes; nevertheless, only four respondents admitted having found this shocking or disgusting. Another four seemed 'outraged' by the raw language used by Wald, while two were annoyed by the shallowness of the topic.

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Responses to Q14 specified which issues in the article or which sentences and word combinations caused respondents to have experienced the strong emotional reactions acknowledged in responses to Q 10.1. The prevalent acknowledged reaction was that of *'amusement'* (15 mentions), mostly triggered by metaphorical references to male genitalia (which Wald calls 'family jewels' or 'essentials' with BBs, and 'distinctive moulded sack' with SOSs). The same reference to male sexual organs aroused 'disgust' with nine respondents. Such findings may indicate an effect of surprise – potentially schema-refreshing in relation to genre conventions – as to the colourful, allegedly 'strong' language Wald chooses to describe parts of the male body. Although, to my knowledge, no linguistic studies have been carried out in relation to Romanians' use and perception of obscene language, my personal experience allows me to maintain that in most traditionally-minded Romanian communities - among which the respondents' parents are highly likely to be included - the very mention of genital organs, be it by their medical denomination is considered taboo and is even evidence of the speaker's entertaining 'dirty' thoughts.

Effects of surprise seem to have obtained also in relation to Wald's *'clever'* writing and to her *'ironical, tongue-in-cheek'* approach to the topic (six respondents). I tend to conclude that emotional reactions were less strong than I expected and that mentions of *'amusement'* prevailed over mention of *'shock'* or the like. Moreover, such emotional reactions were provoked by the innovativeness and boldness of Wald's style rather than by the descriptions of men and of male bodies as such.

7.1.5. Findings illustrative of the implications of gradual exposure to the multimodal text

The findings resulting from the analysis of the fifth set of questions, mainly addressing RQE3, give credit to Hoijer's claim that:

> A person does not apply schemas without first having formed an opinion of, and categorized the object in question. If it is a text, the genre is broadly identified by means of its theme, its persons, or characters, its places and milieus, and all this is done on a holistic level, as well as in relation to the specific scenes and sequences (Hoijer 1992: 292)

Informants' sets of responses illustrated how schemata are likely to alter with gradual exposure to visual, then to multimodal text chunks, and how schematic flexibility indicates growing familiarisation with basic genre requirements. Responses to Q1.1. and Q1.3 were indicative of person schemata which respondents instantiated at an early, exclusively visual, pre-reading stage of textual encounter. The language clues in the responses indicated frequent instantiation of a STANDING MAN schema, consisting of one or several variables such as: 'position', 'location' and 'activity'. Responses to Q1.3. contained language clues which entitled me to hypothesise upon several scenes/themes supposedly nested within the previously instantiated person schema. Among these, I would mention: 'health' (bodily and mental), 'sports' (closely related to health in most responses) and 'fashion'.

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Responses to Q2 could indicate some modifications of the previously instantiated schemata because of the respondents' encounter with a new language trigger – the headline of the article '*Men in Trunks*' and the adjoining questions: '*What does his beachwear say about him? And what could be in it for you...?*'. At this early stage of encounter with both visual and written text, language clues in responses were indicative of noteworthy diversification of scenes. The most frequently mentioned expected scenes were the '*relationship*' scene (25 mentions), followed by the '*masculinity*' scene (12 mentions), while the '*health*' scene is visibly less often cited (only 4 mentions). Most respondents anticipated '*relationship*' scenes to comprise elements they consider to be genre-specific, i.e. issues commonly dealt with in women's magazines, such as seduction strategies, the discovery of sexuality and sexual fantasies, women's comments on and hunches about men. '*Masculinity*' scenes were divisible into several subcategories, according to the associations respondents were likely to have made, the most frequent of which is that between clothes, public image and male behaviour. Interestingly, at this early stage of encounter with the multimodal text, three respondents managed to correctly anticipate the writer's intentions, i.e. her offering the reader a classification of male holiday-makers according to the type of trunks they wear.

So far, findings suggest that respondents did not seem to have difficulties accommodating new representations of masculinity during their partial encounter with both visual and verbal text. The degree of accommodation of such representations was further investigated in responses to Q5, meant to provide a basis for comparison between captions suggested by respondents (2 captions for each picture) and actual captions provided by Wald. The comparison could indicate lesser familiarisation of the respondents with captions as a genre, but not lack of accommodation of newly encountered visual representations of masculinity, since most captions indicate adequate knowledge of the male public personae in the visuals. In addition, dissimilarities between Wald's captions and those suggested by respondents may merely unveil the wide diversity of options in attaching verbal comments to visual input.

Responses to Q10.2 are indicative of instances when respondents met with partial failure in comprehension, arising from their not knowing the meaning of certain verbal expressions, more specifically of certain language items (words or phrases) referring to body parts or aspects of masculinity. I presumed that acknowledging a lack of familiarity with such verbal items could be, among other things, indicative of a partial lack of accommodation of newly emerged descriptions of masculinity within respondents' existing social schemata. In addition, I was inclined to consider those items that respondents regarded as non-inferable from the context, yet contributive to overall comprehension of the article, as indicative of difficulties respondents might have had in accommodating newly encountered gender representations into previously organised mental structures.

The most frequently mentioned phrases designating body parts were '*posing pouches*' and '*weedy quads*', regarded as guessable out of the context as well as important for comprehension purposes. Less frequently mentioned phrases comprised '*smouldering sexuality*', '*sixpack*', '*protruding tummy*', '*inflated Lilo*'. Most phrases mentioned as unknown were equally acknowledged as triggers of emotional reactions, especially amusement . To my mind, such a finding indicates respondents' having

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focused on the unfamiliar phrases in order to infer their meaning. This may have led them, among other things, to discover the colourfulness and innovativeness of Wald's writing style. Feeling intrigued or amused by the writer's style was acknowledged in responses to Q14. Consequently, discovering expectation-challenging metaphorical expressions for body parts, may have led to emotional responses which could be indicative of some potential schema-refreshing effect of the text upon the respondents.

7.2. Relevance of findings for the integration of individual schemata within shared cultural models

I believe my findings have contributed to the elucidation of the overarching content RQ of my study:

> *When Romanian undergraduate female readers are presented with a multimodal text on the male body published in the British magazine 'Zest', is there any evidence that the textual input either (a) reinforces or (b) clashes with the readers' schematic representations of masculinity?*

The analysis of informants' sets of responses has revealed that there is evidence as to whether textual representations of masculinity in the article '*Men in Trunks*' reinforce or clash with respondents' masculinity schemata. This evidence is provided by the language clues in the informants' responses which have enabled me as an analyst to hypothesise about their activation of certain schemata during the textual encounter. Such linguistic evidence highlights both reinforcement of initially entertained stereotypes of hegemonic masculinity (see 7.1.3. and 7.1.4.) and flexibility in terms of accommodating novel, non-hegemonic textual representations of masculinity (see 7.1.1.).

In addition, my findings disclose the continuous interplay between the text and the readers, the readers' familiarisation with the genre, as well as the readers' contribution to the production of meaning. The findings related to the measurement of respondents' attitudes reinforce Shore's claim that besides factual information about objects, persons, and events, schemata are structured according to comprehenders' emotions and attitudes (Shore 1996: 171). Schemata are subjective because they are the outcome of an act of interpretation, in this case the interpretation of a text published in a magazine targeted at young women. Experience, in this case experience arising from the encounter with a text on male bodies and masculinities, is emotionally-laden, although possibly to a lesser extent than direct experience arising from actual interaction with the sight of male bodies and the display of various facets of masculinity.

7.2.1. Attitudes and schema accommodation

Measuring attitudes at various points of textual encounter – pre-, while- and post-reading – could be indicative of accommodation of masculinity schemata by the respondents. Along this line of argument, the findings of my analysis contribute to clarifying the first methodological RQ of my study:

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M1: Are readers' sets of responses efficient instruments in indicating whether and how students accommodate assumedly schema-inconsistent representations of masculinities?

I believe that, indeed, informants' sets of responses indicate accommodation of non-hegemonic textual representations of masculinity by way of measurement of attitudes towards such masculinities (see 7.1.1. and 7.1.3.). A dramatic change in attitudes would have pointed to a lack of accommodation of such schemata as triggered by smaller or larger textual cues. With the group of respondents who participated in my study, figures indicating attitudes towards masculinity-related issues in the text do not show striking differences between an early reading stage (Q4) and a final reading stage (Q11, Q12 and Q15). Measuring attitudes in terms of adjectives regarded as indicative of schema-refreshing potential ('*daring*', '*alluring*', '*ingenious*', '*inspiring*', '*enjoyable*') suggests that readers did not resist accommodation of masculinity schemata as instantiated by Wald's text. Both attitudes and indications of accommodation shed light on to how the construction of meaning, i.e. understanding the classification of male bodies and the evaluation of masculinities as suggested by a British writer, emerges in the interaction between individual cognitive activity, i.e. each respondent's engaging in the process of text comprehension, and shared social reality, i.e. certain prevalent attitudes towards masculinity in the Romanian post-totalitarian culture. To my mind, informants' sets of responses reveal flexibility as to their internalisation of the newly emerged representations of masculinity encountered while reading the article from Zest.

7.2.2. Individual cognition, social resources and the development of gender stereotypes

The ceaseless interaction between individual cognitive systems and socially provided resources is made salient by those findings of my analysis which reveal the respondents' (un)aware development of specific positive or negative stereotypes of masculinity. The analysis has strengthened claims made by scholars such as Fiske and Taylor (1991), Stangor (1996) and Hinton (2000) as to stereotypes not being rigid images in people's heads (see section 3.5.) since such stereotypes proved to be flexible throughout the process of text comprehension. The findings have also demonstrated that both hegemonic and non-hegemonic stereotypes of masculinity are cognitive, affective and symbolic representations of social groups, presumably shared among the respondents as a community of practice. The shared nature of the stereotypes in question is indicative of their having proliferated within particular social and political milieus (predominantly Romanian urban middle-class families) at a given historical moment (the post-communist epoch) while having been socially and discursively constructed during everyday communication (Augoustinos and Walker 1998: 635).

A close examination of the stereotypes of masculinity entertained by these respondents confirms the theory sustained by several social psychologists (Oakes *et al* 1994, Augoustinos and Walker 1998) that gender stereotypes persist not because they reflect 'true' attributes of men occupying social roles, but because they 'make sense' of existing social roles. In other words, gender stereotypes function as 'explanatory fictions'

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relying on the assumed essential differences between men and women. Stereotypes can be socially validated through social influences bringing about consent in like-minded others (Oakes *et al* 1994: 200). In the dissemination and maintenance of stereotypes, some discursive constructions are so pervasive and commonsensical that they give an effect of realism and because of such discursive practices, categorisation is more than a mental process since it becomes "actively constructed in discourse for rhetorical ends" (Potter and Wetherell (1987: 77)[1].

Like all social perceptions, perceptions of gender identities by young Romanian female students ranged from the uncontested acceptance of traditional gender expectations and roles to the assimilation of fluid, dynamic, post-modern gendered positions. In section 1.4. I discussed the gap between the rigid gender stereotypes entertained by the communist ideology and the dramatic fluctuations such stereotypes have been undergoing since the fall of communism in 1989. The next section will provide some further insight into the understanding and construal of hegemonic and non-hegemonic gender identities in the Romanian post-totalitarian context and, hopefully, some account of the lack of potential schema-refreshment indicated by response analysis.

7.3. On the perception of non-hegemonic femininities and masculinities in post-communist Romania

This section will discuss certain socio-cultural developments in post-1989 Romania which may provide some 'developmental' and 'descriptive' explanations (Mason 1996: 137) and explain, at least partially, why my respondents, young Romanian female undergraduates, did not find accommodation of non-hegemonic masculinities as difficult as I had initially anticipated. My anticipation of some partial lack of accommodation – and implicitly of some potential schema-refreshing effect of the text "*Men in Trunks*" upon my informants – was prompted by the general reluctance of the Romanian population to contemplate alternative masculinities in general and by my students' prudishness as to sexual issues in particular (see 1.1.). I will endeavour to present how alternative, non-hegemonic representations of masculinity gained ground in public representations in Romania, which may account for the respondents' ease in accommodating allegedly schema-inconsistent descriptions of masculinity as provided by Wald's text.

As an essential component of gendered identity, the construction and perception of sexuality in post-totalitarian Romania underwent more dramatic changes with representations of femininity as with representations of masculinity. Women's magazines in the early 1990s witnessed a boom of displayed nudity, of aggressive stances of female sexuality radiant with an erotic lure often with a tinge of soft pornography:

[1] Essentialist beliefs about social groups emerge from the fundamental need to rationalise and explain 'why things are the way they are' (Yzerbyt, Rocher and Schadron 1997) and unwaveringly rely on the assumption they are both 'natural' and inevitable (Augoustinos 1999: 639).

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> The exhibitionism evidenced in these journals comes as a novelty to a public used to a highly puritanical vision policy in Ceausescu's period, when even short skirts and low necks were deemed immoral. The publication of images of naked women is associated to the 'liberalisation' of sex. High-school students find it liberating as it connotes rebellion against a variety of paternal and institutional restriction (Nicolaescu 2001: 71).

The promotion of such aggressive femininity came as a kind of compensation for the imperative of austerity imposed by the Communist ideology during the previous five decades (Petre 1998: 260-261). Somehow this outburst of sexuality-laden icons of femininity was welcomed as a counterbalance for the times when the only images of 'worthy' Romanian women were either that of the industrious asexual factory worker or that of the unfeminine, dull, even physically repellent 'world-wide renowned scholar' (*'savant de renume mondial'*), epitomised in the spine-chilling persona of Elena Ceausescu (Lotreanu 1997: 97, Roman 2001: 12)[2]. If until 1995, Western-European epitomes of beauty imbued the magazines for Romanian women inspiring them with a sense of utopian desire and a craving for artificiality (Nicolaescu 1996: 111–116), the rest of the decade witnessed a proliferation of local beauties, imitative of Western icons yet gradually making room for more personalised local symbols.

Having felt less restricted in their bodily acts by the gender-specific behaviour institutionalised via the social practices of the communist decades, men's urge to aggressively display their sexuality-laden bodies was less imperative than women's. Engrossed in the endeavour to comprehend and assert female sexuality and femininity in a sort of revival of the 1960s sexual revolution in Western countries (Nicolaescu 2001: 71-74), media discourses until the mid-nineties were targeted mainly at a female audience and dealt little, if at all, with masculinity. Emphasis was laid on the woman as an agent responsible for her actions, some of which included interaction with men (such as tips for successful dates, long-lasting marriages, the essential role of communicating with one's partner, etc). In the early days of post-communism, men were both visually and discursively represented less than women. Visual representations (i.e. magazines, talk shows, broadcasts of charity concerts) generally included men as functioning in the public sphere: successful politicians and businessmen in Armani suits, artists in eccentric or posh garments, long-haired, denim-clad intellectual ex-dissidents, whose attire emerged as sartorial signs of rejection of the formerly exerted pressure of homogenisation and coerced proletarisation.

Although many discourses targeted at women readers and viewers discussed sexual issues (from sex-related diseases or contraceptive means to tactics of seduction), men were hardly ever visually represented as objects of desire. Intriguingly, the female spectatorship seemed to be more reluctant as to the display of male attractiveness and nudity than to the display of fragmented female bodies (bulging breasts, high-heeled legs, sensuous lips, etc; see Nicolaescu 2001: 71–81).

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[2] Although illiterate and hostile to any intellectual concerns the wife of the famous dictator Nicolae Ceausescu had been granted a PhD diploma in Organic Chemistry and the title of Honoris Causa by several prestigious universities by over-servile academic sycophants being coerced into acknowledging her scholarly qualifications. Her low IQ and her proverbial narrow-mindedness made her the object of very many humorous texts, whose sarcasm was paralleled only by the ruthless jokes targeted at her megalomania.

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One of the effects of the assimilation and consumption of global discourses (Scholte 2000) in the late 1990s was the female audience gradually becoming familiar with the pluralisation of masculinities. Acceptance of pluralisation occurred slowly and painfully, as part of the ongoing wider acceptance of interindividual and intergroup differences, with special reference to gypsy ethnic communities, gay and lesbian communities, disabled and elderly persons, as well as, more recently, immigrants from Asian and African countries (on the intersection of feminism with the 'otherised' subjectivities in Romanian see Roman 2001: 14–15).

Sitcoms such as '*Will and Grace*', '*Ally Mc Beal*', '*Sex and the City*' increased familiarisation with gay masculinities and occasioned a revaluation of gay partnerships and of friendship between gay people and heterosexual people. If, in the early nineties, the Romanian audience could admire the bodily display of superheroes with rippling muscles and sculptural torsos of 'action men' such as Stallone, Bruce Willis or Schwarzenegger, the late nineties provided a view of 'flawed' masculinities, partially revealing bodies of fat, flabby or elderly men (for instance, '*The Full Monty*' was a blockbuster with Romanian audiences). 'Emancipating' magazines such as *Cosmopolitan, Elle, Madame Figaro* gradually introduced more unconventional images of masculinity. Following suit, Romanian magazines addressing older teenagers such as *20 ani* (a copy cat of the British *19*) or *Super* (a hybrid between the British magazines *Sugar* and *Zest*) increased the number of images of male bodies, especially in columns providing advice on safe sex or on initiation in sex practices.

TV shows which boast of boldly discussing taboo topics (copy-cats of Oprah Winfrey's or Jay Leno's talk-shows) equally started inviting controversial male personae such as male prostitutes and pimps, transvestites and transsexuals, strippers and recently, local male porn stars. Male strip shows, like that of the Chippendales, were broadcast live. Local impersonators also put on humorous shows, where short, stocky, flaccid men supplied a grotesque imitation of the sex-laden moves of professional male strippers. Despite the scathing comments of a large segment of the audience, conservative-minded therefore easy to outrage[3], novel aspects of masculinity have been increasingly evident in the limelight of such shows.

Boy bands of the *Backstreet Boys* or *Boyzone* type have been mushrooming. Most such bands bring into focus provocative sexually-tinged moves of the male bodies accompanying lyrics which explicitly address male (hetero)sexuality. The amazing diversity of such boy bands has entailed an explosion of variegated masculinities from the body-muffling 'don't-mess-with-me-pal' grouchiness of the hip-hoppers to the undulating sleekness of the pop dance performers. It is worth mentioning that most local comedians exploit stereotypical masculine social roles most often associated with physical repulsiveness: the stupid and brutal policeman, the mafioso, always eager for bribery, or the small entrepreneur, always eager to get his hand greased, the greedy politician, the

[3] Ignoring the warnings of the national Committee for Audio-Visual censorship, explicit sex scenes and taboo language referring to sexual intercourse and bodily functions abound in movies broadcast before midnight, video clips of local bands and sensational scoops on rapists and pedophiles. Indulgence in such sex-related topics can be explained as the need to compensate for the bleak years of communist prudery.

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sleezy pimp or dealer. Interestingly, most comedians perform all-men groups and consequently act women's parts – generally negative stereotypes such as cheap prostitutes, foulmouthed neighbours, masculinised political personalities, nymphomaniac nurses – in drag. Although the mainstream conservative Romanian mentality generally abhors drag as an everyday practice men might engage in, ratings of the respective shows have risen since the introduction of such transvestite characters.

In the new millenium, the number of TV shows and magazines articles dedicated to feminist issues such as equal opportunities, the celebration of the anti-rape day, the promulgation of bills against domestic violence has visibly increased (for a thorough examination of these issues see Macovei 1997: 56–65), while having managed to bring into focus the construction of certain masculinities that would have been dismissed by conservative public opinion in the early nineties. Prominent male political personalities (the Prime Minister, the mayor of Bucharest) as well as media personalities (actors, singers, journalists) engage in discourses that are meant to unveil their nurturing qualities, the delights of fatherhood, the eagerness they take in sharing domestic responsibilities with their wives or partners. Male viewers have even called hotlines made available by TV shows to criticise the lyrics of some local bands, extremely popular among the Romanian youth at the moment, for the sexist attitudes they promote. Frequent calls from male spectators during 'women's only' shows indicate willingness on the part of male watchers to accommodate new attitudes towards gender roles and expectations.

The above-presented mixture of traditional, stereotypical gender representations and the newly introduced non-hegemonic representations of masculinity in the Romanian context could partially account for the ease with which my respondents accommodated schema-inconsistent representations of masculinity, while also shedding some light on their consolidation of initially entertained stereotypes of hegemonic masculinity. Although not conflicting, the two tendencies mirror the general hesitancy experienced by a large part of the Romanian population when simultaneously contemplating traditional, publicly acknowledged cultural models and attempting to internalise global, Westernised, alternative models.

7.4. Concluding remarks

The first section of the present chapter has summarised the findings of the analysis presented in Chapter 6. Emphasis has been laid on those findings which are indicative of the relationship between attitude measurement and accommodation of novel representations of masculinity. I have also dealt with the possible extension of schema theory by exploiting the interdependence between personal cognition and socially shared schemata or 'cultural models' (Holland and Quinn 1987, Quinn and Strauss 1997). In the last section, I have attempted to provide some explanations for my respondents' accommodations of non-hegemonic masculinities by highlighting some aspects of gender perception and reception in post-totalitarian Romania.

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CONCLUSIONS

8.0. Introduction

The final chapter will discuss the main implications of my research: theoretical, methodological and pedagogical, as well as the contribution to knowledge the present study has endeavoured to make. In the last part of this chapter I will suggest several topics and lines of investigation to be addressed by further studies, while acknowledging the limitations of the present study.

8.1. Theoretical implications of the present study

This study involved performing a systematic quantitative and qualitative analysis of the readers' responses to a tasksheet specifically designed for the text '*Men in Trunks*' published in the British magazine *Zest*. Such an analysis was carried out in compliance with the methods generally regarded as appropriate for the field of social sciences (Mason 1996, Strauss and Corbin 1990, Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000) and which I found particularly suitable for the operationalisation of concepts such as 'schema-reinforcement' and 'schema-refreshment' (Cook 1994, Semino 1997, 2001, Jeffries 2001). In my opinion, the tasksheet I designed succeeding in eliciting relevant language clues, which proved helpful in indicating the likely instantiation of certain schemata, the suspension of others and the flexibility of attitudes as reliable indicators of schema-refreshing effects which the respective group of respondents were likely to undergo as a result of their textual encounter with the article from *Zest*.

Linguistic clues provided by respondents indicate their tendency to accommodate images of masculinity as inferable from textual chunks within existing stereotypical representations of masculinity. At various stages of textual encounter, respondents were inclined to make schema-consistent associations between attractive/unattractive appearance and certain moral flaws or behavioural shortcomings, as well as between size or shape of body parts or concern with one's body and degrees of manliness. Such culturally inculcated associations indicated that socially accepted models of masculinity had been internalised by the respondents, prompting them into activating schemata consisting of traditionally accepted attributes of masculinity. I would even venture to add that accommodations appeared effortless *because* most respondents seemed to have made 'illusory correlations' between traditional 'manly' traits and degrees of attractiveness of

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the respective categories of men (e.g. narcissism associated with repulsiveness, stylishness with attractiveness, and timidity with both).

My endeavour to integrate individual conceptualisations of hegemonic and alternative masculinities has aimed to highlight the ceaseless interaction and unavoidable complementarity between individual cognitive structures and culturally shared representations, concurring with the claims set forth by scholars such as Shore (1996), Quinn and Strauss (1997), Augoustinos and Walker (1998). A schema-based approach to the process of text comprehesion and (lack of) assimilation of allegedly expectation-challenging representations of masculinity enabled me to probe cognitive processes related to the intertwining of intra- and extra-personal knowledge along the lines inaugurated by scholars such as Shore (1996), Quinn and Strauss (1997), Hoijer (1998), who advocate expanding schema theory by closely examining the mutuality between individual cognition and socially available cultural models.

8.2. Contribution of the present study in terms of the instrument designed to investigate readers' conceptualisations during textual encounters

As specified, my hypothesising about which schemata were instantiated at various points of textual encounter relies on linguistic data, more specifically on individual responses to questions included in a comprehension sheet specifically designed for the text *'Men in Trunks'* (see App. III). Operationalising the potential schema-reinforcement and schema-refreshment effects of a specific text on a specific readership has nevertheless disconfirmed Jeffries' claim that 'all readers' meanings differ infinitely' (Jeffries 2001: 341) and has revealed that individual variations do not hinder the analyst from identifying consensual tendencies among a community of respondents. Such anticipated consensus implied envisaging challenged expectations, rankings of attitudes and acknowledged emotional reactions regarding the descriptions of male bodies and classifications of masculinity in the selected text. Elicited responses supplied linguistic indications which are – albeit indirectly – indicative of cognitive processes going on in the respondents' minds: categorisation, inferencing and activation of social schemata, basically masculinity schemata.

I believe that the present study has contributed further refinement to schema theory both by providing empirical evidence supporting its utility and through my introduction of a methodological instrument, the comprehension tasksheet, which allowed me as an analyst to hypothesise about the schemata comprehenders instantiate during their encounter with specific textual input. The comprehension tasksheet I devised as a research instrument enabled me to draw interesting connections between:

- language clues provided in the responses and categorisation strategies, inferencing processes and expectation consolidation or suspension
- attitude measurement and accommodation of social schemata

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- the interaction between intrapersonal mental schematic representations and extrapersonal, socially shared cultural representations.

The generalisability of the study primarily resides in its applicability. Schema-elicitive tasksheets can be and have been devised taking into consideration textual peculiarities as well as the linguistic and social practices the targeted readership is expected to engage in. I suggest that the generalisability of these comprehension tasksheets as an instrument of investigation can be enhanced by surveying gender schematic representations instantiated by the same comprehenders not only at various stages of textual encounter but at various reading stages of their lives. A survey of such differences in schematic representations would involve longitudinal studies, which are more likely to highlight schema-refreshing effects certain texts have upon certain readers, since schema-refreshment is a cognitive phenomenon occurring over relatively long spans of time.

8.3. Methodological implications of the present study

The findings related to strong emotional reactions, topics of disagreement and changes of mentality do not entitle me to sustain the belief that respondents experienced emotional turmoil or felt inclined to radically reconsider their schematic perceptions of masculinity. In other words, they disconfirmed my initial assumption that respondents' cognitive representations are likely to espouse schema-refreshment as a result of the textual encounter. Nevertheless, such disconfirmation does not invalidate the comprehension tasksheet as it can serve as a useful instrument to investigate readers' conceptualisations of masculinities and their activation of social schemata. In addition to enabling me to reasonably speculate on the sets of schemata likely to have been instantiated by the respondents, such an instrument provides measurable evidence as to attitudinal and emotional changes undergone by the respective group of respondents. I deal with the role of attitudes as indicators of potential schema-refreshment further, in section 8.4.

The prevalent acknowledged reactions were '*amusement*' and '*disgust*', both of which outnumbered the mentions of '*shock*', *while* being *both* triggered by metaphorical references to male genitalia. Such findings may indicate an effect of surprise – potentially schema-refreshing as regards the language Wald chooses to describe parts of the male body. Such an effect could be accounted for by the fact that, in most mainstream Romanian communities, mentioning male genitalia by other names than their medical denomination is considered vulgar, even obscene. Effects of surprise seem to have obtained also in relation to Wald's '*clever*' '*ironical, tongue-in-cheek*' style. However, such emotional reactions were considerably less strong than expected and likely to have been brought about rather by the boldness of Wald's style than by the descriptions of men and of male bodies as such.

To sum up, the data analysis reinforced the claim that, in the process of text comprehension and meaning construction, respondents resorted to both personal, directly acquired experience and to the cultural experience provided by 'media offers' (Schmidt 1992). It has equally endorsed the line of argument sustained by Shore (1996) and Quinn and Strauss (1997) as regards elaborating an extended schema theory,

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aiming to bridge the gap between cognition and culture and to envisage combining 'intrapersonal' mental schematic representations with 'extrapersonal' publicly shared cultural models. The respondents' acknowledged attitudes indicated emotional reactions (approval, admiration, disgust) as well as psychological stances (disagreement, displeasure, amusement), which constitute intrapersonal mental representations. However, such intrapersonal mental representations were presumably structured by practices that were habitual in the cultural environs of the comprehenders, i.e. in the extrapersonal, public field of social experience, more specifically the post-totalitarian Romanian academic environment. The 'sharedness' of such cognitive and affective representations of masculinity has reinforced the claim that the group of respondents can be treated as a 'community of practice' (see section 4.6.). The contribution of the study to CofP approaches will be more amply discussed in section 8.6.

8.4. Methodological contributions of the present study: attitude measurement as indicative of schema accommodation

In addition to language clues provided in responses to open-ended questions, measuring changes in acknowledged attitudes provided quantifiable evidence that the readers had effortlessly accommodated the descriptions of men encountered in the text *'Men in Trunks'* within their existing representations of masculinity. Such quantifiable findings revealed that attitude measurement might be indicative of slight or dramatic changes undergone by comprehenders while envisaging their dynamic schematic representations of persons. If maintaining of attitudes within similar ranges may indicate potential schema-reinforcement, noticeable variation in attitudes might anticipate potential schema-refreshment. Since attitudes probe into the emotional-evaluative dimension of schemata, this finding concurs with the claim made by scholars such as Bartlett (1932), Miall (1989), Semino (1997) and Augoustinos (1998), that affect needs more solid anchoring in schema theory.

In addition to evidence of accommodation of newly encountered representations of masculinity into existing gender schemata, acknowledged attitudes may be indicative of success or failure on the part of each respondent's reuniting of their personal and cultural identities (Shore 1996, Hoijer 1998, Schmidt 1992). Both attitudes and indications of accommodation shed light on how the construction of meaning – i.e. understanding the classification of male bodies and the evaluation of masculinities as represented by a British writer – emerges in ceaseless interaction between individual mental activity (i.e. each respondent's set of activated schemata in the process of text comprehension) and shared social reality (i.e. prevalent evaluations of masculinity in the post-communist Romanian socio-cultural environment).

Again, the generalisability of this contribution resides in its applicability. Different analysts of reader reception could elaborate similar instruments elicitive of attitudes as avowed by readers and indicative of the potential accommodation of newly-encountered textual representations within readers' previous sets of schemata. Such

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instruments need to be carefully adapted to the genre of the text as well as to the reading practices of the respondents. Candidly reporting on one's attitudes and emotional reactions during a specific textual encounter risks to be endangered by the respondents' trying to sound open-minded, emancipated and liberal. Again, respondent-friendly and focused tasks may substantially contribute to respondents' supplying the analyst with maximally informative answers while engaging in minimal cognitive effort as text comprehenders and interpreters.

8.5. Implications of the study for CofP approaches to language and gender

The shared nature of masculinity stereotypes as revealed by the data analysis is indicative of such stereotyping practices having proliferated within particular social milieus (predominantly Romanian urban middle-class families) at a given historical moment (the decade following the collapse of communism) while having been socially and discursively constructed during everyday communication (Augoustinos and Walker 1998).

I have attempted to explain the transition from the rigid gender stereotypes entertained by the communist ideology and the fluctuating stereotypes of femininity and masculinity publicly disseminated after 1989 in the light of the wider socio-cultural developments in post-communist Romania (see Chapter 7). As in most ex-communist countries, the population of post-totalitarian Romania was hesitant as to engaging in 'subversive' practices and mentalities, intended to question and undermine institutionalised mainstream values and discourses. Like all social perceptions, perceptions of gender ranged from uncritical acceptance of traditional gender expectations and roles to the deciphering, proliferation and adoption of fuzzy-edged, dynamic, representations of femininity and masculinity.

8.6. Contributions of the study to CofP approaches to language and gender

Along the line of argumentation presented in the previous sub-section, the findings of my study are indicative of some specific categorisation practices on the part of young Romanian female students as a CofP. Although initially developing schema-consistent, hegemonic representations of masculinity, participants experienced no difficulty in accommodating schema-inconsistent, alternative representations of masculinity like the ones described in '*Men in Trunks*'. This could be partially accounted for by their belonging to the CofP of regular or occasional readers of magazines such as *Zest*. Along this line of investigation, my study could be regarded as a local ethnographic contribution to the network of CofP approaches to language and gender for two reasons:

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1) it employs a schema-elicitive instrument, designed for a specific text and a specific community of intended readers
2) it investigates Romanian receptions of Western masculinities by examining the assimilation of global representations of masculinities with young female readers.

Accommodation of schema-inconsistent representations of male bodies and masculinities could be the outcome of the increasing pluralisation of masculinities which has been making itself manifest even in traditionalist, patriarchal environments like the Romanian cultural milieu. In this sense, my study can be regarded as shedding light on the public perceptions of newly emerged stereotypes of masculinity with a specific segment of the population, namely young female intellectuals.

8.7. Pedagogical implications of the present study

Comprehension tasksheets like the one I devised for my study may be helpful teaching and learning instruments, since they provide non-native speakers of English with guidelines towards gradually getting to grips with texts which are likely to contain cultural as well as lexical information otherwise unavailable to the reader. Such tasksheets exploit the ongoing interconnection between already stored knowledge – including knowledge of English and genre-specific British textual practices – and newly emerged knowledge – including lexical gaps in English, colloquialisms, newly-emerged teen catch-phrases. They gradually offer the readers landmarks for text comprehension and for the internalisation of cultural input by presenting them with combined visual and written triggers and highlighting key-words, syntagms and paragraphs.

8.8. Limitations of the present study

At this point I need to reiterate the word of caution I previously formulated (Chapters 3 and 6). Having no access to individual cognitive structures either existing in the respondents' minds or unfolding in their encounter with the '*Men in Trunks*' text, I can only *hypothesise* as to their activation of certain schemata at various stages of their encounter with the text on the basis of their sets of responses. This is consonant with Semino's warning that

> It is important to bear in mind, however, that any account of all these complex and sophisticated interpretative processes is highly *speculative*, no matter what model of cognition is applied (Semino 2001: 354, my emphasis).

Apart from the language evidence in the informants' responses, indirect evidence of potential schema-refreshment or on schema-reinforcement has been supplied by the respondents' own reports on their having (or failing to have had) undergone modifications in attitudes, strong emotional reactions and even changes in their mental

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representations. I admit that not all such changes are reliable to the same extent: if attitude measurement can be indicative of accommodation of newly encountered masculinity schemata, with responses to open-ended questions, there is a non-negligible risk of not getting honest feedback from respondents. As already acknowledged (3.3.8.), such risk emerges for the following reasons:

a) Acknowledged changes of attitudes do not necessarily imply restructuring of social schemata, which takes time to occur and be acknowledged as such and which could be more appropriately investigated via longitudinal studies.
b) For the sake of convenience, respondents tend to neglect the potentially schema-refreshing aspects of the text and to focus on the expectation-confirming elements.

Respondents may not have candidly admitted having found certain elements expectation-challenging to avoid sounding rigid, prejudiced, or old-fashioned. Ideally, evidence of potential schema-refreshment effects texts like '*Men in Trunks*' may have upon readers would be best provided by comparing masculinity schemata respondents had before the textual encounter and those they instantiated at various points of textual encounter. One way of eliciting evidence of such representations would be to formulate a pre-reading task like: *Write a few sentences on your views on masculine beauty.* Taking into account the degree of familiarisation of the respondents with such texts would also help elucidating certain differences, which could have arisen because the respective respondent(s) was/were regular or occasional readers of women's magazines or may not be included among the intended readers of such magazines. Therefore, asking questions such as *'Do you read women's magazines? British? Romanian? Other? How often (once a month/ week/occasionally/ seldom/ never?*' could have facilitated my pinning down the reasons for individual variations among Romanian readers as a CofP. Moreover, categorising readers of British magazines as representative or marginal might unveil the relationship between their status as consumers and comprehenders of such texts and the schema-refreshing or, on the contrary, schema-reinforcing effect texts from such magazines have upon their existing schematic representations of masculinity.

As already pointed out in 8.2., a longitudinal survey of similar groups of respondents exposed to similar texts would be more reliable in terms of providing evidence of potential schema-refreshment in the respective respondents' schematic representations of masculinity. This would however have been hard to carry out, for two reasons:

1) Generations of students of the same age, level of proficiency and background differ strikingly from one academic year to the next in terms of reading practices, curricular and extracurricular preferences and social attitudes and behaviours. The Romanian 'transitional society' evolves rapidly and in many ways unpredictedly, consequently few things can be predicted about the generations to come. Current first year students would adhere to different norms, behaviours and cultural representations than the ones my respondents appeared to espouse, the same way my 2000 respondents partially disconfirmed the expectations I had when I selected the text and first drafted the investigation instrument (in 1998).

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2) Textual similarity is too vague to be rigorously established. These days, articles such as *'Men in Trunks'*, which to my mind, promised to be potentially schema-refreshing at the time of their publication (August 1998), have swamped the Romanian market. Foreign magazines, their copycat local versions as well as Romanian original publications, are nowadays awash with such articles. Among the most cutting-edge recent publications I would mention *'TABU'*, *'for the beautiful and intelligent sex'*, a non-conformist allegedly feminist magazine, meant to empower critically-minded women to innovatively delve into formerly forbidden topics, among which masculinity and male sexuality rank foremost. I might also add that, knowing the text is in English and had been published in a British magazine, students anticipated more expectation-challenging potential from it than they would have done from an article published in a Romanian magazine targeted at a female readership, assumed to be more conservative.

8.9. Suggestions for further study

Several issues which deserve full attention have not been encompassed in the scope of the present study.

I suggest that viewing femininity and masculinity as processes undergoing dynamic socially-situated pluralisations needs deeper and more substantiated inquiry into the 'lenses of gender' proposed by Bem (1993): gender polarisation, androcentrism and biological essentialism. Such lenses could be supplemented by other myths and perpetuating practices that foster congealing genders into pre-established, essentialised, naturalised fixities, which Miroiu colourfully calls 'spells' and which include: the spells of globalism, sacrifice, romanticism, elitism and the woman's worship of her Pygmalion (Miroiu 1997: 12–19). While refraining from declaring any allegiance to a specific feminist trend, I consider myself a flexible-minded researcher in gender studies, always desirous of engaging in investigation meant to boost Romanian women's and men's tolerance and open-mindedness concerning alternative gender representations.

Secondly I would argue that schema theory has proved to be an efficient framework for the analysis of the gender schemata which text comprehenders instantiate. It would be rewarding to attempt to combine a schema-based approach with a relevance-based approach like the one suggested by Christie (1998: 221), since both "[raise] questions about how and why a reader should come up with one set of contextual assumptions rather than another within a given act of interpretation". Unveiling the schematic nature of gender representation and the contextual assumptions both underlying and feeding it may imply, among other things, locating and deconstructing covert sexist meanings. An issue that has not become an object of sociological research in Romania, but which is growing increasingly controversial in Romania is that of 'benevolent sexism', defined as "A subjectively positive orientation of protection, idealisation and affection directed toward women that, like HS [Hostile sexism], serves to justify women's subordinate status to men" (Glick et al, 2000: 763). Studying the language by means of which benevolent sexism is conveyed is likely to expose the sexist

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assumptions or the veiled discriminative beliefs underlying discourses that apparently comply with all the requirements of 'verbal hygiene' (Cameron 1995). I would add that steady concern with culturally inculcated representations of gender identities and tensions arising from conflicting representations are worthy of investigation in order to highlight both consensual tendencies and individual variations within specific categories of readers.

Thirdly, I believe that the dissemination of 'natural' femininities and masculinities could benefit from the 'epidemiological' approach to public representations as elaborated by Sperber (1996), which analyses the spread of cognitive schemata in terms of contagion of mental representations among individuals belonging to a like-minded community:

> [...] an epidemiology of representations is not about representations, but about the process of their distribution. In some cases, similar representations – for example versions of the same myth – are distributed by a repetitive chain of public and mental representations; in other cases, many different presentations, the contents of which do not at all resemble one another, are involved in the same distribution process. In particular, some of the representations involved may play a regulatory role by representing how some of the other representations involved are to be distributed (Sperber 1996: 29).

In my opinion, the issue Sperber addresses as to the basicness of either mental or public representations (1996: 67–75) bears considerable relevance to gender schemata, where the difficulty of separating the 'innate' from the 'acquired' and the 'ascribed' (Bergvall 1999) is increased. The study of individual and local receptions of globalised concepts (non-hegemonic masculinity having lately become such a concept) may support cognitive definitions of culture such as that provided by Sperber and Hirschfeld (1999) who advocate, rightly in my view, that:

> From a cognitive point of view, it is tempting to think of culture as an ensemble of representations (classifications, schemas, models, competencies), the possession of which makes an individual a member of a cultural group (Sperber and Hirschfeld 1999: 14).

Sperber and Hirschfeld's definition of culture ties in with the espousal of social and cultural practices, including language practices, within CofP approaches, which will be my next point.

Fourthly, then, concerning the contribution of local ethnographic studies like my own to the diversification of CofP approaches, I would argue in favour of investigating the reception of multimodal texts pertaining to specific genres (adverts, blurbs, videoclips) by various communities of practice, which differ in point of age, educational background and location. It would be particularly interesting to compare flexibility of the mental representations of hegemonic and alternative masculinities with groups of people living in urban versus groups of people living in rural areas. Comparisons between assimilation of newly-emerged masculinities with various age groups of women (teenagers, career women in their thirties or forties, elderly women) would be enlightening as regards whether such communities entertain common beliefs and assumptions about gender identities and roles, and whether such beliefs and assumptions are hegemonic and/or alternative. Obviously, such an investigation would have to take into account the fact that (most of) the respective respondents cannot read in English and

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that a translation of the British texts into Romanian might bring about some distortive effects upon such readers (and, in my opinion, any readers). Such analyses might identify the sources of discrimination and prejudice in a society like post-totalitarian Romanian, torn between patriarchal tradition and speedy globalisation and assimilation of Western mentalities and cognitive patterns of thought (Scholte 2000).

Fifthly, I would suggest that, apart from being efficient teaching instruments, schema-elicitive instruments devised for the comprehension of various multimodal texts might shed further light on the relation between the language of media representations and the social schemata readers are likely to instantiate. An interesting line of investigation would envisage the reception of humorous Western-European and North-American texts such as adverts, pop songs, parent-child sitcom dialogues, and 'reverse sexism' samples of internet humour by an Eastern-European post-communist audience such as that in Romania. As I see it, the humorous effect of such texts risks being diminished or even annihilated if consumers fail to activate social schemata and stereotypes which the text producers assume their viewers to have acquired and to publicly share.

8.10. Concluding remarks

This final chapter has highlighted the contribution the present study has intended to make to schema theory by devising a schema-elicitive instrument in the form of a comprehension tasksheet. The applicability and adaptability of such an instrument has been emphasised while envisaging some theoretical and methodological contributions. In addition, I have underlined the benefits such comprehension instruments may have for pedagogical purposes. While acknowledging certain limitations of my own research, I have proposed some future lines of investigation, encompassing further inquiry into:

- the use of schema theory for a better understanding of the subject positions taken by 'resistant' readers and the exposure of covert or 'benevolent' sexism
- the reception of the same text within communities of practice other than young Romanian female intellectuals (e.g. rural respondents, elderly female respondents)
- the applicability of schema-elicitive instruments to the analysis of texts belonging to different genres (jokes, adverts, parent-child sitcom dialogues, internet humour) and to the use of such texts for teaching purposes.

Such lines of research could benefit from interdisciplinary perspectives reuniting concepts and methods pertaining to a variety of disciplines such as applied linguistics, gender studies, cognitive anthropology, sociology, media studies and pedagogy.

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APPENDIX I

'MEN IN TRUNKS'

BY DEBORAH WALD

(*ZEST*, AUGUST 1998)

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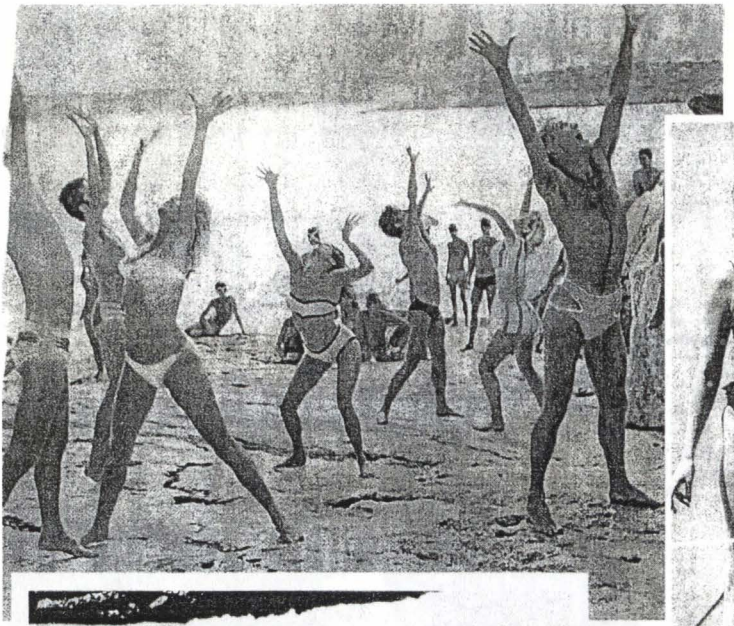
MEN IN TRUNKS

WHAT DOES HIS BEACHWEAR SAY ABOUT HIM? AND WHAT COULD BE IN IT FOR YOU...?

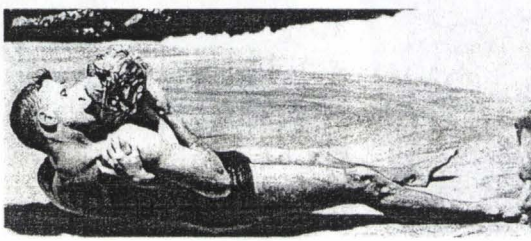
WORDS DEBORAH WALD



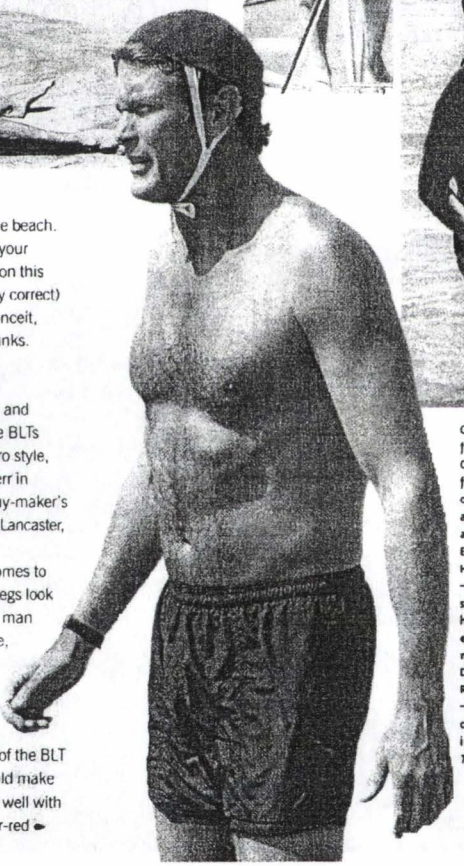
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There's many an enjoyable pastime to be had on the beach. Reading. Paddling. Humming along tunelessly to your Walkman. But by far the most entertaining diversion this summer is watching the men go by and drawing (completely correct) conclusions about their entire life, self-image and level of conceit, based upon the size, shape and fabric of their swimming trunks.

TASTY BLTS

This season, I can reveal, those men with an eye for fashion and not a small dose of vanity will have found it hard to resist the BLTs – Burt Lancaster Trunks – on the beachwear menu. This retro style, made famous in the horizontal clinch scene with Deborah Kerr in *From Here To Eternity*, seems to have caught the male holiday-maker's imagination. And while few men own the body of a young Burt Lancaster, the style does flatter the male figure quite unexpectedly.

Most women run a mile from low-cut leg styles when it comes to their own choice of swimsuit (guaranteed to make passable legs look half their original length) but, it turns out, the same cut on a man gives weedy quads the appearance of finely sculpted muscle, turning Jarvis Cocker knitting needles into limbs that would do David Ginola proud. Added to that, the higher-than-normal waist helps pull in and slim down any man whose tummy more resembles an inflated Lilo than a six-pack.

Then there's the issue of colour. Giorgio Armani's version of the BLT scales new fashion heights: only the maestro of subtlety could make grey a trendy colour for the beach. Mind you, grey doesn't go well with untanned, blue/white skin and looks atrocious with the lobster-red ➨

Clockwise, from top left: Californians pray for a decent pair of trunks. Melanie and Antonio at half-mast. Everything about Hulk Hogan is big – except his smalls. The latest hat-and-trunks ensemble, modelled by David Hasselhoff. Romance on – or under – the ocean wave in *From Here To Eternity*

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so many men sport on holiday. However, the grey-BLT-wearing man is worth checking out – his trunks may be an indicator of more Armani in the wardrobe and, ultimately, more in yours, too. In fact, I'm all for alternatives to black and primary colours. I can even live with turquoise, purple and brown (although not on the same trunks). But insipid pastels are out – everything else about this man is likely to be insipid, too.

SELF-OBSESSED SKIMPIES

But does the BLT spell the end for men who prefer posing pouches and high-cut legs? Shall we girls for ever be denied the childish – nay, sadistic – pleasure of laughing like Bart Simpson at these Narcissi of the summer season? Happily, no, the skimpy swimsuit lives on, with its distinctive moulded sack to allow for swelling in the heat. No doubt these men were inspired to buy by the smouldering sexuality emanating from the man in the moody black-and-white picture on the swing tag. But, in blazing sunlight, the eroticism of the style is all but lost. Didn't anyone (a men's mag, mother, girlfriend) ever tell these exhibitionists skimpies are not a turn-on? Then again, they probably couldn't hear the warnings above their declarations of self-love.

BASHFUL BOXERS

At the other extreme from the barely-there trunk is, of course, the long, baggy, boxer-short style popularised by surfers, Australian soap stars and, speaking rather more personally, a French boy I saw on the beach in Cannes. He emerged from the surf, tanned as a walnut, hair plastered to his head, silky black eyelashes stuck together in glistening clumps, droplets of seawater running down his smooth chest, shorts outlining his lithe adolescent shape...

Of course, this was before I actually had a look *inside* this type of beach apparel. Sisters, I beg you not to get too close. For, although these trunks come in dazzling colours from designers as vaunted as Ralph Lauren, inside there lurks a bizarre and repulsive secret: the polyamide net. With its elasticated leg holes and nappy-ish proportions, this sieve-like container possesses all the sexiness of a hotel shower cap. Designed to save a man's dignity (and spare a woman's blushes) if he splays his legs too widely, they work on the same principle as a net that stops dolphins getting caught by trawlermen fishing for tuna. In this case, the net allows seawater free access to the man, while ensuring his essentials do not swim off when he's not looking. After all, what with jellyfish, sharks and whales, we hardly need another sea predator.

Now there are more cuts in men's swimwear than a butcher's shop, the language of trunks is more complex than ever. But, if your knowledge of Greek, Italian or Spanish is limited, trunks are the only non-verbal way a man has to communicate his personality, should that be an issue for you on holiday. Indeed, many a potential holiday romance has died in the water owing to the choice of Leif Garrett-style calf-length trews or trunks that have lost their elasticity. One word of warning, though: beware the man who approaches you wearing anything thong-like. He's not after your body; he's just spotted your brand-new Lancaster suncream and is dying to try it out. ■

For a look at men *without* trunks, turn to page 148.



Clockwise, from top left: Two cheeky boys. No, Rod, we don't think you're sexy – especially with your label hanging out. Three hunks in trunks discuss how skateboards have changed. You'll be glad to see the back of Hugh Grant. Sly and the family jewels

PHOTOGRAPHS BIG PICTURES, ALL ACTION, FRANK SPOONER ADVERTISING ARCHIVES, CORBIS

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APPENDIX II

PILOT STUDY TASKSHEET

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COMPREHENSION TASKSHEET

PRE-READING TASKS

1.1. Look at the picture on Page 1, the first in a three-page article published in the August 1998 issue of the British magazine "ZEST: for minds as well as bodies"
What does the picture show? (Don't turn over yet).

1.2. How do you find such a sight? Tick the box that best suits your opinion on the five-point scale from "utterly ordinary" to "very unusual" below:

utterly ordinary	1	2	3	4	5	very unusual

1.3. What do you expect an article accompanied by such a picture to be about?

2. Turn over now. Read the title and the questions accompanying it: What do you expect an article with such headlines published in a magazine mainly read by young women of your age, to be dealing with? (Do not turn over the next pages yet).

WHILE-READING TASKS

3. (Do not turn over yet) This is the first paragraph of the article. Fill in the empty spaces with whatever lexical items you may think are suitable to the context (NP = noun phrase)

There's many an enjoyable pastime to be had on the beach. Reading. Paddling. Humming along tunelessly to your walkman. But by far the most entertaining diversion this summer is watching the men go by and drawing (completely correct) conclusions about their NP.....NP.....and NP....., based upon the NP.....,.NP.....and NP..... of their swimming trunks.

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MEN IN TRUNKS



WHAT DOES HIS BEACHWEAR SAY ABOUT HIM? AND WHAT COULD BE IN IT FOR YOU...?

WORDS DEBORAH WALD



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4.1. Identify similarities and differences between your words and Wald's (paragraph below)

There's many an enjoyable pastime to be had on the beach. Reading. Paddling. Humming along tunelessly to your walkman. But by far the most entertaining diversion this summer is watching the men go by and drawing (completely correct) conclusions about their ***entire life, self -image and level of conceit****, based upon the* ***size, shape and fabric*** *of their swimming trunks.*

Which NPs coincide?

Which NPs are close synonyms?

Which NPs are strikingly different?

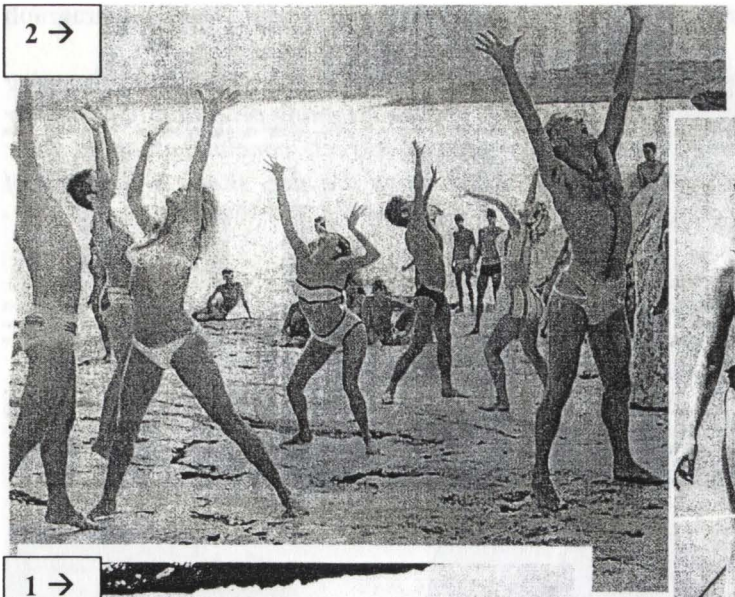
4.2. Between each pair of adjectives below there is a five-point scale. Tick the box that best suits your opinion on the statement Wald makes in the last sentence in the paragraph above:

daring	1	2	3	4	5	conservative
unrealistic	1	2	3	4	5	realistic
alluring	1	2	3	4	5	unappealing
insightful	1	2	3	4	5	superficial
silly	1	2	3	4	5	brilliant

other [list your own idea(s) below]:

5. Look at the pictures (captions covered) on the next two pages of the magazine article and suggest two possible captions for each in the blank spaces indicated for each picture on the respective page.

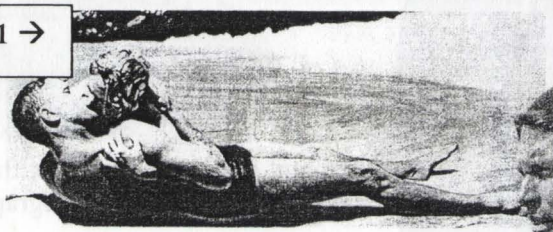
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2 →



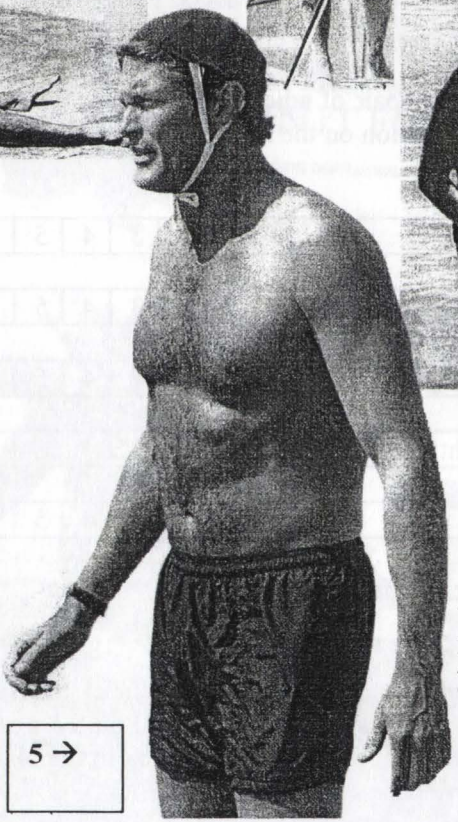
←3



1 →

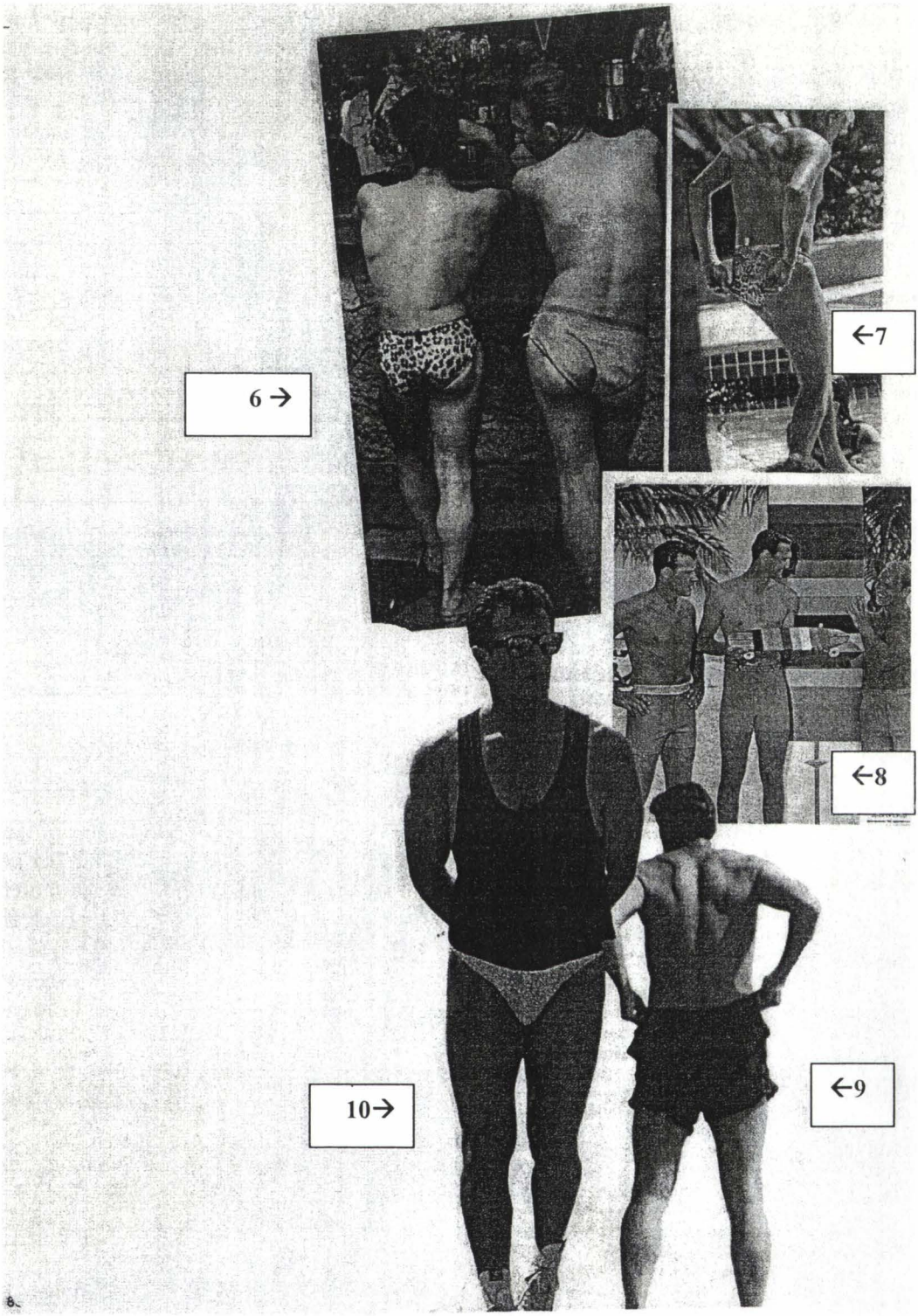


←4



5 →

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6. On the following pages, check your captions against Wald's. On a similarity scale between her captions and yours, where would you locate each of the captions you previously suggested?
[P = picture; C = caption]

P1:C1	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P1:C2	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P2:C1	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P2:C2	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P3:C1	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P3:C2	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P4:C1	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P4:C2	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P5:C1	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P5:C2	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P6:C1	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P6:C2	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P7:C1	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P7:C2	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P8:C1	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P8:C2	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P9:C1	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P9:C2	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P10:C1	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's
P10:C2	very similar to Wald's	1	2	3	4	5	highly dissimilar from Wald's

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7. Try to put yourself in Wald's... sandals and classify men on the beach into three categories according to the type of trunks they wear. Which would these be? What criteria would you use in your classification? (Do not turn over yet).

Categories	Criteria
1.	
2.	
3.	

8. Wald divides male sunbathers into the following three categories:
a) Tasty BLTs
b) Self-obsessed skimpies
c) Bashful boxers

The following lexical explanations might help you get a clearer picture of the three categories:
BLTs = **B**urt **L**ancaster **T**runks, implicitly: wearers of trunks similar to those worn by Burt Lancaster in the beach scene from the movie "*From Here to Eternity*" (photo)
= a type of sandwich (acronym from Bacon + Lettuce + Tomato)
Self-obsessed skimpies: implicitly wearers of skimpy bathing suits, obsessed with the display of their own nudity (skimpy (coll.): "barely or not quite enough; somewhat less in size, fullness, etc, than is needed, scanty" – Webster Dictionary)
Bashful boxers: implicitly: bashful wearers of boxers
bashful = timid, shy easily embarrassed
boxers = men's undershorts with an elastic waistband and the loose, full cut of prizefighters' trunks - Webster's Dictionary)

On a five-point scale from 'disgusting' to 'appealing', how do you expect Wald to assess each category? Tick the box that best suits your opinion.

Tasty BLTs	disgusting	1 2 3 4 5	appealing
Self-obsessed skimpies	disgusting	1 2 3 4 5	appealing
Bashful boxers	disgusting	1 2 3 4 5	appealing

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9. The following sentences are the beginning of each category-describing section.

Tasty BLTs:

This season, I can reveal, those men with an eye for fashion and not a small dose of vanity will have found it hard to resist the BLTs - Burt Lancaster trunks - on the beachwear menu. This retro style, made famous in the horizontal clinch scene with Deborah Kerr in From here to Eternity', seems to have caught the male holiday-maker's imagination.

Self-obsessed skimpies:

But does the BLT spell the end for men who prefer posing pouches and high-cut legs? Shall we girls forever be denied the childish - nay, sadistic - pleasure of laughing like Bart Simpson at these Narcissi of the summer season?

Bashful Boxers:

At the other extreme from the barely-there trunk is, of course, the long, baggy, boxer-short style popularised by surfers, Australian soap stars and, speaking rather more personally, a French boy I saw on the beach in Cannes.

Make a list of points or write a few sentences showing how you would expect Wald to continue under the respective heading.

Tasty BLTs

Self-obsessed skimpies

Bashful boxers

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10. Turn over to the article and read carefully the whole of the three sections describing Wald's three categories of trunk-wearers.

10.1. Describe in your own words the type(s) of men that fall into the respective category according to Wald

Tasty BLTs

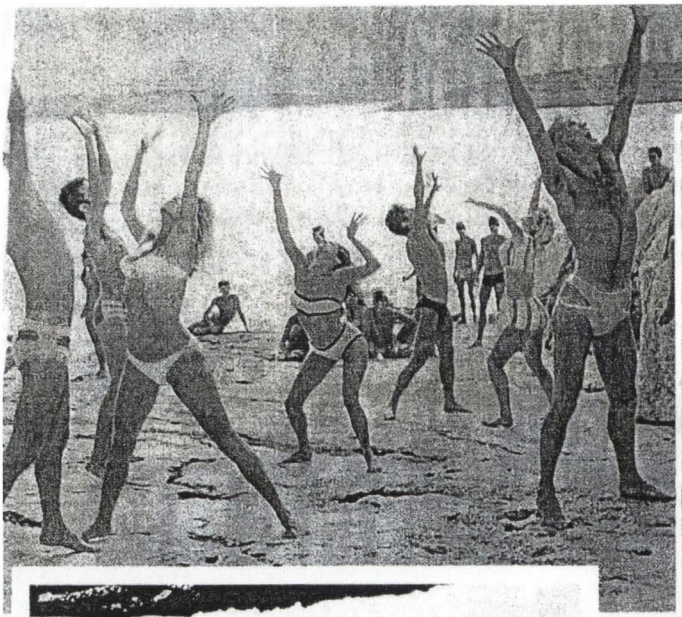
Self-obsessed skimpies

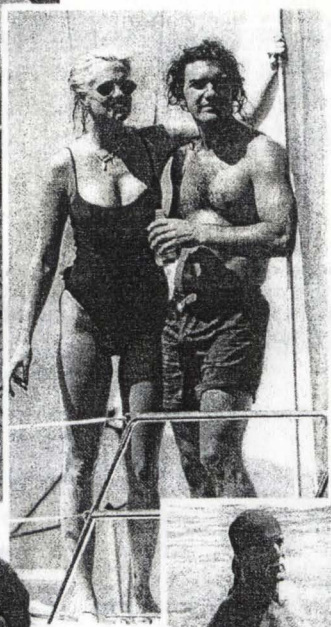
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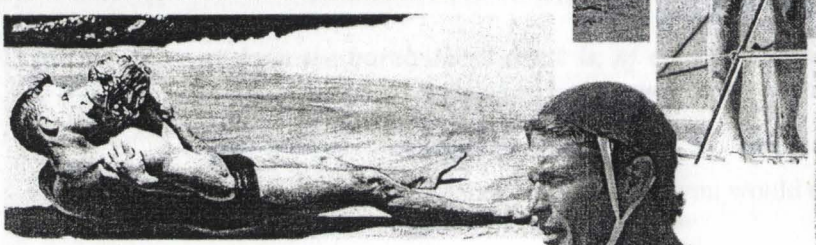
10.2. Give Wald's reasons/ criteria for including them in the respective category.

Category	Wald's criteria
Tasty BLTs	
Self-obsessed skimpies	
Bashful boxers	

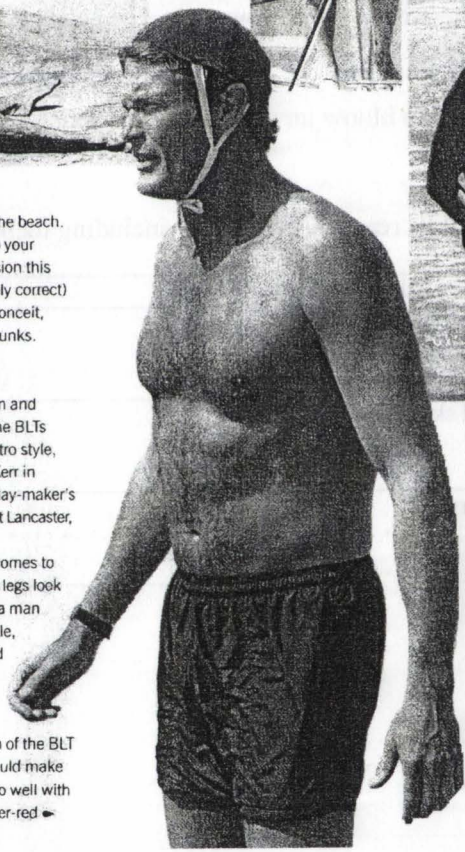
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There's many an enjoyable pastime to be had on the beach. Reading. Paddling. Humming along tunelessly to your Walkman. But by far the most entertaining diversion this summer is watching the men go by and drawing (completely correct) conclusions about their entire life, self-image and level of conceit, based upon the size, shape and fabric of their swimming trunks.

TASTY BLTS

This season, I can reveal, those men with an eye for fashion and not a small dose of vanity will have found it hard to resist the BLTs – Burt Lancaster Trunks – on the beachwear menu. This retro style, made famous in the horizontal clinch scene with Deborah Kerr in *From Here To Eternity*, seems to have caught the male holiday-maker's imagination. And while few men own the body of a young Burt Lancaster, the style does flatter the male figure quite unexpectedly.

Most women run a mile from low-cut leg styles when it comes to their own choice of swimsuit (guaranteed to make passable legs look half their original length) but, it turns out, the same cut on a man gives weedy quads the appearance of finely sculpted muscle, turning Jarvis Cocker knitting needles into limbs that would do David Ginola proud. Added to that, the higher-than-normal waist helps pull in and slim down any man whose tummy more resembles an inflated Lilo than a six-pack.

Then there's the issue of colour. Giorgio Armani's version of the BLT scales new fashion heights: only the maestro of subtlety could make *grey* a trendy colour for the beach. Mind you, grey doesn't go well with untanned, blue/white skin and looks atrocious with the lobster-red ➨

Clockwise, from top left: Californians pray for a decent pair of trunks. Melanie and Antonio at half-mast. Everything about Hulk Hogan is big – except his smalls. The latest hat-and-trunks ensemble, modelled by David Hasselhoff. Romance on – or under – the ocean wave in *From Here To Eternity*

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so many men sport on holiday. However, the grey-BLT-wearing man is worth checking out – his trunks may be an indicator of more Armani in the wardrobe and, ultimately, more in yours, too. In fact, I'm all for alternatives to black and primary colours. I can even live with turquoise, purple and brown (although not on the same trunks). But insipid pastels are out – everything else about this man is likely to be insipid, too.

SELF-OBSESSED SKIMPIES

But does the BLT spell the end for men who prefer posing pouches and high-cut legs? Shall we girls for ever be denied the childish – nay, sadistic – pleasure of laughing like Bart Simpson at these Narcissi of the summer season? Happily, no, the skimpy swimsuit lives on, with its distinctive moulded sack to allow for swelling in the heat. No doubt these men were inspired to buy by the smouldering sexuality emanating from the man in the moody black-and-white picture on the swing tag. But, in blazing sunlight, the eroticism of the style is all but lost. Didn't anyone (a men's mag, mother, girlfriend) ever tell these exhibitionists skimpies are not a turn-on? Then again, they probably couldn't hear the warnings above their declarations of self-love.

BASHFUL BOXERS

At the other extreme from the barely-there trunk is, of course, the long, baggy, boxer-short style popularised by surfers, Australian soap stars and, speaking rather more personally, a French boy I saw on the beach in Cannes. He emerged from the surf, tanned as a walnut, hair plastered to his head, silky black eyelashes stuck together in glistening clumps, droplets of seawater running down his smooth chest, shorts outlining his lithe adolescent shape. . .

Of course, this was before I actually had a look *inside* this type of beach apparel. Sisters, I beg you not to get too close. For, although these trunks come in dazzling colours from designers as vaunted as Ralph Lauren, inside there lurks a bizarre and repulsive secret: the polyamide net. With its elasticated leg holes and nappy-ish proportions, this sieve-like container possesses all the sexiness of a hotel shower cap. Designed to save a man's dignity (and spare a woman's blushes) if he splays his legs too widely, they work on the same principle as a net that stops dolphins getting caught by trawlermen fishing for tuna. In this case, the net allows seawater free access to the man, while ensuring his essentials do not swim off when he's not looking. After all, what with jellyfish, sharks and whales, we hardly need another sea predator.

Now there are more cuts in men's swimwear than a butcher's shop, the language of trunks is more complex than ever. But, if your knowledge of Greek, Italian or Spanish is limited, trunks are the only non-verbal way a man has to communicate his personality, should that be an issue for you on holiday. Indeed, many a potential holiday romance has died in the water owing to the choice of Leif Garrett-style calf-length trews or trunks that have lost their elasticity. One word of warning, though: beware the man who approaches you wearing anything thong-like. He's not after your body; he's just spotted your brand-new Lancaster suncream and is dying to try it out. ■

For a look at men *without* trunks, turn to page 148.



Clockwise, from top left: Two cheeky boys. No, Rod, we don't think you're sexy – especially with your label hanging out. Three hunks in trunks discuss how skateboards have changed. You'll be glad to see the back of Hugh Grant. Sly and the family jewels

PHOTOGRAPHS BIG PICTURES, ALL ACTION, FRANK SPOONER, ADVERTISING ARCHIVES, CORBIS

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10.3. How do you think NOW Wald assesses each category on a five-point scale from 'disgusting' to 'appealing'? Tick the boxes even if your predictions in Q8 have not changed.

Tasty BLTs	disgusting	1 2 3 4 5	appealing
Self-obsessed skimpies	disgusting	1 2 3 4 5	appealing
Bashful boxers	disgusting	1 2 3 4 5	appealing

10.4. Write down those words/phrases/text chunks that hamper you in understanding the article.

11. How do you find Wald's classification? Tick the box that best suits your opinion/attitude.

a)

down-to-earth	1	2	3	4	5	unrealistic

b)

ingenious	1	2	3	4	5	unimaginative

c)

man-bashing	1	2	3	4	5	man-flattering

d)

boring	1	2	3	4	5	inspiring

other [list your opinion/attitude]

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POST-READING TASKS

12. In comparison with your previous images of men on the beach, do you find Wald's classification:

predictable/conventional	1	2	3	4	5	novel/original

Tick the box that best suits your attitude on a five-point scale.

13. Turn the article over and make a comparison between your own classification (Q7) and what you can recall from Wald's classification of men according the their beachwear. Specify:

a) common points between you and Wald

b) points you have not thought about but Wald has. Further divide these into:

i) points you share Wald's opinion on.

ii) points you find to hard/impossible to share Wald's opinion on.

14. Go back to the article and list the words, phrases and sentences that brought to mind issues which caused you to react strongly (feel surprised, indignant, shocked). If possible, specify the reasons for your reaction:

e.g.: "with its elasticated leg holes and nappy-ish proportions" : shocked at Wald's describing men as if they were sucklings with their pampers on.

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15. How did you find Wald's article? Tick the box that best suits your attitude on a five-point scale.

enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	shocking

inspiring	1	2	3	4	5	boring

other [describe your attitude]:

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APPENDIX III

MAIN STUDY TASKSHEET

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COMPREHENSION TASKSHEET

PRE-READING TASKS

1.1. Look at the picture on Page 1, the first in a three-page article published in the August 1998 issue of the British magazine "ZEST: for minds as well as bodies"
What does the picture show? (Don't turn over yet).

1.2. How do you find such a sight? Tick the box that best suits your opinion on the seven-point scale from "utterly ordinary" to "very unusual" below:

utterly ordinary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very unusual

1.3. What do you expect an article accompanied by such a picture to be about?

2. Turn over now. Read the title and the questions accompanying it: What do you expect an article with such headlines published in a magazine mainly read by young women of your age, to be dealing with? (Do not turn over the next pages yet).

WHILE-READING TASKS

3. (Do not turn over yet) This is the first paragraph of the article. Fill in the empty spaces with whatever lexical items you may think are suitable to the context (NP = noun phrase)

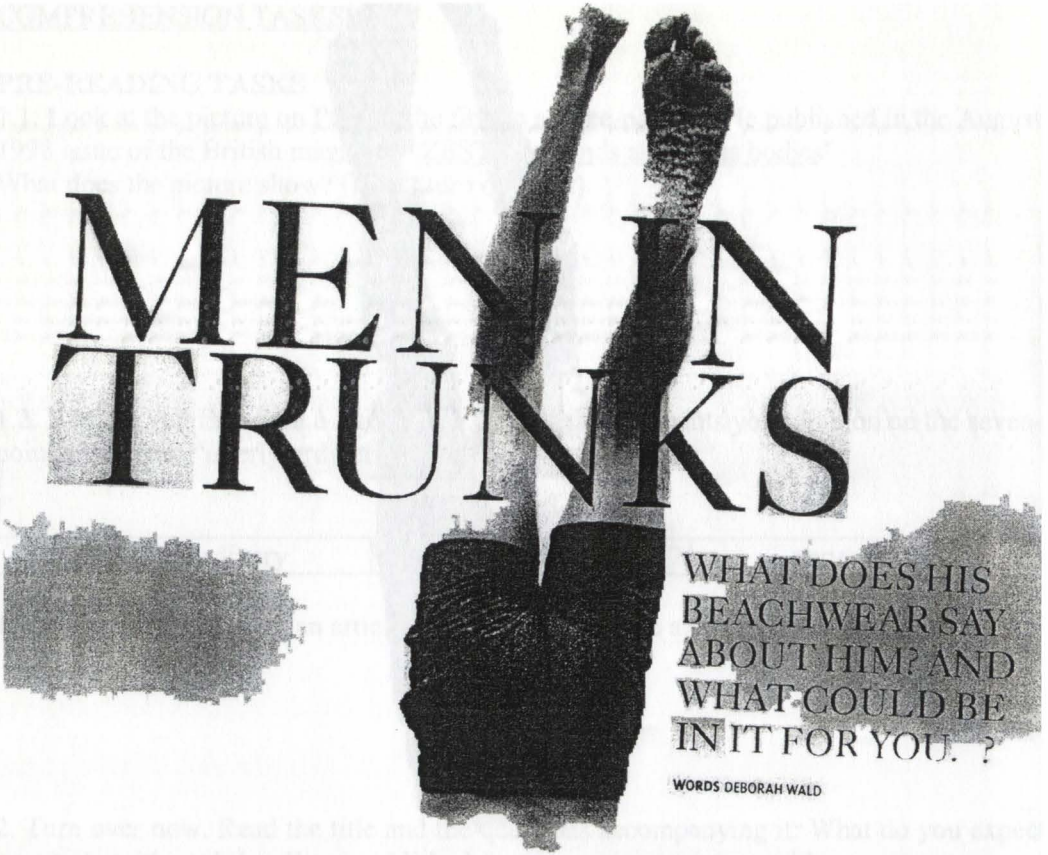
There's many an enjoyable pastime to be had on the beach. Reading. Paddling. Humming along tunelessly to your walkman. But by far the most entertaining diversion this summer is watching the men go by and drawing (completely correct) conclusions about their NP.....NP.....and NP....., based upon the NP.....,.NP.....and NP..... of their swimming trunks.

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MEN IN TRUNKS



WHAT DOES HIS BEACHWEAR SAY ABOUT HIM? AND WHAT COULD BE IN IT FOR YOU...?

WORDS DEBORAH WALD

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4. Between each pair of adjectives below there is a five-point scale. Tick the box that best suits your opinion on the statement Wald makes when she writes:
But by far the most entertaining diversion this summer is watching the men go by and drawing (completely correct) conclusions about their ***entire life, self-image and level of conceit****, based upon the* ***size, shape and fabric*** *of their swimming trunks.*

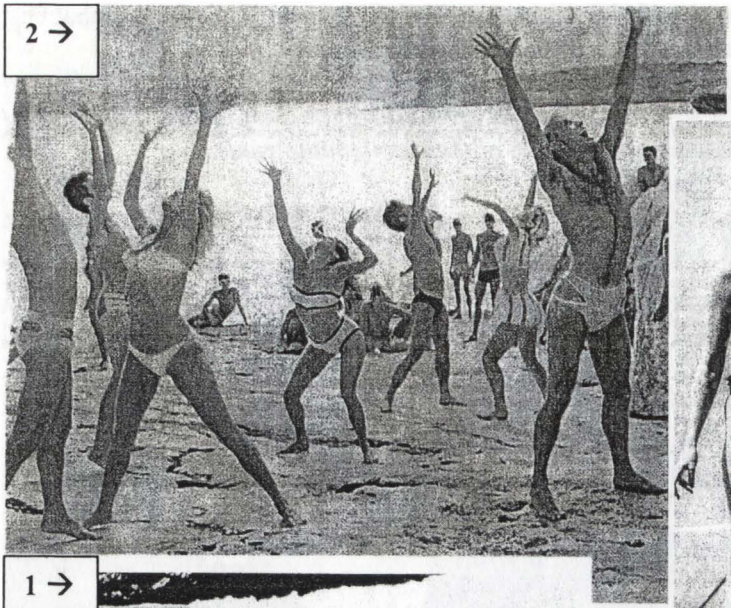
daring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	conservative
unrealistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	realistic
alluring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unappealing
insightful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	superficial
silly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	brilliant

other [list your own idea(s) below]:

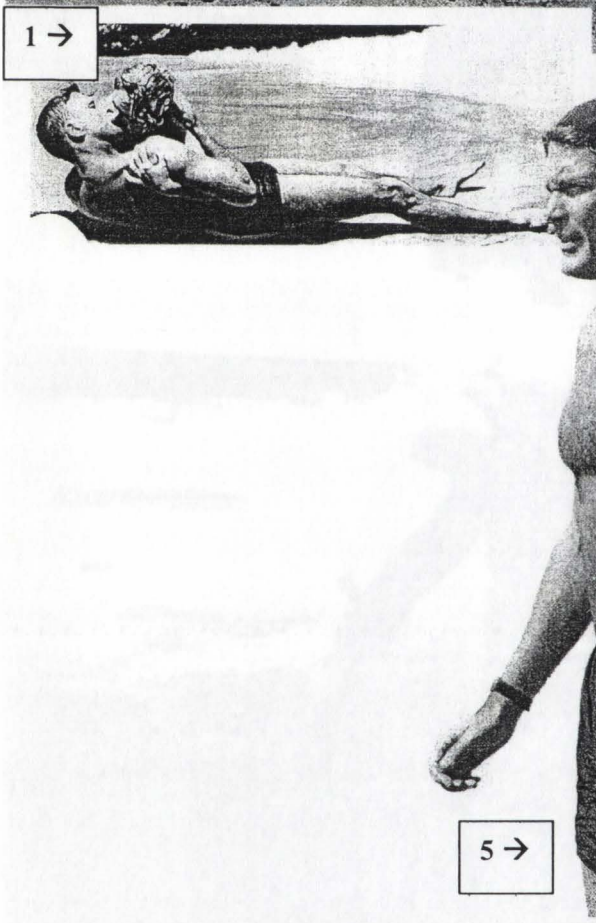
5. Look at the pictures (captions covered) on the next two pages of the magazine article and suggest two possible captions for each in the blank spaces indicated for each picture on the respective page.

1. a)
   b)
2. a)
   b)
3. a)
   b)
4. a)
   b)
5. a)
   b)
6. a)
   b)
7. a)
   b)
8. a)
   b)
9. a)
   b)
10. a)
    b)

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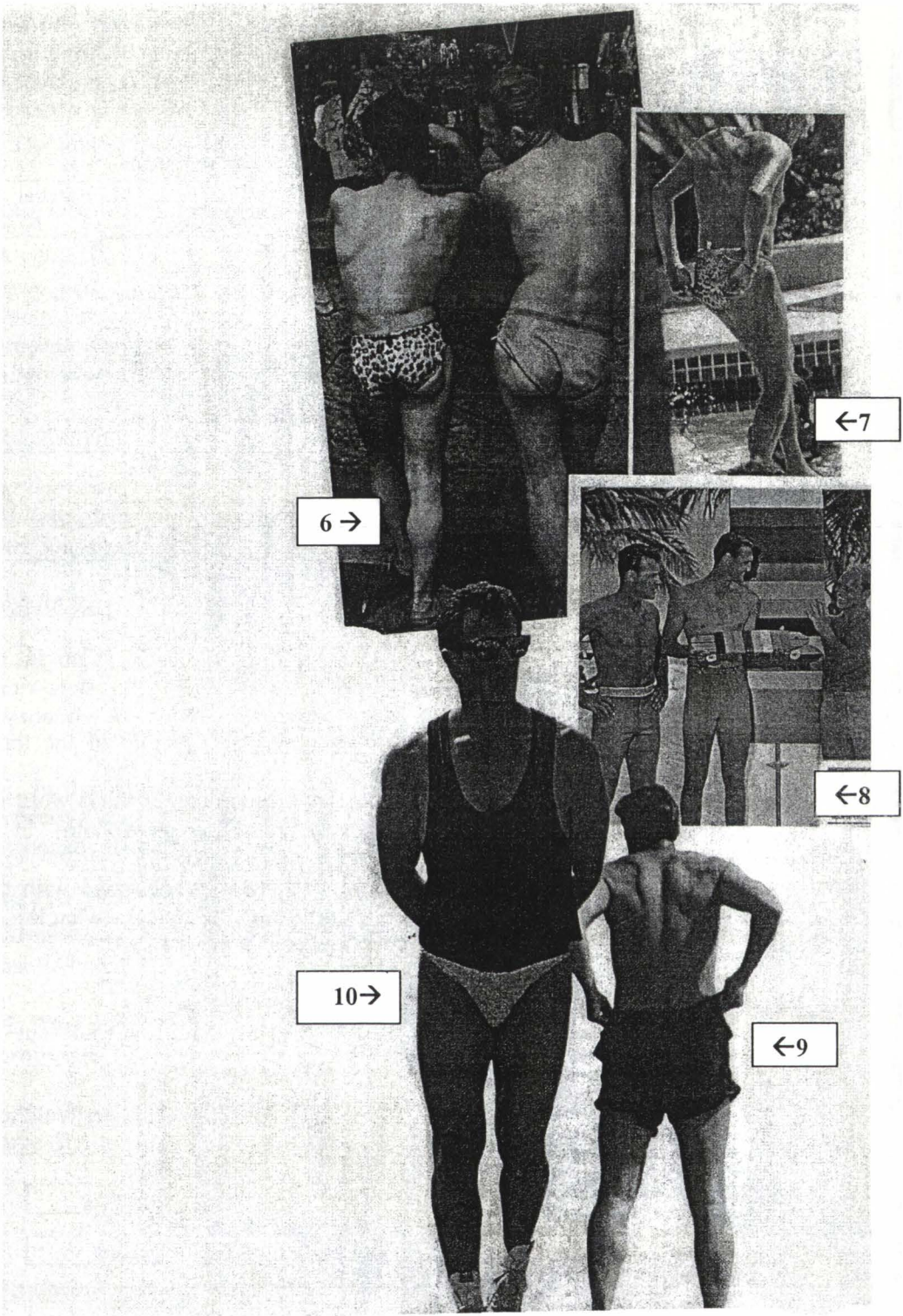








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6. Try to put yourself in Wald's... sandals and classify men on the beach into three categories according to the type of trunks they wear. Which would these be? Enumerate their most salient traits. In order to anticipate how each trait is likely to be perceived by female watchers, tick one of the boxes under the heading "Effect on female observer" (+ = positive; [–] = negative; [N] = neutral) (Do not turn over yet).

Categories	Traits	Effect on female watcher		
		+	–	N
1.				
2.				
3.				

7. Wald divides male sunbathers into the following three categories:
a) Tasty BLTs
b) Self-obsessed skimpies
c) Bashful boxers

The following lexical explanations might help you get a clearer picture of the three categories:
BLTs = **B**urt **L**ancaster **T**runks, implicitly: wearers of trunks similar to those worn by Burt Lancaster in the beach scene from the movie "*From Here to Eternity*" (photo)
= a type of sandwich (acronym from Bacon + Lettuce + Tomato)
Self-obsessed skimpies: implicitly wearers of skimpy bathing suits, obsessed with the display of their own nudity (skimpy (coll.): "barely or not quite enough; somewhat less in size, fullness, etc, than is needed, scanty" – Webster Dictionary)
Bashful boxers: implicitly: bashful wearers of boxers
bashful = timid, shy easily embarrassed
boxers = men's undershorts with an elastic waistband and the loose, full cut of prizefighters' trunks - Webster's Dictionary)

7.1. On a seven-point scale from 'disgusting' to 'appealing', how do you expect Wald to assess each category? Tick the box that best suits your opinion.

Tasty BLTs	disgusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing
Self-obsessed skimpies	disgusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing
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7.2. Could you justify your expectations?
e.g. I ranked Tasty BLTs as.... because

8. The following sentences are the beginning of each category-describing section.

Tasty BLTs:

This season, I can reveal, those men with an eye for fashion and not a small dose of vanity will have found it hard to resist the BLTs - Burt Lancaster trunks - on the beachwear menu. This retro style, made famous in the horizontal clinch scene with Deborah Kerr in From here to Eternity', seems to have caught the male holiday-maker's imagination.

Self-obsessed skimpies:

But does the BLT spell the end for men who prefer posing pouches and high-cut legs? Shall we girls forever be denied the childish - nay, sadistic - pleasure of laughing like Bart Simpson at these Narcissi of the summer season?

Bashful Boxers:

At the other extreme from the barely-there trunk is, of course, the long, baggy, boxer-short style popularised by surfers, Australian soap stars and, speaking rather more personally, a French boy I saw on the beach in Cannes.

8.1. In the light of the above three paragraphs, how do you expect Wald to assess the respective category Tick the box that best suits your expectations. (+ = positive; – = negative; N = neutral)

Tasty BLTs	+	–	N
Self-obsessed skimpies	+	–	N
Bashful boxers	+	–	N

8.2. What other specific traits do you expect to be discussed/mentioned by Wald in the paragraphs to come?

Tasty BLTs

Self-obsessed skimpies

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Bashful boxers

8.3. What public personae do you expect Wald to mention as the representatives of the category in question?
Tasty BLTs

Self-obsessed skimpies

Bashful boxers

8.4. Which reactions on the part of the beach female watchers do you expect Wald to describe for each category?

Tasty BLTs

Self-obsessed skimpies

Bashful boxers

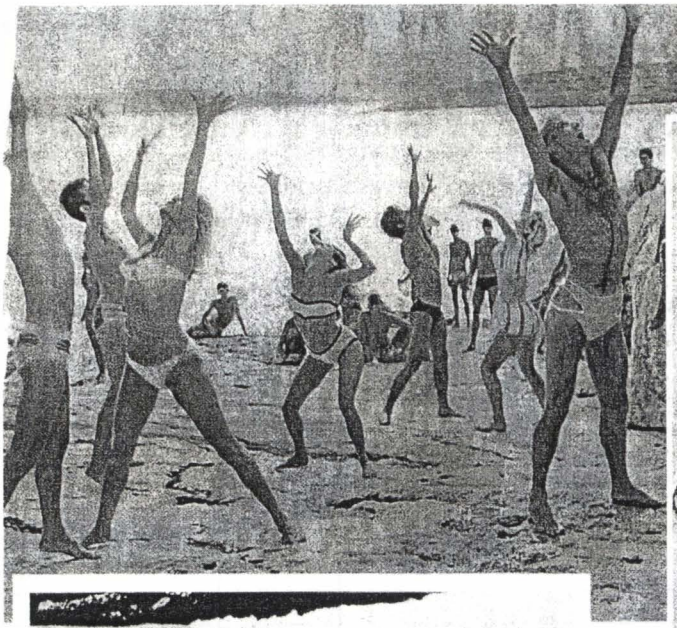
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9. Turn over to the article and read carefully the whole of the three sections describing Wald's three categories of trunk-wearers.

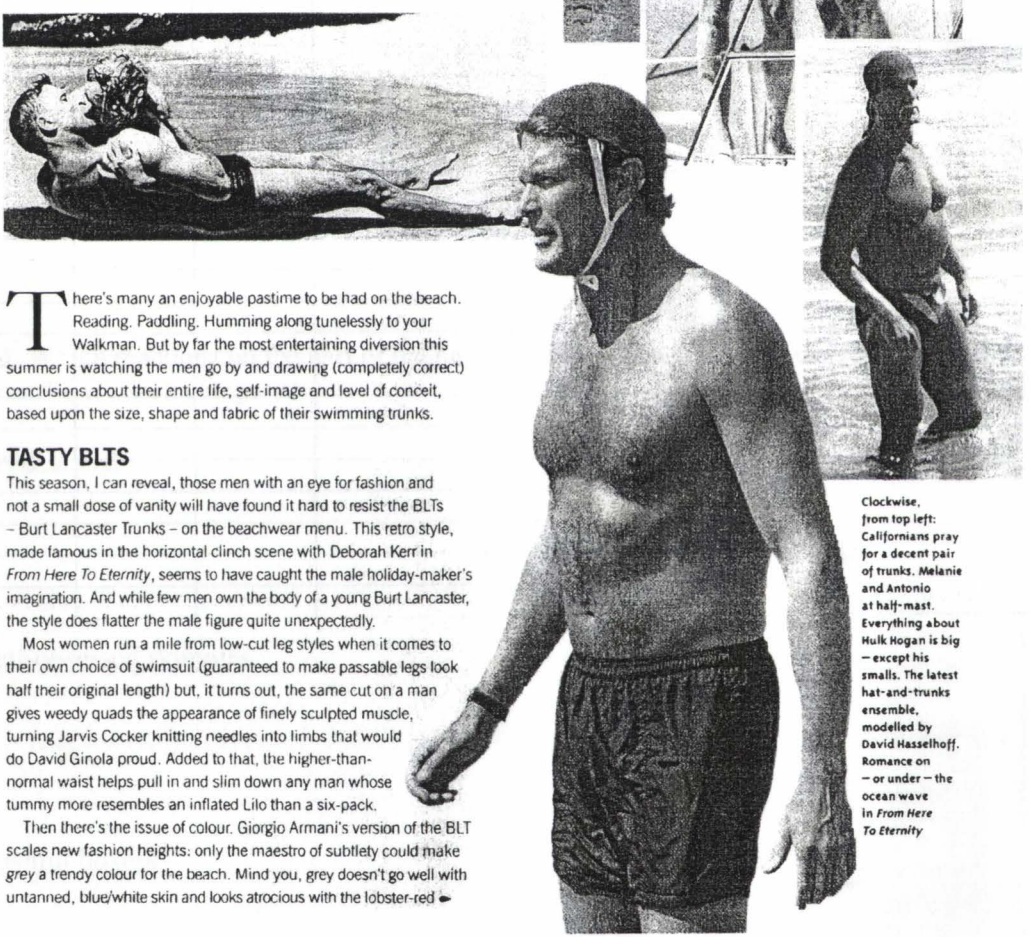
9.1. In hindsight, summarize the characteristics of the men that fall into the categories established and described by Wald. Mark with * those you find particularly surprising, shocking or intriguing to mention. Add Wald's supposed evaluation (+, –, or N)

Categories	Traits	Evaluation (acc. to Wald)		
		+	–	N
1. Tasty BLTs				
2. Self-obsessed skimpies				
3. Bashful boxers				

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Clockwise, from top left: Two cheeky boys. No, Rod, we don't think you're sexy – especially with your label hanging out. Three hunks in trunks discuss how skateboards have changed. You'll be glad to see the back of Hugh Grant. Sly and the family jewels

PHOTOGRAPHS BIG PICTURES, ALL ACTION, FRANK SPOONER, ADVERTISING ARCHIVES, CORBIS

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9.2. Give Wald's criteria for including them in the respective category.

Category	Wald's criteria
Tasty BLTs	
Self-obsessed skimpies	
Bashful boxers	

9.3. How do you think NOW Wald assesses each category on a five-point scale from 'disgusting' to 'appealing'? Tick the boxes even if your predictions in Q 7.1. have not changed.

Tasty BLTs	disgusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing
Self-obsessed skimpies	disgusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing
Bashful boxers	disgusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing

10.1. Here is a list of proper names mentioned in the article. Who are the respective persons? Why does Wald mention them in the respective paragraph/caption?

Name	**Who is he /What is he famous for?**	**Why mention him? (e.g. He symbolizes....)**
Burt Lancaster		
Antonio Banderas		
Hulk Hogan		
David Hasselhoff		
Jarvis Cocker		

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David Ginola		
Giorgio Armani		
Bart Simpson		
Narcissus		
Ralph Lauren		
Leif Garrett		
Rod (Stewart)		
Hugh Grant		
Sly (Stallone)		

10.2. Make a list of lexical items you had not come across before reading "Men in Trunks". Is their meaning:

- guessable from the context?
- important for the issue discussed in the paragraph?

Complete column 1 and tick the box that fits your opinion in columns 2 and 3.

Lexical item	**Meaning guessable**		**Meaning important**	
	Y	**N**	**Y**	**N**

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11. *How do you find Wald's classification? Tick the box that best suits your opinion/attitude on a seven-point scale.*

a)

down-to-earth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unrealistic

b)

ingenious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unimaginative

c)

man-bashing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	man-flattering

other [list your opinion/attitude]

POST-READING TASKS

12. In comparison with your previous images of men on the beach, do you find Wald's classification:

predictable/conventional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	novel/original

Tick the box that best suits your attitude on a seven-point scale.

13. Turn the article over and complete the following:
Regarding the classification of men on the beach according to their trunks,
I agree with Wald when it comes to....

I disagree with Wald when it comes to

I was really appallled/shocked/intrigued by .....

I have found Wald's idea/statement about.... very expectation challenging

Having read Wald's article, I see things differently now with respect to....

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14.1. Wald repeatedly refers to parts of the male body and to various aspects of masculinity. List down all references that caused you an emotional reaction (disgust, amusement, admiration for the clever way the author put it). Specify your reaction next to each item mentioned.

Reference to male body and masculinity	Experienced reaction	Reason

14.2. Indicate any other words, phrases and sentences that brought to mind issues which caused you to react strongly (feel surprised, indignant, shocked). (Simply indicate number of line<s>, first and last word). If possible, specify the reasons for your reaction.

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15. How did you find Wald's article? Tick the box that best suits your attitude on a seven-point scale.

enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	shocking

inspiring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	boring

other [describe your attitude]:

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This book addresses several fields of research: cognitive linguistics, gender studies, language and social psychology, as well as teaching English as a foreign language. It combines linguistic analysis with basic tenets of schema theory and fundamental claims pertaining to contemporary anti-essentialist views on gender, with a view to highlighting the way a community of young Romanian intellectuals accommodate non-hegemonic representations of masculinity such as those displayed by British magazines.

The book is likely to arouse the interest of undergraduate and postgraduate students showing concern for cognitive insights into linguistic phenomena, feminist theories, language and social representation. It may be a reliable resource book for MA students specialising in Applied Linguistics and/or Cultural Studies.

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