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Size Matters

*Male Body Panic and the Third Wave
"Crisis of Masculinity"*

Within the last two decades, a plethora of scholarly work has explored the interrelationship between images of female bodies, gendered power relations, and consumption (Bartky 1988; Bordo 1993; Brumberg 1997; Grogan 1999; Heywood 1998; Duncan 1994). As noted in the last chapter, it has been assumed that gendered power relations necessarily over-determined men as powerful, privileged, and active subjects (Messner 1989), and as such, male bodies were not viewed as capable of being objectified (Bordo 1999). Indeed, because the male body has long been the presumed norm against which female bodies are found lacking (ibid.; Synnott 1993), it has been largely assumed that male bodies do not "lack." Thus, while specific attention has focused on an "ideology of lack" surrounding women's bodies and the need to consume products and services in order to "correct" that lack, it is only very recently that scholarly attention has turned toward the complex ways that the (hegemonic) male body has also been subjected to intensive scrutiny and objectification.

The previous chapter shed light on the ways in which the subject/object dichotomy has not fully elucidated the complexities that circulate around gender and the body to reflect contemporary changes in gender relations in the postindustrial consumer era. We therefore spent some time challenging the traditional emphasis on a subject/object dichotomy (and an active/passive one) by underscoring evidence of a convergence of bodily practices, imagery (poses), and fitness prescriptions among women and men in fitness texts. We introduced Frigga Haug's concept of subjective-aspects-within-being-as-object and noted how Haug's framework allows space for a rebuttal to traditional analyses of women and the body, such that women are not solely objectified but rather, find useful, identity-validating, and pleasurable aspects of being an object (and are framed as such).

We then extended Haug's concept to include men by introducing our own new concept termed "objective-aspects-within-being-as-subject." This concept captures the ways in which traditional notions of male subjectivity have been partly objectified. Such a concept involves recognition that men are not simply subjects, but experience objectifying processes within processes of subjectivity, particularly given that men as a category are not unified (with differences by race, class, sexuality). The analysis in the previous chapter of fitness media texts over time underscored that the framing of both men and women in fitness texts involved an intersection of consumption, gender, and objectification that has evolved in both convergent and divergent ways (and continues to evolve). As was noted, this is consistent with other researchers who have made similar claims about the newly objectified status of men (Miller 2001; Dowsett 1994; Bordo 1999; also see chapter 5, "Body Panic Parity," of Heywood and Dworkin 2003).

In this chapter, we extend the challenges to the subject/object dichotomy offered in the last chapter to argue that men in fitness are not only constituted as having objective aspects within being-as-subject, but that men's objectified status still offers powerful forms of subjecthood in fitness media that are linked to the display and actualization of hegemonic masculinity. As we will show, this is represented in fitness media texts as large physical size, institutionalized links to sport and the military, and the constitution of hegemonic masculinity as different from and superior to subordinated masculinities and to femininities. This chapter therefore explores in detail the construction of the idealized male body through health and fitness texts and how a third wave crisis of masculinity (masculinism, fears of social feminism, and backlash to feminism) is paradoxically constructed and partly resolved through body panic.

Scholars argue that "male body panic," or male preoccupation with physical appearance, has become more prevalent with the advent of consumer culture in the postindustrial era. Just as scholars underscore the negative impacts of consumer culture and corporeal demands on women, men's experiences must increasingly be recognized as having serious social and personal consequences (Pope, Phillips, and Olivardia 2000). The importance of bodily display as a means to establish and negotiate social status, and the ways that body image reinforces or challenges relations of privilege and oppression (whether by sexuality, race, or other social locations), must be investigated, particularly given that all bodies are said to be subject to forms of "body panic." As we will show, health and fitness discourse, and healthism in particular, play a vital, albeit complex role in

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New York, NY, USA: NYU Press, 2009. p 75.

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paradoxically constituting and solving contemporary "male body panic" (Gillett and White ; Heywood ; Kimmel ; Pope, Phillips, and Olivardia).

*Body Panic— The Role of Consumer Culture in Discipline
Moral Panics at the Turn of the Millennium*

Stanley Cohen introduced the notion of "moral panics" to account for a recurring social pattern that emerges and recedes based on sociopolitical contexts: a group is marked as deviant or dangerous, media overstate the risks associated with this group, and a public outcry ensues to maximize control of these individuals, against whom policy is eventually enacted (Cohen). Once the panic recedes, the focus shifts to the next constructed threat, and the process resurfaces with new contours for the next (usually marginalized) social group. Jeffrey Weeks applies the concept of a moral panic to the AIDS epidemic, demonstrating a link between embodiment and morality, and the ways in which constructions of identity status (e.g., race, class) and behavior create moral hierarchies among different bodies (Weeks). Such analyses not only press us to think further about the ways in which bodies are subject to and constituted by moral orders, but they also underscore the ways in which the social behaviors and identities of *dominant and marginalized* bodies need to be carefully disentangled in times of rapid cultural change or instability (or, as we will note, war).

Furthering an analysis of the links between social identities, morality, embodiment, and masculinity, our own earlier work (Dworkin and Wachs ; Wachs and Dworkin) agreed with Weeks's basic claims about embodiment and morality, but subsequently extended his analysis to consider the ways in which intersecting social locations (e.g., race, sexuality, masculinity) reflect and challenge deviant markings and placements into hierarchical moralities. In our previously published media analyses of the differential moral frames that three major newspapers (*Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*) provided in their media coverage of the HIV-positive announcements that male athletes Greg Louganis, Magic Johnson, and Tommy Morrison made to the public, we demonstrated the ways in which media constructed sexual act, risk, and sexual identity.

In that work, we analyzed how newspapers constructed sexual act, risk, and identity, which worked to disseminate erroneous health information

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New York, NY, USA: NYU Press, 2009. p 76.
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about HIV/AIDS risks and constructed different moral orders depending on the specific interaction between social identities and masculinities (e.g., marginalized/subordinated and dominant) that each athlete offered (according to their race, class, sexuality, gender). Men whose bodies were subject to a discourse of "otherness" (e.g., such as Louganis, a self-identified gay man) were not "redeemed" in media coverage when Louganis made a public confession about HIV status, and his body was the subject of panic (e.g., through his blood in the pool) and deviant markings on the basis of his sexual identity. The press assumed that he was promiscuous when he had in fact been in a monogamous relationship with someone to whom he was faithful but who was unfaithful to him. Providing much contrast, men in dominant categories (e.g., in the analysis, self-identified heterosexually active men such as Johnson and Morrison) were successfully redeemed in media coverage and avoided the stigma of contagion, even when literally contagious. This was so despite the fact that this media case study was rife with discourses around sexuality and HIV, and it is noteworthy that racist or classist discourses of sexual excess could have easily been more directly invoked.

However, instead of blaming the heterosexually active men or their behavior (e.g., Morrison and Johnson), as was done in the coverage of Louganis, or blaming the social organization of masculinity within sport (that normalizes "scoring" and multiple sexual partners as central to the constitution of masculine identity), blame for Morrison's and Johnson's behavior was displaced onto the women with whom they had sex. These women were blamed in media coverage for being "groupies" and having "uncontrollable" desires for male athletic objects of desire. Heterosexually active male athletes were discussed in terms that described them to be doing "what any normal man would do" in responding to the women's "requests." Our analysis certainly underscored the need for gender and the body scholars to not only push beyond monolithic notions of hegemonic masculinity to include various subordinated masculinities, but to thoroughly interrogate men's intersecting social locations while carrying out relational analyses of gender (e.g., both women and men). Indeed, the moral order reflected social stratification in order to reify notions of good and bad behavior, identities, and practices in unfortunately predictable ways.

Not all would agree with our claims that this is an example of moral panic.¹ For example, in their analysis of the relationship between moral panics and contemporary media practices, McRobbie and Thornton

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(1995) reference Simon Watney's book titled *Policing Desire* and state that he "rightly points out that gradual and staged creation of a 'folk devil' as described by moral panic theorists applies neither to gay men and lesbians nor people who are HIV positive. Instead, there is a whole world of monstrous representations" (p. 563). Given that our analysis showed clear differentiation between which bodies are able to be redeemed and which were not, we certainly hold to the original claims in our analysis. Hence, our previous media analyses move us to consider the ways in which media rely on the relationship between dominant and marginalized social categories to produce signifiers of morality and reproduce moral panics. Specifically, we have to consider how moral panics operate to (re)produce relations of privilege (heterosexual men) and oppression (gay men, women). Body panic in the current analysis, by contrast, is not part of a mass social movement, but is disseminated through diffuse relations of power found in media representations. It urges one to consider how relations of privilege and oppression are not only represented in media but are literally embedded in the flesh through repeated practices, thereby marking the social stature of individuals and serving as a justification for social positions.

In the current analysis, then, instead of relying on an analysis of the ways in which the "subordinated" are framed within moral panics, we "study up" on dominant ideals in order to extend an analysis of social hierarchies, moral panics, sport, and bodies. For this project, we examine the ways in which body panic is produced as a form of diffuse moral panic through the relationship between what is included and excluded within media frames. While previous work on moral panics in media have emphasized how representations demonize "the other" through directly representing them inside the media frame, we will argue that contemporary media creates a more diffuse "folk devil"² through the creation of the "folk angel"³ that links morality and privilege—and, by extension—ties immorality with those left outside the frame. In this way, we underscore how body panic must not be seen solely as individualized anxieties but must also be understood as part of the broader structure of more diffuse power relations found in postindustrial consumer culture.

While both our previous and current work consider the racialized, gendered, and classed dimensions of moral panic, here, we will consider how, with the advent of consumer culture, the salvation once sought to be derived through the soul has moved to the body (Baudrillard 1998). The body, then, does not simply become a sign of morality (or immorality)

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by being matched by moral (or immoral) acts, but the media works to mark bodies with signs of morality that become markers for the moral act itself. In a strange reversal of Oscar Wilde's novel, *Picture of Dorian Gray*, the surface of the body becomes the locus of sin itself, with sin coming to signify particular values that are associated with bodily imperfections. Wilde's book critiqued Victorian presumptions that degeneracy was written on the body, and that bodies not marked by degeneracy were necessarily more moral than stigmatized ones. Dorian Gray in Wilde's book maintains an outward appearance of immaculate perfection, while his portrait shows the immorality/degeneracy to which he is becoming a more frequent participant. Wilde's book underscores that the sins of the individual were thought to be written on the flesh. In contemporary terms, however, simply not having perfect flesh is currently viewed as a sin in and of itself (and, as will be discussed in this chapter, as antithetical to the interests of U.S. nationalism in the war against terror). Indeed, moral hierarchies intersect with consumer culture in unique ways, given that there are those who are (included) within and (left) outside of the moral frame in fitness media texts, helping to define, shape, and "solve" contemporary social dimensions of body panic.

Some argue that the moral panic of the new millennium focuses on the obese and the out of shape body.⁴ While the World Health Organization (WHO) states that rates of being overweight or obese are reaching "epidemic proportions," and there is a large range of bodies in between slender and overweight, body fat itself has come to symbolize the out of control, unproductive, and morally inferior worker/citizen (as was seen in chapter 2). Each person is now called upon in consumer culture to work assiduously to minimize the ever-increasing set of flaws to which his or her body is subject. Other scholars have noted how body panic is part of a re-emergence of expressions of crises in masculinity. While previous analyses of crises of masculinity centered only on the institutional and structural realm (e.g., the development of sports and the boy scouts), we center here on the embodied, cultural, and symbolic realm of what we term a "third wave crisis of masculinity" that is both similar to and also somewhat unlike previous "crises of masculinity" at the turn of the twentieth century (the wave crisis) and in the 1960s–70s (second wave crisis).

As the contemporary male body becomes a negotiable profit-generating commodity (with a shift from instrumental use to appearance), men are increasingly sold bodily problematizations which are largely assuaged through continual purchases (Bordo 1999; also see Dotson 1999; Armitage

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2005). American men spent over \$2 billion in 1999 on commercial gym memberships, another \$2 billion on gym equipment for the home, and these numbers have risen in great magnitude since that time. The paid circulation of the most popular magazine in our sample, *Men's Health*, climbed more than sevenfold in seven years—from 250,000 to 1.8 million in 2005. The circulation of *Men's Health* currently exceeds that of *GQ* and *Esquire* combined. According to the latest Audit Bureau of Circulations figures, overall circulation grew in the 2005–2006 for masculinist magazines like *Maxim* and *Men's Journal*. According to the same source, sales also increased for fitness and fashion magazines such as Condé Nast's *GQ*, and data from Rodale Press indicated that *Men's Health* was up 5 percent partway through 2006.

The features editor of *Men's Health* recently pinpointed the “why” of this trend in an interview available on the web, in which he is quoted as saying: “Some people might say that we're doing well because men are more vain now, but I think they're just more aware of everything that comes with health—the idea that it is more than skin deep.” And while health reasons may be part of the “cause,” much vanity and bodily anxiety is certainly reflected in broader purchasing trends. Estimates from 1997 indicated that men spent \$3.5 billion on hair color, skin moisturizers, teeth whiteners, and other toiletries (Pope, Phillips, and Olivardia 2000). Between 2002 and 2006, there was a 3 percent increase in cosmetic surgery among men, continuing the trend of cosmetic surgery for men that exploded in the late 1990s and the early part of the new millennium (PR Newswire 2007). Cosmetics and skin care, once the domain of women, have seen a sharp increase in male usage as most major companies expand to offer grooming and skin care lines for men (Morago 2007). Companies rolled out 800 new men-only products in 2006 according to the consulting firm Datamonitor, up from 459 only five years earlier (*Business Week*, September 4, 2006, p. 48). Such trends suggest that claims by scholars and consumers that men were “missed” in the consumer revolution are no longer accurate, if indeed these ever were on the mark.

Some scholars in the disciplines of psychology and sociology argue that men have displayed greater satisfaction with their bodies and less of a desire to change even though they recognize that they often do not meet ideals (Grogan 1999). Still others argue that men are nearly as dissatisfied with their bodies as women, binge eat as much as women, and are highly preoccupied with products and practices that help to construct today's hegemonic ideal of increased musculature and decreased body fat (Pope,

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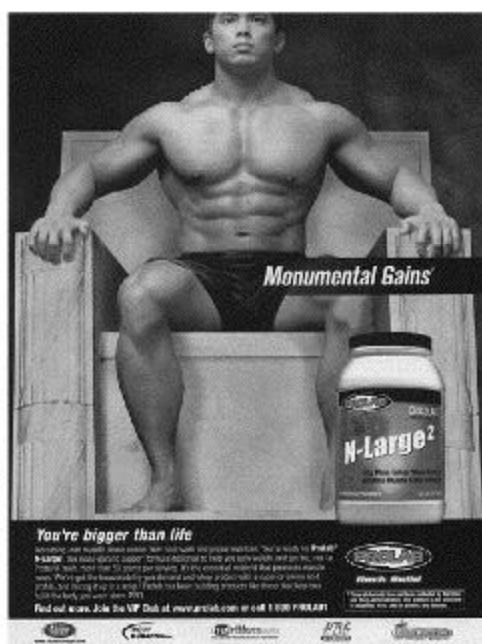
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Phillips, and Olivardia 2000). And, while some claim that gay men are as dissatisfied with their bodies as heterosexual women (Grogan 1999), others argue that gay and straight men are equally dissatisfied (Pope, Phillips, and Olivardia 2000). We suspect that the myriad of competing information reflects a time of transition—that men overall are in the process of becoming less satisfied with their bodies.

The argument here will center on the fact that while there are a number of forces that lead to a convergence of bodies and practices among women and men—and men may in fact be framed as having objective aspects within being-as-subject within fitness texts—it is also true that men's objectified status still offers powerful forms of subjecthood that are linked to the display and actualization of hegemonic masculinity. This chapter explores in detail the construction of the idealized male body and analyzes this body in light of current “third wave” crises of masculinity. This work demonstrates the typical responses characterized by masculinism as including large body size, links to all male domains such as the military, sport, and other male-dominated occupations in the state, fears of social

Clearly, size is paramount to masculinity. *Men's Fitness*, November 2004)



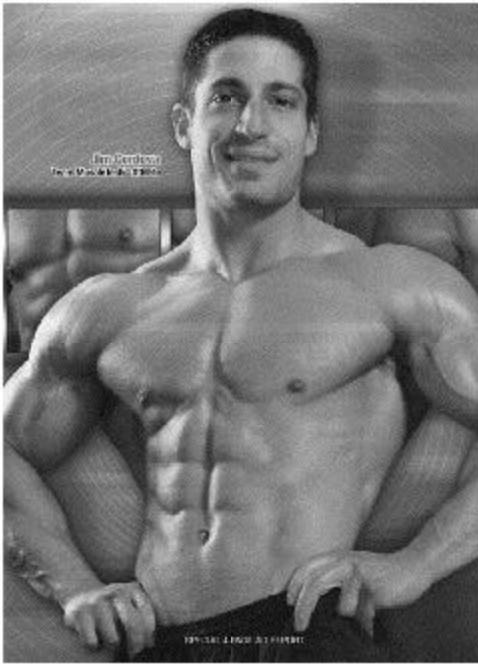
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Men's fitness magazines are focused on size, as evidenced in ads such as this one which promise big gains. (*Men's Health*, April 2006)

feminization, and antifeminism. When one explores the construction of the ideal man today, certainly, size matters.

We conducted content and textual analysis of all available articles from our sample of health and fitness magazines for men. We coded all available articles for thematic emphasis and examined the five (of six) modal themes here: size, power and strength, natural elements, the links made between men's fitness, the military, sports, fears of social feminization, and antifeminism. By examining these themes, we do not mean to suggest that audiences do not offer multiple readings of images or texts, as we suggest throughout the book. Rather, we underscore that while magazines do present a range of alternative viewpoints, they commonly offer "preferred" readings (see chapter 1). The preferred or dominant reading refers to an interpretation in line with what producers of the text desire. We do not argue that "preferred readings" and meanings necessarily reinforce "dominant ideologies" or practices, as many scholars have previously argued, but rather, that dominant ideologies are built into the preferred

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reading and serve to displace blame for the negative aspects of consumer culture onto gender relations (and failed unhealthy choices), rather than the structures of postindustrial society or consumer culture itself.

What Makes a Healthy (Hegemonic) Man—Size Matters

The fundamental belief in dichotomous difference is bolstered by the core assumption that men are big and women are small.⁵ Men's and women's health magazines provide step-by-step instructions for meeting these ideals while simultaneously (re)creating them. As numerous scholars of gender and the body have stated, ideal (Western, contemporary) men are primarily big and, secondarily, cut (Gillett and White 1992; Dotson 1999; Olivardia, Pope, Borowiecki, and Cohane 2004). The fundamental assumption that underlies most recommendations to men is that healthy and fit are defined by the image of musculature, muscle size, greater muscle density, and less body fat. All of the covers of the men's magazines featured well-defined, muscular, and almost always shirtless upper bodies. Most male models were not only toned, but large, and often vascular (displaying enlarged veins). Bulging pectoral muscles, biceps, shoulders, and well "cut" "six- or eight-pack" abdomens adorned almost all of the men's health and fitness covers. The fundamental assumption that underlies men's fitness is that men should strive to increase their muscle mass and decrease their body fat. As noted in the previous chapter, meeting this ideal takes on the importance of a moral injunction—workouts, advice, and images combine to send a clear message that size does matter and makes the man.

The focus on size comes across in the workouts, as almost all articles explicitly set an increase in muscle size or density as a goal (87.8 percent, $N=174$). Only 12.2 percent of men's articles ($N=24$) focused on cardio, flexibility, or other forms of alternative workouts. For example, one article was entitled, "More Muscles Guaranteed! 10 Secrets for Adding Quality Pounds Fast" (*Men's Fitness*, November 2004), another is entitled, "Add Size and Power to Our Arms" (*Men's Exercise*, September 1998), and *Exercise for Men Only (EMO)* (July 2004) exhorts readers to "Super-Size Your Chest!" At the same time, *Men's Health* (May 2004) calls for men to "Get Sets, Grow!" while an April 2006 issue of the magazine features "Twenty-Four Muscle Rippers!" on its cover. One *EMO* cover featured "Get Big Fast!" (May 2006), *Men's Exercise* cheered for men to seek "Superman

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Shoulders in 4 Simple Moves!" on its April 2003 cover, and *Men's Fitness* offered "136 New Ways to Build BadAss Muscle" (May 2006).

While the men's magazine *EMO* offers a "Dumbbells-Only Back and Trap Workout" (June 2000) and asks, "What's the point in having huge 'guns' for arms and 'cannonballs' for delts if your back's as thin as a string of spaghetti?" women's magazines frequently offered workouts like *Self's* "The 3-in-1 workout" that promises "you'll fix trouble spots, lose inches and drop pounds" (February 2003). Further, men's magazines contained far more ads, articles, and snippets (short bits of information that are part ad, part information whose purpose is to promote new products, practices, or services) on supplements designed to add size or muscle mass. While women's nutritional aids almost exclusively focused on weight loss, men's magazines admonished individuals to cut fat while increasing size. For example, *Men's Exercise* offers the regular feature Nutrition News, which promotes beef liver extract as "one of the most dynamic muscle-building supplements around" (July 2001). By contrast, the women's

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Michelle O'Leary walked away the Queen in our new Eclipse Protein Shake. Why? She gets 39 grams of protein in every 1 1/2 ounces of shake. That's 39 grams of protein with each delicious serving. It's exactly the perfect nutritional support formulation to help Michelle keep her body looking lean and hard!

480 Natural
39 Grams of Protein
Simply Delicious
1/2 Gram of Fat
Perfect Meal Replacement

Michelle O'Leary walked away the Queen in our new Eclipse Protein Shake. Why? She gets 39 grams of protein in every 1 1/2 ounces of shake. That's 39 grams of protein with each delicious serving. It's exactly the perfect nutritional support formulation to help Michelle keep her body looking lean and hard!

480 Natural
39 Grams of Protein
Simply Delicious
1/2 Gram of Fat
Perfect Meal Replacement

Henry Brown, NPC Mr. USA, is staying with the 39 big grams of protein he gets each time he downs a meal, and feeling strong as ever. The shake is virtually fat free, but contains 100 calories and enough carbs to help Henry maintain the muscle mass that makes him the size of a middle office building!

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FREE product and a copy of BodyTalk

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Look at your nearest store for all details
Contact Mr. Mike Cooper, PROCEED
Protein and Protein Shake, 39 grams
protein of BodyTalk, represents a nutritional
source of 100% fat, 100% protein, 100%
BULKY FREE, without sugar and other
artificial ingredients.

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2000**

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These advertisements provide visual cues to appropriately feminine and masculine goals. Even in the case of a muscular woman and a muscular man, her captions are about leanness and a low number of calories and he is her "mean" male counterpart who needs no mention of being low cal. (*Men's Exercise*, January 2000)

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Side by side, this image highlights prescribed gender differences. Notice that the direct association between men and sport and indirect association between women and fitness is put forward. (*Men's Fitness*, December 2001)



magazines center on the time-honored theme of women controlling their diet for weight loss, but supplements are almost never mentioned. *Fit* features "Losing the Last 10 Lbs: Confessions of an Aerobics Instructor" that provides hints on how to manage your diet in order to lose weight (December 2002).

Size reduction is the focus of the majority of women's workouts, fitness advice, and nutrition advice. Only 10.5 percent ($N = 23$) of women's workouts instruct women to gain strength. Most of the workout articles focus on "toning" (52.1 percent, $N = 114$) and injury prevention (17 percent, $N = 37$). Our sample of women's magazines had seven times the number of weight loss articles as men's magazines (73 percent, $N = 16$). In addition, the preponderance of articles that discuss fitness, focus on losing weight as a key component. "We Lost a Ton!" (*Fitness*, October 1999) profiles 18 women who lost 2,000 pounds among them. *Fitness* sums up the goal with the piece "Body 2000" (October 1999): "C'mon, admit it. You'd love to kick off the millennium with a tighter tummy, trimmer legs and a jiggle-free behind. There's still time! Our three-month plan tackles the

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whole package with step-by-step cardio, weight and stretching routines that will give you a new body to go with the New Year." Women are fairly consistently sold the promise of a "new you," centered on improving their appearance.

Of course, bodily ideals have changed over time, and some claim these ideas are broadened to include a wider range of femininities. While women's new fit bodies are celebrated as normalizing a wider range of beauty ideals for women, research suggests the parameters of femininity still contain significant size requirements (Heywood and Dworkin 2003; Duncan 1994; Duncan and Brummett 1993). The minimal attention given to strength gains for women makes it clear that this is not an appropriate goal (we have both often wondered why, if women's lower bodies are so problematic, magazines do not suggest that women lift a lot of weights in the upper body to make the lower body appear smaller). The women's workouts (10.5 percent of articles) that focus on gains in strength as the primary goal do not highlight gains in size that generally accompany almost all of the men's workouts with the same goal. If we are to accept that



Left: Women are more often prescribed fitness activities, such as these exercise ball moves, than are men. (*Shape*, September 2006). *Right:* Women are more often prescribed fitness activities, such as graceful dance "moves," than are men. (*Shape*, September 2006)

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Left: Men are much more often prescribed upper body weight work than are women. (*Exercise for Men Only*, May 2006). *Right:* One can see the contrast between men's and women's fitness routines and prescribed physical forms by examining fitness images and texts relationally. (*Exercise for Men Only*, February 2002)

men are naturally bigger and stronger than women, it seems surprising that gaining size wouldn't be recommended for women. One could easily rationalize size gains with feminized ideologies, such as: gaining strength assists in performing "appropriately feminine" tasks such as carrying youngsters or groceries (although, as we will see in chapter 4, babies are the preferred and recommended "barbells" for new mothers).

When taken together, these magazines make it clear that masculinity is displayed through strength and size. It is not simply size requirements that constitute masculinity and femininity, but the fact that gender and corporeality are strategically produced in certain parts of the body. Particular body parts especially signify masculinity (upper body) over and above others.

Table 3.1 appears to, upon first glance, reinforce some aspects of bodily overlap between women and men, as substantial commonality is seen in all categories, and especially in the "combination" of upper and lower body workouts category, the largest category for both women's and men's

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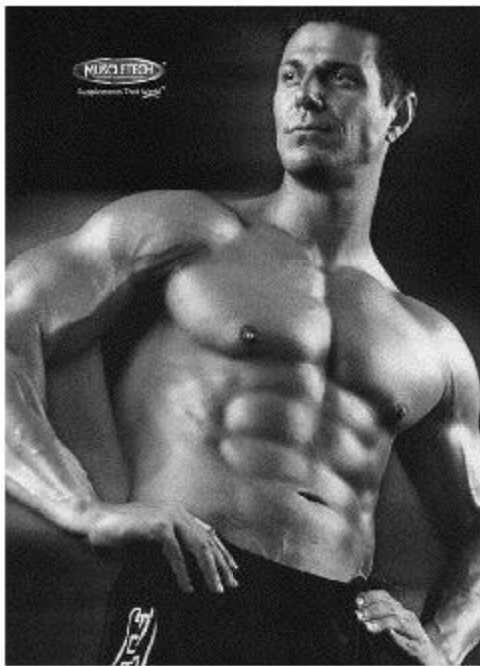
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TABLE 3.1
Not Just Size Matters, but Where Matters

	Upper Body Only	Lower Body Only	Abdominals Only	Combo of Upper/Lower and/or Abs	Other	Total
Male	61 (30.8%)	17 (8.6%)	32 (16.2%)	84 (42.4%)	4 (2.0%)	198
Female	25 (11.4%)	36 (16.4%)	16 (7.3%)	126 (57.5%)	16 (7.3%)	219

workouts. Combination workouts that included both the upper and lower body clearly did provide more overlap in workouts for women and men. However, in this category, in men's magazines, combination workouts were far more likely to include the upper body and abdominals, or only one or two lower body exercises combined with several upper body exercises. For example, *Men's Exercise* (July 2001) promises "Tremendous Traps!" through "6 State of the Art Shrugs." This piece is billed as "The best way to cap off your physique with mountainous muscles." An earlier issue (*Men's Exercise*, September 1998) features "Call to Arms" that claims: "As I've grown older, I now understand that the biceps make up



In our analysis, men's fitness magazines contained three times the number of upper body workouts than women's fitness magazines. The historical association between muscularity in the upper body and masculinity is made here. Note that men's lower bodies are not often shown or emphasized, while women's lower bodies are often presented as a "problem" area. (*Men's Exercise*, June 2006)

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only one-third of the total arm size, even if they are the most impressive to look at. To better fill out your shirtsleeves, you've got to concentrate on the triceps just as much. Likewise, a mammoth upper arm coupled with a stick-like forearm looks positively ridiculous, so you've got to work them, too." The wisdom of age is marshaled in an effort to fill out one's shirtsleeves.

For women, the "problem areas" of hips, thighs, and rear end were ubiquitous. For women, combination workouts included mostly lower body workouts with abdominals with a few upper body toning moves. *Shape* (October 2004) advises readers to "Improve Your Rear View" with a workout that offers "3 moves to chisel your butt and thighs." And two years later, the same publication features a workout that promises to "Re-size Your Thighs: 3 Moves to Slim Down Fast." *Fitness* (June 1999) advertised a workout entitled "Lower-Body Blast," which claims: "Besides giving you a fat-blasting aerobic boost, it also offers a spot-on lower-body workout—a shortcut to slimmer hips, sexier legs and a firmer, shapelier butt."

The upper body/lower body divide is not new. Women in Western culture have long been stigmatized as physical, tied to the body, and rendered less rational and physically capable due to their reproductive organs (lower body). By contrast, men have been venerated by the linking of the male to the cerebral, logical, and rational (upper body) (Grosz 1994; Laqueur 1990; Sennett 1994). In addition, research has demonstrated that while on average men have slightly stronger upper bodies, women have slightly stronger lower bodies (Fausto-Sterling 1985). Hence, the cautions aimed at women's lower bodies and the restrictions on their size indicate the potential for cultural devaluations of women's strength. At the same time, the continued association of masculinity with upper bodies, and the presumption that upper body strength is more central, further highlights the privileging of the male form as ideal, with the female form as consistently not measuring up (Dowling 2001). While many argue that idealized gender differences reflect innate natural differences between men and women, the wide range of bodies and practices employed over time and across space suggests culture plays a significant role in defining idealized bodies and the way individuals go about attaining one (Bordo 1993).

Men's magazines contained three times the number of upper body workouts as women's. They were rife with calls to get "Bigger, Better, Biceps Fast!" (*Men's Exercise*, November 1997), "Shock Your Biceps into Growing!" (*Men's Fitness*, July 2002), "Add 2 Inches to Your Arms!" (*Men's*

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Fitness, May 2006), "Build Sleeve Busting Biceps!" (*Men's Exercise*, June 2006), "Chisel a V-Tapered Back" (*EMO*, February 1997), "Cannonball Delts! Build Massive Shoulders in No Time Flat!" (*Men's Exercise*, February 2003), "Mountainous Traps in Just 6 Sets" (*EMO*, October 1998), "Keeping Your Shoulders Healthy and Wealthy with Size" (*Men's Exercise*, April 2003), and "EMO's Superior Guide to a V-Tapered Back" (August 1997). As in our examples from women's magazines above, clearly, reducing size was the goal. While men as actual readers are far from cultural dupes who will merely passively absorb the messages in any kind of uniform manner, it is interesting (and surprising to us) that these titles are quite consistent with actual surveys of men's bodily dissatisfaction which show particular contempt for the lack of muscularity in their upper bodies, historically constitutive of ideal masculinity (Olivardia et al. 2004; also see Grogan 1998; Bordo 1999).

Another key demarcation of corporeal perfection was the six- or eight-pack of ab muscles. For men, the importance of lean, ripped or striated, and cut abdominal muscles was clear due to their ubiquity in image and

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Choosing the right fat-loss supplement is a must if you want a lean mid-section!

For the most powerful fat-loss supplement, you need one that's clinically proven to be safe and effective. Hydroxycut is a natural fat-loss supplement that helps you burn more calories, even at rest. It's the only fat-loss supplement that's been clinically proven to be safe and effective.

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Six- and eight-pack abs are one of the hallmarks of corporeal male perfection in men's health and fitness magazines. This ad states that "a tight, lean mid-section can be yours with the help of the right fat-loss supplement . . . Hydroxycut!" (*Exercise & Health*, Fall 2001)

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text. Almost all of men's magazines featured one or two abdominal workouts. Overall, approximately one in six (17 percent) workouts were specifically for abdominals, such as "Diamond Hard Abs in Just 10 Minutes a Day" (*Men's Exercise*, November 1997), "Incredible Abs! The Inversion Boots Workout" (*Men's Exercise*, December 2004), "Lose Your Gut for Good!" (*Exercise and Health*, Winter 1998), "Ab Exercise! Lose Your Love Handles!" (*EMO*, May 2006), "The Easy Way to Hard Abs" (*Men's Health*, February 2006), and "Complete Super Definition Ab Training" (*EMO*, February 1998). By contrast, women had the goal of "flat" and "toned" abs. *Self* (February 2003, cover) promises "Sexy Arms, Slim Hutt, Flat Abs in Less Time."

The cumulative social practices necessary to obtain the right abdomen or any other body part are clearly intensive and require continual scrutiny. In this way, the panoptic gaze discussed by Bartky (1988) and Duncan (1994) as applied to women is clearly applicable to men. Men are counseled to push well beyond average to get closer to a more elite athletic level and are told that "transforming the stomach from flabby to firm is part of any smart man's fitness plan. With a sensible diet and regular abdominal exercising, it's a reachable goal. Taking the next step, from firm to sculpted, is another matter entirely. That takes a spartan diet, of the almost fat-free variety, and adhering to a much tougher fitness regimen" (*Exercise & Health*, Winter 1998). Special tips to move men toward the pinnacle washboard status included: "Prolonging the pause" at the top of abdominal crunches (*Exercise & Health*, Winter 1998), "punching combinations," plyometrics (for "explosive execution" (*Men's Health*, April 2006), use of a "body wedge" for increased elevation (*Men's Exercise*, June 2006), use of an "ab pavelizer II" (*EMO*, July 2002), working the abs from multiple angles (*EMO*, May 2006), martial arts for "shredded abs," and high-intensity, high-repetition training plans (*EMO*, February 1997) and more. Men are also prescribed meticulous eating and exercise plans that included limiting calories, eating fat-free foods, increasing protein intake, using meal replacement to get more protein, eating 5-6 times a day, eating a high-fiber diet with plenty of vegetables, and of course, carrying out all of the recommended exercises in the articles.

Unlike women's magazines, which tended not to directly humiliate women by calling their "flawed" or "problematic" body parts disparaging names, at times men's exercises are presented in a manner similar to that used by a football coach or military commander, yelling denigrating remarks at his athletes to encourage them to try harder. Men's ab exercises

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are named “inner tube deflator,” “spare tire changer,” “beer belly buster,” and “love handle handler.” The text is full of comments that make it clear that once the body “plateaus” and you are no longer getting results, it is always necessary to “ramp up” the body maintenance stakes with new products and to an even more disciplined stance that truly requires almost unrelenting diet and exercise plans. “Once you comfortably reach one step, you’ve got to move up to the next if you want to keep the gains coming,” reports *EMO* (December 2001). Genetics are framed as something that should not get in the way (e.g., genetics is “no excuse”), as diet, exercise, and the right attitude should overcome all other influences. Failure to acquire the perfect abdominal muscles is framed as a symbol of a lack of discipline and a lack of moral fortitude, as evidenced by the way in which men who “fail” at this task are said to be “making excuses” or not showing “commitment” or “lacking self-control.” Some articles even caution men to stay at it and not to “fall off the bandwagon,” as if not working out is analogous to being a person with a substance abuse problem.

An emphasis on the constant activity and purchases necessary to achieve the ideal body is similar to previous scholars’ findings on women’s health and fitness magazines, where analyses have centered on how women face “disciplinary self-surveillance” that they then internalize, becoming the individualized moral guardians of their own bodily presentation. This point will also be linked in this chapter to the moral fate of the nation and the links between military, civilian populations, and “terrorist” or “enemy” that is constructed during times of war. (We also return to it in the next chapter where pregnant women are called upon to get their bodies back after giving birth in order to participate in “family values.”) Magazines encourage such individualized internalizations without offering critical considerations of where cultural norms came from to begin with, either in historical or contemporary terms (this, of course, does not bode well for training or purchasing behaviors, nor does it bode well for negating the need to expand the male body in the effort to expand democracy, nor for creating a body that elicits the desire of others).⁶

Interestingly, the lower male body remained somewhat haunted by the specter of the feminine (e.g., working on giving yourself a nice ass is a practice designated mostly for women) and was therefore framed more often than the upper body with military undertones or as functional for participation in male-dominated occupations. Only 8.6 percent of men’s articles referred to the lower body, such as “Powerful Legs From a Paratrooper” (*EMO*, August 1997) and “Mr. America’s Thigh Workout” (*Fitness*

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Plus, March 1997). There were also "Legs of Iron" (*EMO*, January 2003), and "Skinny Legs? Beef 'Em Up Today!" (*Men's Exercise*, December 2004), and "Are You a Hardass? You are if your glutes are powerful! Here's how to make them just that" (*Exercise & Health*, Summer 2000). We argue that though size and power are both used frequently and interchangeably to describe the male body, size is less clearly a goal for men's lower bodies, since the upper body is the preferred signifier of masculinity for the male body. No matter what body part is being worked, however, power is consistently a proposed property for the ideal male body, presented both as a natural element that is simply a part of manhood while also being simultaneously acquired. As we will see next, the hardened and larger masculine body becomes inextricably intertwined with fantasies of national power during wartime, and does so in a context where clear themes are re-emerging around contemporary fears of the social feminization of men.

Power, Strength, and Natural Elements

Power and/or strength are presented as fundamental goals and attributes of the male body. Examples include "Push-Ups for Power-Packed Pecs" (*EMO*, February 1997), "Power Up! Barbell Blast for Super Biceps and Perfect Pecs" (*Exercise & Health*, Spring 2006), "10 Steps to Super Strength" (*Men's Exercise*, June 2000), and "3 Ways to Power Up Your Grip!" (*Men's Fitness*, November 1997). Through engagement in health and fitness practices, the body can become like a natural element, and this is shown in many articles: "Hard Muscle: Your Start-up Plan" (*Men's Health*, January/February 2000), "Hard Abs" (*Men's Health* July/August 1999), "Rock Solid Shoulders" (*Men's Health*, April 2006), "Granite Abs" (*Men's Exercise*, September 1997), and "Stomach of Steel" (*Exercise & Health*, Spring 2006). Such muscularity within health and fitness discourse was usually described as a hard man-made or natural element like "steel," "iron," "diamond," "granite," or "rock hard." Phallic references aside, others have noted how the rock hard body provides an aura of invincibility in uncertain times.

The emphasis on natural elements and suggestions of linear process of building the body through hard work links the relationship of the body to advanced technologies and the latest products that science can produce to control the fate of the human body. As was noted in chapter 1, recent

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cultural trends, such as increases in the size of boys' toys, male bodybuilders, male playgirl centerfolds, and male athletes, suggest a reaffirmation of a dominant muscular male identity as men struggle to redefine themselves in an era of shifting gender relations. At the same time, the common fragility of the human body is a trait that is antithetical to Western ideals and is mostly kept out of the public eye, particularly around images of masculinity.

For example, while the NFL injury rate remains at 100 percent, the average TV viewer only sees a flash of a stretcher whip across the screen when an athlete is injured, and a new, healthy, active player takes his place in a few moments. There is very little imagery concerning the long-term effects of spinal, nerve, muscular, tendon, or other injuries that most professional male athletes carry over the remaining course of their lives. Images on the nightly news show the violence in the war in Iraq, and the ensuing deaths of American soldiers are counted meticulously (over 4,079 in May 2008), but few stories center on the much more common physical vulnerabilities of the injured that stand at 40 times the number of deaths when this book was going to press (as reported on www.icasualties.org).

Consumer culture morphs fragility into a moral imperative toward strength, or more specifically, the appearance of strength. The same can be said for other supermasculine figures outside of the military or team sports, such as male bodybuilders. But the analysis can't easily stay only at the frames of vulnerability and invulnerability. While size and strength are fundamental to making oneself into a faux invulnerable object—as in the words of Wacquant, “what we may call the irony of masculinity: that its dutiful pursuit leads to results nearly opposite to those it promises but with the paradoxical effect of fuelling the continued search for its elusive accomplishment” (Wacquant 1995, quote on p. 171). Size and strength are also fundamental to the creation of making oneself into a bodily object upon which others might pin their desire; historically, such links are especially important during times of war. Our analysis reveals that fitness texts did not avoid direct associations between the fit body, the military body, and the needs of the state, and we turn to an analysis of this topic next.

Idealized Masculinity and National Power

As other scholars have noted, “the concern for physical fitness, at its core, set about redeeming manhood, re-energizing masculinity, and restoring

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force, dynamism, and control to males in a culture full of doubts and contradictions about men's futures" (Griswold 1998). An emphasis on physical fitness has been circulated widely in public during previous times of war as well. During such times, it was (and is) not unusual to call on the populace to internalize the state's needs to expand and "strengthen" democracy by pressing for it in other regions and to prioritize the need for physical prowess, ensuring that it is built into the bodily habitus of individual civilian men.⁷

President Bush viewed the immense tragedy of September 11 as a turning point for America, and the reason to usher in the now well-known "War on Terrorism." The U.S. strategy to embrace the "expansion" of "freedom" through the "spread" of democracy was put forth as the Bush administration's "central effort." In such a war, the efforts were not going to stop, according to Bush, "until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated" (Bush 2001). Within health and fitness magazines, the fate of the nation clearly rested on the biceps of white middle-class American males in male-dominated occupations such as firefighting, the military, and law enforcement. One article reports on an "Air Force Blast: 20 Minutes to Powerful Pecs and Tris" and argues:

Considering the current state of world affairs, it's safe to say that the preparedness of the United States Armed Forces has never been more critical. And a major aspect of this readiness is physical conditioning. With this in mind, the military has developed mission readiness physical criteria to ensure that its members are ready to roll. And if you think this means simply running a couple laps around the track and completing some push-ups and situps, guess again. (*EMO*, July 2003)

The reader is ultimately urged to serve the needs of the state—and the self—through the hardened, protective masculine form, or to simply aspire to achieve the morality and protectionism of its signifier. Consistent with Bush's new "culture of responsibility" (Bush 2001) and his call to the American populace to help fight the war on terror, the desire for military and bodily expansion meet at the very juncture where the goals of the state and the goals of a profitable multinational corporation overlap (consumption and building the body).

In January 2003, *EMO* reported, "In the post-9/11 world, the role of law enforcement in our lives has changed drastically." The article then offers a brief profile of police Officer Christian Dryer's workout. He states,

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“We take a vow to serve and protect . . . and we live by that creed. Body-building helps me do my duty and definitely makes me a better officer of the law. No argument here” (*EMO*, January 2003). Photographs of Christian posing with a number of different guns are followed by a detailed description of a workout for the arms. Similarly, calls for civilians to be “Ready for Action! US Marine Corps Rifle Physical Training” (*EMO*, February 2003) shows a shirtless man in camouflage pants standing outdoors—he holds a gun throughout the workout while demonstrating thigh, back, shoulder, tricep, and abdomen exercises. The gun is said to weigh 9 pounds, and readers are asked to substitute a barbell for the gun to “perform these drills.”

Most of the magazines either reflect on the way in which military training will help the average man make his body and routine more like a disciplined military man or demonstrate a workout by a man dressed in military, firefighter, or police officer garb (either from an actual military program, or just a model in uniform) in order to show men how to muscle up properly. One article titled “Boot Camping! Exercises to Toughen Up” states that “nobody shapes up their charges like the Army,” and men are told that “while you won’t be forced to perform the regimen with a drill sergeant barking orders, it would be a good idea to make this routine a once-weekly session” (*Exercise & Health*, Spring 2006). Similarly, “Full Body Muscle: Train Your Way to Mega Mass” (*EMO*, May 2006) features Troy Saunders, who is said to be the “strongest man in the Air Force” and has won many military power lifting contests. In the article, he is shown bare chested, with a shaved head, gargantuan muscles, and he sports camouflage pants while standing out in the wilderness among the leaves. He teaches the reader (in a gym) how to do bench presses, seated rows, one arm dumbbell presses, squats, and curls.

“Power & Strength” is another article from *EMO* that pays tribute to the armed forces (December 2000). Featuring a Nordic man in camouflage army pants, dog tags, and boots, he poses with a sword near a fence, and performs a number of classic exercises like push-ups and pull-ups. Police officers, firefighters, and military personnel were all featured along with workouts that carried the legitimacy of masculine force. Men in this issue are urged to “Get Fit with the Armed Forces.” The word “guns” is placed right next to the “guns” of the cover model, who has hoisted a very large gun over his shoulders. The ubiquity of the “guns” is a double entendre that further emphasizes the connection between military and bodily might.

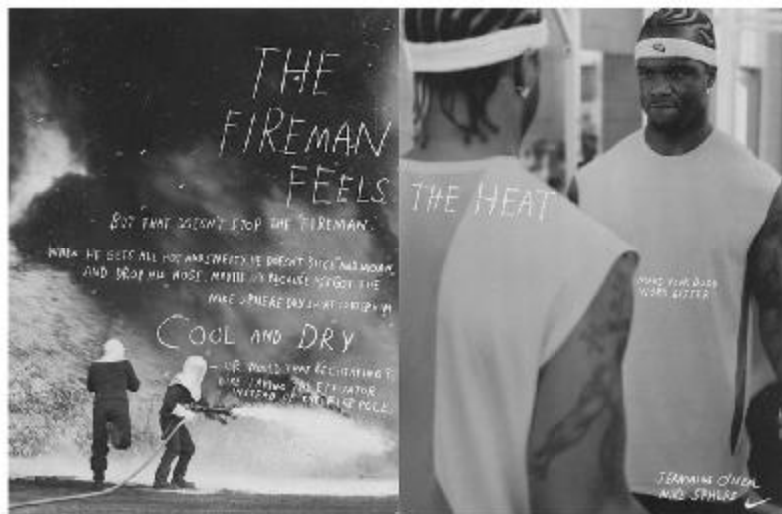
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Other state sectors also call for an inculcation of fitness in order to be the best man on the job and to remain at the top of the moral order. An article titled “Police Power—Law Enforcement Exercise” (*Men’s Exercise*, September 1998) shows “The Strong Arm of the Law” (one of several times this phrase is used across men’s magazines) and features an officer demonstrating a workout. The article features a white male police detective from New Jersey who is pictured in uniform on one page, shirtless and muscular on the next. He calls for his fellow officers to pass up the doughnuts during work and to lift weights outside of the office. He competes in bodybuilding contests outside of work and assists other officers in proper police training techniques. Not unlike other bodybuilders, he refers to himself as “once skinny” and claims that his peak condition makes him feel confident, might save his or other lives on the job, and helps him to perform his work duties better. Such findings remind us of the scholarly examination of the “extent to which the built body promises safety, security, and freedom while contributing to the militarization of civil society” (Saltman 2005).

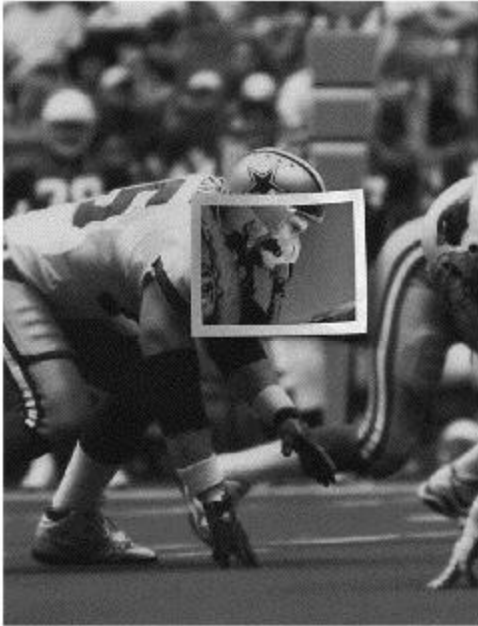


This ad simultaneously encourages fitness for men by linking it to a life-saving career and professional athletics (ad shows a firefighter and a pro athlete), and masculinizes sports fashion through these same associations. (*Men’s Health*, January/February 2005)

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This military recruitment ad makes the sport-military link explicit through the use of a military gas mask shown through a professional football player's helmet. (*Men's Health*, December 2003)

The rock hard male body not only renders the individual body (potentially) more invulnerable, but also represents the invulnerability of the nation. Consistent with the notions of empire and power that ushered in modern Western sports during the Victorian era, dominance on the sporting field is synonymous with military and national success.⁸ Just as the Duke of Wellington expressed Victorian beliefs when he observed that "the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing field of Eaton," current links between Olympic medal counts or Super Bowl wins and national military superiority reflect the potent link between the male body and military might. Hence, men are expected to visibly display not only their own success, but the success of their nation through the body.

A wealth of research has examined how sport was used in colonial periods to demonstrate the superiority of the colonizers, and the importance of sport to American society during the Cold War (Dowling 2001). Simultaneously, representations of the powerful male body offer the opportunity to deploy links between bodily capital and a habitus that will help to "get the job done" in an increasingly unstable occupational structure.

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By extension, it is the flesh of individual male bodies and not the occupational structure or its harmful effects that will lead to "failure." And, as is often the case for soldiers, bodybuilders, and professional sportsmen, there exists the paradox that "the goal of the image of security comes before the safety, health, and security of the [actual] body" (Saltman 2005).

During a time in which military might is clearly a function of national spending priorities and a complex array of race/class/gender/national relations of power, the chiseled/disciplined body becomes symbolic of invulnerability precisely when the body of the soldier is rendered more irrelevant by technology. Scholars such as Ensemble and others have underscored how the "new soldier does not have to be a combat troop 'fighting eyeball to eyeball' in order to be key, even heroic, in a military effort" (Ensemble 2005) given the key roles that logistics, technologies, and intelligence now play compared to times past. While articles in fitness magazines emphasize the need for physical might, daily news stories in national newspapers underscore how troops in Iraq typically travel in armored Humvees or are themselves armored at the neck, chest, and elsewhere. In such a war, it is no longer clear who the "enemy" is; instead, the image of the omnipresent lurking terrorist is potentially everywhere.

The constant threat of terrorist attack creates more amorphous demands on the fitness of citizens called to protect their nation. Fitness magazines put forward ideologies that "indicate an assortment of practices consisting of the conversion of civilian bodies to military use and the inculcation into such bodies of military principles" (Armitage 2005). The consumer marketplace translates these demands to injunctions on individuals to construct bodies that signify power and invulnerability, even when participation in the consumer marketplace can be quite irrelevant. Articles mock the men who choose not to engage, and treat those who do like comrades in arms in a struggle that carries the weight of the nation upon well-defined deltoids. This institutionalizes a form of power relations at the fundamental level of the flesh, and negates alternatives and critiques as seemingly "unnatural." Actual victory is rendered irrelevant in the daily life of those immersed in domestic consumer culture provided one can create the appearance of a victorious body. And while such images and tropes present themselves to the reader as part of men's personal liberation, "health," moral strength, and civil responsibility, it is a process that can also be considered "at odds with democratization" (Saltman 2005).

The specificity of these signifiers (power, invulnerability) and the text used to describe them (size, strength, protection) also help to constitute a

Dworkin, Shari; Wachs, Faye. *Body Panic: Gender, Health, and the Selling of Fitness*.
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contemporary moral order that is definitively gendered. This is elucidated by considering who/what is included "inside" the sport/military frames of fitness media texts and who/what is "left out."⁹ In terms of gender relations, the expanding male body and the need to make it grow for purposes of the strong state takes on its specificity of meaning in a context where (white middle-class) women are more integrated into male domains than ever before. Additionally, a specific form of racialized masculinism emerges—a more muscular nationalism is put forward that includes conceptions of subordinated masculinities—here, feminized or emasculated terrorist others who one must defend against and overpower.¹⁰

Despite the increasing integration of women into sports, the military, and other male-dominated occupations, women remained largely invisible in the magazines (except as prospective sexual partners, or to blame for feminizing men, as we will soon discuss). Additionally, there were no military tropes in women's fitness magazines (despite the increasing number of women serving in the armed forces), and sport remained a signifier linked largely to men while women were largely framed in the realm of fitness (as is discussed below). Instead of examining any number of social forces to explain men's increasing uncertainties in postmodern society, fitness texts commonly centered explicitly on gender relations as the cause of men's problems, reinvigorating classic fears of social feminization centered around women's annexation of male domains, and the failure to properly "masculinize" boys through socialization practices.

Fears of Physical and Social Feminization

We have already partly discussed the role of size in the relational construction of gender. Certainly, part of what underlies the role of size in masculinity is the contradistinction it makes to the ideal feminine form. When women's and men's bodies and activities have the opportunity to become more similar, fears of physical and social feminization become more prevalent. First, the sport and fitness movement has closed the gap between ideal male and female forms during a time period in which many social and cultural gender distinctions have been challenged. Increasingly, women are entering formerly male-defined spheres such as male-dominated occupations, the military, politics, and professional sports (Messner 1992; Crosset 1990; and Kimmel 1990). Second, as was discussed in chapter 2, the objectification of the body to which women have long been

Dworkin, Shari; Wachs, Faye. *Body Panic: Gender, Health, and the Selling of Fitness*.
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subjected becomes a key part of the male experience in postmodern consumer culture.

Third, while these tendencies mean a broadening of certain aspects of what constitutes masculinity, a simultaneous trend is exhibited in which there is a stigma attached to those practices most associated with femininity or the female body. In the case of fitness, working on the lower body, cardiovascular exercise, and stretching all carry the stigma of the feminine; hence, these activities are downplayed and when carried out, the stigma must be partly removed to encourage male engagement. The stigma of the feminine is removed from men's working out and engaging in consumer culture in a number of ways, for example, by linking practices to unquestionably powerful male pursuits such as sports performance, the military, or male-identified jobs. Finally, complex social relations based on race, class, nation, militarism, the needs of the state, and gender are turned into a simplistic gender war discourse that pits individual men against women. In fitness discourse, men are framed as struggling to retain their manhood and are prescribed firmer distinctions between manhood and womanhood (men are linked to sport and the military, women to fitness and service to the home) coupled with disdain for those social trends that are viewed as responsible for improvements in women's status or the creation of shared spaces.

Masculinity and Sport, Femininity and Fitness?

Fitness emerged as a more feminizing alternative to the male domain of sport at the turn of the twentieth century, and therefore it may not be surprising that it continues to require masculine markings within fitness texts by linking it to sports performance, generally in a hegemonic male sport (Crosset 1990; Kimmel 1990; Gruneau 1983). Consistent with historical links between sport, activity, and masculinity, articles were centered on increasing strength to improve a skill for some other sport, such as "Weight Training for Skiing Power" (*Men's Exercise*, January 1998), "Kicking for Martial Arts Power" (*EMO*, August 1997), or "Basketball Basics: Eight Simple Drills Will Have You Smokin' the Court" (*Men's Fitness*, March 2000). Workouts were billed as helping to improve traditional sports skills for basketball, football, or general sports performance. For example, magazines featured "Build Baseball Biceps" (*EMO*, May 2006) to argue that muscularity was not simply for the purposes of aesthetics

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but also for sports functioning such as throwing a baseball. Another article titled "Sport-Specific Fitness Drills" (*Exercise & Health*, Spring 1997) notes that "if it's your dream to whack a baseball out of the park, hit a golf ball incredibly long and with deadly accuracy, or slam-dunk a basketball after leaping for the rebound, one of the best places to start is the weight room."

Moreover, sports performance was akin to knowledge about fitness and weight training, and athletes' workouts were often structured with articles about a particular athlete. For example, "Jason Sehorn: Athlete Profile" (*Men's Exercise*, November 1997) profiles a football player and includes his workout. Another issue features James Bentley, a college freshman who seeks to play on a professional soccer team or in the World Cup tournament (*Men's Exercise*, January 2001). He is quoted as being "extremely aggressive and competitive" and a "furious worker who never surrenders." The article discusses how he "pumps iron furiously" and that this dramatically improves his sports performance. Similarly, *Men's Fitness* (September 2005) contained an article titled "Barbell Brawl" which teaches

It's really great. To be really honest, I never saw any of this stuff. It's really for the men who are 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210, 220, 230, 240, 250, 260, 270, 280, 290, 300, 310, 320, 330, 340, 350, 360, 370, 380, 390, 400, 410, 420, 430, 440, 450, 460, 470, 480, 490, 500, 510, 520, 530, 540, 550, 560, 570, 580, 590, 600, 610, 620, 630, 640, 650, 660, 670, 680, 690, 700, 710, 720, 730, 740, 750, 760, 770, 780, 790, 800, 810, 820, 830, 840, 850, 860, 870, 880, 890, 900, 910, 920, 930, 940, 950, 960, 970, 980, 990, 1000, 1010, 1020, 1030, 1040, 1050, 1060, 1070, 1080, 1090, 1100, 1110, 1120, 1130, 1140, 1150, 1160, 1170, 1180, 1190, 1200, 1210, 1220, 1230, 1240, 1250, 1260, 1270, 1280, 1290, 1300, 1310, 1320, 1330, 1340, 1350, 1360, 1370, 1380, 1390, 1400, 1410, 1420, 1430, 1440, 1450, 1460, 1470, 1480, 1490, 1500, 1510, 1520, 1530, 1540, 1550, 1560, 1570, 1580, 1590, 1600, 1610, 1620, 1630, 1640, 1650, 1660, 1670, 1680, 1690, 1700, 1710, 1720, 1730, 1740, 1750, 1760, 1770, 1780, 1790, 1800, 1810, 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020, 2030, 2040, 2050, 2060, 2070, 2080, 2090, 2100, 2110, 2120, 2130, 2140, 2150, 2160, 2170, 2180, 2190, 2200, 2210, 2220, 2230, 2240, 2250, 2260, 2270, 2280, 2290, 2300, 2310, 2320, 2330, 2340, 2350, 2360, 2370, 2380, 2390, 2400, 2410, 2420, 2430, 2440, 2450, 2460, 2470, 2480, 2490, 2500, 2510, 2520, 2530, 2540, 2550, 2560, 2570, 2580, 2590, 2600, 2610, 2620, 2630, 2640, 2650, 2660, 2670, 2680, 2690, 2700, 2710, 2720, 2730, 2740, 2750, 2760, 2770, 2780, 2790, 2800, 2810, 2820, 2830, 2840, 2850, 2860, 2870, 2880, 2890, 2900, 2910, 2920, 2930, 2940, 2950, 2960, 2970, 2980, 2990, 3000, 3010, 3020, 3030, 3040, 3050, 3060, 3070, 3080, 3090, 3100, 3110, 3120, 3130, 3140, 3150, 3160, 3170, 3180, 3190, 3200, 3210, 3220, 3230, 3240, 3250, 3260, 3270, 3280, 3290, 3300, 3310, 3320, 3330, 3340, 3350, 3360, 3370, 3380, 3390, 3400, 3410, 3420, 3430, 3440, 3450, 3460, 3470, 3480, 3490, 3500, 3510, 3520, 3530, 3540, 3550, 3560, 3570, 3580, 3590, 3600, 3610, 3620, 3630, 3640, 3650, 3660, 3670, 3680, 3690, 3700, 3710, 3720, 3730, 3740, 3750, 3760, 3770, 3780, 3790, 3800, 3810, 3820, 3830, 3840, 3850, 3860, 3870, 3880, 3890, 3900, 3910, 3920, 3930, 3940, 3950, 3960, 3970, 3980, 3990, 4000, 4010, 4020, 4030, 4040, 4050, 4060, 4070, 4080, 4090, 4100, 4110, 4120, 4130, 4140, 4150, 4160, 4170, 4180, 4190, 4200, 4210, 4220, 4230, 4240, 4250, 4260, 4270, 4280, 4290, 4300, 4310, 4320, 4330, 4340, 4350, 4360, 4370, 4380, 4390, 4400, 4410, 4420, 4430, 4440, 4450, 4460, 4470, 4480, 4490, 4500, 4510, 4520, 4530, 4540, 4550, 4560, 4570, 4580, 4590, 4600, 4610, 4620, 4630, 4640, 4650, 4660, 4670, 4680, 4690, 4700, 4710, 4720, 4730, 4740, 4750, 4760, 4770, 4780, 4790, 4800, 4810, 4820, 4830, 4840, 4850, 4860, 4870, 4880, 4890, 4900, 4910, 4920, 4930, 4940, 4950, 4960, 4970, 4980, 4990, 5000, 5010, 5020, 5030, 5040, 5050, 5060, 5070, 5080, 5090, 5100, 5110, 5120, 5130, 5140, 5150, 5160, 5170, 5180, 5190, 5200, 5210, 5220, 5230, 5240, 5250, 5260, 5270, 5280, 5290, 5300, 5310, 5320, 5330, 5340, 5350, 5360, 5370, 5380, 5390, 5400, 5410, 5420, 5430, 5440, 5450, 5460, 5470, 5480, 5490, 5500, 5510, 5520, 5530, 5540, 5550, 5560, 5570, 5580, 5590, 5600, 5610, 5620, 5630, 5640, 5650, 5660, 5670, 5680, 5690, 5700, 5710, 5720, 5730, 5740, 5750, 5760, 5770, 5780, 5790, 5800, 5810, 5820, 5830, 5840, 5850, 5860, 5870, 5880, 5890, 5900, 5910, 5920, 5930, 5940, 5950, 5960, 5970, 5980, 5990, 6000, 6010, 6020, 6030, 6040, 6050, 6060, 6070, 6080, 6090, 6100, 6110, 6120, 6130, 6140, 6150, 6160, 6170, 6180, 6190, 6200, 6210, 6220, 6230, 6240, 6250, 6260, 6270, 6280, 6290, 6300, 6310, 6320, 6330, 6340, 6350, 6360, 6370, 6380, 6390, 6400, 6410, 6420, 6430, 6440, 6450, 6460, 6470, 6480, 6490, 6500, 6510, 6520, 6530, 6540, 6550, 6560, 6570, 6580, 6590, 6600, 6610, 6620, 6630, 6640, 6650, 6660, 6670, 6680, 6690, 6700, 6710, 6720, 6730, 6740, 6750, 6760, 6770, 6780, 6790, 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Masculinity is often constituted by size and sports performance while women are often represented via the ideals of emphasized femininity. (*Exercise & Health*, 2001)

Dworkin, Shari; Wachs, Faye. *Body Panic: Gender, Health, and the Selling of Fitness*. New York, NY, USA: NYU Press, 2009. p 102.

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This ad for a creatine body supplement demonstrates the link between masculinity, muscularity, the idealized male body, and sports. (*Exercise for Men Only*, April 2003)



men, through the principles of boxing,¹¹ how to fight by featuring the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), a new reality TV show. The article begins by telling men to “stop wimping out. Building muscle means beating your body into submission—till it gives up and grows.” Through the “warriors of the Ultimate Fighting Championship” men are shown punching and kicking one another in a ring without headgear protection, and where bleeding, breaking one another’s arms, and mangling or choking one another are fair game. The article also features an instrumental use for muscle—instructions were provided for how to beat up another man if rowdiness occurs in a bar scene.

Aerobic or cardiovascular activities often were marked as male or linked to unquestionably male contexts. For example, the stigma of aerobic activity was often removed by linking it to membership in the military, police, or firefighting. Despite a seemingly widespread understanding in the fitness community that cardiovascular work helps to reduce body fat to reveal the muscles underneath, only 8 percent of the articles prescribed

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cardiovascular aerobic activity for men's fitness routines (though a very small sampling of articles mentioned that one should warm up with 15 minutes of cardiovascular exercise before beginning the "real" workout). One of the only articles that had the word fitness in its title in men's fitness magazines argued that the "Five Pillars of Fitness" are strength, speed, endurance, power, and agility, and featured stars from basketball, baseball, soccer, football, and hockey to demonstrate the pillars (*Men's Health*, April 2006), all of which can be characterized as sports that represent hegemonic masculinity.

The invocation of sport must be understood as an invocation of the masculine (but is still surprising considering the strong entrance of women in sport since Title IX passed), given the role certain sports have played in defining and valorizing specific forms of masculinity (Bush 2001).

By contrast, fitness activities have been long associated with femininity and achieving the ideal female form (Hargreaves 1994, 2001; Lenskyj 1986; Cahn 1994). Hence, few of the men's workouts were aerobic. When aerobic activity was featured, the taint of femininity had to be removed. Aerobics were framed as merely an afterthought that needed a reminder: "To Burn Fat, Don't Forget Aerobics!" (*Men's Exercise*, March 1998), or are marked as masculine and somehow different than women's aerobics—"Men's Aerobics for Fat Burning" (*EMO*, December 1997). At times, aerobics is linked to physical power, such as "Aerobic Fitness: Burn Fat and build explosiveness with power running" (*EMO*, December 2001). In other cases, the activity is linked to the omnipresent masculine careers and contexts. "Boot Camp Aerobics" (*EMO*, August 1997) invokes the military to demonstrate the masculinity of the context. Finally, cardiovascular exercise is masculinized by tying it to sexual performance. *Men's Fitness* (December 2001) encourages participation in cardiovascular exercise by enticing the reader to "Burn Fat, Have Great Sex." Contrary to popular advice that cardiovascular fitness is very healthy for the heart, it seemed that classic masculine and feminine separate spheres ideologies infiltrated "objective" fitness discourse.¹² For instance, "The 10 Rules of Weight Training" for men recommends:

Keep weight training and aerobic fitness separate. Do you do resistance training with light weights and high reps as a form of cardiovascular exercise? If so, you'll certainly build muscular endurance and burn lots of calories, but in a way you're giving yourself the worst of both worlds. (*Men's Fitness*, September 1997)

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However, sex was referred to as a cardiovascular activity and as having healthy benefits for the heart. Articles were even titled "Sex Protects the Heart" (*Men's Fitness*, March 2001) and the text notes that "early to bed, often to rise is the new prescription for the healthy heart." One could argue that the feminizing taint of cardiovascular activity is removed from the unquestionably masculine activity of sex.

The need for separate spheres mentality even permeated the text of actual letters from men, some of whom wrote letters to seek advice on the taint that aerobics would cause to pursuits of gaining size. One letter from a reader in *Men's Fitness* (2001) asked, "I work out about 12 hours a week, half aerobic, half weight resistance. How much aerobic activity can I do before I risk breaking down the muscles I'm trying to build?" The assumption here is that building muscle and size, not necessarily "health" and/or "fitness," is the goal that underlies men's fitness choices. By contrast, we discussed how health and fitness magazines cautioned women from using too much weight, especially in the upper body, recommending that women use the same light weight across sets to avoid increasing size, and women were frequently prescribed lower body "moves" coupled with long cardiovascular workouts in order to maintain a compact size (we will return to this point in the next chapter). The limited frame for desirable bodies constructs idealized masculinity and femininity, and the limited frame for idealized masculinity and femininity constructs "healthy," desirable bodies.

Despite the proliferation of separate spheres that might imply the safety of difference in these separations, magazines centrally emphasized men's fears of becoming feminized. Here, fears emerged from claims that gender could be socially constructed as opposed to biological. (The concept of a range of masculinities and femininities isn't even on the radar screen.) These claims were very common in articles, particularly those with the largest readerships such as *Men's Health* and *Men's Fitness*. For instance, one article (*Men's Health*, February 2000) titled "One Sex Fits All?" specifically counters any assertions that gender could be culturally produced and touts that "the parenting police tell us boys and girls are the same. We say: not in our sandbox. Men are aggressive and hierarchical, women nurturing and cooperative. That's how nature, which knew exactly what it was doing, wanted it." Another article frames men as having a mental health problem if they do not express interest in violence in sport, an interest that is assumed to be a natural part of manhood. For example, in "Ask Men's Health," in response to a reader's question about seasonal

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affective disorder, an expert on men's health responds that men's depression is identified with, among other things, "you lose interest in hockey brawls" (*Men's Health*, January/February 2000).

Prescription drugs are even blamed for trying to take away boys' presumed natural rowdiness, which will make them more like girls. For example, "A Man's Life" (*Men's Health*, June 2000) expresses deep concern that boys in U.S. culture are being socialized and drugged into "acting like girls." Symptoms of boys who have been feminized include: the ability to sit still and focus. The article expresses anger at what is considered to be a backlash against "normal" masculinity: "Their claim: Only by raising boys to be more like girls can we help them to become better, more acceptable boys." The magazine asserts that boys are at risk from the over-prescription of drugs like Ritalin, and are being punished for acting in normally masculine ways. The magazines paradoxically make clear through image, text, and prescribed workouts that consumer culture expects men to make them into successful objects—once reserved only for women—and then blames socialization processes and not consumer culture itself for its "feminizing" trends.

The fear that boys won't become men if they are "overly" exposed to "non"-masculinizing influences has been a popular historical debate during periods termed "crises of masculinity" where broader societal concerns emerge over what kind of men boys should grow up to be. However, while focusing on the kind of men boys should become, the answer is usually masked by assumptions of categorical difference, natural male superiority, and vitriolic assertions that boys won't grow into men at all. The implication is that men will be like women, and therefore not men. In addition to masculinism and fears of social feminization representing historical crises of masculinity, improvements in women's status in the articles were met with another common historical trend: overt antifeminism.

Backlash to Feminism and Antifeminism

As noted in chapter 1 in the discussion of Gayle Rubin's work on the sex/gender system, different activities are often prescribed for women and men and different valuations of these activities can serve to structure the specifics of a gender and sexuality order. Where challenges to difference are made through codes of similarity, backlash can result. Antifeminism is one of the modes of backlash when challenges are made to gender

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relations throughout the course of history.¹³ Antifeminism was coded in the magazines most often on the topics of sport, crying, or on several cultural phenomena that made men's and women's behaviors look similar. Such similarity was framed as distinctly negative and as women's—and feminism's—fault. For example, in "Read 'Em and Weep," an author detailed how feminists are ruining fiction for young men. The article objected to stories about boys who are "different" and books about boys with the courage to try ballet. A "real boys reading list" accompanies the article in order to assure that boys are socialized properly into manhood (*Men's Health*, March 2000). The article cites specific objections to stories which featured female characters (in particular, having the *Little Engine That Could* be a female character was denounced) or "feel-good" messages that seemed to villainize women for "making" men emotionally "soft."

In another article titled "Why Can't I Cry?" the author takes note of the contemporary shifts in men's recent public allowances to cry. For example, the author notes that "Now things have changed, and not for the better. Michael Jordan wept profusely when he won his first NBA championship. Allen Iverson buried his head in his towel and wept during the waning minutes of a quarterfinal round loss to the Indiana Pacers a few years ago. That's right: He wept after the quarterfinals. George Steinbrenner now weeps openly about everything." The article also underscores popular fascination with the topic by describing that "*The New York Times* ran a lengthy article investigating the explosion of public weeping by athletes, citing everyone from teary-eyed Wimbledon champion Roger Federer to choked-up slugger Mike Schmidt. Not to mention Bill Clinton. . . . The implied message was clear: It was ok for rough and tumble athletes and the most powerful man to shed tears . . . so it was ok for everybody else" (*Men's Health*, August 2004). The article draws on the chairman of a counseling center in the Cal State system as an expert to explain that "feminists find this sort of statement infuriating, but there exists both a physiological and a cultural reason why women cry more frequently and copiously than men." At the end of the article, the author states that to help his own plight of not being able to cry, he wishes to "get myself reborn into an ethnic group that actually has emotions." In this way, dominant men remain different from and superior to both women and subordinated masculinities.

Numerous articles expressed disdain for women's "inferior" physical abilities, anger at women's perceived "advantages" in acquiring health-care funding (for issues like breast cancer) at the expense of men's health

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New York, NY, USA: NYU Press, 2009. p 107.
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(for issues like prostate cancer), and many articles addressed socialization trends that treated boys and girls similarly. For example, a *Men's Fitness* article in 2001 notes, in an "active man's guide to damn near everything" that "We can't dress ourselves, but at least we can throw." The article notes that "*You throw like a girl!* is no longer just a chauvinist taunt—it now has some science behind it. A study by the U.S. National Institute of Health and Human Development tested how accurately people could toss objects into a bucket placed nine or eighteen feet away. On average, men hit the target 32 percent more often than women did. See, we knew all those years of Nerfhoops would pay off." No mention is made of whether the two samples of women and men were comparable according to sporting experience or participation.

Other antifeminist stances take place around the topics of sexual assault and violence. For example, one article centers on "male-friendly" colleges that were described to increase the attractiveness of college attendance for men, with male-unfriendly colleges being defined as those that "prosecute sexual assault." Another article, "One Sex Fits All" (*Men's Health*, February 2000), argues that if you "fight biology you get zapped," noting that a mother who would not let her son play with toy guns found sticks shaped like pistols and "shot the hell out of his mom when she came to pick him up." In the same article, the author also explains that sport is naturally suited for boys and not girls, and that parents should not socialize sons and daughters into thinking that they can both play sports adequately. He argued that "these days, boys and girls are supposed to be the same, and you're not permitted to treat them differently." The author states: "This, anyway, is the party line of the PC loudmouths, which, increasingly, the larger culture has pliantly picked up. In the wake of the recent triumph of the U.S. women's team in World Cup soccer, a major corporation tried to cash in on this sentiment with a refrigerator commercial showing a couple viewing their unborn child via sonogram. When he learns that he will soon be a dad to a little girl, the man's attitude is, 'Makes no difference; we'll play sports together just the same as if she were my son.' My thought when I watched this commercial was that although this guy may love his new fridge, he'll end up one disappointed father."

Previous work underscores how discourses of sport and natural gender difference are strategically pursued by men during times of shifting gender relations. For example, in Messner's analysis of retired professional male athletes in his work titled *Power at Play: Sports and the Problem of Masculinity* (1992), he turns to an in-depth interview with a white

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working-class male whose workplace has promoted a woman to a position of authority. Messner asks how the man feels about this and he replies: "A woman can do the same job as I can do—maybe even be my boss. But I'll be damned if she can go out on the football field and take a hit from Ronnie Lott." Messner argues that sport serves an important purpose in the lives of men during times of rapidly changing gender relations since hegemonic male sports (football, basketball, baseball) "gives testimony to the undeniable 'fact' that here is one place where men are clearly superior to women" (1992). At the same time, he underscores that it is also true that most men could not take a hit from Ronnie Lott either. Differences among men are often ignored when the strategic (re)construction of gender relations takes place in the face of having to contend with evidence of contestation in the gender order. In a time of complex and rapid global changes whereby both men and women experience increasing uncertainty, a nostalgic desire for a previous mythic institutional and ideological gender order emerges.

In the past, such crises were usually resolved in the institutional realm, but in a third wave crisis of masculinity within postindustrial consumer culture, the crises and its resolution rest on the symbolic level and at the level of the flesh of the individual American male body. This is paradoxical, as consumer culture assists hegemonic men in making them into successful objects, a task once reserved for womanhood and subordinated masculinities, and then necessarily reiterates the masculinity of the task in both image and text through institutional links.

Conclusion: Consumer Culture, Male Body Panic, and the Third Wave Crisis of Masculinity

The sport and fitness movement, the success of the second wave feminist movement, an increase of women in male realms, an increasing role of fathers in family life, and broader emotional displays for the most privileged men have closed the gap between ideal male and female behaviors. Simultaneously, as was discussed in chapter 2, the objectification of the body to which women have long been subjected has become a central part of the male experience in postmodern consumer culture. As possibilities for similarity emerge, some argue that increases in men's body size can be described as a "masculinist" response to changes in men's and women's roles and positions in society where incontrovertible evidence of men's physical

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superiority is reiterated. Our analysis has underscored the importance not only of examining the size of the male body within media texts such as magazines, but also of examining the text of articles that describe what male and female bodies are, can do, and should do.

Our analysis is analogous to what Kimmel chronicles concerning how men respond to "crises in masculinity" that occur when there are rapid shifts in gender roles. These three responses include profeminism (those efforts that support gender equality), masculinism (those efforts that reinforce separate spheres and value all-male realms as different from and superior to women), and antifeminism (hostility toward women's advances) (Kimmel 2000). The first crisis in masculinity was said to occur at the turn of the nineteenth century with changes in work and family life and the rise of first wave feminism that culminated in women's right to vote. Examples of a masculinist response to a historical crisis in masculinity during the nineteenth century are the development of all-male organizations such as the boy scouts and the institution of sport. Such responses were believed to be necessary given that they provided men with separate all-male environments which (a) affirmed men as different from and superior to women; (b) allowed for masculinist rituals and male bonding; and (c) constructed physical and psychological "manliness" as a response to women's increasing access to institutions that lead to fears that boys and men would be feminized by women (ibid.). We found several of these trends in our contemporary analysis of men's health and fitness texts.

The "second" crisis of masculinity in the 1960s and 1970s occurred when gains made by (largely white) women during the second wave feminist movement again challenged gender roles and male hegemony. In response to this crisis, some scholars have emphasized how the formation of various masculinist and antifeminist men's movements such as the Promise Keepers, the Million Man March, and the mythopoetic men's movement emerged (Messner 1997). The second wave women's movement which provided increasing opportunities for women's entrance into male-dominated realms is often touted in the public forum as "ruining" and feminizing men, and much antifeminist public discourse emerged (e.g., "feminazis"). While previous analyses have emphasized the responses offered by men in terms of social movements and institutional responses, our own analysis at the level of consumer cultural trends finds similarities at the level of image and text.

In a third wave crisis of masculinity, despite evidence of a cultural convergence between women's and men's imagery/posings and prescribed

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practices that we examined in chapter 2, it is clear that these symbols remain bounded and contextualized by institutional and structural forces in the culture at large. For example, men's bodies in fitness magazines were clearly linked to displays of hegemonic masculinity through signifiers of size/power, sport, and military, while women's bodies were clearly more limited to fitness, toning and reduced size, and service to the home (as we will see in the next chapter). The consumption of valued products and practices to construct a large body in a third wave crisis do paradoxically shift gender relations by increasingly marking men's success as making oneself into the right kind of object. Cultural trends such as these have also extended physical definitions of heterosexuality for dominant men to include the "metrosexual" (mentioned in chapter 2—a self-identified heterosexual man who takes on the signifiers and markings of gay male culture) with qualities that were previously considered feminized characteristics (e.g., grooming, hair styling, shopping). Such codes also allow for the facilitation of desire from gay men and women to be hoisted upon heterosexual male bodies, destabilizing the 100 percent heterosexual gaze that is assumed in many cultural corners and is explicitly unmarked in the magazines.¹⁴

But a third wave crisis of masculinity cannot stop at an analysis of gender relations (as the other two waves of analysis should not have) and our analysis should not only extend an examination of contemporary versions of this crisis to the realms of the body and consumption. It is true that the dictums of consumer culture, bodies as national figurations, changing gender relations, and fears of social feminization combine to generate the cultural conditions conducive to male body panic. The specificity of the signifiers (size, protection) that emerge to respond to changes in broader society help to constitute a contemporary moral order based not only on gender, but on race, class, and nation as well. That is, actual men in hegemonic sports and the military are disproportionately subordinated masculinities (men of color, working-class men) while models in the magazines depicted as moral and responsible for protection are overwhelmingly white and middle class (see chapter 2).

The demographics of the magazine readers are largely middle class, while the "enemies" (e.g., "criminals," "terrorists") who men must build themselves up to protect against are disproportionately of lower socioeconomic status or are perceived as a feminized Middle Eastern other who is left out of the muscular frame.¹⁵ Domestic increases in spending on prison systems and policing surges in a context of vast inequities

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between rich and poor (Reiman 2000), while fears of becoming a “victim” to criminals or terrorists feed the perceived need for (imagery and discourses of) corporeal protection. Thus, it is vital to remember that “the norm against which male bodies were defined” (in previous times of war, and we would add in times when there are perceptions of increasing crime) “was set by the suitability of the body for combat. At the outbreak of war, the classification of the body created a single powerful construction of physical, and by implication, moral fitness. Bodies are always immersed in cultural and normative presuppositions in wartime, not only within but also outside the military environment” (Chanter 1999, as cited in Penniston-Bird 2005).

At the same time that signifiers of fitness include those of the moral citizen or man, circulating representations of the powerful male body also offer the opportunity to deploy ideas about bodily capital that are definitively linked to a habitus that will help to “get the job done” in an increasingly unstable occupational structure. The importance of bodily display as a means to establish and negotiate social status is made clear, but asking men to internalize individualized solutions to structural problems is problematic, as it is likely that muscles, strong abs, and a new tie or shirt cannot resolve ongoing global complexities. Just as corporations profit from offering the most privileged women “Just Do It” (e.g., Nike) slogans which tout empowerment to women by selling liberal feminist ideologies of freedom through an individualized, fit bodily politics (Cole and Hribar 1995; Dworkin and Messner 1999), men too are falsely sold masculinist promises that fit bodies will likely not bring. Furthermore, as is consistent with much of American ideology, while bigger is thought to be better (Ritzer 2004; also see Baudrillard 1998; Baumann 1999), the costs of such expansion for men (or this form of spreading American “democracy”) are never discussed in terms of health.

Baudrillard, Bauman, and others critique consumer culture as unquestioningly privileging the idea of economic growth (Baudrillard 1998; also see Baumann 1999). They argue that growth itself is predicated on inequality, and that affluence and poverty are both dispassionately produced by economic structures. Neoliberal market imperatives toward growth such as these are literally embodied in men’s ever-expanding bodies while making it men’s responsibility to impart “health” through masculinism. As Baudrillard notes in his work, *The Consumer Society*, the fundamental growth imperative of consumer markets must be understood as inherently problematic since growth creates the ills that then require further

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market expansion to alleviate. In the same way, male body panic creates an ever-expanding set of dictums, often designed to undo the effects of other practices.

We argue that male body panic is not simply a pathology of individual men as other scholars have claimed, nor is it a reasonable response to a perceived or actual obesity crisis, nor is it a realistic fear of the loss of social status that accompanies a failing body. Body panic relies on healthism—the idea that the individual is responsible for the health of the self and the nation—to simultaneously displace critiques of the social structure onto individual bodily failures and onto gender relations, while stigmatizing those who fail to participate and succeed in the existing system. Body panic marshals resources to a morally valued but socially depoliticized subject in their continual quest for bodily perfection. Those who are privileged enough to be able to participate are able to wield a valuable form of capital¹⁶ and enjoy the pleasures of producing valued identities, thus making the project appealing, yet they experience a real cost to failure, further inducing body panic. Indeed, some argue that broader economic concerns such as the dismantling of social safety nets, social security, public schools and universities, welfare, social services, and health care “intensifies and accelerates” bodily anxieties and undermines collective action that can tend to the cause of the insecurities (Saltman 2005).

Although magazines suggest that successful bodily capital will translate into success in the workplace and in life, what is the actual transferability of bodily capital to the workplace or elsewhere? While this question needs empirical testing, there are researchers who have been interested in the question of whether bodily capital easily transfers to other realms, such as the occupational structure.¹⁷ We suspect, given our read of other work and our understanding of social justice principles, that those who have the most institutional privilege are most likely to be able to garner the benefits from successfully acquiring signifiers of the fit body. This is because social and bodily capital may intersect among the most privileged men in unique ways that can maximize its benefits in several realms. We also suspect that subordinated masculinities (men of color, working-class men) would be most likely to pay the costs of garnering individualized bodily capital, as the occupational structure that requires such signifiers comes with its own set of occupational insecurities and job/health hazards (e.g., NFL, boxing).¹⁸

Thus, some argue that the cultural capital that individuals acquire through the body can be selectively deployed by more privileged individ-

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uals for their benefit, as a type of "mobile resource" (Skeggs 2004), or it can be overwritten onto the bodies of the marginalized and used as evidence of their sense of "lack," immorality, or being an "other." Overall, consumer culture reflects, produces, and changes the symbolic economy through the creation of values that are "deemed to inhere in certain types of bodies, but that nonetheless can sometimes be selectively adopted by others as additional resources or forms of capital within particular contexts" (ibid.). We recognize that even though we deploy an analysis of body panic as a contemporary form of more diffuse moral panics, individuals may reproduce, resist, or challenge the preferred meanings contained in media representations. How dominant and marginalized categories (and intersections of the two) read and interpret the "folk devils" and "folk angels" within media frames could be determined even more effectively through an audience analysis instead of our reliance on imagery and textual analysis.

At the same time, we have examined how, within the cultural realm, inclusion in the fit frame involves the reflection and production of "natural" notions of manhood. This is the case, even as these are also clearly constructed, from the careful prescription of the placement of muscle to its size, all predicated on and depicting a moral and symbolic order that is corporeal and is simultaneously gendered, classed, racialized. These bodies are also contextualized and shaped for productive purposes and instrumental need in the overlap between consumerist desires for profit, identity-producing validation, and the needs of the neoliberal state. In the next chapter, we again examine the racialized, classed, and gendered corporeal form within consumerist fit culture. This time, we expand the analysis of morality and health to include fit mothers and the pregnant female form in a relatively new fitness magazine for women, *Shape Fit Pregnancy*.

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