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**‘A Performance of Appearance’:
Men, Masculinities and Appearance Medicine**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of**

Master of Arts

in

Sociology

Massey University, Albany,

New Zealand.

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2012

Abstract

Masculinity, masculine work places and masculine grooming are all changing. Men of the twenty-first century are experiencing a deconstruction of traditional hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995), as the deindustrialisation of traditional male work places erode the need for men to present a work ethic based upon physical strength.¹ With this erosion of traditional work places, there are changes afoot relocating men, their masculinity and their exterior appearance away from the embedded practices of traditional hegemonic masculinity towards a new ‘performance of appearance’ within contemporary interactive service employment roles.

These changes are not merely occurring from free will, but are mediated by marketing trends and the promotion of the masculine body as an objectified resource, through which men can remain visible and successful in contemporary work places. This movement, however, requires a means to facilitate the changes, with the masculine *habitus* posed as being the vehicle for actualisation.

This thesis draws upon my lived and worked experiences as a Registered Nurse within the appearance medicine sector. I explore contemporary masculine beautification, and the potential paradoxical situation of the emergence of a new masculinity associated with a ‘performance of appearance’ within contemporary work places, but achieved through an adherence to practices associated with traditional hegemonic masculinity. Using a web content analysis approach, I explore masculine appearance medicine websites, the services they offer to men and the marketing trends implemented to engage men with this practice.

My research produces findings that are both multi-faceted and interrelated. The key outcomes suggest that changes are occurring within the construct of masculinity and that men need to both become aware of, and engage with, their *habitus* as a facilitator for change. The findings also present the contradictory practice of masculine appearance medicine treatments being marketed through the constraints

¹ Traditional hegemonic masculinity is the culturally normative ideal of masculine behaviour (Connell, 2005).

and comforts of traditional hegemonic practices. My findings suggest that although the construct of masculinity is porous, and a shift in practices is occurring, with a 'performance of appearance' emerging as a feature of a new work place masculinity, men still require the comforts provided by traditional hegemonic practices in order to facilitate this change.

Acknowledgements

My satisfaction in completing this thesis disguises the long and emotional journey that has occurred to arrive here intact. There have, of course, been numerous people who have supported me through this time, and I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to them. My thanks, therefore, go to Massey University, the Library staff and the learning consultants, together with my extended family.

I would, however, like to thank more specifically my supervisors Assoc. Professor Ann Dupuis and Dr Warwick Tie for their time, guidance and patience through this process. They have been wonderful in supporting me, providing emotional sustenance, practical advice and, above all, a belief that completion was possible. Their support has been resolute, and without whom I would not be where I am today.

My second thank you extends to my close family who have been unwavering in their support for me. They have all been so patient and understanding, particularly when the household needs have fallen upon their shoulders. To Steve, my husband, I cannot thank you enough for not only financially supporting me, but for running the house and for ensuring I eat and drink at the right times; to Gemma for your fabulous cooking skills; to Lucy, who has enduring belief in my ability to write and to Polly and Fuchsia for your company. For this support, I am deeply indebted to you all.

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