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Man-of-Action Heroes: The Pursuit of Heroic Masculinity in Everyday Consumption

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Abstract

We develop a model describing how certain American men, those men who have been described as emasculated by recent socioeconomic changes,

construct themselves as masculine through their everyday consumption. We find that American mass culture idealizes the man-of-action hero—an idealized model of manhood that resolves the inherent weaknesses in two other prominent models (the breadwinner and the rebel). The men we studied drew from this three-part discourse—what we call the ideology of heroic masculinity—to construct themselves in dramatic fashion as man-of-action heroes. In addition, we show that these men pursue heroic masculinity in very different ways, depending on their social class positions.

Keywords: [Sex roles/Gender Issues](#), [Postmodernism/Poststructuralism](#), [Cultural Theories and Analysis](#), [Depth/Long Interviews](#), [Text Interpretation](#)

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