

power other than the metropole in imperialist systems, past and present.

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See also Colonialism; Commodities; Global Cities; Postcolonial Theory; Social and Economic Development; Spaces and Places; Spices; Sugar

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METROSEXUAL

The *metrosexual male* (there is no female metrosexuality) is commonly understood, in the North American and British use of the term, to be a young man who, shunning any reluctance and hesitation informed by received notions and expectations of masculine patterns of behavior, engages in grooming

desolate city centers.) As Matt Houlbrook notes in his study of London's queer subcultures, the city, with its plethora of available experiences—particularly for the newly arrived and the naive—thus becomes "a productive space that generates and stabilizes a new form of selfhood and way of life . . . a space of affirmation, liberation, and citizenship" (2006, 3). Metrosexuality thus engenders and finesse further upward mobility.

Such themes of new modes of male presentation and upward mobility underlie the advertising campaigns for male skin moisturizers, which are often provided with the caveat that they are related to shaving, to hair conditioners, and the sexualization of the male body in advertisements for male underwear (the footballer David Beckham, held to be an embodiment of the metrosexual ideal, has modeled for Armani campaigns in recent years). In this way, the social dividend of upward mobility—sexual activity—is understood to be available via a new beauty regime and new concerns of self-presentation, now appropriate to the social spaces of the urban conurbation.

The Ideological Positions of Metrosexuality

This phenomenon represents two problematic areas. First, that the attraction for the male of adopting a more metrosexual lifestyle/appearance is an attraction predicated on the idea of increased sexual conquests—the very opposite of the intention as read by the female encountering the metrosexual male. In itself, this contradiction between perception and intention is no different from those associated with all forms of male grooming and presentation and indeed seemingly disinterested display of sophistication, maturity, and wit mounted to impress the object of desire. Second, and more convolutedly, the phenomenon as described—in male, heterosexual, patriarch terms, in respect to female heterosexuality and with the assumption of a female tendency to search for one "appropriate" male—is highly retrogressive. This indicates the way in which metrosexuality, once identified in the real world, had been capitalized on by advertising companies, reconceptualized and arguably heterosexualized in the process, and then rearticulated in respect to a further opening up of markets so that previously minority products take on a wide appeal. Thus, metrosexuality is relayed into the market not only by commerce via the imagery

of advertisements but also in, as ever, symbiotic relationships with magazines, comment and opinion pieces in newspapers, the profiles of newly emergent celebrities, and so forth.

The striking heterosexualization of metrosexuality (in the Armani images of Beckham, for example, machismo is merely "reframed" via a metrosexual window dressing) points to the perceived homosexual origins of a concern with male grooming. Any attempt at a prettification, even toward entirely heterosexual ends, had traditionally been met with contempt. In John Steinbeck's 1937 novella *Of Mice and Men*, the character of Curley, who applies Vaseline to his hands so as to ensure softer skin for the benefit of his wife, elicits suspicion from his fellow rural workers. The Hollywood film noir antagonist is either a roughian or heavy (slow, apelike, and violent; "primitive" as a model of man) or smooth (well-presented, effeminate, with a concern for his mother, and surrounded by other men). More recently, the *South Park* episode "South Park Is Gay" posited annoyance in the town's homosexual community at an outbreak of metrosexuality, perceived as an intrusive "faking" of homosexuality. The bohemian homosexuals among the "bright young things" of the 1920s, who adopted feminine fashions, even to the point of transvestism and unconcealed makeup, were understood to be flaunting their sexual difference; resigned to their role as sodomites and outcasts, they sought to rejoice in such marginalization rather than (as polite society would increasingly demand, particularly during the austere years after the Second World War) remain effectively invisible. These exceptions that proved the rule, however, can be seen as forerunners to the male of the "glam rock" period. Here, makeup, an ambiguous sexuality, and "gender-bending" (becoming ambiguous in sexual orientation and/or gender) were briefly entirely in vogue in popular, mainstream culture. Urban myths concerning men from building sites carefully applying makeup prior to a night out in fashionable urban clubs in the first half of the 1970s speak of the ending of a ghettoization of the cultures of sexual difference. Although the glam period is often considered as forgotten, or remembered with embarrassment, this second "Summer of Love" (entirely comparable, that is, to 1967 in its attempt at utopian modes of existence) has long remained in the popular consciousness, particularly through pop music. Yet this afterlife, when considered in relation to the very *lack*

of homosexuality (David Bowie's seeming eventual heterosexuality, Morrissey's proclaimed asexuality, and the straightness of effeminate and "queeny" Brett Anderson of Suede), was criticized by queer theorists as "tourist homosexuality": an acting gay rather than being gay—an acceptable simulacrum in an industry with radical pretensions but deeply conservative practices and politics. In this criticism, the feminization of males would seem to be a legacy of a homosexual bucking of the trend. In this respect, metrosexuality owes its biggest debt to homosexual cultures, in direct opposition to heterosexualization of commercialized metrosexuality.

However, this lineage merely reinforces the idea that the essence of metrosexuality is a concern with presentation on the part of the male or, more precisely, the male who is not ashamed to exhibit evidence of a concern with appearance. This raises the question as to whether metrosexuality really does represent a new phenomenon; from the dandy of the 1920s to the medallion man of the 1970s, presentation has been a facet of seductive strategies. It is arguable, therefore, that motive for metrosexuality is the female, who now wishes to have less heterosexually sexualized males. The "metro-" part of the term also suggests that the urban-dwelling female, on encountering the urban-dwelling male (that is, those in the domain of white collar, tertiary, and affective labor) no longer requires outward signs of sexual prowess from this group. The "rough and ready" is readily available in the hinterland (figuratively and literally: the gentrification of inner cities has banished the previous occupants to the city outskirts). Metrosexuality, therefore, suggests a new class stratification and codification of female desire rather than—as is often understood—the enlightenment that occurs through a breaking of sexual role models.

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See also Beauty Myth; Celebrity; Clothing Consumption; Cosmetics; Masculinity; Men's Magazines; Self-Presentation; Sex; Sexuality

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MIGRATION

The term *migration* refers to the forced or voluntary movement of people between one place and another. *Immigration* has a more limited meaning. It refers to an international movement of people that leads to the permanent settlement of migrants in the country of destination. While studies of migration have focused on particular periods of time and sending and receiving locales—such as the movement of some 30 million Europeans out of the continent between the mid-nineteenth century and World War I or the turn of the twenty-first century flows from the south of the world to the north—historians agree that human mobility has been the norm throughout world history. Some scholars even challenge the actual significance of migration history as a discrete subdiscipline, echoing the famous opening sentence of pioneering U.S. immigration historian Oscar Handlin's book *The Uprooted*, "Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants were American history."

Current theorizations see international migration as regulated by multifactor systems of global interconnections, which include colonialism and decolonization, wars and ethnic persecution, preferred commercial routes and trade relations, fluctuating financial and labor markets, cultural and religious translocal bonds, tourism, and so on. They replaced earlier economics explanations of migration dynamics focused on origin-destination economic factors, such as overpopulation and unemployment, encouraging population expulsion in some places and availability of jobs and unclaimed land attracting it in others. An enduring legacy of the now-discredited "push-and-pull" model is that migrants in the capitalist world system have been much more often studied as producers—workers and participants in the different national working classes—rather than consumers. If relatively overlooked by academic literature, however, it is evident that consumer culture has had a tremendous importance in migratory processes, from the formation of the decision to emigrate to the redefinition of identities involved in any migration and settlement project to the development of translocal flows of goods, capitals, ideas, and images that accompany those of mobile people.

Consumer culture and migration intersect on two major terrains: (1) the behavior and practices of migrants as consumers and (2) the representation

and cross-cultural consumption of migrant cultures, identities, and styles via commodities and experiences, which are variously branded as "ethnic." The two levels are actually tightly interrelated. Migrant consumption can be viewed as another form of production—a production of ethnic meanings, values, and tastes, which, in turn, can become objects of "consumption of the other" in the global market for difference. Articulating their individual and collective identities as *styles* or *subcultures* by means of their consumer choices and behaviors, migrants provide for a public self-representation of their social identities that, in an economy increasingly revolving around symbolic production, can be marketed and incorporated in everything from food to politics, fashion, film, tourism, and so forth. It is only for the sake of convenience that it may be helpful to examine (1) and (2) separately.

The influence of consumer culture on both the shaping and the commodification of migrant identities has arguably intensified in the last decades. Depending on the political and social conditions they encounter in their place of arrival, and their racial and cultural identity, migrant groups may develop into relatively separate communities, often as a result of segregation and discrimination. Processes of *ethnicization*—the formation of immigrant cultures—might last for generations, turning the descendants of the immigrants into socially distinct segments of the population. Anthropologists and sociologists have argued that since the late 1980s, technological innovations, along with the emergence of a global, postindustrial, and consumer-oriented economy, have radically changed qualitatively the experience of migration and ethnicization. Assimilation into host societies and nation-states has ceased to be the ineludible eventual fate of immigrant groups, as originally theorized by the Chicago school of sociology. Fast and cheap transportation over long distances and electronic media and communications have made it easier for migrants to live transnational lives, that is, maintaining psychological, political, and economic links with their real or putative place of origin. The concept of *diaspora* is accordingly often invoked of late in migration studies to mean large groups of globally dispersed displaced people who continue to share a sense of affiliation and belonging to a common "home." Being de-territorialized communities bounded by culturally produced senses of common pasts, values, interests, and tastes, present-day diasporas have typically found in consumer

culture a powerful means of self-production and self-representation. Deindustrialization and globalization have resulted in an economy revolving on symbolic and cultural production and in an accelerated circulation of meanings, images, and fantasies about the other. Not only have migrant identities become a common area of study in consumer culture, but they have also been brought into the consciousness of millions of consumers worldwide.

Consumer Culture and the Immigrant Body

Under modern capitalism, human mobility is often the result of projects of social mobility, which consumer culture sets in motion. The global circulation of consumer goods and mediated images of consumerism provide potential mobile people with visions of better material existences and fantasies about alternative lifestyles elsewhere. Working-class Jewish women in Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century anticipated more comfortable and exciting lives in New York through the near worshipping of mass-produced American brand commodities, such as condensed milk and chocolate bars. The consumer styles of returning migrants from *el Norte* and the images of American consumer environment spread by satellite TV channels, mobile phones, and myriad other media are decisive factors in drawing Mexican migrants to enter, often illegally and dangerously, the United States. Their acculturation as American consumers begins in Mexico and is a central part of their transnational migration project, a pattern strikingly similar to those of Albanian migrants to Italy or rural-to-urban migrant workers in southern China.

In the destination country—or city, in the case of urbanized rural people—migrants are confronted with otherness, that is, with differences in language, appearance, habits, beliefs, and memory (or any combination of these) that set them apart from the rest of the population. As they construct their *self as alien*, consumer culture typically works as an immediate and convenient terrain of mediation, understanding, and representation of difference. In a perspective reminiscent of Norbert Elias's theory of civilization and Michel Foucault's social disciplinarian, a number of writers have insisted on consumer culture as a pathway to assimilation into modern urban society, suggesting that migrants typically articulate this work of self-reinvention through varied techniques of the body. In fact, while reflexive investment in the presentation of the self and body maintenance has