

# **SEXUAL MARKET VALUE:**

Economic metaphor in “pickup artist” handbooks

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# ABSTRACT

Sexual sociality is conceptualised colloquially and academically as a market. However, attempts to apply market analysis tools from economics to modelling sexual stratification result in tautology, where opposite findings can equally be explained away as utility-maximising functions. The predominance of market metaphor may result from sexual selection feeling like a market, rather than it functioning as a market. In this qualitative content analysis of four Anglophone "pickup artist" handbooks, economic metaphor is shown to be used to describe the process for men of attracting women with the aim of initiating sexual interaction. This use of economic metaphor indicates that the heterosexual men that write and read these books partially understand sexual interactions in terms of economic experiences and that this might influence their actions in sexual social space.

The emergent metaphorical structure of the sexual market place was coherent across the corpus and provides a perspective on how heterosexual men conceptualise sexual sociality and plan future action on the basis of their understanding of market functions. This corpus metaphorically constructs sexual sociality as a market. Individuals participating in the market are commodity-producing-commodities and individual actors at the same time. In this market structure, men produce and sell attention (time, money, and emotion) and are paid with sex (physical, sexual interaction) produced by women. Women buy attention from men and pay with sex. Salesperson is a high-power role and buyer is a low-power role in this metaphorical market. Ultimately, this metaphorical structure treats sex as a means to something else, as contrasted with the theory of sexual fields, which treats sex as an end.

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# INTRODUCTION

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Economic sociology offers a dynamic fusion of methods and approaches for the analysis of both economic and social reality. It's an academic discipline that has sought to apply sociological methods to the analysis of economic life and activity (Smelser & Swedberg, 2005, p. 3), and has employed economic methods of analysis to sociological phenomena (Coleman, 2005, p. 166). That economic sociology should arise as a field of inquiry ought to come as no surprise, given that economic activity is inherently social, and that the economy is a key component to the organisation of a society.

Economy and society have interdependencies that create a fertile cross-field for shared methods. It stands to reason that these interdependencies might crop up in other ways. Of particular interest is the role that economic metaphor can play in how humans come to understand non-economic experiences. Metaphor, defined as providing "a partial understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another kind of experience" (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 154), can be seen to "sanction actions, justify inferences, and help us set goals" (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 142). In short, metaphors help to structure less-concrete experiences and guide action.

Economic metaphor is interesting in terms of economic sociology, especially when it is used to describe intangible social experiences. This work explores the use of economic metaphor in the sociology of sexuality as applied to experiences of dating, sex, and relationships. Grounded in Bourdieu's theory of practice and expanded to include a theory of sexual fields, the appearance of economic metaphor in this discourse is considered as a potential symptom of the separation of previously overlapping fields.

The empirical portion of this work considers a sample of Anglophone pickup artist discourse via a corpus of four books. The pickup artist (or seduction community) subculture is of interest because its primary focus is helping men to initiate sexual interactions with women. As such, much of the seduction community's discourse constitutes an amateur sociology of sexuality as understood by the heterosexual men who belong to the community. The use of economic metaphor within this discourse indicates that the seduction community partially understands sexual interactions in terms of economic experiences and that this might influence their actions in sexual social space.

This analysis shows that pickup artist handbooks metaphorically construct sexual sociality as a market, where individuals participating in the market are commodity-producing-commodities and individual actors at the same time. In this market structure, men sell attention (time, money, and emotion) and are paid with sex (physical, sexual interaction) by women. Women buy attention from men and pay with sex. Salesperson is a high-power role and buyer is a low-power role in this metaphorical market. Ultimately, this metaphorical structure treats sex as a means to something else, as contrasted with the theory of sexual fields, which treats sex as an end.

Part I establishes the theory and context for this work. Chapter one introduces Bourdieu's theory of practice and the concept of fields together with the work of Martin & George and Green, which expands a theory of practice to include a new sexual fields theory. This chapter also establishes an approach to metaphor as elaborated by Lakoff & Johnson. Finally, chapter one outlines the hypothesis that an increase in economic metaphor to describe dating, sex, and relationships may indicate greater autonomy between the economic and sexual fields.

Chapter two provides key information about the pickup artist subculture. For readers unfamiliar with pickup artists, this chapter offers a basic overview of the seduction community including a timeline of community development and significant individuals. Chapter two also presents an introduction into how the community operates. It is important to note that this chapter is not exhaustive. Instead, chapter two aims to provide enough information for the reader to adequately situate the corpus under study within the appropriate context.

Part II presents the empirical research produced by this study. Chapter three outlines the research methodology. It details the research questions that directed this study, the corpus under study, and the research methods employed in conducting this study. Chapter four contains the analysis and findings that emerged from this work, as well as highlighting directions for future research and theoretical development.

# PART I: THEORY & CONTEXT

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## Chapter One: Sexual Fields Theory & Metaphor

### 1. Theory of Practice

In the 1950s and 1960s, Pierre Bourdieu conducted ethnographic research on the Kabylia people in Algeria during the Algerian War (Smelser & Swedberg, 2005, p. 18). This research, and the context of war during which it was carried out, inspired Bourdieu's move to sociology (Nice in Bourdieu, 2013, p. vii) as well as his theorizing on economy and society. Published originally in French in 1972, Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* set out his theory of fields. A field was a structured social space "of potentially useful relationships (i.e. those that are actually usable, because spatially close, and useful, because socially influential)" (Bourdieu, 2013, p. 39).

Fields are given their structure by capital, *doxa*, *habitus*, and interest. Capital, in Bourdieu's theory, is accumulated labour that can be called upon in the present moment to mobilise social energy (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241). *Doxa* are the rules, or presuppositions, of a given social space that are so internalised as to be considered "self-evident and undisputed" (Bourdieu, 2013, p. 164) and which therefore govern thought and perception within a field. *Habitus* are "the schemes of perception and appreciation deposited, in their incorporated state, in every member of the group" (Bourdieu, 2013, p. 17). In other words, the *habitus* is an individual's predispositions which relate "future actions... to past experiences" (Smelser & Swedberg, 2005, p.18) within a field. Interest is what motivates an individual to participate in a given social space: "to admit that the game is worth playing and that the stakes that are created in and through this fact are worth pursuing" ([Bourdieu, 1998], Smelser & Swedberg, 2005, p. 18).

In summary, individual human beings find themselves within overlapping yet separately structured social spaces. Each social space is governed by its own set of unconscious presuppositions. Each individual has their own embodied set of predispositions within a given social space, where the memory of what they've done before guides what they will do in future. Within each social space, an individual has more or less power to mobilise social energy toward beneficial ends, and more or less motivation to participate.

With this in mind, the economy as neoclassical economists approach it becomes one of many fields of structured social space that individuals must navigate: that of mercantile exchange (the marketplace). Similarly, economic capital becomes one of many forms of capital that make up “the immanent structure of the social world, i.e., the set of constraints, inscribed in the very reality of that world... determining the chances of success for practices” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242). It becomes possible to understand that individuals are situated in various fields (economic, familial, professional, social, legal, educational, etc.), playing various “games of society” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241), with more or less power to affect the outcome of a given game and broker a desired exchange. Further, if economy is defined broadly as encompassing these forms of social exchange, rather than only mercantile exchange, the possibility to develop an “economy of practices” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242) emerges. Per Bourdieu, this is necessary in order to develop an account of “the structure and functioning of the social world” (1986, p. 242).

## **2. Sexual Field Theory**

Bourdieu established that human beings are situated in multiple fields constituted of “potentially useful relationships” seeking to broker a variety of desired exchanges, with more or less ability and interest to do so. Despite the seemingly obvious parallel, it took some time before the economy of practices extended to the concept of sexual fields. In 2006, sociologists Martin & George published *Theories of Sexual Stratification*, a critique of the American sociological tradition’s reticence to consider the social ordering of sexual desire, as other desires had been addressed (Martin & George, 2006, p. 107-8).

Instead, they assert that it’s not sexual desire, but sexual desiring, which is socially ordered:

The manner in which one specific type of desire, the desire to pair with one and only one person as opposed to another for heterosexual congress, displays supra-individual consistencies. (By “pairing” we do not imply any degree of permanence nor an act of sexual intercourse). Thus it is not desire per se (not its aim, according to Freud’s (1938:553) usage) that is socially significant for the question of order, but the differential valorization of possible partners that could produce scarcity and conflict; for this reason we will henceforward speak of the social organization of sexual desiring. (Martin & George, 2006, p. 108)

Further, the trend among earlier thinkers on the topic of the social ordering of sexual desiring points toward an existing “social consensus” regarding rankings of attractiveness in

sexual pairing (Martin & George, 2006, p. 109). This sexual stratification is a key component of the social ordering of sexual desiring.

The sexual field is assumed to have a logic (*doxa*), hierarchical ordering through capital, coordinating mechanism (*habitus*), and interest (Martin & George, 2006, p. 124). In defining a sexual field, questions arise about the extent of the field, the formation of field-specific capital, and the relative autonomy of the field from other fields. In considering the extent of a field, one must consider to what extent sexual behaviours and attitudes could be said to be coordinated by a hegemonic *habitus*. In the case of the sexual field, there are likely to be divisions into subfields with a greater consensus on sexual stratification within subfields than across them (Martin & George, 2006, p. 126-127). In constituting sexual capital, or the set of relations that field conditions allow to function as capital, one must consider what defines “attractiveness” (embodied capital), as well as what defines an individual’s “trajectory through the sexual field” (institutional or objectified capital) (Martin & George, 2006, p. 128). In considering the degree of autonomy of the sexual field from other fields, Martin & George suggest that the chaos associated with sexual desire may be due to the influence of organizing principles from overlapping fields and their institutions (2006, p. 128-129)

Preliminary exploration of these questions has furthered development of the sexual fields’ concept as a tool for analysis of the sociology of sexuality. Green’s research on urban sexual subcultures approaches the functioning of sexual fields as a form of social organization in their own right, connected to and separate from other fields (2008, p. 25-26). Green identifies spaces of sexual sociality (sexual sites) such as bathhouses, S&M clubs, and internet chat rooms as distinct spatial nodes within the wider sexual field (Green, 2008, p. 25, 27). Green suggests “erotic worlds”: physical or virtual sexual sites and a structuring sexual field (2008, p. 28). However, one might also perceive sexual sites as institutions constituted by and constituting of subfields of the sexual field, which is more aligned with Martin & George’s theory.

Sexual capital, or *erotic capital*, is defined as “the quality and quantity of attributes that an individual possesses, which elicit an erotic response in another” (Green, 2008, p. 29), and is recognised as highly subfield-dependent. Within a given subfield, erotic capital will be constituted by physical traits, affective presentations, and eroticised sociocultural styles which conform to the dominant erotic habitus, or dominant sexual fantasy, within the

subfield (Green, 2008, p.29). Essentially, the valorisation of erotic capital becomes more consistent the more specialised a subfield becomes, and is less consistent across subfields (Green, 2008, p. 29-30). The rewards that motivate interest and are associated with high erotic capital are “rights of sexual choice, social significance, and group membership” (Green, 2008, p. 27).

This sexual (or erotic) capital is convertible to a greater or lesser degree to other forms of capital (i.e. social, economic, or symbolic capital), though convertibility is contingent on a number of factors including gender and the sexual subfield individuals are situated in (Green, 2011, p. 247). Fields have alignment where one form of capital can be converted into other forms (Martin & George, 2006, p. 124). Examples of this are body modification practices and presentation, demonstrating inter-convertibility of economic to sexual capital which is understood by individuals situated in these fields (Green, 2008, p. 29). Another example of relative field autonomy would be the degree to which the institutions of other fields structure the sexual field, for example degree of access to legal abortion could make the sexual field less autonomous from the legal field (Martin & George, 2006, p. 129).

The sexual field contains a diversity of subfields populated with institutions, or sexual sites (like bars, clubs, swingers parties, online dating platforms, etc.), that are constituted by and constituting of subfields. Within each subfield, individual erotic preferences aggregate into a prevailing erotic habitus, which determines the erotic capital at work in a given sexual subfield. Individuals have an interest to participate in a sexual field to a greater or lesser extent motivated by the rewards of erotic capital: sexual choice, social significance, and group membership. Viewed in this way, the sexual field concept is a useful tool for the analysis of sexual sociality and collective sociosexual life.

### **3. Metaphor as Human Understanding**

Lakoff & Johnson offer a controversial and powerful account of the role that metaphor plays in human understanding in their seminal text *Metaphors We Live By* (2003). As linguists and philosophers, Lakoff & Johnson reject the classical view of metaphor as an imaginative linguistic device that highlights isolated similarities between phenomena. They discard the notion of objective truth in favour of the idea that human experience and

human understanding define truth (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. x). They focus on metaphor as key to how human beings understand the world around them and their place in it. From this perspective, metaphor is not about creative word selection, but is embedded in the foundation of our understanding of concepts.

Lakoff & Johnson define the essence of metaphor as “understanding and experiencing one kind thing in terms of another” (2003, p. 5). Metaphor highlights some parts of an experience while downplaying others, even hiding some, meaning that metaphor is at best a partial account of an experience. In this way, metaphor provides the structure that allows human beings to reason about those experiences that are intangible but nonetheless real. Further, Lakoff & Johnson posit that some human experiences, like love, are understood almost entirely in metaphorical terms (2003, p. 85), and that our understanding of social reality is also largely metaphorical (2003, p. 146).

By virtue of the structure provided to intangible human experience, metaphors may function as guides for actions taken in the future. These actions will fit the metaphor that structures thought (2003, p.156). Thus, metaphor holds powerful influence on human behaviour. Metaphor can “sanction actions, justify inferences, and help us set goals” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 142). If a metaphor highlights some parts of an experience while downplaying and hiding others, it constrains how we will make plans and take action in response to a given experience. Although metaphor has the power to influence behaviour, it goes largely unnoticed as it is interwoven into familiar, everyday language (p. 43).

Metaphor, if we accept Lakoff & Johnson’s experientialist approach, is a maker of social meaning and a predictor of social behaviour. It is not simple for individuals or societies to change the metaphors that structure their understanding of the world (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 145). However, new metaphors for human experience can generate new meaning for concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 142). By using a new metaphor, and therefore changing the understanding of a concept, it is possible to change “how we perceive the world and act upon those perceptions” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 145 – 146). Metaphor can be dynamic.

Metaphors structure our understanding of the world, including how we understand social reality, and changes to metaphor can lead to changes in both perception and action. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the metaphors used by those with power. Asserting that “people in power get to impose their metaphors” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p.

157), Lakoff & Johnson examine the implications of US President Jimmy Carter's statement in 1977 that the energy crisis was "the moral equivalent of war" (2003, p. 156). The war metaphor highlighted some aspects of the situation while downplaying and hiding others and structured the discourse and actions taken in response to the energy crisis. This suggests that the metaphors used by leaders and powerful figures can have a significant impact on how their communities understand and respond to reality.

#### **4. The Economic Metaphor Hypothesis**

Returning to the sexual field concept, a competing analytical approach to collective sexual life approaches sexual sociality not as a field but as a market place. Sexual pairing decisions are viewed through the lens of utility-maximising exchanges subject to supply and demand. Sexual sociality and sexual pairing choice in this view "assume an abstract and perfect market" (Martin & George, 2006, p. 114). Scholars of this approach generally perceive the sexual market as a primarily heterosexual market consisting of male buyers of female sex. Davis conceived of a marketplace where men exchange their financial support for female sexual access (Martin & George, 2006, p. 110). Collins saw a historically dependent market centred on "male sexual property in women" (Martin & George, 2006, p. 112). It is also worth noting that these scholars were cis-gendered, heterosexual men.

According to Martin & George, market analysis fails on two counts when applied to sexual stratification. First, if there are unobservable utility functions and unobservable supply schedules, a tautology results where market outcomes are explained as resulting from a balance of utilities realised by individuals (Martin & George, 2006, p. 114). This means that the market analytical approach allows completely opposite findings to be equally explained as utility functions, which is impossible (Martin & George, 2006, p. 117). Additionally, in terms of sexual desiring, human bodies don't have prices (Martin & George, 2006, p. 114), therefore making it impossible to approach sexual stratification through this analytical lens. Ultimately, the market analytical approach produces paradox, rather than theory (Martin & George, 2006, p. 115).

Modifications to the market model when applied to sexual pairing choice strip the model of its explanatory power by removing constraints (Martin & George, 2006, p. 122). This means that the market analytical approach becomes a model "rationalizing action,"

where normative examples that contradict the model can be made to fit (Martin & George, 2006, p. 118). This makes sense if sexual sociality is not a market. Applying market principles and analytical tools to a non-market like collective sexual life obscures, rather than illuminates, how sexual desiring is socially ordered (Martin & George, 2006, p. 119). Further, the market analytical perspective hides the fact that individuals operating in sexual social space have the ability to negotiate relations in that space (Green, 2008, p. 28). Not only do human bodies not carry prices, they also have the ability to talk back.

In this light, it is curious that market analytical tools were thought applicable in the first place, and that market metaphor is often applied, colloquially and academically, to questions of sexual stratification. Perhaps this is because experiences of sexual selection can feel similar to market exchange. With the development of a more autonomous sexual field, autonomous sexual capital becomes subject to “the manipulation of scarcity and competition” (Martin & George, 2006, p. 129), and people broadly have the most experience of scarcity and competition in their economic lives. Martin & George note an interesting trend: at times when economic considerations were key in sexual pairings, economic metaphor wasn’t used to describe sexual stratification (Martin & George, 2006, p. 129). Instead, during periods where the sexual field was much less autonomous, sexual pairing was “naturalized and seen as noneconomic” (Martin & George, 2006, p. 129). This yields the hypothesis that when the sexual field is more autonomous, it is understood in economic terms, most typically using market metaphor.

## **5. Conclusion**

Collective sexual life is not a market, despite the abundance of market metaphor used by everyday people and scholars alike. Instead, sexual sociality, with its attendant sexual stratification, can be more fruitfully analysed when conceptualised as a field in Bourdieu’s sense. Equally, metaphor is worth paying attention to, as metaphor structures the way individuals conceptualise the world and guides their behaviour in coherent ways. Essentially, if people normatively use market metaphor to describe their experience of reality concerning dating, sex, and relationships, this means that they conceptualise and respond to those experiences as they would respond to their normative experience of the market. Further, economic and market metaphors may, paradoxically, only be used to describe

sexual pairing decision making during periods when these decisions are less contingent on actual economic considerations. During periods when the sexual field is more autonomous from other fields, an increase in normative use of economic and market metaphors would be expected.

# Chapter Two: Pickup Artists & The Seduction Community

## 1. Introduction

The seduction community is unknown to many despite its global reach and commercial success. The present-day community has precedent: it emerged from a rich cultural history of seduction literature spanning at least two millennia. The advent of the Internet in the mid-1990s was transformational and led to the development of the present-day seduction community. The seduction community, including participants and community leaders, is predominantly male. The community is focused on supporting heterosexual men to develop their skills as pickup artists (PUAs), sharing tips, strategies, and tactics to initiate sexual interactions with women. A pickup artist is “a man who is knowledgeable and competent in the ways of attracting and seducing women” (Almog & Kaplan, 2015, p. 7).

## 2. Historical Origins

Literature provides an extensive historical record of seduction techniques written for a male audience. Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria* (written c. 2 CE) is one of the earliest examples of such literature in Europe (King, 2017). *Ars Amatoria*, or *The Art of Love*, provided suggestions for where to take women on dates and how to stimulate sexual interest through touch (King, 2017). Operas and plays from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century chronicle the exploits of Don Juan, an archetypal seducer whose character and actions were often inspired by real people (Kray, 2017, p. 5). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the autobiographical accounts of Giacomo Casanova catalogued his experiences seducing women, utilising the systematic approach developed by the Parisian aristocracy (Kray, 2017, p. 3-4). Søren Kierkegaard’s *Diary of a Seducer* (1903), a presumably autobiographical work within his larger treatise on existential philosophy, *Either/Or*, detailed his seduction of a 17-year-old girl in Copenhagen (Kray, 2017, p. 9).

Modern pickup artistry emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Early entrants to the contemporary seduction genre included Jack Hanley’s *Let’s Make Mary: Being a Gentlemen’s Guide to Scientific Seduction in Eight Easy Lessons* (1937) and Norton Hughes Jonathan’s *Guide Book*

*for the Young Man About Town: The Way to More Popularity and Personality for Modern Young Men* (1948) (King, 2017). In 1967, Albert Ellis, the psychotherapist who developed Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy, published *The Art of Erotic Seduction*. The key turning point in this genre came in 1970 with the publication of Eric Weber's book, *How to Pick Up Girls* (King, 2017; Almog & Kaplan, 2015, Strauss, 2005). This was the first mass market book on seduction skills, which sold over 2 million copies and was adapted to film (King, 2017). This marked the beginning of what has become the present-day seduction community.

### **3. Present-Day Development**

John Grinder and Richard Bandler met at the University of California, Santa Cruz in the 1970s and developed neurolinguistic programming (NLP) together (Strauss, 2005, p. 58). In the 1980s, their book *Frogs into Princes* influenced a young Ross Jeffries (born Paul Ross, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1958, United States) (Strauss, 2005, p. 124). NLP formed the basis for the seduction method Jeffries developed, presented in his first book: *How to Get the Women you Desire into Bed* (1988) (Almog & Kaplan, 2015, p. 6). In 1991, he began teaching his method of Speed Seduction (Jeffries, n.d.) and is widely credited with founding the seduction community as a community-as-such (Strauss, 2005, p. 18).

The emergence of the internet coincided with Jeffries' establishment of his Speed Seduction business (Strauss, 2005, p. 124). He took advantage of this new technology to market Speed Seduction seminars on the internet (Strauss, 2005, p. 125). In the mid-1990's one of Jeffries' students, Lewis DePayne, set up the first internet forum for the seduction community, alt.seduction.fast (Strauss, 2005, p. 125). Although initially created for discussion of Speed Seduction products, alt.seduction.fast also offered a forum for discussion among men about their experiences attempting to initiate sexual interaction with women (King, 2017). Ultimately, internet forums initiated a shift from a one-way flow of information from leaders to students through books to an open discussion by men of various levels of ability about their experiences and the sharing of tips and tactics.

In 1999, Clifford Lee, an early member of alt.seduction.fast, set up a separate independent mailing list after Jeffries became upset with him for discussing seduction techniques that were not related to NLP or Speed Seduction (Strauss, 2005, p. 145). *Cliffs*

*List* became an early independent voice within the community, and is credited with launching the career of one of Jeffries' former students, David DeAngelo (born Eben Pagan, December 5, 1971, United States) (Strauss, 2005, p. 131). Around the same time, in 1998, Allen Thompson launched *SoSuave*, another online forum for discussing seduction and pickup techniques (Thompson, n.d.). In the early 2000s, pickup artist Mystery (Erik James Horvat-Markovic, born September 24, 1971, Canada) created the MSN (Microsoft Network) Group *Mystery's Lounge*, which was password-protected rather than publically-accessible (Strauss, 2005, p. 56). Thus, the internet allowed for the generation of the present-day community, connecting men from all over the world around the topic of seduction and pickup artistry.

The seduction community and the archetype of the pickup artist entered into wider cultural awareness through media coverage in 2005, with the publication of *The Game* by Neil Strauss (Almog & Kaplan, 2015, p. 6). Strauss was Mystery's student and also attended seminars by Jeffries (Strauss, 2005). Through frequent posting in *Mystery's Lounge*, and later teaching students of his own, Strauss, known in the community as Style, became a community leader and a teacher in his own right. Following the media coverage of *The Game*, VH1 produced two seasons of *The Pickup Artist* featuring Mystery, further embedding the seduction community in popular consciousness (Almog & Kaplan, 2015, p.6; imdb.com, n.d.).

The publication of *The Game* revealed a significant commercial appetite for books, products, and services catering to men wishing to learn how to initiate sexual interactions with women. Through this dual self-help and commercial model, the community grew. Soon, more leaders emerged, each with his own company, website, or book. Tyler Durden (born Owen Cook, October 1, 1979, Canada) and Papa (born Nick Kho, October 25, 1979, United States), students of Mystery and Style, founded a company called Real Social Dynamics (RSD) in 2002 (Kho, n.d.). Richard La Ruina read a copy of *The Game* in 2005 and in 2006 started the puatraining.com website. RooshV began interacting with SoSuave in 2001, and published his first book, *Bang*, in 2007. He went on to publish a series of *Bang* travel guides. Rollo Tomassi also got his start on SoSuave and went on to launch his website, [www.therationalmale.com](http://www.therationalmale.com), in 2011.

#### **4. Community Structure & Discourse**

The present-day seduction community is comprised of an ecosystem of websites, online forums, real-world community meetups (sometimes referred to as “lairs”; see Almog & Kaplan, 2015, p. 5), workshops, conferences, YouTube channels, live training “bootcamps,” and dating coaches. Men from diverse walks of life and with varying needs are attracted to the community. Many are casual participants who are looking to find a long term romantic partner, many have never had partner sex before and want to have their first sexual partner, and a minority are attracted to the lifestyle and mastery of seduction skills (Manson in Thorn, 2012, p. 278-279). The majority of influential individuals, online forums, websites, and products associated with the seduction and pickup artist community emanate from the United States. That said, the community is active in cities around the world (Almog & Kaplan, 2015, p. 5).

Members of the seduction community interact principally in online forums and discussion groups. Interactions can involve asking for help and receiving advice, or sharing “field reports”: narratives about the experience of implementing seduction skills, the results thereof, and analysis of what could be improved (Dayter & Rüdiger, 2016, p. 338; Hambling & Merrison, 2012, p. 1116). The seduction community uses its own in-group lexicon, with 161 terms and acronyms defined on the website [www.pualingo.com](http://www.pualingo.com) as of September 2018 (“PUA Acronyms List”, n.d.). Most individual men join the community as an AFC, or “Average Frustrated Chump”: a man who has struggled to have, or has not had, interactions with women that result in sexual or romantic relationships (Almog & Kaplan, 2015, p. 7). By joining the community, an AFC hopes to undergo a transformation and become a PUA (Almog & Kaplan, 2015, p.7).

Leadership and prominence within the seduction community results from proven success in seducing women (Almog & Kaplan, 2015, p. 18). This success can be demonstrated to other community members through field reports or live at training bootcamps and seminars. Leadership positions consolidate as other community members apply a pickup artist’s methods, experience success in seducing women, and report this success back to the community. Community leaders amass influence, and often financial profit, in this way. The seduction community leaders mentioned in this chapter followed this common pathway to leadership. This means that the internal seduction community power

hierarchy is structured around the “possession of women” as a “status symbol” (Almog & Kaplan, 2015, p. 16).

## **5. Conclusion**

The present-day seduction community is a new twist on an old phenomenon. Men have been searching for ways to improve and increase their sexual interactions with women for thousands of years. In the United States, the renewed popularity of the genre in the 1960s and 1970s, and later the advent of the Internet in the mid-1990s, resulted in new challenges and new opportunities for men to produce and access information about seduction. In the present-day, the primarily male seduction community is globally interconnected, though many leading individuals and institutions are based in the United States. Leadership and influence within the community is contingent on a pickup artist’s ability to demonstrate success in sexual interactions with women.

# PART II: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

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## Chapter Three: Research Methodology

### 1. Research Questions

This work explores how heterosexual men in the seduction community understand and conceptualise sexual and relational life through the lens of economic metaphor. By accepting Lakoff & Johnson's view that human thought processes drive behaviour, and that human thought processes are largely metaphorical (2003, p. 3-4), the presence of economic metaphor is of interest. This metaphorical framing of men and the sexual world they operate in can offer a view on the expected behaviours and sociosexual interactions of seduction community members.

This exploration asks two main questions. First, it asks what economic metaphors are present in the corpus of texts under study; specifically which economic metaphors are most frequently used by individual authors and which are frequently used by more than one author. Second, this exploration asks what concepts economic metaphor is used to explain in the corpus under study and how this metaphor is used in relation to men, to women, and to social, relational, or sexual activities.

### 2. Sample Selection

The corpus for this study consists of four books selected to represent a diversity of leading English-language pickup artist discourse. Each text is available for purchase on amazon.com. Two are self-published, and two have been brought to market by major publishers. Three of the authors are American and one is British. All four authors established credibility within the seduction community by posting in online forums or publishing blogs.

**2.1 *The Game: Penetrating the Secret Society of Pickup Artists.*** *The Game: Penetrating the Secret Society of Pickup Artists* (hereafter referred to as *The Game*) was published by ReganBooks<sup>1</sup> in September 2005. It spent two months on the *New York Times'*

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<sup>1</sup> ReganBooks was an imprint of HarperCollins (a subsidiary of News Corporation, founded by Rupert Murdoch) from 1994 – 2007 (Bosman, 2007)

Bestsellers List after its release, and has reportedly sold upwards of 2.5 million copies (Johnson, 2016). *The Game* has been translated into 20 languages (stylelife.com, 2011), reaching an international audience.

*The Game* is an autobiographical non-fiction account of author Neil Strauss' (born October 13, 1973, United States) experiences investigating and becoming part of the seduction community. He learns about the seduction community in 1999 through his investigative work as a journalist, participating first in discussions on online message boards before making the decision to attend a live workshop offered by the pickup artist Mystery (Erik von Markovic). This marks the beginning of Strauss' two-year journey from being an outsider to becoming a leading figure in the seduction community, where he was known by his alter ego: Style.

*The Game* brought an awareness of the online seduction subculture into the wider popular culture, and remains the most widely recognised book about pickup artistry. Following the early commercial success of *The Game*, VH1 produced two seasons of a television program called *The Pickup Artist*, featuring Mystery (imdb.com, n.d.), further increasing pickup artist visibility. For its role as a genre-defining text and widespread reach, *The Game* warrants inclusion in the corpus.

**2.2 Bang: The Pickup Bible That Helps You Get More Lays.** *Bang: The Pickup Bible That Helps You Get More Lays* (hereafter referred to as *Bang*) was self-published on the CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform in 2007. No sales volume data is available for *Bang*, and no commercially available translations exist.

*Bang* was written by Daryush Valizadeh (born June 14, 1979, United States), the son of first generation immigrants from Iran and Armenia ("The Truth About Daryush Valizadeh (Roosh V)", n.d.). He's also known as Roosh Vörek, and most commonly as RooshV, the pen name under which *Bang* was published. He found the online seduction community in 2001 when he was 21, shortly after graduation from university (RooshV, 2007, p. iii). *Bang* is written as an instruction manual, detailing how to respond and which actions to take in a variety of scenarios involving women. *Bang* was the author's first book.

In the time since publishing *Bang*, Roosh V has gone on to achieve widespread notoriety. He has appeared on television talk shows in the United States, Romania, the Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and others, where he has been criticised for his views on women ("About Roosh V (Daryush Valizadeh)", n.d.). He has been profiled as an extremist

by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in the United States, and one website that he operates, returnofkings.com, has been highlighted by the SPLC specifically for hate speech (“Daryush "Roosh" Valizadeh”, n.d.).

As of August 2018, RooshV has 38,000 Twitter followers and Return of Kings has 21,600 Twitter followers. The Return of Kings website has 1 million unique visitors per month (“Reach A Predominately American Male Audience With ROK Sponsored Articles”, n.d.). He is one of the “Three Rs” of the manosphere<sup>2</sup>. The degree of publicity he has received warrants the inclusion of *Bang* in the corpus.

**2.3 The Rational Male.** *The Rational Male* was self-published by Rollo Tomassi on the CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform in 2013 and is the first in a series of three books. As at August 2018, *The Rational Male* is the amazon.com #30 bestseller in the Self-Help: Love & Romance category, and the #2,338<sup>th</sup> bestselling book overall on amazon.com. While not currently available commercially in translation, Tomassi announced via Twitter on December 25, 2017 that a Polish translation will be released in 2018.

Tomassi (born April 2, 1968, United States) is known only by his pen name – no source points to his actual identity. His involvement with the community began somewhere around 1999 in online forums, a couple of years before he entered university as a mature student in 2001 (Tomassi, 2013, p. 6-7). In 2011, Tomassi launched his website, therationalmale.com (Tomassi, 2013, p. 8). *The Rational Male* is a select collection of blog posts that Tomassi originally posted on his website. This collection presents a non-academic theory of inter-gender dynamics and a mindset for men to use when approaching dating, sex, and relationships with women. Tomassi, unlike the other authors in the corpus under study, was married when he wrote the blog posts that later became *The Rational Male* and he offers advice for men in partnership as well as single men.

Tomassi claims to have millions of readers from around the world (Tomassi, 2013, p. 9), and the Alexa.com data for therationalmale.com does indicate an international audience<sup>3</sup>. Tomassi is also one of the “Three Rs” of the manosphere<sup>4</sup> and is a regular

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<sup>2</sup> The Three Rs are Roissy, Roosh, and Rollo, and they are cited typically as three people to read for those who are new to the manosphere, a collection of blogs, forums, and other online sites oriented toward a specific view of masculinity, sometimes referred to as “neomascularity” (“Manosphere”, n.d.)

<sup>3</sup> Alexa.com, a website aggregating web traffic data, shows the top five countries originating traffic to therationalmale.com are the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Belgium (“Therationalmale.com Traffic Statistics”, n.d.)

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 2

contributor to the r/theredpill forum on the Reddit.com website, which as of August 2018 has 280,000 subscribers. His significant readership warrants the inclusion of *The Rational Male*, and the author's marital status and age cohort adds diversity to the corpus.

**2.4 *The Natural: How to Effortlessly Attract the Women You Want.*** *The Natural: How to Effortlessly Attract the Women You Want* (hereafter referred to as *The Natural*) was first published in 2012 by HarperOne<sup>5</sup>. No sales volume data is available for *The Natural* and no commercially available translations exist.

*The Natural* was written by Richard Poingdestre Sloan (born July 7, 1980, United Kingdom) under his pen name Richard La Ruina. He is also known by his online handle Gambler. His involvement with the seduction community began in 2005 when he read *The Game* and then developed his own approach to pickup artistry. He started a website, [puatraining.com](http://puatraining.com), in 2006, and published his first book, *The Natural Art of Seduction*, in 2007. *The Natural*, his second book, offers instructional advice for interacting with women using a direct approach to seduction. In March 2018, La Ruina launched a video game named *Super Seducer* on the Steam online gaming platform, a choose-your-own adventure game displaying live action video of the techniques discussed in *The Natural*. The sequel, *Super Seducer 2*, was released on Steam in September 2018.

In February 2016, La Ruina's website [puatraining.com](http://puatraining.com) was reported to have 600,000 unique monthly visitors, a mailing list with 800,000 email addresses, and to be grossing \$500,000 - \$600,000 dollars monthly (Ruina, 2016). As of August 2018, La Ruina has 15,500 Twitter followers. His large audience warrants the inclusion of *The Natural* and that he grew up in the United Kingdom adds diversity to the corpus.

### 3. Methods

The primary empirical research for this project was a qualitative content analysis. Data was derived from reading and coding the texts. Each text was reviewed twice. First, each text was read through and consumed as a normal reader. Second, each text was close read and subjected to coding and memoing. Sections of text were coded for economic metaphor using Lakoff & Johnson's definition of metaphor: "understanding and

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<sup>5</sup> HarperOne is an imprint of HarperCollins (a subsidiary of News Corporation, founded by Rupert Murdoch)

experiencing one kind thing in terms of another” (2003, p. 5). Non-economic notable metaphor was also coded, and memos were taken in response to the text, including documenting the researcher’s affective response. Following the second reading of the texts, coding was reviewed for consistency, similar or duplicate codes were consolidated, and the final code tree was produced.

**3.1 Researcher as research instrument.** It is essential to highlight the central role of the researcher as research instrument to the process of qualitative research. The data for this work was collected and analysed by the researcher, and involved a closeness with the corpus over a long period of time. This yielded an in-depth familiarity with the corpus, which facilitated the production of the findings. At the same time, this means that this study is not exhaustive, nor is it free from subjective bias.

This study concerns itself with a corpus of texts focused on providing heterosexual men with tips and advice for initiating sexual interactions with women. Many of these texts present a perspective on gender that is confronting, and often hostile toward women. The researcher for this study identifies as a woman and has a professional background as a feminist, sex-positive clinical sexologist. This research used the lens of economic sociology, grounded in a theory of practice as the principle methodological guide for working with the corpus. However, individual researchers are not immune to their unconscious bias. In considering the methods and findings of this study, it is important to consider the context in which the data was produced.

**3.2 Close reading and affective response.** The second reading of each text in the corpus was completed with the assistance of the MAXQDA software program and a digitised copy of each book. Each text was close read, as instances of metaphor were detected and categorised by the researcher rather than by the software program. The close reading required an average of 5-6 minutes per page of text and the corpus contained 1066 pages. Therefore, the close reading took approximately 100 hours. Close reading took place over the course of 47 days.

The process of close reading was augmented by taking a series of memos and field notes to document observations emerging from the text and to catalogue notable data not directly relevant to the core research questions. Additionally, affective response was captured in memos and categorised separately. With the researcher positioned as research instrument, tracking affect provides relevant context to this analysis. Affect points to “the

kinds of orientations, attachments and aversions that encounters with texts may give rise to” and so provides important supplementary data contextualizing the findings (Liljestrom & Paasonen, 2010, p. 6). Each affective memo captured an affective narrative: an expression of affect in natural language as spoken or thought in the moment. Additionally, each affective memo included a classification of that affect after reflection.

**3.3 Qualitative Content Analysis.** The qualitative content analysis involved coding text and images in the books within the corpus. Initial categories and codes were theoretically derived and brought to the text, though additional categories and codes also emerged from the text. Coding was assisted by the use of the MAXQDA 2018 software package. This content analysis was a formal structuring content analysis: the aim was to filter out an internal structure from the material (Flick, 2009, p. 327). Specifically, the aim was to filter out patterns of economic metaphor as applied to the following initial categories: men, women, activities, inanimate objects, and locations.

The corpus was approached over a period of 47 days. Initial starting categories and codes were uploaded into the MAXQDA program. Categories were colour-coded for ease of reference. Coding took place in a variety of environments – libraries, living rooms, cafes, offices, etc. Each coding session lasted a variable length of time.

An interplay between open coding and selective coding was at work throughout the data-gathering period. New codes emerged from the text throughout data gathering. A number of categories and codes were generated related to metaphor that either was not, or was not directly, economic in nature. Data related to non-economic metaphor was captured and preserved, though has not been included in this analysis.

After coding was completed, all coded segments were reviewed for consistency. Similar or duplicate codes were consolidated, and segments of text with multiple codes were reviewed with the aim of reducing and further consolidating similarity and duplication.

Several codes were applied related to instances of specific words – girl, boy, condom, value, and market. These codes were reassigned to relevant codes or captured in word count tables and removed. These codes were applied using the lexical search tool with the aim of drawing the researcher’s attention to these words in the texts.

One category, locations, was removed as no economic metaphor was found relating to locations in the corpus. Another category, inanimate objects, was renamed to inanimate objects/concepts, and has received less attention in this analysis as economic metaphor

from this category was infrequently used. The final set of categories, codes, and code counts appears in Appendix 1.

# Chapter Four: Analysis & Findings

## 1. Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of a qualitative content analysis of a corpus of four pickup artist handbooks. Detailed analysis, including text excerpts, are included for four categories of phenomena economic metaphor was used to describe: men, women, activities, and inanimate objects/concepts. This is followed by a summary of word count and word ratio data for the corpus, including a suggested future research direction for the lexical analysis of similar texts. Additionally, affective response data is summarised, visualised, and presented as important context for this analysis. Finally, the concept of instrumental sex is introduced and suggested as a differential tool for the analysis of sexual sociality.

## 2. Economic Metaphor

This analysis of economic metaphor in pickup artist handbooks shows a metaphorical construct of sexual sociality as a market. Men and women are individual actors as well as commodity-producing-commodities within this marketplace. Man-as-commodity begins with no inherent value and gains value over time through acquiring skills and characteristics like social status, confidence, power, charisma, and success. Woman-as-commodity begins with inherent value that degrades over time and is based on attributes like physical beauty, thinness, youth, breast size, and (potentially) race. The value of woman-as-commodity is not influenced by acquired skills or characteristics like social status, confidence, charisma, or success. This analysis suggests that the value of woman-as-commodity is lowered by taking on high-power roles within this metaphorical marketplace.

Man-as-commodity produces an objectified commodity in the form of attention, defined as comprising of time, money, and emotion. Woman-as-commodity produces an objectified commodity in the form of sex, defined as various forms of physical, sexual interaction. As individual actors in the marketplace, men sell their attention to women and are paid in sex. Women buy attention from men and pay with sex. While men can act as

buyers, and women can act as salespeople, these roles are framed negatively. Salesperson is framed as a high-power role. Buyer is framed as a low-power role.

**2.1 Men.** Economic metaphor about men in the corpus predominantly relates to the subcategories of men-as-things and men-as-people, with two references to men-as-organisations.

**Men-as-things.** As things, men were most frequently commodities, with this metaphor being used by all four authors. All other men-as-things metaphors – waste product, investment, product/merchandise, resource, and property – were used by some, but not all, authors.

**Man-as-commodity.** Commodities are raw materials that are traded on the market, are fully or partially interchangeable regardless of producer, and are distinguished by quality or grade. Man-as-commodity metaphor related to what gives an individual man quality, grade, or value in the eyes of women. Some of these metaphors were subtle, with men being referred to as or instructed on how to become “high-value” or “high-status”:

*They want a man— but not just any man. They want one who is confident, powerful, socially savvy, and high in status. (La Ruina, 2012, p. 20)*

*Women would rather share a high value Man than be saddled with a faithful loser. (Tomassi, 2013, p.53)*

*Three dates is ample time for a modern woman to be comfortable having sex with an high-value male. (RooshV, 2007, p. 128)*

*I had taught myself the words, skills, and body language of a man of charisma and quality. Now I needed to develop the confidence, self-worth, and inner game to back it up. Otherwise, I'd just be a fake, and women would sense it instantly. (Strauss, 2005, p. 114)*

In other instances, man-as-commodity metaphor was explicit, referring to men as commodities, or by a grade or rank, most typically on the 10 point HB (“hot babe” or “hot body”) scale:

*I had transformed from a 5 to a 6.5 on the attractiveness scale. (Strauss, 2005, p. 77)*

*Locking down a proven commodity – a Man with a reasonable amount of success and status – is the goal now. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 251)*

*In the SMP [sexual market place] you're really another commodity in hypergamy's estimation. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 217)*

*When men progressively become more aware of their sexual market value, the better their capacity develops to assess long term investment potential with women. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 195)*

*The great thing about being a man is that we can be relationship-worthy at any age. In fact, you'll be valued more by women at an age that's well past the physical peak of your early twenties. (RooshV, 2007, p. 131)*

Tomassi refers most often and most explicitly to men-as-commodities. This metaphor indicates that what gives a man value is his social status, confidence, power, charisma, and success. As RooshV points out, physicality does not have a great influence on a man's commodity value. Essentially, the value within a man-as-commodity must be developed over time.

*Man-as-waste-product.* Tomassi was the principle author of these metaphors, generally referring to men as "disposable":

*Men are the disposable sex. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 187)*

*Thus women modeled a social norm, that mirrors men's natural default position of disposability. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 75)*

Strauss, the other author to employ this metaphor, made a single reference to male genitals as "junk":

*So that's it. I stuck my junk in a chick. (Strauss, 2005, p. 73)*

Man-as-waste-product metaphor confirms what man-as-commodity metaphor reveals: there is no inherent value within men; this is something that must be developed.

*Man-as-investment.* This metaphor was used by two authors. According to RooshV, man-as-investment is a position of power for a man. Once a woman has invested, which is indicated by having sex with a man, it becomes possible to complain about the relationship:

*You can complain more after you've had sex with her, when she's more heavily invested in you. (RooshV, 2007, p.87)*

For Tomassi, man-as-investment lines up with a man's commodity value. He declares that a man's value peaks around age 36 and, provided that he has "maximized as much of his potential as possible" (Tomassi, 2013, p. 123), women will want to invest in him in accordance with "women's hypergamous directives" (Tomassi, 2013, p. 123). Tomassi references *hypergamy* frequently, without offering a succinct definition. Summarised, hypergamy, commonly known as marrying-up, suggests that women have an evolved, innate propensity to prefer the most socially dominant male they can obtain at any time, and this allows women to rapidly remove all emotional investment in one man and transfer it to another (Tomassi, 2013, p. 197-99). This metaphor implies that what gets invested are

sex or emotions and that once a woman is invested, a man has more power. It also suggests it is possible that a woman will withdraw all investment if a higher-value man becomes accessible.

*Man-as-product/merchandise.* This metaphor either explicitly referred to men as merchandise, or implied it, framing men as something “purchased” or as a “solution”:

*Hands off the merchandise.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 32)

*Women don't want a man who'll "do everything she says" because this sends the message that this man can be bought with even the prospect of a sexual encounter.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 87)

*I like telling her the bad news that she's not sexually satisfied because she'll be staring at me—the potential solution!* (RooshV, 2007, p. 108)

This suggests that man-as-product/merchandise metaphor points directly at a man as a human and at a man's body, rather than at a more abstract concept of man in relation to his achievements or status position among other men.

*Man-as-resource.* This metaphor was used by Tomassi in regards to *NEXTing*, the practice of ending relationships abruptly with women if it becomes clear that they are “using” a man (2013, p. 175), or in terms of women attempting to use social convention and the logic of reciprocal exchange to gain a “resource advantage” (2013, p. 75) over men. For example: “when a woman is appalled by the notion that she should be obligated to have sex with a man in exchange for a dinner and a movie (even over multiple occasions), this social convention is the root of that insult” (Tomassi, 2013, p. 75). Here, the resources are sex for women and time and money (i.e. multiple occasions of dinner and a movie) for men.

*Man-as-property.* There were two instances of this metaphor, both by Strauss, related to the desire of Ross Jeffries to “own” other pickup artists (2005, p. 122, 123). Essentially, the only appearance of man-as-property metaphor related to men being the property of other men.

The subcategory of men-as-things metaphor presents the view that men do not have inherent value, and only build up their value by cultivating power, success, confidence, charisma, and other acquired personal, social, and material attributes. This is most clearly exhibited in man-as-commodity metaphor, and is supported by other, less-used men-as-things metaphors.

***Men-as-people.*** The men-as-people metaphors used by all four authors were man-as-buyer, salesperson, beggar/poverty, and marketer. Otherwise, men-as-people metaphors

used by some authors were man-as-investor, slave, employee, farmer/shepherd, employer, and owner.

*Man-as-buyer.* This metaphor was used by all four authors at various levels of abstraction. A key concept in this metaphor is “qualifying,” specifically “qualifying to buy”: the process of being assessed by a salesperson to see if you have the credit worthiness or adequate capital to make a purchase. Man-as-buyer appeared in multiple guises: having sex with a woman before buying into a relationship with her, buying approval from other pickup artists, and buying into experiences.

*Don't buy the juice before you get a squeeze.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 109)

*In essence, it's the free samples before the buy.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 116)

*His subtlety is so amazing that before you know it, you are qualifying yourself to him and he has you right where he wants you.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 213)

*I'm not entirely sold, but I've been learning it a bit and want to see if it's a way to get to know people better, more quickly.* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 94)

Man-as-buyer is situated in a number of social and interactional market places. When man-as-buyer is assessing women and experiences, there is a connotation of skepticism, and man-as-buyer is a position of power. In relation to buying from other men, man-as-buyer is a position of subordination as indicated by needing to qualify.

*Man-as-salesperson.* This metaphor related strictly to sexual transactions. The currency men are paid in is sexual interaction, indicated by references to “closing”: to close in sales is to receive payment.

*Like a salesman, you need to make cold calls to get leads in the form of approaches.* (RooshV, 2007, p. vi)

*Your conversational partner will have to start qualifying herself to you. You're positioning yourself as the selector and seeing if she matches up to your requirements.* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 125)

*And, unlike Mystery, he was a closer.* (Strauss, 2007, p. 255)

*Even if she is truly not interested in the guy, he walks away on his his feet and not his knees, by playing “friend” with her and wasting still more time that could be far better spent with more productive prospects.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 67)

Man-as-salesperson is a position of power, indicated by women qualifying themselves. It also reveals the uncertainty of this process, indicated by needing multiple approaches or spending time with multiple prospects.

*Man-as-beggar/poverty.* All four authors used this metaphor. Instances of the words “needy” and “neediness” indicated man-as-beggar/poverty.

*“Excuse me,” because you don’t want her to think you want something from her (as a street beggar would).* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 174)

*Her sympathies are given by her own volition, never when they are begged for.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 233)

*If you haven’t showered in days, you’re wearing wrinkled clothing picked out of the hamper, and you feel like a homeless bum wearing them.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 18)

*It’s a disease AFCs [Average Frustrated Chumps] get: They become obsessed with a girl they’re neither dating nor sleeping with, and then start acting so needy and nervous around her that they end up driving her away.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 78)

Man-as-beggar/poverty describes a position of low-power and the excerpts illustrate the advice given to avoid giving this appearance.

*Man-as-marketer.* All four authors employed this metaphor. References to a man using demonstrations of higher value, seeking to influence and control perception, using social proof, persuasion, and provoking attraction and interest were coded man-as-marketer.

*Then we’ll focus on how to display the body language of a powerful male in order to increase attraction and interest from women.* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 28)

*Although I’ve suggested casually returning flirtations with other women as a means to amplifying desire and illustrating social proof, this is hardly the only, or best, means of fostering competition anxiety... The idea isn’t to instill and sustain a constant terror from fear of loss, but rather to covertly, subtly, demonstrate higher value; particularly when a woman’s attention is straying into comfortable, routine familiarity and she begins seeking indignation and drama from other sources.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 140)

*Keep it simple without sounding like an advertisement.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 78)

*I’d learned from Mystery that one of the most important things to do with an attractive woman was to demonstrate value.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 58)

Man-as-marketer metaphor illustrates the actions taken to make visible the acquired traits that give men their commodity value. As we have seen from the men-as-things subcategory, in this metaphorical structure men do not have inherent value, which makes man-as-marketer necessary.

*Man-as-employee.* This metaphor appears in three of the four books and also makes use of the word “qualify.” In this sense, one qualifies for a position with an employer. Other

instances of man-as-employee metaphor makes reference to earning and to being screened.

Man-as-employee is a subordinate power position in relation to women.

*Her love is based on hypergamic qualifications, performance, and is far more conditional than what he'd been led to believe, or convinced himself, love should be between them.*

(Tomassi, 2013, p. 168)

*You need to have earned some value.* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 122)

*Man-as-slave.* This metaphor was used by two authors, Strauss and Tomassi.

References to being “whipped” and to servitude were categorised as man-as-slave, though much use of this metaphor was explicit:

*Whatever you cannot say ‘No’to is your master and makes you it’s slave.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 174)

*Most women believe that their pussies are sufficient to hold their men in thrall for a lifetime.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 140)

*Tattoos and white slavery: That’s where self-improvement had led me.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 171)

*Some people may say I’m pussy-whipped, but I say it is my choice.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 178)

The following passage was particularly noteworthy as it implies that men ought to be the slave owners:

*She doesn’t want a slave to her intimacy since this puts her in the masculine role.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 99)

Man-as-slave metaphor describes both a subordinate power position in relation to women and a sense that dominance and positions of power are masculine.

*Man-as-farmer/shepherd.* This metaphor referenced tilling land, planting seeds, or tending a flock:

*A lot of “waiters” find all that a tough road to hoe.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 216)

*He still benefits from all of the above and plants the ‘seed of doubt’ in her about her initial estimation of his acceptability for her intimacy.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 67)

*You’ll maintain your stable like a sheep herder maintains his flock.* (RooshV, 2007, p. vi)

Man-as-farmer/shepherd metaphor implies dominance over land or animals, and so also relates to power positioning.

*Man-as-employer.* This metaphor referenced assessing women against a man’s requirements to see if she “qualifies for the position” and to interviewing and screening women:

*First, your ability to attract a sizable pool of quality 'applicants' is limited by factors you immediately have available. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 49)*

*Just like when a manager interviews you for a position and asks about your experience, you'll ask a girl in a fun and indirect way about the qualities you desire. (RooshV, 2007, p. 39)*

*I don't screen women. That would only limit my adventures. I only screen on how well I get treated. (Strauss, 2005, p. 117)*

Man-as-employer situates men in a position of power over women.

**Man-as-owner.** This metaphor was only concerned with owning social spaces where interaction takes place, e.g., a room or a venue (Strauss, 2005, p. 138; La Ruina, 2012, p. 30, 31, 35). This metaphor indicates a position of power by demonstrating status in relation to social space.

In summary, the subcategory of men-as-people metaphors relates to conceptualising positions of power within different forms of interaction. High-power positions, like man-as-salesperson, man-as-farmer/shepherd, and man-as-owner, are seen as desirable, and the authors use these metaphors to advise their readers how to emulate these positions. At the same time, low-power positions like man-as-beggar/poverty, man-as-slave, and man-as-employee are positioned unfavourably. The power positioning of the man-as-marketer metaphor is neutral: man-as-marketer enables man-as-salesperson. For the man-as-buyer metaphor, power positioning is not fixed and can suggest high-power when coupled with skepticism or low-power when paired with qualification.

**Men-as-organisations.** This subcategory of metaphor was infrequently used, appearing only as man-as-corporation metaphor. RooshV's conceptualised a man's goals like a corporation's mission statement (2007, p. v) and Strauss shared Mystery's idea that the community of pickup artists could come together to pool resources like a corporation (Strauss, 2005, p. 186).

Collectively, economic metaphor related to men frames men as commodities that begin with no inherent value but gain value over time with the development of certain attributes, of which physical appearance and age are less relevant than power, status, confidence, and charisma. These attributes allow men to produce attention of varying degrees of value, which they sell to women, and for which they are paid with sex.

**2.2 Women.** Economic metaphor related to women in the corpus also predominantly relates to the subcategories of women-as-things and women-as-people, with four references to women-as-organisations by one author.

**Women-as-things.** As things, women were most frequently commodities and property, with these metaphors being used by all four authors. Women were less frequently referred to as product/merchandise by all four authors. All other women-as-things metaphors – mineral/metal, investment, waste product, marketing, resource, dividend, vault, wealth, and opportunity – were used by some, but not all, authors.

*Woman-as-commodity.* This was the most frequently used metaphor about women, with a total of 264 instances coded. As with man-as-commodity metaphor, references to the quality, value, or grade of a woman were coded woman-as-commodity, including the use of qualifiers like “hot,” “beautiful,” “blonde,” or “young” (or varying permutations of adjectives related to physical appearance and age) before the word “woman” or “girl” or other stand-ins, often themselves metaphors, like “chick”:

*Hey, I have a policy of meeting the hottest girl in the club when I go out. My name's Rich. (Shake hands.) So, do you know her? (Point at another hot girl.).* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 90)

*I walked up to a cute white girl standing by herself and said, "Wow, you look drunk!"* (RooshV, 2007, p. 16)

*I had never seen real tits this big on a chick that skinny. Oh my fucking God, this was the hottest chick I've ever fucked: my first stripper and my first 9.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 353)

*Women, as is particular to their own Game, will naturally come down on the side of casting doubt on a man's valid assessment of a woman's potential value.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 217)

The HB (“hot babe” or “hot body”) 10 point scale was used in reference to women by Tomassi and Strauss. It was used more frequently than in reference to men. Often, a HB ranking used to describe a woman was accompanied by a hair colour, i.e. “a blonde 10,” etc.:

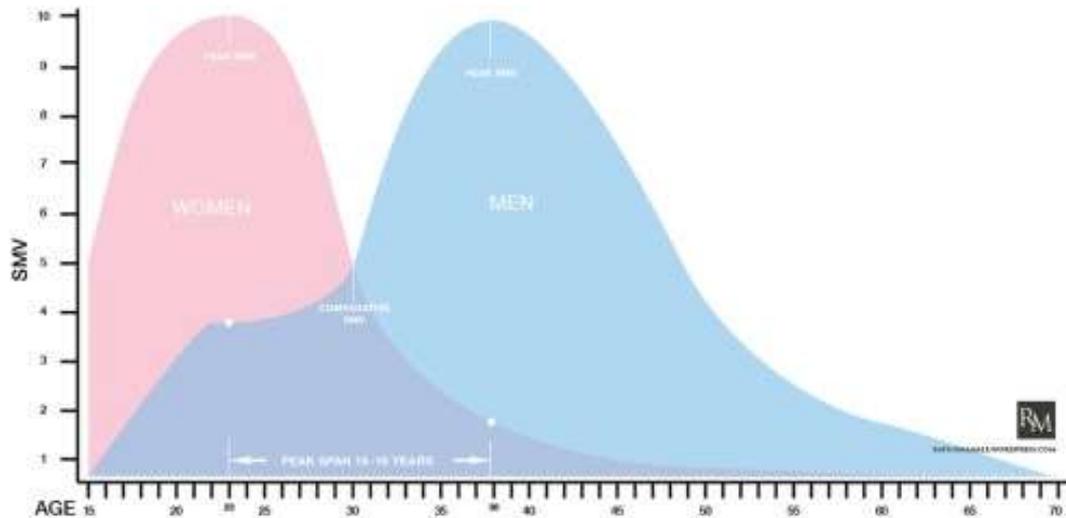
*They were my crash-test dummies, identifiable only by hair colors and numbers—a blonde 7, a brunette 10.* (Strauss, 2007, p. 87)

*Even semi-attractive women (HB 6-7) have a subconscious understanding that most inter-sexual encounters they have are mediated by their frequency.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 201)

One author, Tomassi, explicitly used the word commodity in reference to women:  
*People often make the mistake of assuming that having a wide variety of choices tends to cheapen the commodity, and to a degree this is accurate, but it also allows for a better,*

*learned awareness of which choice amongst the pool is common and which is of higher quality. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 58)*

Tomassi extended the commodity metaphor to include a conceptualization of a sexual market place (SMP), with men and women as separate commodities having a different sexual market value (SMV). Tomassi writes at length about this, including a plot to visualise sexual market valuation curves for men and women (2013, p. 120):



Tomassi posits that women are in denial about their commodity valuation in the sexual market place:

*In various contexts, women's SMV is without doubt the most discussed topic in the manosphere. Try as we may, convincing a woman that her sexual peak lay actually between 18 and 25 is always an effort in debating denial. For all the self-convincing attempts to redefine sexual valuation to the contrary, SMV for women is ultimately decided by Men, not by women. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 122)*

Tomassi made the most frequent reference to woman-as-commodity metaphor.

The corpus presents woman-as-commodity as beginning with inherent value that degrades over time. The attributes that contribute to this commodity valuation are physical beauty, thinness, youth, and breast size. Additionally, this metaphor suggests that race plays a role, with the highest commodity valuation given to white women, suggested by favourable references to blonde hair together with HB score. Attributes that develop overtime, like power, status, confidence, and charisma were not mentioned.

*Woman-as-property.* Most coded segments using this metaphor make use of possessive pronouns or other indicators of possession, i.e. "my girl," "mine," or "his target":

*If... if I wasn't gay, you'd be so mine. (Strauss, 2005, p. 32)*

*She's mine and I know it.* (La Ruina, 2012, p. vii)

*This is going to be the easiest time with your girl yet.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 104)

*They patiently wait for their one target, to the exception of all others.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 66)

Another cluster of woman-as-property metaphor specifies women as the property of other men. In some cases, a pickup artist approaching a woman with a partner is referred to as “stealing” or the woman is referred to as already “taken.”

*I'm not going to make a moral judgment about going after taken girls. I look at it this way: if a boyfriend has kept his game tight and makes his girl happy, she won't even look at me after my opener.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 143)

*Yes, I was going to steal my student's girl.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 85)

*...but also consider that men fought and killed each other for access to those breeding rights.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 183)

One author discusses the necessity of deciding which woman belongs to which pickup artist if approaching women with friends:

*That said, it's important for you and your friends to have a way to determine who gets which girl. The easiest way is to establish a rule that whoever approaches the group gets to pick which girl he wants.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 58)

Another author makes an explicit reference to women-as-property, albeit with some skepticism:

*Some will argue that it hasn't always been thus, and that in certain eras woman have been reduced to property like cattle. While that may have some merit I would argue that the perpetuation of this notion better serves the new feminine reality in promoting a need for recognition of victim status and thus a need for restitution.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 268)

In summary, woman-as-property metaphor suggests that, in this metaphorical structure, men and only men have property rights over women.

*Woman-as-product/merchandise.* This metaphor was used more sparingly. It references women as “goods,” as being displayed, or to the exchange of money for women.

*She's the one on display and being judged, not you.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 73)

*Women are damaged goods for you now?* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 99)

*I will pay you a hundred dollars right now to take these girls away from me.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 235)

*“Ready to go” girls...* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 159)

This metaphor suggests a low-power position. Analysis shows that woman-as-product/merchandise metaphor is used primarily as a reassurance of power position or as a reinforcer for other points being made in the text.

*Women-as-mineral/metal.* In this metaphor, women are referred to as gemstones, gold, paydirt, and “fool’s mate,” itself a play on “fool’s gold<sup>6</sup>”:

*If you never do day game, you’ll never have a chance to meet these gems.* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 183)

*Mystery calls this fool’s mate. I had spent an hour with this girl at La Salsa and two hours at the bar. I was about to experience my first fool’s mate.* (Strauss, 2007, p. 66)

*His long wait is over and he’s finally hit pay-dirt.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 155)

Woman-as-mineral reinforces the view that women are inherent stores of value and suggests that a woman’s value is concealed internally, as are mineral deposits.

*Woman-as-investment.* This metaphor described the investment of time and money into women, with sex as the resulting dividend:

*Don’t get caught in the trap of continuing to date a girl just because you’ve invested money and time into her.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 128)

*Drop the ones which don’t produce dividends, and non-exclusively enjoy the ones who do.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 151)

*Woman-as-waste-product.* This metaphor made references to women as “trash,” “garbage,” or made use of the phrasal verb “throw away”:

*Never root through the trash once the garbage has been dragged to the curb.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 228)

*She came from a good family, she was well-educated, and she had morals, unlike that materialistic club trash.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 90)

*He had this beautiful creature, full of sparkle and life, and he was just throwing it away.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 326)

This metaphor suggests that after a relationship with a woman has concluded, she becomes akin to a waste product.

*Women-as-marketing.* Women were indicated in this metaphor as social proof for or an endorsement of the man she was spending time with:

*Just because you have a girl-friend with a social circle of attractive female friends doesn’t mean you’ll get her endorsement for the one you’d prefer to get with.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 78)

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<sup>6</sup> Fool’s gold is a reference to the mineral pyrite, which has a similar surface appearance to gold while being a common mineral without much value

*You can buddy up with her and her friends as social proof later on.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 63)

Woman-as-marketing metaphor links together with man-as-marketer metaphor, in that a woman is used as an object to make visible and promote the acquired attributes that give men their value.

**Woman-as-resource.** This metaphor was explicit and direct. The woman (and, by proxy, her sexuality) is the resource, rather than her time or money, as in the case of man-as-resource metaphor:

*The rewards are plentiful, though: he gets first pick of available resources— and this includes women.* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 20)

*The power of secrecy and mysticism would need to be cultivated into the feminine as a resource.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 270)

**Woman-as-dividend.** This metaphor was used in reference to investment of time and money into pickup artist skills, with woman-as-dividend indicated as the “payoff”:

*The payoff for you will be better quality women and more power and confidence to get them.* (RooshV, 2007, p. vi)

**Woman-as-vault.** Two references were made to this metaphor by Strauss in relation to cracking code (2005, p. 22) or finding “...the combination to unlock a woman’s heart and legs” (2005, p. 11).

**Woman-as-wealth.** This metaphor was used once by Tomassi.

**Woman-as-opportunity.** This metaphor was used once by La Ruina.

This analysis of the subcategory women-as-things indicates that women are seen throughout the corpus as commodities that begin with inherent value that degrades over time and as property. Women are stores of value that can be owned. A woman’s value is inside of her, a metaphorical reference that suggests that a woman’s value is principally in the sex that she can produce. The other variants of economic metaphor in this subcategory are coherent with this construct of women as stores of value.

**Women-as-people.** The women-as-people metaphors used by all four authors were woman-as-buyer, sex worker, and employer. Otherwise, women-as-people metaphors used by some authors were woman-as-investor, slave, salesperson, employee, beggar/poverty, marketer, consumer, broker, and owner.

**Woman-as-buyer.** As buyers, women indicated interest, raised objections, and were subjected to qualification within the context of discourse on moving to a “close.”

*It's hard for your average chump to think of a woman showing base-line rudimentary IOIs (indicators of interest) and NOT think she's predestined for him by virtue of his self-acknowledged scarcity mentality. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 216-217)*

*Qualify a young girl by making it seem as if you're unsure of her life experience. (RooshV, 2007, p. 147)*

*As we talked, she held eye contact with me. She played with her hair. She looked for excuses to touch my arm. She leaned in when I leaned back. All the IOIs [indicators of interest] were there. (Strauss, 2005, p. 282)*

*If she objects to you verbally but still consents physically (for example, she says she shouldn't go back with you but is still walking hand in hand), it's usually a token objection. (La Ruina, 2012, p. 161)*

Further, most authors made explicit reference to woman-as-buyer, specifically as having “buyer’s remorse” after a sexual interaction with a man, or as buying something.

*You may have heard of something called “buyer’s remorse,” which in the context of dating is where you escalate the physical stuff too quickly with a girl and then she regrets it and doesn't want to see you again. (La Ruina, 2012, p. 164)*

*When a woman goes from hot to cold and back again, this IS the message – she's got buyers remorse. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 147)*

*BUYING TEMPERATURE—noun: the degree to which a woman is ready to make intimate physical contact with a man. Unlike attraction, a high buying temperature generally appears and fades quickly. To maintain a woman's level of physical interest over a longer period of time, a pickup artist attempts to pump her buying temperature with fast-paced routines. Origin: Tyler Durden. (Strauss, 2005, p. 440)*

These woman-as-buyer metaphors suggest that women pay with physical, sexual interaction when they buy. Additionally, with woman-as-buyer, man-as-salesperson becomes a position of power and selectivity. Man-as-salesperson has options, acts as a selector, and qualifies his buyers to make sure they are worthy to buy.

*Woman-as-sex-worker.* All four authors used this metaphor. Instances of “slut,” “whore,” and “ho” were coded to woman-as-sex-worker.

*They're not sluts and they don't want to be treated as such. (La Ruina, 2012, p. 160)*

*Unless you get a firm no or a “I really can't,” assume she's being wishy-washy so she won't appear to be a slut. (RooshV, 2007, p. 112)*

*I'm dressing for the outrageous club girls, the hot slutty girls, the ones I could never get. (Strauss, 2005, p. 150)*

Tomassi offers a clear definition of what is meant by “slut” in this context: a woman that has more than one concurrent male sexual partner.

*Women present a constant facade that the fear of being perceived as a slut (i.e. concurrently fucking more than one guy at a time). (Tomassi, 2013, p. 55)*

A striking instance of woman-as-sex-worker metaphor was used by RooshV, referring to some women as “attention whores”:

*These girls tend to be the biggest game players and attention whores. (RooshV, 2007, p. 55)*

When men act as salespeople, they are enticing a woman to buy and pay with sex. What women are buying in this metaphorical transaction is male attention. In this dynamic, the salesperson is in the position of power. With an attention whore, this dynamic is reversed. The metaphor implies that the woman is a sex worker, and sells her sex in exchange for attention. She sets the price. “Attention whore” is derogatory and within the context RooshV uses, it is meant to be disparaging. This may be because it signals this shift in dynamic from woman-as-buyer to woman-as-salesperson, in the guise of sex worker.

The use of woman-as-sex-worker metaphor suggests that she is aware of the value of the sex that she produces, and seeks to maximise her profits in terms of attention. It also suggests that having multiple concurrent partners reduces a woman’s value, which doesn’t seem at first to be metaphorically coherent. It becomes coherent, however, if high-power positions for women actively reduce their commodity value, rather than simply being less relevant to it.

*Woman-as-employer.* This metaphor suggests a dynamic where men must meet a list of criteria that they are tested on, are subjected to screening, and “work” to “earn” sexual attention. This metaphor was used in the context of ongoing relationships rather than one-off sexual encounters.

*This testing is a good sign, because it starts to happen once she’s becoming committed to the interaction and wants to find out if you’re the man for her. (La Ruina, 2012, p. 37)*

*Essentially a shit-test is used by women to determine one, or a combination of these factors: a.) Confidence – first and foremost b.) Options – is this guy really into me because I’m ‘special’ or am I his only option? c.) Security – is this guy capable of providing me with long term security? (Tomassi, 2013, p. 275)*

*Middle game starts with the phone, a modern invention that’s supposed to make it easier for two people to communicate, but it does the opposite for men, because women have taken its simple purpose and turned it into a complicated beast they use to screen men and to get attention. (RooshV, 2007, p. 84)*

*The less tactful among them will ask, within the first few minutes of a conversation, what kind of car you drive or what you do for work or what celebrities in the room you're friends*

*with in order to determine your social ranking and how useful you might be to them.*  
(Strauss, 2005, p. 354)

The employer-employee relationship in woman-as-employer metaphor is exhibited clearly by Tomassi, describing the exchange of men's independence for "dependable female intimacy" (2013, p. 98) or likening women to casting agents (2013, p. 101). Woman-as-employer metaphor is presented to warn readers about the tradeoffs involved in terms that structure the establishment of an ongoing sexual relationship as employment if the woman has authority and therefore a high-power position.

*Woman-as-investor.* This metaphor depicts women as investing in interactions, parenting, and in men:

*That's riskier on the first date because if she isn't well-invested in you.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 94)

*She's being asked to reveal information before she feels ready to invest in the interaction.* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 137)

*The obvious application of this for women is sharing parental investment.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 16)

For clarity on what a woman invests, we turn to Tomassi:

*It's also unethical, insincere and duplicitous when you also consider the planning involved in dissociating her emotional investment in favor of a new investment.* (Tomassi, 2013, p.184)

He makes explicit what other authors suggest implicitly: woman-as-investor invests emotions. The use of woman-as-investor metaphor suggests that once an emotional investment has been made, men move into a high-power position, though an uncertain one. It also suggests that an emotional investment makes sexual interaction more likely.

*Woman-as-slave.* This metaphor used the words "harem," "enslavement," or "slave," or referred to women serving "masters":

*Beta males have developed (evolved) methods which attempt to 'poach' potential females from an Alpha's harem, or at least in this case his perceived, potential harem.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 131)

*Instead of watching Mystery hunt for bisexual slave girls...* (Strauss, 2005, p. 193)

*In other words, if you believe that you need to have a harem and having a harem is normal, women will agree to it.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 271)

While woman-as-slave metaphor was used by only two authors, there are two telling observations from this data. First, woman-as-slave is portrayed as a desirable state – having a harem is good and normalised. Second, the mixed metaphor is striking. In the

examples above, women are “poached” from a harem, and slave girls are “hunted,” which are typically verbs used to describe animals rather than humans. As with woman-as-property metaphor, women-as-slaves are to be owned, more women-as-slaves (as in a harem) is considered positive, and taking a woman from the harem of another man is theft in the form of poaching.

*Woman-as-salesperson.* The limited instances of this metaphor were of interest, as there was a lack of consistency between the three authors that used it. For La Ruina, woman-as-salesperson is a positive sign, evidence of a woman’s enthusiasm for a man:

*Date close point. This is where she’s enthusiastic about meeting you for a date, to the point of chasing after and trying to close you. (La Ruina, 2012, p. 180)*

For Tomassi, woman-as-salesperson evokes a negative overtone of manipulation, in attempting to sell men on relational commitment equivalent to selling a job position (see woman-as-employer):

*Admittedly, most men are so sex deprived or so inexperienced early on in life that the sell is usually not a tough one for her. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 117)*

For RooshV, woman-as-salesperson is an attempt by a woman to get what she wants at a man’s expense. It illustrates the role reversal of the salesperson as power holder, and is presented as an affront:

*He doesn’t let the woman lead the interaction because it will result in her getting what she wants (attention and validation) at his expense. (RooshV, 2007, p.8)*

Notable in RooshV’s statement is the explicit mention of attention and validation as a man’s expense – this is what is paid to woman-as-salesperson.

*Woman-as-employee.* This metaphor was used infrequently. It made reference to men interviewing women (RooshV, 2007, p. 39), earning and working for attention (Strauss, 2005, p. 23, 33), or qualifying for approval (Tomassi, 2013, p. 117). Instances of woman-as-employee are framed as favourable.

*Woman-as-beggar/poverty.* This metaphor related to instances of begging for a man’s penis (RooshV, 2007, p. 123, 150).

*Woman-as-marketer.* As marketers, women principally offer endorsements or actively locate social proof for men (Tomassi, 2013, p. 78, 140). Woman-as-marketer is marketing man-as-commodity.

*Woman-as-consumer.* In this metaphor, woman-as-consumer consumes time (Tomassi, 2013, p. 52).

*Woman-as-broker.* This metaphor frames women as brokering access to sexuality, which is seen as a form of power over men (Tomassi, 2013, p. 46).

*Woman-as-owner.* In this metaphor, women seek to own control of the “frame,” or narrative, of a marriage (Tomassi, 2013, p. 239).

As a subcategory, economic metaphor related to women-as-people tells a story of power relations. In instances of low-power, such as woman-as-buyer and woman-as-slave metaphor, the framing is positive. In instances of high-power positions, like woman-as-employer and woman-as-salesperson, the framing is skeptical or negative, with a key exception in the writing of La Ruina. In short, the authors want women to be buyers, not salespeople.

***Women-as-organisations.*** This subcategory contained only woman-as-monopoly metaphor and was used only by Tomassi.

*Woman-as-monopoly.* In four coded segments, Tomassi offers a view that women desire a relational state where they are the only source of sexual intimacy for their male partners (Tomassi, 2013, p. 4, 45, 117, 219), and that this position gives them power. Tomassi directly states that woman-as-monopoly leads to a power reversal that results in a man becoming “marginalized” (2013, p. 45). Woman-as-monopoly metaphor points to power relations, specifically a shift in dynamics where a woman has less need to continue engaging sexually with her male partner in the absence of competition.

Collectively, economic metaphor related to women in the corpus presents women as commodities that begin with inherent value that degrades over time. The attributes that contribute to this commodity valuation are physical beauty, thinness, youth, and breast size. Acquired skills or characteristics like social status, confidence, charisma, or success do not influence the commodity valuation, and assuming high-power roles actively lowers a woman’s valuation. Women are seen as the property of men and only of men, and a woman in a low-power role is seen as desirable.

**2.3 Activities.** Economic metaphor related to social, relational, or sexual activities in the corpus appeared predominantly in the subcategories of activities-as-other-activities and activities-as-things, with three references to activities-as-organisations.

**Activities-as-other-activities.** All four authors used the other-activities metaphor, “sales call,” to describe social, relational, or sexual activities. Social, relational, or sexual activities were less frequently referred to by all four authors as marketing, gambling, work/employment, trade/deal/exchange, or crime. All other activities-as-other-activities metaphors – purchasing, consolidation, interviewing, and saving up – were used by some, but not all, authors.

*Activity-as-sales-call.* This metaphor related to making initial social contact with a woman and moving it toward physical or sexual interaction with that woman. It described the process from approaching a woman to the “close.” Approaches were “warm” or “cold” and required a pickup artist to “open” a woman:

*A cold approach is when you initiate a conversation with a girl and are unsure of the response you’ll get. She hasn’t shown prior interest in you and may not even have noticed you. A warm approach is one where you think the response will be at least somewhat positive because you’ve already made eye contact or received some sign of interest, like a smile, a wink, or a quick glance before looking away. (La Ruina, 2012, p. 57-58)*

*Like a salesman, you need to make cold calls to get leads in the form of approaches. (RooshV, 2007, p. vi)*

Women approached by pickup artists were described as “prospects”:

*It’s much easier to actually not “give a fuck” if you have other prospects going simultaneously. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 41)*

*That means that even when your game gets really good, you’ll still get rejected and have prospects that don’t convert. So step back and look at the big picture: one prospect will mean little in the grand scheme of things. (RooshV, 2007, p. 82)*

Gaining indications of interest (IOIs) was a key part of knowing whether to advance the interaction in activity-as-sales-call:

*Now it was time to separate the two of them and see if I could get enough IOIs to kiss-close Heather. (Strauss, 2005, p. 154)*

*To see a video of how I force an indication of interest (IOI)... (La Ruina, 2012, p. 60)*

During the course of activity-as-sales-call, it was also necessary to handle objections:

*By preempting her objections, you help her remain focused on meeting you again and not on the potential problems. (La Ruina, 2012, p. 154)*

*So every part of the pickup is designed simply to anticipate and disarm objections. (Strauss, 2005, p. 216)*

“Closes” involved getting some form of physical or sexual interaction (i.e. “kiss close”, “full close”), or at least the possibility of one in the future (i.e. “number close”).

*Any close—whether it's a number close (where all you do is get a girl's phone number), a kiss close, or a sex close—requires a certain degree of good rapport and connection. (La Ruina, 2012, p. 99)*

*The basic format is FMAC—find, meet, attract, close. (Strauss, 2005, p. 20)*

Strauss recommended using the *Yes Ladder* persuasion technique in pickup artistry, which he defines as follows:

*YES-LADDER—noun: a persuasion technique in which a person is asked a series of basic questions designed to elicit positive answers, increasing the likelihood that the person will also respond in the affirmative to a final, open-ended question. (2005, p. 448)*

RooshV was explicit with his application of activity-as-sales-call metaphor. The following excerpt explains why one wants prospects to act right away, before they change their minds:

*Sales pitches are designed to make you act right away, because marketers know that if you think about making a purchase too long, you won't make it. The same occurs with sex, a decision that depends on a girl's state and environment. (RooshV, 2007, p. 66)*

Activity-as-sales-call metaphor highlights the goal-orientation of pickup artists in this form of social interaction with women, specifically, how to convert social interaction into sexual interaction. When a prospect closes in this framework, she pays with sexual interaction and the man profits.

*Activity-as-marketing.* This metaphor referred principally to activity meant to display the value of the man, to draw attention, and to persuade.

*This line uses fake social proof, a guy with a girlfriend being higher value than a single guy out on the prowl. (La Ruina, 2012, P.87)*

*He still peacocks<sup>7</sup> for sure, but it takes far less now because guys like him have distilled the principle down to what draws attention in various situations. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 102)*

*"How do you make someone want something?" he asked, after making his students practice giving each other James Dean underlooks. "You give it value. You show that others like it. You make it scarce. And you make them work for it. I want you to think about other ways during lunch." (Strauss, 2005, p. 131)*

*Routines are a necessary component of your game because they display your value while filling in those first thirty minutes. (RooshV, 2007, p. 44)*

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<sup>7</sup> "PEACOCK—verb: to dress in loud clothing or with flashy accoutrements in order to get attention from women. Peacocking items include bright shiny shirts, light-up jewelry, feather boas, colorful cowboy hats, or anything else that makes one stand out in a crowd. Origin: Mystery" (Strauss, 2005, p. 445)

The overall structure of activity-as-marketing metaphor is that it is necessary to show what value a man has in order to attract “buyers,” as a man’s principle value relates to acquired traits that are not immediately visible, e.g., status and charisma.

*Activity-as-gambling.* Indicated by words like “luck,” “chance,” “making bets,” and “odds” together with direct references to gambling, e.g., poker, chips, slot machines, and casinos, this metaphor applied to a variety of situations involving risk. This metaphor highlighted that taking risks can pay off. It frequently encouraged developing skills to improve results when possible, rather than relying solely on luck.

*The pickup is a high stakes game, and to win you have to play hard.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 152)

*Knowing a girl is ready to be kissed is like knowing what poker hand your opponent is playing.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 75)

*However, if due to our preconditioning, we feel as though we got lucky, we won the lottery, or walked away with a rare and valuable prize, it doesn’t help us to understand what it is we did correctly in a given instance.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 271)

*It will always be more of a numbers game because it’s non-verbally direct, but with a bit of practice you can up your odds.* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 107)

This analysis shows that what is being gambled on are interactions with women, and the potential payoff is sexual interaction.

*Activity-as-work/employment.* Work and employment metaphors related to the actions of both men and women, structuring them as unappealing but necessary effort made in order to “earn” something.

*Usually, what you wish for doesn’t fall in your lap; it falls somewhere nearby, and you have to recognize it, stand up, and put in the time and work it takes to get to it.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 114)

*Do your best and push yourself to the limit, knowing that good things will come with hard work.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 136)

*This [one person needing another more than they are needed] is a foundation of any relationship, not just intersexual ones, but family, business, etc. relationships as well... I need my employer more than he needs me, ergo I get up for work in the morning and work for him... The same plays true for intersexual relationships.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 7)

*“Winging” is what I call it when you’re working together with a friend to meet girls.* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 191)

Analysis suggests that the effort made in activity-as-work/employment metaphor is structured along the lines of what men and women want in the marketplace. Women want attention and buy it with sex; men want sex and sell attention to get it. For men, activity-as-work/employment are those efforts directed to giving their attention more value by

acquiring characteristics like status and demonstrating them. For women, providing sex is work, or at least should be, according *Bang*:

*In theory, you shouldn't have to work hard to get a girl horny because she should be the one to get you horny. You should just have to lay back, allow her to take off your clothes, and let her please you with deep throat blowjobs.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 116)

In the context of the metaphorical structure of activity-as-work/employment, that “she should be the one” makes sense as it is consistent with women working to earn men’s attention with sex.

*Activity-as-trade/deal/exchange.* These center around ideas of reciprocity and negotiation: the process of deciding to give something in exchange for something else:

*She started to whine because of the long delay. I was thinking, "You're whining? Calm it down, China—seriously." I wasn't getting any arousal out of this deal.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 71)

*You'll be disappointed if you go down on a girl with the intention of having sex and get nothing in return.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 125)

*It's often at this stage that a man will resort to negotiation. Sometimes this can be as subtle as him progressively and systematically doing things for her in the hopes that she'll reciprocate with the same sexual / intimate fervor they used to have.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 13)

*I'd gotten the result, and now I was determined to get even better at dealing with women.* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 12)

This shows that in situations that feel like a trade/deal/exchange, the man hopes to acquire sexual interaction and endeavours to improve at making deals that result in sexual interaction.

*Activity-as-crime.* This metaphor associated instances of taking away control of various forms of social interactions and relationships to “theft” and related instances of lying or misleading to “fraud” and “blackmail.”

*Stealing a woman from the jocks who used to pick on him in school was a taste far sweeter than simply seducing a woman sitting alone in a cafe.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 234)

*If you get into a regular fuck-buddy relationship, you'll be tempted to steal her and make her your girlfriend, but be careful.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 145)

*If a man does everything in his power to avoid a pregnancy...and can prove his intent and the woman still becomes pregnant, even by fraud, the man is still liable for that pregnancy.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 221)

*Usually in this situation [I] would have tried to steal his girl.* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 205)

Activity-as-crime metaphor in this analysis highlighted areas where there was a sense of unjust loss of either perceived property (i.e. women) or of trust. Activity-as-crime metaphor was structurally coherent with woman-as-property metaphor.

*Activity-as-purchase.* This metaphor related believing to “buying into,” buying drinks as attempts to “buy” friendship, and to direct “costs” of various activities from living to dating.

*They buy into, and internalize, psychological social contrivances (i.e. ONEitis).* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 50)

*Another option to build some social proof is to get friendly with the bartender by tipping large or buying him shots. Don't try to buy his friendship.* (RooshV, 2007, p. 62)

*There is no such thing as cheap sex. It always comes with a price.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 412)

Activity-as-purchase metaphor also related to instances where the activity involved a man giving something up and invited the same skepticism as man-as-buyer metaphor. This suggests that activity-as-purchase is low-power activity.

*Activity-as-consolidation.* This metaphor referred either to reducing and strengthening skills (La Ruina, 2012, p. 133) or to a woman reducing options and strengthening a man's long-term commitment (Tomassi, 2013, p. 273, 276).

*Activity-as-interview.* This metaphor related to asking a woman questions during an initial social interaction (RooshV, 2007, p. 39, 49).

*Activity-as-saving.* Moving forward with physical, sexual interaction as quickly as possible in order to save time and money on the number of dates needed before getting the desired result (RooshV, 2007, p. 74) described as activity-as-saving.

What emerges from this analysis is that activity-as-other-activity metaphor relates broadly to attempts to reduce uncertainty and maintain power over interactions.

***Activities-as-things.*** There was less coherence and less overall usage of the subcategory of activities-as-things. The activities-as-things metaphor used by all four authors was activity-as-investment. Otherwise, activities-as-things metaphors used by some authors were activity-as-contract, commodity, equity, debt, hedge, wage, leverage, liability, dividend, and money.

*Activity-as-investment.* The most frequently used activities-as-things metaphor was activity-as-investment. The activity related to investment was developing better skills for picking up women, thinking/ideas, interacting socially, or maintaining relationships with

women. Many different investments were made: time, money, emotions, ego, and work. The expected “payoff,” “yield,” or “reward” related to women in various guises: “quality girls” and “notches,” for example.

This metaphor links together with woman-as-investment, man-as-investment, and activity-as-work metaphor, in that a key thing being invested is emotion, as that effort must be made for a payoff. As with activity-as-other-activity metaphor, one aim of activity-as-investment metaphor is to reduce uncertainty by reestablishing a sense of control.

*It'll pay off in the long run. (Strauss, 2005, p. 274)*

*It's important to realize that it will take a significant investment on your part before you start getting quality girls. (RooshV, 2007, p. 5)*

*Some of these concepts will grate on the investment your ego has in certain beliefs about how men and women ought to relate with each other. (Tomassi, 2013, p. iii)*

*Once she's invested in the interaction, it's time to take it personal. (La Ruina, 2012, p. 175)*

*Activity-as-contract.* Similar to activity-as-trade/deal/exchange, activity-as-contract made reference to negotiation and seeking agreement to give and receive various things. Activities related to contracts were signing a lease, getting married, starting a relationship, going to couples counselling, and going home with a woman. Contracts concerned sexual interaction.

*If I went, I'd have to sleep with her. That was part of the contract. (Strauss, 2005, p. 231)*

*Think long and hard before you sign away your freedom to one girl. (RooshV, 2007, p. 131)*

*Other times a married or long term couple may go to couples counseling to “resolve their sex issues” and negotiate terms for her sexual compliance. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 13)*

Crucially, activity-as-contract metaphor suggested a further loss of freedom than implied by activity-as-trade/deal/exchange. This loss of power was framed negatively; either cautioned against (“think long and hard”) or seen as ineffective regarding “obligated desire” (Tomassi, 2013, p. 195) in which the obligated party is the woman.

*Activity-as-commodity.* Two activities are commodified: male attention-giving and female sex-giving. In this metaphor, used only by Tomassi, male attention has value as a commodity because “the capacity to command attention determines self-esteem, peer status, sexual selectivity, and a host of other factors in a woman’s life” (2013, p.56). When it comes to female sex, Tomassi points out men’s desire toward “locking down a consistent supply of pussy” (2013, p. 220). This is coherent with man-as-commodity and woman-as-

commodity metaphor, and suggests that man-as-commodity is the raw material to produce another commodity in the form of attention, and that woman-as-commodity is used to produce another commodity in the form of sex. This view of activity-as-commodity, specifically the objectification and commodification of male attention-giving and female sex-giving, was buttressed throughout the corpus with the use of non-economic activity-as-object metaphor.

*Activity-as-object.* This metaphor was used by all four authors, and most frequently related partner sex to an object, to a thing that one can “get,” “have,” and accumulate. This accumulation was framed as positive and desirable.

*My morals mean I get laid less than I might otherwise, but I can genuinely say I love women and don't want to hurt them unnecessarily. (La Ruina, 2012, p. 194)*

*I need sex + women have sex + I must discover what is required for me to get sex from women + I will perform/embody/identify with said requirements = woman will reciprocate with her sexual intimacy. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 87)*

*No more than 10% of men have an innate ability to talk to girls, to build attraction, and to rack up more notches in a year than most men get in their lifetimes. (RooshV, 2007, p. 4)*

*I mean, sure, it's better to be a loser who gets laid than one who doesn't, but we're talking about a championship level of game now. (Strauss, 2005, p. 253)*

Activity-as-object metaphor reflects a wider structural view that sex, specifically female sex-giving, is a thing. Activity-as-commodity metaphor extends this, making it clear that sex-as-object has a value.

*Activity-as-equity.* The time, money, and emotions a man puts into a relationship are related to a sense of amassing long-term security through ownership. This metaphor was only used by Tomassi, principally as a warning to readers that relational equity is a fallacy (2013, p.244).

*Activity-as-debt.* Centred around both men and women being put into positions where they “owe” or have an obligation to someone, this metaphor included a woman owing a man for making her more attractive (La Ruina, 2012, p. 87), being obligated to meet a man again to return his necklace (Strauss, 2005, p. 81), and a skeptical view on the idea that men owe women security in a relationship (Tomassi, 2013, p. 104). Analysis suggests that activity-as-debt metaphor relates principally to instances of outright, though not necessarily forceful, manipulation of interactions to achieve a desired result.

*Activity-as-hedge.* This metaphor related actions by men to reduce rejection and sexual scarcity, and by women to reduce relational insecurity in the form of infidelity, to insurance against those outcomes. Rejection was insured against by focusing on a single woman, or type of woman, for seduction (Tomassi, 2013, p. 21). Sexual scarcity was insured against by “spinning plates,” that is, having multiple concurrent female sexual partners (Tomassi, 2013, p. 43). Women insured against relational insecurity via infidelity by keeping their male partner “necessitous” (Tomassi, 2013, p. 115). This is structurally coherent with metaphors relating to investment and to men and women as investors, as a hedge is insurance on an investment.

*Activity-as-wage.* This metaphor, when it was used, related a regular wage to regular sexual interaction with a woman (Tomassi, 2013, p. 98) or to the reward for “sleazy” behaviour (RooshV, 2007, p.111). It was structurally coherent with a woman paying for male attention with sex.

*Activity-as-leverage.* This related to women withholding or otherwise using their availability for sexual activity to influence the behaviour of men (Tomassi, 2013, p. 140, 191). Coherent with the concept that women should pay for attention with sex, this metaphor suggests that withholding sex to gain attention is like using borrowed funds secured against an asset.

*Activity-as-liability.* This metaphor related outside male attention after a woman forms an exclusive relationship as a risk to that woman (Tomassi, 2013, p.77-8).

*Activity-as-dividend.* Often used to defend ending relationships with women that “don’t produce dividends” (Tomassi, 2013, p. 151) in the form of sexual interaction.

*Activity-as-money.* This metaphor identified male attention as “the coin of the realm in female society” (Tomassi, 2013, p. 56).

In summary, activity-as-thing metaphor was structurally coherent with other economic metaphor used in the corpus and supported this other economic metaphor by objectifying actions. Activity-as-thing metaphor clarified what is invested by man-as-investor and woman-as-investor: time, money, emotions, ego, and work. Additionally, this analysis suggests that when men and women exchange attention and sex in this framework, these activities are commodity objects, produced from the raw material of man-as-commodity and woman-as-commodity.

**Activities-as-organisations.** This subcategory was rarely used. There was a single instance of activity as each of stock market, industry, and business.

*Activity-as-stock-market.* This metaphor addresses the overall approach a man takes to initiating sexual interactions with women (i.e. Game). It is related to the stock market, with “cyclical ups and down [sic]” (RooshV, 2007, p. 133). This is structurally coherent with other metaphors related to investment.

*Activity-as-industry.* This metaphor related accidental pregnancy to “a cottage industry” made up of “professional mommies” (Tomassi, 2013, p. 221). It is structurally coherent with woman-as-employer metaphor, and other metaphor in the corpus that puts women in a high-power position compared to men.

*Activity-as-business.* Activity-as-business metaphor describes verbally challenging a woman to explain her positive attributes other than physical beauty to “a tricky business” (La Ruina, 2012, p. 123). This metaphor is not immediately structurally coherent, which suggests that this is likely an idiomatic reference.

In summary, economic metaphor related to social, relational, or sexual activities fit together with economic metaphor related to men and to women. Metaphor that related an activity to another activity centered on reducing uncertainty. Metaphor relating activity to things objectified actions and therefore helped with overall economic metaphorical coherence. Activity-as-organisation metaphor related to uncertainty, investment, and power positioning between men and women.

**2.4 Inanimate Objects/Concepts.** Economic metaphor related to inanimate objects/concepts was infrequently used. Only Tomassi and Strauss used economic metaphor in this category. When this metaphor was used, subcategories included concept-as-marketeer, concept-as-market, concept-as-liability, inanimate-object-as-marketing, and inanimate-object-as-lead metaphor.

**Concept-as-market.** This subcategory of metaphor related sexual sociality to a market, where one is either “on the market” or “off the market,” and where individuals are seeking “insulation” from market volatility.

*"I'm still having fun helping the guys here get girls, but I'm off the market," Sweater said when we asked how he felt about his decision to settle down with one woman. (Strauss, 2005, p. 169)*

*Marriage is no insulation from the sexual marketplace. (Tomassi, 2013, p. 119)*

Sexual-sociality-as-market is coherent with metaphor related to commodities.

**Concept-as-marketeer.** Within this subcategory of metaphor, Tomassi related the feminine gender collectively to an entity that acts to manipulate the perceived value of women. This is consistent with woman-as-commodity metaphor.

*Like any great economic entity, the feminine imperative lives and dies by its ability to inflate its value in the marketplace. Essentially the feminine imperative is a marketeer.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 230)

**Concept-as-liability.** In this subcategory of metaphor, Tomassi related internalised ideals about relationships with women to potentially costly risks. This is coherent with metaphor related to investment.

*Among these is bearing the burden of realizing what you've been conditioned to believe for so long were comfortable ideals and loving expectations are really liabilities.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 105-6)

**Inanimate-object-as-marketing.** This subcategory of metaphor related deliberately selecting items of clothing to attract attention. This is coherent with metaphor related to marketing.

*Just selecting a tie or a pair of shoes for an occasion may seem innocuous enough, but subconsciously you make choices and develop preferences for certain items in certain situations because you think they improve your appearance, and thus your odds for drawing attention to yourself.* (Tomassi, 2013, p. 102)

**Inanimate-object-as-lead.** This subcategory of metaphor related the piece of paper that a woman's telephone number is written on to "wood": a bad lead. This is coherent with metaphor related to sales.

*After watching the movie Boiler Room, about ruthless cold-calling stockbrokers, Mystery had decided that phone numbers were wood—in other words, they were a waste of paper.* (Strauss, 2005, p. 176)

This analysis of economic metaphor related to inanimate objects and concepts in the corpus under study shows that this category of metaphor was rarely used. When economic metaphor related to inanimate objects and concepts was used, it was consistent with the structure of economic metaphor used in categories related to commodities, investment, marketing, and sales.

### 3. Girls & Women, Boys & Men: Word Ratios

Early in the close reading data-gathering process, the frequent use of the word "girl" to describe an adult woman was observed. While commonly used in colloquial English speech,

within the context of strategizing approaches to initiating sexual interaction, the use of “girl” was striking, as girls are children. Equally of interest to texts concerned with sexual interaction was the absence of references to safer sex practices

Using the lexical search tool in MAXQDA 2018, the corpus was subjected to word counting and word count ratios were produced for each book. The frequencies of the following words in each text were analysed, including all of their grammatical permutations: girl, woman, boy, man, and condom. Ratios were produced by comparing the total instances of a word and its permutations in the text with the total word count. The results are displayed in the following tables:

<b>The Game</b>			
Total Word Count	155800	Total Unique Words	11814
Total Pages	452		
Total Girl/Girls	455	Girl(s) to Word Count	0.292%
Total Woman/Women	590	Woman(en) to Word Count	0.379%
Total Boy/Boys	29	Boy(s) to Word Count	0.019%
Total Man/Men	248	Man(en) to Word Count	0.159%
Total Condom(s)	23	Condom to Word Count	0.015%

<b>Bang</b>			
Total Word Count	63759	Total Unique Words	4814
Total Pages	140		
Total Girl/Girls	656	Girl(s) to Word Count	1.029%
Total Woman/Women	125	Woman(en) to Word Count	0.196%
Total Boy/Boys	2	Boy(s) to Word Count	0.003%
Total Man/Men	99	Man(en) to Word Count	0.155%
Total Condom(s)	22	Condom to Word Count	0.035%

<b>The Rational Male</b>			
Total Word Count	112554	Total Unique Words	9330
Total Pages	293		
Total Girl/Girls	200	Girl(s) to Word Count	0.178%
Total Woman/Women	1474	Woman(en) to Word Count	1.310%
Total Boy/Boys	23	Boy(s) to Word Count	0.020%
Total Man/Men	1147	Man(en) to Word Count	1.019%
Total Condom(s)	16	Condom to Word Count	0.014%

The Natural			
Total Word Count	49437	Total Unique Words	4415
Total Pages	181		
Total Girl/Girls	286	Girl(s) to Word Count	0.579%
Total Woman/Women	257	Woman(en) to Word Count	0.520%
Total Boy/Boys	1	Boy(s) to Word Count	0.002%
Total Man/Men	92	Man(en) to Word Count	0.186%
Total Condom(s)	3	Condom to Word Count	0.006%

In two texts, *Bang* and *The Natural*, the ratio of girl to total word count is higher than the ratio of woman to total word count. In particular, in *Bang*, the ratio of girl to total word count is around five times greater than the ratio of woman to total word count. The ratio of girl to total word count is lower in *The Game* than the ratio of women to total word count. It is surprising that the ratio of woman to total word count in *The Rational Male* dwarfs the ratio of girl to total word count: woman and its grammatical permutations are used more than 7 times more frequently in *The Rational Male* than girl and its grammatical permutations. The ratio of boy to total word count and man to total word count is lower across the corpus compared to girl and woman. Also remarkable is the much higher ratio of man to total word count in *The Rational Male* when compared to the remainder of the corpus.

Considering this corpus relates to initiating sexual interactions with women, it could be expected that words referring to women appear more frequently than words referring to men. It is possible that, were these methods applied to a larger sample, word frequencies could be probability indicators for particular worldviews present in the text. Both *Bang* and *The Rational Male* represent the “manosphere,” and the authors of these texts are active as men’s rights activists. It’s possible that much higher incidences of “girl” or “man” compared to “woman” or “boy” could be indicators of texts authored by people aligned with men’s rights activists.

Additionally, despite writing about how to initiate sexual interactions, references to safer sex practices are lacking across the corpus. No individual book has a greater than 0.035% incidence of condom and its grammatical permutations when compared to total word count. None of the texts in the corpus under study made any recommendations about STI testing.

Word ratios and word counts have been included to provide general quantitative data about the content of the corpus, and to highlight the absence of safer sex information. While not a central focus of this research, word ratios in books written for masculine subcultures could be useful in quickly indicating the probability of various worldviews, a possible avenue for future research.

#### **4. Affective Response**

Affective response (emotional reactions to the content) was tracked throughout this project. During the first reading of each book the researcher orally discussed her affective experiences with friends and academic colleagues. During the close reading of each book formal affective response memos were taken. Each affective response memo captured an affective narrative: direct emotional expression in normative speech, as well as a classification of the affect expressed. As an example, memo 784 (16/08/2018) reads: “Narrative - Argh fuck no not more evo bio clap trap; Affect - Bemused frustration.”

Data from the first round of readings, in which each text was approached as a consumer-reader, remains in the form of remembered initial impressions. *The Game*, despite its formidable size, was quick to read and left the impression of a compelling, interesting, and fun story. *The Rational Male* was slow to read. The narrative style was jumbled and often unclear. The researcher frequently had to take naps during the course of the first reading. *The Rational Male* left the impression of an exhausting, confused, and aggressive treatise on gender. *Bang* was quick to read, using simple language and a casual, conversational tone that gave the author an endearing voice. Equally, that endearing voice became jarring when coupled with shocking advice or language. The take-away impression of *Bang* was that it was shocking and often controversial but overall enjoyable to read. *The Natural* was quick to read, though left the impression of being rather flat, sparse, and boring.

During close reading, a total of 171 formal affective response memos were taken. Total affective memos and classifications of affect were tallied for each of the books in the corpus under study. A summary table of affective response is provided below. It lists the total affective memos taken, the total classified affect logged (each memo had 1-4 affective



**Bang.**



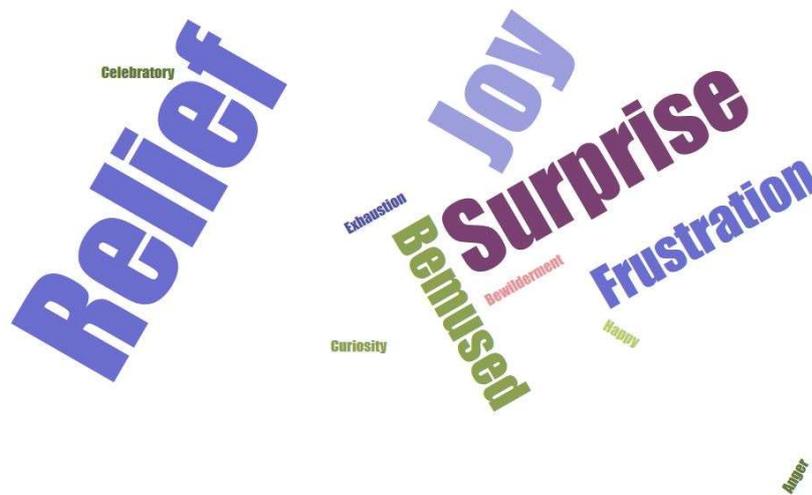
On close reading, *Bang* most frequently elicited expressions of disgust, frustration, anger, dread, and sadness.

***The Rational Male.***



On close reading, *The Rational Male* most frequently elicited expressions of frustration, anger, sadness, incredulity, and exasperation. Notably, frustration was elicited 36 times, appearing in nearly half of all affective response memos.

***The Natural.***



On close reading, *The Natural* most frequently elicited expressions of relief, joy, and surprise. It is important to note that *The Natural* was the final book to be close read. The degree of relief expressed during the close reading likely indicates the contrast of *The Natural* to *The Rational Male*, which was close read immediately prior.

These affective response data provide additional context to this study. When a researcher acts as research instrument, they are not immune to their human experience and unconscious bias. This aggregate affect provides a rich picture of the researcher's close reading experience. Frustration was experienced in reaction to factual inaccuracies and cultural myths. Sadness appeared at the dehumanizing, distancing tone of the language used in the corpus. The researcher experienced anger in response to demeaning, dismissive passages about women. Relief and joy were experienced when close reading *The Natural* at teachings about using empathy as a man to connect with women and at explicit statements about liking women and enjoying their company as people. Additionally, *The Natural* contains one particularly bold statement for the genre:

*If you hate women and just want to fuck them, some of this will come through in your eyes and women won't like you. If this is you, you don't need PUA Training, you need a psychotherapist. Your intent should be as healthy and sincere as possible.* (La Ruina, 2012, p. 134)

Captured in Memo 817 (17/08/2018), the researcher notes: "Narrative - Holy fucking shitballs. He's just called out the misogynists and told them that they need therapy. Damn! Affect - Celebratory, surprised, relieved, happy." This surprise resulted from the direct statement that misogyny ("if you hate women") needs therapy, not pickup artist training.

In short, this summary of affective response data is included to provide the emotional context within which data was gathered and to illuminate the researcher's humanity throughout the research process.

## 5. Toward a Concept of Instrumental Sex

Erotic capital, when defined as “the quality and quantity of attributes that an individual possesses, which elicit an erotic response in another” (Green, 2008, p. 29), points toward sex as an end in itself. The sexual fields approach toward understanding sexual stratification directly considers sex as an end goal, and erotic capital as what makes an individual more or less able to realise that goal.

Martin & George hypothesised that, when the sexual and economic fields have greater autonomy from each other, sexual selection feels more like a market due to the “manipulation of scarcity and competition” (2006, p. 129). This analysis offers some data in support of this premise, and also suggests two additional considerations. First, many of the academics studying sexual stratification, including Martin & George, are men. All of the authors represented in the corpus under study are heterosexual men, writing for an intended audience of heterosexual men. One possibility is that the greater autonomy of the sexual and economic fields makes sexual selection feel more like a market from the perspective of men, albeit not necessarily from the perspective of women.

Second, this analysis suggests that sex as metaphorically constructed within pickup artist handbooks is not an end in itself. Rather, sex is a commodity, a thing or substance, that can be accumulated or exchanged. In this market, men are not active in sex itself, but in the actions undertaken to acquire it. Sex is treated as a means to another end. For women in this metaphorical structure, sex is a means to the end of male attention: time, money, and emotions. For men, the end for which sex is a means is not explicitly named.

This analysis points toward a concept of *instrumental sex*, sex as a means, running in tandem with *experiential sex*, sex as an end. The sexual fields approach and its erotic capital as conceptualised by Green addresses sex as an end. The market metaphor, as well as Catherine Hakim's competing conceptualisation of *erotic capital*, appear to address sex as a

means. Hakim's analysis suggests that erotic capital<sup>8</sup> is a highly convertible form of capital that could play a key role in empowering women in a patriarchal society (2010, p. 499). Green critiques Hakim's analysis for failing to situate erotic capital within a field, rendering it "conceptually flawed, asociological and incapable of remedy" (2013, p. 139).

That said, there is a remarkable congruence between Hakim's analysis of erotic capital, particularly her observations about the power erotic capital gives women over men, and the metaphorical construction of woman-as-commodity in the corpus under study. Sexual stratification when sex is a means may look different compared to when sex is the end. Deliberately distinguishing between experiential and instrumental interest in sexual interaction in the analysis of sexual sociality could prove fruitful to future sociosexual research.

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<sup>8</sup>Hakim's erotic capital is comprised of six or seven elements: beauty, sex appeal (sexual attractiveness), charm, liveliness, social presentation, sexual competence, and possibly fertility depending on culture (2010, p. 500-501)

# CONCLUSION

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Sexual sociality is not a market, defined here as a mercantile market as understood within economics, despite being conceptualised colloquially and academically as such. Attempts to apply market analysis to modelling sexual stratification result in tautology, where opposite findings can equally be explained away as utility-maximising functions. The predominance of market metaphor may result from greater autonomy between the sexual and economic fields, which data from this study partially support. An autonomous sexual field with autonomous erotic capital can make sexual selection seem like a market due to a sense of scarcity and competition. In essence, sexual sociality can feel (to some) like a market, even though it does not function as a market.

In this qualitative content analysis of four "pickup artist" handbooks, economic metaphor was used to describe the process for men of attracting women with the aim of initiating sexual interaction. The emergent metaphorical structure of the sexual market place was coherent across the corpus and exemplifies an Anglophonic, heterosexual male understanding of sexual sociality. The market metaphor was used to explain advice recommending future action in sexual social space on the basis of a folk understanding of market functions.

This matters for two reasons. First, market metaphor influences research into sexual sociality by structuring how researchers formulate questions and select methods. This risks findings that reproduce and consolidate this metaphor rather than reflect reality. Second, market metaphor guides normative sociosexual action. The men that consult pickup artist handbooks for information about initiating sexual interactions receive a market-based view about how these interactions work. They act on the basis of this view.

The analysis here shows that an influential factor in the persistence of the market metaphor may be that interest in sexual sociality can be experiential (sex as an end) and instrumental (sex as a means). Without distinguishing between these types of interest, any analysis of sexual stratification is, at best, only partially complete. The sexual field concept is a useful analytical tool for revealing the workings of experiential interest, as well as distinguishing this from instrumental interest. This discernment makes it possible to develop new research directions and a more accurate understanding of the ordering of sexual desiring.

# APPENDIX

## 1. Categories & Codes

In these tables, EM means “economic metaphor” and OM means “other metaphor.” Categories, subcategories, codes, and total code counts are listed in the tables.

Categories	Codes	Code Counts
EM Men	<b>EM Men - AS THINGS</b>	
	Commodity	133
	Waste Product	11
	Investment	9
	Product/Merchandise	6
	Resource	2
	Property	2
	<b>EM Men - AS ORGANISATION</b>	
	Corporation	2
	<b>EM Men - AS PEOPLE</b>	
	Investor	33
	Buyer	32
	Salesperson	31
	Beggar/Poverty	25
	Marketer	19
	Slave	18
	Employee	18
	Farmer/Shepherd	5
	Employer	5
Owner	4	
Categories	Codes	Code Counts
EM Women	<b>EM Women - AS ORGANISATIONS</b>	
	Monopoly	4
	<b>EM Women - AS THINGS</b>	
	Commodity	264
	Property	69
	Mineral/Metal	11
	Product/Merchandise	10
	Investment	7
	Waste Product	5
	Marketing	4
	Resource	3

	Dividend	3
	Vault	2
	Wealth	1
	Opportunity	1
	<b>EM Women - AS PEOPLE</b>	
	Buyer	63
	Sex Worker	26
	Employer	23
	Investor	20
	Slave	11
	Salesperson	8
	Employee	5
	Beggar/Poverty	2
	Marketer	4
	Consumer	1
	Broker	1
	Owner	1
<b>Categories</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Code Counts</b>
<b>EM Activities</b>	<b>EM Activities - AS ORGANISATIONS</b>	
	Stock Market	1
	Industry	1
	Business	1
	<b>EM Activities - AS ACTIVITIES</b>	
	Sales Call	160
	Marketing	51
	Gambling	47
	Work/Employment	41
	Trade/Deal/Exchange	30
	Crime	24
	Purchase	14
	Consolidate	5
	Interview	2
	Saving	1
	<b>EM Activities - AS THINGS</b>	
	Investment	36
	Contract	23
	Commodity	23
	Equity	9
	Hedge	8
	Debt	8

	Wage	3	
	Leverage	2	
	Liability	1	
	Dividend	1	
	Money	1	
<b>Categories</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Code Counts</b>	
<b>Inanimate Objects/Concepts</b>	EM Sexual Sociality - Market	27	
	EM Feminine Gender - Marketeer	9	
	EM Ideals or Marriage - Liability	4	
	<b>OM/EM Clothing</b>		
	Uniform	1	
	Marketing	1	
	OM Women's Fertility - Clock	8	
	<b>OM/EM Phone Numbers</b>		
	Lead	1	
	Consolation Prize	1	
	<b>OM Relationship</b>		
	House	2	
Hotel	1		
<b>Categories</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Code Counts</b>	
<b>OM Men</b>	<b>OM Men - AS NATURAL PHENOMENA</b>		
	Animal	104	
	Plant	7	
	Planet	5	
	Land	2	
	Force of Nature	1	
	<b>OM Men - AS PEOPLE</b>		
	Child	34	
	Athlete	12	
	Teacher	3	
	Hunter	4	
	Woman	1	
	Baker	1	
	Apprentice	1	
	<b>OM Men - AS THINGS</b>		
Status	1		

	Machine	83
	Object	35
	Prize	22
	Toy	7
	Medicine	1
<b>Categories</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Code Counts</b>
<b>OM Women</b>	<b>OM Women - AS SUPERNATURAL BEINGS</b>	
	Devil	1
	<b>OM Women - AS NATURAL PHENOMENA</b>	
	Animal	156
	Plant	8
	Land	5
	Cloud	1
	<b>OM Women - AS PEOPLE</b>	
	Men	14
	Athlete	14
	Friend	5
	Child	2
	<b>OM Women - AS THINGS</b>	
	Object/Thing	143
	Machine	23
	Prize	15
	Disease	7
	Food	5
	Status	4
	Game	1
<b>Categories</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Code Counts</b>
<b>OM Activities</b>	<b>OM Activities - AS NATURAL PHENOMENA</b>	
	Disease/Illness	38
	Plant	7
	Land	1
	<b>OM Activities - AS THINGS</b>	
	Object	96
	Story	33
	Medical/Medicine	29
	Reward	23
	Technology/Tool	15
	Addiction/Drug	15
	Food	14
	Path	5

	Program	3
	Panites	1
	<b>OM Activities - AS ACTIVITIES</b>	
	Sport/Competitive Game	66
	Performance	22
	Trial	6
	Legislative Activity	5
	Hobby	2
	Hunting	1
	Bodybuilding	1
	Arrest	1
	Threesome	1
	Motorcycle Riding	1
<b>References to Violence</b>	Weapon/Violence	265

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