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Seeing Privilege Where It Isn't: Marginalized Masculinities and the Intersectionality of Privilege

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When discussing privilege, we often consider it a zero-sum quantity, one either has it or one does not. Since privilege is distributed along a range of axes, we consider three sites in which male privilege is compromised by marginalization by other statuses: disability status, sexuality, and class. Employing a Symbolic Interactionist approach, derived from Erving Goffman's Stigma (1963), we observe strategies employed by disabled men, gay men and working class men to reduce, neutralize, or resist the problematization of masculinity as a constitutive element of their marginalization by class, sexuality, or disability.

Systems of privilege exist worldwide, in varying forms and contexts, and while this examination of privilege focuses on only one specific instance (the United States), the theorizing of said privilege is intended to be universal. This is because no matter the context, the idea that "privilege is invisible to those who have it" has become a touchstone epigram for work on the "super-ordinate"—in this case, White people, men, heterosexuals, and the middle class (Privilege: A reader, 2010). When one is privileged by class, or race or gender or sexuality, one rarely sees exactly how the dynamics of privilege work. Thus, efforts to make privilege visible, such as McIntosh's (1988) "invisible knapsack" and the "Male Privilege Checklist" or the "heterosexual questionnaire" have become staples in college classes.

Yet unlike McIntosh's autobiographical work, some overly-simple pedagogical tools like the "heterosexual questionnaire" or "Male Privilege checklist" posit a universal and dichotomous understanding of privilege: one either has it or one does not. It's as if all heterosexuals are white; all 'males' are straight. The notion of intersectionality complicates this binary understanding. Occasionally, a document breaks through those tight containers, such as Woods' (2010) "Black Male Privilege Checklist," but such examples are rare.

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We propose to investigate sites of inequality within an overall structure of privilege. Specifically, we look at three groups of men—disabled men, gay men, and working class men—to explore the dynamics of having privilege in one sphere but being unprivileged in another arena. What does it mean to be privileged by gender and simultaneously marginalized by class, sexuality, or bodily status?

This is especially important, we argue, because, for men, the dynamics of removing privilege involve assumptions of emasculation—exclusion from that category that would confer privilege. Gender is the mechanism by which the marginalized are marginalized. That is, gay, working class, or disabled men are seen as "not-men" in the popular discourse of their marginalization. It is their masculinity—the site of privilege—that is specifically targeted as the grounds for exclusion from privilege. Thus, though men, they often see themselves as reaping few, if any, of the benefits of their privileged status as men (Pratto & Stewart, 2012).

Of course, they do reap those benefits. But often, such benefits are less visible, since marginalized men are less likely to see a reduced masculinity dividend as much compensation for their marginalization. This essay will explore these complex dynamics by focusing on three groups of marginalized men: working class, disabled, and gay men.

Doing Gender and the Matrix of Oppression

In the United States, there is a set of idealized standards for men. These standards include being brave, dependable, and strong, emotionally stable, as well as critical, logical, and rational. The ideal male is supposed to be not only wealthy, but also in a position of power over others. Two words sum up the expectations for men: hegemonic masculinity (cf. Connell, 1995). That is, the predominant, overpowering concept of what it is to be a "real man."

The idealized notion of masculinity operates as both an ideology and a set of normative constraints. It offers a set of traits, attitudes and behaviors (the "male role") as well as organizing institutional relationships among groups of women and men. Gender operates at the level of interaction (one can be said to "do" gender through interaction) as well as an identity (one can be said to "have" gender, as in the sum total of socialized attitudes and traits). Gender can also be observed within the institutionally organized sets of practices at the macrolevel—states, markets, and the like all express and reproduce gender arrangements. One of the more popular ways to see gender is as an accomplishment; an everyday, interactional activity that reinforces itself via our activities and relationships. "Doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures'" (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

These "natures," or social *norms* for a particular gender, are largely internalized by the men and women who live in a society, consciously and otherwise.

In other words, these social norms become personal identities. Moreover, it is through the intimate and intricate process of daily interaction with others that we fully achieve our gender, and are seen as valid and appropriate gendered beings. For men, masculinity often includes preoccupation with proving gender to others. Indeed, "In presenting ourselves as a gendered person, we are making ourselves accountable—we are purposefully acting in such a way as to be able to be recognized as gendered" (West & Fenstermaker, 1995).

Society is full of men who have embraced traditional gender ideologies—even those who might otherwise be marginalized. While the men we discuss below may operate within oppression in one aspect of their lives, they have access to alternate sites of privilege via the rest of their demographics (e.g., race, physical ability, sexual orientation, gender, sex, age, social class, religion). A working class man, for example, may also be White and have access to white privilege and male privilege. What is interesting is how these men choose to navigate and access their privilege within the confines of a particular social role that limits, devalues, and often stigmatizes them as not-men.

Marginalization requires the problematization of the category (in this case masculinity) so that privilege is rendered invisible. At the same time, marginalization also frames power and privilege from an interesting vantage point; it offers a seemingly existential choice: to overconform to the dominant view of masculinity as a way to stake a claim to it or to resist the hegemonic and develop a masculinity of resistance.

The commonalities within the somewhat arbitrary categories (race, class, sexuality, etc.) are often exaggerated and the behavior of the most dominant group within the category (e.g., rich, straight, White men) becomes idealized as the only appropriate way to fulfill one social role. "This conceptualization is then employed as a means of excluding and stigmatizing those who do not or cannot live up to these standards. This process of "doing difference" is realized in constant interpersonal interactions that reaffirm and reproduce social structure" (West & Fenstermaker, 1995).

It is important to realize that masculinity is extremely diverse, not homogenous, unchanging, fixed, or undifferentiated. Different versions of masculinities coexist at any given historical period and can coexist within different groups. However, it is this diversity and coexistence that creates a space for marginalization. "The dominant group needs a way to justify its dominance–that difference is inferior" (Cheng, 2008).

Dynamics of Marginalization and Stigma

Marginalization is both gendered and dynamic. How do marginalized men respond to the problematization of their masculinity as they are marginalized by class, sexuality or disability status? Goffman's (1963) understanding of stigma

may be of use to explicate this dynamic. Stigma is a stain, a mark, and "spoiled identity," Goffman writes, an attribute that changes you "from a whole and usual person to a tainted and discounted one." People with stigmatized attributes are constantly practicing various strategies to ensure minimal damage. Since being stigmatized will "spoil" your identity, you are likely to attempt to alleviate it.

Goffman identified three strategies to neutralize stigma and revive a spoiled identity. He listed them in order of increased social power—the more power you have, the more you can try and redefine the situation (these terms reflect the era in which he was writing, since he obviously uses the Civil Rights Movement as the reference). They are:

1. *Minstrelization*: If you're virtually alone and have very little power, you can over- conform to the stereotypes that others have about you. To act like a minstrel, Goffman says, is to *exaggerate* the differences between the stigmatized and the dominant group. Thus, for example, did African Americans over-act as happy-go-lucky entertainers when they had no other recourse. Contemporary examples might be women who act "ultra-feminine"—helpless and dependent—in potentially harassing situations, or gay men who really "camp it up" like Carson Kressley on "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy." Minstrels exaggerate difference in the face of those with more power; when they are with other stigmatized people, they may laugh about the fact that the powerful "actually think we're like this!" That's often the only sort of power that they feel they have.
2. *Normification*: If you have even a small amount of power, you might try to minimize the differences between the stigmatized groups. "Look," you'll say, "we're the same as you are, so there is no difference to discriminate against us." Normification is the strategy that the stigmatized use to enter institutions formerly closed to them, like when women entered the military or when Black people ran for public office. Normification is the process that gays and lesbians refer to when they argue for same-sex marriage, or that women use when they say they want to be engineers or physicists. Normification involves exaggerating the similarities and downplaying the differences.
3. *Militant Chauvinism*: When your group's level of power and organization is highest, you may decide to again maximize differences with the dominant group. But militant chauvinists don't just say "we're different," they say "we're also better." For example, there are groups of African-Americans ("Afrocentrists" or some of the Nation of Islam) who proclaim Black superiority. Some feminist women proclaim that women's ways are better than the dominant "male" way. These trends try to turn the tables on the dominant group. (Warning: Do not attempt this if you are the only member of your group in a confrontation with members of the dominant group.)

These three responses depend on the size and strength of the stigmatized group. If you're alone, minstrelizing may be a life-saving technique. If there are many of you and you are strong, you might try and militantly turn the tables. However, we might see these three strategic responses to stigma through a somewhat different lens. The over-conformity of normification accepts the criteria that the dominant group uses to maintain its power; normifiers simply want to be included. By contrast, both minstrelizers and militant chauvinists resist their marginalization by rejecting the criteria by which they are marginalized.

We realize that it might also seem to be arguable in the exact opposite frame—that, for example, normifiers may be seen to be resisting their own marginalization, while minstrelizers and militant chauvinists accept their marginalization and over-conform to those stereotypic characterizations that the dominant culture may hold about them. However, we argue that resistance comes in the posture towards those criteria themselves: normifiers accept the criteria and make efforts to demonstrate their legitimate claim for inclusion. Minstrelizers and militant chauvinists turn the criteria on their head, play with them paradoxically, and suggest that the dominant culture is impoverished for being unable to express those traits.

In this way, marginalized men may present to us either or both over-conformity to hegemonic masculinity and resistance to it.

Disabled Men

Discrimination against men with disabilities is pervasive in American society, and issues of power, dominance, and hegemonic masculinity are the basis. Over time, hegemonic masculinity has grown to encompass all aspects of social and cultural power, and the discrimination that arises from this can have an alarmingly negative affect on a man and his identity. Disabled men do not meet the unquestioned and idealized standards of appearance, behavior, and emotion for men. The values of capitalist societies based on male dominance are dedicated to warrior values, and a frantic able-bodiedness represented through aggressive sports and risk-taking activities, which do not make room for those with disabilities.

For example, one man interviewed by Robertson (2011) tells the story of his confrontations with those who discriminate against him. Frank says,

> If somebody doesn't want to speak to me 'cause I'm in a chair, or they shout at me 'cause I'm in a chair, I wanna know why, why they feel they have to shout. I'm not deaf you know. If they did it once and I told them and they didn't do it again, that'd be fair enough. But if they keep doing it then that would annoy me and if they didn't know that I could stand up then I'd put me brakes on and I'd stand up and I'd tell them face-to-face. If they won't listen, then I'll intimidate them, so they will listen, because it's important. (p. 12)

Scholars seem to agree that terms such as "disability" and "impairment" refer to limitations in function resulting from physiological, psychological and anatomical dysfunction of bodies (including minds), causing restrictions in a

person's ability to perform culturally defined normal human activities (World Health Organization). Normal life activities are defined as walking, talking, using any of the senses, working, and/or caring for oneself.

Men with physical disabilities have to find ways to express themselves within the role of "disabled." Emotional expression is not compatible with the aforementioned traits because it signifies vulnerability; in this way, men, especially disabled men, must avoid emotional expression. If they fail in stoicism, discrimination in the form of pejorative words ("cripple", "wimp", "retard") are sometimes used to suppress or condemn the outward expressions vulnerability.

But, men with disabilities don't need verbal reminders of their "not-men" status. Even without words, their social position, their lack of power over themselves (let alone others), leads them to understand more fully their lacking masculinity. One man, Vernon, detailed these feelings specifically,

> Yeah, 'cause though you know you're still a man, I've ended up in a chair, and I don't feel like a red-blooded man. I don't feel I can handle 10 pints and get a woman and just do the business with them and forget it, like most young people do. You feel compromised and still sort of feeling like 'will I be able to satisfy my partner.' Not just sexually, other ways, like DIY, jobs round the house and all sorts. (Robertson, 2011, pp. 8–9)

It seems that in the presence of their disability, these men are often left with three coping strategies: they can reformulate their ideas of masculinity (minstrelize); rely on and promote certain hegemonic ideals of masculinity (normify); or reject the mass societal norms and deny the norms' importance, creating another set of standards for themselves (militant chauvinism) (Gerschick & Miller, 1995).

When reformulating ideas of masculinity, these men usually focus on personal strengths and abilities, regardless of the ideal standards. This can include maneuvering an electric wheelchair or driving a specially equipped vehicle, tasks that would be very difficult for other people. Men who rely on hegemonic ideals are typically very aware of other's opinions of masculinity. These men internalized ideals such as physical and sexual prowess, and athleticism, though it can be nearly impossible for them to meet these standards. Then there are men who reject hegemonic masculinity. These men believe that masculine norms are wrong; they sometimes form their own standards for masculinity, which often go against what society thinks is right for men. Some men [tried] devaluing masculinity's importance altogether. The operative word is *try* because despite men's best efforts to reformulate or reject hegemonic masculinity, the expectations and ideals for men are far more pervasive than can be controlled. Many men trying to reformulate and reject masculine standards often end up "doing" gender appropriately in one aspect of life or another.

Indeed, some men find that hypermasculinity is the best strategy. Wedgwood (2011) interviewed disabled men and Carlos was certainly one who appreciated gender conformity:

> The thrill you get out of doing it because I'm an adrenaline junkie! [laughs]. Contact for me, gets your adrenaline going, gets your blood going and it's a rush... if I have a really hard match and I'm getting bruised and getting smashed in there and I'm still trying to go for the ball and I keep getting hit—that's what I love about contact sports—I keep getting hit and everything and still getting up. (p. 14)

Scott Hogsett, a Wheelchair Rugby player detailed this feeling as well in the movie "Murderball" when he discussed some people's perceptions that their Special Olympics sport wasn't difficult or a "real" sport. He said, "We're not going for a hug. We're going for a fucking gold medal."

However, as Erving Goffman (1963) writes, "The stigmatized individual tends to hold the same beliefs about identity that we do... His deepest feelings about what he is may be his sense of being a "normal person," a human being like anyone else" (p. 116). Failing to maintain the hegemonic norms for masculinity has a direct, sometimes negative psychological effect. People tend to judge themselves and measure their worth based upon an intersubjective, sometimes impossible reality. Goffman (1963) later continues, any man that fails to meet the social standards for masculinity is "likely to view himself—during moments at least—as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior" (p. 128). Identity, self-worth, and confidence depend on whether or not he accepts, conforms to, or relies on the social norms.

Men with disabilities are no strangers to accepting and relying upon social norms of masculinity. Despite their sometimes stigmatized status, they do have access to sites of privilege. For instance, disability has emerged as an important niche for expansion by prostitution industries. In some countries, giving the disabled access to open and free sexual rights has been argued as a way to make prostitution respectable and to suggest that it serves a noble purpose. As a matter of fact, the sex industry lobby group, Sexual Freedom Coalition, in the United Kingdom, staged a demonstration of disabled men against proposed legislation that would have restricted men's rights to access prostituted women in February 2008.

Another example of the normification of disabled men has been around sexuality. Recently, narratives of how disabled men utilize prostitutes as sex tourists and within their own countries have emerged. For example, a 2008 documentary, "Real Life: For One Night Only," aired on Channel 4 in the United Kingdom and SBS in Australia, is described in an Australian newspaper review as a "charming documentary on the sexuality of disabled people" (Jeffreys, 2008). Here, a disabled man is taken on a trip to Spain by his parents to access prostituted women in a special brothel for 'people with various disabilities' (Schwartz, 2008). In this way, he claims male privilege—the ability to use economic resources to gain access to women's bodies—and we, the viewers, see his masculinity—his sexual needs, rights, and entitlements—as validated.

This normalization of prostitution in the interests of servicing disabled men's 'sexual rights' is supported by the rhetoric about the sexual rights of people with

disabilities that is common to much academic and practitioner literature on disability (Earle, 2001). Much of the material on sexuality and disability is composed of reasonable arguments for information and training to be supplied to persons with disabilities so that they may understand sexuality, pleasure themselves, develop relationships, and, in the case of men and boys, learn not to engage in unacceptable behaviors such as masturbation in public.

But the sexual rights argument goes further and leads to demands that men with disabilities, though gender is never referred to in this literature which is carefully neutral, should not only be able to access pornography and prostitution, but be helped by their care-givers, including nurses, to do so. The argument has gone so far, under the title of 'facilitated sexuality', that it appears that nurses may be expected to become adjuncts to the sex industry or a part of it, by directly 'sexually facilitating' men with disabilities themselves (Earle, 2001).

The desire to maintain a disabled man's masculinity does not just stem from within that man, however. The model of rehabilitation of people with disabilities, the medical model of disability, has a male body and male sexuality in mind. "Rehabilitation programs seek to cultivate 'competitive attitudes' and address 'concerns about male sexuality'" (Jeffreys, 2008). They are about "enabling men to aspire to dominant notions of masculinity" (Begum, 1992).

Robert David Hall is an actor on the hit American television show CSI (Crime Scene Investigation) and walks on two artificial legs due to having both of his legs amputated in 1978 after an 18-wheeler crushed his car. His character is not defined by his disability. "I used to hate the word 'disability'," he said. "But I've come to embrace the fact that I'm one of more than 58 million Americans with some kind of physical or learning disability" (p. 1). "After the accident, I realized I had more strength than I knew," Hall says. "I was forced to face up to reality, but facing such a reality helped me face any fears I had of taking risks" (Skrhak, 2008).

In today's world, men with disabilities fight an uphill battle against hegemonic masculinity—their position in the social order—and its many enforcers. Men with disabilities seem to scream, "I AM A STILL A MAN!" They try to make up for their shortcoming by overexaggerating the masculine qualities they still have, and society accommodates this via their support of disabled men's sexual rights and the sexist nature of medical rehabilitation programs and standards.

Gay Men

Male homosexuality has long been associated with effeminacy (i.e. not being a real man) throughout the history of Western societies; the English language is fraught with examples equating men's sexual desire for other men with femininity: molly and nancy-boy in 18th-century England, buttercup, pansy, and she-man of early 20th-century America, and the present-day sissy, fairy, queen, and faggot (Chauncey, 1994; Edwards, 1994; Pronger, 1990). Moreover, the pathologization of male homosexuality in the early 20th century led to a rhetoric of

de-masculinization. By the 1970s, a number of psychiatric theorists referred to male homosexuality as "impaired masculine self-image" (Bieber, 1965), "a flight from masculinity" (Kardiner, 1963), "a search for masculinity" (Socarides, 1968), and "masculine failure" (Ovesey & Person, 1973).

Today in the United States, gay men continue to be marginalized by gender—that is, their masculinity is seen as problematic. In a survey of over 3,000 American adults (Levitt & Klassen, 1976), 69% believed homosexuals acted like the opposite sex, and that homosexual men were suitable only to the "unmasculine" careers of artist, beautician, and florist, but not the "masculine" careers of judges, doctors, and ministers. Recent studies have found similar results, despite the changing nature of gay rights in America (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009; Wright & Canetto, 2009; Wylie, Corliss, Boulanger, Prokop, & Austin, 2010).

The popular belief that gay men are not real men is established by the links among sexism (the systematic devaluation of women and "the feminine"), homophobia (the deep-seated cultural discomfort and hatred felt towards same-sex sexuality); and compulsory heterosexuality. Since heterosexuality is integral to the way a society is organized, it becomes a naturalized, "learned" behavior. When a man decides he is gay (if this "deciding" even occurs), he is rejecting the *compulsion* toward a heterosexual lifestyle and orientation (Rich, 1980).

More than this, though, compulsory heterosexuality is a mandate; society demands heterosexuality; our informal and formal policies and laws all reflect this (Fingerhut, Riggle, & Rostosky, 2011). And, in response, men find that one of the key ways to prove masculinity is to demonstrate sexual prowess. Thus, a normifying process can be discerned among gay men of the pre-HIV, post-Stonewall era.

The ideological turn in the 1970s made by gay men, away from camp and drag, and toward a more hypermasculine affective style, dominated mainstream gay male culture through the 1980s. Hypermasculine men began to emerge in many major Western cities in the 1970s (Badinter, 1992; Levine, 1992; Messner, 1997). "Like the less visible queer movement of the early 1900s, the hypermasculine appearance and sensibility announced a new masculine gay identity to replace the "limp-wristed swish" stereotype of the previous eras" (Taywaditep, 2001).

Levine's classic ethnography of clone culture makes clear that, among gay men, hypermasculine display—clothing, affective styles, fashion, and, above all, sexual promiscuity—consisted of a large promissory note to the larger culture—a culture that was both heterosexist and sexist in its anti-gay sentiments (Levine, 1995). "We are real men!" that note read. "We not only perform masculinity successfully, but we embrace the criteria that denote and confer masculinity. And so we want you, the larger dominant culture, to confer masculinity on us."

Larger dominant culture has not, generally, conferred masculinity on gay men. Indeed, a recent study found that "the stereotype of gay men as more feminine and less masculine than other men appears robust" (Mitchell & Ellis, 2011). This research found that simply labeling a man gay, despite the man presenting as

gender-typical, made the man more likely to rated as effeminate. Gender-nonconforming gay men may often feel marginalized *within gay culture itself*, from other gay men, who are most likely to have experienced stigmatization and may have been effeminate earlier in their lives. Writing about gay men's feminine stereotype, Lehne (1989) noted that, "Effeminacy itself is highly stigmatized in the homosexual subculture" (p. 417).

In the wake of the liberation movement, gay men seemed to rely on similar coping strategies as the disabled men detailed earlier: they reformulated their ideas of masculinity; relied on and promoted certain hegemonic ideals of masculinity; or rejected the mass societal norms and deny the norms' importance, creating another set of standards for themselves (Gerschick & Miller, 1995). Such a move also opened up an oppositional culture within the gay community—a culture of resistance to masculinist overconformity. It consisted in reclaiming the nelly queen, the camp and drag affective styles that the mainstream had discarded.

Sociologist Tim Edwards detailed this type of rejection and reliance: on one hand, there are the *effeminists* who express gender nonconformity and/or seek to denounce traditional masculinity because of their personal style or a commitment to feminism—in other words, they reject mass social norms and deny their importance or very foundation; on the other hand, there are the *masculinists* who are proponents of gay male "machismo" and seek to challenge the long-held effeminate stereotype of gay men—they rely heavily on the hegemonic ideals.

This reliance is, interestingly, the main site of access to privilege for these gay men. Gay men's misogyny in humor and argot, as well as some politico-ideological departures from feminism, have been well documented (Goodwin, 1989). As noted by Astrachan (1993), though it would seem beneficial for gay men and women to unite under their common experiences within the oppressive gender system, some gay men oppress and dominate women by "searching for people they can define as inferior–and finding women. A gay man told me, 'We want to be the equals of straight men, and if that means screwing women–figuratively–we'll do it.'"

The gay men who conform to hegemonic norms, secure their position in the power hierarchy by adopting the heterosexual masculine role and subordinating both women and effeminate gay men. Having noted that hypermasculine gay men have been accused of being "collaborators with patriarchy," Messner (1997) pointed out the prominence of hegemonic masculinity in gay culture: "it appears that the dominant tendency in gay culture eventually became an attempt to claim, eroticize, and display the dominant symbols of hegemonic masculinity" (p. 83).

Historically, camp and drag were associated with minstrelizers, those who exaggeratedly expressed stereotypic constructions of homosexual masculinity. The 1950s hairdresser, interior decorator and florist of classic cultural stereotype were embraced as lifestyle choices, if not yet a political position. Minstrelizers embraced the stereotypes; their effeminacy asked the question "who wants to be butch all the time anyway? It's too much work."

On the other hand, there was a group of effeminists who were explicitly political. As a political movement, effeminism emerged in the first years of the modern post-Stonewall Gay Liberation movement, but unlike it's normifying brethren, effeminists explicitly and politically rejected mainstream heterosexual masculinity. Largely associated with the work of Steve Dansky, effeminists published a magazine, Double F, and three men issued "The Effeminist Manifesto" (Dansky, Knoebel, & Pitchford, 1977).

The effeminists pointed to the possibilities for a liberated masculinity offered by feminism. Effeminism, they argued, is a positive political position, aligning antisexist gay men with women, instead of claiming male privilege by asserting their difference from women. Since, as Dansky et al. (1977) argued, male supremacy is the root of all other oppressions, the only politically defensible position was to renounce manhood itself, to refuse privilege. Dansky and his effeminist colleagues were as critical of mainstream gay male culture (and the denigration of effeminacy by the normifiers) as by the hegemomnic dominant culture.

This position was also taken up by John Stoltenberg, in his book *Refusing to Be a Man* (1989). Refusing manhood meant refusing privilege out of solidarity with women and in opposition to women's oppression. Though little observed today in mainstream gay male culture's uncritical embrace of mainstream masculinity, effeminacy was a most politicized form of gendered resistance to male privilege.

Working Class Men

Working class men are, perhaps, an interesting reference group when compared to disabled men and gay men. The way(s) in which they are discriminated against or stigmatized seem very different. These men, in fact, are often seen as incredibly masculine; strong, stoic, hard-workers, there is something particularly masculine about what they have to do day-in and day-out. Indeed, the masculine virtues of the working class are celebrated as the physical embodiment of what all men should embrace (Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Sanders & Mahalingam, 2012).

Working-class White males may work in a system of male privilege, but they are not the main beneficiaries; they are in fact expendable. The working class is set apart from the middle and upper classes in that the working class is defined by jobs that require less formal education, sometimes (not always) less skill, and often low pay. For men, these jobs often include manual labor such as construction, automotive work, or factory work. The jobs these men hold are typically men-dominant.

If the stereotypic construction of masculinity among the working class celebrates their physical virtues, it also problematizes their masculinity by imagining them as dumb brutes. Working class men are the male equivalent of the "dumb blonde"—endowed with physical virtues, but problematized by intellectual shortcomings. Minstrelizing might be the sort of self-effacing comments such as "I'm

just a working stiff." It can be a minstrelizing strategy of low-level resistance because these behaviors actually let the working class man off the hook when it comes to accountability or responsibility. He exempts himself from scrutiny because he clearly isn't capable of such deep analytic thought.

We can also see this type of minstrelization in men who over-emphasize their adherence to strict gender roles—being rough, uncivilized, brave, or brutish. Like Oliver Mellors in *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, these men want it to be known that they are the epitome of masculinity. By some standards, though, Mellors, is the ultimate nightmare boyfriend: socially isolated and isolating; highly critical of others; the type to spitefully pick fights with others; with an attitude problem, making him highly likely to quit jobs or be fired. And yet Connie Chatterley is obsessed with him. She finds his vulnerabilities entrancing; she can't wait to have his child.

Here is a sociological example of minstrelizing. In their classic work, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, Sennett and Cobb (1993) document a difference between working class and middle class men as they view the relationships between fathers and sons. Middle class men see themselves as role models, Sennett and Cobb found. They want their sons to grow up to be "just like me." Such a posture requires a certain accountability and probity on the part of the middle-class father. Being a role model is a responsibility.

However, by contrast, the working class fathers saw themselves as negative role models.

> "If you grow up to be like me," they said, I'll feel like a failure." "Don't make the same mistakes I made." Or, as one of the essay's authors own father used to say all the time: "If a son does not surpass his father then both are failures." Such sentiments remove responsibility and actually place the onus for acting responsibly on the son, not the father. It's too late for me, but not for thee. Thus, working class men, by conforming to the dumb brute stereotype, offer a modest resistance to the dominant mode of masculinity as upwardly mobile striver. Giving up can also imply not actually giving in.

Of course, there are elements of militant chauvinism in the proclamation of those stereotypes as well. For men in these positions, sexism and patriarchy are key features of their masculine dominance. When the work force in decidedly all or mostly male, relationships are often "built through a decidedly male idiom of physical jousting, sexual boasting, sports talk, and shared sexual activities" (Freeman, 1993). Here, what is key for men is how they can effectively "compensate" for being underlings in the eyes of the managers that rule over them and the families they go home to. Using physical endurance and tolerance of discomfort, required by their manual labor, they signify a truer masculinity than even their office-working bosses can embody. They somehow signify a truer masculinity than their effeminate, "yes-men," paper-pushing managers can lay claim to (Collinson, 1992).

Moreover, those in the working, or blue-collar, class form a network of relationships with other blue-collar workers that serve to support them and give them a sense of status and worth, regardless of actual status or worth in the outside world (Cohen & Hodges, 1963). In fact, because those in the working class cannot

normally exercise a great amount of power in their jobs or in many other formal relationships, they tend to do so in their relationships with other working class members. "To a greater extent than other classes, [the lower–lower class] will tend to measure status by power, and to validate his own claim to status, where he feels entitled to it, by asserting a claim to power" (Cohen & Hodges, 1963).

However, for those who want to minimize the apparent differences between them and the more dominant masculine ideal, a site of normification could be the focus on all men's general relationship to women and the family. Those involved in the union movement, for example, stake claims to manhood and masculinity by organizing around the principal of men as breadwinners. The basic job that all "real men" should share is to provide for their wives and children. This would explain the initial opposition to women's entry into the workplace, and also now the opposition to gay men's and lesbian women's entrance. There is a type of White, male, working-class solidarity vis-à-vis privilege that these men have constructed and maintained, that promotes and perpetuates racism, sexism, and homophobia—the nexus of beliefs that all men are supposed to value (Embrick, Walther, & Wickens, 2007).

This power in the workplace translates directly to the home, as well. In the absence of legitimated hierarchical benefits and status, working class husbands and partners are more likely to "produce hypermasculinity by relying on blatant, brutal, and relentless power strategies in their marriages, including spousal abuse" (Pyke, 1996). However, violence can also extend outside the home. As Pyke (1996) points out, "The hypermasculinity found in certain lower-status male locales, such as on shop floors, in pool halls, motorcycle clubs, and urban gangs, can be understood as both a response to ascendant masculinity and its unintentional booster." Willis (1977) details how working class boys refuse to submit to the "upper-class" imperatives of social mobility, knowledge and skill acquisition; instead choosing to reproduce themselves as working class, despite the social and financial consequences. These students become agentic, rebellious even; but in doing so also become "uneducated" workers of manual labor.

Conclusion

Privilege is not monolithic; it is unevenly distributed and it exists worldwide in varying forms and contexts. Among members of one privileged class, other mechanisms of marginalization may mute or reduce privilege based on another status. Thus, a White gay man might receive race and gender privilege, but will be marginalized by sexuality. In his paper, we described these processes for three groups of men in the United States—men with disabilities, gay men, and working class men—who see their gender privilege reduced and their masculinity questioned, not confirmed, through their other marginalized status. We described strategies these men might use to restore, retrieve, or resist that loss. Using Goffman's discussion of stigma, we described three patterns of response. It is through

these strategies—minsterlization, normification, and militant chauvinism—that a person's attempt to access privilege can be viewed, and, we argue, that we can better see the standards, ideals, and norms by which any society measures a man and his masculinity, and the benefits or consequences of his adherence or deviance.

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