

The Ultimate Silver Lining: The Normalization of
White Male Privilege Through the Guise of an Objective Body

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Abstract

This research looks to uncover the perpetuation of White masculine privilege through men's health magazines. The cover stories from *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness*, and *Muscle and Fitness* will be examined to reveal how White value systems and hegemonic masculinity are encouraged under supposedly objective lenses, specifically, the use of the body. Money, individualism, innate physicality, and examples of the nuclear family were some of the concepts used to code for whiteness. Concepts dealing with fatherhood, heteronormativity, and career uncovered examples of masculinity, whereas strength, power, muscularity, and attractiveness lead to understanding the ideal male body. Through research grounded in whiteness, masculinity, and the body, I will examine how the body promoted in men's health magazines serves a primary purpose of encouraging White privilege under the guise of pursuing a fit body. By focusing on the oppressor's role in social inequality, this research will expose the ways privilege is unknowingly perpetuated to prolong social injustices in the United States.

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Introduction

After Christmas dinner with my family, I sat at the table, digesting the food for three I consumed, listening to the conversation between my family members. At one end of the table, I heard my mother and aunt conversing with my recently graduated cousins about their future plans. Across the table, my younger cousins fought over whose turn it was to play drums on the Rock Band. My grandmother cleaned the table around us, leaving alcohol and dessert on the table. The two things we needed the least.

At the head of the table sat my uncle, his son, and my grandfather. All three men pride themselves on working with their hands. My grandpa owes a landscaping business, my cousin manages grounds keeping at a golf course, and my uncle built the kitchen we sat in. They think of themselves as men's men. Hard working Americans enjoying a day off from work to drink and enjoy repetitive conversation. Current and past ailments, work, and of course, the Old days.

When I happened to eavesdrop on their conversation, they had reached the ever-promising topic of politics. The three men all came to an agreement. Undocumented workers and high taxes for welfare were running America. What happened to people putting in a hard days work on the job and earning a living? People need to get off the couch and get a job.

These three men sat, sipping expensive scotch after consuming an offensive amount of food, wearing the new clothes they received from wives and mothers. They would enjoy a brief absence before heading back to work to earn a steady living. All men had health insurance. All men had the option to attend high school. All men were middle class. And they were all White.

I sat quietly eavesdropping, mildly appalled, but not particularly shocked by their discussion. Any other year, I would have glossed over their conversation and put in my bid to play guitar next on Rock Band. Instead, I listened to my uncle, cousin and grandfather converse,

completely in denial about the immense privilege held by White, middle-class men. Perfectly content blaming others for societal downfalls, they neglected to acknowledge any of their own privileges. Even more revealing, being 20 years old at the time, I questioned why I only now noticed their complete lack of awareness? Why did it take 20 years for me to recognize their denial of privilege? I was awe-struck by their lack of social awareness while questioning my recent acknowledgement of their thought processes as troublesome.

For over nineteen years, my education intricately built upon itself. Elementary school provided me a base for what I would learn in the upcoming years. While I would learn in more detail as the years progressed, every math equation, literary theory, and historical fact fit together like an elaborate puzzle that left me comfortably unchallenged and in above average academic standings.

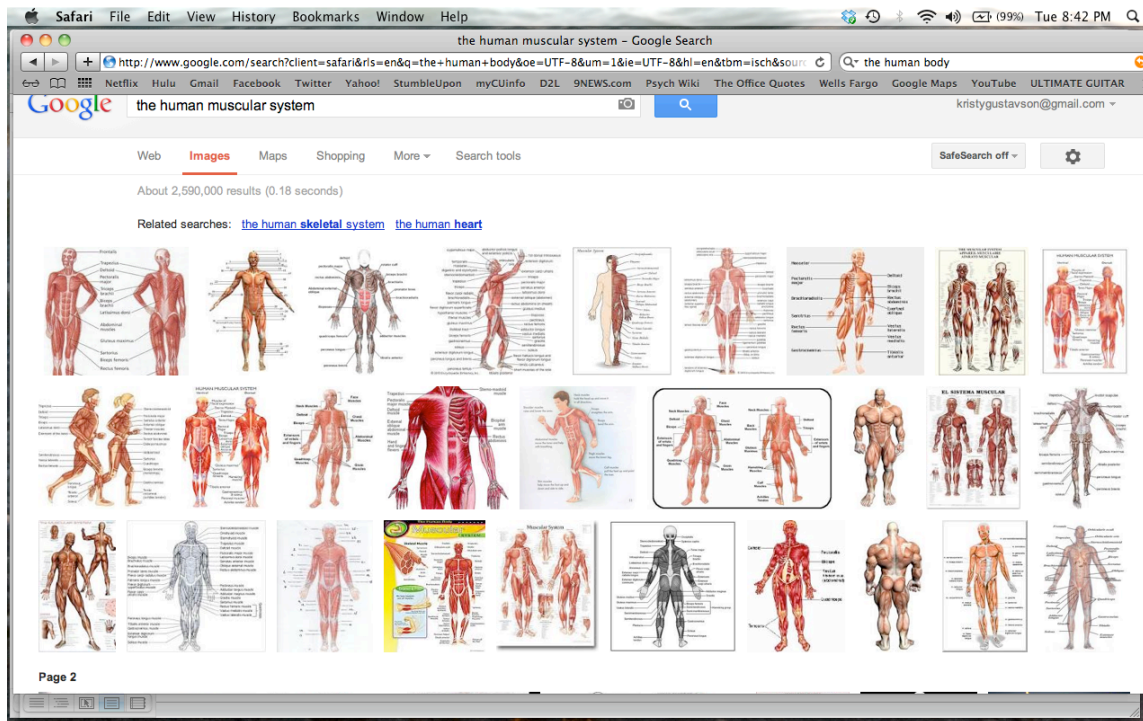
In Fall 2010, while attending the University of Colorado at Boulder, I enrolled in *Introduction to Africana Studies* to fulfill a diversity requirement, at which point I began to reevaluate my understandings of the world around me. In American History, I learned about slavery as a show in America's past, eliminated by Abraham Lincoln and the Union. The Civil Rights Movement represented the end to Jim Crow Laws, therefore, an end to racism in the United States. Dr. Reiland Rabaka threw a wrench in my understanding of Black History in the United States. He spoke in-depth about slavery, the Women's Rights Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power Movement, and the Hip Hop Movement. *Introduction to Africana Studies* by redefining what I had learned and provided a new insight to the world of discrimination, prejudice, and privilege.

Even further than the curriculum itself, Dr. Rabaka shifted my learning style from memorization and regurgitating information to critically analyzing the social position of others

and myself to better understand the social inequality of the United States. *Introduction to Africana Studies* challenged me and forced to grow as a student and an individual by challenging my notions of history, equality, social justice, and privilege. My education came from a one-sided, Eurocentric outlook, and thanks to a number of Ethnic Studies classes and professors, I now see many of the downfalls of Western society. I am forced to consciously recognize my own privilege at the expense of those less fortunate than me, and it is the process of recognizing my privilege that led me to this paper.

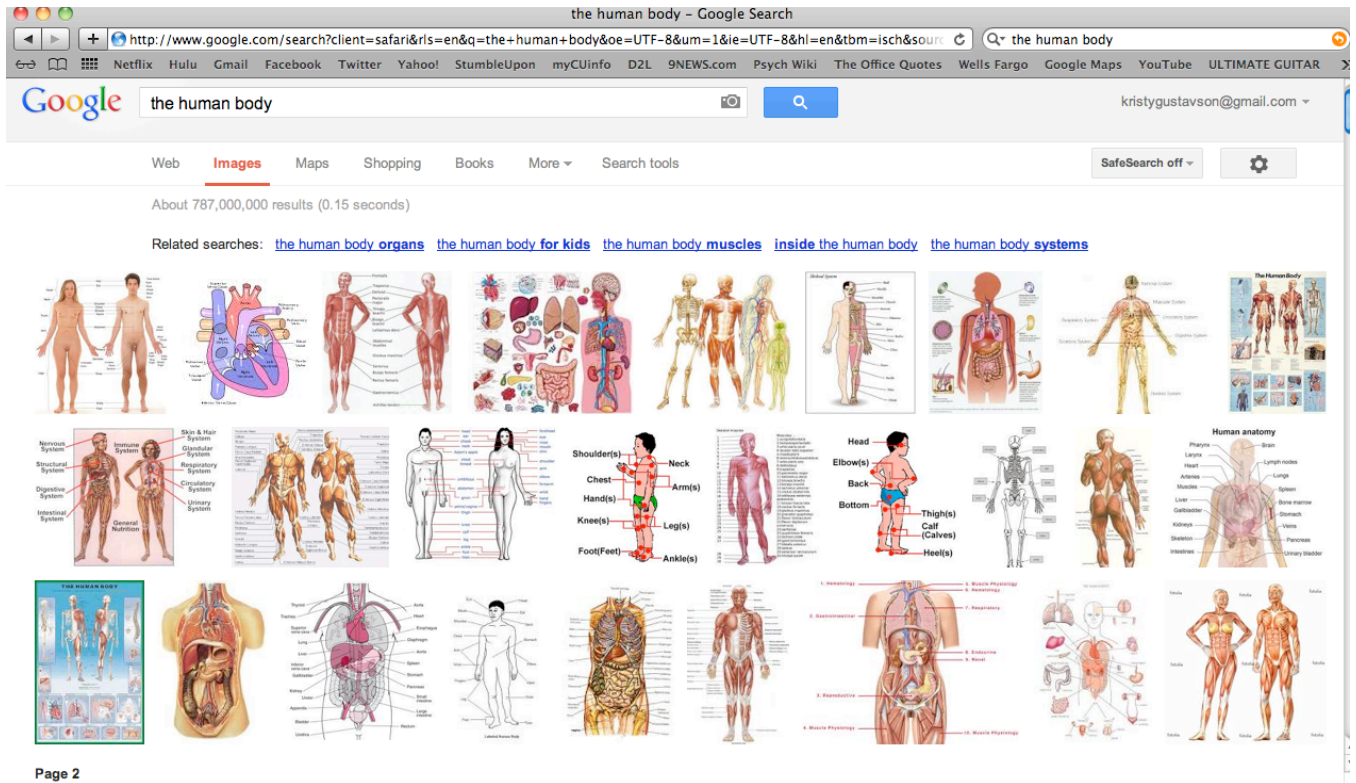
When thinking about privilege, my mind retreated back to the Christmas dinner table, where my uncle, cousin, and grandfather discussed what they believed to be the ills of society. I thought about all the prominent White men in my life, between my dad, brother, family members, coaches, and friends. Many possessed similar political stances and class affiliations. More importantly, I was unsure if any actively acknowledged their White, male privilege. I looked at what seemed to possess value in their lives. Whether it is admiring star athletes, possessing a personal priority to work out, a connection to playing a sport, or admiring his own athletic physique, many men had a strong connection to their bodies. Masculinity appeared contingent on a particular body, and I decided to do research to decode that body's attributes.

Privilege is a difficult concept to conceive because it is frequently left unnamed. As I mentioned previously, whiteness often remains under-discussed as a racial category. Likewise, when looking at gender studies, masculinity can remain under-analyzed. To being formulating the basis of my research, I turned to Google Images because it provides quick, broad feedback. I chose to search, "The Human Muscular System" because, beyond a connection to the body, I noticed men admire strength in power in themselves and other men. Below is my first page of results:



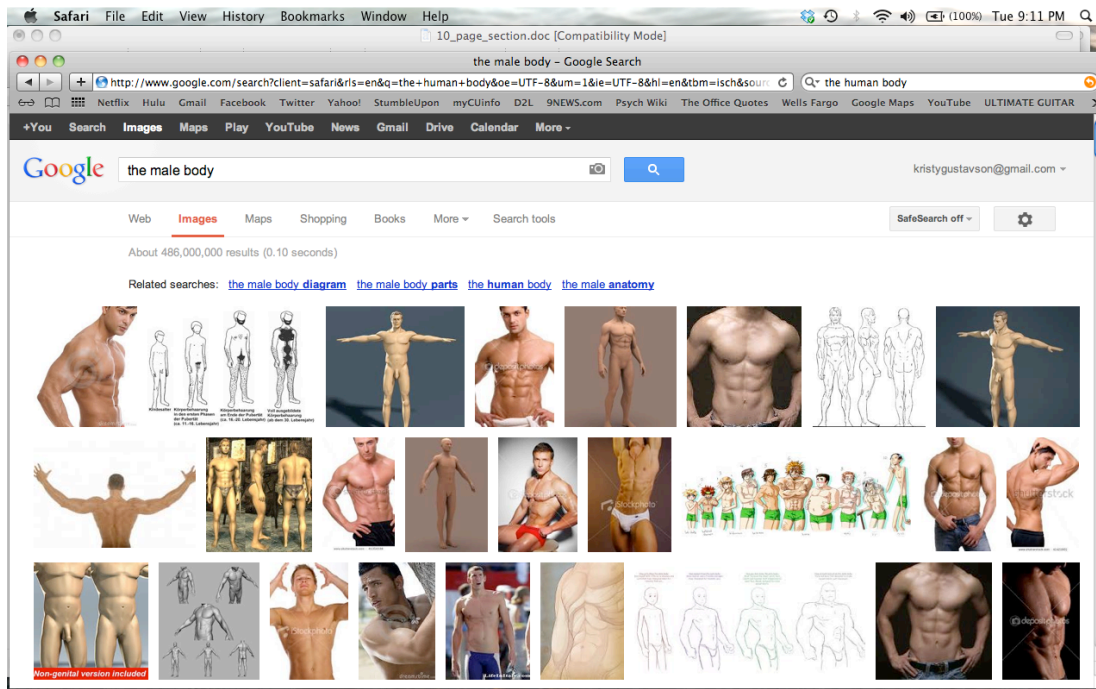
Of the 28 pictures above, 26 appear to be male bodies. I determined the first picture might be female, only coming to that conclusion due to the feminine, hands-on-the-hips stance. One picture contains both a male and female body. The male body appears first, making the female body secondary to the male. Without specifying on gender, 26 of the 28 pictures appear male, hinting at the unspoken connection between the muscular body and masculinity. Further, I neglected to specify race, and the sole picture depicting race is a male with a half White body.

I broadened the next Google search to explore possible connections between race, gender, and the body. I searched “The Human Body” and received the following results:



Five of the bodies could be racially identifiable as White, while the others remains indeterminable. Most bodies appeared male, but overall, more were indeterminable because they only depicted the torso.

In my most specific search, I searched “The Male Body” to determine any unnamed racial connections between the body and maleness. Below are the results:



Without specifying on race, at least 20 of the images displayed White men. The above Google searched opened the door to examining unmarked White masculine privilege. Leaving race and gender unspecified, a White male can search for a picture of the body and relatable images will cover the screen. White men can often move throughout society lacking consciousness of their social identity feeling included and unchallenged.

White men can pick up a fitness magazine, look through the content, and most likely relate to an image, article, or both. Dominant society is conducive to the White masculine identity, and many men remain ignorant to their privilege, either by choice or as a result of his surroundings. My specific focus on whiteness as a racial category enables the recognition of privilege due to simply possessing whiteness. Acknowledging whiteness as a racial category goes hand in hand with recognizing the social privilege whiteness holds. Further, in seeing the power held by whiteness, one can comprehend how other racialized populations are defined by White standards, leading to a decreased social worth assigned by White men in power.

After completing the Google searches, I deemed it essential to pull out unmarked White male privilege in the United States to find ways White male privilege is continually perpetuated. My research will examine the contents of three men's fitness magazines to demonstrate how a seemingly objective, healthy body perpetuates White masculine privilege. Under the guise of 'health' and 'fitness', three popular men's health magazines promote an exclusive, White masculine privilege, aiding in the continuation of hierarchal understandings of the body and human worth.

Literature Review

I was able to split up my research into three categories. I began by researching whiteness and White privilege. I then examined gender and masculinity. Finally, within my research of whiteness and masculinity, I drew on the importance of the boy to understand racial and gendered privilege in the United States.

Whiteness

As I mentioned before, I encountered difficulties in conceiving whiteness as a racial category. My social privilege became more apparent after recognizing whiteness as a race. Previously, I took the colorblind approach to my life. I falsely assumed that if I refused to see race, then I would escape being racist. Because I grew up in a suburb of Denver, Colorado, this was relatively easy to do. My schools and neighborhood contained very little diversity. I was surrounded by people who looked like me, never being pushed to look at myself as someone who possessed race.

Choosing colorblindness has its benefits. As Gallaher argues in “Color blindness: An obstacle to racial justices?”, colorblindness, “portrays the opportunity structure in the United States as being free of any racial bias”, and in turn, “allows whites to delegitimize federal programs attempting to ameliorate racial inequality while validating their belief that their own successes had nothing to do with white privilege” (2006). Colorblindness masks white privilege as individualism, allowing privileged individuals to assume that people rise to the top solely by hard work, neglecting the existence of institutionalized racism. Further, the colorblind mentality, “ends up stifling honestly difficult dialogue about very real dynamics that continue to play out in our interactions” (Tochluk 2008, 15). Colorblindness fails to accurately examine the racialized

reality of the United States. In examining racial consequences, it is crucial to study whiteness as it holds extreme privilege in the United States.

Gallaher and Tochluk's arguments suggest colorblindness benefits already privileged members of society, namely, White men. The act of embracing colorblindness enables the continuation of White privilege by normalizing the White male body as the default image, while other bodies fall below in worth. When I searched "The Male Body", only White bodies showed up on the screen. Likewise, when I searched "The Human Body", the only racially identifiable bodies were also White. Refusing to see racial consequences prohibits honest discussions about privilege in the United States. The White male body represents the default, therefore White men experience privilege in simply living in a society that values their body as normal. Adopting colorblindness furthers White privilege in the United States by neglecting both the disadvantages experienced by people of color and the advantages of possessing whiteness. Seeing the detrimental consequences of investing in colorblindness led me to seek out other avenues for perpetuating White privilege.

In taking a step back to more conceptually look at race, I drew on Omi and Winant's, *Racial Formation*, where they advocate to see race as more than a social construction, but as, "an autonomous field of social conflict, political organization, and cultural/ideological meaning" (1994, 48). Race, according to Maulana Karenga, "is a socio-biological category designed to assign human worth and social status, using white as the paradigm" (2010, 255). In order to comprehend the complexities of race, one must refrain from accepting race solely as a social construct, and instead recognize how it establishes peoples' worth in the United States. Recognizing whiteness as a racial category goes hand in hand with acknowledging its privilege because whiteness is "the unmarked category against which difference is constructed" (Lipsitz

1998). Race assigns worth, with “white as the paradigm”, meaning whiteness is predicated on the continual degradation of other races and normalization of whiteness. Seeing whiteness as the norm results in the othering of African American, Asian American, Native American, Chicano, and endless other bodies.

To further comprehend the complexities of whiteness, I turned to George Lipsitz, author of, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness* (1998). George Lipsitz defines whiteness as “an identity created and continued with all-to-real consequences for the distribution of wealth, prestige and opportunity” (vii). Lipsitz claims, “the possessive investment in whiteness is not a simple matter of black and white; all racialized minority groups have suffered from it, albeit to different degrees and in different ways” (2). Whiteness “shapes so much of our public and private lives” (2), and provides White Americans with “resources, power, and opportunity” (vii). Understanding Lipsitz’s argument allows a deeper comprehension of White privilege. Possessing whiteness enables an individual to benefit from racial inequality due to the body given at birth. White privilege allows White people to benefit from “the distribution of wealth, prestige and opportunity” at the expense of people of color. Whiteness exists as an unearned privilege with numerous benefits to those who possess it and disadvantages for those who identify differently. Grounding myself in Lipsitz’s research and others like him allows me to see the continuation of White privilege and sparks curiosity to reveal alternative forums for perpetuation.

Whiteness can be performed in a multitude of ways, some which resist oppression and discrimination. However, my research focuses on the ways whiteness reinforces oppression and perpetuates its own privilege. David R. Roediger (2000) discusses the origins of whiteness as a way to oppress African Americans in his book, *The Wages of Whiteness*. White individual possess the capability to fight oppression and live in non-discriminatory ways. My research,

however, draws on the literature focusing on the ways in which whiteness gets normalized and consequently oppresses racialized populations.

Like Lipsitz, Farough sees possessing whiteness as having social consequences. He claims whiteness, “produces an identity standpoint where individuals are constituted as separate, self-governing, and autonomous from the social world. However, this so-called universal identity was deeply racialized, gendered, and classed—only straight, white, middle class men have been able to talk on such an identity in Western societies (2003, 4). Whiteness and colorblindness both advocate for an absence of color. Western society normalizes whiteness, administering lower worth to other racial identities. Recognizing whiteness as a racial category requires the acknowledgement of the distribution of privilege as a consequence of race, in turn disproving the possibility of a colorblind society and promoting the existences of a racial discrimination. Together, Lipsitz and Farough establish a foreground for the discussion of White privilege by agreeing on its existence and continual presence in today’s society.

As I began to understand the privilege attached to whiteness, what I found most intriguing were the ways White privilege is unknowingly perpetuated. In Richard Dyer’s, *White*, he dedicates one chapter titled, “Light of the world” to examining how photography and film were developed to privilege White faces and White bodies. He argues that the lighting in photography and film prioritizes White face, even claiming, “Movie lighting in effect discriminates on the basis of race...Movie lighting relates people to each other and to setting according to notions of the human that have historically excluded non-white people” (Dyer 1997). Film and photography objectively capture society, however, in revealing racial bias within film and photography, the objectivity of film and photography experiences challenges.

Peggy McIntosh looks at the ways possessing whiteness unconsciously benefits her life in her piece, “White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women’s studies”. She conceives White privilege as “an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and a blank check” (McIntosh, 1992). Key in understanding the basis of McIntosh’s argument is the invisibility of White privilege. White people hold numerous tools that aid in moving through life with ease, but those tools are frequently left unnoticed. Further, the tools are undeserved and rewarded only by means of skin color. In a self reflection, McIntosh acknowledges, “I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditions into oblivious about its existence, unable to see that it put me ‘ahead’ in any way, or put my people ahead, overrewarding us and yet also paradoxically damaging us, or that is could or should be changed” (1992). My research is based in revealing unearned, unconscious White privilege. I will look at men’s health magazines as yet another forum for the continuation of whiteness as the privileged norm.

White privilege fails to be a universal concept. Other cultures do not value whiteness in the same ways as the United States. Going back to the beginning of U.S. History and slavery, James Baldwin notes, “The idea of white supremacy rests simply on the fact that white men are the creators of civilization (the present civilization, which is the only one that matters; all previous civilizations are simply contributions to our won) and are therefore civilization’s guardians and defenders” (1995). Possessing whiteness enables a belief in expert status because White people understand themselves as solely responsible for the civilized world. Tochluk agrees, arguing, “white people...can unwittingly reinforce the historically racist views of evolution that held that whites are the most evolved manifestation of humanity” (2008, 47).

Possessing whiteness comes with the possession of an expert consciousness, one that provides individuals with a sense of innate capability to lead. The expert consciousness then elevates White people above other citizens, deeming their standpoints more legitimate and trustworthy.

The monopoly on expertise only grew in the health field due to the development of the Germ Theory, connecting science and Christianity, and limited access to medical schools (Ehrenreich & English, 1978). The Germ Theory labels individuals with sicknesses as deficient peoples, neglecting societal constraints responsible for dwindling health. Further, access to medical school required monetary funds mostly available to White people. Whiteness became connected to what the United States values as experts because of White centered development of the medical field. White values like individualism placed ill-health in the hands of those less fortunate, despite environmental constraints restricting people from achieving good health. The takeaway from “Science of the Ascent of the Experts,” hinges upon the understanding of whiteness’s connection to innate expertise. Whiteness relies on elevated expertise status because it gives the White identity a monopoly the definition of a healthy lifestyle. Anything from nutrition to religious practices to family systems are defined as healthy due to the expert status that White privilege has enables for White people. The universal, healthy way of life then gets coded as objective, when in reality, is was constructed due to White belief systems predicated on the elevated status of White people. In the process of guising White opinion as objective, White privilege is further masked and perpetuated to the advantage of White individuals.

Going back to Baldwin’s assertion that, “white supremacy rests simply on the fact that white men are the creators of civilization”, one can begin to comprehend the ways whiteness monopolizes healthy lifestyles on a variety of forums. For example, the nuclear family structure, father as the breadwinner and mother as the homemaker, represents a very Western

understanding of the family. While other cultures may encourage grandparents and other members of the family to live under one roof, the United States deems a nuclear family the ideal situation to raise a family. Because White supremacy relies on the belief that the civilization they created represents the ideal, the White identity is also deemed capable of narrowly defining family values. Henceforth, the nuclear family gets normalized, much like whiteness as a racial category, therefore legitimizing the praise of nuclear families in the United States.

Studying alternative mediums for the normalization of whiteness comes with multiple benefits. If whiteness remains unnamed and unmarked, people of color will continue to be affected by racist individuals and society (Walz, 2008). Naming whiteness as racial category allows the oppressor to be at the forefront of the conversation and forces, “white people like me to sit firmly in the learner’s seat” (Walz, 2008). In leaving whiteness unexamined, White people can continue to see themselves absent from racial dynamics because many fail to have the skills to partake in racial dynamics (Tochluk, 2008). One goal of this paper is to emphasize the existence and prominence of whiteness to springboard discussions of how whiteness can be used to benefit people lacking equivalent privilege.

As Lipsitz states, “we do not choose our color, but we do choose our commitments” (1998, viii). In agreement with Lipsitz, Tochluk promotes the study of whiteness because,

If we are not white, then whiteness becomes meaningless for us. If we are not white, then there is absolutely no reason why we should concern ourselves with what people of color have been saying for generations about the features of white culture. If we are not white, then we have nothing to gain by investigating how our country’s history of racism shapes us. If we are not white, then conversations about our unwitting participation in perceiving racism in our classrooms, on our school campuses, of in communities of color are irrelevant (2008, 34).

Whiteness continues to be unmarked, but in working to name whiteness and its subsequent privileges, I will add to the growing discourse working to irradiate racial injustices, moving

toward a more equal society. There is no question that society can benefit from looking at the disadvantages of people of color to irradiate discrimination. Movements like the Women's Rights Movement and the Civil Rights Movement focus on society's deficiencies in giving equal opportunity to under-privileged identities. While I would never neglect the effectiveness of the above movements, my research works in the opposite direction. I will acknowledge privileged identities and how the perpetuation of privilege aids in the continuation of injustice, shifting the conversation from the oppressed to the oppressor, with hopes of the further irradiation of social injustices.

Masculinity

I recently discussed future plans with a male, college athlete experiencing a potentially career threatening injury. He received two surgeries on the same ligament, recently re-torn it, and would need to reevaluate his future. I asked him what he planned to do. He said he would continue to compete with the injury despite the severity and potential lifelong consequences. He was upset about his situation but did not want to seem "depressed" or "a puss" about it. He needed to compete. It was crucial for him to compete.

In their intricacies, masculinity and gender studies prove complex areas of study. Some conceive masculinity as a genetic predisposition, while others see it as dynamic depending on culture (Seidler, 2006). Due to scholars like Judith Butler, R.W. Connell, and Stephen Whitehead the study of masculinity has moved to the forefront of gender conversation. While I pull from multiple scholars and articles to discuss masculinity, Butler, Connell, and Whitehead lay the basis for my understanding of masculinity in the United States.

In "Gender Trouble," Judith Butler establishes gender, as "an 'act' ... which is both intentional and performative," and "if the truth of gender is a fabrication and if a true gender is a

fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies, then it seems that gender can be neither true nor false” (2001). Butler argues that gender fails to innately exist within an individual, but is instead acted into existence. The athlete I described at the beginning of the section establishes his masculinity in the act of competing. As an athlete, competing legitimizes his masculinity, and by continuing to compete, he acts out his masculinity in a risky manner.

Because Butler advocates for gender to be understood as an act, she also argues to reject biological understandings of gender. Connell agrees, saying, “Masculinities are neither programmed in our genes, nor fixed by social structure, prior to social interaction. They come into existence as people act...” (2000, 12). Understanding gender as an act comes hand in hand with the comprehension that gendered acts vary between cultures. Connell notes, “Masculinities are defined collectively in cultures, and are sustained in institutions” (2000, 11). Performing masculinity will look different depending on time and culture. My research will focus on the performance of masculinity in the United States in the 21st century, specifically hegemonic masculinity, “the centre of the system of gendered power” but “need not be the most common of masculinity (Connell, 2000, 216-217). To elaborate on hegemonic masculinity, I turn to Stephen Whitehead.

Whitehead agrees with Butler and Connell, “while recognizing the fluidity of masculinity, the question remains as to what extent masculinity is simply a by-product of social and cultural change” (Whitehead 2002). Whitehead understands masculinity as a performance, and when looking at hegemonic masculinity, he sees a particular type of performance.

Whitehead advocates, “Dominant masculinities...do not position the male/masculine subject as timid, careful, restricted; in assuming to be boy/man the male does not take himself to be fragile. On the contrary, dominant notions of embodied masculinity speak of force, hardness, toughness,

physical competence” (2002, 189). Masculine performances that enforce toughness and athleticism reify what it means to possess the dominant masculinity in the United States, and possessing dominant masculinity hold privilege.

In “Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the development of the concept” (2005), Connell further delves into the development of hegemonic masculinity. Connell sees hegemony as a “simple model of cultural control”. Despite the possession of control, hegemonic masculinity differs from the most prominent masculinity. Instead, “Only a minority of men might enact it. But it [is] certainly normative. It [embodies] the currently most honored way of being a man, it [requires] all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically [legitimizes] the global subordination of women to men” (2005). Hegemonic masculinity benefits from normalization in a similar way to whiteness benefiting from representing the default body. Hegemonic masculinity relies on the subordination of women, as well as homosexual men. Connell claims, “The idea of hierarchy of masculinities grew directly out of homosexual men’s experience with violence and prejudice from straight men”. Hegemonic masculinity holds privilege due to its reliance on the degradation of femininity and other forms of masculinity. In my research, I will examine how masculinity continually receives privilege in both marked and unmarked ways.

With the works of Butler, Connell, and Whitehead in mind, one can begin to comprehend the importance of understanding the endless consequences of masculinity. Studying masculinity will do more than help individuals understand influences in respect to their personal lives. Connell claims, “How we understand men and gender, what we believe about masculinity, what we know (or think we know) about the development of boys, may have large effects—for good or ill—in therapy, education, health services, violence prevention, policing, and social services

(2000, 4-5). Further, to write about masculinity will align, “with larger desire[s] for gender equality (Whitehead 2002). A large amount of research has gone into masculinity and its implications for men’s health outcomes (Leit, Gray, Pope Jr, 2001; Oney, Cole, Sellers, 2011; Courtenay, 2000; Evans, Frank, Oliffe, Gregory, 2011; & Griffith, Gunter, Wakins 2012). By deconstructing and unpacking masculinity we can begin to work towards a solution to help both men and women perform gender in more healthy ways.

As Connell highlights, hegemonic masculinity is normative despite being highly unreachable (2005). Men who possess hegemonic masculinity experience privilege from continual reinforcement of their lifestyles and bodies. The examined men’s health magazines continue to reinforce dominant masculinity by encouraging specific bodily performances. In studying bodily performances, I will reveal the ways dominant masculinity continually excludes others and elevates itself.

The University of Colorado athlete I mentioned early possesses a desire to perform his masculinity despite injury. Men perform their masculinity in a number of ways, and this project will focus on masculine performances in three health magazines. By looking at each magazine’s suggested performances, I will examine one dominant avenue for men to express their masculinity, and in doing so, I will deconstruct the privilege associated with possessing dominant, Western masculinity.

At the beginning of this section, I defined gender as a performative act and proceeded to characterize the dominant masculinity in the United States. In the next section, I look at the body as a medium to perform masculinity and to understand whiteness in order to elaborate on gendered and raced performances in the United States.

The Body

Science values objectivity. Biology, for example, is said to look objectively on a species and observe its ways of life. When looking at fitness, one may assume that the body's appearance will reveal the health of an individual. The physical depiction of a certain body informs the viewer of the individual's health. The body, in this case, represents the objective sight of fitness. The lifestyles and choices of an individual reflect themselves in the body, and the body provides an objective lens to view fitness. While this interpretation benefits people who possess an idealized body, I see the construction of a 'healthy', 'fit' body as purposefully constructed to benefit those who are more likely to possess it. White men.

To understand the purposeful construction of the body and objectivism, I turn to Sandra Harding. In her book, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?*, she examines the notion of objectivism, saying "objectivist justifications of science are useful to dominant groups that, consciously or not, do not really intend to 'play fair' anyway" (Harding, 1991, 143). Harding rejects objectivity, saying it is impossible to achieve, and instead argues for the engagement of "strong objectivity", which extends, "the notion of scientific research to include systematic examination of such powerful background beliefs. It must do so in order to be competent at maximizing objectivity" (1991, 149). By partaking in strong objectivity, I will examine the male body portrayed in fitness magazines to demonstrate how the idealized male body was constructed to further the performance of White masculinity, then aiding in the continuation of exclusive privilege. When the body is understood as an objective lens to view health and the ideal body as universally achievable, those who possess alternative bodies are scrutinized. Shifting to see the idealized body as a sight to reinforce White masculine privilege reveals how worth is inscribed on individuals for the purpose of enforcing hierarchies and fails to be an objective mode to make health judgments.

The work of Michael Foucault further discusses the importance of the body in power dynamics (Foucault, 2004). In his discussion of power, Foucault investigates the body as “directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs (2004). In the context of White masculinity, men perform masculinity through their bodies, which in turn produce messages and discourses in the world around them. In Foucault’s eyes, “the body is the ultimate surface upon which power and resistance operate” (Whitehead 2002, 186). By studying the purposeful constructions of the idealized body, we can further evaluate the perpetuation of White masculine privilege and its eradication by focusing on the work of the oppressor. White masculine power systems develop the body to reinforce standards of White masculinity. In dissecting the work of such systems of power, like men’s health magazines, we can reevaluate privilege at its source.

In its most simplistic sense, whiteness is visually observed through skin color. For Howard, the White, dominant body benefits from White skin because media normalizes the White body, which is key its continual dominance. In order to fully comprehend White privilege, whiteness must be interpreted as powerful and the implications of the white body must be examined to reveal the perpetuation of such power in the United States. Howard claims, “the lack of sufficiently critical understanding of the position of the white body in white supremacist society still allows the infiltration into this body of work of ideas that support the racist status quo” (2004). Normalizing the White body aids in the continuation of White privilege by giving White people the benefit of seeing their bodies as standard, allowing for the othering of different bodies.

When Connell discusses masculinity, he specifically refers to the importance of the body, saying, “Gender is the way bodies are drawn into history; bodies are arenas for the making of gender patterns” (2000). Rather than seeing gender as a result of biological make up, “masculinity refers to male bodies (sometimes directly, sometimes symbolically and indirectly), but is not determined by biology” (Connell, 2000). Both masculinity and whiteness use the body as a medium to portray meaning. White masculinity becomes the default image through their portrayal in the body. Likewise, Whitehead characterizes the body as largely important in his discussion of gender. Specifically, Whitehead claims, “The male body can be understood, then, as the place from which masculinities appear both as illusion and as materiality. In appearing whole and complete, the body does emit a powerful semiotic presence in the social world” (2002, 186). Whitehead dedicates one full chapter in his book, *Men and Masculinities*, to discuss the importance of the male body, going so far as to claim,

It is a world where masculine bodily performance is primarily, and often violently, expressed as occupation, control, objectification and subjugation (of others’ bodies), competition (against others’ bodies) and the willingness to expose, to risk and danger, one’s own body. The masculine body is not one that is deemed to be rendered passive by its environment but one that seeks to render the environment passive to it, primarily by virtue of the male body’s action within and transcendence of, its immediate space. (2002, 190)

Bodies must be understood as political entities rather than objective surfaces. The idealized body portrayed in men’s fitness magazines promotes the performance of White masculinity by using the default White male body as the norm to establish a raced and gendered body possessing elevated value.

While my research focuses on fitness as a way to construct the ideal body, alternative forums promote a similar ideal body. In the documentary, *Mansome* (2012), men’s grooming patterns are profiled to define a modern masculinity. The documentary looks at facial hair, body

hair, and overall physical appearance to develop an ideal look and performance of masculinity. Kathy Davis (2002) examines cosmetic surgery as a way for men to achieve an ideal physicality. Davis presents the idea that men are discouraged from partaking in plastic surgery because they see themselves as submitting to the surgeon. Because men are expected to be dominant in all aspects of their lives, cosmetic surgery presents a threat to their masculinity, but it can help achieve a certain idealized body that they aspire for. Some men are overcome by a need to perform masculinity, leading to excessive body building which can often times leave their bodies in shambles (Denham, 2007 & Mosley, 2005). *Mansome*, the work of Davis, and the body building research from Denham and Mosley deconstructs the lengths men will go to achieve an idealized body that enables the ultimate White masculine performance. Further, the social position of White men enable higher access to avenues to achieve the ideal body, therefore creating a vicious cycle distributing privilege to White men already in possession of high social privilege.

Men strive to achieve masculinity through certain physical appearances. Men work toward achieving high muscle, low fat bodies, a body that requires an immense amount of time and effort to reach. There is a limited scope of acceptable ways to achieve masculinity, and by looking at fitness magazines, I will examine the range of acceptability in masculine performances to uncover the perpetuation of White masculine privilege under the guise of an objective body.

Methods

Grounding my research in whiteness, masculinity, and the body provides the theoretical lens for how I will interpret the chosen men's magazines. I see White privilege being performed through the need to establish hierarchies. I recognize masculinity as performances, specifically those reinforcing heteronormativity. The body provides the medium for the public conception of whiteness and masculinity. Through understanding the body as a powerful, socially marked entity, I will examine how White masculine privilege penetrates fitness magazines.

After looking at various health, fitness, and men's magazines, I selected *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness*, and *Muscle and Fitness* to extensively examine. I came to my decision using the web site, "AllYouCanRead.com", described as, "a massive media directory of 22,800 local and international magazines and newspapers from all over the world". *Men's Health* and *Men's Fitness* appeared after searching "Top 10 Health Magazines". *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness*, and *Muscle and Fitness* all appeared on the "Top 10 Fitness Magazine" list. Finally, all three also appeared as part of the "Top 10 Men's magazines".

To explore the purpose of each magazine, I acquired their mission statements¹. All three magazines promote a general emphasis on physical performances. *Men's Health* asserts, "It's the brand for active, successful, professional men who want greater control over their physical, mental, and emotional lives" (Media Kit). *Men's Fitness* targets, "young performance-driven men" to give them, "all they need to get results- in the gym, in the office, on the field, in the bedroom" (Men's Fitness: The Ultimate Performance Brand). *Muscle and Fitness* focuses on, "serious fitness enthusiasts" while remaining to emphasize, "the most cutting –edge training, nutrition, supplement information" (Muscle & Fitness: Ultimate Source for Training and

¹ Full Mission Statements for *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness*, and *Muscle and Fitness* can be found in the Appendix

Nutrition). *Men's Health* contains the highest circulation of 1,892,760 (Circulation: A competitive comparison, 2011). *Men's Fitness* has lower circulation at 600,215 (Circulation: A competitive comparison, 2011), and *Muscle and Fitness* falls at 340,732 copies (2012)². While these magazines differ in circulation, I will look at all three to get a more diverse feel for what men can turn to with regards to health and fitness.

The three magazines were all published in October. By keeping all of the issues consist by month, I sought to account for seasonal emphasis, type of issue, holidays, current events, etc.

I chose to look in depth at only the stories advertised on the covers of the magazines because they represent the entire issue and draw the reader in to picking up the magazine. In total, there were 24 articles. One article in each magazine was thrown out. *Men's Health* advertised "867 cool new health, fitness, nutrition, sex and style tips" and *Men's Fitness* claimed to have "346 tips to get lean and strong". Because there was no way to identify 867/346 tips each magazine had in mind, the two articles were thrown out. *Muscle and Fitness* magazine advertised for a "free supplement guide" on the back cover of its magazine. Due to the article being mainly advertised by the back cover, the supplement guide was also thrown out. After eliminating those three articles, I was left with 21 articles to thoroughly examine.

In searching through previous literature, I came across an article titles "Burn fat, build muscle: A content analysis of Men's Health and Men's Fitness (Labre, 2005). After reading Labre's research technique, I decided to take a similar approach to my research. Labre's study focused on men's expectations for their bodies, and the method of coding proved beneficial for men's bodily expectation. I chose to code under three categories: Whiteness, Masculinity, and The Body. Under each category, I chose concepts coinciding with the main category based on

² After extensively looking for circulation numbers, Wikipedia was the only sight I found to have the numbers for *Muscle and Fitness* Magazine.

my research laid out in the literature review. I acknowledge that concepts under one category may also fit under another due to the extensive intersectionality of whiteness and masculinity, especially. Based on my research and to enforce an organizational quality to my analysis, I assigned a concept to only one of the three categories.

The following concepts were used to code from whiteness in the magazines:

Money/Income, Individual/individualism, Innate physicality/genetics, Accomplishment/goals, and Nuclear family.

Coding concepts for masculinity were as follows: Fatherhood/Family, Heteronormativity, and Career.

Finally, for the body sub-category, I used concepts utilized by Labre because the study prioritized bodily concepts as their means to deconstruct masculinity. I looked for examples of Leanness, Power, Muscularity, Beauty/Attractiveness, Strength, Size/bulk, Food/meat.

After analyzing the 21 articles, I will draw on my research on whiteness, masculinity, and the body to interpret the magazines' utilization of the body to perpetuate White masculine privilege³. Again, while I acknowledge the diverse avenues to perform whiteness and masculinity, my research focuses on the performance of whiteness as a forum to perpetuate entitlement. Further, my study of masculinity focuses on hegemonic masculinity in the United States during the 21st century.

³ Throughout my chapters, I will quote the magazine articles as evidence for my claims. Each article is cited individually in the Resource section and a table of the articles organized by magazine can be found in my Appendix.

Chapter 1: Whiteness

Lipsitz characterizes the role of whiteness in the United States as, “The unmarked category against which difference is constructed” (1998). He notes the unmarked component to whiteness, summarizing so much of whiteness’s source of power. The White body represents the default, normalized depiction of the body. From its embodiment as the default, all other bodies are constructed deviant. Whiteness holds immense privilege due to its unmarked, default status, allowing whiteness to represent prestige and expertise in the United States.

As noted in the methods section, I coded for examples of money/income, individualism, innate physicality, and the nuclear family as representations of whiteness. After analyzing the articles, I will weave these concepts into three main sub categories: Heteronormativity, Expertise, and the Definition of Success.

Heteronormativity

The dominant depiction of a family in the United States includes a married man and women who conceive their own children. The father works to support the family, while the mother stays home to take care of the children. While more women have infiltrated the workplace, many experience the “double shift”, where women work at their jobs and come home to complete the same tasks expected of a stay-at-home mother. This Western understating of the family is perpetuated by the three magazines. The structured nuclear family then becomes associated with health and fitness, giving more worth to families with mirroring structure.

The nuclear understanding of family is based on White, Christian principles (Ehrenrich & Engelsih, *Motherhood as Pathology*, 1978). Authors who praise athletes, who result from nuclear

family success are likewise promoting whiteness to privilege the White, Christian understanding of the family as healthy.

To set the stage for his article on Rob Gronkowski, tight end for the New England Patriots, Joe Wuebben provides the reader with a depiction of the Gronkowski residence.

The one with the tin sign that reads, “Home of Champions” hangs in its garage. The one with the fully equipped weight room in its large, unfinished basement. The one sitting on the five-acre lot, complete with full-size basketball court, swimming pool, and enormous grass field of a backyard that could easily accommodate three football fields. The one that Rob’s father, Gordy Sr., says he ‘Built from scratch’ 10 years ago (2012).

Wuebben portrays the house as the ideal foundation to foster the picturesque American family. Where the Gronkowski parents raised “five rambunctious boys” who all became college and professional athlete. They represent the ultimate, successful American family thanks to their traditional heteronormative, nuclear family structure.

More than the house itself, what went on within the home represented the iconic American family. While Gordy Sr. was out selling fitness equipment to provide for his wife and kids, Diane, his wife stayed, “home with the kids all day when they weren’t at school, provided wholesome meals consisting of chicken, steak, vegetables, and very little junk food. ‘She brought a good, healthy meal to the table every night,’ Gordy says” (Wuebben 2012). Feeding that many men proved a difficult tasks, requiring, “four refrigerator freezers...Gordy estimates their grocery bill was \$500-\$600 a week and that the family went through 2 ½ gallons of milk a day” (Wuebben 2012). The full time job of taking care of the boys fell under the responsibility of their mother. Wuebben makes the case that having Diane at home and Gordy Sr. “patriarch of the family; owner of G&G Fitness Equipment” holding the title of head-of-the-household, enabled the Gronkowski boys to experience immense success in the sports arena because they came from a strong nuclear family foundation from birth.

Wuebben infers the high financial status required to raise such a family. The grocery bill alone averages, “\$500-\$600 a week”. The nuclear family structure allows the Gronkowski parents to raise athletically successful boys, much to the credit of their financial success. Financial stability and successful child rearing appear contingent upon the nuclear family structure, resulting in the promotion of White value systems as superior means to raise a family.

Although the intension of the article was to focus on Rob Gronkowski, the author made it a point to address the accomplishments of the five other men in the family. Wuebben shares,

The oldest, Gordie Jr., was a late bloomer who grew to 6’5” in college and went on to play six years of minor league baseball. Dan, also 6’5”, is a workaholic in the gym and a tight end with the Cleveland Browns. Chris, the shortest of the boys at 6’2”, is also the strongest and currently a fullback for the Denver Broncos. Goose (given name Glenn), the baby of the family, is a 6’3” tight end at Kansas State University (2012).

By developing the success of the other boys, Wuebben establishes the Gronkowski’s as the iconic American family. Rob, the feature Gronkowski, represents one of five admired boys, rather than an anomaly. Each member of the Gronkowski family is meant to represent an idyllic image, one that results from White notions of the family.

The Gronkowski family is depicted as a family existing on an equal playing field. By developing a nuclear family structure and enforcing Western norms they acquired the ability to rise to the top financially and socially, allowing them to raise five athletically inclined men. The hard labor of their father and the loving support of their mother appear critical in the success of the boys. Understanding their family in such a way denies the privilege they possessed by possessing whiteness. By possessing whiteness, Gordy Sr. and Diane were already at an advantage to achieve their success. Further, because of his parents’ privilege, Rob is also by default more likely to achieve success by United States standards.

In framing his argument, Wuebben credits much of Rob's success to his nuclear family, one that is 'objectively' defined as the healthiest. However, when looking at Rob and the Gronkowski's possession of whiteness as key to their social position, we can see by being White, the family is more likely to be seen as a successful family. Further, their possession of a nuclear family is deemed healthy, not because of its products, but because White value systems have defined the nuclear family healthier by default, creating a system continually rewarding whiteness under the guise of falsely objective constructions of family health.

Wuebben and the Gronkowski's provide one example of admired heteronormativity. The cover man from *Men's Fitness* magazine, Drew Brees, speaks to the Western importance of nuclear family structures as well. The feature about Drew Brees focuses on his work ethic enabling him to rise to the top of the football food chain. Tuthill titles Brees's article, "\$100 Million Underdog". American thrives off an underdog story because it embodies the "pull yourself up by your boot straps" mentality. America is depicted as the place where, despite your circumstances, anyone can succeed. Brees, New Orleans Saints quarterback, symbolizes the underdog story, one denying social inequality, claiming anyone is capable of success because we all start at the same social position.

Part of Brees's success is interpreted through his family. Tuthill makes it a point to address, "Brees's wife, Brittany, 8 ½ months pregnant with the couple's third child", who "will come in to work out later". Brees's underdog story results in monetary success through his \$100 million contract and family success through his wife and soon-to-be three children. Brees's ability to rise to the top of a capitalist system becomes tied to his ability to 'spread his seed' to the next generation. His family mirrors that of the Gronkowski's, just at a different point in the

process. Brees achieved career success, and along the way recreated the heteronormative nuclear family so encouraged by dominant discourse.

Understanding Brees's story as a tale of an underdog is neglecting his White privilege and access to avenues allowing him to rise from the so-called bottom, to his high social status. Similarly, seeing his family as an objective model to view his success denies the desire of White dominant society to reinforce nuclear families as successful. As Baldwin points out, "white supremacy rests simply on the fact that white men are the creators of civilization" (1985). White Christian value systems define the healthy family structure as a married father and mother with children. Brees's family is seen as successful because it reinforces White Christianity, rather than an objective view of what a family should look like.

Steve Fennessy profiles *Men's Health's* cover man, Andrew Lincoln, lead man of the TV show, "The Walking Dead". Fennessy reveals Lincoln's "parents—an engineer and a nurse—were skeptical that their 12-year old son could make a career as an actor...but a few years ago, approaching his mid-30's with his first child, Lincoln decided it was time, as he says, to 'man-up'" (2012). Lincoln's success gets credited to his son. Lincoln prioritized his acting career to provide for his son because part of being a father is embracing the breadwinner role. Lincoln's choice to embrace the heteronormative male family role enables his success in a capitalist system valuing monetary achievement. Again, in looking at Lincoln's ability to prioritize his acting career, we must also attribute his whiteness to his success. His social position as a White male allows him privileges to prioritize his career in ways that fail to be available to other people. Further, the traditional careers of his parents set the stage for his later success because of their access to careers like engineering and nursing. Lincoln's success, and the success of his parents, reinforces White nuclear family structure. Notions of the family become intertwined with career

success to forge a belief that nuclear families are essential in succeeding in a capitalist society. Therefore, embracing whiteness becomes vital in success, leading to the ever-present promotion of whiteness in health magazines.

All three magazines idealize the traditional, nuclear family structure, in turn, promoting heterosexual White privilege. In his discussion about marital finances, Kris Frieswick of *Men's Health* magazine examines ways to approach a financial secure marriage. The entirety of the article discusses marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman, reinforcing the default heteronormative understanding of relationships. In discussing whether or not to own a house together, Frieswick claims, "for traditional marriages, this may work just fine. But who has one of those anymore?" (2012) Frieswick draws on Steven Carr, "an estate and trust attorney" to elaborate on non-traditional marriages, saying, "Second marriages, third marriages, or marriages between U.S. citizens and noncitizens can make things more complicates" (2012). Alternative marriage in the United States is remarriage between a man and a woman. Gay or lesbian marriage remains unmentioned because of the heterosexual normalization of relationships. I argue, even second and third marriages represent traditional marriages because of their reliance on White heteronormativity. By failing to mention gay marriage as an alternative to heterosexual marriage, *Men's Health* further normalizes an exclusionary; Christian centered idea of relationships, therefore promoting notions of White Christianity as healthy. Despite marriage's supposed lifelong commitment, couples are allowed to break the promise of forever, under the assumption that they will partake in another heterosexual relationship.

My research looks to name privileges that may otherwise go unnoticed, for example, heteronormativity. Though I delve more into general roles within heterosexual relationships in Chapter Two, it is important to emphasize how nuclear families reinforce whiteness in the

United States. All three-cover men are characterized as successful stories due to their connection with heteronormative families. When men prosper from such families, their success becomes a way to promote as the success of the tradition family, and as a result, reestablish whiteness as a superior value system to abide by.

Expertise

Much of the White identity relies on the assumption of superiority. Again, to draw from Baldwin, “The idea of white supremacy rests simply on the fact that white men are the creators of civilization...and are therefore civilization’s guardians and defenders” (1985). Whiteness relies on hierarchal understandings of society. Whiteness is contingent upon a right and a wrong, an experimenter/subject relationship. When looking at medicine, the United States enforces the role of the doctor as the expert and the patient as uninformed. The patient relies on the expertise of the doctor to draw conclusions about the patient’s body. In education, a teacher is in charge of a classroom in which the students are expected to learn a specific curriculum. The teacher and students have specific roles they are expected to follow. The expert/student relationship infiltrates the men’s magazines by establishing certain people or lifestyles as superior. In doing so, they enforce a very black and white understanding of society, where White values represent success and anything else stands for inferiority.

Men’s Health provides an article titled, “For Richer or Poorer”, with the subheading, “Read these 5 myths about marital finances before you sign on any more dotted lines together” (2012). The article examines five different marital myths and how one should go about approaching marital finances. *Men’s Health* attempts to establish itself as an expert possessing the singular truth that will lead couples to financially safe marriages. A financially safe couple, according to *Men’s Health*, would protect their finances in order to gain as much wealth as

possible, therefore contributing to a Western, capitalistic understanding of financial success.

Men's Health claims to have the best knowledge to protect your money, but the need to acquire large sums of money reinforces capitalism, and therefore Western society. Establishing expertise allows *Men's Health* to feel justified in giving advice to married couples about their finances, and in doing so, reinforce a capitalistic notion of successful wealth acquisition.

Men's Health provides another article looking to “throw cold water on four of today’s most insidious weight-loss myths” (Court and Masters, 2012). “Is Exercise Fattening?” looks to uncover “the truth about how your workout affects your metabolism, appetite, weight, and overall health” (Court and Masters, 2012). Authors Ben Court and Maria Masters establish themselves as experts and promote the idea that every body possesses the same weight loss capabilities, leading readers to believe anyone can and should be able to achieve an idealized notice of the fit body. Court and Masters debunk myths by describing universal truths to weight loss, denying difference among individuals’ abilities to lose weight. They claim that these tips will help people lose weight, however, in one contradicting sentence they claim, “No matter how much you want that 32-inch waist, your body wants homeostasis more”. Court and Masters never establish what they mean by homeostasis. Instead, they continue to explain weight loss avenues. Glossing over the homeostasis comment allows Court and Masters to deny differences between individuals. In reality, my body at homeostasis may look very different from someone else’s at her homeostasis. However, one body is closer to the idealized image. Admitting that some bodies are naturally different than the ideal would also be admitting to a false sense of universal achievability.

Universal weight loss strategies fail to exist because each individual body wishes for its own homeostasis. However, an idealized, privileged White male body is continually depicted as

universal achievable. In doing so, White men who possess an idealized body are continually praised for their achievements. No single plan works for every person, but these magazines establish their plan as the best plan to reach the ideal body by drawing on White principles of expertise. Readers will be made to believe that anyone can achieve a perfect body by following a certain workout plan, and those who fail to achieve the body are characterized as lazy and possess less worth. In reality, some bodies, specifically those of White men, already possess an advantage to achieve the ideal body, because of their White male privilege. The magazine authors rely on developing an expert status to give the reader the impression that anyone can achieve the ideal physique, aiding to more people buying into what they are selling.

Sam Dehority, writer of *Men's Fitness*, produces an article profiling appropriate ways to deal with stress. Dehority introduces Riza Gunay, a man who “gets beat up for a living. His clients pay roughly \$70 for the privilege of smacking him around as hard as they want, all in the name of stress relief” (2012). Dehority pulls from Ari Novick, PhD to claim, ““There’s a lot of scientific evidence that supports the fact that hitting things as a way of dealing with stress is ineffective and can actually make people more aggressive”” (2012). In the path of establishing expert status for himself, Dehority degrades ulterior methods of stress relief, in turn hoping to legitimize his suggested methods. After disproving Gunay’s stress relief method, he claims, “hill sprints or a game of competitive sports” are the best ways to deal with stress. With the backing of a Ph.D., someone whose opinion goes highly respected in the United States legitimizes Dehority’s argument. Dehority claims, “it’s not really about pulverizing someone, it’s about burning away pent-up stress while also being a somewhat sensible member of modern society” (2012). Dehority further disgraces Gunay and encourages the participation of “sensible” members of society. Sensible, meaning those who abide by White masculine standards. Running

hill springs and competing in competitive sport may relieve stress, but they also speak to a higher whiteness narrative encouraging competition to prove superiority. Establishing expertise status gives the authors credit to tell the reader what to do. They establish themselves as experts, and in turn, reify White understandings of power and knowledge as most useful in understanding the world.

Dehority initially establishes his expert opinion by critiquing an alternate method of stress relief. *Men's Fitness* contains an article advertising Weight Watchers for men, titled, "Lose like a Man: Eat the foods you love to get the body you want". Before even delving into the recipes, editor Dean Stattmann spends a couple sentences convincing the reader to remain on the page, because even though they once thought, "Weight Watchers is for women", it works for men as well, by "[coercing] the pounds off your body" (2012). Prior to describing the diet, Stattmann finds it necessary to address his readers' concern about the legitimacy of Weight Watchers, by using "Eleven-time NBA All-Star Charles Barkley" to demonstrate how a once skeptical man, "got out of his own way and lost 40 pounds eating the meals on the following pages" (Stattmann, 2012). In order to ensure that the article would appeal to its male readers, Stattmann uses Charles Barkley, a man known for his daunting presence on and off the basketball court as proof of Weight Watchers' potential. Despite Charles Barkley being an African American man, his elevated status due to his athletic success enables Stattmann to use Barkley to demonstrate the huge potential success of the program. The need for Stattmann to establish 'proof' to begin with demonstrates the importance of verifying an expert stance and elevated status for his article to be taken seriously. Westernized, White understandings of truth rely on the assumption that White people are responsible for civilization, therefore take sole ownership of the truth. The truth, in the case of Weight Watchers, is its effectiveness despite the

programs feminine connotation. Stattmann relies on hierarchal, status motivated conceptions of the truth, and in doing so, furthers White understandings of proof.

When looking at improving one's sex life, Chris Cander from *Men's Fitness* considers his advise better than all the rest. To introduce his tips he says, "You've got the urge, you've got the tool, and you've likely had a few years of on-the-job training. If you want your Master of Bedroom Arts degree, however, you'll have to hit the books (actually, just this book). Get ready to perform better and enjoy sex like never before". (Candler, 2012). A master's degree symbolizes achievement. A master's degree in "bedroom arts" represents success in the sexual arena, despite the degree being entire made up. Cander purposefully appeals to the Western desire to acquire knowledge to improve status. Candler encourages high amounts of heterosexual sex in order to give men the opportunity to achieve a sense of sexual expertise. Sexual expertise plays into masculine expectations to have frequent sex that will be addressed in the next chapter, while simultaneously giving the reader the impression that after becoming a sex expert, you will have more frequent sex, appealing to a White value system of quantity over quality.

So far, the writers I have discussed attempt to gain legitimacy in order for the reader to see himself/herself as an expert. In Tuthill's article on Drew Brees, rather than developing himself as an expert, Tuthill depicts Brees as a player with leader status. Someone who commands his troops on the field. A player who tells his teammates, "I'm trying to make you better, man" (Tuthill 2012). Brees embodies the characteristics of an expert in football. He is able to perform at such high levels because of "his ability to compartmentalize—and not his other considerable athletic talents...". Brees's ability to compartmentalize his life comes with privilege. Saying Brees can compartmentalize infers his ability to separate work from home life

in order to perform at the highest level. Brees possesses the ability to separate while others fail to have that luxury.

Being able to leave the stresses of home life at home in order to perform on the football field makes Brees an expert leader. Compartmentalization represents a very White understanding of the mind. Where Gloria Anzaldua would argue for the constant interwovenness of all aspects of an individual, Tuthill makes the case for the superior ability to separate aspects of the self. An ability many people of color live without (Anzaldua 2009). A man with expert status must be someone with the ability to compartmentalize life stressors in order to achieve the most elevated work ethic. Those without the luxury of constantly considering race, class, gender, and sexuality as areas of disadvantage are unfit to be leaders because they let their social status effect their work, leaving only White, middle class, heterosexual men to qualify as leaders. While compartmentalization appears an objective, admirable quality, it remains contingent upon a privilege, White social identity.

Michael Easter's story in *Men's Health* reveals the lengths men will go in order to avoid being portrayed as lacking knowledge. Gene Rychlak Jr. trains Easter to participate in a bench press competition. Easter describes Rychlak, saying, "At 6'1" and 345 pounds, he's a mountain of muscle and flesh. And behind him I see a group of gargantuan men...One of them benching 500 pounds". Upon arrival, Rychlak says "Let's teach you to bench", at which point Easter replies, "...I try to explain that we can skip the introductory stuff since I already know how to do it. 'Not like this you don't,' [Rychlak] says" (Easter, 2012). In an activity resulting in, "detached biceps, dislocated shoulders, herniated disks, [and] blown knees" (2012), Easter believes he can skip the training. He admits the men in the gym "couldn't be more unlike me" (Easter 2012), but wishes to avoid the scenario where he may be seen as an amateur. Easter claims experience

because lack of knowledge results in lack of social worth. In an attempt to be seen as a knowledgeable weight lifter, Easter puts himself in great danger of injury. As the man writing the article, Easter desires to maintain an element of control. He wishes to hold the high status between himself and Rychlak. His understanding of their relationship demonstrates White value systems of hierarchy and a need to be seen as the expert. Taking the role of the student implies weakness by standards of whiteness.

The Gronkowski boys, introduced in the previous section, likewise possess a need to demonstrate knowledgeable in their interactions with each other. Father Gordy says, “‘They’re very supportive of one another’... ‘but if you’re not having a good day, they’re going to let you know about it. We had some massive brawls in this family. They really went at it’” (Wuebben 2012). The Gronkowski boys demonstrate the social importance to develop themselves as the most knowledgeable because knowledge infers a higher status. The need to maintain elevated status motivates men to promote dominance. Men try to gain top positions to ensure their expertise stance because Western, dominant society values individuals at the top of their field. For the Gronkowski boys, the need to prove superiority often results in physical altercations. Much like experts hold elevated status, whiteness maintains its societal privilege by establishing itself as the superior civilization by supposedly its own standards. The concept of race informs human worth, much like expertise provides heighten social worth.

The need to establish expertise is synonymous with the proving social worth. Doctors and lawyers comprise the most valued members of society because of their ability to excel through years of education. Professional athletes represent the cream of the crop, the men who outperformed numerous athletes from high school to college to achieve admiration. For Brees, his expertise resulted from his privileged ability to compartmentalize. Frieswork’s expert

knowledge advocates for the accumulation of wealth, reflecting a capitalist notion of success. Dehority relies on the degradation of alternate stress relief methods to prove his as superior. The above authors all rely on a White centered idea of success. *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness* and *Muscle and Fitness* advertise ways for men to achieve status by White standards guised as universal truths, therefore further normalizing White value systems the healthy way to pursue life.

Defining Success

Thus far, I have advocated for the intentional use of falsely objective constructs to reinforce Whiteness in the United States. In the case of heteronormative families, the authors argue successful men result from nuclear family structures. The falsely objective concept being the notion of the nuclear family. The authors frame the nuclear family as an objective mode to judge success, when in actuality, the nuclear family by itself reinforces White Christianity, so by default, those who come from and produce nuclear families are closer to being perceived as successful.

Often times, objectivity is guised through numbers. In the United States, quantitative research is highly valued over qualitative research because numerical values appear to be objective methods in which to draw conclusions. As Harding argues (1991), however, objectivity exists as a false, unachievable construct. In agreement with Harding, I argue the technique used by men to define the success of other men represents a biased, subjective consciousness framed by White emphasis on numerically based research.

In the health magazines, men typically receive praise for acquiring large amounts of money and breaking records. The *Men's Fitness* article titled "NFL Fit", provides a list of the "25 best athletes in our 2012 season". Brees acquires praise for being "the highest-paid man in

the NFL” who “threw for a career-high 5,476 total passing yards last season...breaking Dan Marino’s 28-year-old, single-season record” (Elliot 2012). After his initial praise for monetary achievement, Brees is idolized for breaking a 28-year-old record. The remaining 24 men profiled in “NFL Fit” receive praise for numerical, record breaking achievements. Jason Pierre-Paul “became the first player in NFL history to record a sack, forced fumble, and blocked field goal in a single game” (Elliot, 2012), where as Ray Rice “rushed for 1000 yards in three straight seasons” (Elliot, 2012). In a similar article from *Muscle and Fitness* concentrating on praising football players’ accomplishments, Calvin Johnson is noted for being “the highest-paid receiver in the league” and Rob Gronkowski for setting six NFL records (Tuthill, The 2012 NFL Strength Team, 2012).

One may argue men deserve praise because they achieved a higher number of tackles, receiving yards, contractual income, etc than their peers. Numerical value appears an objective mode of judgment for the athletes featured in the magazines. The United States promotes capitalism before all else. Capitalism encourages the accumulation of wealth, status and goods. From a capitalism perspective, more quantity equates more success. Whiteness values capitalism as the most prestigious economic system. In understanding the predication of whiteness on capitalism, we see how numbers reinforce capitalist ideas of success rather than objective means of defining accomplishment. Authors praise athletes for their embodiment of capitalist notions of success, leading to a continued promotion of White value systems as the privileged, objective norm.

Because capitalism values the accumulation of wealth, Frieswork provides ways to protect your money in, “For Richer or Poorer”, the article profiling “5 myths about marital finances”. Frieswork claims “...if you don’t treat your marriage as something of a vocation—

with as much impact on your financial security as on your happiness—then you're compromising the future you'll share" (2012). Frieswork infers men possess the rights to money because of their bread-winning role defined by heteronormative values. Men must protect their finances from women, particularly their wives, because above all else, to be interpreted as successful in a capitalist system, men must acquire high amounts of wealth.

Each magazine pulls on concepts of whiteness to establish privileges within the United States. Heteronormative, nuclear family structures are recognized as legitimate, while all other family structures remain unnamed. In order to demonstrate legitimacy, one must develop an expert-like status, often at the expense of someone else. Whiteness fails to exist without the degradation of other races. Expertise among different magazine writers and individuals exists by profiling a deficient way to go about a task. Those who make large amounts of money and break numerical records achieve elevated status in Western society. Possessing one or all of these qualities provides an individual with privilege, and in examining privilege I will demonstrate how privilege gets attached to the body, to reinforcing White privilege in the Western context.

Much of the privilege given to whiteness comes from its default, unnamed quality. White value systems define norms in the United States, however are often interpreted as universally objective theories. Nuclear families provide successful offspring, but the representation of nuclear families reinforces whiteness. Establishing expertise comes as second nature to the authors because so much of their status is predicated on being perceived as the most knowledgeable. White capitalism attempts to mask accomplishments as objectively more impressive due to superior numerical values, however, judging success based on numbers reflects a capitalist consciousness. Whiteness continues to be perpetuated because of it

understanding as the societal norm. In failing to account for the dominance of White understandings of success, whiteness will continue to represent United States norms. Deconstructing the magazines from a perspective grounded in White privilege allows me to reveal the false sense of objectivity in the construction of 'healthy' lifestyles.

In the next section, I will build on whiteness to talk more specifically about White masculinity in the United States. In different but impactful ways, the normalization and performance of masculinity further establishes the continuation of exclusive, privileged identities.

Chapter 2: Masculinity

Butler describes gender as a performance, rather than traits genetically encoded into DNA. Butler illustrates gender as “an ‘act’...which is both intentional and performative” (Butler, 2001). Individuals “perform” gender through work, sex, education, sports, hobbies, etc. A characteristically masculine work performance would be a politician or fireman, while a feminine work performance might be teaching or nursing. Certain jobs have gendered connotations, and every act possesses gendered undertones. For example, when asked to envision someone cooking, the act of cooking is often associated with women. However, if I asked you to envision someone fixing your kitchen faucet, you would most likely retreat to a male image. Every act contains gendered association. In looking through my data (the magazines), three avenues for performing masculinity proved most prominent throughout each magazine. While masculinity can be performed in endless ways, I will draw on masculine performances through three venues: (a) through work, particularly if work involves athletics, (b) heterosexual intercourse, and (c) working out and exercising, particularly high intensity weight lifting. These three stages provide the acceptable ways for men to perform their masculinity while still achieving high status through whiteness mentalities. I will examine how each venue becomes normalized to fit into a higher system of White privilege.

People are constantly forced to think about gender in dichotomous ways. When asked to identify gender, typically two options appear, male or female. You have a choice to use either a men’s or women’s restroom. After a certain age, all sports are separated into men’s and women’s leagues. The constant separation of genders leads to a binary understanding of gender. Gender binaries insist on the understanding of masculinity and femininity as opposites. Any masculine act is accepted when coming from a male body. Dissonance ensues when female

bodies perform masculine acts, or male bodies perform femininity. The pressure to avoid such discomfort results in the perpetuation of dichotomous understandings of gender, predicated on establishing masculinity separate from femininity.

Masculinity, like whiteness, experiences privilege in its normalization. When searching “The Human Muscular System,” as well as “The Human Body”, the images were prominently male bodies. Masculinity is the normalized gendered body, giving it privilege over femininity. Because of its privilege, masculinity relies on establishing itself as superior to, and differentiable from, femininity. My data exposed two ways masculinity relies on dichotomous understandings of gender to gain and maintain superiority over femininity.

Men's Fitness contains an article titled, “Seven keys to better sex”. Cander, author of the article, quotes Andrew Trees, author of “Decoding Love”, who claims, “Sex for men is mostly physical, but for women, it's emotional”(Candler, 2012). Although he fails to claim one conception of sex as accurate, Cander frequently refers to sex as a physically centered activity by including erotic pictures of women's bodies and providing sex tips like, “Train for it” and “Have sex with women, not on them”. Cander emphasizes physical understandings of sex because, “Sex for men is mostly physical”. By only profiling physically based suggestions to improve sex, Candler provides an extremely limited understanding of sex. Promoting sex as solely a physical interaction denies men the experience of sex as an emotional or spiritual encounter. This linear understanding of sex leads to a linear understanding of masculinity. Men who express emotion above physical interaction become feminized, leading to restricted acceptable masculine performances. Improving the sex life will only result from changes in physical performance, because emotional and mental changes infer that women and men can similarly experience sex, delegitimizing dichotomous understandings of gender.

The act of dieting contains feminine connotations. It is acceptable for women to diet to reach a desired body type, however, men must refrain from dieting, and instead work out and perform physically to lose weight. *Men's Fitness* provides an article titled, "Lose like a man", which investigates how Weight Watchers can be an effective weight loss plan for men. Stattmann starts the article saying, "We know what you're thinking: Weight Watchers is for women-we used to think the same thing. Then we actually looked into it. What we found was a world of meatball subs, barbeque pizza, and popcorn. It's not a diet so much as an arsenal of meals meticulously crafted to coerce the pounds off your body. And it works" (2012). Weight Watchers is advertised to help people lose weight, but as Stattmann points out, it is highly understood as a plan for women. In order for Stattmann to persuade his male readers to see Weight Watchers as a legitimate weight loss program, he resorts to using words like "arsenal", "meticulous" and "coerce", all of which hint at a sense of power. He uses athlete Charles Barkley, mentioned in the previous chapter, to legitimize and give credit to the program. Barkley, a retired African American professional basketball player, known for his sizable physique, makes the perfect spokesperson for the program. An extremely physical, hyper-masculinized player suffering from weight gain used this program to regain his athletic physique to reestablish his masculine worth. Using Barkley to frame the use Weight Watchers for men gives men permission to part with feminine understandings of dieting only because partaking in the diet will re-achieve a masculine physique.

"Lose it like a man" manipulates the dichotomous understandings of gender performance to establish Weight Watchers as an avenue to achieve masculinity. Before detailing the diet in any way, Stattmann addresses the concern that "Weight Watchers is for women", as if weight loss plans work differently by gender. Men's resistance to Weight Watchers comes two fold. On

the one hand, a diet meant for women should be ineffective for men due to fundamental differences between genders. Men's bodies are different. Stronger. More muscular. Tougher. A diet meant for women could not possibly provide the nutrients men need to thrive in the fitness arena. Further, men resist dieting in general due to its association with femininity. Western understandings of gender see masculinity and femininity as intrinsically opposite, and for that reason, *Men's Fitness* purposefully constructs Weight Watchers as a program "meticulously crafted to coerce the pounds off your body", to shift the understanding of dieting from feminine and depriving, to masculine and rewarding. Only in making that shift can dieting represent an acceptable form of weight loss for men.

Sexual performance and weight loss strategies reveal the importance of viewing men and women differently. Establishing masculinity and femininity as opposites allows for a hierarchal understanding of gender due to White dichotomous knowledge systems. Masculinity represents the normalized body in the United States. Further, understanding men and women differently allows masculinity to remain in power. Admitting similarities between masculinity and femininity would imply equal status, but the normalization of masculinity relies on being separate from femininity. Both above articles reveal how popular media reiterate gender separations to keep masculinity as the privileged gender, aiding to the continuation of White hierarchical social systems.

After laying the basis for understanding gender dichotomous, I will now shift my focus to discussing the acceptable ways for men to perform masculinity. As mentioned before, work, heterosexual sex, and exercise provide three foundational avenues to pursue hegemonic masculinity, the "most honored way of being a man" (Connell 2005). I will explore the

promotion of each foundational aspect of masculine performance to reveal its reliance on dichotomous understandings of gender to establish masculine privilege.

Work

Men are encouraged to perform masculinity through work because the act of working fulfills White, Christian, capitalistic gender role expectations. Men receive praise for working long, frequent hours because work performance reinforces the capitalistic desire to gain wealth. Working also provides men with the opportunity to embrace their role as the breadwinner, further enforcing beliefs surrounding the nuclear family. If a man is unemployed, he lacks masculinity because he has neglected his role as the provider. Being head-of-the-household solidifies superiority in a White capitalist system. Dominant masculinity, then, becomes contingent on pursuing a capitalist lifestyle based on White privilege, establishing the intersectional modes of power between whiteness and masculinity. Employment and job performance become the medium in which to judge an individual's worth, with White men already at an advantage due to their social position as default bodies of success.

Men's Health cover man, Andrew Lincoln receives admiration through work because, “He's always there early and leaves late. He always knows his lines. He's always pumping everyone up when he sees a drop in energy in the scene”(Fennessy, 2012). Lincoln works long hours while simultaneously establishing himself as a leader by having control over his role and helping his colleagues. Men are admired when their performance at the work place exceeds that of those around them. In the office or on the movie set, men receive praise for performing at elevated levels because conforming to masculine gender norms of superiority. Beyond the office, men are particularly admired and scrutinized when their work performance requires athletic pursuits. Even more so when the athletic pursuit takes place in the football stadium.

Men's Fitness and *Muscles and Fitness* contain extensive articles looking at football players. Elliot, author of, "NFL fit", begins his article saying,

Let's face it: We obsess over sports. Athletic pursuits define our youth, we use statistics as ammunition in our arguments, and, growing up, our heroes waged battle to win championships. Sports are as inherently male as biceps curls and fast cars. The sport we obsess about the most? Simple. Football-a game that encompasses everything we covet: strength, speed, intensity, competition, and glory (2012).

Football exclusively defines what it means to be masculine because is it contingent upon "strength, speed, intensity, and competition" (Elliot, 2012). Football glorifies physical contact. Much like men are encouraged to see sex as a physical act, contact sports receive higher respect among men for their escalated physicality. Football is exclusive to the United States, further legitimizing its glorification. Football is distinctly American, setting it apart from other sports to be admired by players and spectators alike. Football provides uniqueness to American identity, an identity already based on individualism.

Matt Tuthill acknowledges, "It's 6:30 in the morning, and Brees just walked into Fitness Quest 10 in San Diego, CA..." (2012). Even in the early hours of the morning, Brees is praised for sacrificing sleep and free time to master football. Elliot describes Vernon Davis, a football player, as "a workhorse...and hasn't missed a game since 2007" (2012). DeMarcus Ware has "never missed a single game in his seven-year career" and Marques Colston is striving for a "fourth-straight season with 1,000 receiving yards" (Elliot, 2012). Football player are admired for their recurrent and seemingly unstoppable performances on the football field because they aid in the distinction of the American identity. The dedication to their high paying profession awards them exclusive praise because they embody capitalist values to obtain financial income.

Muscle and Fitness magazine admires Ryan Grant, quoting his statement, "My dad started working out with me when I was 9. I don't come from a genetically gifted family. I had to

put in a lot of time in the gym” (Tuthill, 2012). To reiterate Butler’s argument, gender exists as a performance, encouraging men to engage in their work at great lengths. While all men are encouraged and expected to pursue lifestyles of breadwinning and leadership, White men possess an advantage by default because standards of success are constructed with their bodies in mind. Men are expected to work to succeed in a capitalist society that favors White men as the normalized American citizen. While work presents men with the opportunity to gain access to valued notions of masculinity, men also achieve praise when their heterosexual sexual encounters reach lofty expectations.

Sexual Performances

Men perform dominant masculinity through heterosexual intercourse. As Connell discusses, hierarchies within masculinity stem from “homosexual men’s experience with violence and prejudice from straight men” (2005). Discussions of homosexuality remain non-existent throughout the magazine articles. Men are expected to have sex with women, and in doing so, they accomplish the task of demonstrating their masculinity. Sex accomplishes the supposed evolutionary need for men to ‘spread their seed’. Pronasks and Gailey claim men perform masculinity through, “participating in sports, drinking heavily, or pursuing women for sexual purposes” (2010, 13). Pronaska and Gailey cite a porn industry leader saying, “men feel like ‘real’ men, embracing their ‘natural’ sexual appetites” (2010, 15). By speaking only to a heteronormative sexual appetite, the magazines frame heterosexual sex as normative and healthy. The development of sex between a man and a woman becomes naturalized. When men pursue their “‘natural’ sexual appetites”, they must partake in heterosexual sex. Homosexuality is then solidified as abnormal, because by participating in homosexual sex, men appear to be going against “‘natural’” desires, proving inferiority to straight men. Homosexuality cannot result in

‘spreading the seed’, therefore deeming it inferior and abnormal. *Men’s Health*, *Men’s Fitness*, and *Muscle and Fitness* limit themselves to discussions to heterosexuality, furthering the consciousness suggesting homosexuality to be an unhealthy practice, adding to a heteronormative society.

Heterosexual sex allows men to perform their masculinity in a socially acceptable way. *Men’s Health* author, Rachel Maddux, explains the relationship between music and men. Maddux enlightens the male reader, suggesting men can use music to relate to women and assist in their quest for sex. Although Rachel Maddux makes an extensive argument about the connection between music and attraction, she claims, “When dating, we’re often less concerned with muscle tone or facial symmetry than with ears—specifically, what a guy pipes into his” (2012). *Men’s Health* dedicates pages upon pages to increase the appearance and strength of the male body because in doing so, men come closer to achieving idealized masculinity. When Maddux reveals women are in fact less concentrated on body image, she suggests men perform their masculinity for other men.

Maddux argues women are more interested in a man’s music taste than his physical appearance. However, the magazines demand the achievement of a muscular body to attain social worth. Maddux offers the opportunity to understand that men perform masculinity for other men. Women may place less emphasis on men’s physical attributions, but men experience immense pressure to embody dominant masculinity in order to portray their social worth to each other. Men are the audience of masculine performances, particularly already privileged men who define what it means to embody dominant masculinity initially. Masculine performances further normalize White masculinity because the performance of masculinity earns social worth by appealing to White, heteronormative understandings of society.

Steve Almond also writes for the *Men's Health's* sex article, under the subtopic "A Guy's Guide to the Essential Mix Tape". The goal of the mix tape carries "one of two implicit messages: (a) Sleep with me (b) Please don't ever stop sleeping with me" (Almond 2012). Almond suggests that certain songs can produce different female reactions. For example, giving his girlfriend a mix tape with the song, "Take it to the Limit" by Etta James moved him from "having trouble getting [his] girlfriend to take [him] seriously" to "complaining...that [he] needed more space" (Almond 2012). He provides his reader with tracks that will "Make-Her-Year" or "The Happy Backslide Anthem" to aid in achieving masculinity through heterosexual sex. Almond develops music as a sight of manipulation, but disguises it as a way to appeal to the woman. Almond suggests, with all the right moves, men will engage in heterosexual sex, therefore aiding in their achievement of masculinity. Almond negates the ability of women to turn down men's sexual advances because sex is so integral to the performance of masculinity, women should always be receptive to the idea, when in actuality, women can and do practice their right to say no.

Musician John Legend also contributes an excerpt detailing how music gave him, "a nerd, the youngest in my class, and 8 inches shorter than [he is] now" (Legend, 2012), an avenue to attract women. Masculinity relies power seeking behaviors, and as Legend comments, "Great music has the power to put you under a spell" (2012). The more sex a man engages in, the more status he possesses because excessive sex represents a deeper embracement of White, Christian heteronormativity. While John Legend is an African American musician, he still aids to the reinforcement of the reliance of hegemonic masculinity on the acquisition of heterosexual sex. Music provides a cite of manipulation to obtain sex, providing an essential medium to achieve dominant masculinity. Because masculine societal worth relies so heavily on the acquisition of

numerous sexual encounter, *Men's Health* gives men permission to use music to obtain sex, in order to legitimize their magazine as the ultimate tool for embodying dominant, White masculinity.

Men's Fitness author, Chris Cander encourages men to "Ask for Directions", when pursuing heterosexual sex. When asking for directions and partaking "in Four-hour foreplay", "not only will she appreciate your desire to please her, she'll also probably want to do the same for you" (Candler 2012). Men should let their partner, "know you appreciate how hard she works...show interest...women will know what you're up to, but they won't resent it. They want the same thing" (Candler 2012). Candler encourages men to appeal to women's sexual desires, only in hopes of getting their desired outcome. Women are framed as tools to acquire high status framed by heteronormativity. Candler's article promotes the achievement of masculinity through sex while negating the importance of women's sexual desires. Candler encourages men to appeal to women's needs as a pit stop to achieving his sexual needs, therefore providing privilege to heterosexual masculine desires above all else.

Heteronormative sexual expectations encourage men to embrace their 'natural' desire by engaging in frequent sex with women. Dominant masculinity is contingent upon the acquisition of sexual experiences and sexual partners. Despite the importance of sex, an expectation exists for men to perform masculinity with a certain body achievable by brief, frequent, and intense exercise.

Exercise

Working out provides a final forum for men to perform their masculinity. All three magazines argue for specific workouts to achieve the high muscle, low fat body composition men praise. Men must stay from the treadmill and instead lift weights to achieve the idealized

physique. “The Fast Lane to Fitness” promotes, “[Beating] the lines at the gym with this fat-blasting, total body workout” (Yaworski 2012). “Ripped in 42 Days!” a workout advertised on the cover of *Muscle and Fitness* says high-intensity interval training will “Carve up your physique in 6 short” (Stoppani 2012). In six “short” weeks, and one can achieve a defined, toned, muscular body. Jim Stoppani, Ph.D., writes about the benefits of HIIT (high-intensity interval training) as “the most efficient program to date for whittling away stubborn body fat in a short period of time” (2012). Both articles emphasize the short duration required to achieve the desired masculine physique. Their stress on short periods of time leads to an understanding of masculinity’s predication on White societal standards.

Men must work out to achieve the desired physique and in doing so, they perform masculinity. Stoppani argues, “HIIT is definitely the best way to strip off body fat, to the extent that there’s literally no reason to hop on a treadmill...And if you’re reading this magazine, chances are you don’t desire the physique of a marathoner” (2012). The muscular physique desired by men portrays power, strength, and dominance. A marathon runner will typically possess lean muscle. Also, because marathon runners must workout for longer periods of time, they may possess a smaller frame rather than a high concentration of muscle. More than just the smaller physique, marathon running is demonized for the extensive amount of time required to train. Men must work out quickly, because of the expectation to be performing in other categories. Men must embrace breadwinning and have heterosexual sex to spread their seed and perform their masculinity. When men run for hours rather than lift weights for 30 minutes, they sacrifice time to spend performing masculinity through work and sex.

Cuomo’s profile of “The Strongman Muscle Plan”, admits the downfall of his workout is, “you won’t see huge increases in muscle size the way you would with workouts that focus on

isolating individual muscle groups...but...because you shed fat, the muscle you have looks better, if not necessarily bigger” (2012). Cuomo reveals the importance of working out to create an image, rather than creating a fit body. Exercising provides a way for men to create a powerful image embodying masculinity, and not necessarily health, leading to my final chapter on the importance of the body.

Thus far, I have discussed how dominant masculinity reflects White standards of success. As the privileged gender, masculinity plays a key role in promoting whiteness through acquiring wealth and embracing heteronormativity. I will now shift to examine the body’s role in the promotion of White, masculine privilege under the guise of promoting health.

Chapter 3: The Body

In the previous two chapters, I demonstrated how *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness*, and *Muscle and Fitness* advocate for the performance of hegemonic masculinity based on values determined by White dominant consciousness. Each magazine implicitly promotes White masculine norms by explicitly detailing bodily and lifestyle choices resulting in a desired physique. In magazines promoting health and fitness, one would expect suggestions to make on a basis of encouraging a 'healthy' and 'fit' life. However, after my analysis of the magazines' contents, I became aware of a disconnect between possible healthy lifestyles and the content of the magazines. The magazines rely on the assumption that every man possesses the capability to achieve the desired body. The body drifts from promoting a healthy lifestyle and instead reinforces dominant White, masculine value systems.

One must embrace dominant White, masculinity to achieve and maintain the desired physique advertised by the magazines. While a man may achieve health on his way to acquiring a desirable physique, the body's primary purpose is to promote White masculine social values, therefore promoting an already prominent privileged identity. In denying the purposeful construction of the ideal body to promote White masculinity, White masculine privilege will remain unchallenged, leaving other forms of racial and gender identity under valued and under appreciated in the United States. By developing heterosexual, superior, controlled, and innate bodily expectations, *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness*, and *Muscle and Fitness* encourage men to pursue workouts and lifestyles aiding in the continuation of White masculine normalization.

Heterosexuality

White societal norms encourage nuclear families and masculinity relies on embracing natural bodily desires to have sex with women. *Men's Health* and *Men's Fitness* reinforce heteronormativity by constructing the body as heterosexually performing by nature.

Men's Fitness characterizes men's sexual desires as "mostly physical", and *Men's Health* develops sexual attraction as the result of "the right chemicals". Each magazine interprets attraction to the opposite sex as a natural bodily response. *Men's Health* goes so far as to claim, "Neurologists say the chills triggered by music are a type of brain response similar to those seen during sex" (Roberson, 2012). The body becomes an entity craving sex with women. Men must embrace heterosexual desires, and by denying heterosexual urges would deprive men of their bodily needs.

Men's Fitness and *Men's Health* develop heterosexual intercourse as a natural, bodily desire. In doing so, they dismiss the possibility of homosexual intercourse as a natural way of life. *Men's Health* and *Men's Fitness* advocate for heterosexuality under the guise of instinctive bodily desires, furthering the normalization of heterosexuality, and White masculinity. Dominant masculinity in the United States relies on heterosexuality to promote the creation and maintenance of nuclear family structures. *Men's Health* and *Men's Fitness* promote White masculinity by characterizing the body as naturally desiring heterosexual intercourse. Looking at their characterization of the body as a promotion of White masculinity allows the focus to shift from the topic of bodily health to the promotion of privilege, opening the door to discussions of inequality.

Creating Bodily Perfection

In promoting the perfect body, what better sport to use than football, "a game that encompasses everything we covet: strength, speed, intensity, competition, and glory" (Elliot

2012). *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness*, and *Muscle and Fitness* utilize football players as examples of physical perfection. "NFL Fit" provides a full-page shot of Tim Tebow; running shirtless in the rain, and recognizes Donald Driver for his ability to high jump at Olympic levels. Patrick Willis, line backer, is admired for his pure strength and record breaking defensive performance where as Steve Jackson is acknowledged for carrying 5.1 percent body fat. LaRon Landry has "something to prove, and anyone named Iron Man with something to prove is someone to watch out for". Running back, Chris Johnson, ran the 40-yard dash in 4.24 seconds and Brian Orankpo bench pressed 31 reps at 225 and is "all power and agility". Ray Rice receives praise for his ability to bench press 385 pounds and squat 450, while Maurice Jones-Drew, "led the NFL in rushing in 2011" (Elliot 2012).

Like Elliot, Matt Tuthill of *Muscle and Fitness* magazine extensively looks at the accomplishments of three football players; Jason Pierre-Paul, Grant Land, and Robert Griffin III. Tuthill described Pierre-Paul as "a genetically gifted freak of nature" because of his "6'5", 285-pound" physique and "outrageous displays of athleticism" (2012). Tuthill praises Land because, "what the man puts himself through in the gym is more difficult than what most coaches ask of their players. Besides, if the 6'1", 222-pound Grant were in a preseason camp, he wouldn't be able to throw around the kind of weight he loves, squatting 525 for reps, leg-pressing 1,100 pounds, and benching 375" (2012). Impressive statistics scatter the article about Griffin III, like "His 4.41 40-yard-dash time" and "his Adonis physique seemingly carved out of stone" (Tuthill, 2012).

Between the bench press, squat, and sprint, the profiled football players receive admiration for their physical capabilities. However, rather than interpreting the statistics and images as proof of physical accomplishment, I push the reader to see that the statistics reiterate

the promotion of hierarchy. The players obtain recognition for performing at the top of their field. They dominate opponents and achieve superior status among like athletes because of their record breaking accomplishments, again enforcing White notions of hierarchy.

As mentioned before, each magazine offers its own ideal program enabling the achievement of physical perfection *Men's Health* magazine's, "Fast Lane to Fitness" article emphasizes the simplicity of exercise claiming, "All you need is a pair of dumbbells and an adjustable bench" to, "trigger greater gains in raw strength" (Yaworski, 2012). Christopher Cuomo authors an article titled, "The Strongman Muscle Plan" that looks at "full-body exercises" that are "unusual, exhausting, and very effective" (2012). Advocates for this program, "notice how effective it was for developing various strength qualities as well as for improving body composition and athletic performance" (Cuomo, 2012).

Muscle and Fitness magazine highlights the HIIT workouts because, "the results...are washboard abs and an overall leaner physique" (Stoppioni, 2012). Stoppioni claims, "HIIT is definitely the best way to strip off body fat..." (2012). The "Monkey Around" article in *Muscle and Fitness* magazine encourages men to "get...outside and train while the days are still long" (Tuthill, 2012). The article titled, "Straight Up Back" provides four different exercises to achieve a strong looking back to reiterate a powerful bodily image (Wuebben, 2012).

Men's Fitness supports a program focused on "Explosive exercises like jumps, throws, and plyo pushups recruit muscle fibers you don't work with conventional lifts" (Grasso, 2012). *Muscle and Fitness* magazine examines how the workouts of Mr. Olympians "...helped them reached immortality" (Wuebben 2012). Each workout program advocates a low fat, high muscle body composition is achievable by embracing their endorsed program. The program will provide, "gains in raw strength" (Yaworski, 2012) or "the best way to strip body fat" (Stoppioni,

2012). Each program profiles an avenue to achieve an image. An image portraying strength and dominance, never making the claim to promote physical health.

Providing different programs for men to complete leaves men feeling like they have to ability to achieve the perfect body despite any circumstances. You can “get lean in 42 days” (Stoppani, 2012), or gain raw strength with just a couple of dumbbells, and before you know it, you will achieve a “Body of Work” (Wuebben, 2012). Because the workouts appear in health magazines, readers assume their primary focus is to promote healthy lifestyles, however, they serve the purpose of creating an image. Michael Easter’s article in *Men’s Health* demonstrates how the ideal body is often disconnected from a portrait of health.

“Your Best Bench Ever,” looks at the work out regimens of the most skilled and accomplished bench pressers in the United States. Easter continually refers to the weight, height, and bench press power of the individual men in the gym. He is trained by, “Rychlak. At 6’1” and 345 pounds, he’s a mountain of muscle and flesh. And behind him I see a group of gargantuan men”. He goes further to say, “They couldn’t be more unlike me. I’m 6’2”, 175 pounds, and generally athletic, but no one has ever called me big (“wiry” is how I’m usually describes)” (Easter, 2012). Easter characterized the gym goers as deserving of praise because of their physical strength and muscular bodies but claims, “This isn’t your typical health club. Indeed, ‘health’ has little to do with what goes on” (2012). Easter voices, “in power lifting, poor form can have...catastrophic consequences-detached biceps, dislocated shoulders, herniated disks, blown knee caps” (2012). The men in the gym may appear extremely fit and possess the desired body, but they continually risk their health in order to achieve the Westernized vision of an ideal body. Easter blatantly states, “‘health’ has little to do with what goes on” (2012). The images

meant to represent an ideal, healthy body are predicated on depicting strength and dominance and have little to do with health.

Between the admired football players and the numerous available workout regimens, *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness*, and *Muscle and Fitness* provide their readers with a specific body deserving of praise. The body must contain low body fat, high muscle content and appear powerful. Men achieve status by obtaining the ideal body. Status granting social worth and admiration. The bodies promoted in the health magazines reinforce hierarchal notions of human worth. The workout plans fail to endorse health and instead provide ways for men to achieve status. The body represents a medium to achieve societal worth, worth likewise awarded by possessing whiteness.

Control

Whiteness thrives on individualism. The United States values the pull yourself up by your bootstraps mentality. As “creators of civilization” (Baldwin 1985), men must command their surroundings to achieve success. As mentioned before, individualism ignores systems of oppression that create unequal playing fields in the quest for White-defined success. Regardless, whiteness frames any obstacle as conquerable. Because of the pressure to overcome barriers preventing you from achieving the ideal physique, men are forced to understand their imperfect bodies as obstacle to overcome. The body becomes a sight to practice control as a stepping-stone to establish White masculinity.

Again, I turn to Christopher Cuomo's article, “The Strongman Muscle Plan” to illustrate the need to control their body. The credibility of the article stems from Cuomo detailing his personal experience performing the workout. When partaking in the exercises, Cuomo describes, “I'm bracing my core and flexing my thighs the whole time. Everything's getting fuzzy and I

have four stations to go” (2012). Cuomo attempts to control his body, willing its continued performance even when it outputs signals hinting its potential need to stop. Cuomo pushes through blurred vision and takes his “body out of its comfort zone” in hopes of achieving an idealized body. Men who listen to their bodies and ‘give up’ during exercises, are portrayed as wimps. The phrase ‘giving up’ signifies failing, when in actuality, an individual may be listening to bodily signals to stop, rather than putting his body in danger to reach a bodily image of perfection defined by White masculine standards.

Cindy Kuzma offers a different way for men to control their bodies, specifically strategies to combat stress. Kuzma claims “Skip the Red Bull. Step away from the 5-Hour Energy. We’ll show you the smartest ways to power up when your reserves are running low” (2012). Kuzma encourages men to look for quick fixes to avoid signals from their bodies communicating a need to sleep, rest, stop, and/or recharge. The body shifts from being an object to listen to, to an entity meant to control. The article provides ways for men to fight stress in order to constantly perform. Kuzma clarifies energy drains stem from a lack of sleep, and “While you may think you’re a free man, you’re a slave to your circadian rhythm”, however, the article still provides ways to avoid your body’s signals to rest, like “munch on protein” or “bask in the light” or “hit the gym” (Kuzma 2012). She provides eight ways to curb stress, one of which involves sleep, while all represent ways for men to control their bodies. The dialogue framing the body as a controllable entity adds to a discourse similar to colorblindness. Viewing your surroundings as objectively controllable denies difference between individuals. Claiming everyone starts off on an equal playing field denies institutionalized racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. Arguing all men possess the ability to control their bodies, willing it to

perfection, denies individual difference, which will be made clear in my next section titled “Innateness”.

Dieting provides another forum for men to control their bodies. *Men’s Fitness* promotes Weight Watchers to help men, get “out of [their] own way” (Stattmann, 2012) to achieve weight loss. *Men’s Health* looks at the paleo diet, “a system of eating that’s based on foods that would have been available to our ancient ancestors before the intervention of agriculture” (Schuler, 2012). Mark Mullins’s, the subject of the article, swears by the diet because, “he’s lost 70 pounds” (Schuler, 2012). By controlling what men put into their bodies, they hope to achieve an idealized body, and as Schuler points out, puts health maintenance on the back burner to image obtainment.

The article on the paleo diet starts with the idealization of our ancient ancestor, the caveman, due to “their ability to outsmart...megamammals” (Schuler, 2012). Mullins’s diet stems from the basic dietary needs of the caveman, and after losing 70 pounds, author of the article, Lou Schuler, patronizes him saying, “now he might be too much of a lightweight to tackle a ton of raging bison” (2012). The paleo diet aided Mullins in losing 70 pounds, an admirable feat. Schuler advocates, “we’re...older and fatter, and many of us live with chronic conditions that, the paleo diet advocates say, are a self-inflicted consequence of diets filled with food our species isn’t meant to eat” (2012). Despite Mullins’s success with the program, Schuler finds it necessary to comment on his too thin demeanor, suggesting the purpose of dieting is to achieve an image, rather than avoiding health risks.

Whiteness is predicated on the idea of being a superior race, overcoming obstacles to obtain an objectively created idea of success. In reality, success is defined by White standards. Dieting and curbing stress represents ways to control the body, rather than strategies to attain

health. Colorblindness relies on the assumption that race is a myth and has no grounding in society. Therefore, any achievements in life can be chalked up to hard work. The privilege of whiteness and colorblindness rely on the assumption of total control over one's destiny, ignoring the existence of institutionalized inequality. Constructing the body as a controllable entity allows the perpetuation of privileged, White masculinity by giving men the idea that all aspects of the surrounding world can and should be controlled.

Innateness

Each magazine provides endless workout regimens, exercise programs, and diet suggestions in order to portray the universal achievability of the ideal body. The regimens, programs, and diets rely on the assumption that the ideal body is achievable by everyone because hypothetically, they promote health. However, while the magazines promote universal bodily achievements, they hint, intentionally or otherwise, that the ability to achieve the ideal body relies on innate characteristics, therefore disproving its universal achievability. These magazines neglect to promote healthy lifestyles for men, and instead promote White privilege.

Men's health magazines run on the idea that any man can achieve the ideal body, however, underlying messages reveals the opposite. A certain man is more likely to obtain the idealized body because the body was constructed with him in mind. *Men's Health* article, "Is Exercise Fattening", provides the reader with tips for more effective workouts. After revealing to the reader that exercise does not make you hungrier, authors Ben Court and Maria Masters reveal, "no matter how much you want the 32-inch waist, your body wants homeostasis more" (2012), suggesting a lack on control over what the body can accomplish. The body desires to be a certain size, and despite work out and diet regimens, one may be unable to achieve the body the magazines adamantly promote. The three cover men embody innate physicality and perfection.

While men are encouraged to spend hours achieving the advertised body, it is the men who innately and effortlessly possess this body who receive the most praise.

Andrew Lincoln, star of “The Walking Dead” is known for his acting career and also receives admiration for his athletic physique. When asked about his recipe for a fit life, Lincoln replied, “Eat less. Exercise more”, at which point, writer Steve Fennessy states, “so it’s not surprise to learn that Lincoln doesn’t work with a trainer and hates going to the gym” (2012). Lincoln claims to have no interest in “the whole vanity aspect of building up different muscles...I’m probably talking to the wrong magazine, but this six-pack phenomenon in acting, I just don’t subscribe to it”(Fennessy, 2012). Lincoln may be under the impression that he is “talking to the wrong magazine”, but he perfectly encapsulates the truth behind the ideal body’s definition. Despite advocating for men to work hard to achieve a certain look, Lincoln receives praise for his minimal effort and maximum result approach to fitness. He just has it, and those who just have it deserve more praise than those who must work for, and possibly never achieve the ideal physique. Framing the body as a sight for objectively viewing health fails to take White privilege into account. While, dominant masculinity defines the body in a way to further establish its privilege and neglects health entirely.

Drew Brees spends hours in the gym, working hard to maintain his star quarterback status. Tuthill describes Brees saying, “Lean and muscular at six feet tall and 209 pounds, Brees moves through the workout with cool precision, his posture ramrod straight at all times like a Marine” (2012). Part of being a football player requires extensive athletic performances. What sets Brees apart, however, are his natural born qualities no amount of time in the gym could perfect. Tuthill details Brees’s presence on the field saying, “More than the way all men in his presence defer to him, or the omnipresent urgency of his voice, what you always notice about

Brees are his eyes—bring spheres of sharp, crystal blue, focusing like lasers on whatever the task at hand might be” (2012). Brees receives admiration for his instinctive ability to lead, representing the essence of whiteness. Ultimately, despite endless amounts of hard work, Brees’s natural greatness receives the most praise.

The final cover man, Rob Gronkowski, along with his four brothers and father, embody innate superiority. Wuebben notes each boy’s height and weight while profiling their athletic accomplishments. To some extent, one can influence their weight, hair color, muscle tone, etc, however height cannot be manipulated. Noting the Gronkowskis’ heights instills an innate athletic predisposition. Their bodies are naturally tall and powerful, so despite all the articles arguing that every man can achieve the idealized body, Wuebben reveals some men are born with a body more capable of being idealized, denying the possibility of an equal playing field.

After describing all the Gronkowski boys, Wuebben moves into his specific discussion of Rob Gronkowski, saying, “It’s a world of great genetics, but there’s no way genetics alone produced Rob...the biggest of the five at 6’6”, 265 pounds...and the best athlete of them all” (2012). Even though Wuebben credits some of Rob’s success to training, he initially comments on his innate genetic qualities, demonstrating the value they hold in exemplifying the White, ideal body. Wuebben describes Rob as “a natural athlete and an early bloomer” (2012). Dan, Rob’s brother, describes Rob as, “...just a freak athlete’...‘He’s got it physically, and it’s natural, but he definitely works hard like all of us to get the most out of it. Mentally, he’s really tough too”” (Wuebben, 2012). The description of his physical and athletic success, along with nine different pictures of his body performing or observable to admire, Rob’s success is credited to his genetic excellent and nuclear family support. As mentioned before, nuclear family structures are intrinsically connected to whiteness. Further, Rob’s innate genetic perfection qualifies him

worthy of praise because he embodies White masculinity. His innately physical body enables the embodiment of whiteness while simultaneously allowing him to continually perform in the sporting arena, therefore continually performing idealized masculinity.

The article contains four pictures of Rob with his shirt off, three with him working out in the gym with his brothers, and two playing football. Every image reinforces a different aspect of White masculinity promoted by the magazines. His sculpted body looks much like the men who demonstrate the exercises in the recommended work out program. Playing football speaks performs masculinity. The picture captions highlight his accomplishments, between his receiving yard and record setting touchdown receptions, Wuebben characterizes Rob as someone on top of his field. A champion athlete. A Western hero.

When viewing the body as an objective sight of health, you deny the purposeful construction of the body as a forum to promote White masculinity. Heterosexuality is inscribed as a natural bodily state in order to encourage nuclear family and hegemonic masculine privilege.

The body represents a controllable entity to give men the impression that all surrounds are controllable. The physically perfect body mirrors White masculinity, and those men who fit into the stringent White masculine qualifications are at an advantage to receive praise under the guise of embodying health. The construction of the body provided by *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness*, and *Muscle and Fitness* furthers privilege previously awarded to White men. In refusing to see the purposeful construction of the 'healthy' body to promote White masculine privilege, we will continue to live in a society demonizing diversity and promoting hierarchy.

Conclusion

As I wrap up my argument, I think about the most influential men in my life and what they would think if they read this paper. I would like to think that they would all marvel at my intelligence and give me praise for bringing issues of privilege to the limelight because they are all too often left under the rug. I would like to think that my father, brother, uncles, grandfathers, coaches, and teachers would read this paper and agree that possessing a certain body is a privilege, one with unequal access and one continually reinforcing hierarchies putting White, hegemonic masculinity on a pedestal.

Of course I would like to think those men would wildly accept my paper. But the fact remains that many of these men will simply pat me on the back for finishing this paper, with no intention of reading it. So why write it? Why spend countless hours analyzing magazines, reading about privilege, and dissecting implications of the human body? Why write the paper if those with the most privilege will refrain from reading it?

In the United States, White, heterosexual, middle class men hold privileges many cannot imagine. But as I mentioned previously, I am a White woman from a middle class background. I attended highly marked public schools and my parents pay for me to attend the University of Colorado at Boulder. Truthfully, privilege marks my past, present, and certainly my future. Unearned privilege I felt I deserved for a few too many years.

I understand men and women alike may become defensive after reading my paper. I also understand that in order to begin to deconstruct privilege, we have to bring it to the forefront of the discussion. Privilege lies in having White skin, identifying as a masculine male, and possessing a muscular body. In discussing how that privilege comes about and is continually reiterated, I hope to begin moving toward a society that moves away from exclusive privilege.

I chose to look at health because there is such an emphasis to be healthy in the United States, and few forums to achieve it. Almost every magazine on the shelf contains an image of a thin, usually White man or woman in fashionable or minimal clothing. I turn on the TV and there is a new report about obesity in America or a commercial about the newest diet pill or piece of weight loss equipment. Health is a growing discourse in the United States and the image of health in my lifetime has always been a thin, muscular individual. I examined health magazines because of their purpose to advertise a healthy body, and I wished to look at implications of that body for the people who possess it and those who do not. In my research, I came to find a disconnect between health and expectations for the male body. Men are expected to act in pursuit of achieving a certain look supposedly representing health and fitness. However, the idealized male body fails to promote health, but rather serves the purpose of promoting dominant White masculinity in the United States

Through analyzing *Men's Health*, *Men's Fitness*, and *Muscle and Fitness*, I understand how the idealized body has been constructed to reinforce whiteness and the performance of dominant, White masculinity. The athletes and well known stars receive praise for possessing an idealized body, sometimes for what that body can do, but always for what it reinforces. Understanding the healthy body's role in perpetuating White masculine privilege will lead to honest discussions of the continual manifestation of privilege under the guise of objective health goals.

Fitting the stringent qualifications for dominant White masculinity has a downside as well. For example, as I mentioned before, when possessing dominant masculinity, men are limited to understanding sex as a physical endeavor, rather than an emotional or spiritual one. Possessing an extremely structured idea of what constitutes a family hinders how people

understand benefits of alternate family structures. Perpetuating White masculine privilege leads to a narrow scope of acceptable ways to live, limiting those who possess White masculinity, as well as those excluded from its qualifications.

I believe my research is an excellent first step in the process to naming privileges in the United States. In the future, I would like to analyze the three magazines more in-depth and with more issues. Looking at a full year of issues for each magazine would allow the work to be more generalizable. Moving the analysis from simply articles on the cover to the entire issue would also reveal more extensive information on how the magazines reinforce White masculinity.

Questions of access and availability to the health equipment, foods, and resources would also make for a revealing project. Between the gym memberships, personal trainers, food ingredients, and even the clothing, a certain financial lifestyle must be required to maintain a healthy lifestyle. In looking at financial ties to fitness, class privilege and health would be examined more thoughtfully.

Heteronormativity was a hugely prominent theme in the magazines, one that I wish I could give more voice to. After grounding myself in literature surrounding the construction of sexuality I would like to more thoroughly analyze heterosexism's presence in men's health magazines. Constructing the body to fit White masculine standards leaves homosexual men out of the discussion. The healthy male body is predicated on heterosexuality. I would like to focus on the construction to further pull out issues of heteronormativity and their effects on gay men in the United States.

Finally, I would like to extend my research beyond the health field entirely. I being White, masculine privilege penetrated further than simply health and fitness magazines. I would

like to perform a similar study on music magazines, outdoor magazine, and even women's magazines, to see how White masculinity permeates into different aspects of American society.

Completing this research has been extremely challenging. At the start of my paper, I talked about how joining Ethnic Studies has forced me to be in charge of my own education. With the help of some influential people, I fell upon the topic of privilege. I often times found myself thinking my say in Ethnic Studies was invalid because of my privileged identity in the United States. In recognizing my privilege as a key factor in my identity, I chose to use my privilege to uncover privilege in the United States.

In bringing my research to a close, I would like to leave my reader with one final thought. We all have our personal privileges and strengths. Whether it be privileged social position or a beneficial personal trait, we all have something worth contributing. My middle class status awarded me the opportunity to attend the University of Colorado at Boulder to receive a life changing education. I chose to write about privilege in hopes of shedding light on social inequality by focusing on the oppressor. We all possess advantages and downfalls, but it is how we use and navigate them that we can eradicate social injustices. So I will just say this. Identify your privileges, your strengths, your weaknesses, and figure out a way to implement them to pursue positive social change. It is challenging and exhausting but absolutely rewarding.

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Appendix**Men's Health Mission Statement**

“It's the brand for active, successful, professional men who want greater control over their physical, mental and emotional lives. We give men the tools they need to make their lives better through in-depth reporting covering everything from fashion and grooming to health and nutrition as well as cutting-edge gear, the latest entertainment, timely features and more” (Media Kit)

Men's Fitness: Editorial Mission Statement

“Men's Fitness reaches young, performance-driven men by using a unique format mixing fitness with fashion, grooming, sports and other pastimes that comprise an active lifestyle. Primarily targeting men ages 25-34, Men's Fitness gives guys all they need to get results- in the gym, in the office, on the field, in the bedroom” (Men's Fitness: The Ultimate Performance Brand).

Muscle and Fitness: Editorial Mission Statement

“Muscle and Fitness is the No. 1 magazine for serious fitness enthusiasts. It is dedicated to providing the most cutting-edge training, nutrition, supplement information to young men looking to build muscle. Readers appreciate the fact that Muscle and Fitness recognizes the discipline it takes to attain the physique they want” (Muscle & Fitness: The Ultimate Source of Training and Nutrition)

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Is Exercise Fattening?	Court, Ben		102, 104, 107
For Richer or Poorer	Masters, Maria	Allen, Ian	
Your Best Bench Ever	Frieswork, Kris	Allen, Ian	108-109
Recharge Here	Easter, Michael	N/A	110, 112-114
Sex and Music	Kuzma, Cindy	Allen, Ian	120, 122-123
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Men's Fitness Magazine: October 2012

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Straight Up Back	Wuebben, Joe	Barisonzi, Laura	112-114, 116, 118
Bodies of Work	Wuebben, Joe		120, 122, 124

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