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Section 1 – Introduction

“What I propose … is nothing more than to think what we are doing”
- Hannah Arendt (1998, p.5)

The above quote is a part of Arendt’s analysis of the trial of Eichmann and her grander analysis of how violence is rationalized. Chris Chapman used this quote in reference to the diverse locations that power and violence exist. In his work on masculinity and disability studies, Chris Chapman (2010a) reminds us of the political importance of accounting for our actions towards others and the consequences of those actions. Foucault (2003) argues that relationships of power and systemic oppression permeate our lives and are guided by our daily actions. Chris Chapman’s (2010a) work engages with identifying the power relations of masculinity and disability; it is my hope that my work will add to this area that Chapman has begun to develop. Chris Chapman (2010b) considers the importance of engaging in reflexive practise in order to embark on the difficult journey of accounting for our actions, what we thought about them previously and what we think about them now. I have begun with this explication of Chris Chapman’s work as my work continues in the same field of thought that he has been developing.

I believe there is great personal and political value in engaging in reflexive practice to navigate power relations and privileges in our own lives and what we have come to witness in those of others. Reflexive practise and being a witness of others’ experiences provides a space to describe the ways in which oppression operates and how it is perpetuated (Chapman, 2010a). Understanding how oppression works allows us to create a strong intellectual foundation upon which political actions and resistance can be
based. Frantz Fanon (1967) described his work as an intellectual journey to identify the powers of colonialism in order to have effective decolonizing resistance.

I have embraced Fanon’s model and thus my project will examine masculinity and ableism in light of my experiences growing up in the geolocation of the rural upper-middle class of Southern Ontario. My family’s history of transitioning from immigrant agricultural proletariat to managers and capitalists has had consequences for the type of masculinity that I experienced. Additionally, in analyzing my standpoint and lived experiences I will investigate how masculinity-ableism is articulated by people of different classes in interpersonal relationships (Barker, 2010; Peterson, 2005). I have decided to use a dialectical form of thinking to look at the social relationship of masculinity and ableism. A dialectical method of thinking examines an issue like masculinity in relation to the other social forces that define it, and understands how the qualities of that social relation are dependent on the context (Gorman, 2011). For example, masculinity in a middle class white neighbourhood in Southern Ontario has many different values, foundations, and implications than masculinity in the low-income black communities of Albany, New York. Given that the West is a patriarchal society that permeates all social actors and structures, it is possible to find the values and characteristics of patriarchy resonating through different types of masculinity (Bannerji et al; 2001). Using a dialectical form of thinking I can identify the particular masculinity I have experienced. There are many ideologies, oppressions, values, and characteristics that are included in each particular masculinity, including my own (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Although, I will note some of these, my main focus will be examining the relationship between masculinity and the ideology of ableism. Campbell
(2008) suggests that the term ableism may be used to describe the conception that people with disabilities are inferior, and that a state of normalcy should be maintained with able-bodied individuals. Ableism is an ideology and a form of oppression that privileges able-bodied people in society by organizing structures and behaviours to reject people with disabilities (Chouinard, 2007). In addition to this, it is a violent ideology that seeks to marginalize and erase people with disabilities from the norms of society (Campbell, 2008; Crow, 1996). Ableism operates systemically and is also internalized and thus exhibited through violence at both a structural and interpersonal level. The analysis of ableism has grown out of the social model of disability (Sheldon, 2005). The social model clarifies how ideologies and power relations operate in society and the negative consequences this has for people with disabilities. The model focuses on social oppression and cultural discourse that assesses various disabling barriers (social, economic, political, and cultural) (Crow, 1996). The social model argues that there are people who have impairments that can be manifested diversely, however it is not always these, but often the organization and structures of society that disable people. These structures disable people by excluding them from participation within society, and denying them accommodation (Crow, 1996).

I have focused my work on the relationship between masculinity and ableism after having noticed in my studies that the topic has not been thoroughly researched. There has been extensive research conducted on how people with disabilities experience masculinity, and defining a disabled masculinity (Begum, 1992; Jefferys, 2008; Tollestrup, 2009). However, the following work differs from the latter. I am writing the paper from the position of a non-disabled researcher, finding it only appropriate to write
from my own experiences and how I have seen ableism enacted through an identity of being a white middle class able-bodied man. As a non-disabled researcher, I have chosen to write on this topic from my identity standpoint to produce a relational/reflexive analysis. This project has been influenced by Rachel Gorman’s (2005) dissertation, which endeavours to present a methodology for disability studies based on a relation/reflexive analysis, presented by Bannerji (1997) and Smith (1995). Gorman contends that a situated critique is used to analyse the forces and structures that have affected one’s life from his or her particular identity position within society (Bannerji, 1995). Gorman (2005) used the experiences of people in the disability community to identify and critique the relations of ruling in Canadian society. Like Gorman, I contend that the use of narratives assists in explaining a theory of disability oppression that is based on personal experiences. The personal narratives that will be included in this paper will be an essential component of the description of the masculinity-ableism dialectic, but also of how the theoretical material is presented. Therefore, it is essential that I provide a background of my identity, my standpoint, and my location. Engaging in a reflexive practise has been strongly influenced by the guidance of Nancy Viva Davis Halifax. The locale in which I developed a mode of research based on experiential knowledge has resulted in knowledge production that clarifies the connection between academic theoretical analysis and personal histories (Personal Communication, 2011b).

I grew up in Niagara on the Lake, which is a small rural town located in Southern Ontario. The town is predominantly white and upper middle class, with the exception of migrant labour, that farmers and the government exploit in the summer months. I lived in the town and went to the local schools until I graduated from high school when I was 17.
Subsequently, I moved to Toronto to attend the University of Toronto. Eventually, I became involved in community organizing for social justice campaigns in the university and throughout the city. Then, I attended York University for my post-graduate work in disability studies. Writing from my standpoint I focus on critiquing the structures that provide privilege and create oppression. This thesis is one of the first pieces where I hope to fulfill the goal of contributing to stronger analyses for political resistance.

**Purpose**

The purpose of my Major Research Project (MRP) is to conduct a theoretical analysis that will add to current feminist perspectives on gender identity dynamics in disability studies. In particular, my work focuses on examining the relationship between masculinity and ableism. This theoretical analysis will examine how these two social constructions are intertwined and rely on each other to maintain power and influence. I will describe how this relationship operates through systemic violence, and physical violence by social structures and social actors. I will be investigating masculinity by using a dialectical inquiry, which will explain masculinity as a variating identity in which the values and characteristics of masculinity are contingent on social location (Personal Communication, 2011a). While drawing on Gorman’s (2005) work as a methodological framework, I will endeavour to explain masculinity-ableism in connection with broader social relations.

Using a dialectical method I will highlight the relations of ableism to masculinity within the context of my experiences as a white middle class man from Southern Ontario. The inspiration for this research comes from my lived experiences and from a critical
engagement with my identity, which includes an understanding of the social factors that form masculine gender identities and ability (Kaufman, 2007; Demetriou, 2001). Personal narratives will be used in each section to provide lived experience information to the theoretical analysis of masculin-y-ableism. My personal knowledge will be integrated into my theoretical analysis to provide an accessible and tangible study (Smith, 1987). The theoretical content of this paper will be guided by the narratives as I will use the theory to explicate the social concepts in the experiences that I present. This will allow me to provide a particular definition, such as ‘masculinity-ableism’, from a specific location.

The project will be organized into four different sections: (1) methodology; (2) systemic violence through class structures; (3) boys physical violence; and (4) the implications for community organizing. The section on class structures will examine the masculinity-ableism relationship through the mechanisms of capitalism and neoliberalism (Harvey, 2007). Using a historical materialist analysis, I will attempt to reveal some of the ways that the capitalist neoliberal state of Canada influences the formation of oppressive gender identities (Bannerji, 2000; Gorman, 2005). I will argue that capitalism operates as systemic violence that influences societal relations (Eisenstein, 1979a; Gramsci, 1971). An investigation of the social structures of capitalism will provide an analysis of masculinity-ableism that shows the materialist functions of oppressive ideologies (Gorman, 2005; Eisenstein, 1979a; Eisenstein, 1979b). The analysis of capitalism will also inform how class relations are imbedded in the masculinity-ableism relationship.
Though masculinity and ableism operate through various forms of violence, I will specifically analyze physical violence to explore the connection between masculinity and ableism. The section on boys physical violence will provide a theoretical framework of early identity constructions and how physical violence is manifested in children (Connell, 1994; hooks, 2004; Kaufman, 2007). Though masculinity and ableism operate through various forms of violence, I will specifically analyze physical violence to explore the connection between masculinity and ableism as it is directly connected to the personal narratives. I will utilize popular media examples of children’s literature and film, which will highlight how such identities are constructed discursively from a young age (Ostrander, 2008; Nodelman, 2001; Tollestrup, 2009). The literature and film that I will be examining will be ones that are related to my own history of socialization, such as: The Beauty and The Beast, Superman, and Peter Rabbit. Lastly, my final section will examine how masculinity-ableism is addressed within community organizing and activist culture. As the goal and intention of this paper is to provide a theoretical analysis that advances our understanding of oppressive societal relations, an examination of the implications of the work for social justice activism is essential.

**Statement of Problem**

The intent that I have for this paper is to focus on the manifestation of the oppressive ideology of masculinity-ableism and the consequences this has for identity, subjectivity, and personal relations. In analyzing my personal experiences this paper will have an emphasis on my reflexive journey and the practice of anti-oppressive values in my daily life. On the other hand, the theoretical analysis is a deeper project to dialectically look at masculinity and ableism. I focused on this relationship because I
noticed a gap in literature in feminist studies that had not focused on the relationship between masculinity and ableism. Furthermore, a reference to these two oppressive ideologies’ relationship required a further analysis of how it has been constructed by different social oppressions and relations. I first want to establish exactly what I mean by masculinity and how this should be understood when looking at the social relations and divisions that encompass it. In conjunction with this project, I will describe ableism and how it operates diversely on different bodies (Campbell, 2008; Moran, 2007). Covering the complex relations between masculinity-ableism cannot fully be accomplished in this paper. However, I hope to begin an exploration of this issue by beginning from my experiences and those experiences that have been shared with me. I am a witness to much oppression and I have experienced much privilege and thus it is necessary to use these experiences to understand how social divisions are created.

Key Questions

The central questions of my MRP are: How is the relationship between masculinity and ableism manifested? How do the class relations engendered by capitalism define and entrench masculinity-ableism? In what forms of physical violence do we see masculinity and ableism articulated? How does masculinity-ableism further inform our struggle against disability and gender-based oppression? These questions are paramount in understanding the relationship between these two dominant ideologies (masculinity and ableism) and the social structures and forms of power in which they are manifested. Furthermore, the theoretical analysis of the masculinity-ableism relationship will be complemented with research on topics that are tangible and accessible, such as community organizing, physical violence, and systemic violence.
Methodology

I will begin this section by describing the theoretical modes and different disciplines that I have come to use as a researcher. Then, I will describe some of the different theories and techniques used in reflexive writing. My interest and rationale in exploring the relationship of masculinity-ableism is influenced by the growth of literature in feminist studies that focuses on an intersectional analysis of masculinity. Therefore, I will be applying critical race theory’s concepts of intersectional and interlocking analysis in this project. An intersectional analysis recognizes that individuals occupy and embody a range of social locations and subject positions—identities are constituted by a multiplicity of categories (Meekosha, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006). An interlocking analysis, which is related to intersectionality, further recognizes that categories of being are not separate from each other but are in fact systems that constitute and rely on one another (Naples, 2003; Razack, 2002). This analysis posits that categories of identity, such as race and gender, or class and ability, cannot be separated. R.W. Connells’ (2002; 2000; 1996; 1994) interpretation of relationality, which emphasizes how masculinities are hierarchically ordered, will be used with an interlocking analysis to address the different identities that are related to masculinity-ableism. In addition, I will use the works of feminist disability scholars like Meekosha (2006), Crow (1996), and Wendell (1989), whom use critical disability theory to investigate socially generated systems of discrimination and how they effect exclusion and social recognition. This disability lens will be fundamental to my analytical conceptions of systemic and physical violence that arise from social divisions (Connell, 2005; Kaufman, 2007; Pothier, 2006). Critical disability theory reveals the social constructions of disability and ability and the
implications this has in terms of oppression and emancipation (Crow, 1996). In each section, I will be using multiple modes of theoretical inquiry such as an intersectional analysis and a relational/reflexive analysis. I will use the different modes of inquiry that I have noted which most accurately explain the dynamics of oppression in relationships and that explicate the complexities of identity formation in the narratives and the accompanying theory. The use of multiple modes of inquiry and methodologies will permit me to unearth the simultaneous construction of social identities like masculinity-ableism, whiteness and class, which will provide useful knowledge for understanding oppressive social relations (Naples, 2003).

Furthermore, I will be utilizing Marxist-feminist and critical feminist-disability lens analysis to explicate the issues being discussed (Bannerji, 2000; Gorman, 2005; Naples, 2003; Razack, 1998; Smith, 1987; Yuval-Davis, 2006). In using a Marxist-feminist analysis I will focus on how the Canadian political economy is organized to influence class structures and social oppression (Bannerji, et al.; 2001). The theoretical current of Marxist-feminism that I will be using is a foundation to my analysis of capitalist structures and their influence in class relations in interpersonal relationships. I understand the Marxist-feminist theoretical inquiry as dynamic—that is, it has multiple meanings and can produce multiple understandings of social relations and social actors. The use of a historical materialist inquiry can clarify the workings of capitalism through an analysis of social relations and forces that determine how subjects and ideologies are constituted. A Marxist-feminist analysis will reveal the complex social processes of capitalism and how it constructs meanings, values, and identities that influence interpersonal relationships (Bannerji, 1995; Smith, 1987). In response to Gleeson (1997),
Gorman’s (2005) class analysis of disability provides insight on how disability is constructed in social life through material and political relations of labour. In particular, I will explain how masculinity-ableism is mediated through material conditions produced by relations of class, ownership, labour, and property. This theoretical analysis will show how class relations can never operate in isolation or in subordination to social oppressions of race, gender, sexuality, and ability (Gorman, 2005). Furthermore, I will focus on class relations in the inquiry of my location and standpoint towards others in my personal narratives. This theoretical inquiry will be used to understand how class relations affect the power dynamics in a masculinity-ableism relationship and what consequences this has for how violence is internalized and perpetrated.

The methodological foundations for reflexive practice have emerged from work in the fields of Marxist-feminism and disability-feminism (Bannerji, 2000; Crow, 1996; Gorman, 2005). This scholarly area of study has encouraged me to base my research on anti-oppression values that specifically address structures of patriarchy and ableism. In my research I take a position that disability scholars have described as a ‘witness’, which is a non-disabled researcher whose political consciousness of disability is gained through relations with the disability community. Furthermore, a witness is a politically conscious person that reflects upon her own position in relation to the experiences of other people. The usefulness of being a witness helps researchers examine power relations of groups and communities of which the researcher may not be a part. Ultimately, the researcher reflects on their experiences as a witness to explain how power relations should be challenged and resisted (Gorman, 2005). Witnessing encourages a researcher to locate their subject position in relation to the material that is being presented. The
researcher can then self-identify her position and locate their expertise in the material from what they have experienced and what they have gained from others. The method of acting as a witness is predicated on standpoint theory, which is used in reflexive practice to locate the researcher’s position.

To use Dorothy Smith’s (1989) standpoint theory of social analysis as a fundamental model for my research is to understand social structures from my own location. In analyzing my own role, I reflect on my own embodied experiences as a white able-bodied man with a growing political consciousness (Naples, 2003). This standpoint is useful in elucidating how daily actions maintain the power and oppression of masculinity and ableism. This approach to my research is similar to what Himani Bannerji (2000) calls a “situated critique”, which supports a reflexive analysis of understanding ones’ experiences and perceptions as they relate to dominant social structures. Standpoint theory uses the experiences of the writer to guide the theoretical analysis and the formation of definitions of social oppressions in a particular context. Within this paper, power relations and social constructs, like masculinity and ableism, will be defined within a particular white, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual, context of Southern Ontario. This reflexive analysis using standpoint theory will display the relations of masculinity and how its construction depends on and maintains an ideological discourse of ableism.

Narratives have the ability to transform complex conceptions and relations into lived realities that are easier to understand. V. L. Chapman’s work (2005) illustrates a form of poetic writing that describes a story that creates suspense, anticipation, and excitability as its subject matter. Both V. L. Chapman (2005) and Chris Chapman
(2010a) hope that researchers will use stories in their own scholarship because the integration of narratives can provide readers with emotional knowledge. Similarly, Pelias (2007) writes on redefining the hegemonic male by presenting a series of vignettes that describe his lived experiences of masculinity. The personal narratives in my work will provide examples of how racism, classism, sexism, ableism and other forms of social domination operate in a dialectical masculinity (Gorman, 2011). Like Pelias (2007) and Chris Chapman (2010a; 2010b), I will unpack the narratives using a dialectical understanding of masculinity-ableism rather than a static dichotomy. A dialectical examination of the narratives will show that the daily lived experiences of people produce a different way of knowing and understanding masculinities (Razack, 1993).

The primary theoretical task of this MRP is to examine the relationship between masculinity and ableism. I hope to display the intersectional and dynamic relationship by examining the previously noted social systems that maintain oppressive forms of masculinity. In most sections, I will integrate my lived experiences with the theoretical analysis to provide an example of how this relationship manifests itself in daily actions.
Section 2 – The Dialectical Relationship of Masculinity–Ableism

As powerful ideologies, masculinity and ableism inculcate a set of norms, values, and behaviours within particular social structures and social actors. Yet, as I have argued previously, the characteristics and descriptions of these ideologies vary depending on the context. Furthermore, ideologies can adopt new characteristics to maintain their hegemony and dominance (Arendt, 2004; Bhabha, 1990; Fine, 2004). Within this section, I will use Gramsci’s (1972) theory of hegemony to argue that both ableism and masculinity are hegemonic ideologies that act both on personal and structural levels. In describing masculinity, I will argue that the common and popular socialization of the masculine gender is connected with patriarchy and that it operates to benefit and supplement patriarchal dominance (Hearn, 2004; hooks, 2004). Ableism operates differently from masculinity, since the ideology is predicated and founded on the oppression and exclusion of people with disabilities (Chouinard, 1997). Therefore, I will be describing potential characteristics of masculinity that have been located within my own experiences and acts of witnessing. As I describe these experiences, I will articulate how ableism plays out to define a certain kind of masculinity and also to uphold ableist social structures in Canadian society. To understand the social meanings and operations of ideologies, I will be using a form of dialectical analysis to understand masculinity as contingent on its social relations and conditions. This dialectical analysis will require a clear articulation of masculinity and how the power relations of race, gender, disability, class, sexuality, and language interlock to produce the kind of masculinity I have experienced.
Ableism

I have earlier described ableism as a conception that deems people with disabilities as inferior and asserts a state of normalcy that should be maintained by able-bodied individuals. Ableism is an ideology and a form of oppression that privileges able-bodied people in society. The social model of disability identified ableism as an ideology that oppresses and excludes people with disabilities. This model focused on social oppression and cultural discourse and assessed various disabling barriers (social, economic, political, and cultural) (Pothier & Devlin, 2006). The social model argues that there are diverse corporeal manifestations for people with disabilities and that this is impacted by political policies and social organization for disability. The social model suggests that societies like Canada have been organized to limit the movement and inclusion of people with disabilities. These structures disable people by excluding them from participation within society, through violence, oppression, and denying them accommodation. Scholars have explained this through economics, politics, and ideologies such as ableism (Campbell, 2008; Halifax, 2011). There has been a growth in feminist literature noting the importance of lived experiences and an individual’s corporeality in understanding the social model of disability (Crow, 1996). These experiences assist in clarifying how a dominant form of normalcy is maintained and how people with disabilities are constantly oppressed (Barnes, et al., 1999). The social model of disability identifies some ideologies as a disabling force, such as ableism and patriarchy. Masculinity has effects both on societal structures and the individual body that effects exclusion and oppression of people with disabilities (Pothier & Devlin, 2006; Gleeson, 1997).
Masculinity

To this day, I have dreams about being a saviour through my strength and courage. I dream that I am running across open fields saving my partner from a myriad of dangers. Or, perhaps, I put myself in harms way so I can defend my friends and family from zombies or American soldiers. These imaginations are not the stories of a small boy, or a movie, or the manifestation of some sort of male genetics. These imaginations are a product of discursive messages that tell me what it means to be a man. This identity of a man is dominant and pervades Western society as a hegemonic discourse. I challenge these imaginations when I am in a critical, conscious state and I analyze them as a product of my socialization. Within these dreams I am the ideal masculine man—I am able bodied, and unimpaired in my appearance, mind, and emotions. Chapman (2010a) reminds us that the beauty of reflexive writing is that it documents the oppressions and power relations that the author has experienced in which the author does not claim innocence but takes responsibility for one’s actions. The dreams that I have described occur when I am sleeping, and in daydreams. My brain creates scenarios and images of me saving my partner from an American soldier or a racist cop. I am not critical of these images and scenarios at the time; instead, they give me pleasure. Yet, these imaginings are particular to my experiences, my period of history, and the location that I find myself in. These dreams reflect power and violence and how I exercise that power and against whom. Imbedded in these power relations are various layers of socialization, including the importance of the able-body to masculinity. In saving my partner from danger, I act as a hero, a person with no fear and that is always in control of a situation. In this state, I save the “damsel in distress”, in which I attribute
to my partner the characteristic of being a helpless woman, who lacks her own strength and resolve. The actions of the character that I am dreaming of are sexist and ableist.

In identifying my privilege and my identity as a white middle class able-bodied man that passes as heterosexual\(^1\), I fall into the description of what many scholars have identified as the hegemonic masculine man. R.W. Connell (2000; 2002) and his description of hegemonic masculinity have formed the most prevalent understanding of masculinity. Connell (2002) uses the term hegemony to describe a particular masculine identity that has pervaded throughout society and history, and that has been instrumental in the present state of capitalism, racism, and patriarchy. hooks (2004) contributed to this area of study by arguing that the structures of power prominent in masculinity are consistent with patriarchal values of misogyny, heterosexism, white supremacy, and classism. When describing hegemonic masculinity, this identity can change depending on the community or group of people on which elements of a gender identity are considered hegemonic in that environment. Patriarchal-masculinity recognizes that this framework is not enacted through a singular fashion, but consists of distinct logics that are interrelated. Notions of masculinity derive from internalized rituals of social relations of power: the dominant versus the weak and fundamentally, the masculine versus the feminine (Kaufman, 1995). Connell argues that when we speak of hegemonic masculinity in Western society, we speak of a middle or upper class, white heterosexual male who is assertive, intellectual, courageous, strong, heteronormative, able-bodied, daring, sexual, and insensitive (Connell, 2000; Kaufman, 2007; Kimmell, 2007). This identity is starkly opposed to any characteristics that are considered to be feminized or threaten the

\(^1\) Although I self identify as queer, I am in a relationship with a woman. I chose to write that I pass as heterosexual because my experiences would be very different if I were not in a partnership that appears as straight. Since I do not share the same experiences as someone that is in a queer relationship, and my partnership reflects dominant perceptions of sexuality, my experiences will be different than those of someone in a queer relationship.
dominance of the hegemonic man. When a man is performing patriarchal masculinity, he not only embodies the ideal man (which varies across societies and time), but he is also reinforcing and perpetrating the operations of hegemonic power (Hearn, 2004). When a man acts violently towards another person, he is not only performing individual violence, he is also performing the violence that reflects the values of our society—a society that is characterized by hierarchy, authoritarianism, classism, sexism, militarism and racism (Kaufman, 2007). Hegemonic masculinity takes the norms and values of masculinity and implicates every person in society in them.

Much of the description of the particular hegemonic masculinity that I described is representative of my experiences, history, and location. The static definition of “hegemonic masculinity” described is highly relatable to how my gender role was constructed, which is why I was initially enamoured with describing masculinity through the fixed concept of hegemonic masculinity in my earlier work. That said, not all of the characteristics that were mentioned apply to my experiences and the constructions of masculinity in my context. Yet, I have come to understand masculinity dialectically, which is in accordance with how Gramsci describes how hegemony operates. Although much of Connell and others’ analysis is helpful in terms of violence and power, it fails to take into consideration how other masculinities have affected the ideology.

Hegemony

Gramsci (1971) used the concept of hegemony to respond to Marxist theories of power, but also to argue that people organize themselves in relation to dominant ideologies. Such hegemonic ideologies retain their prevalence in society by the tacit consent of people or accepting it in their behaviour. Ideologies are diffused frequently
coinciding with and benefiting the views of the ruling class (Bates, 1975). If people resist the ideologies or they fail to be popularized, the state will then use coercive measures to instil these values (Kellner, 1997). An example of coercive and violent measures by the state to control the bodies of the public can most clearly be seen in the mass protests during the G20 meeting in Toronto (Gorman, 2003). Protesters organized against the status quo and deviated from the rules of society to display their discontent with the operation of the government. In response, the state used violent and repressive means to quell the insurrection and ultimately restore the pre-existing state. The use of violent measures to control the populace was necessary for capitalism and dominance by a particular ruling class to be maintained (Gramsci, 1971; Foucault, 2003). Public opinion and cooperation is integral to the hegemony of ideologies, whether it is ableism or masculinity. Gramsci and Marx theorized ideology to understand how class relations and broader social relations are reproduced when there is no one enforcing such ideologies. Yet, ideologies and change are reorganized as different people engage with them and reproduce them (Gorman, 2011). This dialectical process of hegemonic ideologies is how I have come to understand masculinity differently than described by Connell (2002). Demetriou (2001) argues that Gramsci (1971) understood hegemony to operate both internally and externally on people. The dreams that I previously described are my reflections of the internalization of the ideology and how it has come to affect my behaviours. The external power ranges from all mechanisms of society that operate as socializing tools for gender role construction. Demetriou (2001) responds to Connell’s concept by arguing that masculinity must be understood through a privileged lens and that a hegemonic masculinity is not exclusively linked to white supremacy and the ruling
class. Rather, Demetriou argues that characteristics of subordinate and marginalized masculinities can become aspects of a hegemonic ideology and in doing so perpetuate patriarchy. An example of this is the relatively new concept of *homonationalism*. Homonationalism describes how masculinity and class ideologies have appropriated queer culture to create an identity, which is supportive of the violent and imperialist powers of the state, and to support patriarchal structures. This is an important concept, especially in order to understand how people with disabilities have appropriated an oppressive masculinity, even though disability has long been rejected from masculine and patriarchal spaces. Thus a hegemonic form of masculinity is constantly in flux, where it unites different characteristics from various masculinities and moves beyond the duality of hegemonic masculinity. Demetriou (2001) has named this dialectic process of understanding masculinity as a hybrid masculine bloc:

It is its constant hybridization, its constant appropriation of diverse elements from various masculinities that makes the hegemonic bloc capable of reconfiguring itself and adapting to the specificities of new historical conjunctures. The process through which a historic bloc is formed is characterized, as Homi Bhabha (1990, p. 221) noted, by "negotiation rather than negation," that is, by an attempt to articulate, appropriate, and incorporate rather than negate, marginalize, and eliminate different or even apparently oppositional elements. Furthermore, negotiation generates a hybrid moment, a historically unprecedented combination of elements, a "third space" that displaces the histories that constitute it and sets up new, historically novel forms of power relationships (Demetriou, 2001, p. 348).

Ableism has been constructed in such ways to become part of masculinity and create new power relationships. This has been articulated in a few different ways. The masculinity that I have been socialized with has always included a rejection of disability via ableism. Ableism has also been negotiated in terms of forming an ableist gaze, which views people with disabilities as objects of pity rather than respect. This has and
continues to segregate and oppress people with disabilities, while maintaining the
hegemony of an able-bodied masculinity. I will now seek to understand new forms of
power relationships and how they are presented through the relationship of masculinity-
ableism.

The Relationship Between Masculinity and Ableism

I began to understand how this relationship operates by using Foucault’s ideas of
power and Gramsci’s theory of hegemony. Foucault’s (2003) idea is that there is a
multiplicity of different types of power relations. Power comes from everywhere and it
comes from everything. Most people recreate forms of power that privilege themselves
and disempower others. Power is not something tangible like an institution or a
government; it is something that is permanent and is contained within everything. Power
is involved in all of our relationships and actions. It determines in many ways the
outcomes of relationships and occurrences. Foucault (2003) argues that power is not
random and people are not unaware of its existence. It is intentionally used against
certain groups and certain people. Indeed, power has an objective and a plan.

Ableism and masculinity share a similar connection in both their establishment of
power and social control. Both act as ideologies that are used to serve the interests and
maintain the power and privilege of those that benefit from it—in this case, the able-
bodied male (Tollestrup, 2009). This dominant group uses various modes of violence and
structures to secure their privileged position and to subordinate groups that do not fit into
their ideology (Connell, 2002). The relationship between these two ideologies is that they
are predicated and interlocked in how their dominance is maintained. The body of the
patriarchal male is one that must be able-bodied, and holds characteristics that are not
impeded by physical, mental, or emotional impairments (Schumm & Koosed, 2009; Wilde, 2004). The patriarchal male is thought to be strong and exhibits little emotion, including any manifestations of pain. As it is described in the social model of disability, impairment and the corporeality of pain for people with disabilities is an important element in understanding how disability is experienced (Crow, 1996). Thus, in order for the patriarchal male identity to exist, it must include the ideology of ableism that rejects all bodies with an impairment (Serlin, 2003). Oppressive masculinities can be used to justify the rejection of the disabled body by drawing from the dominant forms of productivity and to justify which body is best suited for the well-being of society. The ideologies of ableism and masculinity are then used to establish hierarchies in persons and bodies (Smith, 2006). Within these hierarchies, bodies with disabilities must disappear and should always be disappearing (Stubblefield, 2007).

**Sexuality and Power**

The following section clarifies the relationship between masculinity and ableism by exploring language, sexuality, and internalization. I have argued that the way in which ableism that has been institutionalized in society is socially regulated and enacted is through the embodiment of an oppressive masculinity. Ableism is grounded in structures of domination and control, and similar to masculinity, ableism is embodied in the personal subject and is dispersed through economics, politics, and social environments (Kaufman, 1995). This can be represented in social activities of school, work, sports, and relationships. A way in which the oppressive masculine identity can be threatened is through the connotation that a man is feminine (Begum, 1992). A man is called a “pussy” or a “bitch” if he shows emotion, compassion, and sensitivity (Jefferys,
2008; Ostrander, 2010). These attitudes are contrary to the tough, powerful, assertive, and insensitive male. Similarly, when a man does not show strength, assertiveness, and the capabilities of a fully able body, then he operates outside of the dominant norms of masculinity (Wilde, 2004). Here, one can see the similarity of the masculine identity in relation to ableism. The oppressive male is “disabling” these bodies by calling them “lame” or a “retard.” This language operates to universally exclude people with disabilities from the dominant conception of normalcy. Disabling language is used as a response to a potential threat of masculinity. The response to this deviation from the hegemonic male identity is usually through the use of physical or emotional violence. This kind of language is also exhibited in aggressive sports, risk-taking activities, and other reflections of strength (Jefferys, 2008).

In the context of the masculinity I have been socialized with, a man must be sexually-driven and sexually-capable. The disabled body, however, is seen to be asexual (Shakespeare, 1999). Any man who has an impairment that is perceived to affect his sexuality or sexual ability is deemed to be inferior to the hegemonic male. The masculine body must be attractive and sexually appealing within the standards of normalcy and a body with impairment does not fit into this criterion and is thus, excluded (Begum, 1992). The oppressive male’s ability to have sex and be sexually appealing is represented in the disabled body’s “lack of.” Male identities are empowered and maintained because of their “normal” ability to have sex and to be sexually appealing. Because of the perceived notions of the disabled body’s (in) ability to be sexually active or sexually appealing, the able-bodied male is deemed to be “more of a man.” The disabled male body will
consequently never fit notions of a man. Thus, hierarchies of bodies are created which privilege the able-bodied man over the disabled man.

When violence is used on peoples’ bodies, sometimes, it is in response to a perceived threat to their hegemonic identity. Violence can also be used to maintain the power of the able-bodied male. When a male feels like their masculinity is threatened, they may react with violence to alleviate any feelings of powerlessness and to prove himself as a true man (Ostrander, 2010; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). When a man feels as if his masculinity is threatened, he may turn to sexual violence against an individual because he may feel like he can restore his power (and thus his conceptions of being the oppressive male) quickly (Kimmell, 2007). As Begum (1992) argues, the ableist male can be attracted to a woman with disabilities and targets her with sexual violence because she is seen to be more passive and vulnerable. Often, the man feels free to assert his power over her. Because disabled women are seen to be more passive, the man’s power is reinforced and amplified. The targeting of people with disabilities and asserting sexual violence upon them then reinforces male dominance by exhibiting and highlighting his characteristics of strength, misogyny, and sexual veracity (Connell, 2002; Tollestrup, 2009). This description of sexuality and power reveals the dynamics of how masculinity-ableism is entangled with daily life experiences. The analysis of the use of power for masculinity-ableism as a hegemonic ideology can then be applied to multiple scenarios and experiences.

Symbolic Violence and Internalization

To protect the dominance of the able bodied male, there are specific structures and ideologies prevalent in society that maintain this identity. One way that this is
accomplished is through symbolic violence (Bourdeiu, 2004). Symbolic violence is an invisible form of self-regulation that controls the population’s behaviours and identities, without their knowledge of this ongoing process. Dominant values of society are instituted through self-regulation and controlling one’s actions and behaviours forces people to operate and represent the hegemonic identity without question or explicit consciousness. If a man acts outside of this dominant identity--by acting feminine, for example—that man will experience shame, guilt, internal conflict, and embarrassment (Bourdeiu, 2004). These are seen as negative emotions and qualities that are reflective of deviant behaviour. Thus, this man is attacking himself internally, but is also simultaneously attacked by society (Bourdeiu, 2004). In maintaining a hegemonic masculine identity, a man rejects and hides any attribute that is perceived to be “feminine”. Femininity is seen as disabling because it disrupts a man’s power and dominance. Accordingly, he then strives to avoid and reject any future displays or expressions of feminine behaviour that would further “disable” this hegemony. These feminine or “disabling” emotions are self-regulated and thus maintain an ableist masculine identity that is not questioned or challenged. However, Pelias (2007) argues that these “deviant” attributes can threaten the masculine identity in a way that actually redefines the definition of masculinity (hooks, 2004). Deviant values can contribute to an anti-oppressive masculinity, yet, there must be a concerted effort to examine one’s own subject position and the reformation of values to form an anti-oppressive masculinity (Pelias, 2007). Such a change requires reflexive behaviour and community support, because, of course, it is less challenging to conform to the ideals of an oppressive masculinity and benefit from its privileges. As Smith (2006) reminds us, people adopt
oppressive behaviour so they are not placed at the lower end of the hierarchy. The person who exhibits the most values and behaviours of the hegemony occupy a place at the top of the hierarchy. This normalizes oppressive behaviour and thus solidifies the oppressive power structure of ableist masculinity (hooks, 2004).

**Discussion**

Dialectical reasoning reveals that dominant and oppressive gender and ability ideologies are connected. The focus on power and symbolic violence displays how these two ideologies are interlocked with all forms of social oppression and influence daily life. Gramsci’s (1971) theory of hegemony explains how the operation of ideologies is always in constant flux to maintain its dominance in peoples’ consciousness and identity. The description of the relationship between masculinity-ableism explains the particulars of the narratives I provided and how these oppressions are enacted. The focus on sexuality clarifies the role gender and patriarchy plays in erasing the experiences and differences of people with disabilities. Furthermore, sexuality and symbolic violence describes how characteristics of oppressive masculinities are internalized. The oppressive masculinity I have experienced is described as aggressive, productive, and valuable, while the disabled body is marked as deficient, exploitable, and inferior (Barker & Murray, 2010). Consequently, the disabled body threatens the values and existence of masculinity. It is important to remember that masculinity is not a static description, but rather changes and evolves depending on the time and history, and this description and relation has come from my time and my history. Presently, I see an internalized ableism as necessary for an oppressive masculinity to maintain power and control and perpetuate
its patriarchal foundation. A hegemonic ideology must be supported by the internalization of the ideology and also by outside structures to maintain dominance.
Section 3 – Capitalism and Systemic Violence of Masculinity-Ableism

The previous section described how masculinity-ableism acts as an oppressive hegemonic ideology and in which social arenas this is displayed. This section will be focusing on the structures of capitalism and the class relations that capitalism creates and how they are both connected with masculinity-ableism. I am using a Marxist-feminist framework to understand the history of disability in a capitalist system and how ability (class, gender, race, sexuality, etc.) is organized through social relations in the social and economic sphere (Gleeson, 1997; Gorman, 2005). I have devoted a full section to class analysis, not only because of the strong relationship between patriarchy and capitalism, but also because class oppression explains much of how disability is perceived and treated within an advanced capitalist state like Canada. I will be using the term ‘systemic violence’ to refer to how the structure of Canada’s political economy enacts violence and oppression on peoples’ daily lives (Smith, 2006). The systemic violence of the state interlocks with all forms of oppression that impact peoples’ daily experiences and create struggles for some and privileges for others. Additionally, both the systemic violence of the state and the network of oppression with which it intersects make some peoples’ experiences visible and others invisible (Bannerji, 1993). I have chosen to articulate the oppression of a capitalist state which creates systemic violence for marginalized groups. For this section, many of the experiences I will describe come from my position as an upper middle-class man from a wealthy community, but also as a witness of the experiences that others have shared with me. Bannerji describes how systemic violence operates on her own identity and how this affects her daily experiences.
My experiences very often spoke of violence and violation. They consisted of humiliation in the institution called the university, fear of the peculiar closeness of their manned bureaucracy, the fear of the state at visa offices, borders and at home, of being judged an unfit parent. There were fears in the street for clothes I wore, the body I carried with me, for my child in her present and future, and a continual sense of non-belonging, a confused silence produced in places which should have been also mine, because they politically proclaimed so in their posters and publications. (Bannerji, 1995, p. 8)

In analyzing the relationship between patriarchal masculinity and political economy, Mohanty (2003) argues that we need to rethink how these two influence each other so as to secure and maximize patriarchy. If we focus on these relations then we will further understand the dynamics of systemic violence and state oppression as an interlocking web of social oppressions, and we can better resist these forces. I focus on the relationship between capitalism, class relations and ableism in order to further understand the intersection of these oppressive ideologies and structures. First, I will present some of the Marxist-feminist literature on the relationship between masculinity and capitalism. I will not be focusing on the relationship between masculinity and class, although this has a significant impact on the dominant hybrid bloc of masculinity in different spaces. I will argue that capitalism is organized to necessarily reject people with disabilities based on productivity and capital accumulation, which reifies the ideology of ableism and has consequences on how people with disabilities are viewed in terms of class. I am defining class as being constituted by the relations of production and ownership of property that has implications on how people are treated and perceived within a specific society (Bannerji et al., 2001) To give a specific example, the working class is constituted as a class by the fact that, unlike the bourgeoisie, it does not control a great deal of property or wealth (Engels, 2007). To explain how ableism and other forms of social oppressions are created and perpetuated by capitalism, it is necessary to think
about the essence of capitalist relations. By initially describing these roots we can then see how social structures are organized and how the economic and social structures of capitalism perpetuate hegemonic ideologies that permeate interpersonal relations (Mohanty, 2003).

**The Organization of Capitalism**

In taking a Marxist stance in this analysis, I will be examining class relations in terms of how it affects people’s identity. I will be drawing upon Gramsci’s theory of hegemony in my analysis of the relationship between class and capitalist structures by understanding ideology as a product of experience and culture. Rather than having a separate analysis of class structures and the politics of ideologies, I will integrate these two to show the dialectical relationship of masculinity-ableism in terms of social structures and social actors.

**Patriarchy-Masculinity and Capitalism**

Harvey (2007) describes neoliberalism as an ideology that influences capitalist structures, and whose goal is to make the necessary structural changes that will maximize capital accumulation. Harvey (2007) and Mohanty (2003) argue that the consequences of capitalist neoliberal organizing are that it structures and organizes labour to be exploitative so as to maximize profit. I mention neoliberalism because it has presented some of the guiding principles that can presently be found in advanced capitalist states like Canada. Neoliberalism is an example of one ideology, which has been integrated into the capitalist system to maintain its dominance. This section will also argue that patriarchy is an ideology on which capitalism is predicated, and reinforces. The
relationship between patriarchy and capitalism has consequences in how social life and labour is organized. Mohanty (2007) argues that the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism has consequences for gender roles and encourages an oppressive masculine identity.

Eisenstein (1979) contends capitalism and patriarchy are mutually dependant structures that exist to secure male supremacy within capitalist structures and daily life. Patriarchal-capitalism exists as a dialectical relationship in which labour and duties become gendered. Some of the examples that Eisenstein (1979) provides to detail the sexist economic organization of capitalism is wage discrimination for women, unpaid home labour, and less powerful positions being held predominately by women. Eisenstein (1979) and Connell (2005) describe that capitalist structures impact how gender roles and masculinity are enacted in the workplace and in the home. Bannerji (1995) then describes that the “[gender] difference is thus encapsulated not only within production/reproduction dialectic of capital, in its labour process and organization, but also in the way labour is valued and remunerated” (p. 31). This provides a summary description of how the structures of capitalism are connected with patriarchy and masculinity and how these are then practised within the structures of life outside of labour. Like Eisenstein, there seems to be a clear connection in how certain traits of an oppressive masculinity that I have been describing coincide with the characteristics that are valued in a capitalist system. Some of these traits are competitiveness, aggression, and independence. The relationship between oppressive patriarchal masculinities and capitalism displays how economic structures influence hegemonic identities. I will argue that the way people with disabilities are treated under capitalism results in reinforcing an
ableist ideology (Crow, 1996). Consequently, this ableist ideology becomes internalized by people because of how they then perceive the social and economic standing of people with disabilities. The consequences of the ableist capitalist structures are that it creates systemic violence for people with disabilities. It is clear then how patriarchy, masculinity, capitalism and ableism become interlocked in maintaining and enforcing oppression and systemic violence (Meekosha, 2006).

Disability and Capitalism

Gleeson (1997) provides a historical materialist account of disability in capitalism. In this analysis, he posits that the market has been organized in such a way that it excludes people with disabilities. In using Engels (2007) and Eisenstein’s (1979) account of the gendering of labour in a capitalist political economy, we can see disability is treated in similar ways. Capitalist structures are organized to create profit, and to accomplish this they have made labour revolve around efficiency, enforced discipline, time keeping, and physical and mental requirements that require meeting the speed of production. Albrecht (2001) details the consequences of this organization and suggests that it results in the majority of people with disabilities being rejected from high-income and high responsibility employment, and subordinates them to menial labour jobs. This then has consequences for how people with disabilities incur ableist perceptions and treatment because of this organization and also because of their class status. Gleeson (1997) describes how people with disabilities have been oppressed because of ableist perceptions, but also because of how capitalism has exploited the lower class. The foundation of capitalism is based on the exploitation and control of the poor and working class so they produce the greatest amount of capital for the ruling class. Therefore, by
forcing people with disabilities into the lower class, capitalism takes away the social responsibility of state structures to support people with disabilities in the labour market and their home life, and also allows those individuals to be exploited in inflexible and poorly paid positions.

Sheldon (2005) reminds us that disability and ableism cannot be dematerialised and explained only as a product of discriminatory beliefs. She maintains that it is essential to address how disablement relates to the capitalist mode of production. I briefly mentioned before how demands of efficiency by capitalism have been adopted by oppressive patriarchal forms of masculinity so as to maintain male dominance within the market and the social sphere (Connell, 2005). Some of the characteristics of the masculine identity include being strong, assertive, and individualistic. These are characteristics typically used to describe not only a good capitalist but also an oppressive masculinity. This allows for male dominance to exist within the economy, while maintaining that dominance through the subjugation of women and people with disabilities. The patriarchal foundations of the economy create a system where higher positions within the social and economic hierarchy are reserved for only able-bodies. The organization of capitalism rejects the body that is not conducive to maximizing production and/or will incur costs for a corporation; therefore the disabled body is rejected from this space (Albrecht, 2001). This economic structural organization dominates and controls people with disabilities (Sheldon, 2005). The organization of a masculine identity seeks to control the body and its norms and gestures so it can be commodified. All bodies within the economy are commodified, and such bodies are valued differently based on their exploitability and expendability (Fine & Asch, 1988).
The disabled body is seen as being deviant from the productive oppressive masculine identity. The disabled body is labelled as inferior to the able-bodied norm because it is viewed as less productive and may require accommodation (Albrecht, 2001). Patriarchal-capitalism and ableism engenders a society where people with disabilities have lower incomes and-participate less in the work force (Fraser et al.; 2003). Disabled people struggle in a society that has been designed for male dominance and as if disability does not exist (Shakespeare, 2005; Fine & Asch, 1988). Peterson (2005) argues that in a capitalist economic system, the dominance of the patriarchal capitalist male is held as the ideal with the intention of preserving the productivity of industrial capitalism. The body of a disabled person marks both a rejection of this masculine identity and an inadequacy in preserving the values and production of capitalism. This unproductive disabled body is then marginalized and forced to take up lower paying jobs that are characteristically occupied by working class peoples (Serlin, 2003). Within these positions, there is less access to benefits and support systems and, in most cases, disabled people must seek supplementary income from welfare (Barnes et al., 1999). Subsequently, the disabled body is made invisible within capitalist society because of its incapacity to embody the valued qualities of the productive patriarchal male. In addition, Albrecht (2001) details how the disabled body becomes hyper-visible to create a disability marketplace in capitalist society. Certain images of the disabled body become visible when they are used for capital gains for large corporations and to create an economic sphere where accommodation becomes attainable by consumption. In turn, the creation of this market creates capital for capitalists and exacerbates an understanding of disability through the medical model (Albrecht, 2001).
Foucault (2003) describes the process of commodification through his concept of the docile body. The concept of docile bodies focuses on how external institutions regulate and dominate the body into the ideal productive body for capitalism, to be productive, obedient, and to maximize the interests of the ruling class (Foucault, 2003). Those who take up the characteristics of the docile body for capitalist interests maintain economic power structures and fulfill the necessary roles for the proper functioning of an exploitative economic system. A docile body is one whose appearance and corporeality is shaped to fit the desired and ideal image that is most beneficial to capitalist growth. An example is a male soldier whose existence revolves around conforming to the obedient, strong, courageous prototype (Foucault, 2003). Foucault states that the docile body “may be subjected, used, transformed and improved” (2003). The purpose of the docile body is to reveal no impairments and to reject and violently respond to the existence of disabilities that contradict the dominant identity. A necessary prerequisite to being a good and productive worker within a capitalist society is to be docile, and to shape and contort ones body and identity to meet labour expectations. Foucault (2003) argues that when a person fails to become docile within society, their priorities and expectations become invisible and they no longer fit the role of the ideal capitalist worker. People that do not fit this role are not considered productive and ultimately are rejected from the economic sphere.

Consequently, the ableist image that is created by a patriarchal capitalist system then becomes adopted by social structures and policies. An ableist perception of viewing disabled people as unproductive and ineffective then has implications on their social standing and how they are generally perceived in society. People with disabilities are
then viewed with pity rather than respect and an ableist gaze is created. Earlier, I used Bannerji’s (1995) experiences to describe systemic violence; the violence of ableism operates in similar ways against people with disabilities. This then pushes many people with disabilities into poverty, lower classes, and precarious employment (Gleeson, 1997; Vosko, 2002). Albrecht (2001) argues that the political economy of disability determines that it is more cost effective for the state to keep people with disabilities in a state of poverty under poorly funded social assistance programs and low-wage precarious jobs. This then does not require the state to change its operations as an ableist entity and renegotiate the ableist systemic violence against people with disabilities (Crow, 1996). This enforcement by the state against people with disabilities is most clearly seen through the organization of social assistance in Ontario, and primarily the Ontario Disability Support Program and the Special Diet Allowance. The Ontario government recently cancelled the Special Diet Allowance, which provided extra funding to people with disabilities to purchase nutritious food (Clarke, 1997). The cancellation of this program was part of a package of austerity measures—measures that were influenced by a growing neoliberal ideology in the Ontario government. The cancellation of this program is not only an attack on poor people throughout Ontario, but it is also a direct attack on people with disabilities (Clarke, 1997). As described before with Albrecht’s (2001) analysis, the cancelling of these services takes away the responsibility of the state to support people with disabilities and creates a larger private market that people with disabilities are then dependent on for support and subsistence. Furthermore, it then maintains and empowers the ableist ideology of viewing people with disabilities as unproductive, inefficient, and ultimately useless in terms of providing for themselves and
contributing to the capitalist economy. This is done by the discourse that is accompanied with the attacks on the poor and people with disabilities. The state and conservative structures argue that people on social assistance are lazy and chose not to work. This discourse often has a profound effect on the political knowledge and affiliation of the masses (Clarke, 1997). This is an attempt to erase the experiences and bodies of people with disabilities from a patriarchal capitalist and ableist social and political economy (Crow, 1996; Ostrander, 2008; Razack, 1998).

**Erasure and Subjectivity**

I remember when I was in school and we would have recess. In the town that I grew up in the population was starkly racially segregated. The white population’s dominance in the area allows the town to be organized around the interests of white supremacy and the upper-class. This geographically and socially isolates the impoverished Mexican Mennonite farmers that lived in the Niagara-on-the-Lake. Each populace was geographically and ideologically segregated from one another, which permitted the white wealthy population to determine the policies and interests of the town. The economy and the population of the town influenced how the school operated, taught, and constructed the divisions within the school. In class, the teachers would primarily address the white kids, staying consistent with the white domination that spread like disease throughout the town. These racist and classist assumptions that we learned and understood from the community and its educators created segregation and violence.

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2 A family friend provided some information of the history of Mexican Mennonites in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Initially, Mennonites fled Germany because of persecution and restrictions on their beliefs by the state in the early 1900’s. Mennonites immigrated to Niagara-on-Lake and other agricultural towns in Canada because of the large Mennonite communities being established. Mennonites who practice their religion strictly usually commit their lives to agricultural and the growth of their family. According to Mennonite scripture they lead minimalist lives and do not accept certain technology, for example vaccinations. However, my family friend has also argued that many Mennonite families receive little state support and live in poverty, which has consequences for their access to health services, such as receiving polio vaccinations (Jansen, 2011).
between the white rich kids, and the poor Mexican Mennonite students. The classism and racism was also interlocked with the ableist perspectives that the white kids had of the Mexican Mennonites. There was a high percentage of people with physical disabilities in the Mexican Mennonite community; one of the causes was the contraction of polio at a young age. The white kids would call the Mennonites cripples, freaks, and gimps, as well as spewing other oppressive language. I recall a hot day on the playground, watching the lines of boys in the back area. I could hear the other white boys’ insulting remarks while preparing to run and fight the Mexican Mennonite boys on the other side of the field. As I stood and watched the white boys, who were also mostly the boys who bullied me, pump their fists and retaliate against the other boys as to crush the “Other” from their pure white school. I stood there silent and watched as they ran towards each other charging forward with brute force to clash until damage was done. These efforts of physical violence were not ones I participated in - I don’t know if at the time I knew it was wrong - but I kept my distance. These events would usually happen on most days, and the Mennonite boys with disabilities did not participate in fighting. This lack of participation and a non-violent demeanour would make them targets for ridicule and bullying later by the white kids. I was unfamiliar with how the kids with disabilities were treated by the Mexican Mennonites as my experiences and location were not part of this group, but rather the former.

Eisenstein (1979) contends that a function of capitalism is to erase the experiences and the exploitation of the working class. This can be done through forms of isolation and disempowerment but also by normalization. In his description of governmentality,

3 At the time, I understood the remarks as being insulting and aggressive. However, in reflecting on those experiences I can now identify the language as racist, and classist.
Foucault (2003) posits that power is exercised, and only exists in action, but it is rarely exchanged. For the lower and working class, the power of a patriarchal capitalist system is exercised upon them and they are forced into the pool of exploitable wage labour rather than having an exchange of power. The concentration of power in the patriarchal capitalist state allows for hegemonic ideologies to become normalized, thus the exploitation and systemic violence against people with disabilities in the working class becomes a normal function of society. We can see this in the narrative that I provided, even though it does not directly relate to the function of capitalist structures. The Mexican Mennonites were targeted because they were poor but this was usually always coupled with an ableist perception of them. The Mexican Mennonites were always perceived to be deficient, whether they were disabled or not, and this idea of deficiency was institutionalized in terms of how they were treated in school, but also personalized in the way they were targeted with violence. This intersection between class and ableism reveals how erasure of difference occurs within daily life and the economy. The connection to masculinity occurs by the socialization of norms and values in men that they receive from the patriarchal foundations of capitalism—for instance, competitiveness, exploitative behaviour, and consumerism. Bannerji (1995) argues “it is equally absurd then to see identity and difference as historical forms of consciousness unconnected to class formation, development of capital and class politics. The mutually formative nature of identity, difference and class becomes apparent if we begin by taking a practical approach to this issue, or their relation of "intersection" (p.30). This intersection between ability and class politics can be seen in the ways in which ableism operates in capitalism and has forced the majority of people with disabilities into
exploitative and lower class positions. The normalization of violence and exploitation is shared between the majority of people with disabilities and poor people because of the large portion of people with disabilities that live in poverty. Yet, for people with disabilities they face the normalization of ableism, which permeates throughout societal structures and behaviours (Bourdieu, 2004; Crow, 1996). Bannerji (2001) describes how this erases the experiences of people with disabilities, by negating to address their difference.

**Discussion**

The use of an historical materialist account of disability reveals how social categories and ideologies are connected with the organization of capitalism. The form of hegemonic ideologies of patriarchy and ableism are ultimately influenced by their relationship to the operation of the economy. Eisenstein (1979) suggests that patriarchy and capitalism are inextricably connected in how both systems operate and control the masses. I described how patriarchal-capitalism can then have consequences for which values and characteristics can define different masculinities. The values of capitalism then necessarily reject people based on productivity. People with disabilities are then considered to be inefficient and cost ineffective, which reifies conceptions of ableism. We can then see how class and ability become interlocked in how they are characterised and treated by a capitalist state.
Section 4 – Boys Physical Violence

The foundations of patriarchy in masculinity for the emotional life of boys start at the moment of birth (hooks, 2004). The socialization of boys’ behaviour will have consequences in how boys will enact hegemonic ideologies throughout their life. Of course, behaviours and values are renegotiated and revalued, but for many who gain privilege from patriarchal structures, their values will remain the same. This type of behaviour can be seen explicitly in white men, whose wealth of privilege directly derives from the oppression of others. Their masculinity and identity is rarely challenged because of the benefits they receive from current social structures. In Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, where I grew up, I witnessed how the power and entitlement to a white, male identity has continued from my peers’ youth into their adulthood.

Hegemonic Ideologies of Violence and Oppression

In elementary school, relations between the boys were usually defined by characteristics of masculinity such as violence, competitiveness, athleticism, and strength. I had never considered my elementary school to be a safe space—attending it was usually the worst part of my day. Dominance and anger was a defining characteristic of boys who controlled the playground. One day, I saw Gary, the most aggressive and dominant boy in my class, giving a younger boy chocolate laxative. Gary convinced the young boy that it was Hershey’s chocolate and that he would love it. The younger boy was my reading partner and he also had Asperger’s syndrome. Gary targeted the younger boy because he was easy to dominate, bully, and control. Though I did not fully

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4 Throughout the narratives I will refer to one of the main people as Gary. For me, Gary encompasses all of the characteristics of the oppressive masculinity that I am attempting to describe. In reality, the character Gary is actually a composite of numerous different boys that I interacted with at school.
understand what was occurring, I remember feeling guilty that I had not acted to defend my friend from whatever Gary had put him up to. When the teachers discovered what had happened, they were less willing to believe that Gary—the charming, smart sports star—would ever do such a thing. His punishment was lenient and teachers responded with the assumption that such cruel acts are natural for young boys. What made this incident different from Gary’s usual violent bullying was that this time Gary had targeted a boy with disabilities. I clearly remember my teacher saying to Gary, “Gary, you can’t play with him like the other boys, you need to understand that he can’t do things like you because he is handicapped.”

The memory I previously described is all too common; authoritative figures would reinforce dominant values of what it means to be a man as well as how people with disabilities should be treated. The term “bullying” is consistently used to describe this behaviour. Stein (2007) argues that the word bullying is used to legitimate boys’ violence and to obscure the school’s responsibility and liability to deal with oppression in children. I have chosen to focus on physical violence because of how state and school structures minimize its severe effect on kids’ socialization. A large part of how hegemonic oppressive ideologies were reinforced and perpetuated was because of the actions and inactions by school administrators and educators. When we think of how oppressive ideologies have been instilled in people, we must examine childhood as one of the most prominent sites of socialization. These sites include multiple layers and locations including the school, peers, parents, and the media. These sites of socialization can instil multiple values in children including ableism and oppressive forms of masculinity. The relationship between masculinity and ableism is learned and exhibited
through various forms of violence. Specifically, I will be focusing on instances of physical violence exhibited by children and how physical violence represents and reflects oppressive ideologies. I will describe how boys are socialized to understand masculine ableism, but more importantly, I will examine how boys interact and enact this ideology on other children with and without disabilities. hooks (2004) asserts the importance of assessing violence amongst boys because of how boys reduce and conceal all non-violent emotions to acts of violence and aggression. Consequently, boys that hide non-violent emotions then become patriarchal men that commit physical violence to assert power and control over others, in effect forcing them to adhere to dominant oppressive ideologies. Violence against those with disabilities is further complicated when it is sometimes responded to with an “ableist gaze”, which views people with disabilities only with pity. The incidents of violence and socialization that I will illustrate are influenced by the privileging of “acceptable” violence as a systematized form of supremacy in Canadian society. This will lend to the conclusion that hegemonic oppressive ideologies are institutionalized and personally internalized to become continuously enacted though behaviour. This can be seen in the response to Gary’s violence: Gary was taught values of ableism and his oppressive masculinity was legitimated, but most importantly, as a white male youth, Gary is deemed innocent and entitled to any space and actions that he pleases. In a space with an institutionalized system of patriarchy and ableism, which grants Gary privilege, his and others’ violence against the disabled body becomes normalized.

**Physical Violence**
Bourdieu (2001) argues that physical violence and the consequences that come from it have significant impacts on a child’s development and their role in their community. In my own experiences, violence and strength defined my life in Niagara-on-the-Lake. As I recall my experiences from when I was a young boy until I was a teenager, almost any contentious situation involved some form of violence or another. Connell (1996) and hooks (2004) argue that physical violence both within and outside of the home are extreme moments where oppressive gender roles come into existence and that this is accomplished through peoples’ actions and the organization of social institutions. The language of ableism is an insult to a person’s identity and usually spurs a violent response. I remember one particular situation in which I had exercised masculinity-ableism through physical violence.

I am 11-years-old and school has never been easy. My mother reminds me, “Thomas, remember, you are better then them, don’t lower yourself to their level.” Recesses are the most frightening because of the name-calling, kicks, flicks, and aggression. For so many years, I rarely fought back with violence. I had stood up for others and myself; I defended myself to their insults of being called a pussy, pansy, and an idiot. As I walked to the back area of the school, and I trudged through the sand box, I slipped and fell into the sand. Gary, one of the school bullies, looked at me as I fell and said, “Look at that retard”. I ran over and I grabbed him, and I slammed his head into the pavement.

Connell and Messerschmidt have argued that threats to masculinity are usually created in relation to the feminine. This was certainly true for my own experiences as
other children would use feminine language to insult me, such as calling me a pussy or a girl. We can also see that masculinity is relationally constructed with disability in that masculinity is devalued against disability by using ableist terminology. For instance, when I previously described in the narrative Gary called me a “retard”, as an ableist term, it insulted my perception of myself as an able-bodied boy that met the standards of masculinity. The language of “pussy” or “girl” is used to insult a boy, as it compares him to the feminine; this can also be seen when using ableist terminology like “retard, psycho, or cripple”. When I violently reacted to Gary’s ableism, it was because he had related my body to an identity that I had considered to be undesirable and insulting. Observing masculinity in this context, there is a fear of disability for the boy who strives to meet the hegemonic masculine bloc of the white, middle-class community. Violence is used to respond to the fear that the disability of being a “retard” exists in myself, and in a moment of fear, the easiest way to express myself was through anger and violence against another and myself.

**Enacting Violence**

The physical violence of boys is deemed to be a natural biological element of maleness and is defended by the psychology of patriarchy (hooks, 2004). In addition, hooks argues that anger and physical violence in boys represent the emotions of sensitivity that they have to hide. So, anger and physical violence is a way for boys to release their emotions in a socially acceptable manner. The identity of young males is based on acts of violence, and social relations of power are reflected and constructed in those acts. The physical violence of young boys represents their own internalized and socialized ideologies from institutional policies and systemic violence. Kaufman (2007)
argues that ideologies like ableism are socially regulated through physical acts of violence. Gender identities and ideologies must be reinforced and manifested for them to hold their power and the use of physical violence is an effective way to secure the hegemony of oppressive ideologies. For young boys, the actions of physical violence not only represent masculinity in a boy, but also represent able-bodiedness and a rejection of disability. I am investigating physical violence because of its importance in a child’s development and the reflection of dominant ideologies.

When patriarchal boys act in violent ways, this behaviour is normalized, and seen as an acceptable form of asserting and expressing their behaviour and emotions. Conversely, when a boy with a disability exhibits violent behaviour, he is rejected from normalized space. He is medicalized, and his body is deemed broken and irrational; because he does not fit into the idea of the masculine able-bodied boy, his expression of physical violence is attributed to his disability, therefore becoming unacceptable. Thus, physical violence is representative of internalized masculine-ableism; in conjunction, responses to physical violence show how masculine ableism is rationalized and normalized.

Society readily condones violent behaviour among men and labels it “healthy male aggression”, especially when such violence is performed on other men. We often hear the term “boys will be boys”, as if that is enough to explain independently violent acts. Once this is associated with a patriarchal male, such responsibility and negative labels dissolve. This is why so much of the violence and structures of domination perpetrated by men come in accepted forms, whether it is sanctioned, nurtured or simply encouraged. There is insecurity and fragility when maleness is equated with masculinity
because masculinity is a social construction, a figment of our “collective, patriarchal imaginations” (Kaufman, 2007). Men are constantly and desperately required to assure and prove their masculinity, and commonly this is expressed in the form of violence towards others. Men often use violence, whether it is towards women/trans people, towards other men, or towards oneself, in order to reaffirm or to salvage their image as the patriarchal male (Begum, 1992). When a patriarchal male feels like their masculinity is threatened, they react with violence to alleviate any feelings of powerlessness and to prove himself as a true man (Ostrander, 2010; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Furthermore, when such a man enacts violence against other men and women, he is reinforcing and perpetrating the unequal power dynamics, whether it is individual or structural (Neath, 1997).

**Ideological Socialization in Young Boys**

Demetriou (2001) reminds us that the process of gender identities and oppressive values are normalized and embedded in everyday actions. Conversations, relationships, environments, and media, have an incredible impact on our perceptions of the world, and especially those of young children, imbuing notions of masculinity and disability.

**School**

School is one of the primary spaces where children begin to receive their socialization and form perceptions of the world. In retrospect, I realize how particular experiences shaped my perceptions of the world in such a drastic way. It was not only my peers that affected me in the school environment, but it was the actions of the teachers, the rules in the institution, and the education and knowledge that I received. The structure
of schools emphasises a process of masculinizing boys and simultaneously rejecting people with disabilities (Consalvo, 2003). In all classes and spaces, there was an emphasis on toughness and physical and mental competitiveness. I remember once, Gary, the boy mentioned in the previous stories, had challenged me to a game of one-on-one basketball. I was neither physically nor mentally prepared to receive this initiation of masculinisation that he was going to give me. The gym teacher provoked and encouraged Gary’s behaviour. The gym teacher also condemned my behaviour and later gave me a discerning look because of my inability to meet the requirements of gender and able-bodiedness that he demanded. In school, to meet a standard of masculinity also meant that you had to have certain mental and physical abilities. If you did not possess these abilities or if you had a disability, then you were rejected and punished. I recall the teacher forcing me to do laps around the gym for refusing to participate in Gary’s challenge. Ultimately, if he could not force me into competition with his prize bull, then he would punish my body until I could. Such practices are used by school systems so that boys may learn disciplinary powers, not only to control their own behaviour in terms of masculine-ableism but to also reify it by enacting it on others.

**Peers**

In establishing her perspectives on patriarchal masculine identity, hooks argues that it is a boy’s peers that influence sexist and masculine behaviour. She argues that patriarchal boys are not permitted to show any form of emotion, with the exception of anger, and that their male peers facilitate this. Physical violence and camaraderie are crucial elements that define a group of patriarchal males. This can be seen in sports, where autonomy and physical fitness are seen as the ideal (Tollestrup, 2009). The
competitiveness of sports is enacted through the actions of the peers that are participating in the game. Their internalized masculine-ableism would reject a person that was not physically or mentally fit to compete on the ideal level. If a person cannot compete, then masculinity-ableism demands shame (hooks, 2004). Shame is an important element to the control of ableism because it demands that a person be dissatisfied with their body and other peoples’ bodies if they do not meet the able-bodied ideal.

There have been some spaces where people with disabilities have embraced sport and fitness like “Murderball” or the Paralympics (Tollestrup, 2009). Yet, some of these spaces recreate the same values of masculinity and ableism. For instance, men with disabilities who play Murderball, where people that use wheelchairs compete through a physically aggressive sport, recount their experiences of feeling more like men and as if they have “overcome” their disability when they engage in violent masculine behaviour (Tollestrup, 2009). People with and without disabilities that do not meet such aggressive requirements—or choose not to—are ejected from this space and therefore, must be subjected to violence through bullying and other forms of oppression (Gerschick & Miller, 1997). The oppressive masculine person violently defends his identity if anyone or anything suggests that he is less than fully able-bodied. Rooted in this violent backlash and self-hate is also an ableist perception and a rejection of the disabled body. Self-hate of any kind of impairment comes from feelings of inadequacy and insecurity of not living up to the standard of the able-bodied male. For men with disabilities, in many instances these feelings of hate are expressed outwardly in ways that disparage feelings of inadequacies in themselves.

Media

The media acts as a conduit for the dissemination of ideologies and the process of socialization in young boys. The ideology of masculinity-ableism does not necessarily originate in the media, but rather comes from the day-to-day actions between people (hooks, 2004). The media’s influence comes from the way it reinforces and normalizes masculine-ableism by bombarding children with these messages hour-by-hour (Pelias, 2004). In a children’s book I authored on masculinity-ableism, I attempt to identify how messages of patriarchy can be renegotiated and problematized. I created my own characters after a stark examination of the messages and characters in mainstream literature and film, many of which, if not all, demanded a particular gender identity for young boys. Superman was an important representation in the media when I was a growing up, and this character still holds a prominent role in popular children’s entertainment. Superman and most other superheroes are representative of an oppressive masculinity in that they are aggressive, violent (in the name of ‘justice’), independent, and able-bodied (Schumm & Koosed, 2009). For Superman, his only true and possible weakness is the mysterious, alien radioactive element, kryptonite. The ableist perceptions that exist amongst common superhero characters are two-fold. The first is that the superheroes, as the prime example of a man, are never and can never be vulnerable, or physically and mentally injured. If they exhibit these characteristics, they are often hidden, or their lives are considered no longer worth living. These representations instil shame into a young boy and a rejection of their body if they cannot meet the fully able-bodied form that Batman or Superman does (Dill & Thill, 2007). Any difference that they do have that deviates from their portrayal of masculinity is usually
hidden, such as Green Lantern or Captain America whose original bodies are hidden by new powers that provide strength and aggressiveness. Nodelman (2001) examined how the disabled subject in many superhero or action media is portrayed as the villain and as a character to violently attack and reject. A focus is put on the villain as comprised of a body that deviates from the ideal of the superhero; the villain’s body is highly visible and disgusting in its difference and otherness. This hero-villain relationship is representative of how boys then play out their social relations in school, among their peers, and ultimately, their daily life. The person of colour and the person with a disability is reflected in the image of the villain, whereas the white masculine boy is portrayed as the hero. This in turn legitimizes him, erasing the experiences and marginalizing the difference of the boys who are reflected in the image of the villain.

**Enacting the Ideologies through Violence**

**Whiteness**

Within this paper, I have identified the identity and community that I come from and have tried to dissect the dominant ideologies of masculinity and ableism that this identity and community holds. An essential component to masculinity in every context in which I have explained masculinity-ableism is in relation to whiteness and how all these relations operate in the white supremacist state of Canada. It is essential for me to articulate how whiteness, heterosexism, and class played a role in my experiences of masculinity-ableism. Particularly, whiteness cannot go unmentioned as it has such a significant role in the conduct of interpersonal violence. The behaviour that my male peers and I exhibited was the norm in my community, and it came from the internalization of values of what whiteness means for the interest of boys. In the previous
section, I provided a narrative of fighting at the school between the white, middle-class kids and the poor Mennonite Mexican-German children. This violence, as well as my silence and complicity were deemed to be acceptable behaviour. I understood power to be held by the white community in Niagara-on-the-Lake and this justified any action of violence against the Mennonite children. Niagara-on-the-Lake is an area built on a history of white dominance and privilege, which contains a pervasive message that white people can do anything they please in any place they want without negative consequences. Razack (2002) describes white masculinity as allowing white men to have access to any space where they can commit acts of violence without repercussions, especially if that violence is committed on a person of colour. The poor Mennonite kids of Niagara-on-the-Lake were the only people of colour in the community except for the people temporarily employed in the apartheid migrant agricultural labour system. The Mennonites exist as colonial subjects with a history of being some of the only people of colour in a geographic area that has been dominated by white people. The colonial history and current colonial operations of the Canadian state remain silenced by the white colonizers who realize many privileges from such a system. Razack (2002) argues that North America denies white dominance and colonialism so as to hide the violent actions of the colonial state and its enactors. In Niagara-on-the-Lake, the history of the Ongiara Indigenous people that lived on the land before white settlers colonized the area remains hidden. However, the colonization of people of colour in Niagara-on-the-Lake continues through the continued exclusion of the Ongiara people and the Mennonites.

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6 Farmers and companies in Niagara-on-the-Lake employ thousands of workers from the Caribbean and Mexico as agricultural labour through the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). These workers receive few rights and protections and live in deplorable conditions. The organization of the SAWP results in poor treatment and few rights for workers, which results in a labour apartheid system. See Sharma, N. (2006). Home Economics: Nationalism and the Making of "Migrant Workers' in Canada. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto.
Gary’s actions against the young boy with a disability exemplify him from enacting his whiteness to show that the space, which he feels entitlement over, is a space without disability. This was also apparent against the Mennonite boys, many of whom had physical disabilities because of poor state infrastructure which led to high rates of polio among children. White masculine violence is used defensively to create a space that rejects difference from the hegemonic ideologies of the community. The reinforcement of Gary’s actions when he suffered little to no consequences for his violent actions creates the message that if he is deprived of any of his white privileges then he is justified in responding with violence. I am not portraying Gary as innocent, but rather as a depiction of the oppressor and a violent identity that must be resisted. Yet, the endorsement of Gary’s actions by the community and school reflected a broader understanding of whiteness in that white is always portrayed as innocent. For the white man, masculinity can be more difficult to identify and less visible, because it is covered by the white innocence that white supremacy grants. Fanon explained in the *Fact of Blackness*, that his black body always exists in relation to the white body. The body of the person of colour acts as the difference and is perceived as dirty, aggressive and violent. For instance, for a young Afghan man, like my friend Shafiqullah, his identity symbolizes stark difference to the innocence of whiteness; therefore, he is seen as having a threatening and violent masculinity. Although it might be possible that Shafiqullah is less masculine than most white men, the perceived white innocence that many of the boys in Niagara-on-the-Lake held, prevented them from receiving punishment for violent masculine-ableist actions. Many feminist and anti-racist scholars including Himani Bannerji (1995), bell hooks (2004), and Edward Said (1978) have presented this
description of difference and racism in a plethora of literature. This dichotomy between white versus non-white prevailed within the actions of Gary and other white boys, whereas the Mennonite boys were always depicted as the aggressors and would receive the majority of the punishment from the school administration following violent incidents. This entitlement and innocence allows for a masculinity-ableism to be enacted by white people on other white people and people of colour with little consequences and with an ideology which justifies their actions. Whiteness explains much of the violence that was committed by white boys against the Mennonite boys, as well as in the context of violence against people with disabilities.

The Ableist Gaze

Physical violence enacted by boys is usually enacted on others who are perceived to have disability and thus seen as weak, vulnerable and controllable. There is also a sense of necessity to reject these vulnerabilities from a space. This necessity can be reflected in the original story that I told: Gary acted violently to who he did because he saw that the boy was weaker and more vulnerable than him. In addition, in order to assert his masculinity, he was able to eradicate the younger boy from the space. Gary acted not only to control the boy but also to make him ostracized, embarrassed, and ill so he was no longer present in Gary’s entitled space. Bullying by children is an important aspect in the schoolyard of defining who is dominant and who has dominant values. People who have disabilities or are perceived to have disabilities are targeted because they are seen as weak and controllable. It is easy for able-bodied boys to confirm their own masculinity by comparing themselves to the perceived disabled boy. This is evident both through physical violence against other boys, and also by the use of language such as retard, idiot,
psycho, and spaz (Gini & Pozzoli, 2006). This type of bullying is targeted towards boys that do not fit the ideal mould of an oppressive male, and also at times at boys who have a disability. Razack (1998) states that some people target children with disabilities because the violence seems legitimate and less important when it is enacted upon someone who seems imperfect and powerless (p. 136). How this behaviour is responded to is essential for how masculine-ableism manifests itself. An authority figure either looks the other way, not addressing the physical violence, or they confront the child that is bullying the other. However, this confrontation is usually not based on the grounds of confronting a child’s patriarchal masculinity. Rather, an act of bullying towards a person with a disability is seen as atrocious, and as more horrible than bullying other children (Gini & Pozzoli, 2006). It is explained as atrocious because the person with a disability is to be seen as pitiful and weak (Neath, 1997; Wilde, 2004). This response reifies masculine-ableist notions that the disabled body only deserves his pity (Razack, 1998).

**Discussion**

These acts of masculine-ableism and the dominance of the masculine-ableist ideology in school environments creates a disabling environment. A disabling environment is where an oppressive ideology both creates the aspects of ableism and instils them in boys. A boy’s perception of himself and his able-bodied masculinity becomes inextricably linked to their biology. Acts of violence in a masculine-ableist atmosphere forces boys who do not meet the ideal requirements of the masculine subject to feel insecure and shameful of their biological aspects which they deem to be lacking. This in turn manifests itself in what Kaufman describes as violence against one self (2007). A masculine-ableist ideology makes boys angry at their biological makeup, and
they deem it as a genetic prison that stops them from all of the glories that a strong and dominant masculinity grants. The violence against oneself can manifest itself physically and/or mentally, where boys become men who are emotionless, have issues of anger from insecurity, severe body image issues, and depression (Bourdieu, 2004).

There are various approaches in how to deal with oppressive masculinities and its possibly associated ideologies of ableism, classism, racism, and heterosexism. In his description of power, Foucault argues that within power there is always an element of resistance. Resistance is not external from power, yet it is integral to power being exercised. There is resistance to patriarchal-masculinity by the people that are part of it and by those who are subject to its violence and oppression. hooks (2004) reminds us that we have to end patriarchy in all its forms, and we may do this by providing alternative ways of thinking about masculinity and boyhood (37). The associated children’s book that I created with the original version of this paper is an attempt at showing that there are alternatives and sanctuaries for boys who do not want or cannot conform to an oppressive dominant masculinity.
Section 5 – Resistance and Reflection

I have begun from experience not as of an isolated self, but from my sense of being in the world, presuming the same for others, and have tried to think through as best as I can the making of these experiences, in as social a way as possible, always in history (Bannerji, 1995, p. 13)

In entering into academia and slowly climbing the ladder into an ivory tower that has been shaped by oppressive forces, we worry about what our places and roles are. Bannerji, who acknowledges that her work as an academic is within a white higher-education institution, states that her role within this power relation is to dismantle the gaze that has been imposed onto her. The gaze is a concept used to describe how the dominant and privileged group perceives an individual’s difference and identity. In Bannerji’s (1999) description she is describing how she is perceived and treated as a woman of colour in a white supremacist and patriarchal society. The focus of radical academics is to create a space of resistance in education that is anti-oppressive and de-colonizing. By writing in a reflective position, I am constantly questioning the use of my own work in community organizing. In the first part of this section, I will describe my position as a researcher and how I have come to understand my role as researcher and organizer and what I can understand about social relations from these reflections. Furthermore, I will endeavour to describe how feminist, anti-capitalist, and anti-oppressive movements have come to engage with masculinity-ableism. Lastly, I will describe some work conducted in Ontario that has responded to masculinity-ableism, including my own resistance.

In the context of reviewing my work and discussing the implications it has for anti-oppressive movements and community organizing I think it is necessary to analyze
my process of self-naming. In self-naming, I describe my location, my standpoint, and the consequences of my identity for the work that I have created. Bannerji and Smith state that writing from a reflexive position is essential in describing and understanding how social relations operate. As someone who is an able bodied white middle-class male in Canada that passes as heterosexual, I have written this piece from reflections that have been shaped both from privilege and oppression. The oppressive masculinity that I have come to internalize and the oppressions it is interlocked with to form its hegemony has created violence and oppression in my life. However, I hope to have made clear in my work that the privilege that myself (and those with my identity have) comes from the oppression of people of colour, women, the poor, people with disabilities, and the queer community. Similarly, my position as an academic researcher also contributes to the systemic oppression faced by various marginalized communities and as I write this I must be fully aware of the possible oppressive implications of my work. Bannerji (1993) reflects on how she recreates violence in her position, writing, and pedagogy, but that this is addressed and resisted when she works towards anti-oppression. Her particular style of writing is also oriented towards this, and as the quote above explains, writing from lived experiences begins to describe the social. Writing from lived experiences has been a challenge to the large portion of academic writing that is committed to the stultification of peoples’ intelligence and passion for resistance. This is one of the forms of control that exists both in the academy, and as I will note subsequently, in maintaining hegemonic ideologies, and creates divisiveness within resistance and political organizing.

**Masculinity-Ableism in Political Organizing**
During my undergraduate studies, when I had the privilege of being fairly active in community organizing, I joined the Board of Directors of a campus-based organization. This organization was involved in much of the political organizing that occurred on campus, and was funded by the university through a levy in students’ tuition. I entered this board with dear friends and highly experienced and committed organizers. I attribute this year-long commitment to this organization as a space where I learned much about the patriarchy I had internalized and exhibited through my organizing. One night, the eight board members were in a meeting that had already lasted three hours during a warm humid night in a small room that had no air circulation. The room was stifling and I was sweating profusely both from nerves and agitation. At one point in the meeting, my friends and fellow members, Chanelle and Christine lied down on the couch and the floor to try and relax for a moment. We had not eaten, we had put in hours of precious time into this meeting, and we were burnt out. Chanelle and Christine tried to take a minute to gain their thoughts and gather themselves for the hour or more we had left of bureaucratic work. Another member, Pete, looked at them with slight disgust and said “What are you doing? We have work to do, we all want to get home and we want to rest but this is what we have to do.” Implicit in his words was the message that to be a good organizer, you must put in many hours and effort without complaint. At the time, I found myself agreeing with this man, despite having what I believed to be a decent recognition of patriarchal behaviour. In silence, I sat and watched as Christine and Chanelle dragged themselves up and looked at Pete. Pete ordered people back to work, as anger started to build in the room.

**Non-Profits and Oppressive Organizing**
Oppressive organizing spaces like the one I just described are not uncommon to many radical community organizations. Within these spaces, we become committed to meeting bureaucratic deadlines, and we recreate the divisive and oppressive structures that we set out to dismantle. In this section I will initially engage in a brief discussion of the non-profit industrial complex. I am identifying this because I see it as a model that has grown to disassemble community organizing and also as a space that fosters masculinity-ableism and oppressive structures generally.

There are some organizations and charitable systems where it is simple to see how they re-establish state power and how they have been significant tools in promoting capitalism. The organization INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence authored a book The Revolution will not be Funded which notes how non-profit agencies have a long history of breaking down community organizations and producing capital for corporations. Yet, this non-profit industrial complex has become part of movements in radical organizing where committed activists have become part of the non-profit industrial system, as I described in the narrative previously. These organizations imbue the notion that hierarchy and centralization in decision making is necessary to do mass-based movement building (Rojas, 2007). Rojas (2007) details how these systems of hierarchy are rooted in patriarchal and capitalist structures that keep activists accountable to state governance and rules. For instance, in the story I provided, we were only in that situation of tension and stress because of our bureaucratic responsibilities to the Canadian Revenue Agency and the University administration. The power of control and the establishment of wage labour through capitalist structures had permeated into our
organizing and relationships with other board members because of how we received funding from the university.

**Patriarchal Structures**

In this organizing space Pete, myself and other men in the group internalized patriarchy as we forced a regiment of organizing on the other members. Rojas (2007) describes that this idea of organizing as a space of sacrifice and suffering comes from a patriarchal and macho form of resistance. To be an organizer in these spaces you have to commit many hours, abandon your friends and loved ones, and suffer without rest and relaxation. Rojas (2007) details how resistance lead by Che Guevara and members of the Black Panthers prioritized the physical strength of men and forced their long-term commitments with women who became responsible for children and all caretaking activities both at home and within the organization. Rojas (2007) details that this mentality has been internalized by organizers and its roots are found in patriarchy and forcing hierarchical structures and demands on the organizing body. Within this masculine form of organizing, there are also certain perceptions of ability and disability with regards to who can enter these spaces. Many times organizations, including the one I described, are located in areas that are diversely inaccessible whether it is physically, mentally, or economically. When Pete told the two women to get up, he did not permit them time to heal their bodies and rest their minds. For Pete, your commitment to the struggle and political agitation was determined by how “tough” you are, and how much you sacrifice for the movement (Rojas, 2007). This structure excludes anyone who cannot or chooses not to force their bodies and minds into a state of pain. Bannerji (2000b) describes organizing in patriarchal Marxist organizations in Toronto, “I have left behind
too much of my own life in these spaces, and abandoned my politics. Naming these absences and identifying these gaps must be seen as an irreducible condition of the left”. Bannerji’s (2000b) experiences describe how much organizing has focused on the erasure of people’s differences and forces them into a certain identity to be part of the organization. In her particular case she had to endure the patriarchal and racist structure of the group in order to become active within that space. This type of structure is not only detrimental to creating a large movement of resistance but it also recreates divisive and oppressive structures.

Allowing these structures of oppression to exist within organizations has left political movements with oppressive structures and exclusion. Yet, I need to be clear as to what exactly I mean by exclusion and inclusion in many of these spaces. The organizing space that I described in the narrative centred on mobilizing and providing support for the poor and working class, LGBTTIQQ2SIA\(^7\) communities and women of colour. The political resistance becomes inert and supportive of a patriarchal capitalist system if it reflects how Canada’s current male-dominated labour force operates (Rojas, 2007). The type of representation and inclusion that has become common in Canada is a form of liberal pluralism and a multiculturalism, which is rooted in and supported by a racist patriarchal capitalist order. Bannerji (2001) describes how these spaces use representation to further exploit women of colour, and their experiences and use them as a tokenist representation. This space also reflects how privilege operates within people of disabilities by generally including only those people with disabilities who are white, wealthy, and have a disability that can be easily accommodated for. Operating and recreating these liberalist structures have warped how we see oppressions as connected to

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\(^7\) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgendered, Intersexual, Queer, Questioning, 2-Spirited
each other, how we value each other’s experiences, and how we recreate these structures in our own organizing.

**Community Responses**

Responding to this masculinity-ableism and other oppression in our organizing requires rethinking and rebuilding. Bannerji (2000b) describes that the use of academic work can be useful in this instance to educate people on understanding “the social” and how oppressive structures are recreated. A teacher that first encouraged me to explore my masculinity started her class with, “I want to remind you all that you all have a right to speak in this space, but you all have a responsibility to yourself and others to listen.” This strategy of valuing other peoples’ experiences and learning collectively has been what I attribute much of my development to, and I am grateful to the people who shared their experiences with me. Bannerji (2000b) and Rojas (2007) both emphasize that as organizers we have much to learn from the politics of Indigenous people and how they have been divided in their struggles and how they understand state violence against their people. Rojas (2007) points to contemporary indigenous struggles in Latin America as spaces to look for organizing strategies. These movements embrace autonomy and horizontal decision-making that recognizes that daily life is political work for some. These organizing strategies reject and move away from hierarchical decision-making and how a patriarchal ableist capitalist organization operates.

Much of this comes from understanding and respecting peoples’ responsibilities and seeing that life, as a daily struggle, is a form of resistance. However, Bannerji reminds us that victims of capitalism do not automatically become socialist. Rather, we need to organize ourselves where political education takes place but are also respectful of
peoples’ abilities and responsibilities. Rojas (2007) describes how Indigenous movements also have a space of healing, where people can express themselves and politically educate others but also heal themselves from their daily struggles and the systemic oppression they face. Movements organized in these ways have been successful as long-term movements that have built slowly, but understand that resistance is incorporated in “how we live, how we survive, and how we sustain ourselves” (Rojas, 2007, p. 148). Politicizing these aspects of our lives in an anti-oppressive and anti-ableist way is accomplished through dialogue and engaging with many political voices. This inclusivity is not in terms of how I described liberalist inclusivity, but rather an inclusivity without hierarchy and without the erasure of people and their experiences, especially those that have been the most marginalized. Bannerji (1995) and Mohanty (2003) both describe that there will of course be political difference, but that we can find commonality when we move beyond dualisms and see our struggles as all interconnected. This requires moving our politics beyond single-issue politics and understanding the bigger picture of Canada as an oppressive state.

**Importance of Organizing in White Communities**

In this section I endeavour to locate the work that I have done into how I understand resistance in Ontario. In the previous paragraph, I described how political organizing can occur through many forms of political participation. I also would argue that organizing by white people, in particular, by white men, contains certain obligations and responsibilities. While holding any privilege that is only possible because of others oppression, people have a responsibility to be committed to anti-oppression so that interpersonal and systemic violence is not perpetuated (Back, 2004). Yet, to fully and
uncritically reject this privilege is not a politically effective or a legitimate position to take. One cannot be separated from their identity, and there is a limited amount of room at the top of the societal “pyramid” and effective resistance must also be accomplished at the top, where people hold the most privilege (Razack, 2002). When The Black Panthers were organizing initially, they rejected white people from their organization, stating that there was much work to be done in white communities and the ignorance and oppression that stems from these communities is significant in supporting the social order. The responsibility to use one’s privilege in terms of resistance can come through as being an ally in other struggles but also in organizing within white communities. Razack (2002) describes that politically unconscious peoples have commonsense needs that must be taken into consideration in order to address the hegemonic ideologies that they hold. Whiteness permits me to enter certain spaces in which others face oppression and silencing. Bannerji (1993) describes that working in spaces of privilege and white spaces can address the divisive elements in the working class that reproduce oppressive race, class, and gender dynamics.

**Conclusion**

In this section I have attempted to make the argument of the usefulness of political education that comes from academic work to be used in movements. Movements organized in a way that creates masculinity-ableism and other hegemonic ideologies have created divided movements and rendered them inert. Mohanty (2003) states that organizing must look at the micropolitical struggle and experience, and as well at the macropolitics of capitalism and systemic oppression. Rojas (2007) argues that the models of indigenous movements “demonstrate that everyday life is political and that
everyone can participate politically. Political work is not outside your struggle for subsistence or in an organization’s office or center, but in your life”. It is in how we resist and organize everyday as a community and as comrades that we can organize by resisting the oppressive hegemonic ideologies that try to pervade every action in our life and our unconscious.
References


