

### Introduction

This is a reflection on a film, which I wrote for Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies 001 taught by Professor Ljung-Baruth. The course is an introduction to the field of gender, sexuality, and women's studies. *Tough Guise* focuses on masculinity and the ways in which its toxic ideals pervade media and culture. The reflection also had to include a reference to two assigned readings. As this is a reflection, it is primarily focused on the opinions of the writer, but concepts covered in class and in the readings must be applied when discussing one's response to the film. The reflection also employs strategies commonly used in English papers, such as an introduction, transition sentences, MLA formatting, and the use of evidence to explain or strengthen an argument.

Note: Sections of the paper have been removed to avoid plagiarism. This is indicated by ellipses (...).

Noelle Villa  
 Professor Ljung-Baruth  
 GSWS 001  
 22 September 2015

*Tough Guise* Film Response

I found the film *Tough Guise* to be interesting, shocking, and haunting. The film introduced several thought-provoking concepts regarding the topic of masculinity and the ways in which its toxic ideals saturate media and culture.<sup>1</sup> For example, the movie emphasized the point that news reports on men's violence often employ gender-neutral language, using words such as "shooter" when referencing a man who is responsible for shooting and murdering people... The reason for this, Katz explains, is that the power of the dominant group is purposefully made invisible. These are surprising observations that I had never noticed before, and I drew a connection between this idea of the invisibility of the dominant group to *Privilege: A Reader* by Kimmel and Ferber.<sup>2</sup> As the author states, "You're [members of the dominant group] everywhere you look, you're the standard against which everyone else is measured...this invisibility is political" (Kimmel 3-4).<sup>3</sup> This invisibility within the media and in American culture (as well as many other societies) is intentional so as to provide a standard, to subtly clarify who does and does not belong to this invisible, privileged group.<sup>4</sup>

...Another interesting notion I had never before considered that the film brought up was the "crisis in masculinity" that resulted from women's movements.<sup>5</sup> Katz asserted

---

<sup>1</sup> Beginning a reflection with a general statement of your overall reaction is a good starting point. Also briefly summarize the content of the film without going into too much detail, as the intended audience is the professor who has obviously also seen the film.

<sup>2</sup> Since the professor is asking for a link from the film to a specific reading, it is important to explicitly state that there is a connection and to state what two things you are planning on comparing.

<sup>3</sup> Use MLA formatting when citing sources for direct quotes. This formatting is used in many other disciplines, including English.

<sup>4</sup> Similar to English papers, it is important to explain the quote and its relevance, instead of just adding it in without any warning or explanation.

<sup>5</sup> Make sure to include transition sentences to make the paper "flow" and to show a clear connection between your ideas.

that hyper masculinity that pervaded American culture was a response to threats to traditional masculinity. This hyper masculinity emerged in magazines and comic books depicting heroic “manly” adventures and the creation of the Boy Scouts.<sup>6</sup> The fact that the emergence of women’s movements and the reassertion of masculinity coinciding at the same point in history was no coincidence was extremely surprising to me.<sup>7</sup> Allan Johnson’s *The Gender Knot* provided an intriguing explanation for this<sup>8</sup>, stating, “For men, the fear is that women will stop playing the complex role that allows patriarchy to continue, or may even go so far as to challenge male privilege directly” (Johnson 103). As soon as women threaten male control in any way, whether it be through the Temperance movement or feminism, many males will utilize all kinds of means to prevent the dismantling of a system in which they are the privileged ones in power.<sup>9</sup> All of this is purely fear-driven, and provides an interesting explanation for the creation of the Boy Scouts and for the ever-expanding biceps of GI Joe.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> When making an assertion about the subject matter (in this case hyper masculinity being employed to combat threats to patriarchy), use specific examples to explain your statement.

<sup>7</sup> As this is a reflective piece of writing, I made sure to include my personal response to the film content I had just described.

<sup>8</sup> Integrating quotes and additional sources to explain your reasoning in a way that is relevant is critical in most disciplines.

<sup>9</sup> As in most disciplines, it is important to demonstrate your understanding of the quote/subject matter. A good strategy for doing this is to explain the quote in your own words.

<sup>10</sup> Another great way to demonstrate your understanding of the subject material, especially in reflective writing, is to take it a step further by adding your own “twist” through integrating your ideas and interpretation.

Works Cited

Kimmel, Michael S., and Abby L. Ferber. *Privilege: A Reader*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 2003. Print.

Johnson, Allan G. *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1997. Print.