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Why More Gay Men Need To Claim Feminism

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In the past few years, more celebrities have proudly and publicly taken on the feminist label: [Beyonce](#), [Taylor Swift](#), [Emma Watson](#), [Amandla Stenberg](#) and [Rowan Blanchard](#), just to name a few. There are even [straight men](#), like [John Legend](#) and [Ryan Gosling](#) who prove you don't need to be a woman to be a feminist. So why are some gay guys so late to join the movement?

There have long been complaints from some women about the lack of solidarity they feel from gay men. In a blog for The Huffington Post last November, [Rose McGowan](#) wrote, "Gay men certainly aren't MORE misogynistic than heteros, but I've met some that have come damn close." And in February, the often controversial Azealia Banks responded to a VICE article that called her homophobic in an [Instagram post](#) after using gay [slurs](#). Banks wrote, "Do gay men get a special pass to say misogynist things simply because they like dick?"

So many of us are only familiar with the idea of male privilege being the province of straight men that we discount how gay men are able to exert dominance and control over women. -- [Rohin Guha](#)

It's taken as a given that straight men have the ability to be [misogynistic](#) or [sexist](#). But even though gay men are a group that has been historically oppressed based on their sexuality, that experience doesn't do away with male privilege. As Patrick Studrick of [the Guardian](#) wrote in November 2014, "There is a misogyny among gay men -- but our sexist world is the problem." Studrick claims that "misogyny is as unavoidable as carbon dioxide," and that gay men must do more to challenge it.

In January 2014, The AeroGram executive editor Rohin Guha wrote an article for Jezebel detailing the ["dirty secrets of gay male subculture"](#) -- misogyny being one of them. "So many of us are only familiar with the idea of male privilege being the province of straight men that we discount how gay men are able to exert dominance and control over women," Guha wrote.

Gay male misogyny takes many forms. In a March 2015 post on the blog [gender-agenda](#), Cambridge student Martha Perotto-Wills points to the idea that gay men often feel entitled to offer unsolicited criticism of women's clothing or bodies, in what she calls "Perez-Hilton-style gendered shaming of women's bodies and fashion/life choices." And even in industries like fashion, which are dominated by gay men and women, [sexism persists](#).

[Gay male privilege](#) is also reflected when gay men feel they have license to grope [women's bodies](#) and then insist that it is not [harassment](#) because of a lack of sexual attraction. It's when gay men call women's vaginas [gross](#) or ignore the [existence of gay women](#). And in January, [The Advocate's](#) [Elieel Cruz](#) called out RuPaul's frequent use of a [trans slur](#) and [Andy Cohen's](#) [invasive questioning of Nicki Minaj's sex life](#) as examples of how gay men use their sexuality and their cis-ness as an excuse to be misogynistic.

This conversation has also played out on social media. A thread from reddit's rad pill sub-reddit, a forum that describes itself as "discussions of sexual strategy in a culture increasingly lacking a positive identity for men," frames gay men as natural "allies" against feminism. The original poster, who claims to be a gay man, writes, "As the situation for males continues to get worse, in my belief, gay men will eventually become some of your strongest allies. Think about it. Gay men gain NOTHING from a society dominated by women...They do not care about 'female admiration.'" And, unsurprisingly, straight men replied to thread backing him up.

The root of gay male misogyny goes beyond resistance to the frustrating "gay best friend" trope or countless other stereotypes that gay men are tired of hearing. The Advocate's Michael Musto addresses legitimate criticisms of certain feminist groups from the gay community. Musto points to the Redstockings, a radical feminist group founded the same year as the Stonewall Riots, which declared male homosexuality objectionable for its rejection of women.

Still, Musto concedes that gay male sexism is a problem and that some gay men have trouble taking criticism. "There was definitely LGBT outcry over McGowan's remarks, but it might have been more useful to step back and seriously evaluate them," Musto wrote.

In order to combat misogyny, gay men should claim feminism as allies, but not in a queer-opting or mansplaining way. After all, the bell hooks mantra "feminism is for everyone," applies to gay men, too.

It means gay men have a duty to feminism. Gay men oppressed by patriarchal systems should be fighting alongside the rest of us to break them all down. -- Teresa Baron

"One of the central aims of feminism is the breaking down... patriarchal systems, whether they oppress groups because of their gender, race, sexuality, or other factors (and intersections of the above)," wrote Cambridge University student Teresa Baron for UK college reporting site The Tab in April 2015. "In that sense, feminism is there for everyone who is oppressed by patriarchal social orders."

But, Baron argues, "That doesn't mean feminism has a duty to gay men. It means gay men have a duty to feminism. Gay men oppressed by patriarchal systems should be fighting alongside the rest of us to break them all down."

Gay men need to stop perpetuating misogyny and ally themselves with the feminist movement. And the first step toward becoming a true ally is listening to women speak about the issues that are important to them, whether it's wage equality, reproductive rights, access to birth control or anything else. We can start there.

As gay men, we may be oppressed by homophobia; but as men, we operate in a system that privileges men and masculine gender identities to the disadvantage of women -- regardless of whether they are gay, straight, cis or trans.

Most importantly, we can use our privilege to call out instances of misogyny and gender-based bigotry in masculine-dominated spaces. Gay men actively supporting feminism shouldn't be a game-changing concept -- it should be a given.

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Conversations



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Sonia Silveroli · Take a guess at Housewife

Honestly, some of the biggest homophobes I have ran across were women, and this has been many many times. Why should a gay man "align" himself with a woman if she has zero intention of doing the same?

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Jerry Kott · Str8jacquet.blogspot.com

Years ago, I was engaged in conversation with a female (who I thought was a friend). She was in a dangerous relationship, had 3 children, and her so called friends were distancing themselves because they didn't want to get caught in the crossfire. However, I hung in there to let her know she was not alone. My partner and I are the God Parents of her 3 boys. The man she was married to was a seriously disturbed creature who eventually committed suicide. What I found disturbing is that in one of the conversations in which I was trying to be a friend in life, she stated that she "wished that her ... See More

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Anthony Gromelski · Northbridge, Massachusetts

Jerry Kott A real man stands for what he believes and is confident in himself. He doesn't abuse anyone and has respect for others. Don't be offended by the ignorance of others...they limit the world they live in...they only hurt themselves.

Like · Reply · 4 · Sep 10, 2015 6:03am



Timothy O'Ceallaigh

There aren't enough numbers of gay men to oppress all women, on the other hand there are millions of women in the GOP who vote to oppress gay men (and gay women [and all people of color]).

And then let's talk about how many feminists are anti-trans...

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Daxon Islander · Works at Unemployed

Glad to see gay men aren't buying into the "feminism is about equality" nonsense. Yea, "equality" against "misogyny" is whatever feminists want it to mean. (Like man spreading, or air conditioning)

Like · Reply · 40 · Sep 10, 2015 9:45am



Nathan Pannell · Owner at Mountain Country Treasures

This idea that you must be a feminist to believe in equality is absurd and needs to rot in the ground where it belongs. If someone is for equality and sees their self as a feminist that is fine but if they don't see their self as a feminist that is fine too.

Like · Reply · 29 · Sep 10, 2015 2:31am



Cory D McDonald

Good to know homophobia is still a thing in feminism.

Gay men don't need feminism, when you have a group that blames men for everything, why the hell should gay men join a group that's just going to exploit them ? It's not like feminists give women a fair shot and treats them like women and not tools to use.

Like · Reply · 29 · Sep 11, 2015 12:27pm



Cody Kodiak · Front Desk at Smithtown Inn

No person who engages in any level of critical thought should call themselves a feminist.

Like · Reply · 26 · Sep 10, 2015 3:39pm



John Allman · Works at Self-Employed

I take exception to that remark. I outed myself as a feminist at: Masculism, Feminism and the Euro Tunnel

