CHAPTER TWO

Self-Made Men

Culturally Navigating "Natural" Difference

Shortly after he began living as a man, Colin went to buy a pair of glasses. When he was signing his receipt, the salesperson told him she had a new grandson named Colin. She had been a little unsure about the name and wanted to know if he struggled with misspellings and mispronunciations. "I said, 'Actually, I picked that name,' not thinking of where this line of questioning would go. She said, 'Oh, what was your old name?' Because I was caught off guard, I said, 'It was Jane.' She kind of stopped and pulled back a little bit." He immediately understood her hesitation, as this response—a routine answer for thirty years of his life—failed to meet the expectations for his appearance as a man.

This disjuncture between biography and appearance illustrates the interactional difficulties that can accompany the transition from being viewed by others as women to being viewed as men—what I call achieving social maleness. Even when transmen experience themselves as male from an early age, their parents and guardians raise them as girls, the only culturally legitimized option for people assigned female at birth. Over time, many transmen develop a female-socialized habitus—a complex and embodied matrix of "perceptions, appreciations, and action" (Bourdieu 1977, 82) imparted over a lifetime by parents, schools, and peers.[1] Female-socialized people do not always think, feel, and behave in normatively feminine ways; however, they understand the consequences of rejecting the idealized expectations of femininity—

consequences that vary across other social locations, such as age, race, and class. Yet, while this habitus encompasses interactional flexibility in a wide range of contexts, it does not prepare transmen for navigating the social world as men.

Transmen start their transitions into social maleness with different understandings of their personal gender identity: it is innate, it is a diverse spectrum, it is a transformable pathway. What united the men I interviewed was a desire *not* to be socially gendered as female in everyday interactions. Hormone therapy, surgeries, and clothing can aid in this process. But natural differences schemas that position men and women as polar opposites bring expectations about gender-specific interests, knowledge, and abilities for men that are very different from the expectations for women. For new men, such as Colin, these expectations come to the forefront in interactions with people who do not know about their physical transitions. The interactional negotiations involved in achieving social maleness illuminate the cultural processes that underlie natural differences schemas as well as the hierarchical power dynamics behind those seemingly innocuous notions of difference (R. Connell 1987; Schippers 2007).

From F to M: The Attainment of Legal Maleness

Masculinity and femininity—the practices, interests, qualities, and abilities culturally associated with men and women, respectively—are commonly thought to derive from differences in chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive roles (R. Connell 1995; Laqueur 1990). Under this logic, people who have XY chromosomes, penises, and the ability to produce sperm are classified as men. Yet, in everyday interactions, chromosomes and genitalia are not visible. Instead, in most social interactions, the presence or absence of visual markers coded as male, such as facial hair, flat chests, and low voices, are used to classify people into the category of man or woman (Dozier 2005; Kessler and McKenna 1978)—a cultural rather than biological practice. Illustrating the importance of these appearance cues in determining social maleness, almost 95 percent of the men I interviewed were taking testosterone (T) or planned to take it in the near future because of its strong masculinizing effects. With T, voices typically lower, facial hair develops, and, depending on genetics, hair loss may start—though these changes can take several months

to a year. These changes make transmen's personal sense of maleness, masculinity, and/or "not femaleness" visible to others.[2] That only five of the fifty-four men I interviewed had not undergone or made immediate plans to undergo chest, or "top," surgery also shows how a flat chest is an integral part of crafting social maleness. Fewer transmen opted for hysterectomies (less than 30 percent) and genital surgery (less than 10 percent), more invasive and expensive surgeries that impact parts of the body normally hidden under clothing. The visible effects of testosterone and chest surgery operate as "cultural genitalia" (Kessler and McKenna 1978), as, in most social interactions, transmen are seen as men regardless of whether they have a penis. Facial hair, in other words, allows them to "[do] sex in a gendered world" (Dozier 2005, 297).

Undergoing these body modifications can bring transmen's personal and social gender identities closer together but can also create a conflict with the legal gender indicated on their government documents. The procedure for changing legal gender varies by state. Texas and California require a letter from a medical professional stating that a transman has undergone a surgical "sex change." Showing how commonsense beliefs that gender identity must align with genitalia are institutionalized, *sex change* in this context is synonymous with genital surgery. Yet, as an increasing number of medical professionals recognize that many transmen do not have genital surgery, some transmen are able to get these letters after a hysterectomy or, in some cases, chest surgery. With this letter, transmen can change their gender on their driver's licenses and Social Security cards. Some states will issue new birth certificates that read "Male." Other states merely change the document to read "Female Amended to Male" or put a line through "Female" and type "Male" next to it.

These differences in laws mean that gender identity varies by state (Greenberg and Herald 2005). Transmen may be male in Texas (and thus legally able to be heterosexually married) but still female in Indiana. And an officially changed legal gender can always be trumped by judges' deeply held beliefs about the invariance of biological sex, as the case of Christie Lee Littleton illustrates. Littleton underwent genital surgery at a Texas state facility in the 1980s, legally changed her gender marker from M to F, and married a cisgender man. When he died due to hospital malpractice, she sued for wrongful death. The state of Texas dismissed her case, ruling she was male and therefore not legally married. The judge wrote in defense of his decision, "At the time of birth, Christie was male, both anatomically and genetically. . . . There are some things we cannot will into being. They just are" (*Littleton v. Prange* 1999, 9). The *Littleton* case is not unique. Transgender people's changed legal gender, physical appearance, genitalia, and social gender have been dismissed in favor of chromosomes in order to deny rights to an estate of a dead spouse (*Estate of Gardiner* 2002) and to deny custody of children (*Kantaras v. Kantaras* 2004), to name just a few cases.

Yet, while chromosomes may have sovereignty in court rulings, the actual process of changing gender on government documents is influenced by appearance—Suzanne Kessler and Wendy McKenna's (1978) "cultural genitalia." The belief that appearances are a stand-in for biological sex means that many people do not anticipate that someone who has a beard may not have a penis. When Sam moved to California, he applied for a new license. He never mentioned that his old license carried an "F." "You go into the DMV looking [like a man] and they are not gonna be, like, 'Well, did you used to be a woman?' Or, 'What does your birth certificate say?' They are going to go, 'Okay, male.' Which is what they did." Aaron had a similar experience. He went to the DMV to get a name change. While changing his name, the clerk noticed the "F." As Aaron had a significant beard, she assumed it was a mistake, apologized, and wanted to immediately process his gender change. Thomas had only recently changed his driver's license to "M," though he had transitioned in the 1990s: "I've been pulled over and the cops just didn't see it [the "F"]. But I also had a beard down to my belly. And so it is hard to get past those cues. That little 'F' in the box miraculously became an 'M.' The fix-it ticket I got said 'M.'" That transmen can be socially gendered as men—even by gatekeepers of legal gender—once they have facial hair suggests that the institutionalization of a male/female binary relies more on the logic of culture than on the science of chromosomes.

From Women to Men: The Achievement of Social Maleness

Physical and legal changes are only one part of the process of achieving social maleness. Transmen also must negotiate behavioral expectations for men—a negotiation that many transmen referred to as "passing." In our interviews, most transmen described worrying a great deal at the onset of their physical transitions about whether they were being read as

male in social interactions. Being able to interact as men with strangers, casual acquaintances, and, for stealth transmen, coworkers who do not know about their physical transitions was taken as supportive evidence that they successfully passed physically and behaviorally. Yet, while many transmen recounted high levels of passing-related anxieties when they began their physical transitions, these concerns were time-bounded. Once transmen gained embodied ease with being men in the world, their anxieties about passing faded.

In an attempt to capture the transformation from passing to achieving social maleness, I asked in my first few interviews, "How did you learn to act like a man?" Anticipating long, nuanced responses, I was surprised to get dismissive answers. Peter says, "I was always living the same way I am now, but my appearance changed so it changed how people saw me." Echoing this, Cole says, "I just have always kind of done it [act like a man]." For Winston, the only difference was that looking like a man gave more legitimacy to what he viewed as his innately male behaviors. "For me, living as a female was constant self-editing. Don't walk like that, don't talk like that, don't sit like that. Now, as a guy, I sit any damn way I want to." For Devin, once he physically passed as a man, people saw his actions as "manly": "Other people, society, and the world help me be [a man]. It's really an interaction."

I quickly realized that asking transmen how they had learned to "act like men" fails to capture the complexity of achieving social maleness—an interactional, not individual, process. Testosterone gives transmen the markers of a male appearance, but other people afford them social maleness. In social interactions with people who do not know about their physical transitions, transmen navigate systems of cultural meanings and expectations about natural differences between men and women and adjust to a new position in the hierarchical relations of masculinities and femininities. Negotiating these expectations as female-socialized men, transmen can develop a gender "double consciousness" (Du Bois 1903).[3] They simultaneously inhabit social space as men and maintain, to varying degrees, an internal repertoire of female-socialized interactional strategies. This double consciousness can generate culture shock as they struggle to synthesize two identities—a female history and a male social identity—that natural differences schemas position as opposing. To gain gender competency, transmen study the idealized qualities that make up a hegemonic understanding of masculinity. As their ease with embodying social maleness increases, however, they can develop gender

literacy that allows for flexible responses to normative expectations of manhood.

Gender Culture Shock

Once transmen look like men, people evaluate their actions and behaviors by a male standard. This change can create a feeling of culture shock, as transmen struggle to understand how people are making new sense of once-familiar behaviors. In some cases, they get social approval for actions they were stigmatized for performing as women. Crispin gives one such example:

> [Now that I'm a man], stewardesses ask me to lift their bags for them. Girls drop things in front of me, and I'm like, "Oh, I'll get that for you." And . . . it is really amazing. All those things I desired. Before, I used to do them [as a female] anyway, but I always felt like I was making the person uncomfortable. . . . I used to love to open doors for women. . . . I would put my coat on the ground and step on water, the whole thing, but they thought, "This is weird. You are a girl." Now it feels comfortable.

As a chivalrous woman, Crispin disrupted gender relations that support heterosexual dominance. As a man, he is now embodying hegemonic masculinity, the idealized qualities and social practices defined as manly that reproduce and maintain a hierarchical and complementary relationship to femininity (R. Connell 1995; Kimmel 2004). Though the behavior has not changed, the recipients of his chivalry feel more comfortable because his actions are now read as gender-appropriate and heterosexual.

Once-comfortable behaviors can also carry negative new meanings. At a work-related conference, Winston, a stealth transman, remarked to a coworker that one of the conference attendees looked "like a dyke" and suggested they should recruit her for some LGBT programs they were designing. "She said, 'You really need to think about how you talk about people.' And I thought, 'Oh, man, she is right!' I mean she is sitting here looking at a middle-aged white man." A former lesbian, he adds, "Sometimes I tell stories about 'these dykes I used to know.' And that word was not negative to us [dykes] back then. It was like how some black people call themselves the 'N' word. But, as a [heterosexual] man, I have to realize I don't have those language privileges." This comment might not raise eyebrows in some settings, as hegemonic masculinity by definition

devalues "pariah femininities" (Schippers 2007) such as lesbianism. Yet, in professional work settings that offer workplace protections to gay and lesbian employees, his comment is censured as inappropriate. Winston's comfort with this terminology, a holdover from a lesbian past, cannot be adapted for a heterosexual man without the accompanying assumption of intolerance for homosexuality—a disconcerting label for a former lesbian to face.

Bodies read as male also carry a different relationship to privacy and sexual intimacy than bodies read as female. Nicky stopped hugging women at work because this behavior from a man could be interpreted as predatory or degrading. Devin notes, "The women at work [who don't know about my transition], they slap me on the chest and stuff like that. They are in their fifties, and they just like to flirt with me a little bit. Like '[You are] such a nice young man.' It is still really freaky to me. [I have to tell myself,] 'You are not supposed to flinch!'" For a woman, having a coworker—man or woman—touch her chest is a violation, as this part of the female body is coded as sexual and private. In most workplaces, this action could be classified as sexual harassment or physical violence. Yet, for a man, this kind of touch can be a casual interaction, like a woman putting her hand on a man's shoulder, because his chest is coded as nonsexual. Other transmen had to adjust to arm punches from heterosexual men who know them as just one of the guys, as men rarely punch women in this jocular way. Devin's flinching reaction demonstrates the difficulty of adjusting to male expectations for bodily contact.

When they first start living as men, many transmen worried when men, seeing them as any other cisgender man, said to them, "Well, you know how men are. . . ." This statement highlights natural differences schemas. Men as a group are thought to share certain interests, experiences, and bodies of knowledge that women would never want or be able to understand—interests somehow embedded on the Y chromosome. Roger says that once he physically passed as a man, "It was like, 'Oh, you are male, you know cars.' No! My father was a mechanic, and I didn't learn anything by osmosis." Gabriel, one of only two men in his workplace, says, "When the computer breaks, everyone comes to me to fix it, and I don't know anything about this." Julian says, "I did a lot of [male] things naturally, but the social interactions and stuff, that is definitely a learning experience." Growing up, Scott learned a lot of "man stuff" from his father. However, he soon realized this was only a small part of what it meant to be a man. "It is just the mores and the subtle body language. I study men all the time. And you know, it's funny, I used to study women so I could be more like one."

A male-socialized habitus—what men are referencing in the statement about "how men are"—is fluid, embodied, and specific to age, race, class, and sexual identity. It is also flexible enough to provide appropriate behavior for a range of contexts and situations. This flexibility takes strategic practice. For cisgender men, this practice occurs in childhood. Little girls, however, are barred from participating in all-boy activities of childhood during which norms and expectations of maleness are transmitted (Messner 1992, 2000). The gender segregation of locker rooms and bathrooms precludes women's gaining firsthand experience with how men interact with one another in these locations. Transmen, then, face the task of learning how to enact social maleness while already being seen by others as men. This learning curve is heightened for transmen who transition later in life. Joseph, who transitioned in his forties, recounts, "There was nobody to teach me the ropes . . . no older guy to bring me up to speed. There was a big gap in my knowledge because I was an older man, just a different level of expectation." Because he was stealth at work, men his own age expected him to have shared biographic experiences. Younger men looked to him for advice, advice he was seeking from others. Wayne, who transitioned in his late teens, had a different experience: "At first, it was, like, how the heck am I going to learn [how to be a man]? In a number of settings, there were things that I just didn't know about." He soon realized he was at the age at which he was expected to be getting advice about what it meant to be a man (rather than a boy). "It was pretty age-appropriate stuff [that I didn't know]."

All-male spaces, such as the public men's restroom, present a particular challenge for new men. The segregation of public restrooms is a cultural strategy to reaffirm deeply held beliefs about men and women's natural differences in a gender-integrated society (Goffman 1977). Expectations for men's and women's bathroom culture are shaped by gendered assumptions. For women, feminine modesty demands a room divided into small, private stalls. Men's restrooms, in contrast, typically have one or two stalls and then a wall of urinals where men urinate in direct view of one another. These interactions are governed by heteronormativity—this open display of genitalia is acceptable only because men are not supposed to want to look at one other. Coming to the men's restroom with years of practice in the women's restroom can be a challenge. Describing his first experience, Brian says, "This man just walked up and pulled

his dick out, and walked forward [to the urinal]. I was so surprised! Especially being a lesbian, coming from that kind of experience! The look on my face probably was so funny!"

Transmen typically retain vivid memories of the first time they used a men's restroom. Transmen who had just begun T, such as Tex and Anthony, worried about men challenging their right to be there. This fear of surveillance came not just from anxieties about their appearance but also from an awareness of the high level of surveillance that occurs in women's restrooms. As women are socialized to be vigilant about sexual predators, they keep a sharp eye on who is entering or leaving the bathroom. People perceived as posing a threat to this gender-segregated space are confronted about their right to be present. Many transmen described being frequent targets of gender policing in the women's bathroom prior to their transitions, a common experience for masculine women (Devor 1989; Halberstam 1998a). Most respondents told at least one story involving women or security guards challenging their right to use the women's restrooms. Colin's story is typical. "A couple of women approached me and said, 'Why are you in here? You shouldn't be in here.' I said, 'Actually, [I am a woman].' My voice was a lot higher, and I figured that would do it. They're like 'No, no, you shouldn't be in here.'" Yet, while these experiences are irritating, transmen know what to expect from women because they have used women's restrooms for typically twenty to thirty years. Over time, they develop strategies for dealing with these situations, such as making their voices higher when they interact with women, hurrying into the privacy of the stall, or avoiding public restrooms as much as possible. For the men's bathroom, however, they struggle with not knowing what to expect if men challenge their right to be there. When Simon was unsure if he physically passed as male, he continued to use the women's restroom. He felt safer braving reactions he was accustomed to than facing unknown reactions from men.

Physically passing as men is a big concern for many transmen when they begin taking hormones. They measure success by what I call the "sir" test—an informal count of the percentage of time clerks and wait-people refer to them as "sir" at first sighting. The more "sirs" they get, the more confident they are in their appearance. Until they are sir-ed 100 percent of the time, transmen can feel hypervigilant about their personal safety. With a gendered appearance that newly transitioning transmen describe as "awkward" or "in-between," they can be targets of

ridicule and/or violence in a society that accepts only male or female—as Eric found out when a car full of teenagers yelled at him, "Are you a boy or a girl?" While not all transmen I interviewed personally identified as male or as men, most of them preferred being seen by strangers as male to make their everyday interactions safer.

Transmen's feelings of vigilance about personal safety are also part of being socialized as females. Public spaces belong to men at night (MacRobbie 1991). Little girls are taught that dangers lurk in the dark in the form of rapists and muggers (Lees 1993). As the negative coverage of rape trials clearly shows, women are held responsible for their own victimization because they should have known better than to go out at night alone (MacKinnon 1987). Men, however, are allowed to take up public space, even at night (Duneier 1999; Vance 1995)—as Caleb learned once he developed confidence that he successfully passed as a man. When he was on his way out with a group of men, his mom reminded him to "be careful, lock your car doors, and don't talk to anyone." "I was like, 'Mom, we're a bunch of guys. It's not really gonna make that much difference. Nobody's gonna bother us.' It's so nice not to be freaked out. To have that kind of security." Showing a trade-off, however, Christopher described his sadness that women now perceive him—just another guy—as a potential sexual predator when he encounters them alone on the street at night. This freedom could be further complicated by the new risk of interactions between men turning violent. When Jake began T, he was living in a predominantly Latino neighborhood in California. Given his shaved head and the youthful appearance that came from the development of facial "peach fuzz" (an outcome of starting T), teenagers saw him as another young Latino. They yelled at him in Spanish and made gang signs, actions he was unprepared to negotiate as a white, thirty-something professional.

Rather than violence, physically passing as men could bring a new camaraderie with other men, a reaction some transmen described as being welcomed into the "men's club." While being one of the guys could be exciting, some transmen were uncomfortable with the relationality this change signified: men see themselves as not just different from women but better than women. As David notes:

> An older man perceiving you as a younger man is just so happy to be in your presence. It is just bizarre. They are not like that to women. There is this distance, because there is some kind of sexual interaction they are facing—or

> some kind of distance because they think you are a dyke or a masculine female. . . . But if they think you are a young guy, they are just so happy to be in your presence. It just bothers me that there is just such a big difference based on just subtle appearance issues.

Luis felt that salesmen were much faster to acquiesce to his demands once he physically passed as a man. When Preston and Anton took their cars in for minor tune-ups, mechanics did not try to sell them extra, costly services—a markedly different experience from taking their cars in as women. Describing his experience at the auto shop, Julian says, "Male privilege is alive and well! There was this woman there. She's buying new tires, and I could overhear her interaction. I started talking to *the same guy* about tires. And to me, he was, like, 'Yeah, man, you can get those tires here, and I'll give you my employee discount.' And I'm like, What the hell is this?" Joseph, like Julian, added that being treated like a man by other men made him much more deeply aware of gender oppression than he had ever been living as a woman. While Joseph felt he was not always treated fairly as a woman, particularly working as a professional in the 1980s, he never realized to what extent men gave one another informal advantages over women until he personally received such treatment.

Yet not all embodiments of maleness bring the same reactions from men. If hegemonic masculinity is defined as different from and better than femininity—a definition that is necessary to maintain hierarchical heterosexual gender relations (R. Connell 1995; Schippers 2007)—then men who come across as feminine in their behavior and demeanor can be devalued. Some new transmen did not want to shed what they described as female-socialized habits, such as talking with their hands or being physically demonstrative. Yet they realized these mannerisms in a man were stereotyped as gay. While more than half of the transmen I interviewed had lived as lesbians at some point in their lives and reported little harassment or violence, they worried that being seen as a gay man—regardless of whether they identified this way—would bring negative reactions. Elliott says, "I did the lesbian thing and was fine. I didn't experience a lot of homophobia. But this [being a gay man] is just an unknown." These reactions were not unwarranted. Paul notes, "I was walking on the beach with my brother, and these boys walked by and we heard one say, 'Are those queers?' And this is so interesting because [in over thirty years,] no one ever yelled at me, 'Is that a lesbian?'" In a more extreme case, Casey was the target of antigay violence while riding his bike in Texas with another man. Xavier, who had stopped T for a few months, remarked that he felt safer in Texas being seen as a masculine woman than as a feminine man. "I'm worried about people kicking my ass because I look like a Nellie fag. I actually feel less vulnerable looking female. I feel like most guys in Texas don't hit girls."

The experiences of transmen of color further show the hierarchical relationality between embodiments of maleness. Transmen of color can experience a loss of freedom as men. Jack, a Latino, and Trey, a black man, both realized they physically passed as men when women started clutching their purses tightly when they walked by. Trey notes, "On one hand, I was like, 'Oh, I am passing!' and then I was like, 'Oh, but you think I am dangerous.'" Keith, a black man, says, "It is interesting now to see it from both sides. I know why the black man is angry! I do. He doesn't start off that way. . . . It is just so weird to get that vibe from people. I just manifest . . . their fears, everything they fear. I am every black man who has been accused of something." He encountered frequent racist treatment, such as being pulled over by white police officers for driving in the "wrong" (that is, wealthy and white) neighborhoods and being followed in stores—all common experiences for black men in the United States (Bolton and Feagin 2004).

Trey faced a similar experience in Texas. Walking a friend's dog in a predominantly white, affluent neighborhood at night, he was stopped by neighborhood patrols and police officers three times in a span of twenty minutes. Shocked at this treatment, he asked his older brother how he dealt with it. His brother was surprised that Trey didn't realize "how it was" and told him that soon he would become accustomed to such treatment. Socialized as black girls, Trey and Keith did not have the same embodied strategies as cisgender black men for navigating this treatment. While schools and families socialize black boys into accepting and adjusting to stereotypes of black, masculine criminality (Ferguson 2000; Oliver 2003), black girls' socialization often focuses on regulating their sexuality and maintaining their self-respect (Kaplan 1997; Orenstein 1994). Becoming a black man means finding interactional strategies that address the expectations of black male criminality.

While transmen of color can experience a heightened sense of visibility, white transmen can start to feel invisible. Eli, who lived as a self-described masculine woman until he transitioned in his early twenties, adopted a confrontational attitude toward people who questioned his

gender identity. "It was like all of a sudden [after I passed], I was completely invisible. Which is what I wanted all my life. It's good, but it took a while to get used to. When I'd walk around, I'd be like, [*snarl*] 'What are you looking at?' and now it's like, 'Oh, you're looking at someone else.'" Henry felt that he had to readjust his strategies for being assertive. "I have always prided myself on being a strong woman and being outspoken and willing to take up space. In the same way, as a transperson, I want to take up some space. I do feel like a guy, but I don't feel like a 'typical guy.' I hold a lot of female socialization." Yet, once he physically passed as a man, his strategies for being assertive as a woman no longer worked. "What people see is a white guy who is upper-middle-class at this point. It is really a process. I am having to realize how people react to me [when I am assertive]. I am stepping on their toes. And they are perceiving it to be based on gender and ethnicity. And that makes me really sad." He adds, "All my life I have fought to take a step forward, and now I have to step back."

Achieving social maleness also brings a change in everyday interactions with women. Seeing them as any other cisgender man, women often exclude transmen from their interactions on the basis that they "just cannot understand"—the Mars/Venus distinction that characterizes natural differences schemas. This social distance from women was a relief to transmen who had fought their whole lives not to be treated like one of the girls. Elliott, in contrast, felt sad, noting, "I grew up surrounded by women. And now to have them be leery of me, that takes some getting used to." Brian, too, felt sad about this exclusion: "I have tried before to get into conversations [as a man] where women are talking and . . . just been shut down. Not being allowed to participate because 'I wouldn't understand.'" While transmen's gender double consciousness may make them feel more connected to women on a political level because they suddenly see inequality so clearly, women assume that, as men, they are unable to share "female" experiences and interests. This exclusion from women's spaces highlights that natural differences schemas—schemas that contribute to gender inequality—exist in part because women, not just men, do interactional work to maintain them.

Gender Competency

Socially crossing the male/female binary puts transmen into the classification of unsettled lives, "periods of social transformation in which

established cultural ends are jettisoned" (Swidler 1986, 278). Similar to other major identity transformations—coming out as gay or lesbian (Stein 1997), becoming an ex-nun (Ebaugh 1988), publicly acknowledging positive HIV status (Sandstrom 1990)—transmen struggle with synthesizing an old social identity (woman) with a new social identity (man). As they learn at the onset, some behaviors can be carried over into social manhood while others no longer work. To adjust to the social expectations of maleness, transmen draw in a very conscious way on their "cultural toolkit" (Swidler 1986) of symbols, stories, and worldviews. Like anthropologists in a foreign country, transmen amass a vast amount of commonsense knowledge about the idealized qualities and behaviors of men. Armed with these guidelines, they develop gender competency in social maleness that eases the culture shock they can experience as female-socialized men.

The workplace can serve as a learning ground for gender competency. Scott describes how he got firsthand experience in how men act with other men when he went stealth in a blue-collar job: "The camaraderie at a male-oriented job. It's so funny. You're always like, 'Oh, thanks, man,' or 'Hey, dude.' And you make a fist and punch the other guy's fist or something like that [*laughs*]." Elliott, who openly transitioned in his retail job in his early twenties, experienced his interactions with men in a similar way. "[I got to learn] the way they greet one another. The little handshakes, all that kind of stuff. To get to participate in that stuff, to be in the inner circle of guys, it's fun." Not all transmen saw this learning curve as amusing, however. Crispin, who went stealth in his late forties in a blue-collar job, expressed much more anxiety about picking up these interaction nuances at work than transmen who transitioned in their late teens and twenties. "All my confidence is not quite there yet. If I was in college, I wouldn't care so much. But I am in a man's world. A good ol' boys' world."

Transgender community groups also serve as socialization agents. Louis Sullivan, the founder of FTM International, published the first handbook for transmen in the 1980s. The book gave tips for where to buy smaller men's clothes, how to wear men's clothes appropriately, how to shave (Garber 1997). The resources grew exponentially in the 2000s. During my fieldwork in California, one of the social groups for transmen in the area hosted a weekend camping trip. The trip included a series of instructional seminars designed to teach participants the "men basics": how to change a tire on a car, check the oil, tie a tie, pitch a tent, smoke

a cigar. Most of the participants in the courses were "newbies," while the instructors were older generations of transmen. The "Tranny Boi Scouts" trip, as it was jokingly referred to, was a lighthearted event. But it also transmitted cultural knowledge about maleness. Support groups served similar functions, as older transmen give advice about navigating the world as men. For transmen who are not part of a local community, such as Nathan, social etiquette for situations such as the men's bathroom are available on transgender blogs and informational sites.

Adhering to rigid bathroom rules can ease the initial shock of using the men's restroom. Describing the rules he learned, Elliott says, "No one looks at each other. They walk in with their eyes on the floor and do their business and leave." Following these rules allowed transmen to feel that they were producing for other bathroom inhabitants the sense that "nothing out of the ordinary" was occurring—the baseline for a successful social interaction (Goffman 1963a). Urinals, however, present a unique challenge. Showing the limits of cultural genitalia, many transmen do not have the visible marker of belonging at the urinal: the penis. There are a variety of devices that enable transmen to urinate standing up. Negotiating these devices, however, can be awkward. Recognizing that fumbling with a device at a urinal could suspend the normal expectation that men do not look at one another in the restroom, many transmen opt for the privacy of the stall. This option, though, can create anxiety for transmen who believe that men use stalls only for defecation.

The longer transmen use the men's room, the more exceptions they see to these rigid rules. They see that some men prefer stalls, a realization that can be a great comfort. They also learn that rigid bathroom rules discount contextual variation. As Kelly notes, "Bathrooms in gay clubs are totally different! No doors on the stalls, more eye contact going on." Brian, who transitioned over fifteen years ago, laughs at how he clung to the rules of bathroom behavior at the beginning of his transition. He quickly learned that bathroom behavior was flexible, as men do talk in the bathroom in some workplace settings where they interact with the same men every day. Elliott, too, learned the need for flexibility: "I taught myself guys don't talk in the bathroom. And then one of my coworkers will come in and be like, 'Hey, dude, what's up?' And it's like, 'Oh God, I have to talk now.' I just have to try to be fluid with whatever comes up."

Mastering social maleness outside of the bathroom also seems at first to require following a set of rules. Henry notes, "I don't tend to do the gentlemanly things. Like I don't think to hold the door open or let the women go into the elevator first. And I am really expected to do it now [as a man]. But yet I was so against that when I was a woman. I really struggle with how much of that behavior to take on." Reflecting on his experience, Douglas says, "I felt a lot more pressure to conform [to masculine norms] at the beginning. Men don't talk about things being cute. You don't gesture with your hands." This pressure transmen describe toward conformity may seem, at first reading, to support the sociocultural frame of transsexuality—that transmen try to embody normative masculinity. However, to me, this initial conformity suggests more about the need to learn the potential penalties for failing to meet new social expectations, an outcome of an unsettled life, than about any investment in idealized masculinity. New transmen can opt to protect themselves by "butching it up" in some social interactions—a rational strategy in a society in which transgender people have no federal protections against violence and discrimination—until they learn the potential consequences of being perceived as transgender, feminine, and/or gay men.

Other men can be models for how to negotiate the expectations of maleness in flexible ways. Julian looked to his stepfather to find strategies for bypassing the sexism he felt expected to express as a heterosexual man. "He is just gentle in a lot of ways. I think that's a good way to be with people. It doesn't seem to matter what [someone's] gender is, he treats them the same way." David looked to an ex-boyfriend. "I learned a lot from him about just being yourself and not having to deal with the way that people expect you to act. He never felt that he had to talk about football. . . . He just modeled that some men don't care that they are a miserable failure at traditional male things." Douglas saw some of his gay friends as a model for crafting a particular kind of gay masculinity: "Like my friend Tim says, 'The Super Bowl? That's the game with the pointy ball?' I like fags. I like how they are. I don't have to be a stereotype of a guy." These role models also can be public figures. Joseph, who transitioned in the 1980s, a time period he describes as valuing chauvinism in men, was moved by Rosey Grier, a star football player, "coming out" as a man who did crochet. These role models challenge the rigidity of the so-called man rules by showing variation and flexibility.

Gender Literacy

Henry, who had been living as a man for almost eight years at the time of our interview, wished that he had kept a journal about his transition experience. "It is amazing how socialization works! I barely notice it [gender differences] now. But when I first started transitioning, I saw it all the time. I have just gotten so used to it. And it really was so blatant to me early on." Wayne, who has lived longer as a man than he did as a woman, says, "I even forget that I had chest surgery. It is like if you had an operation as a child or something. No one really talks about it, and you just forget." Brad, who transitioned eight years prior to our interview, adds, "When you first transition, you think about it a lot. . . . Maybe for like the first two years, you think about it every day. How is it different living as a man? And then it is not an issue anymore." Using me as an example, he added, "Like you identify as a woman. How often do you think, 'I am a woman.' You just are one." What these men are describing is the development of literacy in social maleness. As they find flexible strategies for negotiating social interactions as heterosexual men, men of color, gay or queer men, and/or transgender men, transmen find different ways to socially embody their personal gender identities.

The public men's restroom, once a major source of anxiety, shows this gender literacy most clearly. Now a few years into living as a man, Kelly says, "Men don't pay attention in the bathroom. Everyone told me that at the beginning, and I was like, 'No, that is not true.' But now, I have no issues. I walk in, walk out, no one looks. No one makes eye contact." Robert has grown comfortable using a urinary device at urinals in public restrooms: "Men are not going to look down at my crotch because this society is homophobic." Brian says about newly transitioning transmen, "They freak out and worry about feet pointing in the wrong direction. They just kill themselves with anxiety over issues that really no one is paying attention to and no one gives a damn." Yet this realization can come only with experience. New transmen can hear that men don't pay attention, but they cannot believe it until they have experienced it themselves over and over again—the kind of practice necessary for embodying social maleness.

Literacy also brings the development of cultural tools for potential challenges to bathroom behavior. Homophobia is a powerful social control mechanism, particularly in intimate, all-male spaces such as the bathroom or locker room (R. Connell 1995; Messner 1992; Pascoe 2007).

For Jason, homophobia was a cultural tool he could use to defend possible challenges to his use of the stall: "Guys are very prideful. They don't want to be gay. It is taboo. So they are not going to be looking at your penis. If you go in the stall all the time, maybe you just don't want anyone looking at your penis." Johnny goes further, saying he would call someone "gay" if they questioned him or looked at him too long in the bathroom. "It would shut him up really quickly because no guy wants to be questioned about their sexuality, especially in the males' restroom." Homophobia also justifies a refusal to urinate in front of other men outdoors or discomfort with being naked in men's locker rooms—all situations that can be challenging to navigate for transmen who do not have genital surgery. Being seen as men also brings more right to privacy. Transmen who have had chest surgery have scars that run the length of their chests. When I interviewed Sam, I met him at his gym, where he was known only as a man. I asked if any of the men, people who see him without a shirt on a daily basis, ever asked about his scars. He said that it happened on occasion, but he just gave a vague reply that it was from a surgery he had as a kid. When men asked Peter about his chest scars, he said they were intentional scarification—a subcultural form of body marking. He notes, "They thought it was cool and hard-core." These responses fit with idealized masculinity: stoically dismissing pain.

While transmen talk about their potential reactions to challenges, however, they were rarely put in such situations. Riley had been told to leave a men's restroom when he first started T and looked "in-between" in his gender presentation. With that exception, none of the men I interviewed had ever been questioned about their right to use public men's restrooms. This point emphasizes the interactional safety that physically passing provides—and illustrates the potential for harassment and discrimination that transgender or genderqueer people who cannot or who choose not to physically pass as men or women can face. Referring to the effects of testosterone, Roger says, "After what I call this awkward phase [in appearance], you really have to make an effort to tell people you are trans[gender]." Jake says that now when he comes out to people as transgender, people assume he is planning on becoming a woman. Because most people expect that biological sex differences are written on the body, they overlook any visible female cues when facial hair is evident. During our interview, Stephen and I took a break to get some coffee. He had not had chest surgery at that time and was not wearing a binder—a tight, flexible top that flattens breasts. Though he had visi-

ble breasts, everyone in the store called him "sir" because he had a goatee. Laughing about how concerned he used to be about passing, Brian notes, "With a beard and balding, no one is going to say, 'Oh, did that used to be a girl?'"

Literacy brings a lessening of accountability to idealized masculinity. Transmen who had lived as men for several years often raised and then dismissed stereotypical notions of how men should act. Trevor, a vocal feminist, noted that he took the feminist idea that there are many valid ways to be a woman into his transition—an inspiration for him to shape his own ideas of how to do masculinity. Almost ten years past his initial transition, Brad notes, "I used to think I was supposed to act a certain way [to be a man]. And I would try to act like that. I would feel like I am going to draw attention to myself if I don't act macho. But I am over that now." Winston says, "I didn't go through everything I went through just to be full of crap. I said I wasn't going to be afraid of my feminine side [as a man]." Johnny, who identifies as heterosexual, notes, "The feminine traits I do have add to my personality as a man." Transmen also realized that no man actually embodies idealized masculinity. Roger says, "Some guys know sports, and some guys don't. It doesn't matter." When people ask him if he knows about cars, he replies, "Yeah, I know you join the Auto Club." Wayne, too, rejects many of these expectations—a change from when he first transitioned in the 1980s. "My wife and I had to have our car fixed. This mechanic, he didn't want to talk to my wife. He wanted to talk to me. Right off the bat, women are perceived as having less information about car repair. And my wife is much more into that kind of stuff. Nowadays, I am much more willing to say I don't know and I don't care about that stuff." These discussions illustrate the achievement of gender literacy—being able to understand the qualities that make up idealized masculinity and, at the same time, understand that no one embodies these qualities in all contexts.

As transmen gain experience negotiating the world as men, they begin to see many different ways to embody their personal understandings of gender. Some transmen are comfortable with being what they describe as a "man's man." Others, such as Preston, maintain a commitment to being vocal feminists. Douglas and Trevor cultivated gay identities that rejected many expectations of heterosexual masculinity. Ethan highlighted his female-socialized past as a point of pride. "For me personally, if I could go back and change it, I would not have wanted to be born male. I appreciate and value my trans identity. It is nothing I intend to hide. In conversations, I'm like, 'Hi, I'm Ethan, I'm trans!'" Other transmen, such as Roger and Wayne, were most comfortable being stealth, as this strategy gave them the best alignment between personal and social gender identities.

Transmen of color describe less freedom of choice in shaping their masculine identities, as they felt boxed into racialized and gendered systems of meaning in everyday interactions. For Keith, achieving black social maleness meant losing freedoms he had as a black woman. Making this point in our interview at a ritzy, predominantly white coffee shop in California, he said, "I could stand up right here and yell. And it would be 911! But if as a female I stood up here and yelled and screamed, I'm okay. As a man, if I get mad, it is like, 'Oh no, crazy black man in there!'" He felt that he had no choice but to adopt a strong, silent persona—worlds away from his self-described "loud black woman" behavior—to protect himself. Ken identified as mixed-race, part Asian and part white. "I get white male privilege for the most part. Like older white males will call me sir or young man." To distance himself from this white privilege, he legally changed his surname and first name to be unequivocally Asian. While this change connected him to his Asian heritage, he, like Christopher, found that Asian men were stereotyped as weak and unassertive (Fung 2004)—the antithesis of idealized masculinity.

For some transmen, being socially male for many years relegated "transgender" to a background identity. Trevor, who had been out for many years as a transman, noted that recently, "I have been much more in the space of, I just want to be a dude [rather than out as transgender]. . . . And it is interesting because I heard [older trans] guys talk about being at that stage, and I couldn't imagine it. And now here I am!" In contrast, Chris began to adopt a transman identity after being stealth for many years. Similar to homosexuality (Brekhus 2003), transgender may be a master status, a background part of life, or an identity that has more salience in specific contexts, such as transgender events. New identities can take on new importance with changing life experience. Douglas notes, "Having settled some of my gender demons, other things have emerged that now have more salience for me." Sexual identity, for example, may become more of a focus for transmen after they achieve social maleness. Clark always thought of himself as a gay man born in a female body. However, seven of the men I interviewed went from dating women to dating men—a big shock for people who had once identified as lesbians or heterosexual women. Brad notes, "All my life I was never

attracted to men. Never, never, never, never! And then a few years ago, [I was]. It was like a whole nother world! I think that is more interesting to me than the trans stuff."

Different but Equal?

Transmen have diverse understandings of their personal gender, even when they share the desire not to be socially gendered as female. While not all transmen in this study conceive of themselves as male or as men, they understand that they are located within a culture that recognizes only two gender categories as legitimate. In some contexts, transmen who seek to blur this binary may feel a great deal of validation. However, in everyday interactions with acquaintances and strangers, they may feel more comfortable being read as men—particularly when they live in states where gender identity and expression are not covered by hate crimes legislation. Achieving social maleness requires a change in physical appearance and legal gender. Transmen also work to synthesize, to varying degrees, female socialization and male social identities—two identities that natural differences schemas position as innately opposing. While this social maleness may feel precarious at first, it can become embodied over time. Transmen retool their cultural toolkits, aligning their social and personal identities in ways that allow them to flexibly negotiate everyday interactions in a wide variety of ways.

Undermining the assumption that biology dictates gender, transmen achieve social maleness regardless of their chromosomes or their decisions about genital surgery. This new social identity as men can create distance from women, many of whom assume men do not and cannot understand their lives. Being treated as one of the guys by men, in contrast, can bring more recognition and camaraderie, particularly for white transmen read as heterosexual. These changes in social interactions can transform the double consciousness some female-socialized men have about gender difference into an outsider-within perspective on gender inequality, as transmen negotiate being treated as not just *different from* women but *better than* women. This outsider-within perspective is most visible in contexts where schemas about natural differences between men and women are institutionalized, such as the workplace.

CHAPTER THREE

Becoming Men at Work

The Unequal Outcomes of Difference

At nineteen, Chris went stealth in a blue-collar job. While it was exciting to be working as just one of the guys, he could not ignore how women were treated. "Girls couldn't get their forklift license, or it would take them forever. They wouldn't make as much money. It was so pathetic." Preston, who openly transitioned twenty years later in a blue-collar job, still saw similar differences: "They let the guys get away with so much stuff! And the women who are working hard, they just get ignored." Both men felt that these differences were visible to them because of their unique perspective. Chris notes, "I would have never seen [these differences] if I was a regular guy. I would have just not seen it. . . . I can see things differently because of my perspective. I am a lot like a guy because I transitioned younger, but, still, you can't take away how I was raised for eighteen years." Preston adds, "I am really aware of it [gender inequality] now. And that is one of the reasons that I feel like I have become much more of a feminist since transition. I am just so aware of the [gender] differences that my experience has shown me."

Because maleness is defined in opposition to femaleness (Chodorow 1978; R. Connell 1995; R. Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Schippers 2007), transmen negotiate being viewed as not just different from but also better than women. The differences in treatment that can come from changing social location within a hierarchical system are particularly evident in institutions that allocate rewards and tasks on the basis of gen-

der, such as the workplace (Acker 1990; C. L. Williams 1995). Transmen can benefit from the "patriarchal dividend" (R. Connell 1995, 79), the advantages men in general gain from the subordination of women. Yet not being born into it can generate an "outsider-within" (Collins 1986) perspective on how seemingly innocuous beliefs about gender difference translate into gender inequality.[1] But not all embodiments of social maleness carry the same advantages. White, tall transmen who can physically pass report greater returns from the patriarchal dividend than transmen who are short, gender-ambiguous, and/or racial minorities. The varying experiences of becoming men at work illustrate the hierarchical relationality not just between men and women but also between competing embodiments of maleness.

Before and After: Changes in Workplace Experiences

A large body of research shows that natural differences schemas impact the trajectories of employees (see Ridgeway and Correll 2004). White men are rewarded more than women for offering ideas and opinions and for taking on leadership roles (D. Butler and F. L. Geis 1990; Valian 1998). Both men and women view white men as more competent, more knowledgeable, and more able to command others than women (Elliott and Smith 2004; Olian, Schwab, and Haberfeld 1988; Padavic and Reskin 2002). My analysis of transmen's "before and after" workplace experiences brings these documented patterns to life. Two-thirds of the transmen in my study, both open and stealth, described new workplace experiences as men at work that line up with the workplace benefits associated with maleness: increases in workplace *authority*, perceived *competence*, *reward and recognition* for hard work, and *economic opportunities*.[2]

Authority

When I asked Henry if he noticed any differences in his workplace treatment as a man, he laughed and said, "Do you know how smart I am?" He went on to explain, "I'm right a lot more now. . . . Even with folks I am out to [as transgender], there is a sense that I know what I am talking about." Henry's experience illustrates the gain of a hallmark of social maleness: authority. He is asked to support his opinions and arguments with facts less frequently than when he worked as a woman, and he is sought out more often for his expertise on a wide range of subjects. Trevor, an open transman, also had a sense that his ideas were taken more seriously as a man. "I had good leadership skills leaving college, and . . . I think that those work well for me now. . . . Because I'm male, they work better for me. I was 'assertive' before. Now I'm 'take-charge.'"

Paul openly transitioned in the 2000s in a female-dominated profession. He attended large regional meetings where most of the participants, almost all women, were unaware of his transition. Being a man in these settings brought a new kind of authority:

> [At] some of the meetings I'm required to attend, you have lots of women there. There are [many times], mysteriously enough, when I'm picked [to speak]. . . . That [had] never happened [before transition]. There was this meeting . . . a little while ago where I appeared to be the only male between these thirty, forty women and everybody wants to hear from me.

Gabriel, a stealth man in a female-dominated job, had a similar experience: "[In meetings,] everyone will just get quiet and listen to me. But when this [woman expert] speaks, everyone talks over her. And I have no specialization in this area. I don't know anything, yet they are all listening to me." Xavier, too, openly transitioned in a female-dominated job: "[My colleagues] started paying more attention to what I was saying. . . . In meetings, someone would [raise an issue,] and when I would jump in and say, 'Have you thought of that?' everyone would listen like in a way they hadn't before." He adds, "I think part of it was like, 'Hey, the voice sounds different.' But part of it was also like this kind of creepy programming [for women], like, 'Hey, let's not interrupt the boy voice.'" Rather than being alienated by gender tokenism as women often are in predominantly male workplaces (Eisenberg 1998; Byrd 1999), stealth transmen can be given more authority from their women coworkers, a common situation for white men in women's professions (C. L. Williams 1995).

Some examples of increased workplace authority are more overt. Roger, who openly transitioned in a technology-related retail environment in the 1980s, found that once he physically passed as a man, customers assumed that he knew more than his supervisor, a woman: "People would pass her and go straight to me because obviously, as a male, I knew [*sarcastic*]." He adds, "We would play mind games with them. . . . They would come up and ask me a question, and then I would go over to her and ask her the same question, she would tell me the answer, and I

would go back to the customer and tell the customer the answer." Showing how gender schemas that link maleness and authority are deeply ingrained, customers did not recognize the sarcasm behind his actions. Twenty years later, these schemas persisted, as Scott discovered when he went stealth at a blue-collar retail job: "It was me and three other girls [in that] department. We could be standing right next to each other and if some guy had a question about caulking or spackle or something, they would always ask me. And I had been there for two months, and these girls had worked there for at least a year." Gabriel found that people who came in looking for the supervisor in his workplace always assumed that he, one of two men, must be the person in charge. Even when he insisted he was low on the workplace hierarchy, he was asked to take charge of a variety of situations he had no institutional authority to command.

This new authority can be welcome. In his blue-collar job, Keith was relieved that he no longer had to couch his directives in social niceties, what he called "cuddling after sex." This authority also can be unwanted and disconcerting. Gabriel notes, "Sometimes [in meetings], I get flustered. I kind of start stuttering because it is so quiet and everyone is looking at me. It really confuses me because I could be saying something so dumb. It just doesn't matter; everyone is still, like, 'Wow!'" Joseph struggled with how this new authority came at the expense of women. "I'd always known that women were oppressed, especially on the job. But now [as a man], I have learned so much more about white male power. I didn't really understand that [before]."

While Joseph transitioned in the 1980s, Trevor's experiences in a professional job in the 2000s show that men's workplace authority can still come at the expense of women: "A woman would make a comment or an observation and be overlooked and be dissed essentially. I would raise my hand and make the same point in a way that I am trying to reinforce her, and it would be like [directed at me], 'That's an excellent point!'" He adds, "I saw this shit in undergrad. So it is not like this was a surprise. But it was disconcerting to have happen to me."

Competency

Thomas saw little change in his treatment from his employers when he transitioned into working as a man in his professional job. Yet, once he passed as a man, people who were unaware of his transition began to view him as more competent. Illustrating this change, Thomas tells how

a man who worked at an associated company commended Thomas's boss for firing "Susan" because she was incompetent. He added that the "new guy" (that is, Thomas) was great. The punch line of this anecdote is that Susan and the new guy were the same person. Trey had a similar experience in Texas. He applied as a woman for a professional job in a high-tech field in which he had an associate's degree. When he did not get an interview, he decided to take the time off from work to begin hormones. Three months later, he reapplied for the same job as a man and was hired. While he did not know if the same people evaluated his second application, he knew from his past work experience that men did not view women as being competent in this field. Marking the "M" box on the application made him a closer fit for the idealized image of a competent worker in this occupation.

Thomas's and Trey's experiences illustrate how men are evaluated as more competent than women in careers associated with stereotypically male skills and abilities, such as aggressiveness and technological "know-how" (Pierce 1995; Valian 1998). Brad, who worked stealth in blue-collar jobs for many years, says, "You don't see women as superintendents [on construction sites]. And it is nothing [women] can't do physically. It is just interacting with crews and managing things. But men view other men as more competent and more authoritative." Stephen, who went stealth in a customer service job staffed primarily by men, adds:

> Just because [the men I work with] assume I have a dick, [they assume] I am going to get the job done right, where, you know, they have to second-guess that when you're a woman. They look at [women] like, "Well, you can't handle this because, you know, you don't have the same mentality that we [men] do," so there's this sense of panic . . . and if you are a guy, it's just like, "Oh, you can handle it."

Caleb notes, "The male attitude [about women] is not that great. I've noticed so many guys are like that at work. They just feel like women are below them." Julian's experience in a blue-collar job with men who did not know he was transgender supports this observation: "[The site manager] was obviously saying things to me that he would never have said to a female. He was like, 'You have to help me! The other place I called sent me a bunch of women. . . .' And I was [thinking], 'Buddy, you don't even know the half of it!'" Anton found a similar devaluation of women when he went stealth in a professional job. He was warned by his women co-

workers that his new boss could be demanding and overbearing. Yet, after only two months, he was treated as a respected peer. "He says things like, 'I know I can trust your judgment.'" Though he was a recent hire, Anton was told to double-check the work of the other office staff—all of whom were women with many years' seniority on him. "He'll have the staff put together a schedule, and then it's like, 'I want you to make sure this works, make sure everything comes off smoothly.' And the support staff *is* making sure everything runs smoothly. But he is saying, 'I want you to double-check these women's work.'"

Women coworkers also attribute greater competence to transmen in some arenas of the workplace, such as computer-related concerns. But women can also allow more leeway for assumed male incompetence, particularly in female-dominated jobs that men are not expected to have an interest in. Gabriel found that this new leeway meant he could get out of doing required workplace activities he found burdensome or boring: "I can play the dumb guy. [Women] won't get mad at me. Whereas before, when I worked [as a woman], I couldn't get away with that. If I played dumb, they would just get really pissed off. Now I can play dumb, and it's, 'Oh, Gabriel, you know, that's okay.'" This acceptance of male incompetence in arenas coded as feminine upholds gender inequality at work, much as it does within the family (Hochschild 1990), as men are relieved of the expectations of doing work outside their "natural" abilities. While women in male-dominated jobs are also assumed by their coworkers to be incompetent, they still have to go above and beyond to keep their jobs (Paap 2006).

This outsider-within perspective on gender differences in workplace competency is heightened because many transmen have experienced the reverse: being thought, on the basis of gender alone, to be less competent than men. This sense of increased authority and perceived competence was particularly marked for transmen who had worked in male-dominated occupations as women. In the 1970s, Paul faced open opposition when he applied to be a truck driver as a woman: "[Men] would tell [me], 'Well, we never had a female driver. I don't know if this works out.' Blatantly telling you this." He adds, "[I had] to go, 'Well, let's see. Let's give it a chance. I'll do this three days for free and you see, and if it's not working out, well, then, that's fine, and if it works out, maybe you want to reconsider [not hiring me].'" Stephen, who did blue-collar work as a woman in the 1980s, describes the resistance he faced from men when it came to even basic help, such as enforcing safety precautions for loading pallets. "[The men] would spot each other, which meant that they would have two guys that would close down the aisle . . . while you were up there [with your forklift and load,] . . . and they wouldn't spot you if you were a female. It was maddening, and it was because of gender." In the eighties and nineties, supervisors wrote up Crispin, a woman in a male-dominated job, for every small infraction, a practice used to drive away "outsiders" that Janice Yoder and Patricia Aniakudo (1997, 330) refer to as "pencil whipping." In the 2000s, Dan, still working as a woman, received implicit messages about the incompatibility of women and blue-collar work. "One of my foremen was always talking about his daughter and how he refused to let her [do this job]. He never specifically said anything to me. It was like a subtle hint that he didn't approve of women on the site." Whether the messages were subtle or overt, transmen who worked in male-dominated jobs as women understood that they were assumed to be less competent than men.

Respect and Recognition

Going stealth in a professional job, Nathan immediately noticed differences: "[The men] listen to more of what I say and respect what I say. I actually get a lot more respect from the men." Preston's experiences openly transitioning in a blue-collar job were similar:

> I was not asked to do anything different [after transition]. But the work I did do was made easier for me. [Before transition,] there [were] periods of time when I would be told, "Well, I don't have anyone to send over there with you." We were always one or two people short of a crew, or the trucks weren't available. And I swear it was like from one day to the next of me transitioning [to male], I need this, this is what I want. I have not had to fight about anything.

He adds, "The last three [performance] reviews that I have had have been the absolute highest that I have ever had. New management team. Me not doing anything different than I ever had. I even went part-time." Having achieved social maleness, he is rewarded for doing less work and has to fight less to get what he needs. Additionally, he receives more positive feedback for his work, demonstrating how men and women can be evaluated differently for the same tasks.

As with authority and competence, increased recognition for hard work was particularly noticeable for transmen who had worked in oc-

cupations in which they were gender minorities. Preston, who was an ROTC cadet, felt that no matter how hard he worked as a woman, his achievements were passed over: "I was the highest-ranking female during the time I was there. . . . I was the most decorated person in ROTC. I had more ribbons, I had more medals, in ROTC and in school. I didn't get anything for that." He adds, "There was an award every year called 'Superior Cadet,' and guys got it during the time I was there who didn't do nearly what I did. It was those kinds of things [that got to me]." Similarly, Crispin reports:

> I worked really hard. . . . I produced typically more than three males put together—and that is really a statistic—but it would come down to, "You're single. You don't have a family." And because I was intelligent and my qualities were very vast, they said, "You can just go get a job anywhere." Which wasn't always the case. It was still a boys' world, and some people were just, like, there aren't going to be any women on my job site. And it would be months . . . before I would find gainful employment.

Nathan notes similar treatment as a professional: "I went as far as I could go in management [as a female]. . . . I had reviews as a woman where I was told that I was not going to get promotions even though I was deserving because men had families to support." These experiences illustrate the hardships that women working in male-dominated jobs often face: being passed over for hiring and promotions, having their hard work go unrecognized, and not being socially accepted. Having this experience of being women in an occupation composed mostly of men can create a heightened appreciation of reward and recognition for job performance as men. Even if the changes in treatment are not vast, they are different enough to be noticeable to many transmen.

Another reward that some transmen gain is freedom from unwanted sexual advances, as men encounter less touching and groping and fewer sexualized comments at work than women. Brian recounts his experience working as a waitress, saying that "customer service" involved "having my boobs grabbed, being called 'honey' and 'babe.'" He notes that as a man, he no longer has to worry about these types of experiences. Jason reported a similar change: "When I transitioned . . . it was like a relief! [*laughs*] I swear to God! I am not saying I was beautiful or sexy, but I was always attracting something." This new freedom is limited to stealth transmen, however. Open transmen often are asked invasive questions about their genitals and sexual practices during their transition process, which they can experience as a new form of sexualized harassment.

Economic Opportunities

Some transmen did feel that becoming men brought economic advantages. Chris notes, "I transitioned at nineteen. I went from making feminine minimum wage to making eight hundred dollars a week. That was back in the 1980s. I don't know what kind of job I could have gotten as a female making that same amount of money at the time." Chris had almost twenty years of career history to reflect on, highlighting the importance of longitudinal data for assessing the issue of salary changes. However, while such overt financial changes were rare, some transmen did feel that achieving social maleness increased their *economic opportunities*. Henry says:

> I am really aware of having this [professional] job that I would not have had if I hadn't transitioned. [Gender expression] was always an issue for me. I wanted to go to law school, but I [would have had to] wear the skirts and things females have to wear to practice law. I wouldn't dress in that drag. And so it was clear that there was a limit to where I was going to go professionally because I was not willing to dress that part. Now I can dress the part and it's not an issue. So this world is open to me that would not have been before just because of clothes. But very little has changed in some ways. I look very different, but I still have the same skills and the same general thought processes. That is intense for me to consider.

As a man, Henry is able to wear clothes similar to those he wore as an "obvious dyke," but they are now considered gender-appropriate. Chris felt that he had different entrepreneurial abilities as a man than he would have had as a woman:

> I have this [professional] company that I built, and I have people following me. They trust me, they believe in me, they respect me. There is no way I could have done that as a woman. When it comes to business and work, higher levels of management, it is different being a man. I have been on both sides [as a man and a woman], and I will tell you, man, I could have never done what I did [as a female]. You can take the same personality and I would have never made it.

While he acknowledges that women can be and are business entrepreneurs, he felt that his business partners would not have taken his venture idea in a male-dominated field as seriously if he were a woman. Additionally, he would not have had access to the types of social networks that made his venture possible.

Wayne achieved social maleness after many years of being gender-ambiguous. As men and women always face accountability for being either definitively male or definitively female (West and Zimmerman 1987), gender ambiguity can result in negative workplace treatment. Working at a restaurant in his early teens, Wayne had the following experience:

> The woman who hired me said, "I will hire you only on the condition that you don't ever come in the front because you make the people uncomfortable." A couple of times it got really busy, and I would have to come in the front or whatever, and I remember one time she found out about it, and she said, "I don't care how busy it gets, you don't get to come up front." She said I'd make people lose their appetite.

Once he looked unequivocally male, his work and school experiences improved. He went on to earn a doctoral degree and become a successful professional, an economic opportunity he did not think would have been available had he remained gender-ambiguous. Wayne and Henry highlight the power of becoming *normative*. Yet becoming normatively *male* still plays an important role in these workplace outcomes. Illustrating this, both George and Trevor had self-described feminine gender expressions when they worked as women. While they did not feel discriminated against as women, they still reported gains in perceived competence as men.

Peter went stealth in the process of finishing an undergraduate degree in a female-dominated academic field. Professors and colleagues told him that his gender would be a benefit, as employers were looking for more men in this field. Devin, who openly transitioned in graduate training for a women's profession, felt his gender benefited him in the job market. "I think because there are so few men [in this profession], they're like, 'Oh, let's bump up the number of men we've got here.' So that kind of sets me apart in a weird way, just because of the field." Anton saw clear economic benefits to being one of the only men (aside from his boss) in his professional workplace: "I was promoted immediately. Within two and half months of being hired." When I asked if he would still have been promoted as a woman, he said, "It's the guys that rise through the ranks, and they rise quickly. . . . The workplace is mainly women. These are Latino women who are ten years older than the men and have been in the same position for ten years." He adds, "When someone comes in at that same position and two and a half months later is given a fifteen-thousand-dollar salary increase, it pains them." In this situation, Anton benefits from both his race and his gender. In contrast, David, who transitioned while in professional training for a male-dominated field, worried that becoming a white man was a double disadvantage if hiring committees wanted to increase representation of gender and/or racial minorities. However, the persistence of the gender and racial gap in math and science (Schiebinger 1999), law (Pierce 1995), construction (Paap 2006), stock trading (Roth 2006), and finance (Blair-Loy 2003) suggests that white men are still viewed as more qualified for many male-dominated occupations.

Johnny went stealth in a retail job that involved working in the warehouse loading merchandise. He was promoted after two months to floor shift manager. "[As a female], I would not have been in the back. I would have been on the floor [with the customers] doing merchandise and stuff." The gender segregation of workplace tasks put him in a location where it was possible to move up the ranks quickly. When he went stealth in a blue-collar job, Brad was offered promotions over more qualified, senior women. "There was a girl who worked hard, just as hard as me. But they wanted someone to be assistant manager, so they asked me. She had been there longer." He adds, "I can't say that she shouldn't have had it more than me. I think guys are just like that between one another at work." Trevor and Jake, who both openly transitioned in professional jobs, remember women joking that they were going to "join the good old boys' network" and get promoted. While they discounted these comments, they were promoted soon after their transitions. They felt these promotions were related to their job performance, not their gender—a point I am not questioning. Yet these promotions show that while these two men were not benefiting undeservedly, transitioning did not interrupt the upward trajectory of their careers in these fields.

It is possible that the workplace gains that some transmen reported have a spurious connection to gender. Rather, such changes might come from a gain in education—a change that increases human capital. As table 3.1 shows, some transmen have higher degrees as men than they did as women because they transitioned in college. Others return to

TABLE 3.1 **Highest level of education attained, before and after transition**

	Stealth FTMs		Open FTMs	
Highest degree level	Before transition	After transition	Before transition	After transition
High school / GED	12	7	4	3
Associate's degree	5	5	7	7
Bachelor's degree	3	6	14	10
Master's degree	1	2	2	5
PhD	0	1	2	3
JD	0	0	1	2
Other	0	0	1	1
Total	21	21	31	31

Note: In this table, I exclude Seth and Eric, as they had not held any paid jobs since their transitions. Seth was a homemaker, and Eric was living on disability. Therefore, the table totals to only 52 transmen.

school for higher degrees. Yet, while education level matters in accounting for workplace outcomes, men get a greater reward from their educational attainment (Valian 1998). Anton's experiences bear this out. He was hired in his professional job straight out of college. As a woman, he would have had the same degree. Yet, in his workplace, he observed that women did not advance in the same way that he and other men did. Trey had the same associate's degree in a high-tech field as a man that he had as a female. But the company that hired him as a man passed over his application when he initially checked the "F" box. As many transmen's experiences show, social maleness also influences views of competency. This change holds true even outside of the workplace where their education level is unknown. Crispin notes:

> I used to jump into situations [as a woman]. Like at Home Depot, I would hear . . . [men] be so confused, and I would just step over there and say, "Sir, I work in construction, and if you don't mind me helping you." And they would be like, "Yeah, yeah" [that is, dismissive]. But now I go [as a man,] and I've got men and women asking me things and saying "Thank you so much," like now I have a brain in my head! It's really nice.

As a man, Crispin is rewarded for displaying the same knowledge about construction—knowledge gendered as male—that he was dismissed for offering when he was living as a woman. These experiences suggest that transmen's reported increased authority at work relates to becoming socially gendered as men, not just to changes in education.

Transmen's descriptions of their "before and after" workplace experiences are self-report data, which can render them suspect. If they anticipated that men get better treatment at work, they might be overreporting workplace gains as a way to shore up their maleness. However, I have reasons to doubt that the transmen I interviewed exaggerated these changes. First, few transmen whom I encountered in my interview study or in my fieldwork expected that transitioning would result in anything but negative changes. Unless they worked in LGBT-related jobs, they expected to be fired, ridiculed, and harassed. For those who reported more authority, rewards, and economic opportunities, this change was a shock—particularly when they remained in the same jobs. Second, reactions to this shock are conflicted. While more authority and respect can be satisfying, transmen are aware that this change is an arbitrary result of looking male. This knowledge can undermine their sense of themselves as good workers, making them question the motivations behind any workplace rewards they receive. It can also show transmen that they were receiving less reward as women workers than they had realized, a deeply frustrating experience. Further, many transmen express resentment that these changes often come at the expense of women. Thus, while many transmen could identify interactional benefits associated with social maleness at work, they often retained a critical eye to how changes in their treatment disadvantage women—the outsider-within perspective on gender inequality.

Other Experiences as Men at Work

About one-third of the men I interviewed reported no changes or negative changes in their workplace treatment due predominantly to *occupational context, being transgender,* and *embodiments of maleness.*

Occupational Context

Transmen who worked in retail jobs reported little change in their workplace experiences before and after their transitions. Elliott and Nicky both worked as open transmen in high-turnover retail jobs with a great deal of college student traffic. The jobs had regimented promotion schedules, and they felt it was hard to gain any benefit outside of these set boundaries. They added that none of the workers, regardless of gen-

der, were treated by managers or customers as having much authority because these were entry-level jobs. As tasks in these types of jobs often are gender-segregated (Leidner 1993), transmen might do different jobs than they did as women, such as carrying heavy boxes or working the grill in restaurants, but they were not financially rewarded differently. Casey felt similarly that he could not see any changes in his treatment. As a stealth temporary worker who did his tasks in a service job alone all day, he did not have any other coworkers, men or women, to whom to compare himself. Transmen who described their workplaces as gender-equitable also reported little change from working as women to working as men. Ethan worked as an open transman in a high-level professional job that had equal numbers of men and women. He described his boss as going to great lengths to reward all her employees equally.

Being Transgender

Several transmen felt that they had more negative workplace experiences as openly transgender men than they did working as women or when they were stealth at work. Caleb felt that he was treated like one of the guys in his stealth retail job in Texas. However, when he changed jobs—and came out to his employers as transgender—he had a markedly different experience. In his initial interview for a retail position, human resources personnel assured him that being transgender was not going to be an issue. During his training, he was assumed to be a man and given heavy-lifting jobs. At the close of training, he was assigned to be a sales representative for the company, a position that required a great deal of client interaction. On his first day, he told his direct supervisor that he was transgender. "She moved my position from sales rep . . . to [working in the back of the store]." Dissatisfied with his new position, which came with early morning hours and no interaction with customers, he asked for his original assignment back. "She just said, 'We can't have you in the public. You don't fit the representation of what we consider appropriate.'" While his appearance had not been a problem when his supervisor read him as male, the knowledge that he was transgender changed her perception of his suitability. Scott, who openly transitioned in a semiprofessional job, also felt that his work experiences took a turn for the worse because his supervisor treated him in a transphobic manner. "She had had a bad experience with another person who was transgender . . . and I think she already had a [negative] conceptualization of what happens to a person [when he transitions]." Both Caleb and Scott quit and went stealth in new jobs.

Transmen who worked in jobs that had a predominance of gay and lesbian employees and/or who worked primarily with LGBT clients described a distinct set of workplace experiences they attributed to being transgender. While Douglas was the only one who openly transitioned and stayed in the same workplace, the other four transmen working in these fields were hired as openly transgender. They had high expectations for these jobs, as they were working alongside people who were part of, or at least committed to, the LGBT community. Perhaps because of these high expectations, this group of transmen expressed the most reservations about their actual workplace experiences. They described being treated as "token trannies." Tokens stand out in their workplaces as among the only members of a certain group (Kanter 1977). As token trannies, transmen felt responsible for overcoming their colleagues' preconceived notions about transgender people. Douglas's workplace had once employed a transwoman whom his colleagues described as "flaky." "It created an organizational idea that trans people are sort of inherently unstable. . . . I felt a lot of pressure to be different . . . because I had to deal with the precedent she set and people's expectations." Transmen also became the "go-to" people for any issue related to transgenderism, regardless of whether they had any expertise beyond their personal experience. Having "transgender" forced upon them as a master status negated the relevance of other identities, such as gay or queer.

Embodiments of Maleness

Different embodiments of social maleness carry varying workplace rewards. Transmen who were or looked young, who did not physically pass as men, who were short, and/or who were racial/ethnic minorities reported fewer or no changes in workplace treatment than white, tall, "passable" transmen.[3] Looking first at age, the development of "peach fuzz" prior to the emergence of thicker, fuller facial hair can be an initial response to taking T. This youthful appearance works against transmen who are established in their careers. Thomas says, "I went from looking thirty to looking thirteen. People thought I was new [to the job,] so I would get treated like I didn't know what was going on." Other transmen

remember being asked if they were interns or if they were visiting a parent at their workplace, all comments that underscore a lack of authority. Looking youthful, however, is a time-bounded state.

Transmen who did not go on T describe very different workplace experiences than transmen who did. Christian was hired for a retail managerial position in Texas in the 2000s. He came out to his employer as transgender during the interview. She told him it was fine to identify that way but until he changed his legal gender, he could not inform his employees. Since he had what he described as an "in-between" appearance, some of the people he supervised referred to him as "she" and some as "he." He found the experience frightening in a conservative town where customers often had angry reactions to his ambiguous appearance. Jack and Ken announced their identities as transmen at work, but their coworkers continued to refer to them with feminine pronouns. While they often passed as men in limited social interactions, they were not afforded social maleness by coworkers—a difference they attributed to not taking T (and thus not developing the visual markers of social maleness). Riley had a slow reaction to T, meaning he looked "in-between" for over a year. While his coworkers at his professional job in California were not hostile, they rarely used masculine pronouns with him. Tex, Simon, and Anthony openly transitioned in a professional training job, a women's profession, and a retail managerial position, respectively. At the time of our interviews, they had just started T. They felt it was difficult to speak to any potential gender differences in treatment because they passed as male only about 60 percent of the time. At best, transmen who did not pass as men were treated the same way they were as women. At worst, they were physically threatened and ridiculed at work.

Being over six feet tall is part of the cultural construction for successful, hegemonic masculinity (Hall 2006). However, several men I interviewed were between five feet one and five feet five, something they felt put them at a disadvantage in relation to other men in their workplaces. Winston, who managed a professional work staff who knew him only as a man, felt that his authority was harder to establish at work because he was short. While he was one of the highest earners in my study, he felt he lacked the interactional benefits of maleness, such as authority. Being smaller than many of the men and women he supervised meant that he was always being looked down upon, even when giving orders. Kelly, who worked often with children, felt his height impacted the jobs he was

assigned: "Some of the boys, especially if they are really aggressive, they do much better with males that are bigger than they are. So I work with the little kids because I am short. I don't get as good . . . results if I work with [older kids;] a lot of times, they are taller than I am." Sam added, "I have been a part of male culture, but I also feel like an outsider. I have always felt that it was because I am a little man. Men look down on you when you are a little man." These experiences demonstrate the importance of the body in discussions of gender, as being short can impact the relationality among different embodiments of maleness.

The experiences of transmen of color most clearly highlight the hierarchical relations among embodiments of maleness. Christopher felt that he was denied any gender advantage at work not only because he was shorter than the other men at work but also because he was viewed according to stereotypes of Asian men (Espiritu 1997; Fung 2004; Hamamoto 1994). "To the wide world of America, I look like a passive Asian guy. That is what they think when they see me. Oh, Asian? Oh, passive. . . . People have this impression that Asian guys aren't macho and therefore they aren't really male. Or they are not as male as [a white guy]." Keith felt he could be more direct as a man, but being a *black* man limited his ability to express anger. "I went from being an obnoxious black woman to a scary black man." Reflecting stereotypes that conflate African-Americans with criminals (Oliver 2003), he was asked to play "a suspect" in training exercises in his blue-collar job.

Trey, who was stealth, was accepted at work as one of the only black men in a male-dominated field. However, his predominantly white coworkers joked that he was the "workplace diversity" hire and spoke to him in what they thought was hip, urban (that is, black) slang. He did not find these experiences discriminatory, but they were an irritation that his white coworkers did not face. Aaron, who was openly transgender at work, also felt achieving black social maleness negatively impacted his work life in a predominantly white organization. His supervisors repeatedly told him he came across as "threatening" to others. When he expressed frustration during a staff meeting about a new policy, he was written up for rolling his eyes in an "aggressive" manner. The choice of words such as *threatening* and *aggressive*, words often used to describe black men (Ferguson 2000; Oliver 2003), shows how racialized and gendered schemas impacted his workplace treatment in a negative way.

Human Capital, Gender Socialization, and the Persistence of Inequality

Gender transitions typically are understood as private events. Yet, because transgender people do not exist somehow outside of society, these transitions bring interactional changes. These changes are particularly visible in gendered locations, such as the workplace. Open and stealth transmen move from being socially gendered as women at work to being socially gendered as men. This change can result in increased authority, respect, and recognition, particularly in professional occupations. Highlighting the relationality between embodiments of maleness, however, white, tall transmen who can physically pass report greater gains in these areas than transmen who are men of color, short, and/or gender-ambiguous. These differences show that maleness is not a fixed construct that automatically generates privilege. Rather, there is a hierarchical relationality between embodiments of social maleness (R. Connell 1995; Messner 1997). These findings demonstrate the need for using an intersectional approach to gender inequality at work that takes into consideration the ways in which there are crosscutting relations of power (Calasanti and Slevin 2001; Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1989; S. Martin 1994), as different embodiments of maleness bring very different outcomes.

In many ways, workplace transitions reflect other forms of status changes—changes that have expected outcomes. We anticipate improved treatment to come with certain types of status changes, such as gains in education—medical students who become doctors, graduate students who become professors. In contrast, we often anticipate worse treatment to come with changes away from "normative" statuses—people who publicly identify as gay men, lesbians, and/or transgender people. Some transmen in this study report changes in workplace treatment that run counter to this negative expectation, an expectation that, again, many of them personally held. Having low expectations may make any slight change in treatment more visible. But this does not mean that improvements in workplace treatment do not actually occur. Putting transmen's workplace experiences in context with the changes in their casual social interactions as men suggests that, in some contexts, being gendered as men by others can bring different, and at times better, treatment than being gendered as women.

Comparing and contrasting transmen's "before and after" workplace experiences offers a challenge to rationalizations of workplace inequality, such as human capital and gender socialization. Human capital certainly matters in these situations, as transmen who are educated and work in professional jobs report the most gains at work. Yet, looking beyond education, transmen who report improved workplace outcomes typically have the same skills, abilities, and childhood gender socialization they had as women workers. But, once they achieve social maleness, employers and coworkers can view their skills and abilities in a different light. The improvements in workplace treatment some transmen experience, and the new disadvantages other transmen face, suggest that inequality persists, at least in part, because coworkers and employers rely on racialized and gendered cultural schemas to evaluate their colleagues' achievements and skills at work.