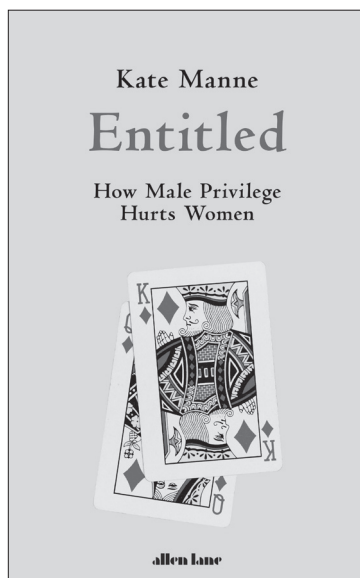


BOOK REVIEWS



Kate Manne (2020)

Entitled: How male privilege hurts women

London, Allen Lane. 270 pages, € 23,00

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A comprehensive overview of the complexity of gender privilege patterns

Kate Manne's book *Entitled: How Male Privilege Hurts Women* is an extensive overview of the many different ways in which privilege manifests itself in our society. The author focuses on the relationship between male entitlement and the inevitable negative consequences these patterns of privilege create for women. The book, however, goes further than merely describing and listing literature and cases. It expands into explaining the intricate ways in which privilege is interpreted in our society. Namely, women's disadvantages are often portrayed as unlucky coincidences – or, even worse, the victim's own fault – while men's entitlement is instead justified as an honest mistake or the simple product of circumstances. No matter the type of disadvantage, the author ultimately shows how disadvantages are personalised to the unlucky or willfully naïve woman, whereas entitlement deflects the blame from men themselves, relieving men from being kept accountable for their actions.

Throughout the book, each chapter represents a specific form of entitlement. Manne uses a systematic approach that covers issues from sex and consent, to

domestic labor and power. Some issues (such as the entitlement to sex) may perhaps be less of a surprising entry to the list of chapters. Blatant sexism and violence are also openly discussed, reminding the reader of the most dangerous consequences of entitlement. However, even for these perhaps more obvious disadvantages, described in Chapters 1 through 4, the author provides a valuable analysis of the economic and power patterns that they create. The addition of thorough notes and bibliography provides insight into the role that entitlement plays in contemporary events such as the Kavanaugh hearings, or the case of Harvey Weinstein. In this way, Manne creates a useful guide for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms that hold raw entitlements in place.

Following these first four chapters, one may already be anticipating the tone and issues of the rest of the book. However, the chapters that follow are even more insightful to the reader. The author specifically focuses on more subtle (and perhaps less obvious) but just as dangerous types of entitlement. Insidious entitlements, such as medical care and bodily control, are brought to light in Chapters 5 and 6, and, again, their influence is discussed in areas such as politics and economics. In the last four chapters (7 through 10), Manne discusses issues such as domestic labor and ownership of knowledge, linking them to prominent events such as the 2020 presidential campaign but also to popular terms such as mansplaining. These chapters show how biases and stereotypes lift men up while creating roadblocks for women across society. These last chapters (focusing on women's restricted occupational roles, power, eligibility, and the restricted possibilities that girls will have in the future) are the reminder of how raw entitlements (such as sex but also medical care and bodily control, discussed in the first chapters) may continue to exist. By keeping women down and away from decision-making roles, little can be done to wear down raw entitlement from our social, economic, and juridical system.

To add to the insightful analysis of how entitlement creates disadvantage, in this book Manne pays attention to how privilege affects not only women but also other minorities. While entitlement creates disadvantages for women, it creates double disadvantages, for instance, for women of colour. This perspective adds a needed complexity to the issues that are discussed. By examining relations with a lens that focuses on different social identities, intersectionality has changed the way gender is seen and discussed, especially in the feminist literature (Shields, 2008). Research on intersectionality highlights how the mere additive presence of certain demographics (e.g. gender, ethnicity, sex) can further contribute towards increasing the weight of entitlement. The addition of this perspective to the narrative gives Manne's book a further layer that makes it more insightful and inclusive.

Taking a step back, one may also consider the perspective from which the author writes: she is a professor in philosophy with a great expertise in issues important to the feminist movement. Although the focus of the book is direct and clear, a point of criticism to the book is that the author could have attempted to better incorporate different perspectives to the narrative. One way to expand the author's perspective is to not only look at how social patterns of injustice affect women but also at how they affect society at large, including men. For example, toxic masculinity is damaging to women and young girls but also damaging to men and young boys. Research shows that children who challenge gender stereotypes are judged more negatively by adults (Sullivan, Moss-Racusin, Lopez, & Williams, 2018). Furthermore, toxic masculinity negatively affects men's own health. Men are less likely to engage in preventive healthcare than women and this is especially true for men with strong masculinity beliefs (Springer & Mouzon, 2011). Expanding the analyses of the consequences of entitlement, by also including the negative effects that these have on men, may allow the message of this book to stretch its influence to an even wider audience. Considering an additional point of view, such as the broader consequences of entitlement, can be a way to critically reflect on the content of this book and think further than within the intended context about the issues discussed in Manne's book.

Keeping in mind the aim of Manne's book, it may also be useful to think of how this book can shape (especially) men's intentions and behaviour, in terms of, for example, their own support for feminism. The information provided by Manne is surely a good first step towards creating awareness of entitlement. The vividness of some of the content of the book may also help to evoke an emotional response in the reader. Being able to recognise privileges and understand the consequences they create can have a powerful purpose, especially amongst more entitled readers. In fact, as explained in a study by Leach, Snider, and Iyer (2002), creating awareness of inequality can taint the moral image of men, and thus initiate actions that repair the group's image and promote equality. By making people aware of their privileges (and the disadvantages of others), this book can be a good trigger to action. However, it is also important to consider the different effects that are initiated when, rather than focusing on reducing disadvantages, the focus is on reducing entitlement. Research carried out by Rivera-Rodriguez, Larsen, and Dasgupta (2021) shows that some privileged individuals may be threatened by potential status loss and are therefore prone towards wanting to maintain the status quo to enjoy their entitlement. This may particularly be the case when emphasis is placed on how privilege diminishes over time for men. Thus, while it may be good to educate and inform readers, if one wants to account for the consequences of exposing privilege, it is also

good to consider how this is phrased. Acknowledging privileges may be a good first step, but leaving the more privileged readers inspired to uplift their moral image by doing the 'right thing' may be more useful to create supporting action, compared to advocating for the clean-cut end of male privilege.

In conclusion, with the book *Entitled*, Kate Manne delivers an important reminder: although we may think that society has already evolved and we may be aware of privileges now more than ever before, there is still a lot of work to do. People may be quick to claim that at least some of the disadvantages women and minorities experience are real and unjust. But, then again, these same people may react just as strongly to the potential of seeing entitlement being stripped away. Kate Manne's book is a comprehensive and insightful summary of a diverse set of disadvantages that women still must face in a patriarchic society as a consequence of male entitlement. The key contribution of this book is to educate the average reader by systematically exposing well-documented information related to contemporary events and current research. It delivers at times a crude awakening but also a necessary one. Entitlement still creates sharp, devastating consequences for women, but it also creates subtle, long-lasting, unforeseen but equally detrimental ones.

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About the author

Elena Bacchini is a PhD candidate in social psychology at Utrecht University, researching majority group members' responses to social change.