

Francis Bracewell, Zahedul Islam, Florance Eburn

Professor Sabatino Mangini

ENG100

April 14, 2019

Masculinity Impact on American Boys for a Positive Society

The Mask You Live In is a documentary produced and directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsom that explores the negativities of masculinity within the American culture. Newsom's inspiration for the documentary originated from her getting pregnant with her son. She was quoted during an interview when she said, "It was really important to me that I could nurture a son who could be true to his authentic self, who wouldn't always feel like he had to prove his masculinity. There's so much loneliness, pain, and suffering when one is pretending to be someone that they're not." We imagine the mixed view this documentary had. Some saw it as gender bias against men and some saw it as the wrong view of masculinity by female. This research paper will traverse masculinity and redefine masculinity as it relates to how American parents raise their sons. Kimmel argues that we've constructed an idea of masculinity in the United States that doesn't give young boys a way to feel secure in their masculinity, so we make them go prove it at all time. According to Dr. Caroline, masculinity is not organic, it's reactive. It's not something that just develops. It's a rejection of everything that feminine. We believe that documentary definitions toward boys and their parents are harmful to society and has the propensity to initial violent among boys, we differ with the film on those issues. Parental attention and care as well as moral orientation will positively impact the lives of boys in America.

1. Parental Attention and Care

Attention means the time or effort that you are willing to give to help someone or something because you care about that person or thing (Cambridge dictionary).

There is usually a strong bond between parents and their children that attracts concern about the wellbeing of them, especially when they are boys and begin to play with peer groups, parents worry a lot. At that period, parents would start talking to the boys about boldness among their peers, that they should not allow anyone bully them or that they must not cry as boys because the society would see them as being weak. Unfortunately, some parents here in America due to busy schedule or other issues find it difficult to spend time with their boys or have personal discussions with them. Some parents are not aware of the pains the boys are facing, they feel that once their material needs are met that clears every other thing. The lack of attention by parents, usually lead boys to frustration, depression or series of troubles such as drugs, crime, suicide, murder just to mention a few.

The need for parental attention and care is one of the two factors for redefining masculinity. Giving listening ears or building friendly environment would definitely encourage the boys to open up whenever they are going through any challenges. Parents need to speak to the boys about masculinity rather than give a negative impression.

Referencing the film, *The Mask You Live In* in scene (18:13-20:04) “My father, we didn't really have a great relationship. His night job was drinking, he was an alcoholic. I was afraid of him. He was a mean man. He was emotionless, he didn't care about much. In his eyes, going to school wasn't the power behind what we should have been doing. It was get a good job, get a lot of women, and then you're a man. My mother was more of my striving force. She taught me that

education was important. So every year on Mother's Day, of course, I would send her a Mother's Day card, but also I would send her a card on Father's Day. And I would just thank her for playing both roles in my life. The moment I found out I was going to be a father was very scary for me. I was an undergrad, and my son's mother told me she was pregnant. And we were no longer together. And I told her if she wanted I would raise him. I would take care of him. My father didn't raise me, and this is very important for me to raise my son. It's been very hard to play both roles as a mother and father for Jacksen Because I was taught that men are tough, they're strong. I spent a lot of nights crying. Because he did have feelings and I had to, you know, take care of that. And then one day, it clicked, and it clicked because Jacksen said to me, "Daddy, I'm sensitive." And I was like, "Okay...okay." So then I just started like, I started reading a lot, you know, doing Google searches on how to be sensitive and stuff like that. I started just asking him how he felt, Like how do you feel, why are you sad, are you okay? He taught me how to be more in touch With my own emotions and his as well. He would cry sometimes, I would cry with him. And I would tell him, "Daddy wasn't allowed to cry growing up, but its okay, if you need to cry, cry." It took some time for me to get there.” Shows lack of parental care.

To buttress the point on parental attention and care, Sandi Schwartz, author of *Motherly*, made this statement in her article “Higher self-esteem, improved academic performance, better parent-child communication, and fewer physiological and behavior problems have been linked to this type of affection. On the other hand, children who do not have affection parents tend to have lower self-esteem and to feel more alienated, hostile, aggressive and antisocial.” This is obvious that giving attention to boys would definitely improve their lives in every facet.

Works Cited

“The Mask You Live In.” Directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsom. The Representation Project, 2015.

Kanopy. Web. 15 Apr. 2019. Accessed 17 April 2019.

"The Mask You Live In." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, Web. January 30, 2015,

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mask_You_Live_In. Accessed 15 April 2019.

Sandi Schwartz. “A Modern Lifestyle Brand Redefining Motherhood.”

www.mother.ly/child/how-a-parents-affection-shapes-a-childs-happiness-for-life.

Accessed 17 April 2019.