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English Composition

Social Media and Societal Brainwashing of Boys

Is society and social media influencing young boys and men to think they have to be masculine, or is masculinity a natural trait among boys? For years, boys have been growing up with social media and been influenced by society. With social media platforms like Youtube, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and text messaging, it has made it easy for boys to interact with, and influence one another whether it be beneficial or harmful to them. Social media brainwashes boys to grow up to be masculine by giving them the misconception that they have to hide their emotions.

In my experiences with social media it has made it difficult for boys to be themselves. There are many influences such as celebrities, comedians, important social figures and other kids putting information out on social media that soon will be seen or read by young kids. Youtube is a good example of how negative influential figures get their thoughts or points across the the wrong audience. Youtube doesn't censor material automatically, the user must go into settings to change the parental controls so this makes it very easy for boys and young kids in general to access whatever they want to access. Depression and sadness are often linked to the opinion of being weak or inferior which a lot of boys and men don't like to display. I think society has made masculinity a way for boys to feel good about themselves but it has also impacted their well being with the way they grow up and the circumstance they grow up in.

Another big issue among men is bodybuilding and the need to look better or more buff than every other guy around. Bodybuilding is a good example of men feeling like they have to be something better than they currently are. In an article written by the [Michigan State University School of Journalism](#), it explains how men that go to the gym, sometimes come out feeling like they didn't accomplish anything because they don't look different than when they went in. In some cases, men go to the gym every day to try to get bigger in size and bulk their muscle up. Social media makes it hard for men to stop where they are comfortable because with pictures and videos, there are no limits to what they can achieve. Society has a definition of perfection when it comes to men. If men didn't have social media to look up to for a goal, perhaps things would be different.

More often than not, boys grow up wanting to be a masculine strong leader or role model such as a musician, law enforcement officer, boxer, football player, etc. It isn't very often people hear of a boy wanting to grow up to be a dancer, pastry chef, nurse, or fashion designer because through society's eyes, these activities are not masculine enough for boys. Social media depicts a strong negative opinion on boys that grow up to be someone other than what they want out of boys.

My reasons for thinking masculinity is a label that society has created is because there are a lot of boys that grow up to be successful men that are not what society or social media would consider masculine. Masculinity is only tossed around when people don't feel like they are in control of boys and how they grow up. Gender identity is often mistaken with sex. No matter what sex you are you can still associate yourself with another gender meaning both boys and girls can be masculine or feminine.

Some people may say that testosterone in men is linked with masculinity and if you are not masculine you don't have testosterone. In an article written by [Stanford News](#), it states "new research suggests that this behavior may have something to do with how much testosterone a man has." When boys grow up to think they are supposed to go to war, own a big car, be strong and "macho" they strive to have those traits when they are grown up. Some men who don't think they are masculine enough have to compensate and make up for the "lost masculinity" so it seems as if they are acting even more tough than usual. "In a study of 54 men, researchers tested them on how feminine or masculine they were." Testosterone levels were measured before and after the study. The men with more testosterone before the test, resulted in more of a masculine outcome and assertiveness in their answers. "Masculine overcompensation in men appears to be driven by men with moderate to high testosterone levels."

There are many problems with society wanting to shape the boy's futures and i feel like there is a lot of time that is wasted on the boys wanting to be masculine than actually being successful. There are a lot of opportunities for boys to not go on social media and try to apply themselves to their futures and focus on their ability to perform. Social media is dangerous and if boys are affected by their peers or posts online when they are young, then when they grow up they will be a part of society that shapes the younger generations of boys to think differently than what they are naturally wired to think.

In conclusion i think society and social media has led to the aggressive behavior and assertiveness we see in the world today. Hatred and violence is not necessary for

boys to grow up feeling and it is not natural. The negative influences need to stop soon or else there will be a lot more problems in the upcoming generations. Willpower is going to be a trait boys are going to have to learn to gain in order for them to become who they want to be.

Sources

Stanford News:

<https://news.stanford.edu/news/2013/april/masculine-testosterone-response-041613.html>

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<https://news.jrn.msu.edu/2017/12/male-body-image-pressure-increases-with-influence-from-social-media/>