Gender Stereotypes In Social Media

Social media and society negatively affect gender roles and enables stereotypical gender behaviour freely. Messages like don't feel, don't talk about your problems, never cry, be badass, treat women like dirt, actually prevent boys from growing up to be healthy, responsible men. I plan on discussing how serious and wrong gender role stereotyping is as it’s some of the motives that cause prejudice and injustice in society. I want to showcase the effects of these messages that being tough and aggressive are making men suffer in silence. When people tell someone to 'be a man' they usually say it so the boy will stop showing any kind of emotion other than anger which is the problem. It sends the message that showing emotions isn't a 'feminine' thing, it's a human thing. You shouldn't tell someone to stop showing emotion because they aren't being 'man enough'. The focus of this research will be on how males stay true to their masculinity and how the roles of each gender can possibly be more harmful than good in due time. I want to figure out the many ways to encourage men on examining themselves and if they just want to fit the characteristics for their gender rather than stray away from social norms; that it’s okay to teach them how their gender roles may affect themselves and the perception of themselves in society.

There's a reason most boys like cars, sports and playing rough, it's called testosterone. In the article, “The Gender Blur” by Deborah Blum, she describes that behaviours testosterone influences are “rowdy play, sex drive, competitiveness, and an in-your-face attitude. Males tend to have a higher baseline of testosterone” (476). Testosterone makes boys hard-wired for being rougher and estrogen makes girls hard-wired for being caretakers. Blum argues Biology does influence behaviour, essentially male aggressiveness. Though there is no uncertainty that society influences behaviour as well, Blum goes on to explain that girls and boys start to realize which gender they should engage with and what kind of practices they should partake in later in life. The differences would then become greater as time goes on, however, to simply remove ‘nature’ out of the developmental process, or Biology, as Aaron Devor does in his article “Gender Role Behaviors and Attitudes”, would be a mistake. Devor claims that male and female behaviours are the result of socially guided directions that influence us to assume that all females want to have children and are consequently reliant on men for assistance and stability. He also tells us to believe that all males are innately aggressive and ambitious and will rule over females. While I agree that society does inadvertently preach these messages, I feel that it rests on society’s hand in order to change this perception. I don’t necessarily agree with Devor’s that everyone believes that women and weak and men are strong. I think that while everyone may grow up believing these messages, it’s up to the individual to realize the truth: that everyone is equal.

There is however a spectrum. Not with girls on one end and boys on the other, but a spectrum of girls and a spectrum of boys. Hence some girls are more girly and some more tomboyish and some boys are rougher and some sweeter. It's a male spectrum and a female spectrum. Not one spectrum with girls at one end and boys at the other. Humans who have more testosterone are drawn to rougher more adrenaline based activities and humans with more estrogen are more drawn to care for others being nurturing. Both boys/men and girls/women need a little of both testosterone and estrogen because both at times will need to be both nurturing and tough. There are times when a man or woman may need to lend a shoulder or an ear to a coworker

who just lost their spouse or need to fend off an attacker walking down the street, etc. A boy or girl may need to defend someone being bullied or support a friend who scraped their knee. Men are naturally stronger than women. Yes, a woman can work out and be super strong. But men are naturally more strong. They also naturally talk less than women because of certain stigmas already instilled in them while growing up. Of course, not all men and women will have exactly all of the typical characteristics but some people in society are now having such a hard time grasping this very simple, well known, harmless truth is absolutely beyond comprehension. Kids naturally gravitate toward whatever more hormones they have is naturally more interested in and there's nothing wrong with it either. So it's all fair and people really shouldn't be so confused and trying so hard to change reality. It doesn't need fixing. The perception is what needs fixing.

In the article, “Subjectivity, Difference, And Commonalities In The Context of Gender in The Caribbean”, by C. Jama Adams she talks about the regions of subjectivity, inequality, and similarities in the context of gender have been historically dismissed from a research viewpoint in the Caribbean. That the main cause for this is the traditional rejection of the humanity of most of the oppressed communities in the region and lack of safe and resourceful places in which to examine these problems. She states that these regions haven’t been entirely disregarded however, the Caribbean artistic group has been productive in its criticism on these matters in a mixture of factors; it is in the area of educational theorizing that one recognizes a lack of analytic research. The constraints reflect the institutional methods that strive to subdue forms of thinking and acting that could be seen as a test to the authoritative groups who have exercised jurisdiction in the Caribbean. She explored some defining points of subjectivity and compared it to differences and similarities within the meaning of socioeconomic structures. Applying the focus of gender in the Caribbean, the expression of prejudiced differences were examined. Lastly, she used a psychoanalytic structure of evidence that implied forms of reasoning that authorize the Caribbeans to build a standard to understand the differences and similarities around gender in a way that does not divide them. One of the main ideas to combat this was to avoid the risk to control the service of culture, while unconsciously disguising the differences within the similarities. Another idea would be to hide the similarities, in the cooperation of a return to an attempt to create mutually exclusive genders, a denial of the similarities that are the basis of both our shared humanity.

This article sort of correlates with “The Gender Blur” as the Caribbean boys raised as “conditional girls”. Blum wrote about the boys in the Caribbean who possess a genetic defect that causes their penises to look similar to a vagina until adolescence. She explains how mountain villages in the Caribbean treat this until their transition from girl to boy. The transition in the villages in the Caribbean is continuous, unlike the immediate change in other societies where the boys are administered as girls until a doctor realizes that their vaginas do not begin to menstruate because they are penises. I realize that this sensitivity and aid level is lacking in American culture since there is no extensive experience of this genetic defect here in America as opposed to the Caribbean.

In the article, “Blurring Gender Lines in Readers' Advisory for Young Adults” by Beth Brendler and Laurel Tarulli, they both explore the shift in reading habits among girls and boys, showing many examples of modern, popular fiction to present examples of books that cross gender lines. Brendler draws on her past activity as a practising librarian and head of the youth services department at a public library in Wisconsin. She realizes that we will continue to see males and females that support the gendered reading model; however, if we pay attention, we will begin to notice all the changes within genders. They found evidence that showed some boys, in fact, do

like fiction and realistic stories about relationships. The high demand for post-apocalyptic fiction is a contradiction of the notion that most girls do not like action, conflict, or science fiction. They came to the realization that more we promote the notion of “boy books” or “girl books,” the more we maintain a gender binary. We need to talk with each student about their interests and help connect them with a book that fits them perfectly. Whether that is a story full of action and adventure, a book about an alien family, or a book filled with dragons, none of these choices should be limited by whether a child is a boy or a girl. It is a choice solely based on what feeds the individual’s imagination and encourages them to dig deeper.

Men who understand their assigned gendered roles would presumably gain a greater amount of societal acceptance, female attention as well as female admirers, and less dismissal from other men. Men who have their hair a certain colour or style and wear tight apparel are only accepted up to a certain point it seems before their masculinity begins to get questioned. For example, a boy who dresses in skinny jeans with a bright colour t-shirt or accessories would be more likely to get picked on and his sexuality would be suspected, in a derogatory way. This persuades men into displaying a façade that shields their real identity when all he wanted to do is express himself whether it having to be about his sexuality or not. It is evident why a man would want to fit masculine ideals when viewed from this perspective. One look at Disney channel or Nickelodeon shows how the youth is supposed to act within each gender Commercials advertise toys in extremely gendered manners. Commercials starring men tend to advertise things like action figures, hot wheels, tech decks and they also show how boys are supposed to be rugged with items and other people. Society displays different items for men and women as well, through magazines, advertisements, and what actors portray on shows and movies. There is a distinct divide in the media between how women and men are thought to look and behave.

Men and women are very different and those “stereotypes” are somewhat true but also happened that way because of men and women’s differences. Gender stereotyping is immoral but both genders often have a preference for certain jobs due to our constructional society. For example, do you ever see and female plumbers and male maids? No, because females aren’t supposed to be doing that kind of “dirty work”. We gravitate towards hobbies and jobs that we are better designed to do which is why social media now plays a substantial role in creating social norms because various forms of it are present almost everywhere in our modern society. Gender roles exist in our society only because society as a mass determines if it’s allowed but they are maintained by the various forms of media. We as the viewers must be conscious of what the media is bestowing upon us, and be certain we’re not partaking in a culture of constraint.

Although the media isn’t yet representing either gender void of stereotypes, a societal change will bring about a change in the media. Regardless of this, gender roles are just that, roles. It is up to the individual to decide whether or not they are going to fill them. This may be hard for each gender missing a mother or father. For instance, a woman who has only had their father in or involved in their life will probably begin to question their gender identity at some point due to being influenced by male tendencies throughout their life and vice versa with males with a mother. The best advice that can be given is to make sure, above all else, that you are fulfilling a role you want to be fulfilling, regardless of where it fits in society’s set of theoretical constructs.