



Boys Will Be Boys: Breaking the Link Between Masculinity and Violence

By Myriam Miedzian



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In this book, Miedzian provides a thorough investigation of the numerous factors influencing aggression and violence in American males. In addition, she also provides descriptions and proposals for interventions, social action, and solutions to break the link between masculinity and violence. The book is separated into three major parts: 1) The Problem: The acceptance of violence as a way of life; 2) Toward a Solution: Raising sons for the twenty-first century; 3) Conclusions: Beyond the masculine mystique.

Throughout the book Miedzian emphasizes that because males have a high potential for aggression and violence, every effort should be made to encourage and model for males those qualities that are counter to violence. She illustrates the large extent to which our culture currently (and historically) encourages qualities and values that increase a male's propensity for violence. (From a review of the book by Lori A. Cillo)

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Miedzian's provocative report, which is stronger in its diagnoses than its prescriptions, contends that a 'masculine mystique' contributes to domestic, criminal and international violence.

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From Library Journal

Why do some boys become violent men? Miedzian's research indicts absent fathers and the "culture of violence" that promotes war toys, violent films and music, brutal sports, and bigotry. Includes tested school programs for changing the "male mind-set."

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From Kirkus Reviews

Here, Miedzian (scholar-in-residence at the Center for American Cultural Studies at Columbia Univ.) presents an exhaustively researched analysis of the inflammatory effects of contemporary American culture on what, she argues, is man's innate predisposition toward violence. Miedzian's position is radical: Nothing short of toppling the male mystique will save us in this nuclear age. As she defines it, that mystique is tough, without empathy, equating action and adventure with bloodshed and destruction, hypercompetitive, woman-scorning, and frequently xenophobic and racist. She addresses all the usual objections--mainly that that's just the way men are, and that trying to change them will create rampant homosexuality, take the piquancy out of male/female relationships, deny men expression of their natural attraction to risk and excitement, create a nation of wimps, and put us at risk for international aggression--and refutes them convincingly. Some of her suggestions for change may strike readers as extreme: abolishing football and boxing, for instance, or denying children access to any TV other than programs on a to-be-created children's public TV network, or all but prohibiting the rental or sale of heavy-metal and rap music and videos to kids. But other proposals seem unarguable: Give boys early and ongoing education in parenting and family life. Instruct boys in nonviolent conflict mediation. Encourage fathers to take a more active role in parenting. Raise people's awareness by any means possible of how pervasive, false, and dangerous is the media's glorification of violence. Covers the same territory as Deborah Prothrow-Stith & Michael Weissman's *Deadly Consequences* (reviewed below) but with much greater depth and scope. Sure to be controversial, this is a major contribution to contemporary thought. -- *Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

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