



NCUR 2021 Proceedings

So Fine a Set of Men: The Influence of Race Relations Between Civil War Soldiers and the Shift in Perspective

History - Time: Tue 3:30pm-4:30pm - Session Number: 5156

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Matthew Feiler

It took centuries for African Americans to gain the same rights as Caucasians, and for many African Americans, serving in the United States' military was their only option to gain freedom and rights. This research aims to present the relationships blacks had with white soldiers in the Union army, and the shift in perspective white soldiers had towards blacks as the Civil War progressed. To present this shift in sentiment, as well as, the motivations of black soldiers, primary documents in the form of letters were used, and a number of secondary sources from experts in the field of the Civil War. Lincoln's public speeches are presented alongside these primary and secondary sources as a mirror of public sentiment at the time, most importantly, the soldiers themselves. Using these sources, a shift in treatment was shown (for a majority of white soldiers), shifting from treating black soldiers essentially like slaves to giving them respect for the valiance they continuously showed in battle. What separates this research from others, however, is the analysis of black soldiers, and their motivations for fighting and how it correlated with the shift in perspective for white soldiers. Through the efforts of particular black regiments, black soldiers were able to prove themselves militarily and began shifting the perspectives of the white soldiers and officers they served under. This shift, presented by a variety of primary and secondary sources, proved to be beneficial in black soldiers in their efforts to claim equality.

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Toxic Masculinity's Origins and Modern Cinema

Interdisciplinary Studies - Time: Mon 3:00pm-4:00pm - Session Number: 230

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Emma Reed

First appearing in the 1990s, the term “toxic masculinity” refers to degrading behavior men inflict on the opposite sex. Men who reflect toxic masculinity show traits of stoicism, toughness, and a lack of emotional sensitivity. Research has shown that men will result to violence when these values and traits are threatened or criticised. According to the American Psychology Association, in 2017, “1,686 murders included female victims and male perpetrators and 93% of the victims were murdered by men they knew.” Given these statistics, toxic masculinity has become the traditional norm for how boys and men are expected to behave. The effects of toxic masculinity have caused women to fear men on the streets, in relationships, and in a working environment. In recent years, the discussion of toxic masculinity and violence has increased in volume and many psychologists are debating the causes and origins for such toxic behavior. I found that the introduction to gender roles at an early age begins the development; parental influence and impression on traditional gender roles are primary sources for toxic masculinity. However, while parental influence may develop toxic behavior, the entertainment industry has reinforced toxic masculinity, promoting the “boys will be boys” mentality and romanticization of abusive dominance. Characters such as Han Solo from *Star Wars*, Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and Edward Cullen from *Twilight Saga* reflect morally questionable behavior in such a way that these traits are deemed appealing and desirous rather than dangerous and abusive. My research also yielded findings which show the “snowball effect” of how these characters influence the highly impressionable male audience. The characters’ negative behaviors are replicated by men, which then perpetuates negative gender stereotypes of dominant males and subordinate females.

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