Masculinity in Gran Torino

A presentation by Neslihan Demirtas
Structure

- What is Masculinity?
- Behaviors/attitudes
- Toxic Masculinity
- The Man Box
- Masculinity in Gran Torino - Thao
- Evolution of Thao's masculinity
- Question of discussion
- Masculinity in Gran Torino – Walt
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- Conclusion
- Any questions left?
- Sources
What is Masculinity?

• social construct
• behaviors, attitudes, roles and culture associated with men
Behaviors/attitudes

- feelings are suppressed or not shown
- violence as a means of solving problems
- aggressive and dominant appearance
- "right" to sexual aggression, assault, crossing borders
- excessive competitive thinking
- claim to have everything under control
- claim to have to do everything alone
- defense against avoidable "feminine" characteristics as weaknesses
Toxic Masculinity

- glorifies negative masculine aspects
- harmful to men and society in general
- “everyone identifying as male has to be masculine like that, otherwise they aren't a man”
- not all men are generally toxic
THE
MAN
BOX

Do not cry openly or express emotion (except anger)
Do not express weakness or fear
Demonstrate power and control (especially over women)
Aggression - Dominance
Protector
Do not be ‘like a woman’
Heterosexual
Do not be ‘like a gay man’
Tough/Athletic/Strength/Courage
Makes decisions - does not need help
Views women as property/objects
Masculinity in Gran Torino
- Thao

• is not the stereotype
• his masculinity gets questioned by his family
• cannot stand up for himself
• then gets taught how to be a man by Walt
Evolution of Thao's masculinity

- gets taught by Walt how to be a man
- more confident
- enriches his life
- gets the Gran Torino for his date/after Walt’s death
  → grows into healthy manhood
Question of discussion

- Does Walt fit into the man box?

THE MAN BOX

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- Do not express weakness or fear
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- Tough/Athletic/Strength/Courage
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Masculinity in Gran Torino - Walt

- never targets women with violence or views them as less
- teaches Thao how to be a man
- influenced language, talks "masculine"
- priest wants him to show emotions (doesn’t want to)
- isn’t proud of serving his country → strapped down emotions
- ignores his disease → acts like a man
Evolution of Walt's masculinity

- goes out of his comfort zone
- gains happiness through friendships and showing emotions (+father role)
- leaves Thao the car as symbol of trust/friendship between men

→ grows into healthy manhood
Conclusion

• Walt and Thao grow together from different parts of the spectrum
• healthy manhood is a key to (more) happiness
• friendships and emotions are important
Any questions left?
Sources

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