



Analysing American Advice Books for Single Mothers Raising Sons

Essentialism, Culture and Guilt

By Berit Åström

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Analyses the normative pressures placed on single mothers raising sons in contemporary parenting literature and how traditional ideas of masculinity and femininity are used to undermine the mothers.

This intersectional study analyses the normative pressures placed on single mothers raising sons in contemporary parenting literature and how traditional ideas of masculinity and femininity are used to undermine the mothers. The study further connects the advice books to a cultural backlash against ideas of 'involved fatherhood' and 'caring masculinity'.

Readership

Gender scholars, cultural studies scholars, graduate students, undergraduate students.

Key selling points

- Provides a comprehensive analysis of normative attitudes towards parenting
- Shows how traditional ideas of masculinity and femininity are used to undermine the mothers
- Analyses the way in which the books draw on mother-blame language, misconceptions of neuropsychological research and traditional conceptualisations of masculinity and femininity to convince the mother readers that they are unable to raise a son to be a man
- Shows how class and ethnicity interact with traditional assumptions of gender and biology to produce a genre of literature that is quite restrictive.

Contents

Introduction: Childcare and Advice in Times of Change; Gender: Borderwork, Science and the Dangerous Mother; Class and Race: Expectations of Mothers and Sons; Reinstating the Father: Fathers in Advice Books for Mothers; Conclusion; Appendix; Notes; Bibliography; Index

About the Author(s) / Editor(s)

Dr Berit Åström is an associate professor at the Department of Language Studies, Umeå University, Sweden. Her main research field is motherhood studies.

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