Bowling For Columbine: English Documentary Analysis

Bowling for Columbine, written, produced and directed by Michael Moore as he shoots his shot at the democratic labour party of guns galore. Only to reveal the underpinning relationship between gun violence and the mass masculinity within his documentary.

Written in 2002, Michael Moore discusses the boundaries of gun laws in America and the violence the media has portrayed upon America's innocents. The assumed relationship with the political gun parties and terrorist has always been a controversial topic around the globe within America with its somewhat "slack" gun laws. The connections of guns and mental illness have been a dominate discussion upon the shooting society that has now become commonplace within America.

Too often, too many questions travel unasked and it is promptly assumed that the clarity of one's gender during a shooting is always identified. But why is the gender of a shooter always assumed to be male? And more importantly, why are females never associated with mass shootings in American civilisation? As depicted by Michael Moore's documentary, Bowling for Columbine, Michael dives into the falling society of Americas gun control to understand and resurface any mistaken claims to rebuild an already broken society that fell fifteen years after this controversial topic.

Although it can be easy to distinguish the relationship between the male gender and the abusive attitudes towards weapons, Moore decides to dig deeper into the stereotypes portraying the forms of American shooters. In protesting society and the violent culture of Americans, Moore investigates the circumstances of the 1999 Columbine High School Massacre.

Later, Moore declares the shortcomings of his detailed documentary as he later stated:

"The one thing I left out in the film and really didn't think of it until it was premiered, is girls don't do this, it's all-boys… Generally, men commit most of the gun murders - Adult men and teenaged boys. Why don't women shoot other human beings?" (Moore, 2016)

All though Moore declared such a realistic statement, it was over 14 years ago of the first production launch. Why couldn't Moore discuss more upon the issues against stereotyping men and including the women as recent publishes around the world have been noticing women performing shootings and other forms of attack. But, the audience can notice Moore subconsciously placing and constructing the stereotypes of males towards gun violence further into the documentary. From the years of 2000 to 2013 found only 6 women out of 160 shootings or 3.8% of shootings have been perpetrated by women. Therefore, dominant notions of race, religion and or mental health are to be included instead of immediately assuming one's gender.

The accessibility of firearms and ammunition in America almost seems excessive as a bank offers a free gun once a bank account is opened and one can pay for a haircut at the barbers and purchase ammunition mid-way a haircut. This absurd accessibility should speak for itself. But, Moore excitingly performs the natural traditions of purchasing a rifle that has been cemented into American culture.

Moore includes a vintage and historical advertisement featuring the Sound-O-Power toy rifle. This symbolises the crude gun culture for children entrenched into the civilisation of a young children's toy. As proposed in the commercial as "looking and sounding, just like a real gun" and as recent studies have shown is that 82% of young boys prefer a form of "aggressive" or "violent toy". It can be noted an almost peer pressure on young boys to pursue weapons to demonstrate a "manly" figure and pressure the gender at a young age.

The tone of Moore's voice is uncritical as he eliminates the 'us versus them' mentality as he includes historic footage of himself as a child with "his first gun". Michael could have easily included this mentality to create a pro and con list of firearm users. Juxtaposing tranquil images of children roaming the streets with his own voiceover, Michael relaxingly recalls the excitement of owning his first toy gun: "This was my first gun, and I couldn't wait to go outside and shoot up the neighbourhood". Moore only passes this quote with insensible humour to amuse the audience.

But these childhood behaviours and memories can result in dangerous climaxes against the masculinity of the male gender, as men are now felt to be obligatory to protecting and providing for their country and the ones they truly love. As due to the ownership of a rifle being recognised in America with ease, there is automatic mandatory tradition to follow but there is an act of responsibility that men must follow and fulfil. Moore performed an interview with a group called the "Michigan Militia", and they conform with the notions of dominant masculinity and the stereotypes of protecting and providing.

As Moore declines all discourse of mass shootings as a convention of terrorists, racists and extremists, Frank, a member of Michigan Militia, tells the truth of the real perpetrators of gun violence:

"we're just concerned civilians; we have a desire to fulfil responsibilities and duties as Americans".

A misguided conception that guns are for the safety of civilians has been promptly disproved. This is due to studies and the high connection and relationships between guns and crime rates. As due to the misconnected relationship, America holds the largest stockpile of weapons on the planet as a relationship to masculinity and pride.

During the documentary, woman are marginalised as just mothers and defenceless victims. Moore proceeds his documentary with a happy vibe as joyful music is played in the background over videos of Violence upon American streets and other brutality. In editing sequences, Moore cuts to a housewife who she believes that guns are safe and 'children should be raised in gun loving American streets'.

Guns can never be safe, even in a controlled environment, incidents will inevitably occur. As due to the uncertainty and unpredictability of shootings, American citizens should fear their lives instead to pretend that there are inherently safe. It has been studied upon that men tend to relieve all feelings through physical attributes instead of emotional support. Mental health is major in today's world and men suffer drastically from this issue. This tends males to hold all internal hatred and will often transform into physical destruction and can be confirmed that male mental health is just like a ticking time bomb. But the blame can easily be placed upon the ease of accessibilities of guns.

Critics of the twenty-first century continue to critique Moore’s effectiveness of Bowling for Columbine. To view the documentary, one would need to see through the gender gap as this proposes a rich insight into American gun violence. Michael saw the over presented documentary as only male involvement which studies have shown to prove is true, but society purges men on active shootings around America.

The male face of masculinity is evidently linked to firearms and weapons as been represented through the entirety of Bowling for Columbine. Although, Moore never intended a specific metaphor, but the American audience should open their eyes of the gender stereotypes that grow within America’s gun violence. There is no more ‘guns kill people’- people kill people and to be more specific…. males kill people.