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Extra Credit Paper: The Great Santini
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The Great Santini

Concepts used within this movie:

Artifacts:

What it means to me: The term of artifacts means the “stuff” we have acquired that describe and influence who we are. When we are growing up, children learn about artifacts based on whether they are of male or female sex. With girls, parents tend to give them gifts relating to housework, dolls, dress-up clothes. Among the colors for girls are pink, pastels, and light colors. With boys, parents tend to give boys sports-related gifts, basketball, games, rough housing games. In this movie, there are a number of instances where Santini tells his oldest son that he wants him to follow in dad’s footsteps. For his 18th birthday, Santini gives his son his World War II bomber jacket, which he wakes his son up at 3am to give. He had saved the jacket since the son was born. Not once did he tell his son that he was proud of him for what he has done, just telling him, with the jacket, that he should be a rough and tumbled military man, and the jacket helps.

Language Evaluates Gender:

What it means to me: These are the terms and phrases that others describe us as individuals. In this movie, after they are at the new home one night, Santini wakes up the kids early the next morning. His youngest son sleeps in only his underwear. He shouts to everyone, “The homo is sleeping naked.” This is a sign of describing his son based on how he is dressed. He then has a basketball match with is oldest son. After the son wins the match, Santini can’t stand losing. So, he follows his son up the stairs, continually beating the ball at the son’s head and shouting how the son should cry because he is a cry-

baby. Once up to the top of the stairs, the son really wants to cry, but because of his dad, sucks the feelings in and yells back at his dad.

Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique: the problem that has no name:

What it means to me: During the 1960's and 1970's, women had an issue with their family life. They were unhappy with their lives, in that they were demeaned. But, they were also unhappy because they didn't just want to be at home, looking at the kids and cleaning the house. During the movie, you can find a number of instances where the mom is dealing with this problem. At the base, she smokes. This helped the women of that time deal with something other than home life. Santini was shown in the movie to be mentally and physically abusive of his wife. When the oldest son won the basketball game, Santini decided he wanted to change the game. The wife and mom stepped in to defy Santini by saying that he couldn't change the rules of the game because the son won. Santini yelled at his wife, telling her if she didn't get in the house, he would kick her butt. He also had an instance where he was beating his wife, and the kids came in and broke up the fight. She has internalized what he has said and done, making her feel inferior. The night after the game, she tells her son that Santini has never hit her, even though he has continually yelled at her. All throughout the movie, you see where she has taken the back seat when it comes to caring for herself. She is always seen as taking care of herself last and everyone else first. That night after the game, she talks with her son about why Santini does what he does. In the end, she is trying to console her son and asks him if he is hungry by offering to make him something to eat.

Monitoring: This is when others talk about us, and we change the way we act based on what is said about us. When we monitor what is said about us, it is an internal thought process. But, the result of that monitoring can be a change in how we act and talk based on this feedback about us. If someone tells me that I am fat, I may internalize it by saying to myself that I have gained weight recently. I should work on losing some weight. In that, I may eat less based on the comments. This entire movie is about

the monitoring each character is doing based on what others say of them, specifically of what Santini says to each of his children and wife. Santini thinks his oldest son is a baby. He ignores his oldest daughter because she is not a boy. He calls his youngest son a homo, and there's not much interaction between Santini and his youngest daughter. The wife is trying to keep all of the issues within the family. She doesn't want anyone to know what problems they have as a family. When Santini has the fight with his wife, where the children take him off of mom, he takes off, drunk. Mom tells the oldest son that he needs to find his dad. In reality, she doesn't want anyone knowing the problems they are having. "Keep it in the family."

Implications of the movie: The movie sends specific implications about males, females, and families in general during the 1960s. It also shows how these people interact in a military environment. It shows the GIs in stereotypic roles, tough military men, who are always out drinking every night. They are equally as tough on their families, by treating the families as their work associates. Santini was shown as a mean bastard to his family, making fun of his boys, but ignoring his girls. In the end, he couldn't distinguish between his work life and his home life. He was also shown as a alcoholic. His oldest son, in the end, could be seen taking directly after his father because of the life-long internalization of his brow-beating and demeaning words. It is very possible that his son would become his father completely, treating his wife-to-come exactly how his mother was treated.