Normalization Of Rape Culture Via Pop Culture In The US

Trends usually define what our popular culture is in America. Pop culture reflects and describes what our society consist of such as, to what people wear, their lifestyle, music, art, and etc… Although many great things can come out of it, it can also be damaging. It has allowed for the desensitizing and normalization of rape culture. According to the Lexico dictionary it defines rape culture as, “A society or environment whose prevailing social attitudes have the effect of normalizing or trivializing sexual assault and abuse”. Nowadays younger children are being predispose to sexual assault through movies, music videos, magazine ads, and any other type of media. And as a result, these exposures lead to negative consequences being perpetuated due to the media's strong influence. Even though pop culture has such a mainstream impact, people still don’t know much about how rape culture can negatively influence the mind and or attitude of young people towards woman or victims affected by rape culture.

One example of rape culture being perpetuated in pop culture is through music videos. Music videos are a prominent place in society. There are a lot of music videos that contribute to that negative affect. One example of that is in the music video “Animals” by Maroon Five. The whole video portrays Adam Levine stalking a young beautiful woman who happen to come in at a deli shop he was working at. The video takes a dark and eerie turn when his stalking becomes extreme as he begins to follow the woman everywhere, she goes, and it goes as far that it eventually leads him to make a whole room full of pictures of that same woman that he had taken. At the end of the video the woman and her lover being are showered with a red dye which symbolizes that Adam Levine had killed them both. The visual elements support the lyrics since they both take on a horrific concept. In the lyrics provided by Songfacts it mentions “ Baby I'm preying on you tonight/Hunt you down eat you alive/Just like animals” and “ Maybe you think that you can hide/I can smell your scent for miles” and “You can pretend it's meant to be/ But you can't stay away from me” (Songfacts). Take on the same eerie tone in the video. Some people may view this as disturbing while others will jump on its defense saying that there's nothing wrong with it because Levine’s wife is playing the beautiful woman. As ABC News points out in their article, “Maroon 5's Video for 'Animals' Sparks Outrage Over Depiction of Stalking”some poster wrote, “If the girl is hugging and kissing the guy back, doesn't look like rape in my book,” ...“People need to calm down. It's not a bad song or video... Its Maroon 5's video to with it what they wish. Plus, it's his wife. His wife, people!!” (ABC News). This comes to show how normalized society has become that people will defend stalking as acceptable becomes someone’s wife is playing the role and it doesn’t mean anything as abc news points out. This is one of many problems that arises in rape culture as some people are too in-denial of the harm it can lead. Other notorious music videos are Robin Thicke’s song “Blurred Lines” and “U.O.E.N.O” by Rick Ross. Catchy as the song can be, they take on a dangerous articulations of rape culture that show woman as nothing more as a sex object who are powerless in the presence of a man.

Another example of how pop culture perpetuates rape culture is through advertisement. Advertisements are the biggest contributor to the depiction of females being highly sexualized. Women are often unclothed or positioned in a seductive or suggestive manner. Even if the magazines are advertising for cars, clothing, and perfumes/colognes women are always the main focus of the ad and it's usually in a sexual nature. Brands like American Apparel, Rolling

Stone, Dolce & Gabbana, and Levis, advertise woman to appeal the sexual desire and fantasy that men have. One example that shows that is in the Dolce & Gabbana ad where a female model is dressed provocatively on the floor while one man is holding her down in a submissive position while, three other guys are standing nearby watching the guy hold down the female with having no ill intentions of helping the female. In Esther Walman article in “How advertising promotes rape culture” the article mentions the same Dolce & Gabbanna ad. She points out that the ads tell us that,

“If you are dressed in any way deemed sexy, then you will be raped. Which leads to the statement, “She was asking for it”. Walman also stated that, “When we make ads like these, we are bound to start becoming immune to the idea of rape it becomes an extraneous part of life” (Walman).

And as result society doesn’t take rape as a serious crime or threat because society is constantly throwing this toxicity of images of rape or the idea of sexual assault as nothing more as a joke or no big deal. This idea of society viewing rape culture as not a being deal brings on real life consequences in which sadly views the victims are the ones being blame for rather than the person who actually committed the crimes.

This notion of victim blaming makes it harder for the victims to report any type of assault they have experienced because of what society has embedded the mind to ask the victims if they were the ones who were provoking it. Tv shows such as Tosh.O make jokes out of it and ridicule it rather than taking it as something serious. Sexual assaults are frequently the most underreported crime because of the fear's victim are faced by the public that stigmatizes them or get outcasted by society rather than getting help. During the whole accusation of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh in 2018 of his attempted rape to a former classmate Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, President Trump made it very clear that Dr. Christine Blasey Ford was only accusing him because she wanted to ruin Kavanaugh nomination because the incident happened thirty-seven years ago. Trump went on twitter to defend Kavanaugh and it sparked the hashtag whyIdidntreport was trending. Vice made an article based on Presidents Trump tweets, in the article written by Leila Ettachfini, she wrote the reasons why victims don't report is because, “...victims of sexual assault echoed one another’s fears of facing stigma, victim-blaming, and re-traumatization as key reasons victims choose not to go to authorities after being assaulted” (Ettachfini). And it goes to say these assaults are due to the exposure of women being objectified in pop culture for so long it has created a vicious cycle that victims deal with. Ettachfini also shared Sydney Leathers tweeted about her own trauma that had happened to her when she was younger. That she was only in middle school and the guy was in high school when it had happened to her and she was afraid no one would believe her. Even though the whole Kavanaugh hearing was highly publicized in the aftermath the Judiciary Committee concluded there wasn't enough evidence to accuse Kavanaugh and he was confirmed as a senate. Rape culture has made it difficult for people to report their assualts because of the whole stigma that goes around with sexual violence or abuse that pop culture has been promoting as “normal”.

Other real-life consequences that are produce because of the normalization of sexual abuse or assaults are the alarming reports of rape or sexual assaults being committed. Predators think that they can do anything these please towards women since they will most likely blame pop culture for it. It's seen so often that their brainwashed and wired to think that they are able to recreate their fantasy as it is portrayed in the media. Crimes like these are now happening in

apps of everyday use such as Uber and Lyft. As of 2019 “Uber received 235 reports of a rape occurring during a ride in the United States last year — an average of four a week” according to NBC News writers Conor Ferguson, Stephanie Gosk and Rich Schapiro post on “Uber reveals extent of sexual assault problem: thousands of abuses report a year”. They reported that Uber has received 5,981 reports of sexual abuse between 2017 and 2018. Uber has made their extensive report public to the viewers. Four victims went on to the Today show to share their stories and the encounters of it. Addison Hoover one of the women recalled that she called an uber to take her back to her sister apartment in Los Angeles in March of 2018 but instead of driving her to her destination the driver took her to his home by forced and raped her, “I was so humiliated and felt like that I was in the wrong,'...'And then a few hours later, I tried to take my own life over this because I was so disgusted.' said Hoover on “Today” show with Megyn Kelly. Another woman who also went on the show to speak up was Stephanie Nam, of Brooklyn, N.Y, said that in 2017 her Uber driver jumped in the back of the car with her and tried to assault her but luckily Nam was able to get out freely. After several months after her assault, as she tried to get an uber she found out that her attacker was still working for the company. After these brave women shared the story Uber had declined to comment on these incidents and gave no details whether or not these attackers were still working with them. As in most cases the attackers in these situations don’t get the punishment they deserve but rather out free as in the case with Stephanie Nam and Alison Hoover attackers. This is why more violence assaults are on the rise since it's easier for the predators to do it without any consequences. If the president can get away with objectifying women and then defending himself by saying its “locker” talk, what does this example set and this say about how our society views rape culture.

All in all, the normalization of rape culture has allowed sexual violence to be seen nothing more as victim blaming and making society feel very numb towards this situation. Pop culture exposure of rape culture has had a mainstream impact as its seen everywhere such as on tv, advertisements, billboards, social media, and etc.., as a result it has led to extremely negative consequence. As long as the media keeps bombarding ill images of women, only for the pleasure of men this notion of “No” means “no” loses it meaning because predators think that victim don't really mean what they say. Or believe that harming someone is acceptable because the media says it is. But luckily movements such as the Me-Too movement are slowly rising and making a huge impact for victims to be able to speak comfortably and share their own stories. And to finally help these victims to serve justice against their attackers.