

Media objectification of women assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Media Objectification of Women “ Dreamworlds 3” To be sociologically mindful is to look for patterns in the society, observe all sides of the social life, ask questions, and seek answers. Being sociologically mindful can lead us to looking into matters that are complex and allow us the opportunity to understand the mechanism behind the division of our society. Race and gender seems to be the most obvious divide lines for this society. While race can sometimes be overlooked in society, discrimination based on gender is hardly absent, whether consciously or unconsciously, on the behaviors of society.

In such a society that values masculinity, being born a male is like a rain check to so many privileges in life. In return, this social preference degrades females to a lower level in society. This devaluation of females is the reason for and the driving force behind the objectification of women that is discussed in the film “ Dreamworlds 3”. Examining the socio-historical context, the ideas and believes, powers, and the consequences in society, we can understand the how and why of sexual objectification of women by the media and society.

Even though there is not much difference between the biological and physical functions and structure of a man and a woman, there is a distinct difference in their socially-constructed structure. The obvious difference however is manifested through physical appearance; that is the bigger and stronger body of a man versus the smaller body of a woman. This bodily strength was interpreted throughout history by ancient and contemporary cultures as a merit for superiority and power. Everything else, including

women, that lack this strength are under the control of men and hence exists only to satisfy the liking of those ones with power.

In her article "Men and Women: Mind and Body", Hesse-Biber explains how cultural rules were used to control women's bodies in ancient China and the Victorian England. The foot binding method was used in China and according to Hesse-Biber; it lasted over 1000 years simply because it reinforced the patriarchal authority of Chinese society. It was also believed that a woman's foot size emphasized her femininity and sexuality and was also a restriction to her mobility and thus insured her subordination and loyalty to her husband.

And both tiny waist in the Victorian England and the bound foot in China were a point of sexual excitement in sense that the fragile appearance of a woman bounded feet or tightened waist allowed the man control over the woman ensuring his ownership over her. (Hesse-Biber 56). Female circumcision in Ancient Egypt and to the present is also a practice to control women's sexuality. The impairing of a female sexual organ and the limitation of her sexual desires insured the girl's virginity at marriage.

Circumcision goes beyond enforcing the idea of patriarchal Ancient Egypt society but also that women are sex plates in the sense that they deliver sex to men while they are denied parts of their own bodies. By understanding this historical context, the objectification of women as sex objects that is discussed in "Dreamworlds 3" should come to no surprise. Just like ancient society valued women for their bounded feet, slimmed waist, and circumcised

genitals, our society today value women for their enhanced breasts, tiny waists, slim bodies, and big hips.

Women have come far in today's society in term of education and work opportunity. They have fought for their voting rights and they won. They fought against being lower or second citizens and being treated as less of a human being and asked for equality in treatment and full recognition in as equal functioning members in society, but they lost. Why did they then won their voting rights but lost their battle for equal human worth? It is true that human worth or value is intangible but it is those intangible rights that we value the most, believes and ideas.

And here lies the answer, it was a battle against social believes and ideas that valued patriarchy and patriarchy only for thousands of years. In his book " the Sociologically Examined Life", under the heading " Ideas and Illusions", Schwalbe argues that a dominating group stays in power by enforcing and instilling ideas in a society. Teaching people at all ages ideas that support their power while also teaching them their roles in society (Schwalbe 191).

This is where the media came in; presenting women only as the sexual, beautiful bodies and men as the powerful and smart. Allan Johnson describes this male dominance and power best in her article " Patriarchy" when she says, " It means they can shape culture in ways that reflect and serve men's collective interests by, for example, controlling the content of films and television shows, passing laws that allow husbands to rape their wives, or adjudicating rape and sexual harassment cases in ways that put the victim rather than the defendant on trial" (Johnson 130).

The music videos on “ Dreamworld 3” whether hip-hop, rock, or pop, they all serve to this very idea. Then when objectification of women is largely commercialized by mass media and especially in music videos that are presented to our society in mass production, it becomes hard for women to fight against this injustice. Therefore, to remain powerful is accomplished by containing those powerless and inferior individuals. By ensure that women stay at the lower places that ancient societies carved for them.

When women are valued for their sexual attribute, they are then devalued for personality attribute and brain capability that are human valuable assets. Objectified as a set of body parts by the media, an intellectual woman then faces the many obstacle and threats constructed by this society to deter women from competing in a man world. Devon Carbado gives examples of these obstacles and threats as a list of everyday disadvantages that men do not experience.

In her example, Carbado mentions social pressure for women to marry at younger age, sexual complements from bosses, name changing upon marriage, choosing between having a family or a career, behavior traits that a woman must present and control that a man doesn't have to worry about, and sexual harassment at work (Carbado 428-29). All of these are social constraints implemented by dominating males to ensure the continuous of the patriarchal control of society. This male power was made clear in the wage structure in the United States paying women less for performing the same tasks as a man.

The message is that it is a man world and men are better and smarter than women, hence are paid more. It is those men in power then who pull all the strings to control society. “ Dreamworks 3” explains that it is the same powerful white male who controlling racist images is controlling sexist images. The purpose is to reinforce the ideas that women are nothing but body parts and to stay in power. This way of representation however, has negative consequences in our society. Rape, sexual harassment, and violence against women are in fact the results of sexual objectification of women.

Because as human we learn about ourselves and about others around us through interactions with others and also by viewing what plays in front of our eyes whether it is a real life situation or something playing on the screen. As children we sometimes mimicked what we observed and maybe continue to mimic others in adulthood as well. “ Dreamworlds 3” shows clips of a video of young men harassing young women at the Puerto Rican Day Parade in Central Park, New York City. These young men are actually trying to act out the scenes in the music videos. Media objectification of women does then play a huge role in making women vulnerable to abuse and harassment. The media also does not stop there but come to act and represents to women, at very young ages, their role-model; the over slimmed, tall and lean young looking woman. Hesse-Biber refers to them as the “ Ultra-Slender Ideal” that is represented by fashion industries. As a result a number girls and young women die every year suffering from Anorexia Nervosa (Hesse-Biber 61). Here again another female body

controlling technique resulting in women continuous suffering and pain in a patriarchal dominated society.