

SOCI 309: Food for Thought Assignment

What is the main argument/thesis?

In the short novel *Fired Up About Consent*, author Sarah Ratchford emphasizes not only the importance of establishing clear and healthy consensual boundaries, but also puts into plain and clear language the ways that we as readers can actively dismantle rape culture, and advocates for a survivor-centered approach to sexualized violence education.

We should discuss this:

In the second chapter, the passage highlighting Indigenous Mvskoke leaders' early legal systems, particularly their first written rape law in 1825, stands out to me, stating: "And be it further enacted if any person or persons should undertake to force a woman and did it by force, it shall be left to [the] woman what punishment she should [be] satisfied with[,] to whip or pay what she say it be law" (Ratchford, 2021, p. 58). I appreciate this law as it grants the survivor the agency to decide on the punishment and directly involve them in the justice process without discounting their experience. On the other hand, I can emphasize that it may be difficult for a survivor of sexual violence to have a direct conversation with their perpetrator. This leads me to the question: what are the potential benefits and challenges of survivors having a direct role in determining punishment for perpetrators of sexual violence?

Commentary:

Within *Fired Up About Consent*, the idea of "rape culture" as a system that normalizes sexualized violence, especially against womxn, is broken down clearly. As Ratchford states, "Rather, [rape culture] is made up of hundreds of actions and cultural beliefs that devalue womxn. It's beer commercials, it's dehumanizing comments said on the sly" (Ratchford, 2021, p. 42). Rape culture is rooted within our daily interactions and observations such as media portrayals, casual sexism through dialogue such as "jokes", and subtle objectification of feminine-presenting bodies, making it hard to recognize and dismantle. This made me reflect on the ways that subtle forms of sexualized violence uphold rape culture and get consistently ignored. The mainstream media, such as Instagram, can reproduce microaggressions that are missed or disregarded as "not that serious". I believe that these small instances of rape culture are what uphold the more violent forms of sexualized violence (reminding me of EQHR'S sexualized violence pyramid). If we confront these everyday instances, we can deconstruct the very culture that enables, and arguably profits upon, rape culture and sexualized violence.

Current Event Connection:

The conversation surrounding the #MeToo movement highlights the urgent need to call out and dismantle instances of sexualized violence and rape culture. A recent article from the CBC discusses how the movement has popularized conversations about "system-wide harm that is happening, [and] the ways in which organizations and institutions collude and actually uphold rape culture" (Xing, 2024). This connection to rape culture is evident in how these institutions have repeatedly ignored survivors' voices and stories of survival. Through this movement, survivors can call on their perpetrators for accountability, transparency, and a dismantling of the systems that perpetuate harm.

References

Ratchford, S. (2021). *Fired Up About Consent*. Between the Lines.

Xing, L. (2024, November 1). *What's changed 5 years after #MeToo*. CBCnews.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/me-too-sexual-assault-harvey-weinstein-1.66338>

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