Female Sexualization

Female sexualization since the 1960s sexual liberty movement has become a real problem for our society. The liberation of women promoted by the media as empowerment resulted in reducing women to sexual objects. The media continuously sells to our current society certain female characteristics, particularly with regards to sexuality. This happens even in media that is directed at children in their early years as it depicts female characters in a certain form (Oppliger, 2008). This research will explore the role of the media in female sexualization. This is particularly an important subject due to the fact that the feminist movement’s efforts for the sexual liberation of women may have had unintended consequences that perpetuated, rather than eliminated, oppression and male dominance. The paper will examine the different types of portrayals of women in the media and the effect such portrayals have; with the conclusion being that media’s portrayal of women is hypersexualized and contributes to the objectification of women.

Popular culture including magazines, pop music, TV shows and films play a major role in the sexualization of women (Oppliger, 2008). Producing music and film companies including other media channels are constantly creating content not only for teenagers, young and adults but also for infants, to promote the feminist movement through the sexualization of females. The content includes messages towards the liberation from parental authority and the promotion of certain female qualities that empowers them and makes them attractive. Sexualized female role models are presented to women from when they are very young through the media. And in a digital culture like today, the media has access to every bit of private information that children and young people publish online (Oppliger, 2008).

But what is most important is that while the feminist movement developed as a way to liberate women from male oppression, domestic and submissive role models, this liberation was done through sexual liberation, allowing the media to make women more than ever, male's sexual objects (Oppliger, 2008). Moreover, through the promotion of certain sexual and aesthetic female characteristic to be the 'best sexual objects' for men, media channels such as magazine use their insecurities to sell products, information, and so on (Sumita, 2014).

The media, by portraying images of the ‘ideal’ women, has encouraged women to compete with each other through sexual characteristics such as particular bodily characteristics to attract men. And so, male power continues to rule as women are constantly taught to perform and become a sexual object to please men (Szymanski, Moffitt & Carr, 2010).

This paper will particularly focus on the link between media’s treatment and portrayal of women and the results of such portrayals. Specifically, how do such portrayals effect how men see women and how they treat them? How does it affect how women see and treat themselves? Does it promote or stifle gender equality?