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Rhetorical Analysis of Sexual Assault and Rape of Women

Sexual assault and rape are very prevalent in today’s society. Every day we hear about a new case of someone in our society being sexually assaulted or raped. I feel that we need to bring awareness to this topic to make it clear that no means no. The rhetorical artifact I have selected is a video that is named “When your date doesn’t hear the word no”. This video portrays a young lady that had gone on a date with a young male who portrays the signs of someone who would act as a sexual predator.

Throughout the video produced by BuzzFeed, and written by Kirsten King, the young girl portrayed, goes on a date with a young man at a bar. He asks to buy her a drink and she allows him to do so. Throughout the night he does everything right. She feels that he is a good guy and he may have some potential. As the night goes on, the man buys her a couple more drinks. She describes that she starts to feel pretty tipsy, and feel that she needs to head home soon. Once he asks to take her home, the mood seems to shift some. When the two arrive at the girl’s home, he is persistent that he walks her to the door. He then proceeds to tell her that he feels that he cannot drive home because he is too drunk.

The young man asks for a glass of water from the girl’s home. She immediately knows that his intentions have changed drastically. From that moment on the tension between the two grows. She understands now that this young man did not have intentions of “sobering up” in her home. While in the home, the boy immediately puts down his glass of water, and allows himself into her bedroom. This example can be used as the ethos approach. Ethos can be described as the argument by character (Heinrichs, pg.40 2017). As he tries and tries to make a move on this young girl, she consistently says gives him several excuses as to why she cannot have intercourse with him. It shows the argument that even though he seemed nice and friendly in the beginning, circumstances have changed his behavior. She finally firmly said “NO” and wiggled out from underneath him. Luckily, he finally stops attempting to seduce the young girl, and he storms out of her house. In the end of the video the girl speaks about how in today’s culture, it is expected that if a man spends money on a girl, they are obligated to give them something in return. In reality, this is not true whatsoever.

The word “No” is a very powerful word. Consent in any type of sexual act is one of the most important factors in the process. If one of the partners does not consent to sexual acts, then their partner needs to respect that decision. There are so many instances every single day where consent is not taken seriously. Many women and men have to endure sexual assault every single day, simply because the other person did not listen to the word “No”. When using the approach to ethos, it is shown in the video that in today’s culture it is expected that sex is involved in almost any dating situation. It is typical behavior of a male that wants to get a female to have sex with him is by buying her drinks, taking her to dinner, buying her flowers; any type of friendly gesture. It seems to be common that if a male spends money on his date, they expect sexual relation in return.

In the video, the narrator uses the pathos approach. Pathos can be described as an argument of emotion (Heinrichs, pg. 40 2017). She talks about her emotional feelings that are going through her mind throughout the event. She talks about how she felt; how scared she was to be alone with a complete stranger. This approach is effective because it relates to a real victim of sexual assault. Sexual assault victims are terrified of what the other person may do to them. It shows that the situation is very serious. The narrator talks about how her date seemed to do everything right. For example, she spoke about him holding the door for her and saying that she was beautiful. This is also a use of pathos by showing that the kindness that her date had shown had made her less aware of the situation she was in. Many people use compliments in order to win over their partner. This use of pathos is very important because it shows how easily people can put their guard down. While the two were in her apartment, she talks about how she allowed him to kiss her. As time passes she speaks on how it was becoming too much for her. She tells him several excuses in attempts to get him to stop. She tells him that she is on her period, her roommate is home, and that she is too tired. None of these excuses seemed to phase the young man that was forcing himself on her. This is another example of pathos. She starts to feel very uncomfortable and tense. She expresses that throughout the video; as they are laying in the bed and he is on top of her, she tells the audience how badly she wants everything to stop. She even goes as far to say that she should just “let it happen”.

Many victims of sexual assault will also resort to this thought of giving up as well. As another person is forcing themselves on a victim, the victim feels helpless and not in control of the situation which can be very scary for the individual involved. Many victims feel hopeless and feel that there is no other choice but to give in. As the video showed, the young girl did not give in though. She tells the audience that she firmly pushes him and tells him “No”. Luckily, he finally stopped and he is seen buttoning up his shirt and walking out of the room. Another use of pathos is seen here; she allows the audience to know how relieved she feels now that he is gone. She speaks about how unlucky she could have been, this nice guy turned out to be just like any other guy. He had the exact same intentions as a guy who did not hold the door, or say that she was beautiful.

As she says in the video, sometimes, people do not do nice things out of the kindness of their heart, but for another selfish reason. They feel that they deserve it, they do these things to get what they want, and to manipulate the other person. Just because a guy does something nice for a girl does not mean that he does not have a secret agenda. “I found out the hard way that in modern day dating that translates to if I spend at least $50 on you, you better sleep with me” is an exact quote that is spoken in this video. The narrator uses logos in this statement. Logos can be defined as an argument by logic (Heinrichs, pg. 41 2017). As a young female in the dating world, that statement is factual. Many young men feel that if they do something nice for you, that you owe them something in return. It is sad that this is how society views the dating world. What makes this situation worse, is some people feel entitled to sleep with another person just because they want to. They have no reason for trying to be nice, or friendly, they just take what they want. Many young adults have one thing on their mind. Unfortunately, many women and even men suffer from these selfish intentions. Sexual assault can cause many long term psychological effects on those who are victims.

As said earlier in the video, the narrator talks about how she used excuses to attempt to get her date to stop. The truth is, nobody needs a reason to say no. It is that person’s body and their choice, if they do not feel that they want to give their physical affection to another person, then that is that individuals choice. Many people feel that they must make up an excuse in order to not make the other person angry or upset. In situations like these, the individual must stand up for themselves.

Unfortunately, there are many times that the victims cannot fend for themselves and are taken advantage of. Many people do not get the chance to say no, they are forced to do things that they are not comfortable with, and with people whom they are not comfortable with. Situations like these can be terrifying for the individual experiencing this abuse. Young men and women are taken advantage of in many different ways. Sexual abuse cannot just happen on a first date with a complete stranger. This video shows two people on a first date, and shows a young man trying to force himself onto his date without her consent. Many times, the two individuals are in a relationship when a sexual assault act occurs. This happens often because one partner feels that the other partner is obligated to have sexual relations with them because they are “together”. This also is a false statement. Anytime a person feels that they do not want to perform sexual acts on another person it is their right to do so. As a mature and respectful human, the other person who listen to their partner’s wishes, but as we know many times that does not happen. The one partner will push and push until the other finally gives in or is overpowered. These acts can make the victim feel worthless, dirty, unloved, etc. Having the ability to say when you want to have sexual relations with someone and when you don’t is a simple gesture that is easily taken away. Sex has been normalized by society as being “not a big deal” when in reality it is a very big deal. These acts are very intimate and special to many people and to not have control of these special moments can be very devastating.

As a young woman in today’s dating world, we realize that it is nothing like it used to be. Men don’t ask women out on dates anymore, they do not treat all women with respect, they all look for one thing and one thing only. There have been many occasions where people feel that they are entitled to getting what they want, and many times they do. They will do anything to get what they want whether it is from persuasion or just forcing themselves on another person. As it is said in the video, your body is your own and it cannot be bought with material things like flowers or drinks. When the you are ready it is because you want to, not because you have been coerced.

Works Cited

BuzzFeedYellow. “When Your Date Doesn’t Hear the Word “No.”” *Youtube*, Youtube, 21 July 2016, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qj\_OcHp7zm8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qj_OcHp7zm8).

Heinrichs, Jay. *Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us about the Art of Persuasion*. Three Rivers Press, 2017.