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Romanticization of Sexual Violence and Sexual Education among Adolescents: A Critical Analysis of Contemporary Cultural Narratives

Romantyzacja przemocy seksualnej a edukacja
seksualna młodzieży. Krytyczna analiza
współczesnych narracji kulturowych

ABSTRACT

The article undertakes a critical analysis of contemporary cultural narratives that romanticize and sexualize sexual violence, with particular attention to fan creations oriented toward adolescents. In the context of the growing influence of social media and young adult literature, the study shows mechanisms that simplify and idealize the portrayal of perpetrators of violence, which can lead to their implicit legitimization and the reinforcement of harmful models. An analysis of fanfiction found on the platform Archive of Our Own regarding Richard Ramirez illustrates how these narratives connect sexualization,

KEYWORDS

romanticization of
sexual violence,
sexualization, sexual
education, cultural
narratives, adolescents

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

romantyzacja
przemocy seksualnej,
seksualizacja, edukacja
seksualna, narracje
kulturowe, młodzież

SPI Vol. 29, 2026/1
e-ISSN 2450-5366

DOI: 10.12775/SPI.2026.1.006
Nadesłano: 31.08.2025
Zaakceptowano: 02.03.2026

romanticization, and the marginalization of consent, creating problematic interpretive models for young audiences. The article underscores the need to consider such cases in sexual education as a starting point for reflection and critical discussion of sexual violence and the mechanisms of its social representation.

This study examines fanfiction published on the Archive of Our Own (AO3) platform, focusing on how authors depict violence, romanticize it, and present apparent consent. Using an interpretive paradigm and qualitative content analysis, we analyzed popular works centered on serial killer Richard Ramirez. The findings suggest that, despite the presence of motifs of sexual violence, young adult literature and fanfiction can serve as valuable educational tools for discussing consent, boundaries, and relationships, highlighting the importance of fostering critical awareness rather than censorship.

ABSTRAKT

Artykuł podejmuje krytyczną analizę współczesnych narracji kulturowych, które romantyzują i seksualizują przemoc seksualną, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem twórczości fanowskiej skierowanej do młodzieży. W kontekście rosnącego wpływu mediów społecznościowych i literatury *young adult* badanie pokazuje mechanizmy upraszczającej i idealizującej prezentacji sprawców przemocy, co może prowadzić do ich nieświadomej legitymizacji i utrwalania szkodliwych wzorców. Analiza *fanfiction* na platformie Archive of Our Own dotyczących postaci Richarda Ramireza ilustruje, jak narracje te łączą seksualizację, romantyzację i marginalizację zgody, tworząc problematyczne wzorce interpretacyjne dla młodych odbiorców. Artykuł podkreśla potrzebę uwzględnienia takich zjawisk w edukacji seksualnej jako punktu wyjścia do refleksji i krytycznej dyskusji o przemoc seksualnej oraz mechanizmach jej społecznej reprezentacji.

Przedmiotem badania jest twórczość fanowska zamieszczona na platformie Archive of Our Own (AO3). Badania koncentrują się na tym, jak autorzy przedstawiają przemoc, romantyzują ją i prezentują pozorną zgodę. Wykorzystując paradygmat interpretacyjny i jakościową analizę treści, przeanalizowałyśmy utwory dotyczące postaci seryjnego mordercy Richarda Ramireza. Wyniki badań sugerują, że mimo obecności motywów przemocy seksualnej literatura młodzieżowa i twórczość fanowska mogą się stać ważnym narzędziem edukacyjnym wspierającym rozmowy o zgodzie, granicach i relacjach. Zamiast

cenzury kluczowe jest wykorzystanie ich potencjału do kształtowania wśród młodzieży krytycznej świadomości trudnych tematów.

Introduction

Human sexuality, especially that of children and adolescents, has long been a subject of interest both for researchers studying the issue and for broader social audiences (Zaborowska-Piecuch 2021). Today, with the advancement of scientific knowledge and clinical practice, increasing emphasis is placed on the depathologization of sexuality and the recognition of its diversity, challenging binary perspectives and highlighting the risk of human rights violations (Smaś-Myszczyszyn, Rzyziński 2022).

The goal of this process is the achievement of sexual maturity, understood as an end state and a positively valued normative category. From a biopsychosocial perspective, it encompasses three complementary dimensions: biological maturity, defined as a stabilized configuration of primary, secondary, and tertiary sexual characteristics, hormonal balance, and the capacity for a full sexual response at both the physiological and behavioral levels; psychological maturity, understood as the ability to recognize and differentiate sexual needs from other emotional and motivational states, the capacity for delayed gratification, and the integration of affection and desire in intimate relationships with the same person; and social maturity, manifested in the fulfillment of sexual needs in accordance with legal, ethical, and cultural norms, as well as the ability to withdraw from relationships that diminish one's well-being (Beisert 2017).

Sexual education and its sources

During adolescence, the importance of the peer group as a source of knowledge and a field for experimenting with relationships increases. A sexual model shaped exclusively, or almost exclusively, by peer experiences and knowledge may be burdened with immaturity, stereotypes, rigidity, excessive liberalism in attitudes, or even elements of aggression. Peer messaging often concentrates on positive

experiences (pleasure, prestige within the ingroup), and only rarely acknowledges risks and consequences (Zaborowska-Piecuch 2021).

Today, another increasingly important source of information about sexuality is the broadly understood media (Maciejewska, Płaczkiewicz 2021; Putyński 2017), particularly adolescent literature and other works that constitute the focus of our research. Media content, similarly to peer influence, often portrays sexuality in ways that reduce it to its hedonistic aspects while overlooking issues of responsibility, consent, or health consequences. It is worth emphasizing that during adolescence initially diffuse sexual arousal undergoes mentalization, when a young person identifies the object of desire and strategies for reducing sexual tension. Individuals often encounter conflicting messages: on the one hand, influences from family, school, or religion; on the other, eroticizing stimuli from peers, mass media, advertising, and the internet.

Under the social norm of delaying sexual initiation, adolescents often turn to masturbation, which differs qualitatively from early childhood forms because it is accompanied by erotic fantasy. In the absence of personal experiences, fantasies are often mediated by erotic content and pornography, which are easily accessible, quick to obtain, often free, and anonymous. It is important to emphasize that during this period become consolidated, sexual scripts as repeated imaginative and somatic stimuli shape relationship patterns. As a result, the quality of later sexual life may largely depend on fantasies “imprinted” during adolescence (Putyński 2017). At the same time, it is becoming increasingly easy to find erotic content on the internet that openly promotes sexual violence (Kociołek 2023).

In light of the developmental mechanisms described above, there is a clear need to support young people in developing appropriate attitudes toward sexuality and the sphere of sexual relations, based on scientific knowledge and objective theoretical foundations free from evaluative bias. However, in Polish public discourse surrounding sexual education in schools, a number of myths and pejorative associations have emerged, which makes substantive debate more difficult (Maciejewska, Płaczkiewicz 2021).

Sexual violence

From the perspective of research and social practice, sexual violence is a strongly stigmatized and emotionally burdensome phenomenon, and one of the key problems of contemporary society (Zaborowska-Piecuch 2021; Makaruk et al. 2023). Sexual violence is a general term encompassing every form of unwanted sexual experience (Kilimnik, Meston 2019). In the international literature, it is defined as “action of a sexual character which has been perpetrated or insisted upon by another person without a voluntary consent of the victim, or towards a person who was unable to give consent or decline participation” (Basile et al. 2014: 11).

Consent as a fundamental condition has also gained central importance in the context of the revised legal definition of rape in Polish criminal law. In March 2025, Poland adopted a new definition of rape consistent with international standards, shifting the emphasis from forms of coercion to the absence of clear consent, in accordance with the Istanbul Convention (Dz.U. 2015, poz. 96). Thus, according to Article 197 § 1 of the Penal Code: “Whoever leads another person to sexual intercourse by means of violence, unlawful threat, deception, or by any other means despite the absence of that person’s consent is subject to the penalty of imprisonment from two to fifteen years” (Dz.U. 2025, poz. 383). This change aligns Polish law with the perspective of human rights that any sexual activity without consent constitutes a crime, regardless of whether physical violence was used.

At the same time, research shows that a significant portion of experiences of sexual violence are not disclosed by those who have experienced them, and sexual acts or violence committed by underage perpetrators are often downplayed as “curiosity” or experimentation,” “sometimes even by professionals responsible for intervention (Haś, Wach 2024).

Researchers studying sexual violence also emphasize that it produces consequences in the physical, psychological, emotional, and social dimensions (Zaborowska-Piecuch 2021; Lissmann et al. 2023), and that its prevention and proper identification should constitute one of the priorities of sexual education that is rooted in the perspective of human rights, and adapted to the developmental needs of adolescents (Walenc 2017; Jeznach 2021).

Cultural narratives addressed to young audiences

Social media constitute an important sphere of activity for the younger generation, significantly influencing the ways in which young people perceive reality. Content, models, and narratives present in this space shape the attitudes, values, and imaginations of adolescents. Increasingly, we can observe a worrying phenomenon involving the romanticization and sexualization of criminal figures, which leads to their transformation into objects of fascination and even personality cults (Duwe 2000; Driessens 2013; Binik 2020).

The term “romanticization” as used in this article, refers to a narrative device that attributes heroic traits to characters and idealizes their image while avoiding or minimizing negative aspects. Such portrayals support the mythologization of individuals and the construction of positive, often distorted images in social discourse (Nowak, Łukasiak 2021). When analyzing the popularity of this type of content, two distinct narrative trends can be identified. The first is a mass narrative consisting of commercial productions created by large media companies (such as Netflix), including films and series inspired by real events. Literary works can also be included within this trend.

The term *sexualization* is characterized by considerable interpretive complexity due to its multifaceted use in the scientific literature. As Zielona-Jenek (2017) points out, the term has long been used in a nonuniform and inconsistent manner, which has resulted in diverse interpretations. Initially, it was associated, among other things, with the process of sexual socialization (Spanier 1977), the phenomenon of inappropriate relationships between adults and children (Finkelhor, Browne 1986), or excessive responsiveness to sexual stimuli (Friedrich 2002, 2004).

Only in 2007 did the American Psychological Association propose a systematic clarification of the term, distinguishing four main forms of sexualization (APA Task Force... 2007, p. 12). For the purposes of the present analysis, particular importance is attached to the definition according to which an individual’s value is judged solely through the prism of their sexual attractiveness or sexual behavior, which leads to the neglect of other aspects of that person’s identity.

In recent years, problematic narratives have also begun to permeate literary content. A relatively new phenomenon in literature is the development of a genre addressed to young adults, known as young adult literature (YAL). Originally, young adult literature focused on themes such as adolescence, peer relationships, and the emotional dilemmas of youth. Over time, however, this direction has undergone a transformation, and narratives depicting physical and sexual violence in a neutralized manner, often devoid of realistic consequences, have begun to appear, raising concerns from a sociocultural perspective.

Motifs of rape, sexual violence, and ambiguous consent in intimate relationships constitute an important part of many novels directed at adolescents. In numerous cases, the plots of these works are concentrated almost exclusively on erotic storylines, while the remaining aspects of the protagonists' lives serve a secondary function—existing mainly as background or as a pretext for developing further sexually charged relationships. The second trend consists of grassroots narratives developed within small online communities, often with a communal or individual character. It mainly concerns fanworks, which include diverse forms of expression such as fan art, stories, or video edits.

Fanfiction currently constitutes one of the most common forms of literary creativity among adolescents and has gained considerable popularity in online spaces. In discussions of fan communities, we can increasingly observe the emergence of groups that idealize or romanticize perpetrators of crimes present in popular culture. This phenomenon can be classified within the category of so-called *dark fandoms* (Broll 2018), that is, specific and often controversial fan communities that concentrate their activities around characters associated with criminality. Aldona Kobus expands Broll's definition by interpreting these communities not only as groups identifying with perpetrators of violence but also as an expression of a broader cultural fascination with violence and the macabre (Kobus 2021). Examples include fandoms centered on Jeffrey Dahmer or the so-called Colubiners (Kopeć 2021).

In the present study, a form of fanwork commonly referred to as fanfiction is analyzed. It is a type of literary narrative created by audiences on the basis of storylines and characters originating from

one or more preexisting source texts, including the so-called canon. These works often take the original stories in new, and not infrequently atypical, directions. The origins of this phenomenon can be traced, among other sources, to science fiction magazines published in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as to oral traditions and practices of collective interpretation. Fanfiction therefore constitutes a form of materializing and popularizing enthusiasm for fictional universes (Thomas 2011). It is usually created by women who have little or no formal experience in writing, and whose creative activity is purely recreational (Mixer 2018).

Research review

Mixer (2018), in a study concerning the influence of fanfiction on sexual development, writes that women who create stories about women often describe the kinds of relationships that they themselves would like to experience.

Hedrick (2020) conducted an analysis of fanfiction dedicated to the band One Direction, indicating that many of these texts lack a coherent narrative regarding the question of consent in sexual encounters or depict sexual violence initiated by male protagonists. The ambivalence in the portrayal of consent, combined with the presence of idolized celebrity figures and an audience belonging to a young fandom particularly susceptible to influence, may contribute to the persistence of harmful models and messages regarding intimate relationships.

Researchers also point to the potential danger that graphic depictions of sexual violence and rape in literature may pose for adolescents. At the same time, they recognize that such content may offer opportunities to use it as an educational tool—a space for reflective discussion about sexual violence (Charles 2019).

The authors of *But She Didn't Scream: Teaching About Sexual Assault in Young Adult Literature* emphasize that young adult literature can serve as a teaching tool for defining sexual violence, debunking myths, and raising students' awareness of its mechanisms and consequences. They also stress the need to justify the selection of literary texts in a way that is acceptable to both school administrators and parents, recommending dialogue with parents and the use of

works recognized in prestigious competitions to enhance their credibility (Colantonio-Yurko et al. 2018).

Jacobs (2018) also refers to the use of young adult literature during the #MeToo campaign, suggesting that such texts can help adolescents understand the impact of emotional trauma and sexual violence.

Research conducted by Syvil Durand (2014) among teenagers showed that reading and discussing novels from young adult literature effectively reduced acceptance of rape myths.

Methodological assumptions of the research

The study adopts the interpretive paradigm and the methodology of qualitative research as its main analytical framework (Rubacha 2008; Urbaniak-Zajac, Kos 2013).

Fanworks published on the Archive of Our Own (AO3) platform constitute the subject of the research. This website is based on the activity of fans who publish works such as fanfiction (stories about idols or fictional characters) or fan art (images, photographs, sketches). The platform has been operating since November 14, 2009. It was founded by the Organization for Transformative Works (OTW). The goal of its founders was to create a safe space in which fan communities could share their creative works (Cole 2019).

We decided to use this platform because it is currently the largest and most popular space where users can share their creative works with others.

As of January 30, 2025, the platform had an estimated 8 million registered users, with an average of approximately 3,000 new members joining daily. These figures, sourced in part from the ChatGPT language model, are approximate, and the actual number of users is likely higher due to those accessing the platform without logging in (Archive of Our Own 2025).

Within the framework of our analysis, we decided to focus on cultural works depicting the character of Richard Ramirez. This choice was considered justified by the fact that Ramirez belongs to the group of the most sexualized and idealized criminals in the media landscape. His criminal activity included sexually motivated homicides and other sexually motivated crimes. Given his presence in

the media and his broad reception in popular culture, the number of cultural texts—including stories and other forms of creative works—dedicated to this figure significantly exceeds the number of similar works devoted to other perpetrators.

The research we conducted was aimed at investigating and understanding how authors of fanfiction dedicated to Richard Ramirez describe his violent behavior and what meanings they attribute to it. In this regard, we formulated the following research questions:

1. In what ways do fanfiction depict violence, and what narrative strategies are used to romanticize it?
2. How is nominal consent (or the lack thereof) depicted in fanworks, and what social consequences may result from this phenomenon?

In the process of selecting texts for analysis, the following search criteria were applied: the phrase “Richard Ramirez” within the fandom category, the exclusion of crossovers (that is, stories featuring characters from more than one media source), and a range of 1,500 to 10,000 views. In addition, the results were sorted by decreasing relevance. After applying these parameters, fifteen stories were obtained and subjected to further analysis.

The short stories analyzed varied in length (ranging from 743 to 150,736 characters) and in publication date (the earliest was published in November 2017, and the most recent in May 2025). The texts also differed in terms of content restrictions; only some contained a clear notice indicating that the story included material intended for adult audiences.

For the analysis of the empirical material, we employed qualitative content analysis. This is a systematic research method used to produce an interpretive description of the meaning of textual data by identifying patterns, themes, or categories while taking cultural and social contexts into account (Schreier 2012). The analysis was conducted between May and July 2025. The analytical categories were derived inductively from the data under examination.

Authors publishing on Archive of Our Own (AO3) are not required to use tags, which poses a significant risk for readers. In our sample of fifteen works, seven contained no tags at all. The most frequent tags referred to erotic and violent motifs, including rape and

the particularly problematic *non-con* (“non-consensual”), the implications of which will be discussed later in the study.

Results of the study

Ways of depicting violence and devices used to romanticize it

The works analyzed contained various forms of violence: physical, psychological, and sexual. The only form of violence not encountered in the analyzed material was economic violence. Authors employed a variety of narrative devices which were intended to romanticize violence or make the actions depicted appear more subtle. One such device was the dissonance between a character’s will and their physical reaction.

Mary was doing everything she could to drown out Richard’s touch. However, the man’s touch was new to her, so her body was treacherously sensitive to the sensation. (D, 556–567)

The author’s use of the phrase *treacherously sensitive* suggests that the protagonist’s bodily reaction is independent of her will. This portrayal may contribute to the normalization of situations in which the body of a person subjected to sexual violence or rape reacts in ways that may be interpreted as arousal. During rape, victims often lose the ability to mount defensive responses as a result of shock and intense fear. In some cases, involuntary physiological reactions, including orgasm, may occur, which can become a source of severe trauma for the victim (Lissmann et al. 2023).

Research conducted by Möller, among others, on a group of 298 men who had experienced rape showed that up to 70% of them experienced tonic immobility, and its occurrence was associated with a higher risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder and more acute symptoms of depression (Möller et al. 2017).

In this way, the author constructs an eroticization of violence, and the reader may be drawn into a narrative framework in which violence is presented as attractive and desirable. It is also worth noting that these mechanisms reflect scripts operating within media culture that romanticize aggression, particularly in the context of fascination with controversial figures who have gained media notoriety.

A similar narrative device appears in the following excerpt:

Such a dirty girl. You are cheating on your husband with someone from Skid Row. Rick's words had hurt, but aroused me more than anything else. (R, 161)

Here, the narrative couples emotional pain (humiliation) with a sexual response. Emotional abuse is thus transformed into a source of pleasure. Taylor's research shows that humiliation, both in a general sense and in forms connected with sexual violence, can contribute to the development of a deeply dysfunctional relationship with oneself, based on the belief that one deserves degradation. As a consequence, individuals may develop a persistent self-perception shaped by feelings of rejection and self-devaluation (Taylor 2020).

Another strategy used to neutralize sexual violence involved portraying female characters as less "innocent" or sexually inexperienced than initially suggested.

Mary was innocent, but not enough to know about semen. (D, 149–150)

In the cited fragment, we encounter a narrative device that relies on the cultural script of the "innocent but aware" girl. The theory proposed by Simon and Gagnon (1986) assumes that our perception and interpretation of sexual behavior are based on socially established models—those that define who, in a given situation, is the "initiator," who is "passive," who "knows what is happening," and what meaning is attributed to their knowledge or lack of knowledge (Simon, Gagnon 1986). In this excerpt, the author manipulates cultural scripts of sexuality in a way that may influence the reader's perception of guilt and victimhood.

The authors also frequently emphasize the physical attractiveness of the main character.

The man next to me was beautiful. He had dark hair cascading around prominent cheekbones; his dark eyes could burn into your soul, and his lips were perfectly plump and symmetrical. I was enraptured by his beauty and almost forgot I was married. (R, 47–50)

By focusing the heroine's attention solely on the man's physical attributes while simultaneously disregarding the violence that he perpetrates, the narrative may contribute to a diminished moral evaluation of his actions and reinforce cognitive schemas in which

physical attractiveness appears to “justify” or minimize violence in the reader’s imagination. Such portrayals demonstrate a clear process of sexualization, as discussed earlier (Zielona-Jenek 2017).

During the analysis, we also singled out narratives that romanticize violence while retaining elements typically associated with it, such as blood, harm inflicted on others, or murder linked with sexual arousal.

“Admit it, the sight of me covered in blood is arousing. I bet you’re damn wet,” I said, moving closer and pinning her between myself and the brick wall (...) “You are—you are sexy. You’re so sexy and it’s so evil! You’ve killed somebody!” she almost yelled, and my hand quickly covered her mouth. (DITN, 723–727)

In the analyzed excerpt, one can observe mechanisms described in the sexual script theory of Simon and Gagnon (1986). The depiction of the protagonist in a state of internal conflict between excitement and moral panic refers to a script common in literary narratives and fanfiction, in which fear and initial resistance are not treated as genuine rejection but rather as elements of the seduction process. In this model, resistance becomes “neutralized” by desire.

This type of narrative pattern perpetuates the problematic belief that signals of non-consent are ambiguous, which may blur the distinction between consent and its absence in real-life interactions. In light of sexual script theory, this portrayal can be interpreted as a reproduction of a cultural model in which domination, risk, and moral transgression function as integral elements of an erotic narrative, and overcoming resistance becomes part of the scenario of intimacy.

I felt my anger disappearing, replaced by this all too familiar feeling. Richard was undeniably hot when he was angry, and now I had him exactly where I wanted, even though I was still angry at him for lying. (TSOBG, 859–862)

In the cited excerpt, a clear association between aggression and sexual desire emerges, which constitutes an example of the romanticization of violence. The protagonist’s anger is depicted as a factor that increases his attractiveness, and the feeling of arousal appears as a direct response to his anger. This type of narrative may reinforce the message that violence or aggressive behavior is desirable or erotically

stimulating, which falls under the broader pattern of normalizing toxic relationships.

In summary, the fanfiction authors romanticize sexual violence by employing several narrative devices, including depicting a dissonance between the protagonist's will and the involuntary reactions of their body; portraying emotional suffering as a source of pleasure; sexualizing characters with a criminal past, suggesting that dangerous individuals are more attractive; and linking acts of aggression with desire.

Consent without consent

The term *consent without consent* refers to narrative portrayals of sexual situations in which a female character's participation is depicted ambiguously—without an explicit indication of informed, verbal consent on her part.

In the materials analyzed, the absence of clear consent to sexual intercourse was justified in various ways. Very often it was explained through physiological reactions, such as vaginal lubrication:

She's taken in three with an anguished moan, but like every good girl she couldn't stop herself from getting wet (...) In his mind he saw it as both subjugation and arousal. She liked getting fingered against her will, his fingers already wet when he pushed them inside and pulled them back out. (MH, 59–63)

The analyzed excerpt illustrates the phenomenon of mock consent, in which the protagonist's physical response is depicted as a sign of acceptance of sexual contact. However, research shows that physiological responses are not equivalent to informed consent (Muehlenhard, Peterson 2005). From a social and feminist perspective, portraying a silent or involuntary response as an indication of consent contributes to the perpetuation of rape myths and the blurring of boundaries between coercion and consent. In this case, the narrative is entirely centered on the perpetrator's perspective, thereby diminishing the heroine's subjectivity and reinforcing a cultural script in which a woman is presumed to “subconsciously desire” what she is subjected to.

The authors also marked consent through descriptions of behavioral responses, such as moans of pleasure or the spreading of legs:

Richard licked Mary's already hardened nipple with the slightest touch of his tongue. His black eyes looked upward, observing Mary's dreaming face. When Mary did not react, he began to suck and lick her nipple, while his hand gently squeezed her breast. "Hmm." Mary let out a quiet moan of pleasure. (D, 366–369)

In the excerpt above, we find neither verbal nor informed consent expressed by the female protagonist. Instead, the absence of a reaction is obliquely interpreted by the man as encouragement to continue his actions. Beres (2007) emphasizes that silence is not equivalent to acceptance of sexual activity. Consent should be active and include clear, enthusiastic affirmation.

He caught you by the collar of your thin shirt, ripping it away from your body and revealing your breasts. You screamed, and the handle of the gun struck your cheek. "Pinche puta," he growled. In one motion, he pulled down your pants and underwear. You were completely and utterly exposed. You clamped your thighs together tightly, and in response he pressed his gun against your temple. Tears streamed down your face and into your hair as you spread your legs. (BCWYWF, 34–38)

In this excerpt, the author portrays the protagonist's spreading of her legs as a superficial indication of consent. However, when considered in a broader context, it becomes clear that this reaction is a consequence of the violence she experiences—the woman has a gun pressed against her head. Other reactions, such as clamping her thighs together and crying, do not deter the man. This description reduces the female protagonist solely to the role of a sexual object.

These types of narratives are particularly problematic because they may contribute to the perpetuation of rape myths, including the belief that a woman, despite verbal opposition, in fact "means the opposite." According to the theory of sexual consent (Beres 2007), its essential elements are voluntariness, awareness, and enthusiasm.

Depictions of so-called *consent without consent* in fan texts may support the normalization of sexual violence by blurring the boundaries between conscious, informed permission and coercion. At the same time, the narrative often becomes oriented toward the perpetrator's perspective, which reduces the female protagonist's subjectivity and places her in a subordinate role.

Summary

Literary works that deal with themes of rape and sexual violence may constitute a potential risk for adolescents, due to the possibility that such content may be interpreted in problematic ways or incorporated into personal erotic fantasies. However, the complete elimination of these types of narratives from the media landscape appears unrealistic, given their strong presence in culture and popular literature. In this regard, it seems justified to shift the emphasis from attempts to censor such content toward its educational use.

Young audiences—often active participants in fandom communities—are already familiar with these types of narratives. This familiarity creates an opportunity to initiate open discussions about the ambiguities of sexual violence and the ways in which it is represented in culture. In light of the above, we recommend that individuals working with adolescents—including teachers, educators, and psychologists—use adolescent literature and fanworks as tools for shaping awareness in the areas of sexual violence, consent, and interpersonal relationships. For young people, for whom belonging to a fan community plays a significant role, discussions based on familiar and relatable content may serve as an effective starting point for conversations about difficult yet extremely important topics.

According to data from the American media organization National Public Radio (NPR), literature classified as young adult (YA) can serve as a supportive tool for parents and caregivers who wish to initiate conversations with teenagers about sexuality and emotional maturity. As Ulaby (2016) notes, this type of literature may provide a safe space for addressing topics related to physicality, boundaries, and consent, which makes it particularly valuable in the context of sexual education.

Limitations

As with any qualitative study, a key limitation lies in the subjectivity of the interpretations of the content and the themes identified, which results from the focus on a single perpetrator and the limited scope of the material analyzed. To enhance reliability, we

independently coded and interpreted the data, and the final analytical codes were established after confirming the consistency of our conclusions.

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