Opinion Writing: a Guide to Writing a Successful Essay Easily

What Are the Pop Culture Stereotypes?

Over the past, American popular culture has been strong in creating racial stereotypes. Images displayed through television, music, and the internet have an impact on how individuals behave and what individuals believe. People find their identities and belief systems from popular culture. Evidently, I believe that American pop culture has created racial stereotypes that predominantly affect other ethnic minorities. Analyzing the history of America reveals that African Americans have always had a problem defining themselves as Americans ever since the era of slavery. African Americans have always had a hard time being integrated into American culture. The result is that African Americans have been subjected to ridicule and shame. American pop culture has compounded the problem by enhancing the negative stereotypes of African American. In theatre, film, and music, African Americans have been associated with vices such as murder, theft, and violence.

Roles in films have been assigned to individuals based on their skin colors as opposed to their ability to execute a certain role. As a result, the popular culture in America has created black stereotypes that revolve around African Americans being thieves, murderers, and lazy and this is evident in how African American are portrayed in the rap industry, entertainment, and sports. First, I believe that the rap industry has helped create negative racial stereotypes. Rap music comprises of dirty lyrics that often revolve around violence and obscene words. Many people associated with rap music with violence. Since its inception, rap music has been seen by many as a contributor to the increasing wave of violence in American society. Rap music is popular among African Americans (Weaver 10). As a result, rap music has helped further the notion that African Americans are violent people. Many rappers write lyrics that insinuate that people should be violent towards the police. The result is that listeners may take this

message negatively and have overflowing adrenaline that may result in violence. On the other hand, rap music is a representation of reality. As a result, the lyrics in the music do not really create racial stereotypes but rather are a product of events that occur in society. Non-Caucasions have been stereotyped, and the result is that the music that they create speaks volumes about the racial discrimination that characterized the American society. Others believe that rappers write the lyrics as an expression of the problems that they are going through (Weaver 14). However, using this argument fails to hold water since while racial discrimination has reduced the lyrics of rap music have remained constant and even increased the violent content.

In my opinion, the American entertainment industry portrays other ethnic minorities as violent and criminals in general, and this is wrong. Other ethnic have been subjected to derogatory assumptions regarding their character. The creation of a positive or a negative identity is done through pride in certain cultural traditions (Hoberman 2). As a result, the ethnic minorities in America have battled the notion that some of their traditions are negative. In the NBA, African Americans are the dominant race with many NBA players being African Americans. Studies indicate that people are attracted to activities that portray their ethnic groups in good light and ignore activities that tend to portray their ethnic groups in a negative light. Images portrayed in the entertainment industry and the sports industry portray a distorted picture of African Americans. Instead of taking on positives such as people of colour as being successful in the NBA despite various challenges that they have had to battle, the entertainment industry takes on negatives and forms a negative picture of African American. Dissenters counter that the roles that non-Caucasian get in the film industry depends on the roles that they apply and that other ethnic minorities are also portrayed positively by

What Are the Pop Culture Stereotypes?

some movies. However, the entertainment industry predominantly portrays other ethnic minorities in a negative light. Additionally, while sports is seen as an important aspect in racial integration the sports industry has only resulted in the merging of various stereotypes into one persona (Hoberman)

In addition, I believe that the pop culture portrays African American as thieves and this is not factual. African Americans especially males have been stereotyped as thieves and armed criminals. Racial profiling in the American justice system has resulted in the creation of the stereotype that African Americans are thieves and violent criminals. In major political campaigns, crime is mainly used as a metaphor to refer to other ethnic minorities by conservative politicians. The black persona has been associated with theft and other violent crimes. News mainly shows that African American people are thieves and that whites are the victims of the heinous acts perpetrated by other ethnic minorities. When covering crimes, news reporters tend to over-represent whites as victims. Television shows also show African Americans a perpetrators of crime (Versluys 7). Critics argue that many criminals are black; however, the crime statistics do not back this finding. Evidently, a narrative has been created that seeks to portray African American people as criminals while ignoring facts.

Moreover, black people have been prone to violence and are thus it is wrong to generalize all as killers. Black people have been killed by law enforcers in incidents that have been recorded and shared on different social media platforms. Secondly, black people have been depicted as docile, submissive and manageable, thus creating the notion that their rights can be violated, they can be killed and their murders still walk freely. Thirdly, black people have been overrepresented in crimes including murder, and are seen as killers because of their race, which is wrong. Even though black people in

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America are only a small percentage of the entire American population, the wrongful convictions made against them in courts exonerate them and make strengthen the stereotypical statements that they are killers. Others argue that black Americans are highly probable to kill compared to their white counterparts, instead of viewing killers as criminals from any race, they tend to identify murder more with black people (Lopez and Javier). Study for the National Registry of Exonerations shows how race may influence conviction (Lopez and Javier). Black people comprise of forty-seven percent of exonerations in the registry, and quite a huge number were wrongfully convicted after being framed for crimes they never committed. However, judging from the exonerations, I am convinced that black prisoners who could be serving time for murder are more likely to be innocent compared to white murder convicts. Therefore, it is ill-informed to refer to black people as killers since statistics and research has shown that there have been outrageous incidences where black people have been framed for murders they never committed.

   Finally, I believe it is wrong to generalize all black people as lazy. Many black people from all walks of life have worked hard and succeeded in making their own living. For instance, there are quite a number of black business leaders such as Oprah Winfrey and Sean Combs, who has worked hard to be a respectable brand builder and marketer. Secondly, black people have succeeded in politics, for example, Barack Obama worked smart to become a black President in a country where his race is marginalized. Thirdly, black people are not wired as lazy and history shows that they have worked hard to fight against inequality and have achieved quite a lot in fighting injustices against the black race. Dissenters counter that African American people are hardwired to be lazy hence the high level of poverty in their communities, but they fail to

understand their plight and their underprivileged position (Helmreich 2). I believe that black people are not poor because they are lazy. They have worked very hard to alleviate themselves from poverty but they are pushed back by historical injustices that were committed against their race. They are not lazy, but victims of circumstances and of a past that has exposed them to unfavorable conditions such as poverty and limited opportunities. Overall, pop culture has stereotyped black people by portraying them as lazy, thieves, killers in the entertainment industry, sports and rap music. I believe that pop culture has nurtured racial stereotypes that negatively affect black people. Even though there are black people that commit crimes such as killing and stealing, it is wrong to fallaciously generalize and refer to all black people as thieves and killers even when some have upheld high moral standards in their society. Content shared in the form of entertainment has a great impact on people's conceptions of others in society. That said, it is incorrect to depict black people as lazy or generally as people of low moral standing.it is evident that racial differences have a great impact on how people perceive others. Nevertheless, this should not translate to racial disparities. Rather than spreading negatively influencing people's perception of black people, pop culture should instead sensitize people and spread messages of peaceful coexistence among members of the community regardless of one's race.

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