

Sexuality and violence

Literature, Russian Literature



Sexuality and Violence: The Myth of the Black Rapist This paper explores Angela Davis' Myth of the Black Rapist. In addition, it takes a closer look at two cases in which the Myth of the Black Rapist is exhibited and a summary of the events that followed with respect to African Americans.

Sexuality and Violence: The Myth of the Black Rapist

Many view sexual assault as the most effective form of socially controlling women (Pratt, 2010). In addition, Pratt (2010) believes that recent years have seen the advancement in myths to socially control sexual assaults among colored men. The Myth of the Black Rapist has long been evident in the African-American setup. A perfect example took place in 1931 with the Scottsboro Boys case (Pratt, 2010): two police runaway women, Bates, a minor and Prince, an adult, claimed to have been raped by black Americans after a fight between two gangs; blacks and whites after they were discovered to be wearing men's attire by officials. A crowd was waiting at the train terminus in Alabama to lynch the nine black men arrested of the rape act but the National Guard Forces prevented it. Nevertheless, they were tried by a white jury and found guilty labeling the crime as the most heinous against whites.

A second example is the Central Park Jogger case where the victim, Trisha Meili was raped and beaten severely leaving her in a coma and without memory of what happened. Police assumed that the crime was committed by several Latinos and black Americans. Consequently, an arrest of five men followed and all were imprisoned. In 2003, Matias Reyes, one of the five convicts confessed to have committed the crime alone and despite a match in DNA evidence collected, the initial prosecutor verbally opposed cancelling

of the initial convictions. Furthermore, a panel of police from New York City Police Department claimed that the initial number of suspects (five) was guilty.

Aspects of the Black Rapist Myth from the Two Cases

i. It is believed that sexual assault of a white woman by a colored man is not a crime against an individual but against whiteness.

ii. The accused are assumed to be guilty (Davis, 1981). For instance, Prince claimed to have been raped by twelve black men and instead of police looking for the twelve men specifically, all black Americans on the train were taken captive. Similarly, Meili's case saw Matias confess of being guilty yet the other four convicts were not voided and still assumed guilty.

In both cases, the victims were imprisoned despite the court failing to find sufficient evidence. From the non-white point of view, the harsh decisions made against the four men in the Meili's case led them to believe that any sexual activity against a white woman will be considered the most heinous of all.

References

Davis, A. (1981). *Women, race and class*. New York: Vintage Books.

Pratt, S. (2010). All our puzzles will disappear: Royce and the possibility of error. *Cognitio: Revista de Filosofia*.