

Essay on black men and public space

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



Cesar Augusto Gonzalez Professor Hargett English 1101 October 14, 2010

Vicious Cycle Throughout history, literature has served as a way of expression. Human beings have poured out their feelings onto paper, as long as there have been people interested in them. Common themes have risen through the ages, such as the contrast between light and dark. Darkness is known for its negative undertone. In earlier times, we saw darkness as an interpretation of evil; likewise, light represented God and all good.

From literature we, as a society, have built what later became social rules, giving rise to things such as prejudice. In Brent Staples essay “ Black Men and Public Space” this is clearly shown by the authors own experiences of antipathy and hostility towards him caused by his own self. In “ Black Men and Public Space”, Brent Staples begins by coming to the realization of the way he’d be viewed for the rest of his life. He describes feelings of uneasiness towards his newfound self-image. It all came to him one evening in an ally where his tall frame walked behind a young woman.

She proceeded to perceive him as a threat to her safety even her life, and race off into the night. Later on his -problem- took a deeper hit on him when even as a professional this image continued to follow him. It evolved into harm for himself when he is mistaken for a thief several times. Toward the end the author learns how to manage this issue by cleaning his image, and controlling his rage toward the ones who considered a criminal. Consistent rejection can cause a man -or woman to see the world as of one color or the other, to the extremes.

Thus creating a situation of self-blame where one might think and accept that every bad incident its their own fault. He is blaming himself for actions

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that occur without actual intent of the so-called attacker. In “ Black Men and Public Space,” Staples writes, “ My first victim was a woman” (566). This phrase creates a dark tone that only gets clearer as the essay moves on. The image of – the victim- is passed onto the author itself. And the fact that is proclaiming himself as an aggressor indicates that he has acknowledged this as a reality.

In today’s society, people have the tendency to change how they –act and react- toward certain groups of people, places of interaction, friends and strangers. It can range from lowering safety standards when ones home, to the point of running from someone that, by mistake, its portrayed and related to something harmful. This can create a unique experience, most of the time being of uneasiness and stress. Staples write, “ I First began to know the unwieldy inheritance I’d come into- the ability to alter public space in an ugly way” (566).

It is clearly stated in the previews quote that the author is now experimenting a new way of social awareness that it’s brought upon him by just being that way he is. It is surprising how fast people tend to judge yet it also can be way of protection. Even though the author might not be the real aggressor that does not takes the fact that another man like him could be the authentic one. Today’s civilization has grown with fear. Fear of loosing what’s theirs, fear of the police, fear of politics, fear of what’s unknown and different.

Sometimes this can manifest in avoidance of the subject but in some occasions it can be a little more –active-. Staples writes, “ And I soon gathered that being perceived as dangerous it’s a hazard in itself” (567). As

a result of his dangerous association the author realizes that it's unsafe to be outside too. As some women tend to opt just to sprint away from you, some men might choose to fight the problem. This brings concerns to the author who apart from being socially un-welcome is now threatened by his own naturally built image. Fear is accompanied by a need for survival.

Some animals grow being dominant, creating fear to control. Other just decide to hide hoping not to be involved into precarious situations. In "Black Men and Public Space", Staples describes, "I chose, perhaps unconsciously, to remain a shadow - timid, but a survivor" (568). Staples explain that he took the -smaller animal- path and tries to remain un-recognizable in order for him to have a safer journey around avoiding confrontation. Is easier to hide that to fight but in the long run that -easiness- brings other problems, where self-blame can evolve to depression and self-depreciation.

It comes a time in every man's life when he has to choose between himself and society. When he has to decide whether to stand on his own or simply hide his true self in order to escape confrontation, arguments and possible rejection. Most people have a tendency to - go with the flow- be just like everyone else. Staple writes, "I now take precautions to make myself less threatening" (568). This quote describes the idea previously expressed. He chooses to alter his image to make his journey safer. In order to add this newer safer self, he must subtract what he was before, losing his identity.

In Staples essay "Black Men and Public Space", big issues are explored and described in a way that we can relate to without getting lost in the context. On a narrow sense the essay can be viewed as how the author goes through the realization of how he is pictured, moving to the changes he has to make

to be -socially- less threatening. Doing this one can go a process of depression and losing identity. This is just the example of only one person but this case is not reserved to him only, it happens to almost everyone and in many different levels.

We are 6, 602, 224, 175 humans suffering form all kind of unreal and unfair treatment and as a result, hate and resentment are created, and in fact they are he main cause of racism and un fair treatment towards others thus creating a vicious cycle from which we need to get out in order for humans to walk though these crowded streets in harmony. Work Cited Brent Staples. “ Black Men and Public Space”. Four in One: Rhetoric, Reader, Research Guide, and Handbook. Eds. Eduard A. Dornan and Robert Dees. 5th Edition. Boston: Longman, 2011. 167-169. Print