

Black men and public space



All three essays focus on the societal differences amongst individuals as well as their impact. However, they differ in the way society perceives each difference. In *Black Men and Public Space*, Brent Staples discusses the stereotypes normally associated with African Americans. His narration leads the reader to believe that the majority of white women are, to some extent, afraid of young black males. In *There is No Unmarked Woman*, Deborah Tannen discusses the inferiority normally exhibited by women in our culture. She argues that men dominate almost all aspects of life as opposed to women who usually get the short end of the stick. In the last essay, *On Being a Cripple*, Nancy Mairs portrays the life of a cripple who faces daily challenges due to her disabilities. Due to her inability to perform regular tasks, her friends and family help out. However, Mairs hints at the fact that at times, the people around her get annoyed. All three of these essays normally had a woman who was marked as a “victim” which implies that gender comes into play in almost all circumstances.

It seems that all the authors imply that society always differentiates between genders by specifically talking about the impacts on women. Furthermore, all the essays describe negative situations or circumstances. In other words, instead of focusing on how a king might stand out in a crowd, the authors pick out the unprivileged individuals. Staples describes the negative stereotypes associated with young black males; Tannen refers to the social inferiority of women and Mairs illustrates the unfortunate life of a cripple.

In all circumstances, the targeted individuals suffer in one way or another. In contrast, the type of emotion felt by and against the protagonists differs

between the essays. In *Black Men and Public Space*, the black male feels ashamed of how women fearfully avoid him. While he feels that the allegations against him are false, society labels the African American as a criminal. In *There is No Unmarked Woman*, women feel oppressed as they were not born with the same social status as men. However, the author never discusses the views of males or how society as a whole looks at the situation.

She says from a women's perspective that men dominate in our culture, but does not give outside views on this idea. In *On Being a Cripple*, the cripple feels helpless as her disabilities prevent her from doing what she wants. The people around her felt sympathy towards her due to her situation while feeling a bit annoyed by the amount of help she needed. All three essays portrayed the differences in emotion associated with each situation.

Although they have some differences, they all attack the identity factors that exist in our society.