



Crime and Racial Constructions: Cultural Misinformation about African Americans in Media and Academia

Jeanette Covington

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Crime and Racial Constructions: Cultural Misinformation about African Americans in Media and Academia focuses on how film images of dangerous, hedonistic blacks have assumed greater significance since blacks protested racial injustice during the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. It does so by reviewing a number of films that have been released from the 1970s until the present in which black males are depicted as violent and threatening. It likewise considers how these same films represent black females as prostitutes; drug addicts; and irresponsible, abusive mothers who spawn violence in their children. Because these on-screen images of a violent, apolitical, and immoral black underclass find their way into the criminological literature, the book also takes a look at how criminologists use these images to link crime to underclass culture. Both Hollywood and criminologists alike manage to ignore how black activism during the 1960s social movements actually sparked black opposition to the kind of black-on-black crime that is routinely depicted on-screen. By taking a critical look at these negative images, Crime and Racial Constructions seeks to correct some of the distortions that arise from the undue academic and cinematic focus on black criminals at the expense of racially conscious blacks.

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