

# SLUT PRIDE



**THE REAPPROPRIATION ATTEMPT BY SLUTWALK**

**Siena Noe**

**“I’ve been told I’m not supposed to say this. However, women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimized.”**

**~Michael Sanguinetti, Toronto police officer**

# WHAT IS SLUTWALK?

- SlutWalk is a **protest march** against sexual violence and what is called victim-blaming, **elements** of rape culture
- According to Marshall University's Women's Center Website, rape culture refers to "an environment in which rape is prevalent and in which sexual violence against women is normalized and excused in the media and popular culture. Rape culture is perpetuated through the use of misogynistic language, the objectification of women's bodies, and the glamorization of sexual violence, thereby creating a society that disregards women's rights and safety" ("Rape Culture").

## MOVEMENT GOALS

- **Reclaim "slut"**
- **Raise awareness**
- **Unify across races and ethnicities (United States Third Wave Feminism)**

# **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- (1) In regards to United States Third Wave feminist goals, are SlutWalks achieving the desired long term outcome?**
- (2) Is the strategy of reclaiming “slut” having the desired effect?**

# ARTIFACT

## Open Letter from the Black Women's Blueprint to SlutWalk Toronto

### Excerpt:

**“We are deeply concerned. As Black women and girls we find no space in SlutWalk, no space for participation and to unequivocally denounce rape and sexual assault as we have experienced it. We are perplexed by the use of the term “slut” and by any implication that this word, much like the word ‘Ho’ or the ‘N’ word should be re-appropriated.”**



# CLUSTER CRITICISM

## STEPS

- Identify the key terms
  - Frequency
  - Intensity
- Chart the clusters
- Find the patterns
- Name the motive

# PER THE ANALYSIS

## THEMES

- Reinforcement
- Oppression
- Lack of Space
- Difference

## KEY TERMS

- “Slut” – 8x
- “Space” – 7x
- “Black” or “of color” – 19x
- “Rape” – 15x

# **REINFORCEMENT** OF RAPE CULTURE AND MISOGYNY

- **Found most prominently around terms “slut” and “Black”**
- **In regards to treatment of African American women specifically**
  - “sexist/racist vernacular,” “validating,” “normalizing,” “encourage,” and “reinforce”
- **Concept of women as objects**
  - “bodies,” “misrepresentations”
- **“Acceptance” near the term “slut”**
- **“Slut” as devil term despite SlutWalk’s attempt to cast it as god term**

# OPPRESSION

- **Linked most closely to terms “rape” and “Black” / “of color”**
- **“Oppression” itself, “trivialization” in regards to sexual violence, “absence of justice,” and “racist/sexist structures”**
- **“Rape . . . is a radical weapon of oppression” (paragraph 8)**
  - “attack,” “violation,” “assault,” “dehumanize,” and “devalue”
- **Blacks treated historically as second class citizens in U.S.**
  - “kidnappings,” “lynching,” “misrepresentations,” “struggle,” “dehumanize,” “devaluation,” and “erasure”
- **Prevalence of rape culture and racism**
  - “everywhere,” “culture,” “every level of society,” “institutionalized ideology”



# LACK OF SPACE

- **“Space” interchangeable with “privilege,” African American women find themselves without space in SlutWalk because they lack the privilege white women are privy to**
- **African American women as crucial components to a successful Feminist Movement**
  - Verb terms imply action: “participation,” “denounce” in reference to “rape and sexual assault,” and “annihilate” in reference to sexist slurs

# DIFFERENCE

- Terms and phrases that express this difference found primarily around key terms “slut” and “Black”
- “clothed or unclothed bodies as **unable to be raped** whether on the auction block, in the fields or on living room television screens”
- **History as main reason for difference**
  - “historically,” “histories”
  - “Jim Crow kidnappings,” “lynchings”
  - “Civil Rights Movement,” “Women’s Suffrage,” “Black Nationalist and Black Feminist Movements”
  - “since the 19<sup>th</sup> century”

# CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS



- **Language is powerful!**
- **Understand the effects of trying to reappropriate “slut” to better combat rape culture**
- **Future studies:**
  - Primary artifacts from SlutWalks (posters, lipstick text across a participant’s breasts, etc.)
  - Other responses to SlutWalk Movement
  - Responses to the open letter from Black Women’s Blueprint

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVISITED

- (1) In regards to United States Third Wave feminist goals, are SlutWalks achieving the desired long term outcome? **NO.**
- (2) Is the strategy of reclaiming “slut” having the desired effect? **NO.**

Reappropriation of “slut” through SlutWalk excludes certain races and ethnicities, decreasing solidarity within the Feminist Movement.

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**Method developed by Kenneth Burke**

