Brittannie Luscavage

Dr. Sherry

Lit For Young Adults

February 22, 2012

Lens 2 Monster Critical

In Myers novel, *Monster*, the line between guilt and innocence are skewed. Myers shows how the color of someone’s skin can determine how people view them. Right off the bat Steve Harmon is viewed as a “monster”. There is no concrete evidence that points to Steve Harmon as being the murderer. However, this s how he is scene because of the way he has grown up and the color of his skin.

Steve doesn’t understand what he did wrong to deserve this. He knows he is innocent, but everyone else sees his as guilty. The reader knows from Steve’s writings that Steve is actually innocent and was really just in the wrong place at the wrong time. The jury is shown that Steve is a young black man, growing up in a rough neighborhood. He is friends with other young black man, some of them being criminals. The jury is also told that Steve was at the scene of the crime where a man was killed at a drug store. Being presented with only this information, it would be hard not to think that Steve was in fact the murderer.

Myers novel shows the prejudice that people possess. I would like to say that I would view Steve as being innocent until proven guilty, but I’m not sure I would. Given his background and that he was at the murder scene my mind would think it was him right off the bat. I would then probably be persuaded by the facts that it may not have been him. Myers novel illustrates how people are influences by common assumptions about others. The environment that they were brought up in dictates how they view others.

There is a fine line between innocence and guilt when it comes to a predetermined verdict. The jury already Steve as being guilty before he could even plea his case. Unfortunately, this isn’t only in Myers books. Far too often people are seen as being “bad” based on the color of their skin, the environment they grew up in, or the people they tend to hang around with. The jury in Harmon’s case represents the opposing views of society.