

From Medusa to #MeToo: Different Discourses on Sexual Violence with Particular Reference to the Situation in Serbia

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Abstract : Sexual violence is a social fact that is both ubiquitous and invisible. From the myth of Medusa and Lucretia, through legends about sexual violence in war conflicts, to Hollywood films and other productions — sexual violence exists as a motive, implicitly or explicitly. Many Hollywood films contain a scene of rape, and the media is increasingly reporting on cases of sexual violence, often not following the guidelines for sensitized and ethical reporting. On the other hand, sexual violence remains an invisible phenomenon if we are talking from the perspective of the survivors. Only the wave of women's testimonies that flooded social networks after the #MeToo campaign in 2017 pointed to the prevalence and to the existing ideas about sexual violence that persist at the level of myths in society, but also through formal norms in the hearing of justice systems. The problem is also in the way rape is defined in the criminal codes of different countries, and all of this affects the reproduction of sexual violence. Precisely because it is a deeply intimate experience of violence, but also a structural problem; on the other hand, understanding sexual violence requires sociological imagination. Accordingly, the subject of this paper is the presentation and analysis of various discourses on sexual violence throughout history — pre/anti-feminist, feminist and criminal law, with particular reference to the situation in Serbia. The paper uses a critical review and comparative analysis of various sources on sexual violence, as well as an analysis of the impact of these sources on the modern legal framework that regulates sexual violence. Research has shown that despite feminist contributions, myths about sexual violence persist and influence the treatment of women who have survived violence in criminal systems and society in general.

Keywords : sexual violence, gender-based violence, MeToo campaign, feminism, Serbia

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