

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: Big, Black C%#K: Desire, Race and Masculinity

Abstract approved:

Elizabeth Sheehan

My thesis examines perceptions of power in relation to white and black masculinity in the United States. The introduction invokes the work of Mireille Miller-Young, Hortense Spillers, Vincent Woodard and Hiram Pérez as a foundation to ground my discussion of agency, consumption, desire, homoeroticism and the characteristics of the Mandingo, which occur in both articles. In my first article, "Who's Hungry: Consumption in James Baldwin's 'Going to Meet the Man'" I argue that "Going to Meet the Man" serves as a case study for exploring how black masculinity has the agency to consume its white counterpart. Drawing on Spillers' theory of pornotroping and Vincent Woodard's understanding of consumption, my article argues that Baldwin's short story encourages readers to recognize that black men can and do have the ability to at once be othered and affective in a way that impacts everything white masculinity touches.

My second article, "Power and Pleasure: Mandingo Agency in Cuckolding and Cuckolding Pornography" continues to interrogate black masculine agency by analyzing cuckolding and amateur cuckolding pornography. I examine an amateur cuckolding video that was uploaded to a popular pornography website, which offers a narrative that illustrates the power dynamics between white and black men. Furthermore, I suggest that although hegemonic narratives lead us to read these sexual encounters as strengthening white masculinity, by inhabiting precisely what white masculinity desires and can never achieve, black masculinity is disrupting this hegemonic system. My hope is that the work that has been done in this project

will serve as another framework that can be used to identify the ways in which white supremacy and sexual politics interact and systemically impact the U.S.

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Big, Black C%#K: Desire, Race and Masculinity

by

Emalydia Flenory

A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for

the degree of

Master of Arts

Presented May 29, 2020
Commencement June 2020

Master of Arts thesis of Emalydia Flenory presented on May 29, 2020

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Emalydia Flenory, Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my inspiring and supporting advisor, Lily. Thank you for agreeing to be my advisor and for pushing me in the best way possible. Thank you for always being available to brainstorm and provide direction. Most importantly, thank you for always seeing me as a whole person. To the rest of my committee—Dr. Thompson, Dr. Ribero and Dr. Boovy—you all have supported my work and me as an individual in so many ways. I truly appreciate all of your kind words, direction and laughs.

To the women of color who have come into my life and filled my cup. You all gave me the community I needed to finish this degree and grow as a person. Academia is a space that is not kind to us, but knowing that I always have a community to lean on, makes this experience worth it. I truly cherish each and every one of you. Thank you for making my experience at this university truly special.

To my thesis writing group for being a consistent and steady sounding board, for reading through the rough stuff and for always ensuring that I never felt alone. I will always be thankful for our late nights at coffee shops and for having the opportunity to be surrounded by your incredible minds.

To my partner, Chad. There are no words that can express my appreciation for your unwavering emotional support. Whenever I was uncertain, you were there with love, kindness, and reassurance that I was on the right path. Please know that I could not have made it to this point without you.

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Big, Black C#K: Desire, Race and Masculinity
By: Emalydia Flenory

INTRODUCTION

The white man's unadmitted and apparently, to him, unspeakable—private fears and longings are projected onto the Negro. The only way he can be released from the Negro's tyrannical power over him is to consent, in effect, to become black himself, to become a part of that suffering and dancing country that he now watches wistfully from the heights of his lonely power and, armed with spiritual traveller's checks, visits surreptitiously after dark.

—James Baldwin *The Fire Next Time*

The source of white anger exists then in the anticipated vicarious experience of the white male, a participation by proxy in the imagined delights enjoyed by the black male in interracial sex relations. The anger arises not from his indignation that 'his' white female is being 'violated,' but from the thought that she is being violated by someone who is having a far greater pleasure in the process than he might have.

—Charles Stember *Sexual Racism: The Emotional Barrier to an Integrated Society*

Much of what we perceive of black masculinity as an identity has been a reflection of what white masculinity has constructed it to be.¹ This reflection is understood by a collective "we"—all genders, sexualities, races and ethnicities, and black men are acutely aware of this perception. We are taught that black masculinity is fairly one-dimensional, something to be feared and more generally, along with black people as a whole, an identity that is reduced down to a thing to be oppressed rather than something human. However, at the same time, black masculinity is an identity that is constantly being desired. It exudes a sort of raw sexual energy and inhibition and is able to reach a level of pleasure that white masculinity can only dream of. Black masculinity, stripped of its humanity, is ultimately something to be literally, socially, sexually, and symbolically consumed by this collective "we." My project is intended to enter into

¹ Throughout this project, I use the terms black masculinity and black men. I want to make clear that I do not recognize these terms as synonymous; rather, I view black men as the individuals with subjectivity and black masculinity as the understood tropes, characteristics and stereotypes that can be attributed to black men.

the current conversation circulating around this point in disciplines such as gender and sexuality studies, literature, ethnic studies, and film studies to ask, "How do we talk about blackness without only talking about oppression?"² More specifically, I am interested in exploring how, when working to expand our discussion outside of just oppression, we can also consider the accessibility of pleasure, desire and agency that black men are presumed to have with their masculinity.

Too often, popular discourses have taken this aforementioned perception of black masculinity as truth and have reinforced narratives that black masculinity is something to be consumed. This position is articulated without any consideration to the agency that black masculinity could potentially have in this relationship with its white counterpart. My project follows a similar trajectory as Mireille Miller-Young's, whose scholarship has been indispensable to my work. In *A Taste for Brown Sugar: Black Women in Pornography* she states that one of her goals with that book is to rethink, "the meaning of agency in relationship to black women's sexuality" by suggesting that we expand our understanding of agency as a concept that is equal to sexual freedom. Instead, she urges us to, "read agency as a facet of complex personhood within larger embedded relations of subordination" that, depending on the particular historical moment, we can see manifesting itself differently with differing levels of power. She presents the possibility of understanding agency as a, "dialectical capacity for pleasure and pain, exploration and denial, or for progressive change as well as everyday survival" (17).

Although my work is focused on black masculinity rather than femininity, I am also invested in expanding how agency is recognized in the sexual political landscape. I, too, believe

²One of the driving forces behind this conversation would be the work of Mireille Miller-Young and Xavier Livermon who co-authored a chapter in *Black Sexual Economies: Race and Sex in a Culture of Capital*. Here, they critically examine the sexual labor of the Mandingo within pornography and sex work.

that agency must be examined as more than simply meaning sexually liberated. By utilizing Miller-Young's interpretation of agency, I am able to connect how agency is manifesting itself in James Baldwin's "Going to Meet the Man" ("GTMTM") to how these relationships appear and interact in contemporary amateur cuckolding pornography. Through examining these texts side-by-side, the unexpected ability black masculinity has to consume its white counterpart shifts into the realm of possibility. In doing so, my project simultaneously illustrates white masculinity's dependence on black masculinity while also disrupting perceptions of power and desire in order to bring awareness to how these relationships are interacting. Contrary to the narratives that popular discourses perpetuate, the relationships between black and white masculinity are not happening in a vacuum of our bedrooms; these desires and aversions are always spilling out into our public lives and have material consequences.

I want to underscore exactly how black masculinity is consuming its white counterpart. Black masculinity exposes how white masculinity is sexually inept due to its reliance on its black counterpart. Black masculinity upends traditional narratives by demonstrating that white masculinity is not the ideal to be desired; therefore, black men are able to have the power of discourse to perpetuate whatever narratives they want about white men/masculinity. Rather than being something novel, this control that black men have has always been lying underneath the superficial discourses that white masculinity has been perpetuating.

What is remarkable about the discourse surrounding black masculinity is that it is something that does not only benefit white masculinity, despite the fact that it was constructed by white masculinity. Whiteness, of course, practices othering whenever possible to uplift itself, but with black masculinity, whiteness has made a mistake. Ideally, whiteness would never construct a narrative that would be disadvantageous to itself. However, in the case of black masculinity,

whiteness has generated a narrative that epitomizes the ideal man as being someone who exudes brute strength and sexual prowess. The trope of the Mandingo, like the stereotypes of black sexuality produced by what Hortense Spillers' calls pornotroping, represents something to be both desired and feared while also only being accepted within the confines of consensual sex. Additionally, black masculinity has the ability to be sexually fulfilled while exerting a strong hegemonic, patriarchal dominance. Consequently, white masculinity has created something that is unattainable. It is this—the inability to reach this level of masculinity—that fuels the violence and aggression enacted toward black men in both public and private spheres. It is my contention that the dynamics of this relationship allows black masculinity to consume white masculinity because it is able to embody exactly what white masculinity can never be.

The objectification of black bodies that has been instructed by white masculinity has made blackness available to be used as a resource for imagining and fantasizing. I explore this fantasy and desire within literature in my first article, “Who’s Hungry: Consumption in James Baldwin’s ‘Going to Meet the Man.’” In this article, I examine the ways in which black masculinity breaks down white masculinity into something to be objectified and consumed by way of Baldwin writing from the perspective of a white male protagonist. To bolster my claim, I bring in the work of Spillers, Vincent Woodard and others. These scholars have produced work that aids in understanding how race, power, and performance of masculinity all engage with one another at all times. Spiller's theory of pornotroping supports my effort to do this work. As Amber Jamilla Musser articulates, "To think with pornotroping is to acknowledge that some people circulate as highly charged affective objects, while simultaneously being positioned outside of the parameters of normative sexuality and subjectivity."³ Recognizing that black men

³ Jamilla Musser, Amber. *Sensual Excess: Queer Femininity and Brown Jouissance*. NYU Press, 2018.

can and do have the ability to at once be othered and effective in a way that impacts everything white masculinity touches will aid in grounding my assertions throughout this project.

In my analysis of "GTMTM," I implement the aforementioned understanding of pornotroping and agency as the cornerstones for my contention that "GTMTM" serves as a case study for exploring how black masculinity consumes its white counterpart. In the act of writing this story, Baldwin is demonstrating one way that black masculinity can actively participate in consuming white masculinity. Because Baldwin makes his protagonist a cisgender, heterosexual white man, readers are able to explore and critique white masculinity from a nuanced position. Effectively, Baldwin is the author of both black and white masculinity. Moreover, this story illustrates how white and black masculinity in the U.S. are interwoven by exploring how white masculinity depends on its black counterpart. Through this process, I argue, "GTMTM" disrupts the traditional model of oppressor/oppressed that is deeply rooted in the narratives of consumption of blackness.

Another point of contention that my project addresses is how homoeroticism manifests itself within "GTMTM." In his book, *A Taste for Brown Bodies: Gay Modernity and Cosmopolitan Desire*, Hiram Pérez notes that Baldwin provides his readers a compelling way to examine the formation of whiteness.

What I find useful about this story is its location of a nexus between racialization and sexuality in the formation of whiteness. Baldwin demonstrates how white supremacist fantasies about the black male body construct forms of white masculinity that are not necessarily heterosexual...Desire for the black man's body generates white male

sexualities...Baldwin's story suggests that homoerotic interracialism functions as a common denominator for modern male heterosexual and homosexual identities.⁴

Pérez makes an important distinction here. Not only is he suggesting that white masculinity depends on black masculinity, but he also suggests that there may be a spectrum of desire that white masculinity experiences toward blackness. While one could read "GTMTM" through a homosexual lens, or a heterosexual lens that repels any indication that blackness is to be desired, this reading does not allow for the possibility that this desire could exist without the end goal being penetration. Thus, I prioritize reading this text through a homoerotic lens rather than a strictly homo-/hetero- sexual lens, which gives readers the freedom to view this relationship on a spectrum rather than a binary.

This homoerotic framework is what bridges my first and second article together. Through my interrogation of Baldwin's piece, I began to explore 21st century manifestations of the tension between desire and contempt that white masculinity has regarding black masculinity. Ultimately, the characteristics that have been attributed to black masculinity—chiefly hypersexuality, having a large penis, and aggression—are the exact characteristics of the Mandingo. In considering these 21st century manifestations and the Mandingo, my research led me to the field of porn studies. Within porn studies, efforts have been made to destigmatize pornography as a genre of film to be critiqued and studied. Through this work, the construction of black masculinity has been examined because of the already understood and accepted characteristics attributed to it.

⁴ Pérez, Hiram. *A Taste for Brown Bodies: Gay Modernity and Cosmopolitan Desire*. NYU Press, 2015.

One of the factors that is driving this project, especially in relation to my second article, is the effort to destigmatize sex, desire and pornography. More specifically, I am invested in critically speculating about the possibilities of blackness in every sphere. Porn studies scholar Gail Dines has articulated that, "To ignore the racist codings of black men in pornography in favor of a simplistic, decontextualized reading of the pornographic text as subversive is to operate in a world of white privilege where being a "fucker" is a status symbol with no real-world burden."⁵ I would agree that attempting to decontextualize black masculinity completely from its racist codings is reductive and arguably foolish. However, I do not see my efforts within this project as striving to minimize the black masculine experience as Dines expresses. By using these racist codings as boundaries rather than tools to work through these relationships, I believe scholars such as Dines are missing an opportunity to grapple with a wider range of these real-world burdens.

My second article, "Power and Pleasure: Mandingo Agency in Cuckolding & Cuckolding Pornography" continues to examine black masculine agency by analyzing cuckolding and amateur cuckolding pornography. I analyze an amateur cuckolding video that was uploaded to a popular pornography website, which offers a narrative that illustrates the power dynamics between white and black men. Furthermore, my article suggests that although hegemonic narratives lead us to read these sexual encounters as strengthening white masculinity because white men must consent to having their female partner penetrated by the Mandingo, by inhabiting precisely what white masculinity desires and can never achieve, black masculinity is disrupting this hegemonic system.

⁵ Dines, Gail. "The White Man's Burden: Gonzo Pornography and the Construction of Black Masculinity." *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism*, vol. 18, no. 12, 2006, <https://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1250&context=yjlf>. Accessed 6 April 2020.

The genre of cuckolding has served as an extremely generative environment for exploring how the themes of racism and desire that are found in "GTMTM" have been repackaged for the 21st century. From the perspective of black masculinity, cuckolding has been a place in which black men have the freedom to explore their own sexuality and desires. Additionally, by inhabiting the Mandingo, black men have access to a form of sexual fulfillment that white masculinity can never access. White men's dissatisfaction cannot be contained to the bedroom or a website; there is a breakdown in white masculine subjectivity, which allows black men to socially consume white masculinity. This reading can also help to understand Baldwin's construction of his protagonist, Jesse, and how readers should examine each of their masculinities.

My discussion in both articles is not meant to propose that there is a monolithic explanation or understanding of black masculinity that we should recognize. Black masculinity, like any other identity, is abundantly nuanced. Trying to perceive the relationship black men have to their own sexuality or the Mandingo in any generalized fashion would surely be reductive and restricting our ways of comprehending different subjectivities. In order to contribute to the current dialogue that takes into consideration the complexities of black masculinity, I selected a video titled "Husband watch wife with a big black cock" found on the popular pornography website XNXX.com. There are, of course, many cuckolding videos available; however, this video is particularly effective because of the amount of dialogue that is made as well as the content and implications of the dialogue. The Mandingo, for example, repeatedly asserts his masculinity by smacking his penis on the husband's forehead and the wife reaffirms the necessity for having the Mandingo there in order to feel sexually fulfilled. In other

words, this video provides a narration of the sexual politics that are continuously occurring every day.

The final aspect that I explore that adds some complexity to my overall discussion of black masculine agency and consumption is the practice of "cleaning up," which is commonly found within cuckolding videos but is also its own subgenre. Cleaning up is understood as the ingestion of semen, and in the case of cuckolding, is typically of the white male ingesting the Mandingo's semen. The act of cleaning up offers viewers and those participating a material way to inhabit black masculinity in a way that merely spectating does not. Moreover, cleaning up illuminates another way in which homoeroticism is at play during these sexual acts. Scholars have typically read the act of cleaning up as not necessarily homosexual; they argue that the purpose of ingesting the semen is to protect the purity of the white race.⁶ However, I believe that by using a homoerotic framework, this behavior can be understood the white man materially ingesting the sexual prowess of the Mandingo that he so desperately wants. Through cleaning up, he feels empowered and reaffirmed in his own masculinity. Because the Mandingo is able to witness this cleaning up, he is aware and reaffirmed in the power of his masculinity; furthermore, it becomes clear that white masculinity needs the Mandingo in order to feel empowered and sexually dominant.

Again, the fuel for this project is my desire to empower black men to have more control over the narratives that are being circulated about them. For too long, black masculinity has been reduced down into being overly aggressive and hypersexual, and discourses have perpetuated them being the victims of consumption. By bridging the gap between public and private in

⁶ Miller-Young and Livermon explore this in their chapter "Black Stud, White Desire: Black Masculinity in Cuckold Pornography and Sex Work."

relation to desire and racial violence, an opportunity becomes available to reclaim black masculine agency.

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Who's Hungry: Consumption in James Baldwin's "Going to Meet the Man"

For Baldwin, it is not 'the strange meaning of being black' that is the 'problem of the Twentieth Century,' nor even 'the problem of the color line.' Baldwin makes the central problem of the twentieth century the strange meaning of being white, as a structure of felt experience that motivates and is motivated by other denials.'

—Marlon Ross "White Fantasies of Desire: Baldwin and the Racial Identities of Sexuality"

INTRODUCTION

Throughout Baldwin's lifetime, much of the work he created unpacks the psyche of whiteness in relation to racial violence and desire for the other. Baldwin's 1965 piece "Going to Meet the Man" ("GTMTM") from his larger collection of short stories under the same title, offers, arguably, one of the most visceral explorations into the white psyche. "GTMTM" is written from the perspective of a white male sheriff, Jesse, in the Jim Crow south. The story begins with the focus being on Jesse's impotence to please his wife, Grace, and closes with his sexual gratification and fulfillment. Most of the story's focus is on recollections of his day at work and childhood memories of witnessing a lynching for the first time. Baldwin constantly makes associations between the violence that Jesse is inflicting (and witnessing being inflicted) onto black men and Jesse's sexual arousal.

This complex entanglement of violence and desire births an underlying homoeroticism to the entire ideology of racism between white and black men as well as a new way to examine consumption. As ethnic and queer studies scholar Hiram Pérez neatly puts it, "Baldwin demonstrates how white supremacist fantasies about the black male body construct forms of

white masculinity that are not necessarily heterosexual”(66).⁷ Throughout "GTMTM" Baldwin makes explicit the fact that Jesse needs to imagine himself embodying the prowess of a black man as opposed to being with a black man to gain any sort of confidence within himself to succeed in the role of the heterosexual man.

Many scholars of the African diaspora remark on the fact that blackness and its masculinity are set up to be consumed by whiteness; this implies a sort of passive participation on the part of the black individual, which suggests a lack of agency. I would like to begin my intervention into this larger conversation by interrogating what types of consumption are occurring between black and white people and will be using “GTMTM” as a vehicle for this exploration. I argue that the act of consumption, which manifests itself in a variety of ways, is something that black masculinity *can* actively participate in. Through the text’s very creation, Baldwin is actively participating in consumption by offering this story and Jesse’s white masculinity to be consumed by his readers. Furthermore, this story exposes how white and black masculinity in the U.S. are bound together by exploring how white masculinity constructs and depends on its black counterpart.⁸ Through this process, “GTMTM” disrupts the traditional model of oppressor/oppressed that is embedded in accounts of how whiteness consumes blackness.

The intention of my discussion is that it be used as a platform to explore not if, but *how* these conflicting masculinities influence our education, legislation and policy, environmental

⁷ Pérez goes on to state that, “desire for the black man’s body generates white male sexualities...Baldwin’s story suggests that homoerotic interracialism functions as a common denominator for modern male heterosexual and homosexual identities” (66).

⁸ I’m invoking boundness from the work of Lisa A. Beard who states that “white racial identity and white supremacist ideology function quite well nearby people of color because both are fundamentally structured by the disavowal of ‘flesh and bone’ kin and the transformation of kin into property”(379). In other words, white racial identity understands itself by what it projects it is not—black.

resources, economy, popular culture, etc. My assertion is that "GTMTM" is a text that offers a viable basis to engage in conversations about the erotic nature of racism and the homoerotic consumption that white masculinity craves while also recognizing that black masculinity has the power to consume as well.

Drawing from Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark*, I would like to offer some grounding for my claim that black and white masculinities are intertwined. Morrison states that "the fabrication of an Africanist persona is reflexive; an extraordinary meditation on the self; a powerful exploration of the fears and desires that reside in the writerly conscious" (17). Although Morrison is speaking about how white authors construct black characters within literature, I argue that this idea can also play out in how white people imagine blackness to be in reality, and more specifically, how white masculinity imagines its black counterpart.⁹ More importantly, I would like to interrogate how the way in which Baldwin captures this reflexive process that white masculinity participates in ultimately provides his readers an avenue to critically examine white masculinity in a nuanced way. This new avenue that Baldwin provides serves as a form of consumption of white masculinity for readers.

To clarify: I understand the relationship that black and white men have with one another's masculinity is one that is in constant motion. With this understanding, I reject the idea that white and black masculinity are somehow detached from one another and to destabilize the notion that this power to consume can only be held by whiteness. Another theoretical framework for which I am grounding my assertions is found in scholar Vincent Woodard's book *The Delectable Negro*:

⁹ Baldwin being a black queer man writing through a white heterosexual man offers an interesting dynamic to this model that Morrison presents, and I think this additional complexity should be explored through further research. For now, I would like to narrow my examination into how the pornotropic and homoerotic tendencies toward black masculinity of Jesse are a reflexion of his own insecurities of his own manhood, which informs the way he consumes black masculinity.

Human Consumption and Homoeroticism within U.S. Slave Culture. Woodard understands the definition of consumption to span from “the literal murder and eating of black persons to what we might think of as metaphoric acts. I refer to these metaphoric acts—which encompass starving, flesh-seasoning rituals, and sexual modes of consumption” (6). While Woodard’s discussion is predominately situated within the parameters of slave culture in America, I am interested in examining how his literal understanding of consumption—murder—and his metaphoric understanding—sexual— operate in the larger paradigm of racism and masculinity within the U.S.

An important note about Woodard's text is that its focus is on blackness and the black perspective. He spends little time diving into the intricacies of how whiteness engages with these ideas other than that whiteness has always been an affliction for black people. In doing so, there is a missed opportunity to explore what whiteness loses or gains from these relationships in the reflexive way that Morrison describes. Thus, his work reinforces the perceived lack of agency that black masculinity has. Because of this, his work raises the question: if black people are constantly being consumed, are they able to consume whiteness at all? Herein lies gap in Woodard's text, which I hope to fill with the help of Baldwin’s work. I do not believe that Woodard would state that black people are passive victims in the act of consumption; however, due to the scope of his text, this is somewhat implied. I reject the idea that black people, and particularly for my discussion, black masculinity, is or ever has only filled the role of the victim.

I want to reinforce the notion that the way in which black masculinity is able to consume its white counterpart is by existing in popular discourse the way white masculinity demands them to exist. This (sub)conscious inhabiting of the Mandingo showcases how “inferior” white masculinity is sexually by not being able to assert its masculinity without black masculinity's

support. In this way, white masculinity is not the ideal to be desired in an inverted pornotroping sense; in other words, I am not suggesting that white masculinity is then able to be literally, metaphorically and symbolically consumed in the very same way blackness is. However, I am suggesting that white masculinity becomes a visible, weaker actor that black masculinity then has the power of discourse over to produce the narratives about white masculinity as it sees fit. This agency is not something that is novel, rather an action that has always been engaged with underneath the superficial narratives that white masculinity has perpetuated.

This strangeness of being white is something that Baldwin explored in various ways throughout his work. Whiteness is strange in the way it “others” other groups, but when it comes to blackness and masculinity, whiteness has had a misstep. In an ideal world, whiteness would separate itself as superior in every way. It would not allow for any presumed “inferior” races to achieve more than them in any context; yet, when it comes to black masculinity in particular, whiteness has constructed an idea of a being that exemplifies strength and peak manhood in the sense of biology and desire. Black masculinity offers complete satisfaction and pleasure, dominance and assertion. As a result, white masculinity has created something that it can never obtain, which fuels the violence and aggression it feels must be exerted onto black men. This relationship, I argue, ultimately allows black masculinity to consume white masculinity largely because it has the ability to embody exactly what whiteness desires, uprooting the standard power structure. The consumption that occurs is significant because it has the potential to influence everything that white masculinity engages with.

In order to explore this corner of consumption and its connection to the larger conversation about racial dynamics in America, I provide literary critic Hortense Spillers' theory

of pornotroping as a way to enter my discussion.¹⁰ Spillers' famously coined the term "pornotroping" to describe the process by which black flesh becomes material for white fantasy. Although Spillers' discussion focuses largely on the effect pornotroping has on black women, I believe that her theory is equally as credible when considering men and masculinity. Building upon Spiller's concept of pornotroping, I offer a means by which we can begin to understand this complex exchange between black and white masculinity. Furthermore, by drawing from Spillers' and Woodard's theories and implementing their work as a foundation to a close reading of "GTMTM", we can also examine how, as a result of these distorted or refracted constructions of masculinity, we, as a nation, continue to struggle with understanding some of the systemic ways racism operates in America—one of them being how homoeroticism operates in tandem with it.

HUNGER FOR THE OTHER

There has been substantial scholarship published that has considered the ways in which "GTMTM" explores homoeroticism, masculinity and the consumption or fetishization of blackness, and that work has informed my claim—that blackness is an active participant in consumption. One of the texts that has informed my claim is "Papas' Baby: Impossible Paternity in *Going to Meet the Man*," by ethnic studies scholar Matt Brim. In this piece, he argues that Baldwin's entire collection, "GTMTM" included, explores what it means to be white and that reading each of the stories together within the collection offer readers the ability "to

¹⁰ In her invaluable article "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," Spillers introduces a theory of body transforming into flesh by way of the Middle Passage. Furthermore, she argues that through the introduction and enactment of slavery, Africans who had agency and were seen as people or bodies, became commodified and reduced to cargo or flesh en route to America. Because the humanity is stripped from the African, as she suggests, it is easier for whiteness to see blackness as an object to desire. "The captive body becomes the sources of an irresistible, destructive sensuality...at the same time—in stunning contradiction—the captive body reduces to a thing, becoming a *being* for the captor..." (67).

defamiliarize, to make strange, whiteness” (173). Brim’s discussion has been extremely vital in working to understand how exactly homoeroticism plays a role in white masculinity and its constructions of its black counterpart. I believe that Brim’s argument, however, does not go far enough. Though comprehensive, Brim’s article does not address how exactly these white projections of black masculinity affect popular discourses in America. I believe this is where the work of Pérez fills some of this gap and helps to situate my work.

In his chapter entitled, “Going to Meet the Man' in Abu Ghraib," Pérez argues that “GTMTM” exposes how pervasive queer desire is in how we construct white masculinity in the U.S. Moreover, he states that “dominant white masculinity—which may include various U.S. institutionalizations such as Jim Crow, U.S. military culture, and neocolonialism —never perfectly aligns with heterosexuality” (53). In other words, these ideas of white masculinity that are perpetuated, either intergenerationally within whiteness or within or popular discourses in the U.S., are fundamentally queer and are riddled with elements of desire. I want to emphasize the importance of this point because it helps to bring forth the idea that by recognizing that many of the systems within American culture that are perpetually presented as hyper-heterosexual and masculine are constructed narratives that are self-serving. If we are able to critically examine where these narratives are derived from and who they benefit, then we can begin to re-examine what constitutes white masculinity to begin with.

While scholars such as Brim and Pérez have pointed to the homoerotic nature of this story in relation to Jesse's impotence only being remedied by his memory of the lynching and castration of a black man in his childhood, I would like to offer another layer into this homoerotic reading. Not only is Jesse unable to perform unless he imagines himself as a black man in order to please his wife's supposed desires, throughout the text, there are suggestions of

Jesse wanting to consume various parts of black men in general, which has been instilled in him from a young age. Through the flashback of him attending a "picnic" with his family and community--an event that was of celebratory nature for the white people, we can see how Jesse's father may have also had similar desires. All of these desires held within these white male characters work as a synecdoche for the white male population, whiteness in general and arguably our government.

I believe Pérez and Brim's efforts are imperative in grasping the complexities of not only masculinity but desire, racism and the multiplicity of consumption that occurs. They, like Woodard, however, are nonetheless focused on how whiteness consumes blackness. Their work does not examine how black masculinity could perhaps internalize these projections that white masculinity creates and perpetuate them as well. There also is not a clear understanding of whether or not black masculinity could consume white masculinity in any fashion. My work fills these gaps by offering white masculinity as an object of consumption.

In order to understand how black masculinity has been able to participate in the metaphorical and symbolic manifestations of consumption, we must first take a moment to examine the relevance of literal consumption. Some may argue that the idea of physical consumption and (auto-) cannibalism is an idea or practice so far removed from the lived experience of our contemporary historical memory. However, this is far from the truth. It has been heavily documented that the black slave population, young and old, were tortured, butchered, killed, castrated, and prepped for physical consumption. Still, it was black men who contributed uniquely to the complexity of white slave owner's desire to commit these violent acts. One slave owner from Kentucky, in particular, remarked to his wife his own desire and gratification after having butchered and cooked a male slave over a fire. He stated, "that he had

never enjoyed himself so well at a ball as he had enjoyed himself that evening” (Woodard 164). It is clear from this one account, and from Woodard’s assertions, that violence and sex/desire have been entangled from the beginning. White slave owners such as this one, and I argue white men at large, gain a sort of boost in their own manhood through the general process of consumption.

This example in particular also speaks to Baldwin’s, and black men as a whole, agency to potentially buy into the characteristics that are desired of them while also exposing the cracks within the idea of what white masculinity is. As I have established, blackness and black masculinity have always been entities to be consumed by whiteness. Specifically, within the work of Woodard, the distinction of literal, metaphoric and symbolic consumption that are found historically prove to be extremely useful in establishing a starting point from which we can examine more contemporary manifestations. His remarks on the rhetorical power of using language that’s typically associated with food such as seasonings, spice etc. when describing black people, especially within texts such as political messaging, newspapers and magazines illustrates and how insidious these perceptions were and continue to be. Today, for example, it’s not uncommon to hear black people described as looking like honey, chocolate, or berries. Rappers from Tupac to Ludacris have written song lyrics that associate black women with food when speaking about them.

If we assume that Baldwin was working with the understanding that white men benefit from this process of consumption then surely we can speculate that including a violent scene in which he describes a lynching would allow readers to consume white masculinity by critiquing what constitutes it to begin with. Examining violence singularly without considering how desire also influences the consumptive relationship between black and white masculinity would not get

us to the root of what is driving these actions in the first place. This process of questioning that Baldwin is enacting mirrors how white masculinity understands black masculinity in order to constitute itself. Implementing pornotroping allows for this work to be done to further understand white supremacy and how violence and desire inform the relationship between white and black masculinity.

The concept of pornotroping can be seen in two pivotal sections of “GTMTM.” These scenes also demonstrate black masculinity's agency and the instability of white masculinity. Baldwin explores how white masculinity has transformed acts of unforgivable violence into an (homo-)erotic experience for white masculinity. At the same time, Baldwin is allowing us to be able to critique the ways that white masculinity breaks down. The first scene where Baldwin's exploration is apparent occurs during Jesse's remembering of his day at work in which he beats a black man whom he has arrested. After becoming frustrated with his impotence, Jesse begins to lie in bed and reminisce about his day at work with his wife. He begins to tell her about a specific black man who he has arrested at a protest that day. Jesse states,

‘[the black man] acted like he didn't hear me and I put it on him again, under his arms, and he just rolled around on the floor and blood started coming from his mouth. He'd pissed his pants already.’ He paused. His mouth felt dry and his throat was rough as sandpaper; as he talked, he began to hurt all over with that peculiar excitement which refused to be released (201).

Here, we can see the unsettling aggression that Jesse exerted onto the man, and the immediate sexual response that Jesse had in response to it. He is actively engaging in the relationship of consumption as though he as a sort of erotic tic. However, this memory is not the one that allows for him to achieve the erection that he desires. Nor did his original attempt, before recounting his

day to Grace, of remembering a time when he rapes a black woman. When thinking about the black woman, for Jesse, it only gives him a distant “excitement”; however, the thought of consuming black femininity does not push Jesse to maintain an erection.

Furthermore, it is important to note that in the text, prior to the aforementioned passage, Jesse indicates that one of the reasons he began beating the black man is because he and other arrested black protesters that day were singing in solidarity with one another. Jesse tries over and over to get this man to stop encouraging everyone to sing. This interaction demonstrates in another way how as much as white men try to beat their black counterpart into submission, they will fail. Baldwin has indicated through this protester that blackness, and more specifically black masculinity, is inexhaustible in this way. It could be argued that this type of tenacity and determination are also attributes that are desirable to masculinity. Therefore, this inability to exhaust black masculinity is yet another example of white masculinity's inability to obtain what they desire.

If, in fact, Jesse was operating under a typical heteronormative paradigm, Baldwin would have never had him struggle with impotency in the first place. However, because of how Baldwin presents Jesse, as a man who cannot please his white wife, who does not aroused enough by the thought of a black women, but is aroused by his interactions with black masculinity, it is not a stretch to see the homoerotic nature of his masculinity. Furthermore, this dynamic that Baldwin illuminates exposes how this typical paradigm that white masculinity embodies is a distorted and reflective construction that makes achieving the ideal man by severing all ties from blackness impossible. This reinforces the dependency that white masculinity has on its black counterpart and forces readers to acknowledge this relationship. Baldwin directing readers to this allows for a new way to socially consume white masculinity.

More important is the ability for black masculinity to be able to view this dependence that white masculinity has as a sort of paradoxical adoration that may encourage a continuation of these constructions that white masculinity has for its black counterpart; thus, black men have the power of authorship over popular discourses.

The focus on black male genitalia in the final portion of the text serves as a crucial example for some of the complexities in Baldwin's critique of masculinity. In these scenes, Jesse is getting ready to attend his first lynching with his family. Through this experience, Jesse observes his mother in awe of the spectacle and describes her eyes as "very bright" and that "she was more beautiful than he had ever seen her, and more strange" (216). Baldwin paints a very joyous memory that Jesse is experiencing for the first time, which was not uncommon of lynchings as they were a communal and celebratory affair among the citizens of a given area. Furthermore, once Jesse and his family arrive at the lynching, it is clear that phallic images and manipulation of the black man's genitals was something that impacted Jesse on multiple levels. Additionally, it should be noted that through these images of black genitalia, Baldwin is arguably reinforcing the very constructions of black masculinity that he seems to be critiquing and wanting his readers to critique. Because of this, it becomes a bit opaque when trying to decipher, as readers consuming the text, how Baldwin is suggesting these white masculine ideologies to be read. This point is significant to note because it demonstrates the complexity of the relationship between masculinity, desire, and race that is occurring within this text, but also outside of it.

Baldwin's inclusion of Jesse's father in his memories suggests a commentary on how ideas of masculinity are reproduced. Baldwin makes it apparent that Jesse looked toward his father to understand what (white) masculinity should look like and how to embody it. This meant recalling hearing his parents having sex and his father satisfying Jesse's mother, while physically

he was lying next to his unsatisfied wife. Secondly, it also meant paying close attention to how his father behaved during the lynching, which informed Jesse deeply as to the opinions he should have about his own masculinity, how he should understand black masculinity and how he could consume it.

Baldwin is constantly reminding readers that masculinity is much more convoluted than black men being hypersexual and deviant while white masculinity is the standard. White masculinity is tightly bound to its black counterparts in ways that are extremely detrimental to its own existence. Moreover, these ideas are constantly being reproduced intergenerationally. His inclusion of Jesse's father into the story helps to illustrate how this ideal masculinity that white men aim to inhabit is unattainable and at the same time vigilantly perpetuated and desired. This white masculine anxiety aids in reinforcing the idea that rather than wanting to be *with* the black men white men encounter, there is a homoerotic desire to consume their constructions.¹¹ Rereading scenes in "GTMTM," like the lynching or castration scene, from this positioning allows readers to view these actions as not being driven by a suppression of homosexuality by white men but rather as an act of aggression in desiring to become or attempting to inhabit what they believe black masculinity represents. The father's anxieties have unquestionably informed Jesse's masculinity and allows readers to be critical of this troublesome reproduction of whiteness.

¹¹ Brim asserts that "white male impotence seems more closely associated with the black men who appear in Jesse's nocturnal reveries not as sexual objects but as sexual accomplices or partners. Demonstrating the plasticity of male/male desire, Jesse does not fantasize about having sex with the black man so much as he desires to have sex along with or as the black man" (185). Furthermore, he suggests that because Jesse is found impotent in the *absence* of a black man (physical or from memory), this further cements the fact that it is a sort of reliance on this idea of black masculinity that white masculinity has created in order to sustain itself.

In the imagery presented in Jesse's remembering of the lynching, Baldwin illustrates further how this intergenerational ideology of masculinity impacts white masculinity. When Jesse remembers vividly the black man who was being lynched and the way his father's friends who were leading the lynching and castration were behaving. Baldwin writes,

Jesse wished that he had been that man...The man with the knife took the nigger's privates in his hand, one hand, still smiling, as though he were weighing them. In the cradle of the one white hand, the nigger's privates seemed as remote as meat being weighed in the scales; but seemed heavier, too, much heavier, and Jesse felt his scrotum tighten; and huge, huge, much bigger than his father's, flaccid, hairless, the largest thing he had ever seen till then, and the blackest. The white hand stretched them, cradled them, caressed them (216).

Within this passage, it is apparent that Jesse is projecting himself by wishing to be the white man manipulating the black man's genitals, and with this projection, there is the eroticism of his scrotum tightening. The reader is forced to view this experience through Jesse, causing the reader to consider the kind of white masculinity that Jesse is desiring to become. Even as a child, Jesse wished he was the man who was manipulating the testicles and establishing dominance with the knife in his hand. This seemingly small specification speaks volumes. Most importantly, it explores the fact that Jesse's ideas of masculinity are something that has been instilled in him from a fairly young age in part because of the traumatic violence he observed and the violent rhetoric used by his father and his friends.

This cataloging of the black man's genitals in relation to the white man's hand also introduces a conversation about white masculinity literally having power over the black man's masculinity. At the same time, there is a sort of sensuality to this violence. This interaction

exposes a sort of idolization of black masculinity while in the process of inflicting violence upon it. In other words, the fact that this white man chose to spend time manipulating the man's manhood rather than killing him immediately exposes a complexity to the violence exerted. The constant combination of violence and adoration or fetishization within this recollection in which Jesse compares what the black man's genitals look like to his father's, adds another layer to our discussion. Again, Jesse experiences his scrotum tightening in this scene, and while it's a bit ambiguous whether this is something he experienced as a child in the moment or as an adult as he is lying in bed remembering the lynching, I would argue that both scenarios are critical in recognizing how Jesse understands and experiences pornotroping. Because of the way that Baldwin constructs this scene to show a complicated desire toward black masculinity, it allows black masculinity, though being desecrated within the story, to be ultimately dominant over its white counterpart.

Another important element to this scene is the function of the white crowd and their participation within the lynching. The crowd serves as a reminder of the strength that white masculinity has. More specifically, the crowd reminds readers that white masculinity sets the hegemonic ideology and narratives about black masculinity. Once the black man was castrated, Baldwin writes, "the crowd rushed forward, tearing at the body with their hands, with knives, with rocks, with stones, howling and cursing" (217). The spectacle of the lynching, which is orchestrated by white masculinity, has developed enough power to influence its white spectators to participate in this consumption. This aspect of the scene speaks to the larger issue outside of the story that white masculine ideology has the ability to move the mass to join in on this pornotroping. Although fallacious, white masculine ideology is dominant and has influenced the larger narrative of white and black relations in the U.S.

The final scene of the story is where readers can see a direct correlation between the violence that Jesse obsessively recounts and a regaining of his masculinity through its black counterpart, which I argue cements the narrative that black masculinity has the ability, as shown through Baldwin, to have the agency to (re-)direct narratives of masculinity. After seeing his father's friend castrate the black man and the community participate and cheer, it is implied that Jesse experiences his first orgasm but indicating that "Jesse felt his scrotum tighten." Baldwin writes, "Something bubbled up in him. His nature had again returned to him. He thought of the boy in the cell; he thought of the man in the fire; he thought of the knife and grabbed himself and stroked himself and a terrible sound, something between a high laugh and a howl, came out of him and dragged his sleeping wife up on one elbow..." (218). These flashes between Jesse regaining his erection or "manhood," all of the violence that was noted throughout the story, followed by him stroking himself culminates into a sort of frenzy for Jesse. This incessant juxtaposition allows us to see a clear example of how violence and desire intertwine to influence one's desire, and in this particular case, one's masculinity.

Following the lines of his sexual frenzy, Jesse says the following to his wife, "'Come on, sugar, I'm going to do you like a nigger, just like a nigger, come on, sugar, and love me just like you'd love a nigger'" (218). What is particularly interesting about this passage is *how* Jesse comes to feel sexually empowered. Despite the violent acts Jesse witnessed and committed, he still fixated on the supposed value black masculinity holds. Again, it is clear that rather than actually wanting to be intimate *with* a black man, Jesse clearly desires to *be* a black man in order to satisfy his wife in all of the ways he believes he should be able to, but cannot if he remains in his own white masculinity. Since Baldwin is the author of these interpretations of masculinities in this story, this interpretation reinforces the notion that black men are aware that white men

have a desire to inhabit blackness to be sexually fulfilled. Therefore, this awareness empowers black men to (re-)direct narratives of masculinity as Baldwin is demonstrating.

CONCLUSION

Baldwin has presented, arguably, one of the most provocative opportunities to examine white masculinity. I have argued that using “GTMTM” as a case study for how consumption is enacted by white masculinity provides an avenue by which we can view black masculinity as an active participant—one that has agency. By creating the text itself, Baldwin has allowed white masculinity to be consumed materially but also socially and metaphorically in a similar fashion to what Woodard suggests in his work. Additionally, “GTMTM” exposes how white and black masculinity are not separate entities in an inherent hierarchy, but rather equal actors, if not black masculine dominant, within our popular discourses. Through my interrogation of this relationship, I assert that “GTMTM” disrupts the traditional model of oppressor/the oppressed in areas of consumption.

While I am sure this article does not have the capacity to dismantle the structures of white supremacy as a whole, my intention is that my claims may be used to explore how perceptions of masculinity inform and influence how racism functions in areas of education, legislation and policy, environmental resources, economy, and popular culture in the U.S. My contention is that Baldwin’s piece establishes a way by which we can examine 21st century accounts of black agency in consumptions of masculinity. Through this particular reading, black masculinity is given agency while at the same time destabilizing white masculinity by a reading which consumes it. In focusing anti-racist work to this particular area, I believe we can better disrupt the power of white supremacy in a more strategic way.

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Power and Pleasure: Mandingo Agency in Cuckolding and Cuckolding Pornography

How awful it must be to have invented the big black dick, then to have to spend so much time ensuring that it doesn't overshadow one's own sense of self-worth, that it doesn't somehow destroy your own stature.

—*Scott Poulson-Bryant* Hung: A Meditation on the Measure of Black Men in America

INTRODUCTION

For centuries, the genitalia of black men has been at the forefront of the white imagination. Whether it was the initial European encounters with Africans or the lynching of Emmett Till for allegedly whistling at a white woman in Mississippi, this desire and fear associated with black men has been consolidated into the archetype of the Mandingo and is no less present today than it was in those first encounter.

¹ This archetype is characterized as hypersexualized, aggressive, and having a large penis. The Mandingo is constructed by white masculinity and, in the white gaze, applies to all black men. Presently, research within porn studies shows that the multi-billion dollar pornography industry is capitalizing on these racialized kinks that have been lying beneath many of the racist ideologies that white men project onto black men. In 2018, searches in the categories of "Ebony" and "Interracial" were more likely to occur 60 percent and 36 percent of the time, respectively,

¹ According to Martha Hodes, another aspect of our nation's history that tracks the narrative of the Mandingo can be found in our economic and political sectors. "White concerns about the preservation of slave property could therefore check violent reactions to a sexual transgression between a white woman and a black man...White Southerners explicitly conflated black men's alleged sexual misconduct toward white women with the exercise of their newly won political rights" (5-6).

compared to the rest of the world.² What's more, from 2016–2017, views in the category of "Cuckold" increased by over 70 percent.³ In thinking about the genre of cuckolding pornography, which is typically comprised of a white heterosexual couple and a black man, it may seem peculiar that the act of a white man allowing his wife to have sex with a black man while he watches would draw such a high percentage of viewers. This is especially curious when placing this situation in the context of United States history.⁴

One could argue, especially when considering the hegemonic conditions of the U.S., that because the husband is actively encouraging or facilitating this activity, he is ultimately the one in control of the situation. However, I would like to think more critically about the power dynamics within this environment and offer a more expansive perspective on how power is upheld and disrupted through cuckolding and amateur cuckolding pornography.⁵ Here, I understand cuckolding to mean these actions happening in the privacy of someone's home versus happening in the privacy of one's home and then being uploaded to the internet. I also want to

² This statistic comes from Pornhub's 2018 Year in Review, which is a report that features data that highlights the most watched categories on their website, most searched pornstars, average time spent on website per visit, website traffic by device and operating system among other categories.

³ This statistic comes from Pornhub's 2017 Year in Review.

⁴ Scholars such as Robin Zheng have articulated an important concern about the narratives that racially, and/or other marginally oppressed groups, in pornography perpetuates. Zheng writes, "My concerns derive from the way that systems of racial oppression subsume and rely on patterns of erotic taste in order to preserve mechanisms of racial domination. In particular, I contend, these patterns tend to generate a dilemma in which pornographic representations of racial difference constantly risk reinforcing patriarchal, racist, and otherwise oppressive standards of desire along the twin poles of fetishization and tokenization" (10-11). While I agree that these dominant narratives have the ability to be reinscribed each time racialized pornography is consumed, it is also important to consider how black men inhabiting what white masculinity fears impacts this consumption.

⁵ Cuckolding is derived from a term that scientifically explains the behavior of some cuckoo birds that will lay their eggs in the nest of other birds, which causes the host bird to care for the hatchlings as if it were their own. The etymology of cuckolding has made its way from appearing in plays written by Shakespeare to now being used in alt-right rhetoric. 'Cuckservative' is now a relevant term describing mainstream Republicans who may run on traditionally conservative platforms but "sell out" once in office by supporting any progressive positions. See more at <https://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2016/11/the-surprising-etymology-of-the-alt-rights-favorite.html>

⁶ According to Pornhub's 2019 Year in Review, searches for amateur pornography went up 108 percent from the previous year. This incredible surge in interest in this category also speaks to the urgency in analyzing and working to understand the impact that these videos are having on its viewers and the various (sub)cultures these viewers interact with.

make the distinction that my work is concerned with amateur pornography rather than highly produced commercial pornography. While the latter is also an important area to explore as far as understanding how pornography reflects cultural desire, I believe that these highly produced and commercially distributed videos dramatize many aspects of various sexualities, kinks, and fetishes. Moreover, these commercialized videos are further away on the spectrum of fantasy and "real life" in comparison with amateur pornography. My hope is that by focusing on material that is uploaded and/or made by users, my analysis will get closer to how these interactions that are occurring within these videos reflect quotidian sexual politics between white and black men in America.

In broadly considering the power dynamics between white and black people, as bell hooks neatly put it, many white people "are shocked that black people think critically about whiteness because racist thinking perpetuates the fantasy that the Other who is subjugated, who is subhuman, lacks the ability to comprehend, to understand, to see the working of the powerful" (168). It is my assertion that although there is a long, dark history of sexual politics between white and black people within the U.S, in the act of cuckolding and its documentation in pornography, black men are the ones who are empowered and in control of the sexual activity despite the consent of the white man in the room. Furthermore, black men have been aware of this empowerment and the dependence that white men have on the perception of black masculinity.

Cuckolding has served as an environment for black men to disrupt the system of white supremacy and utilize this subculture as a means of reparations while also being able to explore their own sexuality and desires in a way not typically afforded to them. Within the context of sexuality and porn studies, cuckolding is recognized as a subculture in relation to dominant

narratives of cisgender, heterosexual intercourse between two individuals. By embodying the Mandingo, black men are impacting the way that white masculinity is embodied and understood inside and outside of the bedroom. Through this disruption of power, white men may experience feelings of inadequacy in their ability to fulfill one of their partner's most basic needs. This burden must be carried outside of the bedroom, and affect other aspects of their identity and how they understand their own masculinity and their black counterpart. Because of the difficulty in partitioning desire from the private to the public spaces of life, there is a breakdown in white masculine subjectivity; thus, black men are able to socially consume white masculinity.⁷

To clarify, the attributes that have been impressed upon black men—aggression, hypersexuality and large penises—are all attributes birthed out of white masculinity. Ironically, in an effort to "other" their black counterpart, white men have created an identity that emasculates themselves while at the same time, in the case of cuckolding, visually plays out their most visceral fear of losing the purity of whiteness through penetration of their partners. In short, white men have created an identity that they desperately desire but that they will never be able to achieve. Furthermore, while it can be seen that white men may be benefiting economically from these relationships being documented, at the same time, these relationships are chipping away at the "imaginary white man." Because white supremacy affects everything systemically, if we can re-examine how blackness is the crux of white masculinity, we can then see how a reconsideration of black masculinity would all be affected by and affect everything white supremacy touches.

⁷ Generally speaking, blackness has always been consumed in the broadest sense. It has been documented that enslaved black people were physically consumed by slave owners and other slaves, and black culture and identity are routinely appropriated by other cultures. Within this article, I am concerned with this symbolic taking of culture and identity. The ideology and practice of taking from blackness what is desired and neglecting everything else is at the heart of my focus on the Mandingo I am interested in asking, "Can blackness disrupt the hegemony by putting its counterpart in the forefront to examine and be symbolically consumed in the very same way?"

My discussion is not meant to provide a monolithic analysis or framework to view black masculinity from. Black masculine subjectivity is extremely complex and attempting to understand the experiences that black men have with their genitalia and masculinity as monolith is undoubtedly reductive. In other words, while some black men may revel in the idea of inhabiting the Mandingo, and there may be some social capital to gain in doing so, there are many black men who are not interested in engaging with this narrative. In being asked about his relationship to his penis, Poulson-Bryant's friend "Simon" states,

'Being thought of as 'the black guy with the big dick' truly creeps me out. It might make me 'popular' but it doesn't make me better in bed. I don't think I was born with some special set of sex skills because of the size or the color of my dick. I don't like the idea that it makes other guys jealous, black or white. When they pay so much attention to it, it drives me crazy. It's like I'm on a slave block or something' (48-49).

"Simon's" sentiment helps to contextualize the precariousness of the Mandingo. Throughout Poulson-Bryant's piece, he shows, through his own experience as a black man and his friends', that the prescription of the Mandingo is undeniably present and at the same time embraced in very different ways.

Some scholars have argued that the act of cuckolding on the part of the black man does not "overturn violent structures of representation that over-determine their sexuality" because the machine of white supremacy is essentially too strong to be disrupted by a subculture such as this, and inhabiting the Mandingo only serves as an avenue for sexual liberation and exploration. In other words, sexual liberation is not enough to make structural social change (Miller-Young and Livermon 51); I believe this reading is a bit too narrow. Thinking critically about the ability black men have to disrupt this structure in a way that exposes the façade of a white masculine

subject allows for a radical reimagining to take place. If black men have the ability to disrupt their sexual political relationship to white masculinity, then all aspects of life in which the black man is at the center will be affected. The identity and implications of the Mandingo influence everything from lynching, the prison industrial complex, representations in tv and film to historical analyses of European encounters with Africa and the slave trade. If it is recognized that black men have the ability to disrupt, we can then begin to reimagine a world that understands that the conceptualization of black masculinity is rooted in the emasculation that white masculinity experiences. In other words, we must first accept that the Mandingo and the social understanding of the black man are a manifestation of white masculine anxieties before we can welcome the possibility black men have the ability to affect the hegemonic system.

The impact of the Mandingo is exacerbated within pornography. In 2019, Pornhub had approximately 42 billion website visits, which illuminates the degree to which pornography is being constantly consumed ("The 2019"). Moreover, this perpetual consumption of pornography, particularly of pornography that is driven by racist undertones, perpetuates these aforementioned narratives of power, oppression and white supremacy outside of the individual participants within this subculture. This incessant need to watch (via screen or in person) and consume not only sex but also black bodies and not only black bodies but black male genitalia, reaffirms this reliance on black masculinity that white masculinity has. Historically, pornography has been constructed as a space where "anything goes" in the name of sexual liberation.⁸ With that being said, pornography is still taboo in many cultures, including American culture. This causes those

⁸ Particularly with interracial pornography, there is an erotic element to what is happening on the screen because of its taboo history that differentiates it from other categories of pornography. All pornography, however, does not have this element to it. "Eroticism in pornography thus depends on the continued awareness of the taboo. This is why interracial pornographies can sometimes have an erotic charge that other forms of pornography do not" (Williams 275). This context of the erotic will also support my later discussion on homoeroticism.

consumers to satiate themselves in private, consuming an endless amount of whatever content they want. This consumption of a racialized kink reinscribes and cements narratives of white supremacy that are systemically affecting other areas of American life outside of the privacy of the consumers' own desires.

In speaking about the fascination that white masculinity has with the Mandingo and its implications on black men, porn studies scholar Gail Dines states in her influential piece "The White Man's Burden: Gonzo Pornography and the Construction of Black Masculinity"

Just as white suburban teenagers love to listen to hip-hop and white adult males gaze longingly at the athletic prowess of black men, the white pornography consumer enjoys his identification with (and from) black males through a safe peephole, in his own home, and in mediated form. The real, breathing, living black man, however, is to be kept as far away as possible from these living rooms, and every major institution in society marshals its forces in the defense of white society. The ideologies that white men take to the pornography text to enhance their sexual pleasure are the very ideologies that they use to legitimize the control of black men: while it may heighten arousal for the white porn user, it makes life intolerable for the real body that is (mis)represented in all forms of white controlled media (297).

This concept is important to remember when considering the high viewership among white male consumers. If the labor of the Mandingo is affecting white masculine subjectivity and therefore discourses that are set within a framework of white supremacy, then it can be presumed that the constant consumption of this condition would also be affected. It is crucial to note that black men receive and inhabit the role of the Mandingo to varying degrees. For some, this interaction does

create an expectation that that black male individual is not comfortable with as Dines states. For others, this interaction is a part of the disruption that allows black men to take control of their masculinity and sexual desire. The constant consumption of this disruption by millions of viewers each year has the potential to greatly impact U.S. sexual politics.

I have grounded my claim about the empowered black man in the work of Mireille Miller-Young's and Xavier Livermon's chapter entitled "Black Stud, White Desire, "which examines how the Mandingo archetype within cuckolding "allows a space for black men to explore their pleasures and desires with the understanding that this desire is always mitigated by history and materiality and thus framed by white supremacy" (51). Additionally, they underscore how there has been minimal discussion around "what forms of desire might be produced within the Mandingo archetype by black men, by white women, or by white men for black men. In other words, what productive possibilities and queer potential emerge for all actors in the triad within the fantasy space of the Mandingo archetype?" (42). In order to explore this relationship within cuckolding, they highlight a video titled *Cherry's 1st Interracial*. Miller-Young and Livermon assert that although the interaction between the wife, Cherry, and the Mandingo is only accomplished because of her husband, Bob's, "displacement as Cherry's proper mate, Bob is ultimately making a distinct decision by allowing his wife to participate and facilitating her infidelity" (45). In this chapter, they are viewing these interactions within cuckolding as more of a collaborative homosocial relationship between the two men. This homosocial relationship seems to be situated within Eve Sedgwick's definition, which triangulates the bonds between two men as platonic, though vehement, while women "act as the conduits through which those bonds are expressed" (Storr 41). While I agree that this is one productive way to evaluate this situation,

it is somewhat limiting in how we can integrate the historical context of white and black masculinity in the U.S.

Although Miller-Young's and Livermon's work has been instrumental in my research, I do not think they go far enough in exploring the ways in which this interaction informs each parties' masculinity in different ways. It may be collaborative in that everyone has consented and that the black man knows that he must perform the Mandingo in order to satisfy this fantasy; nevertheless, this awareness does not inhibit the possibility of the Mandingo and white man's masculinity to be inversely affected by the act of cuckolding. Exploring the relationship between the men in the room can assist in uncovering what each party may gain or lose from this interaction as well as how it affects those who view this material on pornography websites. One way this relationship can be examined is through various sites of political intensity.

Kyla Wazana Tompkins has examined the ways in which the mouth is a point of interest when thinking about how blackness is consumed. Tompkins writes, "The black mouth is a site of political intensity itself, as it consistently occupies and preempts the domination of white desire, from the kitchen, from the back of the house and below the stairs, and then ultimately in the sphere of urban commodity culture" (9). I would like to build upon this site of interest and suggest that the same could be said for the black penis. In the act of cuckolding and by black masculinity inhabiting the Mandingo, black men are able to "preempt the domination of white desire" by not allowing white masculinity to feel fully satisfied.

Many scholars in the field of ethnic and sexuality studies have broadly understood the cuckolding relationship between black and white masculinity as homosexual. They assert that this complex desire is driven by the white man's fixation on black men's penises, which is

derived from white men's repression of their homosexual attraction to black men.⁹ While I agree that the cause of white masculinity's fear of black masculinity is because of their own fixation on black genitalia, I do not believe that is necessarily because of a repressed homosexuality. I understand this dynamic as homoerotic as opposed to undoubtedly homosexual, in that in the very premise of cuckolding and its documentation, it is clear that white men are not always looking to engage in sex with the Mandingo. Rather, they wish to *inhabit* the sexual prowess that their counterparts seemingly exude. Simplifying this intricate relationship to white men lusting over the black men prohibits one's ability to explore the nuances of how desire, repugnance and race all intermingle and operate within cuckolding. Furthermore, this simplification limits one's capacity to connect cuckolding to larger systems of racism.

MANDINGO AT WORK

There are thousands of videos that can be found within the category of cuckolding that could be used within my analysis, and I have chosen to use a video uploaded on the popular pornography website XNXX.com titled "Husband watch wife with a big black cock."¹⁰ This video in particular serves as an effective example of the interactions that are always at play between white and black men. In an attempt to remain consistent with the statistics that I have

⁹ In "Skin Flicks on the Racial Border: Pornography, Exploitation, and Interracial Lust" film studies scholar Linda Williams invokes Fanon to illustrate this phenomenon, "According to Fanon, the deepest cause of this fear lies in the reduction of the black man to a penis, which ultimately constitutes a pathological projection on the part of the white man of his own repressed homosexuality. The white man's fear is thus, to Fanon, also his desire" (277).

¹⁰ By definition, the genre of cuckolding does not inherently mean that it is a white heterosexual couple with a black man serving as the third person. There are many videos out there where everyone is white presenting or a mixture of different races; however, because of the prevalence of the Mandingo, I argue that they have become somewhat synonymous in that you do not have to add "mandingo", "ebony", "bbc" or even "black man" in order to find the composition of a white heterosexual couple with a black man as the participants.

included within this article and the texts I will be analyzing, an interesting problem arose. Much of the research that has already been conducted that compiles statistics on what types of pornography people tend to watch, how often etc. is synthesized in a more general way in that particular websites are not necessarily listed or commonly published by organizations who view pornography as an addiction. Alternatively, lists that show the top pornography websites visited, do not each have their own "Year in Review" as Pornhub does.¹¹ The company that owned Pornhub in 2016, MindGeek, also owned approximately 50 of the top visited pornography websites. Since XNXX has routinely been placed within the top five visited websites, I have chosen to use the data published by Pornhub as a basis for the texts I have selected.

"Husband watch wife with a big black cock" begins in medias res with the wife already having intercourse with the Mandingo. Throughout the video you can see the husband moving about the room with his own camera phone, and at times, after being directed by his wife, comes and participates. One thing that is unique about this particular video is how often the black man speaks and interacts with the husband as well as the amount of dialogue and facilitating the woman does, which reaffirms the black man's masculinity. This could be attributed to a familiarity, as I was able to find a few different videos uploaded with this couple and the same black man, but I also think it serves as a striking representation of black masculinity's ability to become empowered within this environment and "bite back."¹² Again, there is an innumerable

¹¹ What is known is that "the top 10 most popular sites are owned by just five companies – and several in the top 50 are owned by a company now called MindGeek" (Woods 1). Outside of this, it becomes extremely difficult to track the finances of these companies as well as trying to find out who owns these companies as they prefer to stay anonymous.

¹² I am invoking the terminology of "biting back" from Tompkins' *Racial Indigestion* where she states, "...across the nineteenth century black bodies and subjects stick in the throat of the (white) body politic, refusing to be consumed as part of the capitalist logic of racism and slavery as well as the cultural and literary matter that they produced. Whether impeding absorption—getting stuck in the craw or producing colicky white bodies and thereby disturbing the easy internalization of blackness—or whether testifying from the space of imminent death and expulsion from the bowels of a slave-dependent nation, black bodies and subjects in these encounters fight back, and bite back, both in the white imaginary and in domestic manuals and novels produced by black authors" (8).

amount of cuckolding videos available that feature a white heterosexual couple with a Mandingo as their third participant. However, the aforementioned commentary of this particular video serves as a sort of narration of the dynamics that are always at play during these interactions in a way that is absent from many of the videos that were scoured on pornography websites for this project.

Again, in the beginning of the video, the black man and white wife are already engaging in sex. Approximately three minutes into the video, the wife asks her husband to lie underneath her and perform cunnilingus while she continues to have intercourse with the black man who is behind her. The Mandingo says, "that's a nice view" as he gestures to the woman's buttocks and seemingly her vagina to which the wife replies, "look at my view" and begins to fondle her husband's penis, which is visibly smaller than the black man's penis. She then refers to her husband's penis as her "little thimble" and calls him the "cleaner up-er" as she laughs (00:03:00-00:05:00). The fact that the Mandingo verbalizes his admiration for the woman's body prior to entering her, which is juxtaposed by the woman's "view" is significant in that the Mandingo knows that he will be the one to fully enjoy this woman's body. The white man's masculinity is immediately diminished through humiliation and it becomes apparent that he is not able to satisfy his wife in the way that she desires.

A few minutes later, the black man asks, "you like feeling my balls on your face?" to the husband. He also appears to pull his penis out and slap it on the husband's face and repeats his question (00:06:10-00:06:54). After a position change where the husband is not participating, the Mandingo asks if the husband likes watching him "fuck his wife" to which the wife responds, "of course he does" (00:09:03). This exchange is extremely vital in understanding the agency that the

Mandingo has in disrupting the hegemonic structure. The Mandingo literally has his material masculinity on the white man's face and not only that, he chooses to slap it multiple times onto the husband's face. Additionally, the Mandingo is doing all of this while having intercourse with the white man's wife; he continually works to emasculate the white man by asking him a question that is rooted in power. The wife responding to the Mandingo with "of course he does" reaffirms this power that the Mandingo holds. To reiterate, this scenario can be understood as a degradation of the husband and his masculinity. The husband's inability to satisfy his wife with his own penis, and to then have a figure who is understood to be less-than ensure this satisfaction is fulfilled, emasculates not only the white man in the room, but white masculine subjectivity of the predominate pornography viewer—white men at large.

Approximately 11 minutes into the video, the black man asks the wife, "you wish he was fuckin' this pussy don't you?" The wife responds by saying, "he was just saying that to me before you got here. He wishes he could, but he understands why he can't." The final significant dialogue is in the last few minutes of the video when the wife turns to her husband and asks, "Can you see how much I love it? And you know how much I need it? It's obvious now, right? Why we do all this?" (00:10:02-00:16:09). This final section of the video is arguably the most striking example of the ways in which the traditionally understood power structure is being disrupted by the Mandingo and there are several layers that need to be explored. While it is unclear exactly what the wife means by "he understands why he can't," it could be reasoned that the husband cannot please her because his penis is too small as she referred to it previously as a "thimble."

If we continue with this line of reasoning, it can be inferred that the husband expressing his understanding of why he cannot fulfill his wife's need along with the wife's final posed

questions, confirms the disruption. The white man cannot make his wife happy unless he ultimately sacrifices his own manhood. The wife's statements also imply that this activity is going to be something that must be repeated in order to keep her happy and satisfied sexually. Because it is difficult to compartmentalize desire, as previously stated, the wife's desire to be fulfilled in this particular way sexually, could also influence her fulfillment in her relationship outside of the bedroom.

The consequence of her fulfillment (or lack thereof) outside of the bedroom bolsters my claim that the effect of this particular sexual activity/relationship undoubtedly connects the perception of the Mandingo to everything that white masculinity influences. Furthermore, her final questions, "It's obvious now, right? Why we do all this?" could be understood as her suggesting that what is obvious is the black man's penis and how it, and the man it is attached to, is the only way that she will be fulfilled. Moreover, this suggests that all white women are cuckolding their white male partners in a sense because it is clear that white masculinity will never be able to achieve the level of masculinity that their female partners desire. Verbalizing these sentiments of both the husband and wife to the Mandingo actively reaffirms his own sense of empowerment and masculinity inside and outside of this environment while also conditioning the subjectivity of the viewer(s) of the uploaded video.

CLEANING UP

Another critical element related to this project that I would like to examine is the act of "cleaning up," which can sometimes be found within its own category, but it is frequently found

as a part of cuckolding videos. Porn studies scholars have understood cleaning up to be the white man using his mouth to "clean up" the ejaculation from the Mandingo off of his partner and swallowing it. They have argued that this is done as a way to ensure that the wife remains pure and is not "tainted" by any black seed. White men take this action without it being categorized as "homosexual" because, as Miller-Young and Livermon suggest, "acting as a conduit of white male desires for racial purity and/or for the black man's body, the white female body allows this interaction to take place without it being deemed 'gay'" (46). I would like to offer another explanation— that the act of consuming the ejaculation from the black man is how the white man attempts to symbolically inhabit the sexual prowess of the Mandingo rather the act being motivated or understood by homosexuality.

Again, it is possible that some of the interactions that these men are having are driven by a repressed homosexuality. There are countless videos that have been uploaded that show "heterosexual" husbands engaging with the black penis in various ways. However, it is imperative to consider how homoeroticism opens up the possibility to expand the critique of dynamics of cuckolding. In refocusing this interaction on homoeroticism, the nuances in the act of cleaning up can be critiqued to unpack the interconnectedness of racism and desire.

The intentional shift to a homoerotic reading of these acts is further supported by the fact that in some cuckolding videos where "cleaning up" occurs, the white man may continue to perform oral or could conceivably have genital intercourse with his partner after he cleans up her up. There are also some instances in which the Mandingo has ejaculated in or around the woman's vagina, and rather than "cleaning up" the white man will begin to have vaginal intercourse with her. In this case, I argue that an ingestion is still taking place in that the white man wants to engross his own penis in the ejaculation of the Mandingo.

In other words, after the white man is able to ingest the sexual energy—materially—from the black man, he then feels invigorated enough to inhabit the kind of masculinity he desires and can be the one to please his wife and restore his dominance within their relationship. This same logic can be understood to support the act of cleaning up the ejaculation to begin with. Being able to ingest the materiality of the Mandingo can allow the white man to feel generally empowered and reaffirmed in his own masculinity. Considering the placement of the ejaculation is also something to note when examining this activity. In some videos, the Mandingo may ejaculate on other parts of the woman's body, instead of or in addition to, in or around her vagina.¹³ I believe this suggests another important point of possession over satisfaction and/or fulfillment for the Mandingo and an attempt at reclamation of this very same thing for the white man.

Furthermore according to the script of hegemonic patriarchy, while the ultimate fear of white masculinity is losing the purity of the white woman by way of blackness, there is also a loss of sexual gratification on the part of the white man when the Mandingo is able to display his satisfaction so prominently on the woman's body. The feeling that goes along with the display is seemingly unattainable for white masculinity. This relationship is another avenue by which white masculinity is fractured. Regardless of whether or not the Mandingo is having intercourse with the white man's partner, the Mandingo is still inhabiting an identity that is free to have uninhibited sexual pleasure. Through the act of ingestion, white masculinity is attempting to obtain this ideal prowess that they have constructed. From the perspective of the black man, he is the reason the white man's masculinity is restored or even exists in the first place. He

¹³ Examples of these types of videos can be found here:
https://www.xvideos.com/video38971635/interracial_cuckold_cleanup
https://www.pornhub.com/view_video.php?viewkey=ph5c6bd3af343a7

understands that the white man needs the Mandingo to act in the way that he has imagined him to be in order to reassert his own manhood, thus empowering and informing the Mandingo's masculinity.

CONCLUSION

The Mandingo is an archetype that has typically been seen as a pawn within white heterosexual intercourse. He is something to be simultaneously desired yet feared and regulated to the controlled environment of consensual sex. In examining cuckolding and its documentation within pornography, I have attempted to redefine what black masculine agency could look like to black men as well as all to his spectators and sexual partners. In working with the assumption that black men do have the ability to feel empowered when inhabiting the desired characteristics of the Mandingo, I have illuminated an avenue by which black men can disrupt the hegemonic system that has defined them. By inhabiting the very thing that white masculinity, and much of the dominant discourses tell us to fear, black men are able to emasculate white masculinity with few restrictions.

While inhabiting the Mandingo, black men are perceived to be able to satisfy the white women in a way that they, according to a very conventional understanding of pleasure, desire to be fulfilled inches away from the white men who have invited them into their bedrooms. Additionally, the white men who choose to "clean up" feel the need to materially ingest the prowess that they have just witnessed as a means to regain their own sense of masculinity. The goal of the behavior that the white men engage in, ultimately fails in that they are seemingly still not fully satisfy their partners in the way they need to, and those who ingest masculinity can only

do so in a symbolic sense. Black men are, of course, a part of this entire experience and are able to have their own manhood reinforced by witnessing their counterpart's inability to succeed in the way that they do. Furthermore, it becomes apparent that white masculinity needs the Mandingo in order to feel empowered, especially when the white man begins to engage in intercourse with his partner after he's ingested the Mandingo's sexual prowess.

One important thing to note about the conclusions that have been drawn in this project is that they are working within a few confines. The first confine is that of pleasure. How we define pleasure and who has access to pleasure is a much farther-reaching conversation than I have defined it as in this project. My work was not meant to adjudicate how to understand pleasure, but rather to perform an analysis based on some of the accepted readings of the interactions between white and black men. Furthermore, although one of the goals of this project is to reimagine what black masculine agency could look like, ultimately my reading is still accepting and upholding patriarchal systems.

Nevertheless, the work that has been done within this project is vital in gaining a more nuanced discussion about the ways in which much of American, and arguably global, culture and industry are influenced by the myth of the Mandingo. Although much has been examined, there are still many questions to be explored in future endeavors. There is one area in particular that should be prioritized within these future endeavors—breeding. Breeding is a subgenre of cuckolding where the goal is to have the Mandingo impregnate the white woman. Miller-Young and Livermon recognize breeding as "referencing the Mandingo's labor in the system of controlled reproduction common during slavery, these videos portray 'neomiscegenation drama.' What is distinctive in this new version of the miscegenation drama is that this imagined treat of contamination is turned into erotic or economic value for each of the actors. For white men and

white women, the possibility of pregnancy creates erotic charge and sexual excitement" (46). Here, they define "neomiscegenation drama" as a "gesture to how cuckolding sociality reinterprets familiar tropes of racial mixture through this contemporary racialized, sexualized performance" (57). Examining breeding alongside "cleaning up" will allow for a complex perspective of the homoerotic relationship that is occurring.

There are, of course, many more questions to consider such as what happens to the erotic foundations of white supremacy when it is clear that white men desire to be *with* black men rather than to just *be* them? Is the consumption of white/black masculinity influenced by how white men engage in cuckolding? How does highly produced and commercialized cuckolding pornography impact these notions?

Engaging with questions such as these will help to fine-tune how we approach white and black masculine subjectivity in the U.S. Through this project and others like it, I hope we can divorce ourselves from the idea that sex, desire, and pornography are somehow separate from all other happenings within our world. We must also work to de-stigmatize the scholarship and critical discourses surrounding the impact and strong prevalence of sex, desire, and pornography inside and outside of the scope of "legitimate" scholarship. By implementing this kind of critical lens, we will be able to better identify the sinister ways in which sexual politics has and continues to systemically impact much of our contemporary culture.

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CONCLUSION

In response to Norman Mailer's book *The White Negro*, James Baldwin stated, I think that I know something about the American masculinity which most men of my generation do not know because they have not been menaced by it in the way that I have been. It is still true, alas, that to be an American Negro male is also to be a kind of walking phallic symbol: which means that one pays, in one's own personality, for the sexual insecurity of others. The relationship, therefore, of a black boy to a white boy is a very complex thing.

I believe that it still remains true that "to be an American Negro male is also to be a kind of walking phallic symbol." Through this project, this much has been made clear. Baldwin examined this complex relationship through "Going to Meet the Man" ("GTMTM"), which served as a stable framework and historical marker to examine contemporary racialized kinks in pornography. As I stated within my second article, the insatiable desire that white masculinity has to inhabit the Mandingo is not a feeling that can be confined by the walls of a bedroom. These desires are messy and spill out into more "mainstream" happenings of all of our lives.

In April of 2008, the cover of *Vogue* featured basketball star LeBron James and supermodel Giselle Büchen for their Shape Issue. This special issue highlights the "best bodies" by including various models and athletes in photographs together. The inclusion of James, or any black man, is a bit unexpected as *Vogue* (a high-fashion women's magazine) rarely features black women on its covers (Miller-Young and Livermon). What is especially significant about this photo is that James and Büchen are posed in a way that eerily resembles images of King Kong and Ann Darrow. James wears black athleticwear with black and white sneakers while he

appears to be letting out a scream. At the same time, he has his left arm wrapped around Büchen's waist. Büchen wears a light green figure-hugging dress and heels with a big smile as wind blows through her hair. Although the meaning of this cover is a bit convoluted, what I want to highlight here are the various narratives that this image is invoking.

Black male athletes, like James, are given praise and endorsements for their bodies and athletic ability—something that is of extreme value to white masculinity. However, it's apparent that white masculinity desires to be like them and to inhabit their abilities, which all connects to the sexual charge that the Mandingo exudes. "The picture's visual inspiration might be *King Kong* [1933], but the narrative corollary is D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* [1915]. Men, lock up your ladies! Here comes LeBron!" (Morris qtd. In Miller-Young and Livermon). Not only does this image evoke the fear-mongering rhetoric of the hypersexualized, aggressive black man, it also invokes an element of cuckolding. Because of the narratives white masculinity has instigated, it could be argued that having James staring straight into the camera with a white woman on his arm gives the viewer a similar feeling as the viewer of cuckolding pornography. Firstly, the printed page serves the same degree of separation as the computer screen does. Secondly, as Morris stated, this image shifts from solely being about *King Kong* to bring about images of interracial sex, and even rape, of a white woman. Furthermore, this image urges readers to also consider the attributes that are given to the Mandingo, which would seemingly fulfill Büchen in a way that her white husband, who is also a professional athlete cannot.

The *Vogue* cover is just one example of how the narrative of the Mandingo has expanded past the confines of our bedrooms, and there is so much more scholarship to be done. Within each article, I posed questions that I believe should be addressed in future research projects to continue the work of better understanding how these interactions between masculinities operate

and to have a more nuanced approach to dismantling white supremacy. If we consider Baldwin's identity as a black queer man writing from the perspective of white heterosexual man, how does this influence how readers should understand their own masculinity and masculinity in general? What happens to the erotic foundations of white supremacy when it is clear that white men desire to be *with* black men rather than to just *be* them? Is the consumption of white/black masculinity influenced by how white men engage in cuckolding? How does highly produced and commercialized cuckolding pornography impact these notions?

While my project cannot dismantle the hegemonic system alone, my hope is that the work that has been done within this project will offer a framework to grapple with questions like the ones I have offered. Approaching discussions of sexual politics between white and black masculinity with an understanding that pornotroping and homoeroticism are key components will encourage scholars to detach ourselves from the idea that sex, desire and pornography are somehow separate from everything else. By implementing this critical lens, my hope is that we will be better able to identify the ways in which white supremacy and sexual politics interact and systemically impact the U.S.

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