

**The Sound of (Black) Music: Black-Oriented Media Use and Hegemonic Gender Beliefs as Liabilities to Black Women's Sexual Well-Being**

by

**Lanice Renée Avery**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Psychology and Women's Studies)  
in the University of Michigan  
2016

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Elizabeth Ruth Cole, Co-Chair  
Professor Lucretia Monique Ward, Co-Chair  
Assistant Professor Sara McClelland  
Professor Abigail Stewart

**© Lanice R. Avery**  
**All rights reserved**  
**2016**

---

## **DEDICATION**

To my ancestors -- for I am living your wildest dreams.

To my mother, grandmother, Joy, and the other strong Black women who knew that I  
could before I ever imagined that I might.

In loving memory of Marona Graham-Bailey. Amandla!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The successful completion of my doctoral training and dissertation project would not have been possible without the unconditional love and support of my family. To my mother – thank you for encouraging me to pursue my passions, to ask questions, and to be more concerned with doing what is right than being right. Thank you for teaching me to persevere through every level of adversity, to resist complacency with mediocrity, and to believe in myself. Thank you for instilling in me the importance of ambition and determination, demonstrating grace in times of failure and loss, and humility in times of triumph. Thank you for showing me that the brightest light exists in honesty, truth, and love. I sincerely appreciate your words of encouragement, care packages, prayers, laughs, and phone calls. You were my first role model, mom, and I hope you are proud of the woman that I have become. I could never have accomplished this without you.

To Amy Saucier, my dearest friend. Thank you for inspiring me to live life more fully. Your kindness, generosity, and passion for justice helped me to understand that life is best lived in service to others. I will never be able to fully articulate my gratitude for your commitment to being present in the good times *and* the hard ones. Your unyielding support has enabled me to fearlessly pursue my dreams – knowing that you will always be there with a meal, a song, an adventure, and an inspirational word when I need encouragement. You are my favorite person on this planet and I would not be the woman that I am had we not become “insta-friends” in 2004. You are beloved, indeed.

To my extended Bay Area family – Janasha Higgins, Amber Crosby, Jessica Servin-Jones, Gwyneth Jones, and Tucker Silva – thank you for holding space for me in your homes and hearts while I have been on this journey. Thank you for making my times of respite remarkably healing and for being my constant cheerleaders. I am eternally grateful for this wealth of support. Christina Monroe, I am so grateful to have had you as a friend, sister, confidant, travel companion, and colleague during this journey. You keep me grounded and hold me accountable in really critical ways. I am glad that I have been able to accomplish so many milestones with you by my side and I look forward to more adventures and celebrations in Virginia! To Leah Woods, thank you for nurturing my spirit over the last decade. Thank you for visiting me in Michigan to make sure that I was not physically alone during the holidays and for sending me care packages that kept me looking fly. I appreciate the nights you stayed up late to keep me company via video chat while I worked in my research lab and stayed on the phone with me while I walked home at four in the morning to make sure I made it safely. Thank you for inspiring me with your poetry, being a stand in research assistant when I needed one, and for listening to all my presentations, research ideas, and relationship drama without judgment. Most of all, thank you for being my best friend and always making me laugh until it hurts.

My chosen family in Ann Arbor deserves my deepest gratitude. To my ‘Motivation,’ Elise Hernandez, your brilliance and bravery astound me! Thank you for loving me fiercely, thriving in my vibes of resistance and authenticity, and always reminding me that my power and purpose are far greater than the obstacles in my path. We will continue to unapologetically slay the basics, hold each other in the deep, and

keep women and queerness at the center of our Blacktivism. To my mains, Kathleen O’Neal, Gina Fedock-Robinson, and Shanta Robinson, thank you for being home. Your love, warmth, and incredible brilliance, sustain me. You have nurtured me through many tough times and I share every ounce of my success with each of you. I will be eternally grateful to Marona for facilitating our meeting and making space for us to cultivate familial relationships in Michigan. I look forward to a lifetime of Sunday dinners, holiday sleepovers, celebrating each others’ milestones, and falling deeper in love with Vivian and Vincent (a.k.a. dem babies). To my light, Alexis Stanton, thank your for brightening my life and offering excellent editorial (and emotional!) support with my dissertation project. Thank you for keeping a smile on my face, writing fire, consistently showing up and showing out, and most importantly, thank you for always “dipping-and-ducking-and-dodging” the foolery with me. You are a remarkable friend and scholar! You fill me up with the light of Black feminist love and you are the essence of #CarefreeBlackGirl and #BlackGirlMagic.

My graduate school experience was deeply enriched by the support of my mentors. Dr. Monique Ward, you are a phenomenal advisor! Thank you for being committed to the development and success of your students. Your support and guidance has been invaluable to my experience at the University of Michigan, and it has been an honor to learn from you over the past seven years. Thank you for your kindness, compassion, advocacy, and patience. Thank you for believing in me and helping to make our project exceptional. To my other advisor and co-chair, Dr. Elizabeth Cole, thank for helping me produce critical and intersectional work. I have learned from your example to avoid taking short cuts, to pay attention to the details, and to ask better questions. I

appreciate your patience and attentiveness to my progress throughout the program and I am fortunate to have received such great feedback on my writing from you during my training. I would also like to thank my committee members Dr. Abigail Stewart and Dr. Sara McClelland. It has been wonderful to have your support on this project. You both are remarkably brilliant feminist scholars, and working with you provided for an invaluable academic experience.

I would like to acknowledge my undergraduate mentors. Dr. Jessica Fields – thank you for advising me as a fellow in the Career Opportunities in Research Program funded by the National Institutes of Mental Health at San Francisco State University. Thank you for providing me with excellent support, encouragement, and research training. You are an excellent model for how to do engaged community research that prioritizes the experiences of socially marginalized women. You are an excellent scholar, teacher, and mentor, and much of my development as a scholar may be attributed to the foundational and transformational experiences I had as a member of your Research on Inequality, Sexuality, and Education lab group at the SFSU Center for Research on Education, Gender, and Sexuality. Dr. Alford Young Jr. and Dr. Stephanie Rowley, you facilitated my first introduction to research at the University of Michigan while I participated in the Summer Research Opportunity Program in 2008. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to meet you both and that you encouraged me to apply to the University of Michigan for doctoral training. This experience has been life changing, and I am convinced that it was the absolute best place for me to earn my degree (you were right, Dr. Rowley!).

Finally, I am thankful to all of the amazing people that I met during graduate school. I have received so much support during this process and I would not have accomplished this milestone without their assistance. Surabhi Pandit, you have a heart of gold! Thank you for sharing your humor, warmth, generosity, and genuine (not to be confused with Genuwine) love with me. Your “grind won’t stop, hustle won’t quit” work ethic inspires me to keep fighting to “make race heard.” Your lyrical references to songs by our favorite Neo-Soul and rap musical artists keeps me sharp, and I will miss our Sunday brunches at Zingerman’s Roadhouse where the pop quizzes were always in full effect. Always remember, “this is a solo!”

Dr. Susana Morris, thank you for all of the ways that you have nurtured my mind, body, and spirit over the last few years. I am so fortunate to have had you on this journey with me. Thank you for generously giving me your time and helping me brainstorm all of my ideas. Thank you for supporting me with the job market and riding the highs and lows of the dissertation process, and thank you for believing in me so strongly when I was beginning to lose hope. I will be forever grateful to you for sharing your humor, your heart, and your brilliance with me. I love you and I am so excited to see what great things are in store for us both. To my fellow members of the Intersectional Perspectives on the Body and Sexuality and Media and Sexual Socialization Lab groups – you rock! Thank you for sharing materials with me, giving me wonderful feedback on my work, offering words of encouragement during times of struggle, and being generative and supportive colleagues.

To Dr. Joy Saniyah – you changed my life! Thank you for being such a tremendous source of support for me. I know that I would never have been able to finish



were it not for your encouragement, advice, love, and unwavering belief that I would FINISH STRONG. You aided my development and progression by constantly reminding me of the importance of this work and that I have everything I need within myself to surmount any obstacle. You helped me to understand my value as a woman, scholar, teacher, mentor, friend, and lover. You have been a transformative agent in my life, and I will be forever grateful to you. I share the success of this milestone with you. Together, we did this!

My journey through graduate school has been incredibly enriched by the opportunity to work closely with my favorite lab mate and research partner, Morgan Jerald. You are incredible! Our project would not have been possible without your tenacity, efficiency, determination, and expertise. Developing a research partnership with you has been one of the most rewarding things about my time at the University of Michigan, second only to becoming your friend. You astound and inspire me every time I read your work and see you present. You have helped me to become the best version of myself – to work harder, smarter, and to feel confident writing from my unique perspective. I love you and I look forward to a lifetime of sharing laughs, cocktails, truths, successes, and thinking deeply about Black women’s liberation because we are in formation and we slay! #SayHerName #BlackGirlMagic #BlackLivesMatter

Thank you to my Black Student Psychological Association (BSPA) brothers and sisters, especially Latisha Ross, Felecia Webb, Kyla Day-Fletcher, Kevin Goodman, Nkemka Anyiwo, Amber Williams, Tamarie Macon, Chauncey Smith, Alvin Thomas, Elan Hope, Faheemah Mustafaa, Christy Byrd, Lori Hoggard, and Bridgette Richardson.

Amber Nicole Williams, thank you holding me together during the many times that I was falling apart. Thank you supporting my process and helping me to find the strength and tenacity to unapologetically define the terms and conditions of my journey. Thank you for teaching me about radical self-love and exposing me to a wealth of Black feminist literature that ultimately became the framework for this dissertation. I am endlessly inspired by how fierce you are in your work and social/political activism. You will always be my muse as you are the epitome of radical Black femininity.

To the awesome students, administrative staff, and faculty associated with the Departments of Psychology and Women's Studies, Sweetland Dissertation Writing Institute, Institute for Research on Women and Gender, Center for the Education of Women, Rackham women of color writing groups, Women of Color Leadership Academy Fellows of the National Women's Studies Association, Ford Foundation, and the New Leader Scholars: thank you for sharing your time, advice, insight, expertise, and general brilliance with me. I am also thankful for the custodial staff in East Hall, Lane Hall, and Munger Graduate Residences – you all made me feel seen, celebrated, and supported. Thank you to all my colleagues who laughed with me during meetings and invited me into their homes and hearts during my time here. Your love and support has been incredibly instrumental to my success.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
LIST OF TABLES .....	xii
LIST OF APPENDICES .....	xiii
ABSTRACT .....	xiv
CHAPTER 1: Introduction .....	1
CHAPTER 2: "Mic Check 1, 2, 1, 2" Representations of Femininity and Masculinity in Popular Music by Black Artists (Study 1)	
Introduction .....	19
Method .....	32
Results .....	39
Discussion .....	43
Conclusion .....	49
CHAPTER 3: Remixing the Script? Associations Between Black-Oriented Media Consumption and Black Women's Heteropatriarchal Romantic Relationship Beliefs (Study 2)	
Introduction .....	60
Method .....	81
Results .....	88
Discussion .....	90
Conclusion .....	95
CHAPTER 4: Does "Pretty Hurt?" Acceptance of Eurocentric Beauty Ideals and Reduced Sexual Well-Being (Study 3)	
Introduction .....	101
Method .....	117

Results.....	123
Discussion.....	125
Conclusion .....	130
CHAPTER 5: Grand Discussion	
Discussion.....	136
Limitations and Future Directions .....	141
Hegemonic (Emphasized) Femininity as a Health Risk .....	144
Conclusion .....	146
APPENDICES .....	148
REFERENCES .....	163

## LIST OF TABLES

### Table

1	Study 1 Summary of Hegemonic Masculinity and Femininity Categories Coded	52
2	Study 1 Distribution of Song Sub-genre by Year	56
3	Study 1 Proportion of Songs with Particular Representations of Men and Women (across Genres and Time)	57
4	Study 1 Changes over Time in Proportion of Songs Containing References to Hyper-Masculine Men and Hyper-Feminine (Hyper-Sexualized) Women	58
5	Study 1 Music Genre Differences in Proportion of Songs Containing References to Hyper-Masculine Men, Hyper-Feminine (Sexualized) Women, and Romanticism/Emotionality	59
6	Study 2 Zero-Order Correlations Between Black-Oriented Media Use and Heteropatriarchal Relationship Belief Acceptance	99
7	Study 2 Correlations among Heteropatriarchal Relationship Beliefs and Demographic Covariates	99
8	Study 2 Multiple Regression Analyses of Black-Oriented Media Use Predicting Heteropatriarchal Relationship Beliefs	100
9	Study 3 Correlations among Eurocentric Beauty Ideal Acceptance and Sexual Well-Being Variables	133
10	Study 3 Correlations among Sexual Well-Being and Demographic Covariates	133
11	Study 3 Multiple Regression Analyses of Eurocentric Beauty Ideal Acceptance on Sexual Affect	134
12	Study 3 Multiple Regression Analyses of Eurocentric Beauty Ideal Acceptance on Experiential Sexual Agency	135

## LIST OF APPENDICES

### Appendix

A	Items Assessing Demographic Variables	148
B	Items Assessing Black-Oriented Media Use	151
C	Items Assessing Heteropatriarchal Romantic Relationship Belief Acceptance	153
D	Items Assessing Eurocentric Beauty Ideals	156
E	Items Assessing Subjective Sexual Well-Being	158

## **ABSTRACT**

Through many sources, Black women are socialized to embrace gender beliefs that emphasize passivity, selflessness, sexual appeal, and nurturance. However, endorsing these notions is consequential and may undermine their sexual agency and well-being. One prominent source of traditional gender messages are mainstream media, which young Black Americans consume at higher rates than their peers. Therefore, it is important to identify the prevalence of hegemonic gender content in media targeting Black audiences and understand whether Black women's use of these media is related to their understandings of their personal and interpersonal sexual desires. Thus, this dissertation investigated representations of gender and sexuality in Black-oriented music and tested the association between embracing hegemonic femininity and outcomes related to experiences of sex and romantic relationships among heterosexual Black women.

Three studies are presented: 1) A content analysis investigating representations of hegemonic femininity and masculinity in Black-oriented music media; 2) Analyses of survey data testing whether exposure to these media is associated with Black women's acceptance of heteropatriarchal relationship beliefs; and 3) Analyses exploring whether restrictive feminine beauty and body standards are associated with Black women's experiences of sexual well-being.

Theoretical connections proposed by cultivation theory were supported. Study 1 indicated that portrayals of women in Black-oriented music increasingly emphasized their

physical attractiveness and utility as sexual objects, and men were depicted as competitive, dangerous, and sex-focused. Study 2 revealed that women who frequently consumed magazines, reality television, and R&B/Hip-Hip music reported greater acceptance of heteropatriarchal relationship beliefs. Study 3 confirmed that acceptance of restrictive beauty standards was associated with greater negative sexual affect (e.g., sexual guilt, self-consciousness during sex) and lower levels of sexual agency (e.g., sexual assertiveness, satisfaction).

Together, findings indicate that restrictive gender content contained in popular media prescribe sexual norms that may jeopardize Black women's sexual well-being. Although our findings do not permit us to firmly state that high levels of media consumption *cause* greater acceptance of restrictive gender beliefs that hamper sexual well-being (relations may be bidirectional), findings suggest that popular Black-oriented media should be considered as an important, but not always empowering, agent in Black women's sexual socialization.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*Yo, this is Sommore – the bitch that has the comedy game on lock  
This is a motherfucking roll call.  
So listen up all the ladies, Nubian queens, Black princesses, African goddesses,  
choir girls, young girls, models, skeezas, bitches, hos, playettes, dykes, divas,  
housewives, gold diggers, sack chasers, cum guzzlers, chicken heads, crack heads, baller  
bitches, shake dancers, and boosters.  
Say what you want, we're all one in the same.  
No matter what they call you, or you call yourself.  
There's only 3 rules in this game:  
Keep your nappy-ass hair done, do your mother fucking sit-ups,  
and whenever you lay on your back, make sure your paper is stacked.”*  
- “Intro” by Sommore, Trina *Diamond Princess* (2002)

Black women receive a range of prescriptive messages in the popular media about socially sanctioned gender and sexual ideals. For example, the introductory track on mainstream rapper Trina’s album *Diamond Princess* features popular Black comedian Sommore noting a myriad of stereotypical and culturally specific ways that Black women exist in the larger social imagination, and the ways in which they may understand and define themselves. She also suggests that regardless of the varying ways that Black women understand themselves (e.g., respectable vs. deviant/denigrated, empowered vs. disempowered), *all* women are similarly held to and governed by “rules” that reflect traditional hegemonic notions about women’s physical, social, and sexual subjugation and objectivity in relation to men. These “rules” or socially sanctioned norms for Black women mandate that they must prioritize their physical beauty and attractiveness, and ensure that they are compensated or financially remunerated for sex. Specifically, these

comments emphasize the way in which sex and sexuality function as mechanisms and strategies for economic gain, and the ways in which Black women's sexuality is deeply implicated in their experience of broader gender and sexual inequality. In this dissertation, I plan to explore the extent to which Black women are exposed to these messages and have developed sexual attitudes that reflect the controlling images rooted in systemic experiences of race, gender, and class based oppression.

Black feminist sociologist Patricia Hill Collins attends to these questions in her book *Black Sexual Politics* (2004), and suggests that widespread cultural beliefs concerning the sexual attitudes and behaviors of Black Americans occur at the particular intersection of gender, race, and sexuality. She argues that gender-specific racial oppression includes frequent exposure to controlling images of deviant and pathological femininity and masculinity (i.e., outside of the purview of respectability politics), and these images frame the ways that Black women and men come to understand, idealize, desire, and treat one another. Specifically, it is argued by Collins and others that Black women's racial and sexual oppression in the United States includes rampant production and circulation of media images depicting Black women and girls as promiscuous, hypersexual/insatiable, untrustworthy, manipulative, opportunistic, adversarial, and as sexual commodities to be (ab)used and controlled by men (Collins, 2000, 2004; Crenshaw, 1993; Giddings, 1992; hooks, 1992). Collins, and many other feminist scholars (see hooks, 1997; Morgan, 2000; Pough, 2004; Rose, 1994, 2008) note that these messages are especially salient in the media produced within hip-hop culture.

It is important that we document the prevalence of stereotypical representations of Black women in the media, and we must also examine how these messages are

interpreted, internalized, and resisted by the audience. Women are not merely passive receptacles for hegemonic beliefs viewed in the media, and their acceptance of and/or resistance to controlling images occur in the context of several sociocultural factors. Among the many theoretical frameworks concerning sexual socialization and the mass media, I find that two theories are particularly useful in explaining the media's influence as a gender and sexual educator for Black women. First, cultivation theory (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994) argued that highly stylized, stereotyped, and repetitive images portrayed in the mainstream media construct a particular portrait of reality, and increased exposure to these images facilitates the development of personal attitudes and beliefs that reflect this socially/commercially constructed portrait.

Second, Sara McClelland's *Intimate Justice* feminist framework (2010) helps us consider the ways that socio-political inequalities constrain the development of liberatory beliefs about one's sexual needs and desires. McClelland argued that cultural constructions of sexuality and sexual expectations reflect the broader sociocultural conditions that women experience (i.e., heteronormativity, sexism, misogyny, racism), and other feminist scholars have noted the injurious consequences that Black women experience when they do not uphold the socially sanctioned standards prescribed to them (Collins, 2004; Durham, Cooper, & Morris, 2013; Hammonds, 1999; Collins, 2000, 2004; Giddings, 1992; hooks, 1992).

Although these theoretical assertions offer important contributions to our understanding of the mechanistic processes of Black gender socialization and sexuality development, few systematic analyses have tested these processes among young Black women. It is important that we have empirical evidence to evaluate claims concerning

both the acquisition of attitudes and behaviors about romantic and sexual relationships, and the possibly (dis) empowering effects of such attitudes. Therefore, this project has two related aims: 1) to investigate contemporary constructions of Black femininity and masculinity in popular Black media and 2) to examine how exposure to these media contributes to the development of hegemonic sexual attitudes among Black women. By focusing on research questions that inquire about the gendered messages in popular media *and* the psycho-sexual experiences of its target audience, this research contributes important insights about the socialization of Black gender and sexual ideologies. It examines how Black women use culturally specific media as a site of social learning, and develop collective understandings of their personal and interpersonal sexual desires. It also examines the ways that exposure to hegemonic messages about Black women may undermine culturally specific femininity prescriptions that emphasize female agency and strength.

This work places feminist, Black feminist, psychological, sociological, and communication studies literatures in conversation with one another, informing a strategic and interdisciplinary thinking about the individual and collective experiences of sexuality among Black women. Using a mixed methods design, including content analysis and empirical survey methods, my study will provide an innovative and nuanced depiction of contemporary Black sexualities by interrogating the role of socially derived hegemonic gender beliefs on romantic relationship attitudes and sexual experiences.

### **Literature Review**

It is widely understood that sociocultural constructions of sexuality condition individuals' perceptions of gender role norms and influence sexual behavior. The concept

of sexual scripts, typically credited as originating with Gagnon and Simon (1973), is frequently used among feminist sexuality researchers to explain women's sexual attitudes and behaviors. The central tenet of script theory is the idea that sexuality is *learned* from culturally available messages that help to determine the details (who, what, where, when, and how) of sexual interactions. Sexual scripts are mutually shared conventions that guide independent action in sexual interactions, and are influenced at three levels: cultural scenarios, interpersonal scripts, and intrapsychic scripts. Cultural scenarios are those norms that guide sexual behavior at the societal, cultural, or subcultural level, and indicate the requirements for specific roles or group norms. Interpersonal scripts reflect individuals' interpretation of cultural scenarios. At this level, individuals are scriptwriters or adaptors who rely on their socialization to actively shape cultural scenarios into scripts for their own relationship and sexual behaviors. Additionally, intrapsychic scripts provide roadmaps for how to think, feel, and behave in sexual contexts. Internalization of sexual scripts both consciously and unconsciously influences individuals' perceptions and behaviors concerning love and sex, and individual adaptation and development of sexual scripts comes secondarily to the cultural and collective description of the script (Gagnon & Simon, 1973).

Culturally appropriate sexual scripts are learned from sources like parents, family, teachers, clergy, and peers. The mass media have been highlighted as an important source of sexual socialization due to their unique ability to frame and define social expectations and relations for a national (and increasingly global) audience, and their powerful influence on the sexual knowledge, beliefs, and values of their consumers. In this dissertation, I will focus on the hegemonic, sexualized gender scripts communicated in

contemporary mass media, paying special attention to media oriented toward a Black audience. I will then examine the associations among Black media consumption and hegemonic gender and sexual relationship beliefs.

### **Hegemonic Masculinity and Sexuality**

Within mainstream society (Euro-American culture), women and men receive conflicting messages about their expected gender roles and sexual scripts that are guided by hegemonic, patriarchal, and heterosexual norms. Researchers have found that the sexual scripts for heterosexual men often reflect “hegemonic masculinity,” a concept created by Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell (1995). According to her social theory of gender and power relations, hegemonic masculinity ensures the dominant social position of men (and subordinate position of women) by scripting traditionally masculine characteristics for men that espouse patriarchal relationships with women. These characteristics include violence, aggression, emotional restraint, toughness, risk-taking, adventure/thrill seeking, competitiveness, achievement, and success. Sexually, hegemonic masculinity prescribes that men act as sexual agents, aggressive initiators and orchestrators of sexual activity (Connell, 1990, 1995).

Though some sociological and psychological research has found that that men have internalized masculinity ideals that stretch beyond the overdetermined, rigid hegemonic masculinity (e.g., Dworkin & O’Sullivan, 2005; Smiler, 2012), other researchers (e.g., Bretthauer, Zimmerman, & Banning, 2006; Connell, 1990; Hunter & Davis, 1992) have noted that messages linking masculinity to toughness, competitiveness, independence, individuality, sexual virility, and domination over women are persistently the most frequent representations of men in the mass media, and

many women and men in heterosexual relationships enact culturally dominant sexual scripts that idealize hegemonic masculinity.

### **Emphasized/Subordinate Femininity and Sexuality**

Conversely, gender scripts communicated about women in the mass media *emphasize* the acceptance of and compliance with patriarchal, hegemonic femininity. According to Connell (1987), idealizations of femininity in this society are oriented toward accommodating the interests of men. Hegemonic sexual scripts highlight for women the importance of nurturance, passivity, emotionality, and modesty (Mahalik et al., 2005). One central aspect of the traditional femininity prescription is the expectation of communion, that is, that women are to be highly attuned and responsive to others' desires, often at great cost to their own goals, desires, and feelings (Eagly, 1987; Rudman & Glick, 2001).

Hegemonic gender prescriptions for women's behavior also extend into the domain of sexuality, and link femininity with notions of sexual passivity, submission, ignorance, and self-objectification (McCormick, Brannigan, & LaPlante, 1984; Tevlin & Leiblum, 1983; Wiederman, 2005). Theoretical arguments (e.g., Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Morokoff, 2000) and empirical evidence suggest that endorsing these feminine sexual norms jeopardizes women's ability to express sexual agency resulting in increased rates of sexual coercion, lesser perceived ability to negotiate condom use, decreased sexual health, and fewer experiences of sexual pleasure and satisfaction (Curtin, Ward, Merriwether, & Caruthers, 2011; Sanchez, Crocker, Boike, 2005). These prescriptions suggest that in order to fulfill the dominant cultural image of a pure, submissive, and

respectable “lady,” women must not appear to be too curious or knowledgeable about sex and refrain from communicating and prioritizing their sexual desires.

When women display traditionally masculine (agentic) traits, they are viewed as violating the prescriptions of femininity because agency and communion are viewed as oppositional (Hegelson & Fritz, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 2001). In order to ensure partner approval and avoid backlash, women are likely to accept the prescriptions of the feminine communality stereotype by following it in their own lives (McCormick, Brannigan, & LaPlante, 1984; Rudman & Glick, 2001; Wood, Christensen, Hebl, & Rothgerber, 1997). Moreover, women gain power and status through accommodating these prescriptive roles (Rubin, Nemeroff, & Russo, 2004).

Research indicates that women’s internalization of restrictive sexual attitudes and beliefs often reflect a strong desire to appear sexually attractive to men and receive socially desirable responses from their intimate partners (e.g., Fallon & Rozin, 1985; Sanchez, Crocker, & Boike, 2005). Women who fear being perceived as unattractive and too sexually assertive have difficulty expressing their sexual desires, tend to adhere to disempowering sexual scripts (Kiefer et al., 2006; Telvin & Leiblum, 1983; Tolman & Porche, 2000) and experience lower levels of subjective sexual well-being and agency (Curtin et al., 2011; Sanchez & Kiefer, 2007; Wiederman, 2000; Yamamiya, Cash, & Thompson, 2006). Most importantly, internalizing restrictive ideals about women’s gender and sexual roles decentralizes the importance of personal pleasure and agency in women’s sexual lives, and hampers their ability to assert their authentic sexual desires in romantic and sexual relationships.



## **Black Women Learn Multiple Dimensions of Femininity**

Femininity is also a racialized construct, and the implications of femininity prescriptions differ for women of different races (Beuboeuf-Lafontant, 2007; Cole & Zucker, 2007). Because Black women are a minority group within American culture, they receive prescriptions derived from both normative *and* culturally specific femininity ideologies (Nash, 2011). Collins (2004) argued that the mass media frequently circulate controlling images of deviant and pathological Black femininity and masculinity, and that these images frame the ways that Black women and men come to understand, idealize, desire, and treat one another. Before discussing the implications for the gender and sexual socialization of women exposed to these media messages, it is important to understand the history of Black women's gender and sexuality in the United States.

*Respectability and Black femininity.* Understanding contemporary constructions of gender and sexuality for Black women in the United States is complicated by the long history of colonization/oppression and Black women's enduring desire to resist and disrupt dominant discourses and controlling images about their sexuality. Black feminist scholars like Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, and Toni Morrison have written extensively about the impact of issues such as rape, forced sterilization, and violence on the sexual lives of Black women in the U.S. According to Hammonds (1999), historical discussions of Black women's sexuality in the U.S. often begin with conventions of sexual exploitation and objectification captured in the iconography of Saartjie "Sarah" Baartman (popularly referred to as the 'Hottentot Venus') during the early 1800s. Crudely exploited and objectified by European audiences based on her "unusually large" genitalia and buttocks, researchers and medical practitioners "concluded with ever-increasing

‘scientific’ evidence that the Black female embodied the notion of uncontrolled sexuality” (Hammonds, 1999, p. 95). Stereotypes about their fundamental (sexual) anatomical and behavioral deviance was used to justify the enslavement, rape, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse of Black women by white men, and notions of their immoral and uncontrollable sexualities have endured in the popular imagination.

In response to the socioeconomic and political exploitation and mistreatment that Black Americans experienced in the U.S. at the turn of the twentieth century, lower income women developed a range of strategies to defy the dominant discourses securing their social and sexual subordination. Coined by Black feminist historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham (1993), “the politics of respectability” describes a range of strategies deployed by progressive Black women in the early 1900s to promote racial uplift and women’s rights by espousing the importance of “manners and morals” to signify notions of honor, purity, self-esteem, piety, and propriety. “Respectability constituted a deliberate, highly self-conscious concession to hegemonic values” (Higginbotham, 1993, p. 193) in order to elicit social equality and respect. The politics of respectability formed an integral part of Black women’s collective effort to defend and protect their sexualities, and Black feminist historian Darlene Clark Hine (1989) suggests that Black women also adopted a self-imposed secrecy and sexual invisibility, or a “culture of dissemblance,” in an attempt to “protect the sanctity and inner spaces of their lives” (p. 915). In other words, Black women refrained from exposing the details of their sexual lives to the public in order to protect themselves from further exploitation.

As representations of Black female sexuality as primitive, exotic, immoral, and uncontrollable have persisted in the dominant discourse throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>

centuries (e.g., via tropes such as the Baby Mama, Welfare Queen, Jezebel, and Gold-Digger; Witherspoon, Thomas, & Speight, 2004), so has Black women's adherence to respectability and dissemblance. These cultural endorsements of morality and "silence" have largely foreclosed the development of a complex, historically and culturally specific analysis of Black women's sexuality. Furthermore, adherence to hegemonic values has helped to reinscribe White, hetero-patriarchy systems of power, and failed to fully disrupt public narratives that configure Black women as sexually excessive and deviant (Durham, Cooper, & Morris, 2013). These hegemonic discourses ensure that Black women's bodies are "empty spaces that [are] simultaneously ever-visible (exposed), and invisible, where Black women's bodies are always already colonized...[having] so much sexual potential it has none at all" (Hammonds, 1994, p. 94). That being said, challenging respectability politics is difficult because there are often serious social and political repercussions for Black women who liberally express sexual agency, desire, and pleasure. As a consequence, Black women's personal engagement with respectability politics continues to be vital.

### **Perspectives on Sexual Socialization via Black-Oriented Media**

It has been argued that Black women's development of sexual agency is hampered by the hegemonic discourses and controlling images about their sexuality. For example, Black feminist author and activist Toni Cade Bambara (1970) suggests that Black women are not immune to the social conditioning of their disempowerment and are trapped within the rigid confines of oppressive socially contrived roles suggesting men are dominant sexual subjects and women are subordinate sexual objects. Similarly, other Black feminist scholars have argued that contemporary Black media are *the* central

locations for the discussion of Black gender and sexuality, and often serve as the mechanisms by which hegemonic gender ideologies are learned (see Collins, 2004; hooks, 1992; Rose, 2008; Morgan, 2000). These scholars suggest that the internalization of patriarchal, hypermasculine, and misogynistic ideals stems from their frequent circulation in the lyrical, video, and print content of the popular Black-oriented media in hip hop culture. Empirical evidence exists that support these theoretical claims, and findings indicate that increased exposure to hypermasculinity and anti-femininity through TV and music videos is associated with Black women's acceptance of traditional gender stereotypes and a tendency to idealize patriarchal and dominating men as sexual partners (Gordon, 2008; Ward, Hansbrough, & Walker, 2005; Ward & Friedman, 2006). However, these studies did not specifically examine culturally targeted media sources nor their impact on culturally specific relationship attitudes.

*Media exposure and gender ideology.* People amass information about culturally relevant and socially sanctioned gender role norms from a number of sources, including parental/familial models, peers, teachers, and religious leaders (Ward, 2002). A few sources believed to be prominent in this learning are TV, magazines, internet and music media, which offer abundant examples of how women and men should look, behave, and interact. Indeed, media are likely to be especially important sources of gender and sexual socialization for Black Americans due to the amount of time they spend with media (Ward, Hansbrough, & Walker, 2005). Studies consistently indicate higher levels of overall media use among Black Americans than among other ethnic groups in the United States, and the majority of the media content they consume is oriented toward a Black audience (i.e., R&B/hip-hop music and videos, reality TV shows featuring a primarily

Black cast, and blogs/social media websites featuring stories and content about Black entertainment and socio-political issues; Hoff, Greene, & Davis, 2003; Jamison, 2006; Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010).

Few systematic analyses have been conducted of the gender themes in Black-oriented media. Instead, research inquiries concerned about the socialization impact of popular media have focused on analyzing the prevalence of harmful or risk-related content in contemporary Black-oriented media (i.e., R&B, hip-hop, and rap music) relative to other popular genres (i.e., pop, rock, and country). Both popular (e.g., Michael Eric Dyson, Sister Souljah, Joan Morgan, Melissa Harris-Perry) and academic (Armstrong, 2001; Collins, 2004; Oware, 2009; Rose, 1994, 2008) criticisms of Black media have often centered on one of three concerns: the prevalence of misogyny, hyper-masculinity, and hyper-sexualization of women. To date, little is known about how gender role norms are depicted in Black media, and whether or not popular representations of femininity and masculinity primarily reflect traditional, hegemonic prescriptions that are rooted in the cultural legacy of respectability politics.

There is evidence indicating the positive associations between media exposure and greater acceptance of hegemonic and stereotypical attitudes about sex, gender, and relationships (e.g., Ward, Hansbrough, & Walker, 2005), and a new and serious problem arises when considering sexual socialization at the intersection of converging social and cultural gender messages. How do Black women negotiate hegemonic gender ideologies that prescribe sexual purity, passivity and communality for “women,” and hypersexuality for “Black women?” In my dissertation, I will address this larger question through a rigorous scientific exploration of Black women’s sexual attitudes and behaviors. I

propose a set of studies that examine the effects of femininity ideologies on Black women along three lines of inquiry: an examination of the frequency with which hegemonic femininity and masculinity messages are circulated in Black-oriented media, an analysis of associations between Black media consumption and support of heteropatriarchal beliefs about romantic relationships, and an investigation of the internalization of hegemonic and culturally specific femininity ideologies and their associations with sexual well-being among young Black heterosexual women.

*Remixing and Resisting.* The impetus for this research emerged from my interest in recent Black feminist scholars who have argued that Black media produced within hip hop culture is a site of liberatory praxis, offering Black women an opportunity to produce and consume empowering messages that challenge the racist, sexist, and misogynistic gender narratives derived from the broader hegemonic social context (J Morgan, 2000; M Morgan, 2005; Pough, 2004). Self-proclaimed “hip-hop feminist” scholars like Zenzele Isoke, Whitney Peoples, Gwendolyn Pough, and Joan Morgan argued that women of the hip-hop generation need feminist frameworks that facilitate an examination of the ways in which dominant representations and images can be simultaneously empowering and problematic. By “remixing” (Black) feminist theory to construct radical inquiries that “tackle Black sexual politics by discussing and challenging the persistence and prevalence of ‘misognoir’ (the hatred of Black women and girls), respectability politics, and compulsory heterosexuality” (Durham, Cooper, & Morris, 2013, p. 730), these scholars argue that we facilitate new conversations about Black women’s sexuality and their negotiation of the sexual scripts provided for them within media content produced within hip-hop culture and society at large (Peoples, 2008).

## **Dissertation Overview**

Black women remain central to discussions of hypersexuality within mass media, and representations of them as either sexually objectified or as agentic, manipulative “gold-diggers” constitute the most frequently circulated controlling images of Black women in the media. Empirical findings (e.g., Gordon, 2008; Johnson, Adams, Ashburn, & Reed, 1995; Ward et al., 2005) suggest that Black women’s frequent exposure to these messages influences their acceptance and endorsement of hegemonic gender and sexual beliefs, shaping their idealizations and expectations of sex and romantic relationships. However, respectability politics frequently impede Black women’s ability to express themselves freely, and often foreclose our empirical ability to understand Black women’s experiences of sexual agency, sexual pleasure, and internalization of or resistance to idealizations of their sexual domination. This project reflects four theoretical frameworks about sexual development (cultivation theory, sexual script theory, intimate justice, and black feminist theorizing about respectability politics), and aims to explore the paradoxical acceptance and negotiation of public (mainstream) and private (racial/cultural) prescriptions for Black women’s sexuality.

The dissertation consists of three studies, each investigating dominant gendered and sexualized representations and expectations of young heterosexual Black women, and the potential impact of embracing hegemonic femininity on Black women’s experiences of sex and romantic relationships. The study goals were as follows:

Study 1. Although analyses indicate that mainstream media are a prominent force in the gender socialization of Black youth, little is known about the nature of gender messages in contemporary music, especially in music performed by Black artists. To

explore this issue, I sought to examine the prevalence of gendered messages reflecting hegemonic femininity and masculinity in popular music via a systematic quantitative content analysis of the lyrics to the most widely circulated R&B/Hip-Hop songs between 1990-2010. I addressed four primary research questions: 1) What dimensions of femininity and masculinity are used most frequently to represent women and men?; 2) What is the contributing role of the sex of artist in the promotion of traditional gendered messages?; 3) Has the communication of these messages varied over the last 20 years?; and, 4) Are there significant subgenre (R&B/Soul versus Rap/Hip-Hop) differences in the appearance of traditional gender representations? Findings from this study will extend the current theoretical and empirical research regarding the potential impact of Black-oriented media on the gender and sexual socialization of Black Americans and help determine which dimensions of femininity and masculinity to include in Study 2 and Study 3 of the dissertation.

Study 2. The central goal was to employ quantitative survey methods to empirically examine whether exposure to media targeting Black audiences is associated with greater acceptance of heteropatriarchal romantic relationship beliefs. Using an anonymous online questionnaire, heterosexual Black female college students were asked to indicate the frequency with which they consumed media targeted toward Black audiences (i.e., magazines, reality television, music videos, and popular music genres featuring predominately Black models/actors/artists/images), and reported the extent to which they agree with questions that measured their level of acceptance of the heterosexual script, adversarial sexual beliefs, and adversarial beliefs about Black heterosexual relationships.



Study 3. Based on findings from Study 1 that indicate the proverbial absence of nuance in the representation of women and femininity in Black music outside of the controlling messages emphasizing the importance of women's physical appearance and sexual objectification, the main goal of Study 3 was to investigate how acceptance of restrictive beauty and body standards is associated with Black women's experiences of sexual well-being. Little research has examined the relation between acceptance of narrow, Eurocentric ideals of beauty and Black women's sexual experiences, and this study will attempt to fill this gap in the literature by exploring the role of beauty and body appearance beliefs on reduced sexual well being.

### **Contributions to the Field**

Together, I propose a set of studies that will both update and substantially add to the literature that examines the messages about gender and sexuality in popular media, the extent to which these representations are internalized by those who consume this media most frequently, and the impact of this internalization on sexual well being among Black women in college, a population that is often overlooked. Adhering to socially sanctioned gender expectations may have a resounding impact on Black women's sexual health. As the rates of unplanned pregnancies, sexual victimization, and HIV infection continue to increase among Black women (Hussen, Bowleg, Sngaramoorthy, & Malebranche, 2012; Collins, 2004), it is important that researchers create innovative programs of research geared toward understanding the sexual experiences of Black women and shedding light on the social and psychological issues that maintain their interpersonal and sexual vulnerability. My dissertation research utilizes research methods from psychology, women's studies, and communication studies to conduct a nuanced

analysis of Black women's experiences of gender, romantic relationships, and sexual well-being. Ultimately, I will work to increase sexual autonomy among Black women by helping to disrupt the internalization of hegemonic gendered ideologies, and explore the ways that media content may both hinder and aid in the construction of liberatory, empowered, and healthy Black sexualities.

**CHAPTER 2**  
**"MIC CHECK 1, 2, 1, 2" REPRESENTATIONS OF FEMININITY**  
**AND MASCULINITY IN POPULAR MUSIC BY BLACK ARTISTS (STUDY 1)**

**Introduction**

Gender role beliefs reflect socially and culturally sanctioned ideas or attitudes regarding idealized gender-specific roles, responsibilities, behaviors, and traits (Bem, 1975). Beliefs about gender guide our interpersonal interactions in social relationships (e.g., Ridgeway & Correll, 2004), sexual encounters (e.g., Amaro, Raj, & Reed, 2001), and inter/intra group relations (for review, see Toosi, Babbit, Ambady, & Sommers, 2012). According to social identity theory, individuals learn what is expected of them, including expectations about gender roles, by observing role performances exhibited by culturally relevant socialization agents, such as parental/familial models, peers, and the mainstream media (Stets & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Because race and social class interact to shape cultural constructions of gender, research has sought to understand the gender socialization experiences of specific ethnic groups, such as Black Americans, from their unique cultural perspective. To date, most research in this area has focused on the impact of parental models (for review, see Skinner et al., 2015). However, media use is believed to have especially powerful effects on the gender belief development of Black youth because of their high rates of media consumption (Ward et al., 2005). Although youth in the United States consume media at high rates, in general,

Black youth consume media at significantly higher rates than their White American counterparts (9 hours and 44 minutes per day versus 6 hours and 22 minutes; Rideout et al., 2010). Furthermore, although music is the second most popular form of media consumed (behind television), little is known about the gender-specific content featured in popular music lyrics.

The purpose of this study was to update and expand our knowledge about representations of femininity and masculinity in the popular music that Black youth most avidly consume in order to better understand its potential contribution to their gender development. More specifically, this study is a content analysis of hegemonic depictions of femininity and masculinity in commercially successful songs performed by Black artists over the last 20 years (between 1990 and 2010). Black youth have a preference for culturally relevant media, and the music diets of Black youth are dominated by the work of Black artists, producers, and performers (Rideout et al., 2010). It is estimated that 81-98% of Black youth listen primarily to music oriented toward Black audiences, including rap, hip-hop, rhythm and blues (R & B), and pop music performed by Black artists (Hoff, Greene, & Davis, 2003; Jamison, 2006). Research also suggests that Black youth identify more with media messages by Black artists than White artists (Milkie, 1999; Schooler et al., 2004). These findings support premises of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1994), which contends that observers are more likely to model the behavior of those who are perceived as attractive, powerful, and similar to themselves. In order to investigate the potential role of music lyrics in the gender socialization of Black youth, we have chosen to focus on the gendered messages conveyed in the music performed by Black artists. Additionally, because popular music content is not static and has been noted to differ

based on music genre and historical time period (e.g., Cooper, 1985), we also test contributions of these factors.

### **Theoretical Perspectives of Media Influences on Gender Development**

Two theories serve as a framework for this research: Social Identity Theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000; Hogg & Abrams, 1988) and Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994). Social identity theory postulates that people have two sources of identity: 1) a personal identity as a unique individual, and 2) a collective identity as a member of a social group(s). The theory also suggests that a person's unique identity is directly informed by the social categories or groups with which they identify. Thus, an individual's social categories (e.g., race, gender, age) may define the way they understand themselves and shape how they think, feel, and behave (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). For example, a Black girl may utilize the language, beliefs, and values communicated in the music of commercially successful Black female artists to develop an understanding of the behavior expected of her. Also, by identifying with the social category "Black girl/woman," she may define herself based on the attitudes and behaviors deemed socially appropriate and ideal for Black women in the mainstream media.

Cultivation theory (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994) is premised upon the assumption that highly stylized, stereotyped, and repetitive images portrayed in the mainstream media construct a particular portrait of reality, and increased exposure to these images facilitates the development of personal beliefs that reflect this socially/commercially constructed portrait. Therefore, frequent media exposure is believed to lead consumers to gradually come to accept the portrayals and images as

models of realistic, acceptable, and expected behavior, and several studies that draw upon cultivation theory have confirmed these associations among Black audiences (e.g., Gordon, 2008). Methodologically, cultivation theory also provides a useful analytic strategy for testing the impact of media use on beliefs. According to Gerbner and colleagues (1994), cultivation analysis should begin by identifying recurrent and stable patterns in media content, documenting the consistent images, portrayals, and values. Therefore, as a first step in understanding contributions of popular music to the gender ideologies of Black American youth, we sought to conduct a quantitative, systematic analysis of the dominant themes about masculinity and femininity conveyed in popular music performed by Black artists.

### **Early Analyses of Gender Portrayals in Popular Music Media**

What do we know about how masculinity and femininity are portrayed in popular music lyrics? To date, there have been few systematic, quantitative content analyses of gender themes in contemporary *music*. There have been several excellent analyses of gender themes in *music videos*, which find an abundance of sexualization and degradation of women, and portrayals of men as aggressive, domineering, and violent (e.g., Aubrey & Frisby, 2011; Conrad et al., 2009; Wallis, 2011). However, despite the promise of these findings, any conclusions about the impact of music lyrics remain tentative because these analyses focused on the visual images portrayed and not the lyrics. Most scholarly work on music lyric content consists of textual or conceptual analyses of gender themes in specific songs, genres, or the music performed by a few artists (e.g., Adams & Fuller, 2006). In one of the first, large-scale, quantitative studies to investigate our question, Wilkinson (1976) analyzed 200 songs across all genres that

were “big hits” between 1954 and 1968. This analysis was data-driven, in that the author made a list of *all* of the descriptive adjectives and verbs in these songs that were applied to one sex or the other. For men, the most frequently occurring descriptives were cries, needs/depends on, submissive, faithful, and lonely. For women the most frequently occurring descriptives were cries, pretty, heavenly, unfaithful, sweet, fearful, and loving. Using a more theory-driven approach, Freudiger and Almquist (1978) examined the lyrics of 151 songs representing the top songs from the Country, Soul, and Easy Listening charts for 1973. A subset of 105 songs that contained a “heterosexual theme” were examined for the degree to which women were depicted using six traits associated with hegemonic femininity (supportive, inconsistent, submissive, dependent, hesitant, and beautiful) and to which men were represented using six hegemonic masculinity traits (aggressive, independent, demanding, consistent, active, and confident). Women were most frequently depicted as supportive (41% of songs) and submissive (37% of songs). Men were most frequently depicted as confident (52% of songs) and aggressive (51% of songs). These rates varied across genres, although statistical tests were not run.

Perhaps the most comprehensive analysis of portrayals of femininity in popular music is a study by Cooper (1985), who analyzed the top songs of 1946, 1956, 1966, and 1976 for the presence (yes/no) of eleven stereotyped images of women. Included in the group of stereotypes were images of women as evil, needing a man, as possessions of men, as sex objects, as delicate, as childlike, as being on a pedestal, as attractive, and as supernatural. Ninety-six percent of the songs coded contained at least one of the eleven stereotypes. Themes varied in prevalence across the decades. References to women’s

needing men were dominant in 1946 and 1956. References to women as childlike were the top themes in 1966 and 1976.

### **Gender Portrayals in Popular Black-Oriented Music**

To date, there has been no content-analytic work that investigated the broad range of gendered themes depicted in commercially successful songs performed by Black artists. However, several scholars (Armstrong, 2001; Balaji, 2010; Beatty, 2005; Emerson, 2002; Oware, 2009) have examined depictions of women and men in specific musical genres like rap and hip-hop, which are dominated by Black artists. Within these studies, researchers focused on one or two specific male gender stereotypes, particularly those that endorse aggression and misogyny, as hip-hop and rap music have been singled out by scholars for their frequent advocacy of aggression and power over/hatred toward women (e.g., Bretthauer, Zimmerman, & Banning, 2006). For example, in his analysis of misogyny in rap lyrics, McFarland (2003) found that among 263 popular rap songs released from 1999-2002, 37% depicted women as objects of male desire and pleasure, and 4% justified violence against women. Additionally, Weitzer and Kubrin (2009) investigated the prevalence of misogyny in rap music using a sample of 430 rap songs that attained platinum status between 1992 and 2000, and found that misogynistic messages were less pervasive than they expected (22% of songs), and that sexual objectification of women (67% of songs), distrust of women (47%), and legitimating violence against women (18%) were significant themes. Research that analyzed gendered portrayals in Black-oriented music has also centered on depictions of men as hyper-masculine, or excessively aggressive, violent, sexual, materialistic, and overly concerned



about displaying status and/or appearing wealthy (Franklin, 1985; Hunter & Davis, 1992; Oliver, 1984).

Most of the contemporary research and scholarship examining gender in Black-oriented media has focused on the experiences of men, and has both implicitly and explicitly linked Black popular culture with masculinity (Emerson, 2002; Rose, 2008). The handful of content analyses that explored representations of women in Black-oriented media often assessed the misogynistic, stereotypical, exploitative, and sexualized images of Black women in *music videos* (e.g., Emerson, 2002; Hunter, 2011; Zhang, Dixon, & Conrad, 2010). For example, Conrad and her colleagues (2009) examined gender portrayals and skin tone distortion/colorism in 108 rap and R&B music videos and found that women were more likely to appear as sexual objects and that there was a greater emphasis on conventional feminine beauty standards for women compared to men. Although these studies provide critical analyses of the portrayal of Black women in music videos, they have focused primarily on graphical images depicting their sexual objectification. As a result, little research has considered how Black women are depicted in popular music *lyrics* using a more comprehensive range of gendered attributes. Completing a content analysis that includes a more expansive range of feminine attributes and the possibility of women's representations as both feminine and masculine will fill a significant gap in the literature.

### **Considering Cultural and Multidimensional Beliefs about Gender**

Although previous content-analytic findings offer a provocative portrait of gender roles in popular music, they are constrained in their application because of their limited analysis of gender. Typically, researchers have examined the content of the music Black

youth frequently consume for the presence of only one or two gender dimensions, such as aggressive masculinity or sexualized femininity. Yet gender ideals are broader than these characterizations, and femininity and masculinity are both multi-dimensional constructs. Hegemonic masculinity has been defined to include attributes such as competitiveness, emotional restraint, risk taking, dominance, non-relational attitudes toward sexuality, independence and self-reliance, sexual objectification of women, and achievement (Collins, 2004; Levant, Smalley et al., 2007; Mahalik et al., 2003; Thompson & Pleck, 1986). Some suggest that these dominant attributes often take an extreme form known as hyper-masculinity. According to Mosher (1991), gender socialization *primarily* encourages men to adopt hypermasculine roles, or exaggerated performances of masculine gender-typed behaviors like violence, sexual aggression, danger/risk taking (including drug and alcohol use), threats, and verbal manipulation to coerce women into sexual compliance.

Alternatively, hegemonic femininity has been conceptualized as compliance with patriarchy and a concession to the sexism and misogyny inherent in hegemonic masculinity (Collins, 2004). More specifically, hegemonic femininity has been defined to include dimensions such as deference and submission, care-taking, seeking romantic relationships, emotionality, being appearance-focused, loyalty, and purity (Levant, Richmond, et al., 2007; Mahalik et al., 2005; Tolman & Porche, 2000). Collins (2004) suggests that an important benchmark in hegemonic femininity includes displays of a hyper-sexualized femininity (also referred to as “hyperfemininity;” Murnen & Byrne, 1991), or an exaggerated adherence to stereotypic feminine gender roles that emphasize appropriate feminine demeanor and the enactment of normative standards of beauty.

Similarly, others have indicated that hyperfemininity includes the belief that a woman's worth is largely determined by her ability to acquire and maintain a relationship with a man, and that her primary value in a romantic relationship is her sexuality (Matschiner & Murnen, 1999; Maybach & Gold, 1994). Murnen and Byrne (1991) suggested hyperfeminine women use their sexuality instrumentally to achieve the goal of securing a romantic relationship.

Because of the unique historical and contextual factors that shape their experiences as underrepresented minorities in the United States, many have questioned whether hegemonic gender constructions even apply to Black men and women, especially given that Black men lack access to the forms of political, social, and economic power available to the elite White men who embody and enact hegemonic masculinity. Black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins discusses the associations among hegemony and gender ideology in her book *Black Sexual Politics* (2004), and argues that hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity are supported and reproduced among Black men and women in the United States. She reports that Black masculinity and Black femininity are both constructed in relation to hegemonic masculinity.

At the same time, evidence suggests that the narrative constructions of gender identity that Black Americans maintain may be more expansive than hegemonic descriptions of femininity and masculinity. For example, qualitative examinations of Black men's narrative constructions of masculinity suggest that in addition to traditional characteristics like autonomy, independence, and achievement, Black masculinity is relationally constructed and includes responsibility and accountability to family, morality, resilience, and self-respect (Chaney, 2009; Hammond & Mattis, 2005).

Additionally, scholars have suggested that Black women often serve as the matriarch and provider/breadwinner in contemporary family arrangements, and, as a result, Black femininity includes expectations that women consistently appear strong, resilient, independent, self-determined, and display emotional restraint (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2007; Romero, 2000; Woods-Giscombé, 2010). These findings suggest that Black women and men are socialized to adopt culturally specific gendered selves that contain traits characterized within both hegemonic femininity *and* masculinity.

Currently, it is unclear how music media may facilitate the development of these multidimensional and cultural conventions of gender. Without data that comprehensively investigate gendered representations of Black women and men as constituting both feminine and masculine gender attributes, we cannot postulate about the potential impact of observational learning from the lyrics of Black musical artists. According to cultivation theory (Gerbner et al., 1994), the first step in testing the impact of media exposure is to first conduct a quantitative, systematic analysis of the dominant themes in the media landscape. Accordingly, we addressed this need in the present study by conducting a systematic analysis of references to masculine and feminine attributes for women and men. Based on existing research and on the theoretical premises of cultivation theory and social identity theory, we examined how women and men are referenced in popular songs by Black artists. The central research question guiding our investigation was: What are the dominant representations of masculinity and femininity in popular music performed by Black artists? Given the trends that emerged in previous content analytic studies examining representations of gender-specific attributes in popular music, our research hypotheses were as follows:

**H1a:** Hegemonic masculinity attributes will be more frequently used in reference to men than to women. However, there will be a nontrivial representation of men described using hegemonic femininity gender attributes.

**H1b:** There will be more references to men as hypermasculine than other dimensions of masculinity.

**H2a:** Hegemonic femininity attributes will be more frequently used in reference to women than to men. However, there will be a nontrivial representation of women described using hegemonic masculinity gender attributes.

**H2b:** There will more references to women as hyperfeminine than other dimensions of femininity.

### **Contributing Role of Historical Time**

A second means by which we sought to expand existing analysis was by examining these trends over time, acknowledging that neither gender norms nor music content is entirely static. Indeed, several individual studies have noted that song year represents an additional concern when analyzing music lyrics because popular song lyrics change in order to reflect patterns of cultural and societal shifts in attitudes about femininity and masculinity (e.g., DeWall, Pond, Campbell, & Twenge, 2011). For example, a content analysis of popular song lyrics between 1946 and 1976 conducted by Cooper (1985) indicated that there was an increase over time in depictions of women as harmful to men, sexual objects, and helpless and in need of male protection. Other studies found that there have been fewer mentions of love and romance in popular music lyrics over time, and that lyrics have become more explicit in communicating messages of sexual objectification of and violence against women (Armstrong, 2001; Bretthauer et al., 2007; Dukes et al., 2003). Lyrical content depicting women simply as sexual objects for male desire and pleasure have steadily become more prominent in Black-oriented music like rap and Hip-Hop (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009).

Rap began as a personal narrative-based art form that focused on telling the individual stories of urban lives that were largely ignored by mainstream media (Rose, 1994). Rap music traditionally prioritized the lives, voices, and experiences of Black women and men, and primarily hosted content that celebrated the language, attitude, style, art, and fashion of Black youth in urban American cities. However, rap music's ascendance into the mainstream record and radio industry during the 1990s, following the rise of West Coast "gangsta rap," included a "hyper-gangsta-ization" (Rose, 2008) of the music, imagery, and storytelling in rap music. Specifically, West Coast gangsta rap expanded and iconized representations of men as street criminal figures (thugs, hustlers, gangsters, and pimps), and these hypersexist, hypermasculine, one-dimensional narratives of Black men and masculinity began to dominate the storytelling worldview of Hip-Hop culture (Rose, 2008). Taken together, this scholarship indicates that time may be a likely source for potential differences in portrayals of femininity and masculinity in music performed by Black artists; we therefore incorporated time into our analyses and posed the following hypotheses:

**H3a:** There will be an increase in depictions of hypermasculinity over time.

**H3b:** There will be an increase in depictions of hyperfemininity over time.

### **Differential Content between R & B, Hip-Hop, and Pop Genres**

A final means by which we expanded on existing analyses was by exploring the role of genre, acknowledging possible differences *within* popular music performed by Black artists. Music has acted as a central platform for Black artists to protest for social change and give voice to their experiences resulting from oppression, denigration, and disenfranchisement in the United States (Neal, 2001; Rose, 2008). Historically, rhythm

and blues (R&B) was the most commercially successful music genre showcasing Black musical artists, and it largely produced soulful love ballads in the tradition of Blues music (Neal, 2001; Stewart, 1979). Introduced to the mainstream audience during the 1960s, R&B canonized songs that purported “love conquers all” themes, including celebrations of male-female relationships that champion oaths of undying affection, loyalty, and desire. An empirical examination of the most popular songs from 1958-1998 found that 96% of R&B songs were love songs, greater than the amount observed in other popular genres (Dukes et al., 2003). Given these findings, we expect that dimensions of femininity related to emotional expressions of love or romanticism and desire for partnership will be more prevalent in the lyrical content of R&B songs.

With roots in the Black power and civil rights movements, rap music is perhaps the best-known feature of Hip-Hop culture (Kitwana, 2002). Rap is a Black cultural expression devoted to the articulation of the pleasures and problems of Black urban life in contemporary America (Rose, 1994). Emerging in the late 1970s, rap became commercially successful during the 1990s, and its rapid ascendance accompanied a shift from earlier “fight the [socio-politically oppressive] power” driven narratives to sanctions on hypersexual, misogynist, and consumption-based attitudes and behaviors. Empirical evidence indicates that there are genre differences in gender-specific content, with rap music emerging as one of the more provocative genres. First, findings indicate that more frequent references to men as excessively aggressive, violent, dangerous/risky (i.e., consuming illicit substances and engaging in illegal behavior), and materialistic appear in rap lyrics compared to other genres (e.g., Brookshire et al., 2003; Hunter & Davis, 1992; McFarland, 2003). Second, findings indicate that more degrading references to sex

appear in rap lyrics than in other genres (Primack et al., 2008), as do more slang and misogynistic derogatory nicknames for women (e.g., *ho*, *bitch*; Bretthauer et al., 2006; Frisby, 2010; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009). Together, these findings suggest that music genre may be a likely source for potential differences in portrayals of hypermasculinity and the sexualization of women; we therefore incorporated genre into our analyses and posed the following hypotheses:

**H4a:** Rap/Hip-Hop songs will contain significantly more depictions of hypermasculinity compared with other genres.

**H4b:** Rap/Hip-Hop will focus more than other genres on hyperfemininity.

**H4c:** R&B/Soul music will have more portrayals of men and women as romantic and emotional compared with other genres.

## **Method**

### **Song selection**

Our sampling strategy focused on selecting the most commercially successful songs performed by Black artists between 1990 and 2010, focusing on five-year iterations, in effort to capture trends in the data while minimizing the overrepresentation of particular artists, themes, or producers. We used *Billboard*, a national music rating service, to identify the most popular songs in the United States during this time frame. *Billboard* compiles music consumption data using an algorithm that integrates data from a combination of consumer sales and digital downloads (compiled by Nielsen SoundScan), radio airplay (based on Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems), and digital streaming. Due to their long history of song-charting and their rich approach to data collection, *Billboard* was the best source to reference when selecting the songs that were most widely consumed. Selected for analysis were the songs listed as the top 100 songs



on *Billboard* magazine's Hot 100 and *Billboard*'s Hot R&B/Hip-Hop year-end charts for each of the following years: 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2010. The Hot 100 and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop year-end charts represent the most popular songs for the entire calendar year.

*Billboard*'s year-end charts are closed out, and do not change based on the date of access. The song titles from both year-end charts were compiled for each of the 5-year iterations, yielding a list of 1,000 songs. Because some songs were included on both charts, these duplicate songs (195 in total) were deleted, yielding a sample of 805 unique song titles. Lyrics for each song title were gathered from one of several websites, including [www.rapgenius.com](http://www.rapgenius.com), [www.sing365.com](http://www.sing365.com), [www.mldb.org](http://www.mldb.org), and [www.azlyrics.com](http://www.azlyrics.com). During the coding process, coders indicated the demographic information (e.g., artist gender and race) for each song in the sample. For this study, only songs performed by predominately Black artists or groups were selected for inclusion in these analyses ( $N=527$ ). This final sample of 527 songs is listed as Appendix A.

### **Coding Categories**

In constructing dimensions of masculinity, we first drew on the “benchmarks of hegemonic masculinity” identified by Collins (2004). We then consulted the Male Role Norms Scale (Thompson & Pleck, 1986), the Male Role Norms Inventory (Levant et al., 1992), the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (Mahalik et al., 2003), the Bem Sex Role Inventory (1975), and Spence and Helmreich's PAQ (1980), due to their heavy prevalence in the psychological literature about gender roles and norms. Together, these sources name the following attributes as components of hegemonic masculinity: achievement/status, toughness, anti-femininity/avoidance of femininity, rejection of

homosexuals, self-reliance, aggression, restrictive emotionality, casual attitudes toward sex, winning, primacy of work, risk-taking, violence, heterosexual self-presentation, power over women, dominant, independent, competitive, takes a stand, active, and stands up well under pressure. Finally, we included descriptions of men drawn from literature on popular music (e.g., Bretthauer et al., 2007), including notions that men are sexually driven and view women as sexual conquests, that men are providers and breadwinners, and that men are the heroes (women are rescued). Combining these attributes, and reducing redundancies, we produced the following list of 13 attributes representing hegemonic masculinity: *competitive, emotionally controlled, risk-taking, violence, anti-femininity, dominance, sex-focused, self-reliance/survivor, provider/ bread-winner/hero, aggressive/challenging, homophobia, feminization of men, and status-seeking/material goods as status*. These attributes are described in the top half of Table 1. Based on the literature (Mosher, 1991), we operationally identified the following seven hegemonic masculinity attributes as reflecting hypermasculinity: *competitive, risk-taking, violence, anti-femininity, sex-focused, aggressive/challenging, and status-seeking/material goods as status*.

In constructing dimensions of hegemonic femininity, we first drew on the “benchmarks of hegemonic femininity” identified by Collins (2004). We then consulted the Femininity Ideology Scale (Levant et al., 2007), the Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory (Mahalik et al., 2005), the Bem Sex Role Inventory (1975), and Spence and Helmreich’s PAQ (1980). Together, these sources name the following as components of femininity: *submissive, passive, dependency/deference, sexual purity, caretaking, emotionality, nice in relationships, thinness, modesty, domestic, care for children,*

prioritizing romantic relationships, sexual fidelity, investing in appearance, naïve/childlike, and compassionate. Finally, we included descriptions of women from literature on popular music and music videos, including notions that women are sexual objects, and that women are opportunistic gold-diggers (e.g., Cooper, 1985). Combining these attributes and reducing redundancies, we produced the following list of ten attributes representing hegemonic femininity: *deferent/ submissive, nurturant/supportive, need for a partner/love, importance of physical appearance, emotional, loyal, financially dependent, manipulative social climber (gold-digger), sex object, innocent/childlike*. These attributes are described in the bottom half of Table 1. Based on the literature (Murnen & Byrne, 1991), we operationally identified the following three hegemonic femininity attributes as reflecting hyperfemininity: *importance of physical appearance, sex object, need for a partner/love*.

### **Coding Procedures**

The unit of analysis for this study was the song. Each song was coded by 3 trained coders, who coded the songs independently. At the beginning of a coding session, an individual coder first re-read descriptions of the coding categories. Each coder then recorded the demographic information for the song's artist on their coding sheet, including the artist name and gender, song year, and song rank. If the artist sex was unknown, it was investigated via the web search engine Google. Coders then skimmed over the song lyrics to get a gist of the content.

Using the 23 gender attributes listed in Table 1, each song was then coded in two steps. Coders first read through each line of the song, coding for what the song was saying about men and masculinity. These could be references either by male artists

singing about themselves and their lives (“I”), male artists singing about other men, or female artists singing about men. Coders were instructed to seek for clear content, for things that did not need to be inferred. Coding for each variable was done on a presence/absence basis. Therefore, if a variable was present at least once in a song, the coder checked a box on the coding sheet representing “yes, present in this song.” Repeated refrains were not counted, and the number of occurrences within a song was *not* recorded, given that our goal was not to examine how frequently the themes occurred in each song, but was to document theme prevalence across the broader media landscape. Coders examined how men were referenced, coding for evidence of the 13 masculine attributes *and* the 10 feminine attributes. Songs could contain more than one attribute.

For the second step of the coding procedure, the coder read through each line of the song again, this time coding for what the song was saying about women and femininity. These could include female artists singing about themselves and their lives (“I”), female artists singing about other women, or male artists singing about women. If an attribute was present, even once, it was coded as “yes, present in this song.” Coders examined how women were referenced, coding for evidence of the 10 feminine attributes *and* the 13 masculine attributes.

### **Coder Training**

Reliably coding an entity as subjective as music lyrics, using attribute categories that were also somewhat subjective, such as “deference/submissive,” presented many challenges. We therefore undertook an extensive training program and made rather strict coding choices.

Development of the coding system, and reliable training of the coders, took place over several months, in several steps. The first step involved operationalizing the attributes for the coding system. After the foundations of the coding categories were established, the researchers consulted additional texts to help operationalize the attributes (e.g., what does it mean and/or what does it look like to be deferent/submissive). The research team reviewed several content analyses of music lyrics (e.g., Cooper, 1985; Dukes et al., 2003; Frisby, 2010), reviewed and discussed several films on music and music video content (e.g., *Hip Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes*), and consulted additional empirical literature on media and gender stereotypes (e.g., Oliver, 1984; Oliver, Ramasubramanian, & Kim, 2007). The research team met twice weekly to formulate and revise the coding system, and to operationalize the coding categories. For example, the category “self-reliant/survivor” was operationalized with the following descriptors: “independent, takes care of own business, doesn’t rely on others, makes own way in the world, doesn’t ask for help, not being taken advantage of, street smart, relying on self, surviving, overcoming difficulties/ obstacles, tackling problems, never giving up.”

Once the initial coding system was established and the coding categories were operationalized, the system was tested using lyrics from 1999 and 2004, which were not part of the formal sample. Members of the coding team each coded 5-10 songs independently, and the results were discussed at a weekly meeting. Discrepancies were reviewed, and revisions were made to the coding system or coding rules as needed. Inter-rater agreement was tabulated, and if the percentages were low, that particular variable was discussed in greater detail for clarification. Several rounds of this procedure

occurred over a six week-period. Two quizzes were also given on segments of lyrics to investigate whether coders were reading particular passages similarly.

### **Computing Inter-rater Reliability**

Once the coding system was relatively finalized, and once it became apparent that coders were beginning to reliably see content the same way, we conducted two rounds of inter-rater reliability. Each round was conducted across the 6 coders, based on a test sample of 5 songs from 1999 or 2004. Concerning references about women, Cronbach's alpha across the 6 coders was .74 and .78. Concerning references about men, Cronbach's alpha across the 6 coders was .80 and .88. We also calculated percent agreement for each of the 23 coding categories across a test sample of 10 songs, for the coding of references to women and references to men. Here, we wanted to see if any categories were particularly problematic. Percent agreement ranged from .83 to .99. The lowest agreements were for references to risk-taking (83%), sex-focused (86%), need partner/love (88%), and anti-femininity/power over women (88%).

Once it became apparent that coders could reliably see content similarly, we assigned coders to code a subset of the data. Three researchers coded each year and each song for that year. For each year, we then compiled data across the three coders. Each of the codes given for a song was recorded onto one sheet. We then selected into our final dataset, *only those codes for which 2 of the 3 coders had indicated a code was present*. Therefore, in the end, there was 100% agreement across at least two coders for each item retained in the final dataset. In most content analyses, once reliability is obtained, only one person codes each stimulus. Although our choice to seek agreement across at least

two coders for each piece of data was a stringent choice, and although some content may have been lost, we chose to err on the side of strictness.

## **Results**

### **Descriptives and Preliminary Analyses**

Of the 527 songs that were included in our analyses, male artists accounted for 329 or 62% of the songs, and female artists accounted for 170 or 32% of the total songs. The remaining six percent of the songs were performed by artists and/or groups that contained both women and men. Additionally, as illustrated in Table 2, more than half of the songs in the sample (58.6%) were classified as R&B/Soul, 30.4% as Hip-Hop/Rap songs, and 9.5% as Pop/Dance/Electronic.

### **Dominant Representations of Hegemonic Masculinity and Femininity**

The first set of hypotheses centered on possible differences in the gender-specific representations of men and women. These potential differences were tested using independent-samples T-Tests for each of the 23 variables. Findings for these analyses are provided in Table 3.

The first hypothesis (H1a) was that men would be depicted significantly more frequently as masculine compared with women. This hypothesis was supported, and men were referenced significantly more frequently than women on every dimension of masculinity except for emotional control, survivor, and homophobia (as illustrated in Table 3). The second part of this hypothesis predicted that there would be nontrivial representations of men using hegemonic femininity attributes. This was also supported, and we found that of the 10 femininity attributes examined, the most prevalent references were to men as emotional (17% of songs) and as needing love/a partner

(15%). Indeed, men were much more likely to be characterized fitting these hegemonic femininity attributes than they were fitting masculinity attributes such as homophobic (1%), provider/breadwinner (6% of songs), and emotionally controlled (2% of songs). All of the other hegemonic femininity attributes were rarely applied to men.

The second hypothesis (H1b) predicted that there would be more references to men as hypermasculine than other dimensions of masculinity. In terms of the 13 hegemonic masculinity attributes coded, the most prevalent references were to men emphasizing materialism and consumption (26% of songs), being competitive (24%), being driven by sexual desires (22%), taking risks (21%), and misogyny (17%). Each of these attributes has been described in the literature as exaggerated displays of hegemonic masculinity, lending support to H1b.

The third hypothesis (H2a) argued that women would be depicted significantly more frequently as feminine compared with men; this hypothesis was only partially supported. Although women were referenced more frequently than men on eight of the ten feminine attributes, only three of these differences were statistically significant: importance of appearance, manipulative social climber, and sex object. The second part of this hypothesis argued that there would be nontrivial depictions of women using masculine attributes; this expectation was partially confirmed. In terms of the 13 hegemonic masculinity attributes coded, the most prevalent reference was to women as sex-focused (7%). All other masculine attributes were applied to women in less than 5% of songs.

Our findings did support hypothesis H2b, which predicted that there would be more references to women as hyperfeminine compared with other dimensions of



hegemonic femininity. For the 10 hegemonic femininity attributes coded, the most prevalent references were those emphasizing the importance of appearance for women (17%), those portraying women as sexual objects (15%), and those portraying women as emotional (13% of songs) or as needing love/a partner (13%). Three of these attributes have been identified in the literature as dimensions of femininity related to acquiring and maintaining a heterosexual relationship, including an emphasis on women's sexuality as a commodity to use in relationships. The other hegemonic femininity attributes were infrequently applied to women.

### **Differences in Depictions of Men and Women across Time**

To test the second set of hypotheses, concerning possible changes over time in portrayals of hypermasculinity and hyperfemininity, we conducted Pearson chi-square analyses for the five years for each of the seven variables representing hyper-masculinity and each of the three variables representing hyperfemininity. Given the large number of tests run, the p-value was set at  $p < .002$  to minimize Type I error. Results are provided in Table 4. For hypothesis H3a, all expectations were confirmed. As predicted, there was a significant increase over time in the prevalence of references to men as competitive, risk-taking, violent, anti-feminine, sex-focused, aggressive, and focused on materialism as a symbol of status. For some traits, such as competitiveness and anti-femininity, the numbers appeared to increase steadily over the years. For other attributes, such as violent and sex-focused, the change was more curvilinear, with peaks in 2000 and then some recession. In all cases, the percentages were lowest for 1990 and 1995. Concerning depictions of hyperfemininity (H3b), as expected, there was an increased presence in references to women's appearance and to women as sexual objects. References to

women's physical and sexual attractiveness were lowest in 1995 (5% for both appearance and sex object) and occurred in nearly one-quarter of the songs in 2010. However, there was no significant change over time in portrayals of women as in need of a romantic relationship.

### **Genre Differences in Gendered Depictions**

To test our final set of hypotheses, concerning possible differences across music genre in hyper-masculinity, sexualized dimensions of hyperfemininity, and romanticism/emotionality, we conducted Pearson chi-square analyses for the three main music genres (R&B, pop, rap/hip-hop) for each of the seven variables representing hyper-masculinity and the three variables representing a sexualized hyperfemininity. To test for differences in romanticism/emotionality, we selected the following two variables: need partner/love and emotional, and tested for genre differences concerning representations of both women and men. Again, the p-value was set at  $p < .002$  to minimize Type I error. Results are provided in Table 5. All expectations were confirmed. As expected, there were significantly more references to men as competitive, risk-taking, violent, anti-feminine, sex-focused, aggressive, and focused on material goods as a symbol of status in rap/hip-hop songs than in R&B or pop songs. Indeed, the prevalence of these hyper-masculine attributes in rap songs was quite astounding, and often occurred in more than 50% of songs. These seven attributes were virtually absent in pop/dance songs. Second, as expected, references to women's appearance and to women as sexual objects occurred more often in rap/hip-hop songs than in the other genres. Finally, as expected, there were more depictions of *men* as needing a partner/love and as emotional in R&B/Soul songs than in Rap/Hip-Hop and Pop songs. A similar pattern was found regarding portrayals of

women as emotional, such that R&B songs contained the greatest proportion of such references. Genre differences in depictions of women as in need of a romantic relationship were less consistent. We found that women were depicted as needing love less often in Rap songs compared with other genres, as expected. However, these references were equally prominent in pop songs (20% of songs) as they were in R&B songs (17%).

### **Discussion**

Cultural and temporal variations in dominant portrayals of gender in popular music lyrics are an important yet seldom studied aspect of media research. Although research has critiqued the frequency with which hegemonic notions of femininity and masculinity are depicted in rap music (e.g., Adams & Fuller, 2006; Bretthauer et al., 2006; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009), few of these studies examined gender-specific themes across multiple genres of popular music oriented toward Black audiences, testing how these messages may have changed as the genres became more commercially successful. Additionally, existing studies have typically analyzed a limited set of gender attributes, reducing our ability to succinctly identify the gendered prescriptions that are most salient in the lyrical content. Therefore, we sought to update this content analytic work by examining the prevalence of multiple gender attributes in the lyrics of popular music by Black artists over two decades. Several key findings emerged, and results confirm important gender, genre, and temporal differences in depictions of masculinity and femininity.

Generally, this study found that representations of masculinity were most likely to reflect hypermasculinity, characterizing Black men as materialistic, competitive, sex-

focused, and risk-taking. This pattern reinforces previous scholarship about the prevalence of negative portrayals of men and masculinity in popular music and music videos (Aubrey & Frisby, 2011; Conrad et al., 2009; Wallis, 2011). Depictions of men using culturally specific, relational attributes (e.g., provider) rarely occurred in the songs we coded, suggesting that music performed by Black artists may not be a likely source of socialization from which men learn these beliefs. However, we also speculated that there would be nontrivial representations of men that reflect hegemonic femininity attributes, such as emotional expressiveness and desire for love/romantic partnership, and our predictions were confirmed. These portrayals provide a nice balance to the hypermasculine characterizations, and allow Black men a fuller humanity.

Consistent with previous content analyses (e.g., Cooper, 1985), we also found that representations of women were more likely to reflect hyperfeminine, sexualized attributes that emphasize the importance of their physical appearance or utility as sexual objects for male pleasure than other aspects of femininity. Compared with earlier studies, the sexual objectification of women in our sample of rap lyrics was less prevalent than in previous work (e.g., Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009), which may indicate a new and positive finding. The prevalence of sexualized femininity also confirms similar content analyses that explored representations of Black women in music videos (Emerson, 2002; Hunter, 2011; Zhang, Dixon, & Conrad, 2010), supporting broader concerns about the role of popular media in the acceptance and endorsement of women's sexual objectification and subordination (Matschiner & Murnen, 1999). Given that Black women often serve as the stoic, matriarchal provider in contemporary family arrangements (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2007; Woods-Giscombé, 2010), we expected that representations of women would

include some hegemonic masculinity attributes related to being a strong, self-reliant provider. Interestingly, representations of both men and women were infrequent for these dimensions of masculinity. Together, these findings underscore a critical need for greater diversity among gendered representations of men and women in popular music by Black artists. Cultivation theory (Gerbner et al., 1994) suggests that these kinds of portrayals may affect listeners' beliefs and behaviors, particularly during adolescence and emerging adulthood when youth are coming to terms with sexuality and gender identities.

### **Differences across Time**

Our third goal was to test whether the communication of hypermasculinity and sexualized femininity in commercially successful songs performed by Black artists varied over the 20-year time period, perhaps reflecting societal or music industry shifts in attitudes toward hegemonic femininity and masculinity. Findings indicated a persistent increase in representations of men with lyrics that reflect hypermasculine traits, and decreases in references to them as in need of love or a romantic partner. There was also an increased emphasis on the importance of women's physical attractiveness and references to women as sexual objects. These increases in the prevalence of hypermasculinity and the sexualization of women mirror the general findings and critiques of previous hip-hop researchers (e.g., Armstrong, 2001; Bretthauer et al., 2007; Herd, 2014; McFarland, 2003).

Our study also suggests that these findings are associated with an increase in the presence of Rap/Hip-Hop songs on Billboard's Hot 100 and Hot 100 R&B/Hip-Hop Song charts. Whereas rap represented only 7% of the songs on the charts in 1990, it represented roughly half of the songs on the charts in 2010. This shift, perhaps, is the

most important factor in our consideration of the potential role of Black musical artists in the gender socialization of its listeners. Because Rap/Hip-Hop music has come to present the most uni-dimensional representations of gender and increasingly dominates the popular music charts, commercially successful Black artists may be dangerous models from which Black youth derive beliefs about gender and sexual ideals.

### **Genre Differences**

A final goal of the current study was to investigate the contributing role that genre may play in the promotion of traditional gender messages. One of the dominant patterns emerging from our data is that portrayals of hypermasculinity and hyperfemininity differ deeply by genre, adding complexity to our understanding of popular music performed by Black artists. In terms of depictions of hypermasculinity, men in R&B/Soul songs were referenced more frequently than men in Rap/Hip-Hop songs as expressing a need for love and as emotional, which are hegemonic femininity attributes. At the same time, Rap/Hip-Hop songs contained more depictions of men using hypermasculine attributes than did songs in other genres. Indeed, more than 50% of Rap/Hip-Hop songs contained elements of hypermasculinity, such as being competitive, violent, anti-feminine, materialistic, and taking risks. These findings are consistent with previous research documenting the prevalence of hypermasculinity messages among commercially successful Rap/Hip-Hop songs (e.g., Bretthauer et al., 2007). Interestingly, Pop songs were less likely to contain depictions of hypermasculinity and hyperfemininity than other genres, and it had more references to women and men as expressing a need for romantic partnership. Although this is a rather encouraging finding, it is important to note that Black artists are vastly underrepresented in Pop music genres, and that less than ten percent of the Pop songs

between 1990 and 2010 were performed by Black artists. Consequently, Black youth may be less likely to identify with Pop music artists in their gender development.

Concerning genre differences in representations of women, there were more frequent references to women as sexual objects and references to the importance of their physical appearance in Rap/Hip-Hop songs compared to R&B/Soul songs. This finding lends support to previous content analyses, such as work by Frisby (2010), who found that songs classified as Rap/Hip-Hop were more likely to include demeaning and sexually objectifying references to women compared with other popular music genres. In terms of cultivation theory, the pervasive and narrow focus on women's sexual attractiveness may facilitate the acceptance of hyperfeminine beliefs suggesting that a woman's primary value lies in her sexuality.

### **Homophobia**

Finally, a notable contribution of our study lies in its evidence indicating the low occurrence of homophobia in popular music performed by Black artists. Empirical and popular cultural scholars have asserted that there is rampant and pervasive use of homophobia in Black-oriented music genres like Rap/Hip-Hop, and in Black culture more broadly (Rose, 2008; Sharpley-Whiting, 2007; Oware, 2011). Hill (2009) suggested that rappers deploy anti-gay rhetoric as a tool to bolster their social status through the denigration and emasculation of their competitors. Perhaps researchers may have conflated homophobia, misogyny/anti-femininity, and the feminization of other men in their analyses. We found that examining these constructs separately, where homophobia was considered a distinct occurrence of verbal bashing of homosexual/queer/same-gender loving individuals or the use of pejorative language with an anti-gay stance, there were

few mentions. Specifically, we found no incidences of homophobia in the commercially successful R&B/Soul lyrics over the 20-year time span analyzed, and found that homophobic references to men and/or women occurred in less than 2% of the Rap/Hip-Hop songs analyzed. Although we did not find that the lyrical content of the songs reflected circulation of homophobic messages, we acknowledge that homophobic messages may have been present in the genres at large, but not in the chart-topping songs. Perhaps such references are used by less mainstream and/or commercially successful artists. It is also possible that anti-gay messages and slurs may appear more frequently in the lyrical content of other songs on the albums of these popular artists. Also, we are mindful that self-identified gay/queer artists were not well represented among the popular Black-oriented artists analyzed in this dataset.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

The results of this study must be understood in the context of the project's limitations. First, we acknowledge that we may not have captured and assessed *all* gender-related attributes. Although we tried to be as inclusive as possible with our 23 attributes, there may be some gendered traits that were excluded. Second, no systematic attempt was made to triangulate our findings regarding the most widely circulated songs before constructing our list of song lyrics to include in the analysis. It may have been useful to identify the top songs based on several lists other than the Billboard Hot 100 and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop year-end charts (i.e., SoundScan, RIAA, NIELSON). Thus, our study provides a snapshot of the prevalent hegemonic masculinity and femininity messages as they are represented in *mainstream* music performed by Black artists; we should therefore use some reservation in our understanding of these results as



characterizing the most popular songs in the United States during the given time frame. Billboard ranks their Hot 100 songs using a comprehensive score that relies on Broadcast Data Systems and Nielson SoundScan to identify and measure radio circulation and record sales. Using this ranking system, popular independent and “underground” songs that were featured on mixed tapes, artist websites, and social media sites may not be included in the year-end charts. Additionally, despite national trends, there may be vast regional differences in the popularity and circulation of particular artists. In this way, the implications for the potential role in the gender socialization of popular Black-oriented music may vary in different regions of the United States. Thus, our conclusions may not be generalizable to specific local contexts.

### **Conclusion**

Music produced by Black artists often validates the existence and lived experiences of Black youth, giving voice and power to those often rendered aberrant and invisible by the dominant social culture (George, 1999; Rose, 1994; 2008). In line with Hip-Hop culture’s historical tradition of empowering Black youth, popular music performed by Black artists often includes messages that assert a sense of agency and an identity in opposition to the oppressive social conditions they experience in urban environments (Kitwana, 2002). The music produced within hip-hop culture provides not simply a voice for disenfranchised youth, but a sense of self that challenges racial practices, speaks to economic struggles, and sometimes provides a blueprint for the possibility for social change (Ginwright, 2004; Kelley, 1996). Black music reaffirms Black love, beauty, humanity, dignity, and promise at a time when Black youth are increasingly socially targeted, racially profiled in stores (Gabbidon, 2003) and in vehicles

(Ramirez et al., 2000), stopped and frisked on the street (Gardiner, 2012), and systematically excluded from educational and employment opportunities (Aspen Institute, 2005). In this way, readily accessible platforms like Black music and media that showcase Black talent and innovation, and promotes the inherent value of Black lives are indispensable. However, the explicitly exploitative and increasingly hypersexist, hypermasculine, and hypersexual messages contained in these media should not be overlooked as they may directly, albeit unintentionally, influence the gender belief systems of the Black youth who tune in.

The relationships between Black cultural practices, social and economic conditions, media and technology, and sexual attitudes and beliefs are complex and in constant motion. It is our hope that the findings presented here will facilitate an expansion in current discussions regarding the potential impact of Black musical artists on the socialization of the gender ideologies of its listeners. To date, critics have chiefly purported the dangers inherent in frequent depictions of hypermasculinity, misogyny, hypersexualization of women, and homophobia in the lyrical content of mainstream music performed by Black artists. Although our results noted the increasing pervasiveness of hypermasculinity, misogyny, and the sexual objectification of women, they also indicated that there are important gender and genre differences in depictions of masculinity and femininity that must be considered in efforts to understand how this content shapes popular perceptions of Black women and men. The broader American audience may rely heavily on these images when constructing their attitudes toward Black men and women, and Black audiences may use these images to inform their gender ideologies and relationship expectations. Consequently, given the rates at which listeners

are purchasing and listening to this music, hypermasculinity and hypersexual attitudes about Black men and women are likely to persist in the popular imagination.

We also note that Black artists are not monolithic and that there are several commercially successful Black artists like Lauryn Hill, Erykah Badu, Maxwell, and Janelle Monae who perform songs with greater variation in the depictions of femininity and masculinity. However, as long as narrow, one-dimensional representations of women and men dominate the gender-related messages in commercially successful songs performed by Black artists, it is unlikely that critical perceptions about the potential impact on gender socialization of Black youth can (or should) change.

Table 1  
*Summary of Hegemonic Masculinity and Femininity Categories Coded*

Hegemonic Masculinity Dimensions		
Competitive	Bragging, boastful swagger	<p>“My whole aura’s so mean in my white tee/Nobody light-skinned reppin’ harder since Ice-T” (Ludacris, <i>Number One</i>, 2005)</p> <p>“Run through your town I shut it down/Brilliant. Resilient. Fan mail from 27 million.” (Rihanna ft. Yung Jeezy, <i>Hard</i>, 2010)</p>
Emotional control	Control emotions, don’t cry or show vulnerability; hard	<p>“Swear nothing is wrong, you’re so strong/Baby, don’t hold this inside, relax your pride” (Anita Baker, <i>Talk To Me</i>, 1990)</p> <p>“We were lost in our frustration/We’re too proud to even cry” (Freddie Jackson, <i>All Over You</i>, 1990)</p>
Risk-taking	Daring, taking chances, engaging in illegal or dangerous activities	<p>“Ross that’s my nickname/Cocaine running in my big vein” (Rick Ross ft. Styles P, <i>Blowing Money Fast</i>, 2010)</p> <p>“If you looking for me you can find me/On the block disobeying the law/Real G, thoroughbred from the streets/Pants saggin’ with my gun in my drawers” (Jeezy ft. Akon, <i>Soul Survivor</i>, 2005)</p>
Violence	Refs. to committing a violent act; gun talk; refs to fighting	<p>“Still, niggaz run up and try to kill at will/But get popped like a pimple, so call me Clearasil/I wipe niggaz off the face of the Earth since birth.” (Dr. Dre, <i>Keep Their Heads Ringing</i>, 1995)</p> <p>“I’ll kill you if you try me for my Air Max 95s/Told Banks when I met him I’mma ride/And if I gotta die, I’d rather homicide” (Game ft. 50 Cent, <i>Hate It Or Love It</i>, 2005)</p>
Anti-Femininity	Devaluing women & anything feminine; whore, bitch, hoochie	<p>“Makes a mill’ up off a sorry ho/Then sit back and peep my sce-nahr-i-o/Ooops, my bad, that’s my scenario/No, I can’t fuck a scary ho” (Jay Z, <i>Big Pimpin’</i>, 2000)</p> <p>“Bougie ass bitches, you can kiss my ass” (Game ft. 50 Cent, <i>How We Do</i>, 2005)</p>
Dominance	Being a leader, taking charge, giving orders,	<p>“Gangsta, true to your gang, street master/You the one I need when there’s beef, street blaster/Ain’t afraid to stop a cat, plus pop a cat/Soldier, cash money, rule your world/What’s topping that?” (Missy Elliot ft. Eve, Lil’ Mo, Nas, &amp; Q-Tip, <i>Hot Boyz</i>, 2000)</p> <p>“Did y’all think I’m a let my dough freeze, ho please/You better bow down on both knees/Who you</p>

		think taught you to smoke trees/Who you think brought you the oldies/Eazy-E's, Ice Cube's, and D.O.C.'s/The Snoop D-O-double-G's/And the group that said fuck the police" (Dr. Dre ft Eminem, <i>Forgot about Dre</i> , 2000)
Sex-Focused	Player, sex-driven, professing sexual needs, appetites, skills	<p>"The only sound I'm tyrin' to hear is your moan/You ridin' topless, no panties on/And I've been thinkin' 'bout this all day long" (112, <i>You Already Know</i>, 2005)</p> <p>"Take you home, and maybe we could bone or something/It's no limits to what we can do, cause tonight we cutting, gut busting/I'm digging in your walls something vicious/With your legs to the ceiling, catch a nut something serious" (Trillville ft. Cutty, <i>Some Cut</i>, 2005)</p>
Self-Reliance/ Survivor	Independent, resilient, emotionally strong, handle own business	<p>"Will take care of this business I need to attend to 'cause my rent's due/And this rap shit's my meal ticket/So you god damn right: I'm gonna kick it or get evicted" (Dr. Dre, <i>Keep Their Heads Ringing</i>, 2000)</p> <p>"All the shit I been through/It's a wonder why I'm still here/ Said I was gone but I'm still here" (Ja-Rule, <i>Wonderful</i>, 2005)</p>
Provider/Breadwinner/Hero	Being a financial provider, ambitious, in control of finances	<p>"I'm takin' you places you only see on TV/Tryna show you how your livin' is trife/How many guys you know can bring the travel channel to life/One day we on the Autobahn, swerving drivin/Next day we in the sun on the Virgin Islands/If you with me ain't no time to sleep" (Ludacris ft. Bobby Valentino, <i>Pimpin' All Over the World</i>, 2005)</p> <p>"Take 'em out the hood, keep 'em looking good" (Jay Z, <i>Big Pimpin'</i>, 2000)</p>
Aggressive/ Challenging	Being confrontational, challenging someone, in your face, pushy	<p>"Get back motherfucker, you don't know me like that/Yeek yeek woop woop, I ain't playing around/Make one false move I'll take you down" (Ludacris, <i>Get Back</i>, 2005)</p> <p>"And while you're getting your cry on, I'm getting my fly on/Sincere/I see you aiming at my pedestal/I better let you know/That I'm so hard." (Rihanna ft. Yung Jeezy, <i>Hard</i>, 2010)</p>
Homophobia	Disdain for homosexuals; anti-gay slurs	<p>"Faggot wanna peep my blue prints, I'm like whoa!/Had to hit the brakes on ya niggas like whoa!" (Black Rob, <i>Whoa</i>, 2000)</p> <p>"You homo niggas getting AIDS in the ass" (Lil Wayne ft. Mannie Fresh, <i>Go DJ</i>, 2005)</p>
Feminization of Men	Denigration & feminization of other men; questioning	"I'm tired of weak ass niggas whinin' over pussy/That don't belong to them, fuck is wrong with them?/They fuck it up for real niggas like my mans and them" (DMX, <i>Party Up In Here</i> , 2000)

	masculinity	<p>“We can end the speculation ‘cause today we gone see/What’s the future of a pussy nigga hatin’ on me” (T.I., <i>U Don’t Know Me</i>, 2005)</p> <p>“Pussy nigga what’s up?/Hell naw you ain’t gon’ buck/All that poppin’ at the mouth/Gon’ get you fucked up”(Lil Jon ft. East Side Boyz &amp; Lil Scrappy, <i>What U Gon’ Do</i>, 2005)</p>
Material goods=status	Glorifying money/possessions; references to consumption	<p>“And I ain’t trippin cause my pockets stick out mo’ than my belly/They know I’m paid, livin’ laid in the shade/2 slabs in the Escalade with fo’ or five estates/They know that I got it made, I’m a motherfuckin’ baller” (Mike Jones, <i>Back Then</i>, 2005)</p> <p>“Two G’s blown just for cologne/Money never limited/So icy with benefits/My driver needs a passport/All my cars are immigrants” (Gucci Mane ft Trey Songs, <i>Beat It Up</i>, 2010)</p>
<b>Hegemonic Femininity Dimensions</b>		
Deferent/ Submissive	Being submissive, being a victim, needing guidance, deferring	<p>“Why I’m so confused for you, I have no answer boy. When I feel so used by you just like a toy.” (Jazmine Sullivan, <i> Holding You Down</i>, 2010)</p> <p>“When you come home late tap me on my shoulder, I’ll roll over/Baby I heard you, I’m here to serve you.” (Destiny’s Child, <i>Cater 2 U</i>, 2005)</p>
Nurturant/ Supportive	Taking care of emotional needs of partner/friend/child; compassion	<p>“I understand, here’s my hand/Why stand alone in the dark, open up your heart/Let this go, set it free, now my baby, talk to me” (Anita Baker, <i>Talk to Me</i>, 1990)</p> <p>“Baby I’m the kind of man who shows concern/Anyway that I can please you let me learn” (Joe, <i>I Wanna Know</i>, 2000)</p>
Need for a partner/Love	Longing for love/partner; seeking commitment; incomplete w/out a partner	<p>“Here in my heart I believe/Your love is all I’ll ever need/Holdin’ you close through the night/I need you, yeah” (Luther Vandross, <i>Here and Now</i>, 1990)</p> <p>“Everything is not anything/If you’re not here to share my dreams/You don’t know what it means to me/If you’ll accept my love” (After 7, <i>Ready or Not</i>, 1990)</p> <p>“When you left I lost a part of me/And it’s still so hard to believe/Come back baby please because we belong together” (Mariah Carey, <i>We Belong Together</i>, 2005)</p>
Importance of physical app.	Refs. to someone’s attractiveness; making efforts to look good	<p>“I like ya hair and every style that you wear it/And how the colors coordinate with your clothes/From your manicured nails to your pedicured toes” (Ludacris ft. Bobby Valentino, <i>Pimpin’ All Over the World</i>, 2005)</p>

		“I got a cute face, chubby waist/Thick legs, in shape/Rump shakin, both ways/Make you do a double take” (Missy Elliot ft. Ciara & Fatman Scoop, <i>Lose Control</i> , 2005)
Emotional	Being overwhelmed by emotion; crying; Stating a strong felt emotion	“Love takes time/To heal when you’re hurting so much/Couldn’t see that I was blind/To let you go/I can’t escape the pain/Inside” (Mariah Carey, <i>Love Takes Time</i> , 1990)  “Now they can see the tears in our eyes/But we deny the pain that lies deep in our hearts/Well maybe that’s a pain we can’t hide/’Cause everybody knows that we’re both torn apart” (Boyz II Men, <i>Water Runs Dry</i> , 1995)
Loyal	Loyal to a partner; faithful; talking about “one and only”	“Here and now/I promise to love faithfully/You’re all I need/Here and now/I vow to be one with thee (You and me)/Your love is all I need” (Luther Vandross, <i>Here and Now</i> , 1990)  “When you’re far away and I’m not around/And temptation fills your heart/Think of all the ways that I’m faithful babe/To replace me would be hard/Cause aint nobody/Aint nobody gonna treat you better” (Mary J. Blige, <i>I Am</i> , 2010)
Financially dependent	Being taken care of financially by another	“She was sponse to buy ya shorty TYCO with ya money/She went to the doctor got lypo with ya money/She walkin around lookin like Michael with ya money” (Kanye West, <i>Gold Digger</i> , 2005)  “But I keep her and Irv and Jeffrey quite icy” (Ja-Rule, <i>Wonderful</i> , 2005)
Manipulative social climber	Using beauty/sexuality/false sweetness to get status, material goods, or advance self; gold-digger; opportunist	“She take my money when I’m in need/Yea she’s a triffin friend indeed/Oh she’s a gold digga way over town” (Kanye West, <i>Gold Digger</i> , 2005)  “From all these superficial golddigging bitches in here/They get a baller think that they ain’t got to pick a career/Guess they plan on sucking dicks until some millions appear” (Drake ft. Swizz Beatz and T.I., <i>Fancy</i> , 2010)
Sexual objectification	Refs. to women/men as being primarily body parts for others’ sexual use/pleasure; valued only for one’s sexuality	“Girl shake that thing, yeah work that thing/Let me see it go up and down/Rotate that thang, I wanna touch that thang/When you make it go round and round” (50 Cent, <i>Just a Lil’ Bit</i> , 2005)  “Honey got a booty like pow, pow, pow/Honey got some boobies like wow, oh wow” (Usher ft. Will.I.Am, <i>OMG</i> , 2010)
Innocent/ Childlike	Wholesome, pure, naïve, chaste, refs to “good reputation”	“Baby, don’t you know I really want you?/Innocent, girl, innocent lover for more than one night”(The Whispers, <i>Innocent</i> , 1990)  “And she don’t drink or know how a L look” (Mya ft. Jadakiss, <i>Best of Me</i> , 2000)

Table 2

*Distribution of Song Sub-genre by Year*

Genre	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	Total	Percent
R & B/Soul	77	77	60	47	48	309	58.6
Hip-Hop/Rap	7	21	34	53	45	160	30.4
Pop/Dance/Electronic	17	13	4	4	12	50	9.5
Other (Gospel, Jazz)	4	0	2	0	2	8	1.5
Total	105	111	100	104	107	527	

*Note.* Sample drawn from all Billboard Hot 100 Hip-Hop and R & B Songs featuring Black artists and all Billboard Hot 100 songs featuring Black artists for each of the 5-year iterations.



Table 3

*Proportion of Songs with Particular Representations of Men and Women (across Genres and Time)*

Attribute	Refs. to Men	Refs. to Women	T-Test (df=526)
<b>Hegemonic Masculinity Dimensions</b>			
Competitiveness	.24	.02	10.959***
Emotional Control	.02	.01	.904
Risk-Taking	.21	.03	9.566***
Violence	.13	.02	7.184***
Anti-Femininity	.17	.03	8.332***
Dominance	.11	.03	5.406***
Sex Focused	.22	.07	8.223***
Survivor	.04	.04	-.480
Provider/Breadwinner	.06	.00	5.239***
Aggressive	.09	.03	3.926***
Homophobic	.01	.00	1.343
Feminization of other men	.03	.00	4.187***
Focus on status/material goods	.26	.04	11.026***
<b>Hegemonic Femininity Dimensions</b>			
Deferent	.01	.02	-2.006
Nurturant	.04	.06	-1.132
Need a partner/love	.15	.13	1.029
Importance of Appearance	.05	.17	-7.040***
Emotional	.17	.13	2.334
Loyal	.04	.04	-.493
Financial dependence	.00	.01	-1.735
Gold-digger/Social climber	.00	.05	-4.622***
Sex object	.05	.15	-6.534***
Innocent/naive	.01	.01	.000

Note. \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .

Table 4

*Changes Over Time in Proportion of Songs Containing References to Hyper-masculine Men and Hyper-feminine (Hyper-sexualized) Women*

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	Chi-square
<b>Hyper-masculinity</b>						
Competitiveness	.10	.13	.22	.38	.40	45.350***
Risk-Taking	.03	.14	.27	.35	.30	40.585***
Violence	.00	.09	.20	.22	.12	30.134***
Anti-Femininity	.01	.09	.22	.26	.30	42.195***
Sex-Focused	.11	.16	.33	.28	.26	18.733***
Aggressive	.00	.07	.14	.14	.09	18.099***
Status/Material Goods Focused	.10	.05	.36	.43	.39	68.059***
<b>Hyper (sexualized) femininity</b>						
Importance of Appearance	.14	.05	.18	.25	.25	20.328***
Sex Object	.06	.05	.20	.24	.23	27.755***
Need Partner/Love	.19	.14	.10	.11	.09	6.106

*Note.* \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 5

*Music genre differences in proportion of songs containing references to hyper-masculine men, hyper-feminine (sexualized) women, and romanticism/emotionality*

	R&B/Soul (N=309)	Pop/Dance (N=50)	Rap/Hip-Hop (N=160)	Chi-square
<b>Hypermasculinity</b>				
Competitiveness	.08	.08	.62	178.230***
Risk-taking	.06	.04	.58	182.603***
Violence	.01	.00	.40	155.140***
Anti-Femininity	.03	.00	.52	158.858***
Sex-Focused	.17	.02	.39	43.188***
Aggressive	.02	.00	.25	74.767***
Status/Material Goods Focus	.12	.06	.60	140.270***
<b>Hyper (sexualized) Femininity</b>				
Importance of Appearance	.13	.06	.29	22.591***
Sex object	.07	.02	.36	75.964***
Need partner/love	.17	.20	.03	21.695***
<b>Romanticism/Emotionality</b>				
MEN - Need partner/love	.23	.04	.03	37.804***
MEN - Emotional	.26	.06	.06	34.081***
WOMEN – Need partner/love	.17	.20	.03	21.695***
WOMEN - Emotional	.17	.14	.02	22.631***

*Note.* \*\*\*  $p < .001$

**CHAPTER 3**

**REMIXING THE SCRIPT? ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN BLACK-ORIENTED  
MEDIA CONSUMPTION AND BLACK WOMEN’S HETEROPATRIARCHAL  
ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP BELIEFS (STUDY 2)**

**Introduction**

Robyn Rihanna Fenty, better known by her stage name “Rihanna,” is a young Black female recording artist who frequently communicates gender and sexual messages in her music that suggest she does not conform to the socially sanctioned codes of behavior reserved for women. Earning an Icon Lifetime Achievement award from both the American Music Awards (2013) and the Council of Fashion Designers of America (2014), the 27-year old Barbadian has undoubtedly become one of the most influential Black women in the media. *Billboard* named Rihanna the top Digital Songs Artist of the 2000s, and *TIME* named her one of the Most Influential People in the world (2012) after she was established as the bestselling digital artist of all time based on Neilson SoundScan records (Billboard, 2010, 2011; Kennedy, 2013).

Her success as a recording artist has brought her to widespread prominence in mainstream media, where she offers a prototypical example of young Black women’s sexual liberation and resistance against conformity to restrictive and oppressive sexual roles. For example, in her song *Cockiness* (2011), she instructs her partner to “Suck my cockiness, lick my persuasion. Eat my words and then swallow your pride,” and follows

with “I want you to be my sex slave, [do] anything that I desire.” More provocatively, in her song *S&M* (2010) she states, “Feels so good being bad, there’s no way I’m turning back... ‘Cause I may be bad, but I’m perfectly good at it. Sex in the air, I don’t care, I love the smell of it. Sticks and stones may break my bones but chains and whips excite me.” Rihanna’s lyrics promote women’s abandonment of traditional and cultural expectations for respectable, passive, communal, and submissive “lady-like” sexual ideals and instead encourage women to prioritize their own sexual desires and act on their sexual needs. Given previous feminist critiques of mainstream media’s heteronormative conceptualizations of female-male relationships that support dominance and power over women (MacKinnon, 1994; Yost & Zurbriggen, 2006), sexualized images that transgress the mores that constrain female sexual agency arguably represent moments of social progress.

However, after the 2013 MTV Video Music Awards, the liberatory potential of these representations of Black women’s sexuality was called into question when Rihanna wore a vintage graphic t-shirt that read “gotta get a ruff neck,” adorned with a photo of MC Lyte<sup>1</sup>. Some feminist discussions on popular blogs and social media websites emphasized how empowering it was to see a young Black female artist paying homage to one of hip-hop’s pioneer feminists—the first female lyricist to release a successful solo

---

<sup>1</sup> MC Lyte was the first female solo rapper ever nominated for a Grammy award based on the success of her rap song “Ruffneck” (1993). The classic hip-hop anthem explicitly celebrates women’s acceptance of and desire for male partners that display gender characteristics that have been described as hypermasculine, or excessively aggressive, (hetero)sexual/virile, dominant, violent, and dangerous. In “Ruffneck,” Lyte raps a final stanza that describes attitudes and behaviors of her ideal man: “I need a ruffneck/I need a man that don’t stitch like a bitch/shed tears or switch...Eat sleep shit fuck, eat sleep shit/Then it’s back to the streets to make a buck quick...Hard boppin’ always grabbin’ his jock and braggin’ about his tec...Pissin’ in corners/Doing 80 by funeral mourners/Showing little respect/Now that’s a ruffneck.”

rap album and earn a Grammy award nomination. Other discussions were less enthusiastic about her outfit. Given her widely publicized experience with domestic violence at the hands of fellow musician Chris Brown, popular social networks were filled with vitriolic criticism about her promotion of Lyte's "Ruffneck" because it endorses an acceptance and sexualization of misogynist, homophobic, violent, and hypermasculine gender ideals.

Feminist criticisms of Rihanna's "Ruffneck" endorsement mirror previous theoretical arguments that suggest that Black women's development of sexual agency is hindered by the broader hegemonic social context. For example, Black feminist author Toni Cade Bambara (1970) suggests that Black women are not immune to the social conditioning of their disempowerment and are trapped within the rigid confines of oppressive socially contrived roles suggesting men are dominant sexual subjects and women are subordinate sexual objects. She argues that Black women's individual beliefs about the physical and psychological aspects of sex and relationships often reflect broader social constraints. In other words, Black women's beliefs about how much they are entitled to sexual pleasure, agency, and relational equity may be dampened by the institutionalized power inequities that they systematically experience socially, politically, and economically. Bambara's framework is a useful guide to conducting research that highlights issues of perceived entitlement and deservingness resulting from inequities in hegemonic social structures, and addresses how these perceptions may jeopardize Black women's sexual well-being.

Some contemporary Black feminist scholars have argued that Black media produced within hip hop culture can be a site of liberatory praxis, offering Black women

an opportunity to produce and consume empowering messages that challenge the sexist and misogynistic gender narratives derived from the broader, hegemonic social context (Morgan, 2000; Morgan, 2005; Pough, 2004). Conversely, canonical Black feminist theorists like Patricia Hill Collins (2000, 2004), bell hooks (1997), and Tricia Rose (1994, 2008) argue that contemporary Black media are a central location for the discussion of Black sexuality, and often serve as vehicles by which hegemonic gender ideologies are learned. They argue that the internalization of patriarchal, hypermasculine, and misogynistic ideals are linked with the prevalence of these elements in the lyrical, video, and print content of popular Black-oriented media.

Whereas it is possible that exposure to agentic sexual messages in popular music, television, and print media may have positive implications for Black women's empowerment, these messages may also have negative implications for the gender and sexual socialization of young Black audiences due to the perpetuation of traditional gender and sexual roles. For example, in a systematic content analysis of the top songs performed by Black artists released between 1990 and 2010, Avery et al. (2016) found that representations of men frequently reflected a hypermasculinity that characterized men as competitive, dangerous, sex-focused, and materialistic, and portrayals of women narrowly focused on the importance of their physical attractiveness, utility as sex objects, and excessive emotionality. If "agentic" sexual content in the media (like Rihanna's frequent endorsements of sexual transgression) mirrors hegemonic hyperfemininity narratives that are used to justify women's subjugation and victimization in heterosexual relationships, then popular media may, indeed, perpetuate and maintain women's sexual oppression, as Collins, hooks, and Rose suggested.

Drawn by this paradox, we examined exposure to Black-oriented media and its association with the acceptance of heteropatriarchal relationship beliefs. If frequent exposure to popular media is associated with Black women's acceptance of traditional gender stereotypes and a tendency to idealize patriarchal and dominating men as sexual partners (Gordon, 2008; Ward, Hansbrough, & Walker, 2005; Ward & Friedman, 2006), these findings will contribute greatly to future consideration about the potential socializing impact of media on Black women's sexualities.

### **Heteropatriarchal Gender Beliefs**

Hegemonic power relations are naturalized in traditional renderings of heterosexuality such that sexual norms and expectations for women and men reflect a *heteropatriarchal* structure – a conflation of compulsory heteronormative and patriarchal ideals that privileges masculinity and heterosexual men while subordinating all other sex/gender types (Rich, 1986; Valdes, 1996). Heteronormative social scripts prescribe mutually exclusive social and sexual roles for “females” and “males” under a binary passive/active paradigm that devalues and penalizes persons who are feminized (Jackson, 1984; Richardson, 1996; Valdes, 1996). Patriarchy has been defined as a system of social structures in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women (Walby, 1989), and patriarchal heterosexual relationship structures situate men in dominant positions of power and authority over women, operating on the assumption that relationships between women and men are inherently unequal and hierarchical in nature (Walby, 1989).

Heteropatriarchal sexual scripts characterize masculinity as dominant, active, powerful, and instrumental, while femininity is seen as complementary and primarily passive, communal, and submissive in nature (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989; Hussen, Bowleg,



Sangaramoorthy, & Malebranche, 2012; Jack & Dill, 1992; Rudman & Glick, 2001). This conceptualization creates a set of oppositional and *adversarial* relations between femininity and masculinity that reinscribe gender-based inequalities in relational power and agency. In this way, hegemony serves to naturalize male domination over women by instituting patriarchy and misogyny as cornerstones of heteronormative sexualities (Eaton & Matamala, 2014; Hill, 2006; Smith, 2005), and heteropatriarchy is presented as the “natural,” normative, and inevitable romantic relationship dynamic (MacKinnon, 1994).

According to Sexual Script Theory (Simon & Gagnon, 1986), sexual scripts function in ways that establish dating norms and practices, structure beliefs for sexual and romantic interactions between women and men, and guide women’s romantic relationship expectations. Although sexual scripts may shift to accommodate socio-political, cultural, and social changes throughout history, the overarching norms and expectations for each gender with respect to courtship, romance, and sex have largely remained constant because they reflect traditional gender ideologies (Collins, 2004).

DeLamater (1989) suggested that the most commonly occurring sexual scripts in U.S. culture include relational scripts (i.e., the notion that sex fosters intimacy between partners), procreational scripts (i.e., sex is for reproduction), and recreational scripts (i.e., sex is for pleasure). Kim and colleagues (2007) provided a framework called the *heterosexual script* to describe the interactional nature of hegemonic heterosexual relationships that prescribe different, often oppositional, behaviors for women and men. The heterosexual script relies on hierarchical and patriarchal gender ideologies that prescribe proactive sexual roles for men while suggesting that appropriate and acceptable sexual behavior for women involves being passive (and reactive) sexual gatekeepers

(Kim et al., 2007; Seabrook, 2016; Tolman, 2002). For example, men are expected to attract women with their power (either through physical prowess or material resources), be the aggressors and initiators of sex, and value sex itself over relationships (Bem, 2000; Dworkin & O'Sullivan, 2005; Sadalla et al., 1987; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1993). On the other hand, women are expected to be sexually desirable while maintaining weak sex drives, prefer sex that occurs in the context of a romantic relationship over casual sex, supremely desire commitment and monogamy, be sexually passive, and primarily seek emotional intimacy and trust in sexual encounters (Bay-Cheng, Robinson, & Zucker, 2009; Diekman, McDonald, & Gardner, 2000; O'Sullivan & Byers, 1993; LaMarche & Silverman, 2006).

The misogyny couched in the hegemonic structure of these binary gender expectations paints men as highly coveted sources of stability and security in heterosexual relationships (Bem, 2000; Kim et al., 2007), and sees women as antagonistic, judgmental, calculating, deceitful, and untrustworthy relational liabilities (Burt, 1980). Reflecting historically codified expressions of denigration and mistrust toward women (i.e., Freud's writings about women as "hysterical"), research reveals that Black women are chiefly perceived as aggressive, hostile, sly, and untrustworthy in the social imagination (Collins, 2000; Hammonds, 1999; Stephens & Phillips, 2003). As Patricia Williams (2000) stated in her remarks about social perceptions of Black women in the commercial real estate marketplace, "I was raised to be acutely conscious of the likelihood that no matter what degree of professional or professor I become, people would greet and dismiss my Black femaleness as unreliable, untrustworthy, hostile, angry, powerless, irrational, and probably destitute" (p. 83). Similar to the historical

images of Black women as sexually savage and insatiable (e.g., Jezebel; Stephens & Phillips, 2003) that were created to justify their exploitation and incessant violation during enslavement, these pervasive stereotypical and disempowering speculations about the quality and content of Black women's moral, psychological, and sexual character foster the belief that male dominance over Black women is justified in sexual and social contexts (Burt, 1980; Briere et al., 1985).

### **Heteropatriarchy and Black Relationships**

To date, there is little research that focuses specifically on Black women's acceptance of patriarchal gender roles in romantic and sexual relationships, but the literature focusing on Black women's non-traditional gender role socialization is relatively robust. Studies conducted exclusively with Black women have found that they are socialized to adopt conflicting definitions about socially sanctioned roles for women and men, and they tend to hold more egalitarian gender ideologies than White or Latina women in their adulthood (Binion, 1990; Collins, 2005; Harris, 1996; Harris & Firestone, 1998; West, 1995). For example, in a qualitative study investigating interpersonal relationship attitudes among a sample of 14 lower to middle-income Black women aged 22-39, Bowleg and her colleagues (2000) found that participants were more likely than other groups to simultaneously endorse expressive (e.g., emotionality, nurturant, communal) *and* instrumental (e.g., autonomy, assertiveness) gender ideologies. Scholars have suggested that Black women's tendency toward "psychological androgyny" is rooted in the socio-historical context of slavery and institutional discrimination that required that Black women work outside the home to support themselves and their families, unlike their White female counterparts (Binion, 1990; Wyatt, 1997). These

findings suggest that a prevailing relationship script for Black women is that they must fulfill hegemonic feminine expectations in their intimate heterosexual relationships, *and* also exert behavioral characteristics reserved for masculinity in terms of their workforce participation. These inconsistencies in societal prescriptions may complicate the development of romantic relationships that reflect traditional patriarchal heterosexual coupling dynamics because the concept of being the “man of the house” or “king of the castle” may be usurped when women are perceived as competition for the role of provider.

Although the beautiful, nurturing, nice, passive, and submissive woman describes the socially sanctioned expectations for heterosexual women in romantic relationships according to the heteropatriarchal relationship script (Collins, 2004; Kim et al., 2007; Seabrook, 2016; Tolman, 2002), Black women are often viewed as being overbearing, controlling, and unfeminine in their social and sexual roles within romantic relationships (Hutchinson, 1999; Lawrence-Webb et al., 2004; Stephens & Phillips, 2003).

Specifically, Black women are frequently characterized as angry, domineering, hostile, nagging, and combative “Sapphires” who emasculate men, similar to the character Sapphire from the 1940s and 1950s radio and television program called *Amos ‘n’ Andy* (Collins, 2000; Thomas, Speight, & Witherspoon, 2004; West, 2012).

It is reasonable to speculate that adversarial and antagonistic romantic relationship beliefs might develop and manifest differently within Black heterosexual relationships compared to White populations due to some historical and socioeconomic contextual factors. Conflict in Black heterosexual relationships has often been linked to acceptance of traditional gender roles and perceived economic inequalities between Black women

and men. For example, Cazanave (1983) surveyed 155 middle-class Black men and found that they were more likely to harbor antagonistic beliefs toward Black women if they believed that women had greater access to economic resources. Although Black women have been able to function as both wage earners and family caretakers, a substantial percentage of Black men have not been able to serve as the primary breadwinner and provider because they have been denied access to economic resources and employment that would enable them to do so (Collins, 2000; West & Rose, 2000). Despite the fact that Black women's social realities are incongruent with heteropatriarchal gender expectations, Black couples' attempts to enact traditional gender roles and family configurations may contribute to role strain and relationship conflict. For example, in an ethnographic study using a sample of 41 Black teenagers from a small city in the Northwest, White (1997) found that young women primarily characterized their boyfriends as dominant and aggressive, and indicated that they frequently acquiesced to the sexual demands of their partners due to the belief that sexuality was one of the few areas where their boyfriends could assert their masculinity. In an effort to avoid emasculating their boyfriends, participants prioritized their role as supporters and caretakers despite experiencing excessive aggression and violence from their male partners who were trying to exercise power in the relationship. Although little research has explored adversarial sexual beliefs among Black Americans, one study indicated that Black female undergraduates endorsed male-female relationships as negative and antagonistic more often than their White females counterparts (Edmonds & Cahoon, 1993). Thus, it is likely that young heterosexual Black women will strongly endorse

adversarial beliefs about romantic relationships, especially intraracial male-female relationships.

Women are encouraged to uphold the heteropatriarchal relationship script despite the fact that it places them in positions of limited power. Although there are certainly women who do not endorse the heteropatriarchal sexual script, they are typically aware that it exists and understand that they will be judged for violating its prescriptions (Hussen et al., 2012; Tolman & Porche, 2000). Thus, as a result of naturalized and systemic power inequities, women may come to accept heteropatriarchal sexual scripts that include endorsement of (1) traditional/binary gender roles that emphasize male dominance over women in romantic relationships and sexual encounters (*heterosexual script*), and (2) adversarial and antagonistic beliefs about sex and romantic relationships.

### **Images of the Heteropatriarchal Script in Black Media**

We know from previous research that beliefs reflecting heteropatriarchal sexual expectations and idealizations are learned from various sources, including parents, peers, religious teachings, and the mainstream media (Skinner, Perkins, Wood, & Kurtz-Costes, 2015; Ward, 2003). Media are likely to be especially important sources of gender socialization for Black women due to the amount of time they spend consuming them. Studies consistently indicate higher levels of overall media use among Black Americans than among other ethnic groups in the United States (Nielsen, 2013; Rideout, 2010). Dominating in their media diets are culturally oriented sources that are targeted toward a Black audience (e.g., R&B/hip-hop music and videos, television shows featuring a primarily Black cast, and magazines featuring stories and content about Black celebrities, entertainment, and socio-political issues; Hoff, Greene, & Davis, 2003; Jamison, 2006;

Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). Black-oriented music, magazines, and television programs were originally designed and operated by Black-led enterprises to counter the pervasive stereotypical images about Black Americans that occurred in mainstream media (Rose, 2008). Black media have provided an opportunity for many to produce and consume empowering messages that diverge from the standard racist and classist narratives perpetuated by the mainstream media (Morgan, 2000; Morgan, 2005; Pough, 2004). However, Black media have also been criticized for having a predilection for portraying images of Black life that reflect heteropatriarchal gender and relationship ideologies (Rose, 2008; Wanzo, 2011).

In one of the few studies to specifically examine the media consumption habits of Black Americans, RadioOne and research firm Yankelovich (2008) surveyed 3,400 Black women and men ranging in age from 13-74, and found that young Black adults (ages 18-34) spent an average of 31 hours per week on the Internet (compared with the national average of 35 hours per week of digital media use). The study indicated that more than 60% of the sample reported reading at least one magazine per week, and spent an average of 45 hours per week watching TV (compared with the national average of 35.1 hours; Nielsen, 2013). The vast majority of the television stations and programs respondents watched focused on Black Americans and/or were music related. Additionally, Black Americans spent an average of 31 hours per week listening to music (compared with 14 hours per week on average nationally; Nielsen, 2013), primarily listening to Black-oriented genres like R&B, Hip/Hop, and Gospel—with Black women reporting more R&B and Gospel preferences than men (39% vs. 24% and 27% vs. 17%, respectively). Thus, because Black audiences are especially drawn to media that feature people and

content reflecting their own identities and experiences, Black media are likely to play a more prominent role than mainstream media in their socialization into patriarchal gender and sexual roles. This association may be especially apparent among young Black adults due to their heavy media consumption.

Although there is no singular measurement of heteropatriarchal romantic relationship beliefs, there is evidence suggesting that hegemonic, patriarchal ideals that privilege men and masculinity while subordinating women are prominently featured in Black-oriented media. One arena where images of women often reflect and reinforce notions of hegemonic femininity and women's subjugated social positioning are mainstream magazines. Feminist media scholars Byerly and Ross (2006, p. 49) argue, "if women are vulnerable to gender stereotyping across all media, nowhere is more obvious than in the shaping of an entirely unreal construction of *passive* female beauty in women's magazines." Evidence drawn from several recent content analyses of the depictions of women in magazines indicate that they are a key site for the construction and dissemination of hegemonic feminine gender and sexual roles. For example, Sullivan and O'Connor (1988) found that there was a significant increase (60%) in the percentage of images that portrayed women in purely decorative and sexually objectifying roles in their examination of magazine advertisements from 1958 to 1983, and Stankiewicz and Rosselli's (2008) examination of women's depictions in 58 popular U.S. magazines indicated that fifty percent of the ads featuring women portrayed them as sexual objects.

In a study that examined the stereotypical portrayals of women in 1,374 popular magazine advertisements across a 50 year time span, Lindner (2004) observed that there was a greater tendency for women to be portrayed as smaller in size, objectified, and in



postures that suggest submission and inferiority compared to men. However, Baker (2005) found that power-based depictions of women in magazines vary depending on the target audience. Specifically, her content analysis of over 600 magazine advertisements indicated that women were significantly more likely to be portrayed in roles that suggest dependency on men/male partners, submissiveness, and less independence in White-oriented magazines (e.g., *Cosmopolitan*) than they were in Black-oriented magazines (e.g., *Essence*). Baker's findings also indicated that images depicting women in sexually objectifying physical positions (e.g., bending over) and portrayals of women as having lower relative authority occurred more frequently in Black magazines compared with White magazines. These findings suggest that magazines designed specifically for Black audiences contain gendered imagery that may subtly perpetuate and reinforce hegemonic social beliefs and expectations concerning male dominance over women.

A second media format that may provide gender socialization models and content for Black youth is television. Television portrayals have been found to contribute directly and indirectly to shaping individuals' notions of gender and sexual behaviors because they convey explicit messages about cultural norms and belief systems, providing information about what is valued, expected, and attainable. One format of particular interest is reality programming, which comprises the vast majority of the primetime programming that African Americans consume (Nielsen, 2013; Rideout et al., 2010). Evidence suggests that this format may be an informational tool used by audiences to determine what is or is not socially desirable and acceptable behavior (Tyree, 2011). For example, Siobhan Smith (2013) conducted a content analysis of the gendered messages featured in Black Entertainment Television's *College Hill*, a reality television program

that focuses on the experiences of students who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and found that Black female cast members were more frequently depicted as arrogant and domineering than male cast members. She also found that women were depicted as nice and kind, happy, optimistic, and emotionally strong less often than male cast members. Additionally, her findings indicated that female cast members were more often portrayed as sexually attractive, well-groomed, lighter skinned, and more concerned with their physical appearance compared to their male counterparts.

Another study conducted by Bland and Montemurro (2015) utilized a national sample of diverse women aged 18-50 to explore the impact on women's attitudes about relationships and sexuality of watching *Real Housewives of Atlanta*, a documentary-style program that is argued to predominately reflect variations of the Jezebel and Sapphire stereotypes through its emphasis on women's aggression, anger, and hypersexuality (Reid, 2013; Tyree, 2011). They found mixed effects. Although most of the participants in their study did not report being directly influenced by watching the program, many conveyed modeling—a form of learning how to act or perform by observing another individual—and an indirect internalization of the sexual and romantic scripts shown. For example, 72% of the participants in their study believed that portrayals of love and commitment shared among the married cast members featured on the show was genuine, and frequent viewers reported feeling more sexually self-confident and empowered due to their exposure to female cast members who display a high level of sexual interest, desire, assertiveness and confidence. However, 84% of the participants responded “No” when asked, “Do you aspire to be like any of these women relationship wise.” Taken together, the literature suggests that reality TV programs may be used by viewers to

gauge who they are, to understand their relationships with others in their communities, and to ascertain socially desirable and acceptable sexual behavior.

A final arena that has been found to influence women's romantic and sexual attitudes is music related media, including music videos. There have been several excellent analyses of gendered imagery in music videos suggesting that love and sex predominate as themes in popular music and music videos (Andsager & Roe, 1999; Arnett, 2002), and evidence suggests that there is an abundance of sexualization and degradation of women in the lyrical and video content of contemporary music (e.g., Dixon & Zhang, 2009; Wallis, 2011; Ward et al., 2005). For example, Aubrey and Frisby (2011) explored the prevalence of sexual objectification across musical artists' gender and musical genres and found that female artists were more sexually objectified, held to stricter appearance standards, and more likely to demonstrate sexually alluring behavior compared to male artists. Similarly, a recent content analysis of the gendered attributes in the top commercially successful songs performed by Black artists from 1990 to 2010 revealed that women were most likely to be represented as hyper-feminine sexual objects, emphasizing the importance of their physical attractiveness, utility as sexual objects, and emotional expressiveness (Avery, Ward, Moss, & Üsküp, 2016). Avery and her colleagues also found that representations of men were most likely to reflect hegemonic, hypermasculine attributes such as competitiveness, dangerous, sex-focused, and materialistic.

These findings raise serious questions regarding the ways that all Black people, and in particular, Black women, may be adversely affected by exposure to media that are sexually objectifying and socially denigrating. Social learning theories of media use

suggest that traditional and stereotypic gender portrayals may affect the sexual attitudes and behavior of heavy media consumers. Specifically, cultivation theory (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994) argues that people who frequently consume media will gradually come to adopt attitudes and beliefs similar to the images and messages conveyed in the media. Additionally, social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001) suggests that identification with media characters and perceived realism of the content will deepen a person's level of engagement with media, often leading to stronger acceptance of its content. Although cultivation theory assumes that the audience passively and uncritically consumes media content, a notion which many Black feminist and media scholars challenge, several empirical studies have found that frequent exposure to traditional gender and sexual ideals in media content is indeed associated with greater acceptance/endorsement of traditional stereotypes.

Several correlational studies have linked music video exposure with more stereotypical attitudes toward gender roles (Ward, 2002; Ward, Hansbrough, & Walker, 2005), more adversarial attitudes toward male-female relationships (Bryant, 2008), greater acceptance of sexual objectification and degradation of women (Conrad, Dixon, & Zhang, 2007; Gordon, 2008; Hust & Lei, 2001; Ward, 2002), and more acceptance of sexual violence against women (Keastle, Halpern, & Brown, 2007). Other researchers have used experimental designs to link music video exposure to stereotypical gender beliefs. For example, one study examined effects of exposure to nonviolent rap music videos on Black adolescents' acceptance of dating violence using a sample of 60 Black girls and boys aged 11-16 (Johnson, Adams, Ashburn, & Reed, 1995). Findings indicated that girls exposed to the music videos showed greater acceptance of men's violent

behavior than girls who were not exposed. Similarly, Ward, Hansbrough, and Walker (2005) found that frequent music video exposure was associated with stronger endorsement of sexual stereotypes like “using her body and looks is the best way for a woman to attract a man,” in their study examining the impact of music video exposure on traditional gender role acceptance. Thus, existing findings indicate that frequent music and music video exposure is associated with a greater acceptance of hegemonic and heteropatriarchal beliefs about women, gender roles, and sexual relationships among Black and White women.

Each of the studies conducted using Black participants focused on Black adolescents (a critical developmental stage), and therefore cannot address the issue of whether Black media portrayals are harmful to the development of healthy romantic relationship beliefs among young adults. Additionally, these studies did not simultaneously examine multiple genres of Black oriented media nor did they test ways that each medium is associated with heteropatriarchal relationship belief acceptance. The extant research often focuses on traditional media such as television, magazines, and music related media. Little is known about distinct contributions of these media to the sexual socialization of Black women. The purpose of this study was to update and expand our knowledge about media exposure and the acceptance of disempowering beliefs about gender roles in romantic and sexual relationships. In this study, we explore the potential impact of Black reality TV, magazines, and music related media consumption habits in the acceptance of heteropatriarchal relationship beliefs by Black women.

## **Control Variables**

In this study, we aimed to measure the independent effects of Black media use on the acceptance of heteropatriarchal relationship beliefs, and it was important that we identified and controlled for any potential confounding factors that may have adversely affected our results. Given that Black women are not a homogenous group, we expected that there would be individual differences in demographic and socio-psychological identity factors that could shape women's media use patterns and practices. First, multiple studies have shown that Black Americans who have relatively low education, occupational status, and income consume more media than those with higher levels of socioeconomic status (Bickham et al., 2003; Ward, Day, Thomas, 2010). These studies examined the associations between socioeconomic status (SES) and media use among Black adolescent samples. Although to date there have been no studies exploring these associations among Black emergent adults, our study considered potential social class based differences in Black women's media consumption.

Second, another potentially confounding factor that we considered was ethnic identity, or an individuals' acceptance of and positive feelings toward being Black. Studies have shown that Black college students who identify strongly or positively with being Black reported more time using Black oriented websites and were more critical of the media in general in comparison to those with a weaker ethnic identity (Bickham et al., 2003). Additionally, Ward, Day, and Thomas (2010) analyzed the ways that ethnic identity influenced media use among a sample of 139 Black adolescent girls and boys and found that stronger ethnic identity was associated with more frequent computer use and stronger identification with their favorite musical artist and TV character.

Finally, religiosity and religious involvement are significantly associated with media use patterns among Black Americans. Ward et al. (2010) found that organized religious involvement was associated with less frequent TV viewing and less criticism of gender portrayals in music videos. Given its strong presence in the Black community, religion has also played a substantial role in shaping attitudes about gender and sexuality. The Black church, or the primary religious institution that serves Black communities, has historically been a source of political, social, and psychological strength for Black Americans. Compared to White Americans, Black Americans attend religious services more frequently, engage in daily prayer at higher rates, and feel more strongly about their religious beliefs (Taylor, Chatters, Jayakody, & Levin, 1996). Church affiliation is strong among all socioeconomic levels of Black Americans, and biblically-based sexual discourses have been described as oppressive, patriarchal, and hegemonic because they privilege heterosexuality in ways that constrain and prohibit female sexual agency, instrumentality, and desire (Collins, 2005; Douglas, 1999; Taylor et al., 1996). Because gospel music is an integral component of the Black church, and religiosity may influence media consumption habits, we considered the contributing role of organizational religious participation on Black media engagement and heteropatriachal beliefs.

### **The Current Study**

Although Black Americans are consistently reported to be the heaviest media consumers in the United States, little investigation has been conducted concerning the potential association between Black media use and the sexual socialization of young Black women. The purpose of our study was to explore the associations between multiple dimensions of Black oriented media exposure and acceptance of heteronormative and

patriarchal sexual beliefs. If cultural constructions of gender and sexuality are derived in part by women's media engagement, does contemporary Black media use facilitate women's acceptance and idealization of relationships in which women are dominated (and at times violated) by hypermasculine men? Does Black media consumption lead women to endorse heteropatriarchal sexual scripts and expect/desire adversarial interpersonal relations? And if so, may we still understand Black media as a praxis oriented medium with emancipatory and empowering outcomes?

Based on previous empirical studies that link heavy media usage with more stereotypical attitudes about gender and sexuality, our hypotheses examined whether frequent exposure to six (6) dimensions of Black oriented media consumption [reality television shows, magazines, music videos, and music (R&B/Soul, Hip-Hop/Rap, and Gospel)] would be associated with greater endorsement of heteropatriarchal relationship attitudes among Black women. To our knowledge, no comprehensive single measure of heteropatriarchal romantic relationship beliefs currently exists; therefore, we used three scales that assess the concepts within this larger umbrella: the Heterosexual Script Scale (Seabrook et. al, 2016); Adversarial Sexual Beliefs Scale (Burt, 1980); and a scale we developed for this study called the Heteropatriarchal Beliefs about Black Relationships Scale. Specifically, we expected:

**H1:** Women who consume more media content oriented toward a Black audience would report more acceptance of the heterosexual script.

**H2:** Women who consume more media content oriented toward a Black audience would report more adversarial sexual beliefs than women with lower exposure to these media.



**H3:** Women who consume more media content oriented toward a Black audience would report more heteropatriarchal beliefs about Black relationships than women with lower exposure to these media.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The data for this analysis were collected as part of a larger study administered to a random sample of 378 self-identified Black undergraduate and graduate women aged 18-30 ( $M = 21$  years) attending a large Midwestern university during the fall 2013 semester. Although the majority of the sample identified as Black/African American (76%), another 14% identified as Bi/Multi-racial, 4% as African, 3% as West Indian/Caribbean, and 1% as Afro-Latina (e.g., South or Central American, Dominican, Puerto Rican). We measured parents' educational background as a proxy for socioeconomic status. On average, the young women sampled came from relatively well-educated backgrounds. Specifically, 27% of their mothers had completed Bachelor's degrees, and another 23% earned a graduate or professional degree. Additionally, 19% of their father's earned a Bachelor's degree, and 23% of their father's earned graduate or professional degrees. Inclusion criteria did not require that women have sexual experience in order to participate in the study, and as such, 33% of the women indicated that they had never had vaginal intercourse. Research has indicated that previous sexual experiences significantly influence women's attitudes and expectations about dating and sexuality (see Tolman, 2000 and Impett et al., 2006). However, our preliminary analyses revealed that sexual experience was not significantly correlated with any of the dependent variables; therefore, we did not include it in our final analyses. Participants indicated their sexual

orientation on a scale from *1 = exclusively heterosexual* to *5 = exclusively homosexual*, and the majority of the sample identified as exclusively or predominantly heterosexual (93%). They were also asked to describe their sexual attraction and behavior using a similar rubric, and 91% described their sexual attraction as exclusively or predominantly heterosexual, and 89% of the sample described their sexual experiences as exclusively or predominantly heterosexual.

### **Procedure**

For the full survey, a random sample of Black female college students was recruited with assistance from the university's Office of the Registrar. The Registrar's office emailed 932 self-identified Black undergraduate and graduate students and invited them to participate in an anonymous online study that examined the unique experiences that affect Black women's health and personal development (response rate of approximately 25%). The email indicated that participants would be compensated \$25 for their participation and included a link to the online survey. Interested students used the link to complete the online survey, and were directed to a second survey upon completion to provide their contact information for compensation. Administration of the full survey took approximately 60-90 minutes to complete, and all the participants were assured that any information given would be kept confidential and that their participation was voluntary. Following completion of the measure, all participants were debriefed. The full survey included a broad range of measures assessing sexual socialization, sexual body image and esteem, sexual desire and perception of attractiveness, sexual experience, stereotypes about Black women, satisfaction with life, mental health, and general health

behaviors and practices that were not analyzed here. For this study, we analyzed measures related to media use and romantic relationship beliefs.

## **Measures**

### **Black media use.**

**Magazines.** Participants were asked about the rates at which they consume five popular magazines that target a predominately Black audience. *Ebony*, *Essence*, and *VIBE* magazines were included because they represent the most highly circulated Black magazine publications according to media monitoring reports conducted by Pew Research Center (2013) and Cison (2013). We also included *The Source* and *XXL* because they are widely consumed among young Black audiences between 18-34, and contain content related to hip hop music, culture, and politics. Participants indicated how often they read each publication, and response options ranged from 0 to 12 issues in a typical year. On average, participants reported relatively low levels of Black oriented magazine readership with only 20% having read at least one magazine issue ( $M=.57$ ,  $SD=1.08$ ).

**Reality Television.** Previous *State of the African-American Consumer Reports* conducted by Nielson (2013) noted that of the top ten primetime television programs consumed by African Americans between ages 18-49, eight are reality television programs featuring a predominately or exclusively Black cast. Of these eight shows, we selected *Love & Hip Hop Atlanta*, *Real Housewives of Atlanta*, and *T.I. and Tiny* because they were listed as the reality television programs most viewed by Black Americans and they showcased stories and content reflecting contemporary Black culture, communities, relationships, and lives. We also included *Basketball Wives* because it was a highly

viewed reality television program that featured similar content. Using a 4-point scale that ranged from 0 (Never/None) to 4 (All of the time/Most or all episodes), participants were also asked to indicate how much of each popular reality TV program they had watched. Average reality television viewing scores were calculated across all four programs. Overall, participants reported moderate consumption of these reality television programs oriented toward Black audiences ( $M=2.09$ ,  $SD=.97$ ).

**Music Videos.** Using a scale that ranged from 0 hours to 12+ hours, participants were asked to indicate the number of hours that they watch music videos on a typical weekday and weekend. Average weekly viewing hours were calculated by multiplying weekday use by five, multiplying weekend use by two, and then summing the scores to create a composite total. Generally, participants watched music videos somewhat frequently ( $M=5.07$ ,  $SD=10.16$ ).

**Music.** Black oriented music consumption was assessed using a mix of open-ended and closed-ended measurement items. First, participants responded to the following open-ended question, “We often listen to many types of music. How would you describe your overall music diet? (e.g., 20% pop, 40% rock, 10% R & B, and 30% jazz) Numbers should add to 100%.” We coded the open-ended responses and assigned each participant a genre usage value (ranging between 0 and 1, where 40% = .40) for each of the three Black-oriented music genres found to dominate the music diets of Black participants in previous studies (R&B/Soul, Rap/Hip-Hop, and Gospel; Hoff, Greene, & Davis, 2003; Jamison, 2006; Williams & Keen, 2008). Next, average weekly music hours consumed was measured using two close-ended questions, “How many hours on a typical weekday do you listen to music (radio, iPod, CDs, etc.)?” and “How many hours

on a typical Saturday or Sunday do you listen to music?” Weekly music consumption scores were calculated by multiplying weekday use by 5 and adding Saturday/Sunday use. Response options ranged from *0 hours* to *12+ hours per week*. Finally, a regular music genre exposure score was calculated for each of the three genres by multiplying the genre usage value and the average weekly music hours, yielding a score that we interpreted as the amount of exposure that each participant had to that genre, ( $M_{R\&B}=11.67$ ,  $SD_{R\&B}=14.08$ ,  $M_{Rap}=8.34$ ,  $SD_{Rap}=11.55$ ,  $M_{Gospel}=2.23$ ,  $SD_{Gospel}=7.96$ ).

### **Heteropatriarchal romantic relationship attitudes.**

***Heterosexual Script.*** This construct was assessed using a 22-item measure created by Seabrook and colleagues (2016) to examine the extent to which participants endorse multiple elements of the heterosexual script, including the sexual double standard, gender-specific courtship strategies, and gender-specific orientations toward commitment. The Heterosexual Script Scale was developed from the Women are Sexual Objects, Men are Sex Driven, and Dating is a Game subscales of the Attitudes Towards Dating and Relationships Measure (ATDR; Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999) used in Ward (2002) and Ward and Friedman (2006). Items reflecting male and female commitment strategies were added to these scales. Participants rated their agreement with each statement on a 6-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include “A woman should be willing to make personal sacrifices in order to satisfy her partner” and “Men should be the ones to ask women out and to initiate physical contact.” Internal consistency was good ( $\alpha = .90$ ). On average, participants reported low acceptance of the heterosexual script ( $M=2.87$ ,  $SD=.78$ ).

***Adversarial Sexual Beliefs.*** The 9-item *Adversarial Sexual Beliefs Scale* (Burt, 1980) was used to capture participants' beliefs that romantic relationships are fundamentally exploitative and that both sexes, but especially women, are manipulative, sly, dishonest, cheating, and not to be trusted. Sample items include "Most women are sly and manipulative when they are out to attract a man" and "Women are usually sweet until they've caught a man, but then they let their true self show." Participants reported to what extent they agreed with each of the nine statements using a 6-point Likert-type scale, and responses were anchored by 1 (*strongly disagree*) and 6 (*strongly agree*). Internal consistency for the scale was acceptable ( $\alpha = .85$ ) and participants generally reported low acceptance of the belief that women and men are inherently adversarial in relationships ( $M=2.38, SD=.87$ ).

***Heteropatriarchal Beliefs about Black Relationships.*** Whereas the previous two measures have been used to document how hegemonic (White) gender ideal acceptance influenced romantic relationship beliefs, there are no scales that consider patriarchal sexual beliefs between Black women and men in the context of their sociocultural and historical experiences in the United States. Charleston (2014) conducted a qualitative study that investigated how Black women and men understand patriarchal performances in romantic relationships. She used Steve Harvey's (2009) *New York Times* Bestseller *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man: What Men Really Think About Love, Relationships, Intimacy, and Commitment* (which now has a sequel and two film adaptations) to develop the interview guide that she used in the focus groups. Charleston chose the book specifically because it explicitly communicates patriarchal values, focuses specifically on Black cultural and social experiences, and was commercially successful. In order to

develop a quantitative scale that measured Black women's acceptance of patriarchal values in romantic relationships, we relied on the emerging themes of these qualitative studies and also consulted the Steve Harvey (2009) book. We created a 12-item measure that asked participants to rate their level of agreement with each statement using a 6-point Likert scale anchored by 1 (*strongly disagree*) and 6 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include "Black women have too much control and power in their families" and "Many Black men, without realizing it, have helped to keep the Black woman down because of their low regard for her." Mean scores across the 12-items were calculated ( $\alpha = .86$ ), with higher scores translating to more traditional views of women's roles in romantic relationships. On average, student's reported moderate acceptance of heteropatriarchal beliefs about Black relationships ( $M=3.22$ ,  $SD=.90$ ).

**Religiosity.** To determine the role of religion and spirituality in the lives of the participants, women were asked to indicate their organizational religious involvement using a 3-item measure. Responses to these items were provided on a 5-point Likert-type scale anchored by *never or not at all* and *very or very regularly*. Items included, "How religious are you?" "How often do you attend religious services?" and "How important is your religious training to your beliefs about sexuality?" Responses to each question were scored from 0 to 4, and the means were calculated across the three questions to produce a religiosity score for each participant ( $\alpha=.86$ ). On average, participants were somewhat religious ( $M=3.00$ ,  $SD=1.15$ ).

**Ethnic Identity.** The *Racial Centrality* subscale of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; Sellers et al., 1997) was used to measure the strength of participants' ethnic identity, or how much participants felt that being Black/African

American was an integral part of their self-image. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with such items as “I have a strong attachment to other Black people” and “Being Black is an important reflection of who I am” using a 4-item, 7-point Likert-type scale anchored by 1 (*strongly disagree*) and 7 (*strongly agree*). Participants’ scores were averaged across the 4 items such that higher scores correspond with higher levels of racial centrality. The scale yielded an acceptable level of internal consistency ( $\alpha=.86$ ), and participants somewhat agreed that they felt a strong identification with Black individuals and/or culture ( $M=5.37, SD=1.16$ ).

## **Results**

### **Preliminary Analyses**

As a first set of preliminary analyses we examined inter-correlations among the six media variables and the three heteropatriarchal relationship attitudes (see Table 6). Heavier consumption of one media genre was often related to more frequent consumption of other media genres except for gospel music, which was associated with less frequent consumption of other media genres outside of magazines. The Heterosexual Script Scale was significantly correlated with both the Adversarial Sexual Beliefs Scale and the Heteropatriarchal Beliefs about Black Relationships Scale, suggesting that traditional gender role ideology may be conceptualized as a viable measure of women’s acceptance of the normative heteropatriarchal sexual script.

As a second set of preliminary analyses, we conducted zero-order correlations between the three heteropatriarchal relationship belief variables and the following set of demographic factors: age, sexual experience, sexual orientation (via a 0/1 dummy code whereby 1=predominantly or exclusively gay), mother’s level of education (as a proxy



for socioeconomic class status), romantic relationship status, religiosity, and racial centrality. Correlations are presented in Table 7. Overall, religiosity was associated with stronger endorsement of each of the relationship belief outcome variables, and racial centrality was associated with stronger support of heteropatriarchal beliefs about Black relationships. In addition, sexual orientation was associated with stronger endorsement of the heterosexual script and adversarial beliefs about Black relationships. Because racial centrality, religiosity, and sexual orientation were the most consistent correlates, only these three demographic factors were included as controls in the subsequent analysis.

### **Testing the Main Hypotheses**

In order to examine the role of Black-oriented media use and acceptance of heteropatriarchal relationship beliefs, we conducted hierarchical multiple regressions for each of our three outcome variables: the Heterosexual Script, Adversarial Sexual Beliefs, and Adversarial Sexual Beliefs about Black Relationships. The demographic controls were entered on the first step and the six media variables were entered on the second step.

*Heterosexual Script.* The first set of analyses examined whether women who consumed more Black-oriented media would report greater acceptance of the heterosexual script. Results are provided in Table 8. The predictors accounted for 15% of the variation in the Heterosexual Script. Our hypothesis was supported, and our findings indicated that greater consumption of Black magazines and heavier exposure to rap music was each significantly associated with stronger endorsement of the Heterosexual Script. More frequent viewing of Black reality TV programs was associated with notably higher endorsement of the Heterosexual Script.

*Adversarial Sexual Beliefs.* For this hypothesis, we anticipated that greater exposure to Black media would be related to more adversarial sexual beliefs, or the expectation that female-male relationships are fundamentally exploitative and that women are especially sly, manipulative, and untrustworthy (H2). The predictors accounted for 14.9% of the variation in the Adversarial Sexual Beliefs Scale. Similar to findings from H1, we found that more frequent Black magazine consumption was significantly associated with greater acceptance of the belief that women and men are fundamentally adversarial in romantic and sexual relationships. Additionally, we found that women who had watched more episodes of the selected Black reality television programs also reported more adversarial sexual beliefs. There were no other significant associations between the remaining media genre variables and adversarial sexual belief acceptance (see Table 8).

*Heteropatriarchal Beliefs about Black Relationships.* For our last hypothesis, we predicted that greater exposure to Black media would be associated with greater acceptance of Black heteropatriarchal relationship beliefs (H3). Our predictors accounted for 14.7% of the variation in the Heteropatriarchal Beliefs about Black Relationships Scale. Results indicated that greater weekly consumption of both R&B/soul and rap/hip-hop music was positively associated with heteropatriarchal relationship belief acceptance. There were no other significant associations between the media genre variables and acceptance of heteropatriarchal beliefs about Black relationships (see Table 8).

## **Discussion**

The influence of Black-oriented media on the sexual socialization of Black Americans is a highly theorized yet understudied aspect of scholarship on contemporary

Black sexualities. Explicit media depictions of sexual and romantic relationships may be an especially relevant source of information for college-aged women as they navigate their first romantic relationship experiences. Our study examined the associations between young Black women's media consumption patterns and their endorsement of heteropatriarchal relationship beliefs that sanction male dominance over women and the expectation that women and men are inherently adversarial in romantic relationships as a result of these naturalized power inequities. Our findings suggest a strong connection between the frequency with which Black women consumed some genres of Black oriented media and their patriarchal relationship belief acceptance.

First, as anticipated, we found that levels of consumption shared significant associations with women's acceptance of heteropatriarchal romantic relationship attitudes, over and above the main effects of religiosity and racial centrality. First, the frequency with which participants read contemporary Black-oriented magazines emerged as a significant correlate of their acceptance of the non-culturally specific dimensions of heteropatriarchal relationship beliefs. More specifically, women who frequently read magazines targeting Black audiences were more likely to endorse complementary but inherently unequal roles for women and men in their romantic and sexual interactions (heterosexual script) and were more likely to believe that women are fundamentally exploitative, manipulative, untrustworthy, and antagonistic in romantic relationships (adversarial sexual beliefs). Notably, frequent magazine readership was not significantly associated with greater acceptance of heteropatriarchal beliefs about Black relationships.

Similarly, we found that more hours spent watching Black reality television shows was associated with greater acceptance of the non-culturally specific dimensions

of heteropatriarchal relationship beliefs. Questions about whether reality TV reasserts heteronormativity and traditional gender norms have increased over the last two decades as the genre has become more popular, yet empirical evidence supporting this premise has been slow to accumulate. Whereas several studies indicate the direct link between the socialization of traditional gender ideology endorsement and television consumption broadly (e.g., Aubrey, 2006; Gordon, 2008; Ward, 2003; Ward & Friedman, 2006), little attention has been paid to the analysis of reality television shows that target Black audiences and to contributions of their viewing habits to their acceptance of hegemonic gender ideologies. A few studies have found that Black youth do not blindly accept sexualized television portrayals of Black women as representative of reality and tend to criticize and contest any images that they perceive as demeaning to themselves, friends, and female family members (Adams-Bass, Bentley-Edwards, & Stevenson, 2014; Strasburger, Wilson, & Jordan, 2009). The tendency to contest denigrating and stereotypical depictions of Black women on television may help to explain why reality TV viewing habits were unrelated to the hegemonic and patriarchal beliefs about Black heterosexual relationships in this study. Given that there is a dearth of information available about the sexual content featured in popular reality TV programs that are targeted toward Black audiences, future research should investigate the prevalence of gender and sexual themes in Black reality TV programs to assess the prevalence of gender and sexual representations that reflect a heteropatriarchal structure.

Although many of our expectations were confirmed, one finding emerged that warrants further investigation. Our results indicated that music video consumption was not found to be a significant correlate of heteropatriarchal relationship belief acceptance.

Previous studies (e.g., Kalof, 1999, Ward, Hansbrough, & Walker, 2005) found that frequent viewing of music videos was linked with stronger acceptance of traditional beliefs about gender and sexual roles. In our study, frequent music video consumption was significantly correlated with the heterosexual script, adversarial sexual beliefs, and patriarchal beliefs about Black relationships, but these associations were not significant in hierarchical linear regressions when effects of other media use variables were held constant. Despite the null results, it may be premature to dismiss the viewing of music videos as unimportant. We found that women who more frequently watched music videos also reported greater magazine issue consumption and listened to more rap/hip-hop music on average, and these dimensions shared significant positive associations with heteropatriarchal relationship beliefs. Additionally, although television viewership reports suggest that overall music video consumption has subsided since the conclusion of daily television programs that exclusively feature music videos (e.g., MTV's Total Request Live and BET's 106 & Park), other reports by Nielsen Entertainment indicate viewership has been persistently growing online with the development of on-demand music video websites like YouTube and Vevo. According to Victor Luckerson of TIME Magazine (2013), music video viewership has far exceeded its historical trends and currently incurs over 12 billion domestic views and 55 billion worldwide views (compared with 200,000 televised plays in 1999). Technological innovation has enabled music videos to become the most popular visual genre on the internet, and future research should investigate how the shift from cable-based programming to on-demand web viewership has impacted the role of music video viewership on the sexual socialization of young consumers.

## **Limitations**

Although these findings offer many unique insights into Black women's Black media use patterns and sexual attitudes, we acknowledge several limitations that future research will want to address. First, because this study is correlational, we cannot speculate on the directionality of our main effects. That is, we do not know whether media consumption affects romantic relationship attitudes, or whether women who endorse hegemonic, patriarchal beliefs about heterosexual relationships are more likely to seek out particular types of Black-oriented media. We anticipate that both paths are likely appropriate.

Second, we examined exposure levels to a somewhat limited selection of media in our study. For example, we only included five magazines, four reality television programs, and three musical genres. Although we selected the titles and genres found to be most popular among Black audiences according to media monitoring reports (e.g., RadioOne, 2008; Nielsen, 2013), the inclusion of a wider array of Black-oriented media shows and musical genres (e.g., films, scripted series, sitcoms, reggae) may yield contributions to what we know about the associations between media exposure and sexual attitudes. Additionally, we did not assess previous exposure to Steve Harvey's book, which may have influenced our findings in that participants who had read the book or seen the movies may have endorsed the heteropatriarchal beliefs about Black relationships scale to a greater degree than those who had not been exposed to the material.

Finally, our study was conducted using a relatively homogenous sample of Black female college students at an affluent, predominately White university. Previous research

has shown that the meaning and importance of race are integrally related to the extent to which students participate in ethnic group affirming activities. Specifically, perceptions of congruence between African Americans and their educational environment influence the importance of race in their lives, and the extent to which they feel comfortable expressing their ethnicity and participating in ethnic group affirming activities (Chavous, 2000). For example, in a study examining the role of impression management in exposure to stereotypical representations of Black characters in the media, Richeson and Pollydore (2002) found that Black students experienced *increased* anxiety after exposure to Black characters who behaved counter stereotypically during interactions with White characters compared to stereotypical behavioral depictions. The authors credited this unexpected response to Black students' attempts to balance opposing needs for positive group identity and the positive need to have positive relationships within a larger White cultural context. Future research should further investigate culturally specific media content exposure in culturally incongruent environments, and the potential salubrious and deleterious effects that occur in this intersectional context.

### **Conclusion**

There is a great deal at stake for Black women whose sexual development is heavily influenced by the gendered messages learned from the mainstream media. Existing data have demonstrated several ways that repeated exposure to narrow representations of hegemonic gender and sexual norms can contribute to how Black women conceptualize ideal sexual roles and scripts in romantic relationships with men. The implications of these beliefs are evident in analyses that explore how Black youth evaluate dating violence. For example, Squires, Kohn-Wood, Chavous, and Carter (2006)

conducted focus groups with 35 Black high school students to assess their attitudes about gendered interpersonal violence in romantic relationships. After reading examples of dating violence portrayed in rap music lyrics and a vignette about the sexual assault of a hip-hop fan (or “groupie”), participants believed that women’s behavior was to blame for their own victimization. Specifically, students made comments like “‘nasty’ dancing was her downfall,” suggesting that women were primarily to blame for their abusive relationships with men due to their expressive sexual character or behaviors. Although their data did not permit a causal linkage between hip hop music exposure and acceptance of interpersonal relationships violence, their findings suggest that Black youth have been socialized to believe that when women agentically express sexual interest and/or desire, they *choose* to be sexually abused, and that while male perpetrators are merely products of their social and familial environments, women’s sexuality and strength were the catalyst for their victimization. Repeated exposure to music lyrics like those from Rihanna’s *S&M* (2010), which include statements like “I may be bad, but I’m perfectly good at it. Sex in the air, I don’t care, I love the smell of it. Sticks and stones may break my bones but chains and whips excite me,” may contribute to the socialization of these beliefs.

Gerbner’s (1998) cultivation theory suggests that repeated exposure to traditional gendered images in the media results in viewers’ believing that those representations are acceptable and expected behaviors for people in real life. According to this theory, the prevalent gender and sexual images in popular media oriented toward Black audiences may help shape their conceptualizations about what an ideal romantic relationship is “supposed to” be like. Avid Black-media consumers may come to believe that Black



women are “perfectly good at being bad” in relationships and perhaps deserving of and entitled to punishment and denigration in romantic relationships. Findings from our research suggests that exposure to magazine, reality television, and music featuring stories, images, and performers that reflect Black American lives plays a significant role in the acceptance of these “transgressive” yet potentially harmful beliefs.

If Black women are learning that ideal heterosexual intraracial romantic relationship configurations involve submission to men who display hypermasculine and patriarchal behaviors, they may come to develop a complicity with misogyny, a predilection for sexual subjugation, and a desire for intimate partners that support Black women's inauthenticity, invisibility, and sexual silence. Although mean scores on the heteropatriarchal belief scales were relatively low for the non-culturally specific measures, they were moderately high for the measure that specifically related to patriarchal beliefs about Black romantic relationships, which is consistent with research that indicates that Black women are at greater risk for domination and violence in female-male intraracial relationships due to their broader social location and marginalization (Hussen et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2004; West, 2000).

In conclusion, this study is further documentation that exposure to popular Black-oriented media content is associated with greater acceptance of hegemonic and patriarchal gender roles in intraracial romantic relationships among young Black women. Although exposure to representations of Black women who display a high level of sexual interest, desire, and assertiveness may help some Black women feel more sexually self-confident and empowered (Bland & Montemurro, 2015), evidence indicates that such portrayals may also lead Black women to internalize stereotypical gender role attitudes

and a stronger acceptance of objectifying notions about women and beliefs that romantic relationships are inherently adversarial. Understanding the social and psychological dynamics that place this population at increased risk of interpersonal violence is an important research priority that warrants further investigation.

Table 6

*Zero-Order Correlations Between Black-Oriented Media Use and Heteropatriarchal**Relationship Belief Acceptance*

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Reality TV Viewing	--								
2. Magazine Issues Read	.18 <sup>b</sup>	--							
3. Music Video Hours	.12 <sup>a</sup>	.40 <sup>b</sup>	--						
4. R&B/Soul Music	.14 <sup>b</sup>	.03	.09	--					
5. Rap/Hip Music	.13 <sup>b</sup>	.10	.12 <sup>a</sup>	.18 <sup>b</sup>	--				
6. Gospel Music	-.11	.01	-.03	-.06	-.13 <sup>a</sup>	--			
7. Heterosexual Script	.15 <sup>b</sup>	.25 <sup>b</sup>	.15 <sup>a</sup>	.11 <sup>a</sup>	.19 <sup>b</sup>	.02	--		
8. Adversarial Sexual Beliefs	.16 <sup>b</sup>	.23 <sup>b</sup>	.18 <sup>b</sup>	.13 <sup>a</sup>	.15 <sup>b</sup>	.01	.80 <sup>b</sup>	--	
9. Heteropatriarchal Beliefs about Black Relationships	.10	.14 <sup>b</sup>	.14 <sup>b</sup>	.20 <sup>b</sup>	.21 <sup>b</sup>	.04	.48 <sup>b</sup>	.43 <sup>b</sup>	--
Means	.80	.60	5.20	11.51	8.30	2.20	2.86	2.38	3.26
Standard Deviations	.64	1.20	10.65	14.05	11.52	7.92	.76	.87	.90

Note. <sup>a</sup>p<.05; <sup>b</sup>p<.01; <sup>c</sup>p<.001.

Table 7

*Correlations among Heteropatriarchal Relationship Beliefs and**Demographic Covariates*

Demographic Variables	Heterosexual Script	Adversarial Sexual Beliefs	Heteropatriarchal Beliefs about Black Relationships
Age	-.07	-.20 <sup>b</sup>	.01
Sexual Experience	-.02	-.03	-.01
Sexual Orientation	-.14 <sup>a</sup>	-.12 <sup>a</sup>	-.19 <sup>c</sup>
SES	-.03	-.08	.01
Relationship Status	.09	-.08	-.04
Racial Centrality	.03	.00	.24 <sup>c</sup>
Religiosity	.18 <sup>c</sup>	.12 <sup>b</sup>	.22 <sup>c</sup>

Note. <sup>a</sup>p<.05; <sup>b</sup>p<.01; <sup>c</sup>p<.001.

Table 8

*Multiple Regression Analyses of Black-Oriented Media Use Predicting Heteropatriarchal Relationship Beliefs*

	Heterosexual Script (N=373)		Adversarial Sexual Beliefs (N=371)		Adversarial Beliefs about Black Relationships (N=364)	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Religiosity	.14 <sup>b</sup>	.13 <sup>a</sup>	.15 <sup>a</sup>	.10	.13 <sup>b</sup>	.13 <sup>b</sup>
Racial Centrality	.00	-.08	-.02	-.10 <sup>a</sup>	.21 <sup>c</sup>	.16 <sup>b</sup>
Sexual Orientation	-.09	-.10 <sup>a</sup>	-.09	-.09	-.13 <sup>a</sup>	-.13 <sup>a</sup>
Reality TV		.09		.14 <sup>b</sup>		.10
Magazines		.20 <sup>c</sup>		.18 <sup>c</sup>		-.10
Music Video		.06		.09		.09 <sup>†</sup>
R&B Music		.06		.08		.11 <sup>a</sup>
Rap Music		.14 <sup>b</sup>		.09		.16 <sup>b</sup>
Gospel Music		.01		.02		.02
<i>Final Adjust R<sup>2</sup></i>	.03	.13	.02	.12	.10	.14
<i>Adjust. R<sup>2</sup> Δ</i>	--	+.10	--	+.10	--	+.04
<i>Equation F</i>	4.60 <sup>b</sup>	6.75 <sup>c</sup>	3.29 <sup>b</sup>	6.60 <sup>c</sup>	14.10 <sup>c</sup>	7.56 <sup>c</sup>

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>p≤.05; <sup>b</sup>p≤.01; <sup>c</sup>p≤.001. † p=.06.

## CHAPTER 4

### DOES “PRETTY HURT?” ACCEPTANCE OF EUROCENTRIC BEAUTY

#### IDEALS AND REDUCED SEXUAL WELL-BEING (STUDY 3)

##### Introduction

*“Mama said, you’re a pretty girl  
What’s in your head, it doesn’t matter.  
Brush your hair, fix your teeth  
What’ you wear is all that matters...  
Blonde hair, flat chest  
TV says bigger is better  
South Beach, sugar free  
Vogue says thinner is better...  
Pretty hurts  
We shine the light on whatever’s worst  
Perfection is the disease of a nation.”*

“Pretty Hurts” by Beyoncé, *self titled album* (2013)

Beyoncé, the 17-time Grammy Award winning Black female artist, recorded “Pretty Hurts” to express contempt for the ways in which feminine beauty ideals negatively impact women, and the consequences that women experience in pursuit of “perfection.” Intended as a self-empowerment anthem, “Pretty Hurts” is an example of the important liberatory messages that hip-hop feminist scholars (e.g., Balaji, 2008; Morgan, 2000; Peoples, 2008; Pough, 2004; Stephens & Few, 2007) argue are present in the media produced within mainstream hip-hop culture. Yet, it is important to highlight that these types of messages are infrequent, and representations of Black women in the mainstream media primarily emphasize the importance of their physical beauty and

sexual attractiveness. The limited variation in these representations serves to uphold and legitimize the dominant hegemonic social system (Collins, 2004).

In studies based in the U.S. and other countries, unrealistic beauty standards are often implicated in low self-esteem and unhealthy behavior among young women and adolescents (Makkar & Strube, 1995). Feminist scholars like Naomi Wolf (1990) have used theory and empirical research to indict feminine beauty ideals as the context and cause for psychological distress in young women, including low self-worth, rampant dieting, and disordered eating. However, the emphasis on beauty also suggests women's value lies primarily in their role as objects for the sexualized male gaze, which could promote a heightened investment in achieving physical beauty. Relatively few studies explore the ways in which embracing restrictive ideals of beauty influences the sexual attitudes and behaviors of women, and even less research examines these associations among Black women, who are socialized to idealize both European centered beauty standards and more expansive, culturally-derived notions of feminine appearance. The studies that exclusively focus on Black women's perceptions of feminine beauty and attractiveness shed no light on the ways that their negotiation of appearance-related aspects of feminine gender roles impacts their sexual functioning.

Building on prior work linking sociocultural factors to women's sexual well-being (e.g., Curtin, Ward, Merriwether, & Caruthers, 2011; Laumann, Paik, et al., 2006; Tolman & Porche, 2000; Wiederman, 2000), this study uses a sociocultural theoretical framework to explore the potential liabilities in Black women's acceptance of Eurocentric beauty ideals. We contended that endorsement of the narrow and unattainable

beauty ideals would be associated with a decrease in the positive cognitive and physical aspects of sexual functioning such as sexual self-esteem, pleasure, and assertiveness.

### **The Elements of Beauty**

Within the United States, women and girls are socialized to value physical appearance as an essential aspect of their gender, sexuality, and self-concept. From an early age, girls are taught that an attractive appearance is essential to the feminine gender role, and they learn the dominant socially-sanctioned standards of beauty and physical attractiveness through cultural sources such as fairy tales, fashion dolls, and “princess themed” animated films (Baker-Sperry & Grauerholz, 2003). Through various sources, including the mainstream media, women and girls are taught that beautiful women are viewed more positively than less attractive women and that they should prioritize their physical attractiveness because it is one of the major means by which they will gain social status. For example, consistent with the “beautiful is good” stereotype (Dion, Bersheid, & Walster, 1972), several studies have found that individuals view attractive women as more sociable, friendly, warm, competent, and intelligent than less attractive women (for reviews, see Langlios et al., 2000). Furthermore, several studies have documented the importance of physical attractiveness in person perception (see Cash, 1981, for review), indicating that attractive people are viewed as having more desirable personalities (e.g., Dion et al., 1972), are preferred as dating partners (e.g., Byrn, Ervin, & Lamberth, 1970), and are typically more successful in social interactions (e.g., Reis et al., 1982). Given the presumed social advantages and opportunities available to “beautiful women,” the pursuit of beauty occupies a central role in many women’s lives throughout their adulthood, especially among relatively affluent White women who have the

resources, time, and energy to expend on acquiring beauty. Bordo (1993) argued that beauty regimes of styling one's hair, applying makeup, and selecting clothing and accessories are central elements in the daily lives of many women.

Although some have argued that beauty cannot be quantified or objectively measured (e.g., Saltzberg & Chrisler, 1997), there is a body of research on perceptions of physical attractiveness. Although much of this research oversimplifies the definition of women's physical attractiveness in ways that centrally focus on physical facial or body features and characteristics (e.g., Coetzee et al., 2014; Cunningham et al., 1995; Riggio, Widaman, Tucker, & Salinas, 1991), other studies have conceptualized beauty as a multifaceted construct that includes the investment in grooming activities (e.g., dress, cosmetic use, hair styling; Cash, Melnyk, & Hrabosky, 2014) and the idealization and prioritization of weight management and a thin body (e.g., Bissell, 2002; Harrison, 2003; Hesse-Biber et al., 2010) in addition to specific facial features.

**Eurocentric Beauty Ideal.** Although there are a multitude of different ways that individuals conceptualize beauty across cultures and historical periods, what remains consistent is that dominant notions of beauty are rooted in hegemonically defined expectations (Collins, 2004; Patton, 2006). In the United States, standards of beauty are heavily communicated via the mainstream media and most often reflect physical characteristics most commonly occurring among those of European descent. European centered—or Eurocentric—aesthetic is highly valued in popular culture in the United States, and a premium is placed on youthful appearing women with fair skin, lighter colored eyes (e.g., blue/green), and hair that is long, straight, and light in color, smaller facial features, and thinner bodies (Awad et al., 2015; Devalost et al., 2007; Halliwell &



Dittmar, 2003). Conversely, features more akin to an African centered aesthetic (e.g., darker skin, larger/curvier bodies, short and kinky/curly hair, full lips, wider noses) are deemed ugly, undesirable, and less feminine (Awad et al., 2015; Collins, 2004).

**Appearance Investment.** Given that attaining and maintaining an attractive, youthful appearance is believed to be central to a woman's role, value, and social standing, women come to believe that achieving the "perfect" body is an important component of their sense of self-worth, and their inevitable failure to meet these narrow gender and beauty ideals has been linked with an increased experience of sexual problems (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Women who internalize these hegemonic notions of feminine appearance may begin judging themselves harshly against societal standards of beauty as a measure of their own self-worth. For women whose self-worth is highly contingent upon their achievement of a socially sanctioned appearance ideal, the degree to which they engage in activities and behaviors to enhance their appearance may be intimately linked to their body satisfaction and self esteem. Researchers suggest that conformity to Western appearance related beauty and body ideals does not merely comprise the physical aspects that women come to embrace (e.g., lighter skin tone and thin bodies), but also the importance that women place on achieving those standards (Mahalik et al., 2005). Appearance investment is distinct from, but related to, Eurocentric beauty ideal acceptance. Whereas acceptance measures one's general attitudes about Eurocentric beauty standards, appearance investment is related to attitudes about the importance of those beauty standards to one's sense of self (Mahalik et al., 2005). Women with high appearance investment often spend a great deal of time attending to and/or attempting to maintain or enhance their feminine appearance (Cash et al., 2004).

**Thin ideal.** Hegemonic femininity largely involves distinguishing women's physical appearance from men and masculinity, and one important benchmark of femininity concerns achieving a small, or thin, body size and shape. Mahalik et al.'s (2005) research on contemporary norms of femininity suggests that appearance, and specifically an emphasis of thinness, is inextricably tied to notions of femininity, and other research has identified repeated exposure to increasingly thin images of women in the mainstream media as a mechanism through which the thin ideal of feminine beauty becomes internalized (e.g., Harrison, 2003; Stice et al., 1994; Sypeck et al., 2004). In addition to increased vulnerability to weight bias in employment, medical, and educational settings, recent studies have increasingly documented the adverse affects of weight bias for women in sex and romantic relationships (see Puhl & Heuer, 2009, for review). For example, Sheets and Ajmere (2005) surveyed 554 undergraduate students and found that overweight women were less likely to be in romantic relationships, more likely to have been told to lose weight by their partners, and reported lower relationship satisfaction than thinner peers.

Few studies have explored the role of weight stigma on subjective sexual well-being; however, one study conducted by Chen and Brown (2005) asked college students to rank order six pictures of hypothetical sexual partners ( $N=449$ ) and found that men ranked the image of the overweight woman as least desirable sexual partner compared to the others. Other findings indicate that overweight women are rated as being less sexually attractive, skilled, warm, responsive, and less likely to experience sexual desire compared to thinner women (Regan, 1996). Taken together, these findings suggest that women with body sizes that are more substantial than those prescribed by Eurocentric feminine beauty

ideals experience a range of weight-based discrimination in romantic and sexual relationships. Therefore, it is unsurprising that women who have internalized a thin-ideal of beauty largely attribute their pursuit of thinness to a desire to attract male partners (Fallon & Rozin, 1985).

In an effort to appear physically attractive to men, some women may embrace restrictive beauty standards that value thinness, and studies have linked thin-ideal internalization with adverse psychological consequences, including body dissatisfaction (Thompson & Stice, 2001) and low self-esteem (Webster & Tiggemann, 2003). Indeed, a great deal of research in the body image literature highlights the contributing role of thin beauty ideal endorsement on women's sexual self-consciousness and body dissatisfaction (see Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002, for review); a smaller literature suggests that thin-ideal internalization predicts lower sexual self-esteem and less sexual satisfaction. Several studies have linked thin-ideal internalization to appearance anxiety during sexual intimacy and diminished sexual functioning in women (Moradi et al., 2005; Calogero & Grogan, 2009; Harper & Tiggemann, 2007; Wiederman, 2000), but these studies largely utilized samples of predominantly White women, thereby limiting our ability to estimate about these associations within diverse samples of women.

### **Black Women and Eurocentric Beauty Standards**

Assuming that Western societal standards of physical attractiveness similarly dominate the feminine beauty ideals of Black women would be fallacious given the diversity of Black women's bodies and the richness of their sociocultural context. Although the effects of thin ideal acceptance have been relatively understudied, there is evidence that Black women are accepting of larger body sizes and report greater

satisfaction with their body size despite generally higher rates of overweight (Celio et al., 2002; Shoneye et al., 2011). It has been argued that Black women are “protected” from sociocultural pressures of thinness due to cultural acceptance of shapelier bodies (Malloy & Herzberger, 1998). However, there is also evidence suggesting that Black women evaluate themselves according to an alternative version of the thin ideal called the curvaceous body ideal (Harrison, 2003). Although often described as “thick” in Black popular culture, the curvaceous but thin beauty ideal is described as a woman with a sexually mature feminine body frame; more specifically, this ideal includes having an hourglass figure with larger breasts, full/round buttocks, and a thin waist (Ahern et al., 2011; Harrison, 2003; Poran, 2006).

There is a small but growing literature on Black women’s negotiation of social expectations to be curvaceously thin. In a qualitative examination of young Black college women’s attitudes toward the thin ideal, Poran (2006) found that the body shape participants thought most heterosexual men preferred was curvaceous, but thin. Similarly, using a sample of 116 Black and 222 White female college students, Overstreet and her colleagues (2010) found that Black women preferred a curvaceous body shape more often than their White counterparts. These idealized feminine body standards were highly represented in the popular music video content analyzed by Emerson (2002) and Stephens and Few (2007), suggesting that the dominant, socioculturally salient images of physical attractiveness for Black women emphasize a simultaneously thin *and* voluptuous body. Although a curvaceous shape could be understood as widely divergent from the traditional thin ideal, it is important to recognize that the desire for curves is limited to those that appear on slim bodies. Thinness, as opposed to fatness, remains an important

marker of physical attractiveness for Black women, and endorsement of these largely unattainable standards of beauty may carry adverse consequences to women's psychosexual health and functioning. Thus, although we have reason to believe that Black women are more resistant to the internalization of the thinness ideal compared to White women and are generally more accepting of their bodies (Malloy & Herzberger, 1998), this study aims to empirically test this association in order to expand the emerging literature on the sociocultural liabilities of restrictive beauty ideal acceptance for the sexual well-being of Black women.

### **Physical Appearance and Subjective Sexual Well-Being**

In addition to assessing Black women's acceptance of and engagement with Eurocentric standards of beauty, our second goal is to examine their association with multiple aspects of Black women's sexual well-being. A key aspect of sexual health for women is comfort with and confidence in their bodies during sex. As women's sexual desirability is often equated with their levels of physical attractiveness, sexual intimacy may pique appearance related concerns, and any discomforts may negatively impact women's experience of sex. As might be expected given the degree of bodily exposure that occurs during partnered sexual activity, subjective feelings about one's physical attractiveness may be highly salient during sex, as one may be partially or fully naked. Studies have shown that women with more body esteem demonstrate better sexual adjustment, including higher self-reported sexual desire in response to erotic stimuli, and lower levels of sexual anxiety, avoidance, and sexual dysfunction (Pujos et al., 2010; Tolman & Porche, 2000; Wiederman, 2000; Wiederman & Hurst, 1998).

For these reasons, appearance related concerns are argued to play an important role in sexual pleasure and functioning. Researchers argue that if people are distracted by concerns about their physical appearance, they may be unable to relax enough to experience sexual pleasure. Evidence exists that supports this assertion, linking body self-consciousness to lower levels of subjective sexual well-being and agency (Curtin et al., 2011; Sanchez & Kiefer, 2007; Wiederman, 2000; Yamamiya, Cash, & Thompson, 2006). Subjective sexual well-being refers to the perceived quality of an individual's experience with sex and intimate relationships (Laumann, et al., 2006) and considers the cognitive and emotional aspects of an individual's sexuality as well as the physical qualities associated with sexual activity.

If evidence suggests that being concerned about one's appearance may interfere with sexual functioning and jeopardize subjective sexual well-being, then this dynamic may be a particularly significant problem for women because concern about appearance is a defining feature of femininity. Additionally, Black women place greater importance on creating and maintaining a feminine appearance compared to their White female counterparts (Cole & Zucker, 2007), suggesting that it could be a critical liability to their well-being. Although occasional sexual difficulties are common and varied, preoccupation with one's physical appearance has been identified as a stable predictor of sexual dissatisfaction and dysfunction (Dove & Wiederman, 2000). There is little research looking at this phenomenon among Black women, as most of the literature about Black women's sexual health focuses on risk behaviors (e.g., Rickert, Sanghvi, & Wiemann, 2002; Whyte, 2006; Wingwood & DiClemente, 1998). In the current study, we move beyond notions of risk, conceptualizing Black women's sexual wellness in

terms of the subjective experience of agency and pleasure—as an affective *and* physical sensory experience of sexual intimacy. Black women’s subjective experiences of pleasure and agency include the following two components: sexual affect and sexual well-being.

### *Sexual Affect*

*Sexual Guilt, Shame, and Distancing.* According to Bem (1987), when an individual believes they have failed to uphold socially sanctioned gender ideals and expectations, they often experience shame that directly threatens their self-concept and feelings of self worth. Similarly, Zahn-Waxler et al. (1991) suggested that violating traditional feminine prescriptions often involves feelings of guilt and irresponsibility among women and leads women to try and repair the damage for which they feel responsible. The experience of shame is generally linked with the tendency to devalue oneself, and guilt is associated with increased attempts to achieve external validation in addition to punishing oneself for violating gender appropriate behavior (Tangney, 1995), suggesting that both of these personality traits critically undermine safety, enjoyment, and satisfaction during sex.

Research has linked high sexual guilt and shame with restricted sexual behavior and interest, lower sexual satisfaction, less contraceptive use, refusal to seek out sexual information, feelings of sexual inadequacy, low sexual self-worth, and negative affective reactions following sex or exposure to explicitly sexual material (Darling, Davidson, & Passarello, 1992; Davidson & Moore, 1994). Much of the extant research on guilt, shame, and emotional distancing during sex utilized primarily White college students and does not permit our speculation about the ways these associations may vary across cultural and social contexts. However, given the findings suggesting that Black women

are highly invested in physical appearance and attractiveness (Cole & Zucker, 2007), we expect similar trends among Black women, such that those who endorse Eurocentric standards of beauty and are highly invested in physical appearance, will also experience more emotional distancing and feelings of guilt and shame in sexual contexts.

Specifically, we hypothesize:

**H1:** European beauty ideal acceptance and appearance investment will be associated with more frequent experiences of sexual guilt and shame.

**H2:** European beauty ideal acceptance and appearance investment will be associated with more frequent emotional distancing during sex.

*Sexual Self-Consciousness.* There is a growing body of literature that points to the deleterious effects of intrusive appearance-based cognitions on sexual functioning.

Several studies have documented that women's heightened awareness and monitoring of their physical appearance during intimacy ultimately detracts from ability to focus on their own sexual desires (Dove & Wiederman, 2000; Wiederman, 2000). For example, in a clinical study using a community sample of adult women, Meston (2006) found that high public self-focus during sex, or self-evaluations that were based on a viewer's perspective of one's appearance or performance, was related to lower subjective sexual arousal and increased experiences of pain during sex. Research has also demonstrated that women high in appearance orientation, or who generally place a high degree of emphasis on their physical appearance, may be more prone to experiencing self-consciousness during sexual interactions and may view themselves as less desirable sexual partners (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Wiederman & Hurst, 1998).

Several studies utilizing predominately White samples have found that women often report feeling self-conscious about their bodily appearance during intimacy,



specifically in relation to concerns over being perceived as fat by their sexual partners (e.g., Harrison, 2003; Molloy & Herzberger, 1998; Weaver & Byers, 2006; Wiederman & Hurst, 1998). Given that larger-bodied women are socially stigmatized with regard to sexuality and courtship (Halpern et al., 1999), and Black women often report higher body sizes *and* greater satisfaction with their bodies compared to other racial groups of women in the United States, the extent to which beauty ideal endorsement is linked to sexual self-consciousness in Black women is unclear. Irrespective of Black women's general satisfaction about their physical appearance, a heightened awareness about how one's body appears to a sexual partner paired with the perceived deviation from Eurocentric physical appearance standards may result in increased body shame or sexual self-consciousness during sex. Consistent with the literature based on White women (Sanchez & Kiefer, 2007; Wiederman, 2000), we hypothesize that Black women who are highly invested in achieving a physical appearance consistent with Eurocentric standards of beauty will also experience more body image self-consciousness in sexual contexts.

**H3:** European beauty ideal acceptance and appearance investment will be associated with more body image self-consciousness during sexual interactions.

#### *Experiential Sexual Agency*

*Sexual assertiveness.* A second dimension of sexual well-being that may be affected by Black women's beauty and body cognitions is experiential sexual agency, which includes sexual assertiveness and sexual satisfaction. Assertiveness about intimate needs and desires is distinct from general assertiveness (Morokoff et al., 1997). According to Gervasio and Crawford (1989), asserting oneself in intimate relationship settings has different emotional associations and consequences than asserting one's rights

in impersonal settings (e.g., insisting on service in a restaurant). Moreover, individuals who are generally assertive are not necessarily assertive in intimate settings. Morokoff and colleagues (1997) operationally defined female *sexual assertiveness* as the ability to a) communicate sexual likes and dislikes to intimate partners, b) concentrate on one's own pleasure during intimacy (as opposed to focusing on partner's satisfaction), and c) direct sexual activity in a manner that ensures one's desires or needs are met, including active initiation and/or refusal of sex (Hulbert, 1991; Morokoff et al., 1997). This literature suggests that female sexual assertiveness is demonstrated when a woman takes responsibility for and control over her sexual stimulation and activity (e.g., pleasure and physical and/or reproductive safety), and moves away from the idea that sex is centered around the male orgasm by asserting her own sexual desires and needs during heterosexual encounters (Hurlbert, 1991). A woman's ability to effectively prioritize and communicate her sexual beliefs and desires is a necessary step toward the development and achievement of healthy sexual intimacy (Curtin et al., 2011; Morokoff et al., 1997); however, it is not clear whether Black women who are highly invested in physical appearance standards may be likely to engage in these behaviors. Additionally, in order to experience pleasure during sex, a woman must possess a sense of entitlement to those feelings. When women feel insecure or self-conscious about their physical appearance during sex, they may feel less deserving of (or entitled to) sexual pleasure (Tolman, 2009). Accordingly, we expect that European beauty ideal acceptance will be associated with reduced levels of perceived sexual assertiveness and entitlement to sexual pleasure.

**H4:** High European beauty ideal acceptance and appearance investment will be negatively associated with sexual assertiveness.

**H5:** High European beauty ideal acceptance and appearance investment will be negatively associated with entitlement to sexual pleasure.

*Sexual satisfaction.* Although scholars have argued that sexual satisfaction is a core component of sexual well-being, few studies have considered the construct in women. The studies that do focus on women often examine satisfaction in clinical studies of relationship duration and quality among married and partnered heterosexual couples (e.g., Byers et al., 1998; Cupach & Comstock, 1990; Davies, Katz, & Jackson, 1999; Waite & Joyner, 2001). Sexual satisfaction has been operationalized to consider a person's level of happiness with both the physical and affective dimensions of her sexual interactions, including frequency of activity and orgasm, experience of emotional closeness with her partner, and quality of sexual sensation and pleasure (Haavio-Mannila & Kontula, 1997; Štulhofer, Buško, & Brouillard, 2010; Wyatt & Lyons-Rowe, 1990). Evidence demonstrates that traditional gender ideology adherence is a key predictor of reduced sexual satisfaction in women. For example, Kiefer and Sanchez (2007) found that women who engaged in submissive behavior perceived themselves as having a lack of sexual autonomy which then predicted greater sexual problems, including lower sexual satisfaction. Although gender differences in sexual satisfaction have been small, they consistently indicate that women report lower levels of sexual satisfaction compared to men (Laumann et al., 1999; Petersen & Hyde, 2010; Waite & Joyner, 2001), and these findings suggest that women's investment in and adherence to socially prescribed gender roles for women may be an important culprit.

Although research on sexual satisfaction has increased in recent years, there is a scarcity of information available regarding sexual satisfaction of African Americans in general and African American women, in particular. Using a sample of 126 Black

women, a study conducted by Wyatt and Lyons-Rowe (1990) found that frequent experiences of positive affective feelings during sex (e.g., not feeling guilty or afraid), comfort engaging in and initiating sex, and openly expressing their sexual needs were key predictors of sexual satisfaction. Given that body image concerns and distracting appearance related thoughts during sex are negatively correlated with sexual efficacy, esteem, and satisfaction (Davidson & McCabe, 2005; Dove & Wiederman, 2000; Pujois, Meston, & Seal, 2010), we hypothesize that high investment in Eurocentric beauty standards may lead to decreased sexual satisfaction in Black women.

**H6:** High European beauty ideal acceptance and appearance investment will be negatively associated with sexual satisfaction.

### **Control Variables**

In this study, we aimed to measure the role of European beauty ideal acceptance on affective and experiential dimensions of sexual well-being among young Black heterosexual women. In order to explore the independent associations between physical appearance beliefs and sexual well-being, it was important that we consider aspects of women's backgrounds that may contribute to a lower level of sexual agency and well-being, such as age, level of sexual experience, sexual orientation, romantic relationship status, and identification with racial group membership. Previous research has indicated that greater organizational religious involvement is a consistent predictor of sexual thoughts and behaviors, and is associated with lower levels of sexual activity, risk-taking, and fewer sexual partners (McCree, Wingwood, DiClimente, Davies, & Harrington, 2003), and greater levels of sexual guilt and shame (Wyatt & Dunn, 1991) in young Black women. Research also suggests that racial identity and socioeconomic status (SES) are potentially confounding factors that may affect our results, given that lower SES has

been linked with lower self-esteem and self-efficacy, greater psychological distress, and more frequent experiences of sexual victimization in Black women (Russo, Denious, Keita, Koss, 1997). Thus, we consider the role of religiosity, SES, and racial identity in our exploration of the associations between physical beauty ideals and sexual well-being.

### **The Current Study**

Although we may speculate that Black women's generally high levels of self-esteem and evaluations of their own attractiveness may enable positive experiences of sexual intimacy, there has been no research that supports these predictions. What role might acceptance and investment in mainstream standards of beauty play in shaping the emotional and physical aspects of sexual well-being? The current study built upon previous research and examined the connections between beauty ideal endorsement, including thin-ideal internalization, and sexual well-being in a group of young Black undergraduate and graduate students. We sought to extend previous findings linking appearance investment and thin idealization to diminished sexual well-being agency in Black women. In general, we hypothesized that women who report higher levels of beauty ideal endorsement would also report more frequent negative affective cognitions and less sexual pleasure, assertiveness, and satisfaction.

## **Method**

### **Participants and Procedure**

The analysis sample for the present study is identical to the analysis sample used in Study 2 (please refer to pages 87-88 for details on sample characteristics and study procedure). In short, 378 Black female undergraduate and graduate students ( $M= 21$  years) completed an anonymous online questionnaire that included a broad range of

measures assessing sexual socialization, sexual body esteem, sexual desire, media use habits, romantic relationship beliefs, stereotypical images about Black women, and general physical and mental health practices. For this study, we analyzed measures of feminine beauty ideal acceptance and affective and experiential sexual well-being.

The sensitive topic being studied may have restricted the participants' comfort, thereby resulting in guarded reports or missing data. Black women may be less willing to report information about sexual thoughts, feelings, desires, and behaviors because of negative stereotypes often ascribed to Black women (i.e., insatiable and hypersexual; Kaplan, 1997). Although the vast majority of our participants provided responses for each of the variables included in this study, nearly 100 participants elected to refrain from responding to the sexual satisfaction items. Sexual satisfaction was one of the few scales included in our questionnaire that measures participant experiences within a specific time frame (e.g., during the past six months). If the participants had not been sexually active during that time frame, they may have chosen to skip those questions. Due to missing data, hypotheses were tested on a sample of between 279 and 349 women, depending on the analyses.

### **Feminine Beauty Ideal Acceptance**

**European Beauty Ideal Acceptance.** The 12-item Image Acceptance Measure (IAM; Plybon, Pegg, & Reed, 2003) examines the degree to which Black women endorse traditional European standards of beauty, such as a lighter skin tone, straight and long hair, and a small or thin body appearance. The scale also measures Black women's acceptance of artificial enhancements and augmentations that will facilitate Black women's achievement of a more European appearance (e.g., nail extensions, physical

alterations of natural hair, and a desire to alter facial features that may be defined as Afrocentric). Sample items include “Straightened hair looks better than natural hair,” “I think guys prefer girls who have lighter skin,” and “Being thin (small) gives you a better appearance.” Participants rated twelve items on a 5-point scale (1= *strongly disagree* to 5= *strongly agree*), and responses were averaged to create a mean score such that higher scores indicate greater preference for a physical appearance consistent with Eurocentric beauty ideals. This measure displayed strong inter-item consistency in the original study ( $\alpha = .78$ ), and the  $\alpha$  value was 0.87 in this study.

**Thin Ideal and Appearance Investment.** Two subscales from the Conformity to Femininity Norms Inventory (CFNI; Mahalik et al., 2005) were used to measure the extent to which participants internalized two appearance-related dimensions of traditional femininity: *idealization of thinness* and *investment in appearance*. Participants rated their agreement with items on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items for Idealization of Thinness (5 items) include “I would be happier if I was thinner” and “I would be perfectly happy with myself even if I gained weight” (reverse scored). Items for Investment in Appearance (4 items) include “I spend more than 30 minutes a day doing my hair and make-up” and “I feel attractive even without make-up” (reverse scored). Negatively worded statements were reverse-coded, and responses were averaged to create a mean score. Higher scores on these subscales indicate greater acceptance of the appearance related dimensions. Internal consistency for the Idealization of Thinness subscale was strong ( $\alpha = .88$ ), while the consistency for the Investment in Appearance subscale was not as strong ( $\alpha = .61$ ).

## **Sexual Affect Measures**

**Sexual Guilt, Shame, and Distancing.** The 10-item Women's Sexual Working Models Scale (WSWMS; Birnbaum & Reis, 2010) was used to measure two dimensions of negative sexual affect: *sexual guilt/shame* and *emotional distancing*. Using a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (*very uncharacteristic of me*) to 9 (*very characteristic of me*), participants were instructed to rate the extent to which specific activities or attributes apply to them, via items such as "Sexual activity makes me feel ashamed" (guilt and shame subscale, 6-items,  $\alpha = .93$ ) and "During sexual activity, intruding thoughts often distract me" (distancing subscale, 4-items,  $\alpha = .79$ ). Means were calculated for the participants, with higher scores indicating more shameful, guilty, and distancing feelings related to sexual activity.

**Sexual Self-Consciousness.** The Body Image Self-Consciousness during Intimacy Scale (Wiederman, 2000) examines women's feelings about their bodies during physical intimacy with a partner. A sample item is "I could only feel comfortable enough to have sex if it were dark so that my partner could not clearly see my body." Participants rated 15 items on a 7-point scale (0= *Never* to 6= *Always*). The measure was reliable ( $\alpha = .95$ ).

## **Experiential Sexual Agency Measures**

**Sexual Assertiveness.** Sexual assertiveness was assessed using the Hurlbert Index of Sexual Assertiveness (HISA; Hurlbert, 1991;  $\alpha = .92$ ). This 25-item instrument is designed to assess the frequency with which respondents engage in activities related to assertive behavior in sexual situations. Participants were asked to indicate the level of agreement with each of the 25 statements using a 5-point Likert-type scale, anchored by 1



(*never*) and 5 (*all of the time*). Example items include: “I speak up for my sexual feelings” and “I feel comfortable initiating sex with my partner.” Negatively worded statements were reverse-coded, and scores across statements were averaged to create a sexual assertiveness index; higher scores on this index indicate higher levels of sexual assertiveness with a typical partner.

**Entitlement to Sexual Pleasure.** The 4-item Entitlement to Sexual Pleasure scale was designed by the L. Monique Ward and her graduate students ( $\alpha = .84$ ) to measure the extent to which participants emphasized their own sexual pleasure during sexual encounters. Participants were asked to indicate the level of agreement with statements like “I attempt to achieve orgasm during my sexual encounters” and “It is important for me to achieve orgasm during my sexual encounters” using a 5-point Likert-type scale, anchored by 1 (*never*) to 5 (*all of the time*). Means were calculated for participants, with higher scores indicating greater feelings of entitlement to experience sexual pleasure during sex.

**Sexual Satisfaction.** An adapted version of the New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (NSSS; Štulhofer, Buško, & Brouillard, 2010) was used to measure participants’ overall evaluation of their level of satisfaction with multiple domains of their sexual behavior including frequency of activity, experience of emotional closeness, and quality of sexual sensation and pleasure (12-items,  $\alpha = .94$ ). Using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all satisfied*) to 5 (*extremely satisfied*), participants rated their level of satisfaction with sexual statements like “The balance between what I give and receive in sex,” “The quality

of my orgasms,” and “My body’s sexual functioning.” Mean scores were computed with higher scores indicating greater sexual satisfaction.

### **Control Variables**

**Religiosity.** To determine the role of religion and spirituality in the lives of the participants, subjects were asked to indicate their organizational religious involvement using a 3-item measure. Items included: “How religious are you?”, “How often do you attend religious services?” and “How important is your religious training to your beliefs about sexuality?” Responses to these items were provided on a 5-point Likert-type scale (0= *never or not at all* to 4= *very or very regularly*), and scores on the scale were averaged to create a religiosity index ( $\alpha = .86$ ). On average, participants were somewhat religious ( $M=3.00$ ,  $SD=1.15$ ).

**Socioeconomic Status (SES).** Mother’s level of education was used as a proxy for socioeconomic status. Using a single-item that read, “What is the highest level of education reached by their mother,” participant responses were measured using a scale anchored by the following options: 1 (*a few years of high school*) to 10 (*Ph.D.*). Higher scores on this index reflected a higher level of educational attainment and presumably a higher socioeconomic class status. The young women sampled came from relatively well-educated backgrounds. Specifically, one-quarter ( $N=94$ ) of their mothers had completed Bachelor’s degrees, and of those, 88 of the participants’ mothers had also earned a graduate or professional degree ( $M= 4.70$ ,  $SD= 2.08$ ).

**Racial Identity.** Finally, we used the Racial Centrality subscale of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity-Short (MIBI-S; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997) to measure racial identity. Racial centrality is the extent to

which respondents feel being African American is central to their self-definition. A sample item is “Being Black is an important reflection of who I am.” Participants rated four items on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*), and responses were averaged to create a scale score ( $\alpha = .92$ ). Higher scores indicate that the respondent’s racial identity is more integral to their self-concept ( $M=5.37$ ,  $SD=1.16$ ).

## **Results**

### **Preliminary Analyses**

As a first set of preliminary analyses, we examined inter-correlations among the three feminine appearance variables and the six dimensions of sexual well-being (see Table 9). Acceptance of the Eurocentric beauty ideal was significantly associated with every dimension of sexual well-being. Specifically, high endorsement was related to greater levels of negative sexual affect and lower levels of sexual assertiveness and satisfaction. Similar trends were found in relation to thin-ideal internalization. However, appearance investment was not significantly correlated with any of the sexual well-being variables.

As a second set of preliminary analyses, we conducted zero-order correlations between the six dimensions of sexual well-being and the following set of demographic factors: age, sexual experience, sexual orientation (via a 0/1 dummy code whereby 1=predominately or exclusively gay), mother’s level of education (as a proxy for socioeconomic class status), romantic relationship status, religiosity, and racial centrality. Correlations are presented in Table 10. Overall, sexual experience was associated with fewer negative sexual feelings and more sexual agency. Similarly, being in a committed relationship status was significantly correlated with fewer negative sexual feelings and

greater levels of sexual agency. Religiosity was correlated with more sexual guilt and shame, greater sexual self-consciousness, less sexual assertiveness, and less perceived entitlement to sexual pleasure. Mother's level of education was positively associated with sexual guilt and shame and negatively correlated with entitlement to sexual pleasure. Finally, racial centrality was positively correlated with entitlement to sexual pleasure. We controlled for sexual experience, relationship status, religiosity, SES, and racial centrality in the subsequent regression analyses.

### **Associations between Beauty Ideals and Sexual Variables**

Our analyses involved testing a series of Multiple Ordinary Least Squares regression equations. To test our first set of hypotheses that acceptance of Eurocentric standards of physical attractiveness would be associated with frequent experiences of negative affective sexual cognitions, Eurocentric beauty ideal acceptance, thin ideal internalization, and appearance investment were regressed onto the exogenous predictor variables and the measures of negative sexual affect. For these analyses, the control variables of organized religious involvement, mother's level of education, and racial centrality were entered on the first step, and the sexual affect variables were entered on the second step.

Results supported our hypotheses (see Table 11). As indicated in Step 2 of the regressions, European beauty ideal acceptance was significantly related to more frequent experiences of sexual guilt and shame (H1), more emotional distancing during sex (H2), and greater levels of sexual self-consciousness (H3). Thin-ideal internalization was associated with more sexual distancing and more self-consciousness during sex.

Appearance investment was not related to any of the dimensions of negative sexual affect.

Our next set of hypotheses examined associations between Eurocentric beauty ideal acceptance and experiential sexual agency (Table 12). Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was utilized to test whether beauty ideal acceptance, thin internalization, and appearance investment were associated with lower levels of perceived sexual assertiveness, sense of entitlement to sexual pleasure, and lower levels of sexual satisfaction. As in the previous analyses, control variables were entered on the first step and the three beauty variables (Eurocentric beauty ideal, thin-ideal internalization, and appearance investment) were entered on the second step.

As hypothesized, women reporting higher levels of beauty ideal acceptance also reported lower levels of sexual assertiveness; there were no significant associations for thin-ideal internalization or appearance investment (H4). Evidence partially supported our expectations regarding beauty ideals and sexual pleasure (H5). Beauty ideal acceptance was negatively associated with entitlement to sexual pleasure. Similar to the previous test, there were no significant associations for thin-ideal internalization and appearance investment for women's perceived entitlement to sexual pleasure. Finally, thin-ideal internalization was related to lower levels of sexual satisfaction (H6).

### **Discussion**

This research evaluated the relation between beliefs about beauty, including Eurocentric beauty standard endorsement, and sexual well-being among young Black women. Overall, findings from this study provide evidence that endorsing restrictive standards of beauty is associated with reduced affective and physical sexual well-being.

Although several studies indicate that Black women generally report high levels of physical body esteem, and authors speculate this esteem may protect Black women from the sociocultural pressures of thinness (Celio et al., 2002; Malloy & Herzberger, 1998; Shoneye et al., 2011), sexual contexts where one's body is exposed can heighten women's awareness of idealized feminine appearance standards that revolve around thinness (Harrison, 2003). We hypothesized that Black women would not be exempt from the negative sexual consequences of Eurocentric beauty ideal endorsement, and that higher levels of restrictive appearance acceptance and investment would be associated with more negative sexual cognitions and less sexual assertiveness, agency, and perceived entitlement to pleasure.

Our results revealed many expected relations. Eurocentric beauty ideal acceptance—which emphasizes the importance of light skin tone, thin body shape/weight, and straight hair—was negatively related to every dimension of sexual affect and well-being except sexual satisfaction. Specifically, women who endorsed restrictive Eurocentric physical appearance ideals reported higher levels of sexual guilt and shame, emotional distancing during sex, and body self-consciousness during sex. These participants also reported lower levels of sexual assertiveness and less entitlement to experience sexual pleasure. Our results are consistent with previous studies that found that habitual monitoring of one's physical body enhances dissatisfaction with physical appearance (Moradi et al., 2005; Overstreet & Quinn, 2012), which may in turn negatively impact women's sense of self worth and sexual self-efficacy (Impett et al., 2006; Salazar, DiClemente, & Wingood, 2004; Yamamiya et al., 2006).

Novel to the current study, thin-ideal internalization was also related to the broader appearance related beliefs of the Black women in our sample. Contrary to the extant research indicating that thinness is not an important marker of physical attractiveness for Black women (Celio et al, 2002; Shoneye et al., 2011; Malloy & Herzberger, 1998), we found that 40 percent of our sample emphasized the importance of thinness—agreeing that they would be happier if they were thinner (nearly 20 percent reported relatively strong agreement). We also found that thin-ideal internalization was significantly related to more emotional distancing during sex, more sexual self-consciousness, and lower levels of sexual satisfaction. Thin-ideal internalization was significantly correlated with increased guilt and shame and lower sexual assertiveness, but these associations were null in our regression analyses likely due to other variables absorbing some of the variance between thin-ideal internalization and these outcomes. Our findings corroborate those from previous studies conducted with White female samples that link body image concerns with lower sexual assertiveness, pleasure, and agency (Impett et al., 2006; Shulman & Home, 2003; Yamamiya et al., 2006).

A notable exception to the findings described above was an unexpected neutral association between appearance investment and sexual well-being. In our study, appearance-managing investment was unrelated to the sexual affect and experiential sexual agency measures. This finding suggests that unlike buying into restrictive beauty ideals, enjoying and adorning one's physical body by applying make-up and spending time styling hair is not associated with sexuality. In other words, it is not harmful to be invested in maintaining a feminine appearance; instead, it is harmful to be invested in achieving a restrictive and largely unattainable appearance. This interpretation mirrors

previous investigations with White women that link negative sexual outcomes with body dissatisfaction and beauty ideal discrepancies (Davidson & McCabe, 2005; Dove & Wiederman, 2000; Hoyt & Kogan, 2001; Wiederman & Hurst, 1998).

The take home message is not to suggest that women abandon their individual efforts to achieve and maintain a socially sanctioned feminine appearance. Rather, our findings highlight the costs associated with women's attempts to invest their self-worth in the achievement of idealized standards of beauty. Specifically, highlighting the ways that altering or enhancing one's appearance in order to more closely approximate White hegemonic beauty ideals that inextricably bind Blackness with inferiority can diminish psychological and sexual well-being. Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) defined the *Lily Complex* as a process of altering, disguising, and covering up one's physical self in order to assimilate and be accepted as attractive according to Eurocentric standards. They argued that the constant pressure to meet a beauty standard that is inauthentic and often unattainable may lead Black women to loathe their natural physical appearance and believe they are undeserving of pleasure, safety, health, success, and esteem.

The Lily Complex is a useful framework for considering the dangers in the pursuit of an investment in "pretty." Although Black women are generally more satisfied with their physical appearance than White women, and heavier Black women are more satisfied with weight/body sizes than heavy White women, we must not overlook the fact that Black women, like their White counterparts, experience dissatisfaction in response to social pressures to fulfill hegemonically defined beauty standards. Future research should consider the ways that investment in achieving and maintaining Afrocentric feminine beauty standards (i.e., curvaceous body, natural hair styles, moisturized skin, adorning



culturally-oriented clothing and accessories) is related to positive self-concept, satisfaction with physical appearance, and sexual well-being. Black women engage in a process of disrupting and challenging dominant notions of gender, power, and Black inferiority when they embrace an Afrocentric aesthetic, and future studies should explore implications of these acts of resistance in the sexual domain.

In interpreting the results of this study, it is important to take into consideration its limitations. The first limitation is that correlational models were used to test the associations between beauty ideal acceptance and sexual well-being, restricting our ability to make causal inferences. Our findings do not permit us to firmly state that endorsing Eurocentric standards of physical attractiveness *causes* more intrusive appearance-related cognitions during sex that jeopardize sexual well-being.

In addition, this study utilized a sample of Black female undergraduate and graduate students from a large, predominately White university in the Midwest. Factors such as geographical location, racial homogeneity of neighborhood and school context, and racial composition of friends and intimate partners are also potential factors that may impact sexuality attitudes and should be further examined in research. Research suggests that racial and cultural context may play a significant role in Black women's acceptance of Eurocentric appearance related ideals. For example, Hesse-Biber and colleagues (2010) conducted a qualitative analysis of Black women's body image attitudes and found that Black female college students who attend a predominately White university were more likely to endorse Eurocentric appearance related ideals, such as straight hair and thin-body ideals. Other studies indicate that the extent to which Black women identify with hegemonic, White culture can increase Black women's vulnerability to Eurocentric

standards of beauty and physical appearance (Abrams et al., 1993; Roberts et al., 2006; Sabik, Cole, Ward, 2010; Smolack & Stiegel-Moore, 2001). Future research should further investigate the contributing role of diverse socio-cultural contexts on Black women's beauty and body ideals and their associations with experiences of sexual well-being.

Nonetheless, the present study has several strengths. It is one of the few studies that measure Black women's investment in achieving Eurocentric beauty and thinness standards from a culturally specific standpoint (e.g., considering skin tone, hair straightening and/or lengthening, artificial nails), and also measures how endorsement relates to sexual attitudes, behaviors, *and* affective cognitions. The importance of studying Black college women's gender and sexual socialization in the context of their own culture has not always been acknowledged in the extant literature, and this study is part of an emerging body of research that uses culturally specific measures of gender and sexual ideologies to examine sexual well-being (e.g., Overstreet & Quinn, 2012; Poran, 2006; Stephens & Phillips, 2003).

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the current work suggests that Black women are not protected from the sociocultural pressures of hegemonic femininity and its emphasis on Whiteness and thinness. Although Black women navigate complex and multifaceted appearance expectations that enable them to maintain a positive sense of their physical bodies, in the context of sex, they also engage in a process of body surveillance that hinders their capacity to focus on achieving sexual pleasure. The present study sheds light on how acceptance of beauty standards staked in domains encouraging Whiteness and thinness

could increase intrusive appearance-related cognitions and body surveillance—critical factors that often contribute to a host of negative sexual well-being outcomes such as increased sexual guilt and shame, emotional distancing during sex, body image self-consciousness, and diminished sexual satisfaction and assertiveness. Although Black women have been socialized to highly value their larger bodies, our findings show that they are also highly invested in hegemonic notions of feminine appearance and thinness likely due to the fact that there are grave socio-political, economic, and interpersonal consequences for falling outside of the boundaries of “pretty” as it is currently defined in the mainstream social imagination.

In Beyonce’s song “Pretty Hurts,” she states that pretty (i.e., beauty) is harmful because “we shine the light on whatever’s worst” and that “perfection is a disease of a nation.” These lyrics, albeit unintentionally and indirectly, underscore the ways in which contemporary beauty and feminine appearance standards reflect the longstanding European colonial practice of creating inter-ethnic hierarchies that utilize White superiority as a rubric for allocating power, describing desire, and placing a premium on White bodies to the detriment of people of color. “Pretty” supremely values and privileges phenotypical features and attributes commonly found among White women, and devalues physical features common to women of African descent. In doing so, it creates a binary conceptualization of worth in which Blackness comprises “the worst” (e.g., good hair vs. bad hair) and consistently emphasizes the ways in which Black women fall outside of the parameters of sanctioned (good or best) femininity. Focusing on Black differences in ways that justify and reinscribe notions of their inferiority and disempowerment is definitively a disease, or pathology, of our nation. As bell hooks

(1994) so beautifully articulates, *imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy* describes the interlocking political, institutional, and social systems that are the foundation of our national politic—whereby patriarchy is the hegemonic sociopolitical system that ensures that White men are endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak (i.e., women and people of color). As long as the beauty politics rely on social constructions that serve to ensure Black women’s place at the bottom of the sociopolitical hierarchy, and commercial messages perpetuate these derivations via the mainstream media, conformity to “pretty” will continue to be a psychological ill that both produces and perpetuates Black women’s social, psychological, and sexual disempowerment.

Table 9  
*Correlations among Eurocentric Beauty Ideal Acceptance and Sexual Well-Being Variables*

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. European Beauty Ideal	--								
2. Thinness	.13 <sup>b</sup>	--							
3. Appearance Investment	.18 <sup>c</sup>	-.02	--						
4. Sexual Guilt/Shame	.38 <sup>c</sup>	.12 <sup>a</sup>	-.02	--					
5. Sexual Distancing	.05	.01	-.07	.58 <sup>c</sup>	--				
6. Sexual Self-Conscious.	.15 <sup>b</sup>	.02	-.09	.42 <sup>c</sup>	-.40 <sup>c</sup>	--			
7. Sexual Assertiveness	-.21 <sup>c</sup>	-.06	-.02	-.46 <sup>c</sup>	-.40 <sup>c</sup>	-.57 <sup>c</sup>	--		
8. Entitlement to Pleasure	-.17 <sup>b</sup>	-.22 <sup>c</sup>	.13 <sup>a</sup>	-.43 <sup>c</sup>	-.27 <sup>c</sup>	-.30 <sup>c</sup>	.57 <sup>c</sup>	--	
9. Sexual Satisfaction	.08	-.04	.05	-.22 <sup>c</sup>	-.30 <sup>c</sup>	-.43 <sup>c</sup>	-.48 <sup>c</sup>	.35	--
Means	2.41	3.60	2.87	3.14	2.34	2.82	3.56	3.78	3.46
Standard Deviations	.74	1.37	1.03	2.40	1.82	1.21	.77	.98	1.02

Note. <sup>a</sup>p<.05; <sup>b</sup>p<.01; <sup>c</sup>p<.001. N= 283-378.

Table 10  
*Correlations among Sexual Well-Being and Demographic Covariates*

Demographic Variables	Sexual Well-Being					
	Guilt/Shame	Distancing	Self-Conscious.	Assertive.	Entitled to Pleasure	Satisfaction
Age	-.09	-.04	-.13 <sup>a</sup>	.06	.04	-.06
Sexual Experience (Virginity Status)	-.34 <sup>c</sup>	-.18 <sup>c</sup>	-.34 <sup>c</sup>	.38 <sup>c</sup>	.34 <sup>c</sup>	.14 <sup>b</sup>
Sexual Orientation	-.13 <sup>a</sup>	.00	-.04	.07	.04	-.11
SES	.12 <sup>b</sup>	.01	.02	-.06	-.22 <sup>c</sup>	-.04
Relationship Status	-.23 <sup>c</sup>	-.17 <sup>b</sup>	-.28 <sup>c</sup>	.36 <sup>c</sup>	.26 <sup>c</sup>	.38 <sup>c</sup>
Racial Centrality	-.02	-.07	-.09	-.02	.18 <sup>b</sup>	.05
Religiosity	.38 <sup>c</sup>	.05	.16 <sup>b</sup>	-.21 <sup>c</sup>	-.17 <sup>b</sup>	.08

Note. <sup>a</sup>p<.05; <sup>b</sup>p<.01; <sup>c</sup>p<.001. N= 283-378.

Table 11  
*Multiple Regression Analyses of Eurocentric Beauty Ideal Acceptance on Sexual Affect*

	Sexual Guilt/Shame (N=316)		Sexual Distancing (N=292)		Sexual Self- Consciousness (N=329)	
	Step 1 $\beta$	Step 2 $\beta$	Step 1 $\beta$	Step 2 $\beta$	Step 1 $\beta$	Step 2 $\beta$
Sexual Experience (Virginity Status)	-.23 <sup>c</sup>	-.23 <sup>c</sup>	-.16 <sup>b</sup>	-.14 <sup>b</sup>	-.23 <sup>c</sup>	-.23 <sup>c</sup>
Relationship Status	-.13 <sup>b</sup>	-.13 <sup>b</sup>	0.12 <sup>a</sup>	-.12 <sup>b</sup>	-.24 <sup>c</sup>	-.20 <sup>c</sup>
Religiosity	.34 <sup>c</sup>	.34 <sup>c</sup>	.06	.05	.08	.07
Mother's Education	.02	.00	-.02	-.05	-.05	-.10 <sup>a</sup>
Racial Centrality	-.06	.00	-.04	.01	-.05	.01
<b>Euro. Beauty Acceptance</b>		<b>.23<sup>c</sup></b>		<b>.22<sup>c</sup></b>		<b>.19<sup>c</sup></b>
<b>Thin Ideal</b>		.02		.10		<b>.31<sup>c</sup></b>
Appearance Investment		.05		-.05		.02
<i>Final Adjust. R<sup>2</sup></i>	.23	.29	.04	.10	.16	.32
<i>Adjust. R<sup>2</sup> <math>\Delta</math></i>	--	+0.06	--	+0.06	--	+0.15
<i>Equation F</i>	20.27 <sup>c</sup>	16.86 <sup>c</sup>	3.46 <sup>b</sup>	4.88 <sup>c</sup>	13.64 <sup>c</sup>	20.62 <sup>c</sup>

Note. <sup>a</sup>p $\leq$ .05; <sup>b</sup>p $\leq$ .01; <sup>c</sup>p $\leq$ .001. †p=.056. Standardized Betas are reported.

Table 12  
*Multiple Regression Analyses of Eurocentric Beauty Ideal Acceptance on Experiential Sexual Agency*

	Sexual Assertiveness (N=317)		Entitlement to Sexual Pleasure (N=290)		Sexual Satisfaction (N=265)	
	Step 1 $\beta$	Step 1 $\beta$	Step 1 $\beta$	Step 1 $\beta$	Step 1 $\beta$	Step 2 $\beta$
Sexual Experience (Virginity Status)	.27 <sup>c</sup>	.27 <sup>c</sup>	.24 <sup>c</sup>	.23 <sup>c</sup>	.05	.03
Relationship Status	.25 <sup>c</sup>	.25 <sup>c</sup>	.14 <sup>a</sup>	.15 <sup>b</sup>	.36 <sup>c</sup>	.35 <sup>c</sup>
Religiosity	-.14 <sup>b</sup>	-.13 <sup>b</sup>	-.14 <sup>b</sup>	-.13 <sup>b</sup>	.06	.08
Mother's Education	.02	.04	-.14 <sup>b</sup>	-.13 <sup>b</sup>	-.02	.00
Racial Centrality	-.02	-.07	.16 <sup>b</sup>	.14 <sup>b</sup>	.01	-.04
<b>Euro. Beauty Acceptance</b>		<b>-.19<sup>c</sup></b>		<b>-.13<sup>a</sup></b>		-.11
<b>Thin Ideal</b>		-.01		.02		<b>-.15<sup>b</sup></b>
Appearance Investment		-.05		.01		.00
<i>Final Adjust. R<sup>2</sup></i>	.21	.25	.18	.19	.13	.17
<i>Adjust. R<sup>2</sup> <math>\Delta</math></i>	--	+03	--	--	--	+04
<i>Equation F</i>	18.22 <sup>c</sup>	14.10 <sup>c</sup>	14.03 <sup>c</sup>	9.53 <sup>c</sup>	9.15 <sup>c</sup>	7.72 <sup>c</sup>

Note. <sup>a</sup>p $\leq$ .05; <sup>b</sup>p $\leq$ .01; <sup>c</sup>p $\leq$ .001. Standardized Betas are reported.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **GRAND DISCUSSION**

Broad concerns reflected both at research and policy levels have surrounded the sexual practices, health, and experiences of young Black women in the United States, particularly in relation to the early age of sexual intercourse, low marriage rates, and high rates of teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and sexual/dating violence among this group (Hussen et al., 2012). These concerns give rise to an image of excessive sexuality among this group, situating articulations about Black female sexualities outside the purview of respectability and instead within discourses of hypersexuality and pathological femininity. Although there are more representations of Black women available for consumption in the mass media than ever before, the substance of these images has changed little over the past 25 years (Avery et al., 2016; Rose, 2008; Stephens & Phillips, 2003). Less is known about the contributing role of these historical, theoretical, and popular representations on the way that young Black women experience sexuality in practice. Although sexualized messages of Black women are pervasive in the mainstream media, silences continue to surround the nature and expression of Black female sexuality (Rose, 1990; Weekes, 2002). The silence about Black women's sexuality harkens back to concessions made by Black feminist historians about the importance of cultural dissemblance (Hine, 1989), respectability politics (Higginbotham, 1994), and similar practices of resistance to exploitative and oppressive renderings of Black women's interior lives. However, it has been argued that maintaining these silences



has merely failed to produce the ‘politics of articulation’ necessary to disrupt hegemonic narratives that configure Black women as sexually excessive, pathological, victimized, and simultaneously hypervisible and invisible (Durham et al., 2013; Hammonds, 1994; Morgan, 2015). Instead, Collins (2004), Hammonds (1994), Morgan (2015), and Nash (2014) call for the development of a Black feminist theoretical framework for investigating sexuality that employs a “politic of articulation” – that elucidates and communicates the broad range of sexual feelings, desires, and activities that Black women experience in ways that excise Black sexuality from heteropatriarchal renderings that foreclose possibilities of liberatory sexual subjectivities, sexual well-being, sexual pleasure, and erotic justice.

Thus, this dissertation is my effort to investigate Black college women’s sexual socialization and sexual well-being in ways that utilize these conceptual and theoretical Black feminist frameworks. The current work contributes to the literature in three ways: by expanding what we know about the hegemonic gender messages that dominate the media genres that Black women most avidly consume, by exploring how romantic and sexual relationship beliefs are shaped by the prevalence of gendered messages in these media, and by identifying links between the restrictive feminine appearance ideals and sexual well-being. Further, these contributions compliment the nascent literature about representations of Black femininity and sexuality by using multiple methods. The findings from this dissertation emphasize the nuances, contradictions, and patterns in Black women’s negotiation of Eurocentric, patriarchal notions of gender, heterosexual romantic relationships, and sex.

Study 1 demonstrated that hegemonic gendered messages varied across time and musical genre. Findings indicated that representations of hegemonic masculinity were most likely to reflect hypermasculinity, characterizing Black men as competitive, dangerous, sex-focused, and materialistic. Portrayals of women were more likely to reflect hyperfeminine attributes that emphasized the importance of women's physical attractiveness, sexual objectification, and utility as sex objects. Representations of men as hypermasculine and women as hyperfeminine sex objects increased over time, and were more frequent for Rap/Hip-Hop music than for other genres. Given that beliefs about gender guide our interpersonal interactions in social and sexual relationships (Amaro et al., 2001; Toosi et al., 2012), these findings have strong implications for the sexual socialization of Black women. Specifically, findings from Study 1 have important implications for the potential role of popular Black-oriented music on the gender and sexual development of Black women. If Black women are frequently exposed to this content, especially to themes in contemporary rap and hip-hop music, then they are repeatedly exposed to narrow constructions of femininity and masculinity that have been linked with greater acceptance dating violence (Johnson, Adams, Ashburn, & Reed, 1995), the sexual objectification of women (Conrad, Dixon, & Zhang, 2007; Gordon, 2008; Hust & Lei, 2001; Ward, 2002), and sexual violence against women (Keastle, Halpern, & Brown, 2007). If these messages become the ideal, are other forms of femininity and masculinity possible to conceptualize and achieve? Do potentially disempowering relationship behaviors and expectations become more acceptable and normative?

Study 2 built upon Study 1 in two ways. First, Study 2 verified that popular music related media targeted toward Black audiences were, indeed, linked to the increased acceptance of hegemonic beliefs about gender and romantic relationships among Black women in college. Secondly, Study 2 illuminated the nuances in acceptance of patriarchal beliefs about heterosexual relationships, underscoring the contributing role of cultural specificity and racial salience in Black women's gender ideologies. By focusing on Black women's repeated exposure to narrow representations of gender and sexual norms featured in Black-oriented media, I was able to highlight the complexities and nuances of their acceptance of diverse heteropatriarchal gender and relationship beliefs. More specifically, exposure to reality television and magazines was associated with their acceptance of dominant (White) patriarchal, hegemonic, and misogynistic beliefs about heterosexual relationships, whereas consumption of Black-oriented music (e.g., rap and R&B) was exclusively linked with greater acceptance of patriarchal beliefs about Black women and men in the context of their sociocultural and historical experiences in the United States. The patriarchal underpinnings of socially sanctioned femininity and masculinity are especially salient in the lyrical content of music performed by Black artists, and Study 2 is further documentation that exposure to these media is linked with Black women's acceptance of hegemonic and patriarchal gender roles in intraracial romantic relationships.

Although findings from Study 2 make unique contributions concerning the impact of Black-oriented media exposure on women's gender and sexual beliefs, we acknowledge a critical limitation that future studies will want to address. As with most analyses that employ cultivation theory, these findings are correlational and do not allow

us to draw conclusions about causality. It is likely that exposure to Black-oriented media may influence women's beliefs about patriarchal roles in heterosexual relationships between Black women and men; however, we cannot rule out that relations may be bidirectional, such that women who highly endorse hegemonic gender beliefs are drawn to media content that upholds their beliefs. The reinforcing spirals model (Slater, 2014) provides a framework for conceptualizing this phenomenon, suggesting that individuals often select media content that is consistent with their existing beliefs, values, and identities, and that "selective exposure" to attitude-consistent content is a mechanism used to reinforce their existing beliefs. Moreover, scholars have found that selective exposure may also strengthen people's existing attitudes, in a process known as attitude polarization (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008; Stroud, 2010). Additional longitudinal analyses are needed (e.g., Aubrey, 2006) to help clarify the direction of causality.

In Study 3, associations were established between acceptance of Eurocentric beauty standards and reduced sexual well-being among Black women in college. Specifically, greater acceptance of physical appearance ideals that reflect dominant beauty standards for White women (e.g., long, straight hair, lighter skin tone, and thin bodies) was linked to more experiences of intrusive thoughts and less physical pleasure, assertiveness, and satisfaction during sex. These findings suggest that Black women are not protected from the sociocultural pressures of hegemonic femininity and its emphasis on Whiteness and thinness, despite previous research indicating that Black women are socialized to value their larger bodies (Celio et al., 2002; Shoneye et al., 2011). Although Black women navigate complex and multifaceted appearance expectations that enable them to maintain a generally positive sense of their physical bodies, they also engage in a

process of body surveillance in sexual domains that often contribute to a host of negative sexual well-being outcomes.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

Although my studies made several contributions and provide compelling support for the influential associations between Black-oriented music media exposure and sexual well-being, any conclusions must be tempered by the study limitations. The primary limitation was that Study 2 and Study 3 were correlational, and therefore I am not able to determine causality or speculate on the directionality of our main effects. The correlational nature of these studies means that I cannot rule out that Black women who strongly endorse heteropatriarchal gender and sexual beliefs seek out media that reflects their ideologies (as opposed to media exposure influencing the development of those ideas). However, because experimental evidence exists linking music video exposure to stereotypical gender role beliefs (Johnson et al., 1995; Ward et al., 2005), we do have reason to expect that cultivation theory is a useful framework to aid in the interpretation of our findings.

Related, another limitation is that the current sample included students from only one university, which was an elite institution with a fairly wealthy and predominately White student body. Institutions of higher education differ in their prestige, selectivity, and the social demographics of their student body, and these factors have been found to impact both the sociocultural climate of the educational context and Black women's vulnerability to White appearance standards and concerns about the availability of eligible mates within these spaces (e.g., Ferguson, Quinn, Eng, Sandelowski, 2006; Oney, 2012; Sabik, Cole, & Ward, 2010; Smolack & Striegel-Moore, 2001).

A final limitation is the recognition that the sample used is not fully representative of the national population of Black women, and therefore the data cannot be considered as normative or typical. However, because the data were obtained from Black college women at a highly selective, public four-year institution who were also from relatively well-educated backgrounds, the findings represent meaningful contributions to the literature on Black women's sexualities, which often utilizes lower income samples.

Identifying what young Black women learn about sex and relationships is a fundamental step toward understanding the complex and dynamic process of how heteropatriarchal sexual scripts are used (and resisted) in their sexual lives. Findings from the current studies suggest several directions for future research. Longitudinal studies are necessary to look at the developmental implications surrounding Black women's transition out of emerging adulthood. Young adults are likely experiencing their first serious romantic relationships while attending college (Petersen & Hyde, 2009), and media messages about gender and sexuality may be especially influential in the absence of extensive levels of sexual experience. Laumann and colleagues (2006) conducted a cross-national and longitudinal study of subjective sexual well-being and found women's feelings of happiness, fulfillment, and satisfaction with their sexual experiences and relationships appear to improve with age. Similar to findings reported by Haavio-Mannila and Kontula (1997), women reported greater dissatisfaction with their sexual lives across all ages compared with men; however, older women reported significantly higher levels of subjective sexual well-being than their younger female counterparts. Given that age has been identified as a significant correlate of media consumption patterns among Black Americans, with young adults (18-34) consuming far more average hours per day

compared with other age groups (although older adults aged 65+ consume more traditional television media than other age groups; Nielson, 2011, 2013), future research should consider how the associations between media and sexual appearance attitudes change across the lifespan. These questions should also be explored among Black women at culturally congruent colleges (e.g. Historically Black Colleges and Universities) and among community samples of women who live their lives primarily outside of a college context. In doing so, the complexities of Black women's socialization to hegemonic sexual and feminine appearance beliefs can be examined in the context of environmental, economic, and partnership status changes.

Our inclusion of college students who self-identified as either Black or African American may have obscured significant differences within the group regarding ethnicity and nationality. It is important that we avoid perpetuating the myth of the homogenous Black woman by reducing the experience of Black women in the United States to a mono-ethnic group with a single racialized narrative of gender, femininity, and beauty. Future studies should investigate the contributing role of popular media on the gender and sexual socialization of Black women with roots in the Caribbean and other parts of the diaspora. The meaningful inclusion of transnational Black identities will facilitate the development of a more inclusive and generalizable conceptualization of Black women's sexual socialization.

Finally, future research should also consider the contributions of different types of media on Black women's sexual attitudes and beliefs. For example, study is needed of scripted television programs with strong Black female leads (e.g., *Scandal*, *How to Get Away With Murder*, *Being Mary Jane*), movies that feature a predominately Black cast,

and digital media (e.g., websites, blogs, and podcasts) that target predominately Black audiences.

### **Hegemonic (Emphasized) Femininity as a Health Risk**

Collectively, these three studies demonstrate the utility of using cultivation theory, sexual script theory, and social identity theory to empirically excavate and articulate the contributing role of culturally specific media on the gender socialization processes of Black women. The extant literature on Black women's gender ideologies has chiefly focused on the internalization of historically controlling images and its impact on sexual attitudes and mental health symptomatology. However, each of these studies addresses an important aspect of the gender development process for Black women in college. Building from Toni Cade Bambara's (1970) argument that Black women are socially conditioned to accept restrictive gender roles and sexual disempowerment, this dissertation moves from identifying the messages in the media that reflect socially contrived roles that maintain our hegemonic social structure (hierarchically organized to ensure White heterosexual male supremacy), to assessing the effects of this discourse on women's experiences of sex and relationships.

In order to develop a framework for understanding Black women's sexual socialization, it was necessary to build on previous discussions about hegemonic gender prescriptions that emerge in media produced within hip hop culture, as it is one of the sources believed to be an especially important source of gender socialization for Black Americans due to the amount of time they spend consuming it (Ward, Hansbrough, & Walker, 2005; Ward, Day, & Thomas, 2010) and its specific attention to the political, social, cultural, and economic events and conditions that are unique to this cohort of



Black college women. Although such discussion has generally been reserved for criticizing and contextualizing depictions of Black women as hypersexual, recent Black feminist scholars have argued that there are emancipatory possibilities in women's engagement with hip-hop culture via its depictions of Black female sexuality that centralize the experiences of agency, pleasure, and power. It was critical to investigate Black women's media engagement as a potential source of social conditioning *and* resisting hegemonic gender beliefs that serve as liabilities to sexual well-being. During an episode of MSNBC's Melissa Harris-Perry Show in 2015, Professor Brittney Cooper, feminist scholar and co-founder of the Crunk Feminist Collective, boldly exclaimed that, "there is no justice for Black women without pleasure and power." Echoing this powerful statement, this dissertation sought to treat Black women's erotic justice and sexual well-being as both aspirational goals and fundamental rights.

Despite my implementation of a liberatory possibilities framework, increases in women's Black media engagement were shown to have significant associations with gender ideologies and sexual beliefs that reflect heteropatriarchal sexual scripts that reinscribe gender-based inequalities in relational power and agency. Further, frequent Black media consumption was linked with the belief that male domination over women in relationships was normative, inevitable, and ideal, and that women are antagonistic, deceitful, untrustworthy relational liabilities – perhaps deserving of the violence and victimization they experience in the broader hegemonic social system. Representations of Black women in Black-oriented media include displays of hypersexualized femininity, or an exaggerated adherence to stereotypic feminine gender roles that emphasize appropriate feminine appearance, demeanor, and enactment according to hegemonic, Eurocentric

standards of beauty. Whereas women are taught to believe that achieving these standards of beauty is required to attract and secure a male partner, our findings suggest that endorsing hegemonic femininity ideologies will likely lead to experiences of sexual disempowerment in relationships and reduced sexual well-being.

For young Black women, the struggle to develop sexual agency appears to stem from a collective lack of rejection of the sexual double standards inherent in the heteropatriarchal sexual script. Whereas the heteropatriarchal sexual script for men ties sex to the experiences of power, mastery, and pleasure, sex for women is tied to morality, security, and procreation. Given the narrow conceptualization of sexual roles for women and the unique historical and contextual factors that shape their experiences as underrepresented minorities in the United States, it is unsurprising that the three dissertation studies illustrate that Black college women receive and are affected by restrictive messages about femininity and sex. These findings bolster previous arguments made by feminist scholars like Toni Cade Bambara (1970) and Patricia Hill Collins (2004) about the reproduction of hegemonic notions of femininity and masculinity as a critical liability to the development of healthy sexualities among Black Americans.

### **Conclusion**

This dissertation has demonstrated that gendered messages in popular media targeting Black audiences are relevant for the sexual socialization of Black college-aged women, yet the aspects of women's sexual lives that are affected differ based on the types of media they consume. Frequent consumption of popular Black-oriented magazines, reality television programs, and musical genres like Rap and R&B are associated with greater endorsement of heteropatriarchal sexual ideals, including the belief that Black

women should aspire to achieve restrictive beauty standards and submit to hyper-masculine male partners who assume patriarchal gender roles in intimate relationships. Additionally, this research links heteropatriarchal gender ideal endorsement with adverse consequences to Black women's psychosexual health and functioning. Although we have reason to believe that Black women are more resistant to the internalization of restrictive and stereotypical notions of gender roles and are more accepting of their bodies than women from other racial groups (Malloy & Herzberger, 1998; Overstreet et al., 2010), this research suggests that adherence to socially prescribed gender roles and physical attractiveness standards is linked with low sexual self concept and satisfaction, a predilection for sexual subjugation, and a desire for intimate partners that support Black women's inauthenticity, invisibility, and sexual silence.

This dissertation serves as a preliminary step towards future research on Black women's sexual well-being that will evaluate how the constructs of racial identity, culturally specific sexual gender norms, body image, and media exposure work together to influence sexual attitudes and behavior. Further understanding of how these factors work in diverse samples of Black women and men will facilitate the development of interventions that will best meet the sexual needs and interests of the young Black American population and increase the experiences of sexual agency, esteem, pleasure, and wellness.

**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**

**ITEMS ASSESSING DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES**

What **best** describes your ethnic background/identification?

\_\_\_ Afro-Latino (e.g., South or Central American, Dominican, Puerto Rican, etc.)

\_\_\_ West Indian/Caribbean (e.g., Haitian, Trinidadian)

\_\_\_ African

\_\_\_ Black/African American

\_\_\_ Biracial or Multiracial

\_\_\_ Other

\_\_\_\_\_

Highest level of education reached (please mark one for each row)

	Mother	Father	You
A few years of high school or less	_____	_____	_____
High school graduate	_____	_____	_____
Some college	_____	_____	_____
Junior college/trade school graduate	_____	_____	_____
College/university graduate	_____	_____	_____
Some graduate school	_____	_____	_____
Master's Degree	_____	_____	_____
Business school graduate (MBA)	_____	_____	_____
Law or medical school graduate	_____	_____	_____
Ph.D.	_____	_____	_____

Religiosity

How religious are you? 1 2 3 4  
5

not at all somewhat

very

How often do you attend religious services?

never once in a blue moon occasionally, maybe semi-regularly, maybe very regularly, usually  
(less than once a yr.) a few times a year once or twice a month once a week

How important is your religious training to your beliefs about sexuality?

1 2 3 4 5  
not at all somewhat very

Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity Racial Centrality Subscale (MIBI; Sellers et al., 1997)

Directions: How do you feel about being Black?

Response Options:

- 1=Strongly disagree
2=Disagree
3=Slightly disagree
4=Neutral
5=Slightly agree
6=Agree
7=Strongly agree
x=Decline to answer

Survey Questions/Items:

- 1. In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image.
2. I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people.
3. I have a strong attachment to other Black people.
4. Being Black is an important reflection of who I am.

Level of Sexual Experience

Have you ever had vaginal intercourse? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

How old were you the first time you had vaginal intercourse (Age in years)? \_\_\_

How many total vaginal intercourse partners have you had? \_\_\_

## Sexual orientation, Sexual attraction, and Sexual behavior

1. In terms of my **sexual orientation**, I identify myself as:

(1) Exclusively heterosexual/straight (2) Predominately heterosexual/straight, (3) Bisexual -- interested in men and women somewhat equally, (4) Predominately homosexual (gay/lesbian), (5) Exclusively homosexual (gay/lesbian), (6) Other, (7) Decline to answer

2. I would describe my **sexual attraction** as:

(1) Exclusively heterosexual (only men), (2) Predominately heterosexual/straight, (3) Bisexual -- attracted to men and women somewhat equally, (4) Predominately homosexual (gay/lesbian), (5) Exclusively homosexual (only women), (6) Other, (7) Decline to answer

3. In terms of my **sexual behavior**, I would describe my sexual experiences as:

(1) Exclusively heterosexual (only male partners); (2) Predominately heterosexual/straight (mostly male partners); (3) Bisexual (had sex with men and women somewhat equally); (4) Predominately homosexual (mostly female partners), (5) Exclusively homosexual (only female partners), (6) Other, (7) Decline to answer

## APPENDIX B

### ITEMS ASSESSING BLACK-ORIENTED MEDIA USE

How many issues (0-12) of the following monthly magazines do you read (i.e., browse through and check out at least a few articles) in a typical year?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ebony
- \_\_\_\_\_ Essence
- \_\_\_\_\_ VIBE
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Source
- \_\_\_\_\_ XXL

Please indicate how much you have watched TV programs using the 4-point scale.

Reality TV Shows	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Love & Hip Hop Atlanta	0	1	2	3
Real Housewives of Atlanta	0	1	2	3
T.I. and Tiny	0	1	2	3
Basketball Wives	0	1	2	3

#### **How often do you watch music videos? (on TV, the internet, iPod)**

*How many hours on a typical weekday do you watch music videos?*

0 .5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12+

*How many hours on a typical Saturday do you watch music videos?*

0 .5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12+

*How many hours on a typical Sunday do you watch music videos?*

0 .5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12+

#### **Overall Music Diet**

We often listen to many types of music. How would you describe your overall music diet? (e.g., 20% pop, 40% rock, 10% R & B, 30% jazz). Numbers should add to 100%.

---

**How often do you listen to music (e.g. radio, ipod, cP3, Pandora, etc)?**

*How many hours in a typical weekday do you listen to music?*

0 .5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12+

*How many hours in a typical Saturday do you listen to music?*

0 .5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12+

*How many hours in a typical Sunday do you listen to music?*

0 .5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12+



## APPENDIX C

### ITEMS ASSESSING HETEROPATRIARCHAL ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP BELIEF ACCEPTANCE

Heterosexual Script  
(Seabrook et al., 2016)

**Directions:** What do you think about dating and heterosexual relationships? There are lots of opinions about what dating is like and how relationships work between women and men. For each statement below, indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements. How much do you agree that:

#### Response Options:

- 1=Strongly disagree
- 2=Disagree
- 3=Disagree a little
- 4=Agree a little
- 5=Agree
- 6=Strongly agree
- x=Decline to answer

#### Survey Questions/Items:

1. Women with a lot of “experience” should expect a bad reputation.
2. Men are mostly interested in women as potential sexual partners and not as “just friends.”
3. Women should be more concerned about their appearance than men.
4. No matter what she says, a woman isn’t really happy unless she’s in a relationship.
5. A woman should be willing to make personal sacrifices in order to satisfy her partner.
6. Guys like to play the field and shouldn’t be expected to stay with one partner for too long.
7. The best way for a woman to attract a boyfriend is to use her body and looks.
8. It is better for a woman to use her “feminine charm” (e.g., flirting, body language) to indicate her interest than to express it directly.
9. It is difficult for men to resist sexual urges and remain monogamous.
10. Being with an attractive woman gives a guy prestige.
11. In dating, the goal for men is to score with as many women as they can.
12. Guys are always ready for sex.
13. It is natural for a guy to want to admire or check out other women, even if he is dating someone.
14. Women should do whatever they need to (e.g., use make-up, buy sexy clothes, work out) to look good enough to attract a date/partner.
15. Men are more interested in sex and women are more interested in relationships.
16. Men should be the ones to ask women out and to initiate physical contact.

17. The way to win a woman's heart is to spend money on her (e.g., flowers, gifts, nice dinner).
18. A woman wants a man because she wants someone to protect her.
19. Women like to admire men's bodies & are attracted most to men who are muscular and handsome.
20. There is nothing wrong with a man's being primarily interested in a woman's body.
21. Women are attracted most to a man with a lot of money.
22. Sometimes women have to do things they don't want to do to keep their man happy.
23. It is up to women to keep things from "moving too fast" sexually.
24. A man's sexual needs take priority over the woman's needs.

Adversarial Sexual Beliefs  
(Burt, 1980)

**Directions:** What do you think about dating and heterosexual relationships, in general?

**Response Options:**

- 1=Strongly disagree
- 2=Disagree
- 3=Disagree a little
- 4=Agree a little
- 5=Agree
- 6=Strongly agree
- x=Decline to answer

**Survey Questions/Items:**

1. A woman will only respect a man who will lay down the law to her.
2. Many women are so demanding sexually that a man just can't satisfy them.
3. A man's got to show the woman who's boss right from the start or he'll end up dominated.
4. Women are usually sweet until they've caught a man, but then they let their true self show.
5. A lot of men talk big, but when it comes down to it, they can't perform well sexually.
6. In a dating relationship a woman is largely out to take advantage of a man.
7. Men are out for only one thing.
8. Most women are sly and manipulating when they are out to attract a man.
9. A lot of women seem to get pleasure in putting men down.

Heteropatriarchal Beliefs about Black Relationships Scale  
(created for this study)

**Directions:** Here are some things some people think about Black relationships. What do you think?

**Response Options:**

- 1=Strongly disagree
- 2=Disagree
- 3=Disagree a little
- 4=Agree a little
- 5=Agree
- 6=Strongly agree
- x=Decline to answer

**Survey Questions/Items:**

1. Too many Black men date and marry outside the race.
2. Black women have too much control and power in their families.
3. Many Black men, without realizing it, have helped to keep the Black woman down because of their low regard for her.
4. All Black men have a little “dog” in them.
5. Black men don’t respect Black women.
6. It’s a Black woman’s job to make her man feel like a king.
7. Even if a woman makes a lot of money at work, she still needs to let her man be the “man of the house.”
8. If a woman doesn’t let a man know how to treat her, it’s her own fault if she gets played.
9. Many Black men are reluctant to date Black women because men think Black women have too much attitude.
10. Because there aren’t enough good Black men to go around, sometimes Black women have to expect to share their men.
11. Black men are threatened by Black women who are too successful or too smart.
12. it’s a Black man’s job to make his woman feel like a queen.

## APPENDIX D

### ITEMS ASSESSING EUROCENTRIC BEAUTY IDEALS

Image Acceptance Measure  
(IAM; Plybon, Pegg, & Reed, 2003)

**Directions:** Next, we're going to ask you some questions about women and beauty. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below.

#### **Response Options:**

- 1=Strongly disagree
- 2=Disagree
- 3=Neither agree nor disagree
- 4=Agree
- 5=Strongly agree
- x=Decline to answer

#### **Survey Questions/Items:**

1. It is important to have "good" hair.
2. If I could change my natural hair texture, I would.
3. Getting the latest hairstyle is more important than letting my hair grow naturally.
4. Nail extensions look better than natural nails.
5. Being thin (small) gives you a better appearance.
6. I think guys prefer girls who have lighter skin.
7. I would change the way my skin looks if I could.
8. I think guys prefer girls with straight hair.
9. Straightened hair looks better than natural hair.
10. Having long hair gives you a better appearance.
11. I think guys prefer girls that are small (thin).
12. If I could change how my face features are, I would.

Conformity to Femininity Norms Inventory Subscales  
(CFNI; Mahalik et al., 2005; Parent & Moradi, 2010)

**Directions:** Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below.

**Response Options:**

- 1=Strongly disagree
- 2=Disagree
- 3=Disagree a little
- 4=Agree a little
- 5=Agree
- 6=Strongly agree
- x=Decline to answer

**Thinness Survey Questions/Items:**

1. I would be happier if I was thinner.
2. I would like to lose a few pounds.
3. I am always trying to lose weight.
4. I would be perfectly happy with myself even if I gained weight. (reverse coded)
5. I am terrified of gaining weight.

**Appearance Investment Survey Questions/Items:**

1. I spend more than 30 minutes a day doing my hair and make-up.
2. I feel attractive without makeup. (reverse coded)
3. I regularly wear makeup.
4. I get ready in the morning without looking in the mirror very much. (reverse coded)

## APPENDIX E

### ITEMS ASSESSING SUBJECTIVE SEXUAL WELL-BEING

Women's Sexual Working Models Scale  
(WSWMS; Birnbaum & Reis, 2010)

**Directions:** Now, we're going to ask you some questions about your personal experiences with sex. How characteristic is each of the following statements of your perspective toward sexuality? To select your answer, please click and slide the bar to the appropriate number (choose one number 1-9).

#### Response Options:

1=Very uncharacteristic of me

9=Very characteristic of me

#### Survey Questions/Items:

1. Sexual activity makes me feel guilty.
2. Sexual activity makes me feel ashamed.
3. To me, sexual activity feels like something forbidden.
4. Sexual activity makes me feel sinful.
5. I often feel critical of myself during or after sex for doing something wrong.
6. Sexual activity feels like something impure.
7. During sexual activity, intruding thoughts often distract me.
8. During sexual activity, my thoughts often wander to unrelated things.
9. During sexual activity, I sometimes feel apathetic.
10. While having sex, I sometimes feel like I am not involved but I am watching myself from the outside.

Body Image Self-Consciousness during Intimacy Scale  
(Wiederman, 2000)

**Directions:** Please use the following scale to indicate how often you agree with each statement or how often you think it would be true for you. The term *partner* refers to someone with whom you are romantically or sexually intimate. You do not currently need to be in a relationship to answer these items.

**Response Options:**

1=Never  
2=Rarely  
3=Sometimes  
4=Often  
5=Usually  
6=Always  
x=Decline to answer

**Survey Questions/Items:**

1. I would feel very nervous if a partner were to explore my body before or after sex.
2. The idea of having sex without any covers over my body causes me anxiety.
3. While having sex, I am (would be) concerned that my hips and thighs would flatten out and appear larger than they actually are.
4. During sexual activity, I am (would be) concerned about how my body looks to my partner.
5. The worst part of having sex is being nude in front of another person.
6. If a partner were to put a hand on my buttocks, I would think, "My partner can feel my fat."
7. During sexual activity it is (would be) difficult not to think about how unattractive my body is.
8. During sex, I (would) prefer to be on the bottom so that my stomach appears flat.
9. I (would) feel very uncomfortable walking around the bedroom, in front of my partner, completely nude.
10. The first time I have sex with a new partner, I (would) worry that my partner will get turned off by seeing my body without clothes.
11. If a partner were to put an arm around my waist, I would think, "My partner can tell how fat I am."
12. I (could) only feel comfortable enough to have sex if it were dark so that my partner could not clearly see my body.
13. I (would) prefer having sex with my partner on top so that my partner is less likely to see my body.
14. I (would) have a difficult time taking a shower or bath with a partner.
15. I (would) feel anxious receiving a full-body massage from a partner.

Hurlbert Index of Sexual Assertiveness  
(HISA; Hurlbert, 1991)

**Directions:** This index is designed to measure the degree of sexual assertiveness you have in relationships with a typical partner, either casual or long-term. You do not currently need to be in a relationship to answer these items.

**Response Options:**

- 1=Never
- 2=Rarely
- 3=Some of the time
- 4=Most of the time
- 5=All of the time
- 6=Not applicable

**Survey Questions/Items:**

1. I feel uncomfortable talking during sex. (reverse coded)
2. I feel that I am shy when it comes to sex. (reverse coded)
3. I approach my partner for sex when I desire it.
4. I think I am open with my partner about sexual needs.
5. I enjoy sharing my sexual fantasies with my partner.
6. I feel uncomfortable talking to my friends about sex. (reverse coded)
7. I communicate my sexual desires to my partner.
8. It is difficult for me to touch myself during sex. (reverse coded)
9. It is hard for me to say no even when I do not want sex. (reverse coded)
10. I am reluctant to describe myself as a sexual person. (reverse coded)
11. I feel uncomfortable telling my partner what feels good. (reverse coded)
12. I speak up for my sexual feelings.
13. I am reluctant to insist that my partner satisfy me. (reverse coded)
14. I find myself having sex when I do not really want it. (reverse coded)
15. When a technique does not feel good, I tell my partner.
16. I feel comfortable giving sexual praise to my partner.
17. It is easy for me to discuss sex with my partner.
18. I feel comfortable initiating sex with my partner.
19. I find myself doing sexual things I do not like. (reverse coded)
20. Pleasing my partner is more important than my pleasure. (reverse coded)
21. I feel comfortable telling my partner how to touch me.
22. I enjoy masturbating myself to orgasm.
23. If something feels good, I insist on doing it again.



24. It is hard for me to be honest about my sexual feelings. (reverse coded)
25. I try to avoid discussing the subject of sex. (reverse coded)

Entitlement to Sexual Pleasure Scale  
(Ward et al., 2013)

**Directions:** Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

**Response Options:**

- 1=Never
- 2=Rarely
- 3=Some of the time
- 4=Most of the time
- 5=All of the time
- 6=Not applicable

**Survey Questions/Items:**

1. Sexual pleasure is important to me.
2. I feel entitled to sexual pleasure.
3. It is important for me to achieve orgasm during my sexual encounters.
4. I attempt to achieve orgasm during my sexual encounters.

Adapted Version of the New Sexual Satisfaction Scale  
(NSSS; Štulhofer, Buško, & Brouillard, 2010)

**Directions:** Thinking about your sex life during the last 6 months, please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects:

**Response Options:**

- 1=Not at all satisfied
- 2=A little satisfied
- 3=Moderately satisfied
- 4=Very satisfied
- 5=Extremely satisfied
- x=Decline to answer

**Survey Questions/Items:**

1. The quality of my orgasms.
2. My “letting go” and surrender to sexual pleasure during sex.
3. The way I sexually react to my partner.
4. My body’s sexual functioning.
5. My mood after sexual activity.
6. The pleasure I provide my partner.
7. The balance between what I give and receive in sex.
8. My partner’s emotional opening up during sex.
9. My partner’s ability to orgasm.
10. My partner’s sexual creativity.
11. The variety of my sexual activities.
12. The frequency of my sexual activity.

## References

- Adams, T. M., & Fuller, D. B. (2006). The words have changed but the ideology remains the same: Misogynistic lyrics in rap music. *Journal of Black Studies, 36*, 938-957. doi:10.1177/0021934704274072
- Adams-Bass, V. N., Bentley-Edwards, K. L., & Stevenson, H. C. (2014). That's not me I see on TV: African American youth interpret media images of Black females. *Women, Gender, and Families of Color, 2*, 79-100. doi:10.1353/wgf.2014.0000
- Adams-Bass, V. N., Stevenson, H. C., & Kotzin, D. S. (2014). Measuring the meaning of Black media stereotypes and their relationship to the racial identity, Black history knowledge, and racial socialization of African American youth. *Journal of Black Studies, 45*, 367-395. doi:10.1177/0021934714530396
- Ahern, A. L., Bennett, K. M., Hetherington, M. M. (2010). A qualitative exploration of young women's attitudes towards the thin ideal. *Journal of Health Psychology, 16*, 70-79. doi:10.1177/1359105310367690
- Appiah, O. (2004). Effects of ethnic identification on Web browsers' attitudes toward and navigational patterns on race-targeted sites. *Communication Research, 31*, 312-337. doi:10.1177/0093650203261515
- Armstrong, E. G. (2001). Gangsta misogyny: A content analysis of the portrayals of violence against women in rap music, 1987-1993. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture, 8*, 96-126. Retrieved from <http://www.albany.edu/scj/jcjpc/vol8is2/armstrong.html>
- Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change. (2005). *Structural racism and youth development: Issues, challenges, and implications*. Retrieved February 1, 2015,

from

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/rcc/rccSR-2-final4.pdf>

- Aubrey, J. S. (2006). Effects of sexually objectifying media on self-objectification and body surveillance in undergraduates: Results of a 2-year panel study. *Journal of Communication, 56*, 366-386. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00024.x
- Bailey, A. A. (2006). A year in the life of the African-American male in advertising: A content analysis, *Journal of Advertising, 31*, 83-104. doi:10.2753/JOA0091-3367350106
- Baker, C. N. (2005). Images of women's sexuality in advertisements: A content analysis of Black- and White-oriented women's and men's magazines. *Sex Roles, 52*, 13-27. doi:10.1007/s11199-005-1190-y
- Baker-Sperry, L., & Grauerholz, L. (2003). The pervasiveness and persistence of the feminine beauty ideal in children's fairy tales. *Gender and Society, 15*, 711-726. doi: 10.1177/0891243203255605
- Balaji, M. (2010). Vixen resistin': redefining Black womanhood in hip-hop music videos. *Journal of Black Studies, 41*, 5-20. doi:10.1177/0021934708325377
- Bambara, T. C. (1970). *The black woman: An anthology*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Bandura, A. (1994). The social cognitive theory of mass communication. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Beatty, A. C. (2005). *What is this gangstressism in popular culture? Reading rap music*

- as a legitimate hustle and analyzing the role of agency in intrafemale aggression.*  
Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 2005.
- Beauboeuf-Lafontant, T. (2007). "You have to show strength": An exploration of gender, race, and depression. *Gender and Society, 21*, 28-51.  
doi:10.1177/0891243206294108
- Bem, S. L. (1987). Gender schema theory and the romantic tradition. In P. Shaver & C. Hendrick (Eds.), *Review of personality and social psychology* (Vol. 7, pp. 251-271). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Bem, S. L., & Lewis, S. A. (1975). Sex role adaptability: One consequence of psychological androgyny. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 31*, 634-643. doi:10.1037/h0077098
- Bennett, W. L., & Iyengar, S. (2008). A new era of minimal effects? The changing foundations of political communication. *Journal of Communication, 58*, 707-731.  
doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.00410.x
- Bickham, D. S., Vandewater, E. A., Huston, A. C., Lee, J. H., Caplovitz, A. G., & Wright, J. C. (2003). Predictors of children's electronic media use: An examination of three ethnic groups. *Media Psychology, 5*, 107-137.  
doi:10.1207/S1532785XMEP0502\_1
- Bissell, K. L. (2002). I want to be thin, like you: Gender and race as predictors of cultural expectations for thinness and attractiveness in women. *Visual Communication Quarterly, 9*, 4-11. doi: 10.1080/15551390209363479

- Bland, B. N., & Montemurro, B. (2015). The effects of watching ‘Real Housewives of Atlanta’ on attitudes about sexuality and relationships. *Journal of Black Sexuality and Relationships*, 2, 35-58. doi:10.1353/bsr.2015.0016
- Bordo, S. (1993). *Unbearable weight*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Borzekowski, D. L., Robinson, T. N., & Killen, J. D. (2000). Does the camera add 10 pounds? Media use, perceived importance of appearance, and weight concerns among teenage girls. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 26, 36-41. doi:10.1016/S1054-139X(99)00044-0
- Bowleg, L., Lucas, K. J., & Tschann, J. M. (2004). The ball was always in his court: An exploratory analysis of relationship scripts, sexual scripts, and condom use among African American women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 28, 70-82. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2004.00124.x
- Bretthauer, B., Zimmerman, T. S., & Banning, J. H. (2006). A feminist analysis of popular music. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, 18, 29-51. doi:10.1300/J086v18n04\_02
- Briere, J., Malamuth, N., & Check, J. V. P. (1985). Sexuality and rape supportive beliefs. *International Journal of Women’s Studies*, 8, 398-403. Retrieved from <http://www.johnbriere.com/BM%26C.pdf>
- Brookshire, T., Davis, C., Stephens, E., & Bryant, S. (2003). Substance use references in lyrics of the favorite songs of African-American adolescents. *Journal of Young Investigators*, 8. Retrieved from <http://legacy.jyi.org/volumes/volume8/issue1/articles/TMP670woiyq1a.htm>

- Bryant, Y. (2008). Relationships between exposure to rap music videos and attitudes toward relationships among African American youth. *Journal of Black Psychology, 34*, 356-380. doi:10.1177/0095798408314141
- Burt, M. R. (1980). Cultural myths and supports for rape. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38*, 217. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.38.2.217
- Byers, E. S., Demmons, S., & Lawrance, K. (1998). Sexual satisfaction within dating relationships: A test of the interpersonal exchange model of sexual satisfaction. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 15*, 257-267.  
doi:10.1177/0265407598152008
- Calogero, R. M., & Grogan, S. (2009). Potential implications of the objectification of women's bodies for women's sexual satisfaction. *Body Image, 6*, 145-148.  
doi:10.1016/j.bodyim.2009.01.001
- Cash, T. F., Melnyk, S. E., & Hrabosky, J. I. (2004). The assessment of body image investment: An extensive revision of the Appearance Schemas Inventory. *International Journal of Eating Disorders, 35*, 305-316. doi:10.1002/eat.10264
- Cattarin, J. A., Thompson, J. K., Thomas, C., & Williams, R. (2000). Body image, mood, and televised images of attractiveness: The role of social comparison. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 19*, 220-239.
- Celio, A.A., Zabinski, M.F., & Wilfley, D.E. (2002). African American body images. In T.F. Cash & T. Pruzinsky (Eds.), *Body image: A handbook of theory, research, and clinical practice* (pp. 234–242). New York: Guilford Press.

- Charleston, K. (2014). Act like a lady, think like a patriarch: Black masculine identity formation within the context of romantic relationships. *Journal of Black Studies*, 45, 660-678. doi:10.1177/0021934714549461
- Chavous, T. M. (2000). The relationships among racial identity, perceived ethnic fit, and organizational involvement for African American students at a predominately White university. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 26, 79-100. doi:10.1177/0095798400026001005
- Chen, E. Y., Brown, M. (2005). Obesity stigma in sexual relationships. *Obesity Research*, 13, 1393-1397. doi: 10.1038/oby.2005.168
- Coetzee, V., Greeff, J. M., Stephen, I. D., & Perrett, D. I. (2014). Cross-cultural agreement in facial attractiveness preferences: The role of ethnicity and gender. *PLoS One*, 9(7) doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0099629
- Cole, E. R., Zucker, A. N. (2007). Black and white women's perspectives on femininity. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 13, 1-9. doi:10.1037/1099-9809.13.1.1
- Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Collins, P. H. (2004). *Black sexual politics: African Americans, gender, and the new racism*. New York: Routledge.
- Connell, R. W. (1987). *Gender and power: Society, the person and sexual politics*. Cambridge: Polity.



- Connell, R. W. (1990). An iron man: The body and some contradictions of hegemonic masculinity. In M. A. Messner & D. F. Sabo (Eds.), *Sport, men and the gender order: Critical feminist perspectives*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Conner, M., Johnson, C., & Grogan, S. (2004). Gender, sexuality, and beating behaviors. *Journal of Health Psychology, 9*, 505-515. doi:10.1177/13591053040444034
- Conrad, K., Dixon, T. L., & Zhang, Y. (2009). Controversial rap themes, gender portrayals, and skin tone distortion: A content analysis of rap music videos. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 53*, 134-156.  
doi:10.1080/08838150802643795
- Cooper, V. W. (1985). Women in popular music: A quantitative analysis of feminine images over time. *Sex Roles, 13*, 499-506. doi:10.1007/BF00287756
- Cunningham, M. R., Roberts, A. R., Barbee, A. P., Druen, P. B., & Wu, C. (1995). "Their ideas of beauty are, on the whole, the same as ours": Consistency and variability in the cross-cultural perception of female physical attractiveness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 68*, 261-279. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.68.2.261
- Cupach, W. R., & Comstock, J. (1990). Satisfaction with sexual communication in marriage. Links to sexual satisfaction and dyadic adjustment. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 7*, 179-186. doi:10.1177/0265407590072002
- Curtin, N., Ward, L. M., Merriwether, A., & Caruthers, A. (2011). Femininity ideology and sexual health in young women: A focus on sexual knowledge, embodiment,

- and agency. *International Journal of Sexual Health*, 23, 48-62.  
doi:10.1080/19317611.2010.524694
- Darling, C. A., Davidson Sr, J. K., & Passarello, L. C. (1992). The mystique of first intercourse among college youth: The role of partners, contraceptive practices, and psychological reactions. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 21, 97-117.  
doi:10.1007/BF01536984
- Davidson, J. K., & Moore, N. B. (1994). Guilt and lack of orgasm during sexual intercourse: Myth versus reality among college women. *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy*, 20, 153-174. doi:10.1080/01614576.1994.11074114
- Davidson, T., & McCabe, M. (2005). Relationships between men's and women's body image and their psychological social, sexual functioning. *Sex Roles*, 52, 463-475.  
doi:10.1007/s11199-005-3712-z
- Davies, S., Katz, J., & Jackson, J. L. (1999). Sexual desire discrepancies: Effects on sexual and relationship satisfaction in heterosexual dating couples. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 28, 553-567. Retrieved from  
<http://link.springer.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/article/10.1023/A:1018721417683#page-1>
- Davis, J. L., & Gandy, O. H. (1999). Racial identity and media orientation: Exploring the nature of constraint. *Journal of Black Studies*, 29, 367-397. Retrieved from  
<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/stable/2668064>
- DeWall, C., Pond J., Campbell, W., & Twenge, J. (2011). Tuning in to psychological change: Linguistic markers of psychological traits and emotions over time in popular U.S. song lyrics. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 5,

- 200-207. doi:10.1037/a0023195
- Douglas, K. B. (1999). *Sexuality and the Black church: A womanist perspective*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Dove, N., & Wiederman, M. (2000). Cognitive distraction and women's sexual functioning. *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy, 26*, 67-78. doi:10.1080/009262300278650
- Dukes, R. L., Bisel, T. M., Borega, K. N., Lobato, E. A., & Owens, M. D. (2003). Expressions of love, sex, and hurt in popular songs: A content analysis of all-time greatest hits. *The Social Science Journal, 40*, 643-650. doi:10.1016/S0362-3319(03)00075-2
- Durham, A., Cooper, B. C., & Morris, S. M. (2013). The stage hip-hop feminism built: A new directions essay. *Signs, 38*, 721-737. doi:10.1086/668843
- Dworkin, S. L., & O'Sullivan, L. (2010). Actual versus desired initiation patterns among a sample of college men: Tapping disjunctures within traditional male sexual scripts. *Journal of Sex Research, 42*, 150-158. doi:10.1080/00224490509552268
- Eagly, A. H. (1983). Gender and social influence: A social psychological analysis. *American Psychologist, 38*, 971-981. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.38.9.971
- Eagly, A. H., & Mladinic, A. (1989). Gender stereotypes and attitudes toward women and men. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 15*, 543-558. doi:10.1177/0146167289154008
- Emerson, R. A., (2002). Where my girls at? Negotiating Black womanhood in music videos. *Gender and Society, 16*, 115-135. doi:10.1177/0891243202016001007

- Evans, P. C., & McConnell, A. R. (2003). Do racial minorities respond in the same way to mainstream beauty standards? Social comparison processes in Asian, Black, and White women. *Self and Identity, 2*, 153-167.  
doi:10.1080/15298860390129908
- Fallon, A. E., & Rozin, P. (1985). Sex differences in perceptions of desirable body shape. *Journal of abnormal psychology, 94*, 102-105. doi:10.1037/0021-843X.94.1.102
- Ferguson, Y. O., Quinn, S. C., Eng, E., & Sandelowski, M. (2006). The gender ratio imbalance and its relationship to risk of HIV/AIDS among African American women at historically Black colleges and universities. *AIDS Care, 18*, 323–331.  
doi: 10.1080/09540120500162122
- Franklin, C. W. (1985). The Black male urban barbershop as a sex-role socialization setting. *Sex Roles, 12*, 965-979. doi:10.1007/BF00288098
- Fredrickson, B. L., & Roberts, T. A. (1997). Objectification theory. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 21*, 173-206. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1997.tb00108.x
- Freudiger, P., & Almqist, E. M. (1978). Male and female roles in the lyrics of three genres of contemporary music. *Sex Roles, 4*, 51-65. doi:10.1007/BF00288376
- Frisby, C. M. (2010). Sticks ‘n’ stones may break my bones, but words they hurt like hell: Derogatory words in popular songs. *Media Report to Women, Summer 2010*, 12-18.
- Gabbidon, S. L. (2003). Racial profiling by store clerks and security personnel in retail establishments: An exploration of “shopping while Black.” *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 19*, 345-364. doi:10.1177/1043986203254531

- Gagnon, J. H., & Simon, W. (1973). *Sexual conduct*: AldineTransaction.
- George, N. (1998). *Hip Hop America*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1994). Growing up with television: The cultivation perspective. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research.*, LEA's communication series (pp. 17–41). Hillsdale, NJ England: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Gervasio, A. H., & Crawford, M. (1989). Social evaluations of assertiveness. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 13, 1-25. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1989.tb00982.x
- Giddings, P. (1992). The last taboo. In T. Morrison (Ed.), *Race-ing justice, en-gendering power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and the construction of social reality*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Ginwright, S. A. (2004). *Black in school: Afrocentric reform, urban youth, and the promise of hip-hop culture*. NY: Teachers College Press.
- Gordon, M. K. (2008). Media contributions to African American girls' focus on beauty and appearance: Exploring the consequences of sexual objectification. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 32, 245-256. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2008.00433.x
- Guskin, E., Moore, P., & Mitchel, A. (2013). African American Media: Evolving in the new era. In Pew Research Centers, *The state of the news media: An annual report on American journalism*. Retrieved from <http://stateofthemedias.org/2013/african-american-2/>
- Haavio-Mannila, E., & Kontula, O. (1997). Correlates of increased sexual satisfaction. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 26, 399-419. doi: 10.1023/A:1024591318836

- Haboush, A., Warren, C. S., & Benuto, L. (2012). Beauty, ethnicity, and age: Does internalization of mainstream media ideals influence attitudes toward older adults? *Sex Roles, 66*, 668-676. doi:10.1007/s11199-011-0102-6
- Halpern, C. T., Udry, R. J., Campbell, B., & Suchinran, C. (1999). Effects of body fat on weight concerns, dating, and sexual activity: A longitudinal analysis of Black and White adolescent girls. *Developmental Psychology, 35*, 721-736. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.35.3.721
- Hammonds, E. M. (1999). Toward a genealogy of Black female sexuality: The problematic of silence. In J. Price & M. Shildrick (Eds.), *Feminist theory and the body: A reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Harper, B., & Tiggemann, M. (2008). The effect of thin ideal media images on women's self-objectification, mood, and body image. *Sex Roles, 58*, 649-657. doi:10.1007/s11199-007-9379-x
- Harrison, K. (2003). Television viewers' ideal body proportions: The case of the curvaceously thin woman. *Sex Roles, 48*, 255-264. Retrieved from <http://link.springer.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/article/10.1023/A:1022825421647#/page-1>
- Helgeson, V. S., & Fritz, H. L. (1999). Unmitigated agency and unmitigated communion: Distinctions from agency and communion. *Journal of Research in Personality, 33*, 131-158. doi:10.1006/jrpe.1999.2241
- Herd, D. (2014). Changes in the prevalence of alcohol in rap music lyrics 1979-2009. *Substance Use and Misuse, 49*, 333-342. doi:10.3109/10826084.2013.840003

- Hesse-Biber, S., Livingstone, S., Ramirez, D., Barko, E., & Johnson, A. (2010). Racial identity and body image among Black female college students attending predominately White colleges. *Sex Roles, 63*, 697-711. doi: 10.1007/s11199-010-9862-7
- Higginbotham, E. B. (1993). *Righteous discontent: The women's movement in the Black Baptist church, 1880-1920*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hill, D. B. (2006). "Feminine" heterosexual men: Subverting heteropatriarchal sexual scripts? *Journal of Men's Studies, 14*, 145-159. doi:10.3149/jms.1402.145
- Hill, M. L. (2009). Scared straight: hip-hop, outing, and the pedagogy of queerness. *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, 31*, 29-54. doi:10.1080/10714410802629235
- Hine, D. C. (1989). Rape and the inner lives of Black women in the middle west: Preliminary thoughts on the culture of dissemblance. *Signs, 14*, 915-920.
- Hoff, T., Greene, L., & Davis, J. (2003). Sexual health knowledge, attitudes, and experiences. In J. Henry (Ed.), *National survey of adolescents and young adults*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation.
- Hogg, M. A., & Abrams, D. (1988). *Social identifications: A social psychology of intergroup relations and group processes*. Taylor & Frances/Routledge.
- hooks, b. (1992). *Black looks: Race and representation*. Boston: South End Press.
- Hoyt, W., & Kogan, L. (2001). Satisfaction with body image and peer relationships for males and females in a college environment. *Sex Roles, 45*, 199-215.
- Hunter, A. G., & Davis, J. E. (1992). Constructing gender: An exploration of Afro-American men's conceptualization of manhood. *Gender & Society, 6*, 464-479.

doi:10.1177/089124392006003007

- Hunter, M. (2011). Shake it, baby, shake it: Consumption and the new gender relation in hip-hop. *Sociological Perspectives*, 54, 15-36. doi: 10.1525/sop.2011.54.1.15
- Hurlbert, D. F. (1991). The role of assertiveness in female sexuality: A comparative study between sexually assertive and sexually nonassertive women. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 17, 183-190. doi:10.1080/00926239108404342
- Hurt, B. (2006). *Hip hop: Beyond beats and rhymes* [Documentary]. United States: God Bless The Child Productions.
- Hussen, S. A., Bowleg, L., Sangaramoorthy, T., & Malebranche, D. J. (2012). Parents, peers and pornography: The influence of formative sexual scripts on adult HIV sexual risk behavior among Black men in the USA. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 14, 863-877. doi:10.1080/13691058.2012.703327
- Impett, E. A., Schooler, D., & Tolman, D. L. (2006). To be seen and not heard: Femininity ideology and adolescent girls' sexual health. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 35, 129-142. doi:10.1007/s10508-005-9016-0
- Jack, D. C., & Dill, D. (1992). The Silencing the Self Scale: Schemas of intimacy associated with depression in women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 16, 97-106. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1992.tb00242.x
- Jackson, M. (1984). Sex research and the construction of sexuality: A tool of male supremacy? *Women's Studies International Forum*, 7, 43-51. doi:10.1016/0277-5395(84)90083-9
- Jackson, S. (1996). Heterosexuality as a problem for feminist theory. In L. Adkins & V. Merchant (Eds.), *Sexualizing the social*. New York: St. Martin's Press.



- Jamison, D. F. (2006). The relationship between African self-consciousness, cultural misorientation, hypermasculinity, and rap music preference. *Journal of African American Studies*, 9, 45-60. doi:10.1007/s12111-006-1018-z
- Jefferson, D. L., & Stake, J. E. (2009). Appearance self-attitudes of African American and European American women: Media comparisons and internalization of beauty ideals. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 33, 396-409. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2009.01517.x
- Jones, C., & Shorter-Gooden, K. (2003). *Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Kennedy, G. D. (2013, November 14). Exclusive: Rihanna to receive 'Icon' honor at American music awards. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/music/posts/la-et-ms-rihanna-to-receive-icon-honor-at-american-music-awards-20131114-story.html>
- Kiefer, A. K., Sanchez, D. T., Kalinka, C. J., & Ybarra, O. (2006). How women's nonconscious association of sex with submission relates to their subjective sexual arousability and ability to reach orgasm. *Sex Roles*, 55, 83-94. doi:10.1007/s11199-006-9060-9
- Kitwana, B. (2002). *The hip hop generation: Young blacks and the crisis in African American culture*. NY: Basic Books.
- Kubrin, C. E. (2005). Gangtas, thugs, hustlas: Identity and the code of the street in rap music. *Social Problems*, 53, 360-378.
- Langlois, J. H., Kalakanis, L., Rubenstein, A. J., Larson, A., Hallam, M., & Smoot, M.

- (2000). Maxims or myths of beauty? A meta-analytic and theoretical review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 26, 390-423.
- Laumann, E. O., Paik, A., Glasser, D. B., Kang, J. H., Wang, T., Levinson, B., & Gungell, C. (2006). A cross-national study of subjective sexual well-being among older women and men: findings from the Global Study of Sexual Attitudes and Behaviors. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 35, 143-159.
- Lawrance, K., & Byers, E. S. (1995). Sexual satisfaction in long-term heterosexual relationships: The interpersonal exchange model of sexual satisfaction. *Personal Relationships*, 2, 267-285. doi:10.1111/j.1475-6811.1995.tb00092.x
- Levant, R. F., & Majors, R. G. (1997). An investigation into variations in the construction of the male gender role among African American and European American women and men. *Journal of Gender, Culture, and Health*, 2, 33-43.
- Levant, R., Richmond, K., Cook, S., House, A. T., & Aupont, M. (2007). The femininity ideology scale: Factor structure, reliability, convergent and discriminant validity, and social contextual variation. *Sex Roles*, 57(5-6), 373-383. doi:10.1007/s11199-007-9258-5
- Levant, R. F., Smalley, K. B., Aupont, M., House, A. T., Richmond, K., & Noronha, D. (2007). Initial validation of the male role norms inventory-revised (MRNI-R). *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 15, 83-100. doi:10.3149/jms.1502.130
- Linder, K. (2004). Images of women in general interest and fashion magazine advertisements from 1955 to 2002. *Sex Roles*, 51, 409-421. doi:10.1023/B:SERS.0000049230.86869.4d

- Luckerson, V. (2013). Internet saved the video star: How music videos found new life after TV. *TIME Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://business.time.com/2013/04/02/internet-saved-the-video-star-how-music-videos-found-new-life-after-mtv/>
- Lykes, M. B., & Stewart, A. J. (1986). Evaluating the feminist challenge to research in personality and social psychology: 1963-1983. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *10*, 393-412. doi: 10.1111/j.1471-6402.1986.tb00764.x
- MacKinnon, C. A. (1994). Rape, genocide, and women's human rights. *Harvard Women's Law Journal*, *5*, 5-16.
- Mahalik, J. R., Locke, B. D., Ludlow, L. H., Diemer, M. A., Scott, R. P., Gottfried, M., & Freitas, G. (2003). Development of the conformity to masculine norms inventory. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, *4*, 3-25. doi:10.1037/1524-9220.4.1.3
- Mahalik, J., Morray, E., Coonerty-Femiano, A., Ludlow, L., Slattery, S., & Smiler, A. (2005). Development of the Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory. *Sex Roles*, *52*, 417-435. doi:10.1007/s11199-005-3709-7
- Matschiner, M., & Murnen, S. K. (1999). Hyperfemininity and influence. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *23*, 631-642. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1999.tb00385.x
- Maybach, K. L., & Gold, S. R. (1994). Hyperfemininity and attraction to macho and non-macho men. *Journal of Sex Research*, *31*, 91-98. doi:10.1080/00224499409551735
- McClelland, S. I. (2010). Intimate justice: A critical analysis of sexual satisfaction. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *4*, 663-680. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00293.x

- McCormick, N. B., Brannigan, G. G., & LaPlante, M. N. (1984). Social desirability in the bedroom: Role of approval motivation in sexual relationships. *Sex Roles, 11*, 303-314. doi:10.1007/BF00287522
- McFarland, P. (2003). Challenging the contradictions of Chicanismo in Chicano rap music and male culture. *Race, Gender, and Class, 10*, 92-107.
- McKinley, N. M., & Hyde, J. S. (1996). The objectified body consciousness scale Development and Validation. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 20*, 181-215. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1996.tb00467.x
- Meston, C. M. (2006). The effects of state and trait self-focused attention on sexual arousal in sexually functional and dysfunctional women. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 44*, 515-532. doi:10.1016/j.brat.2005.03.009
- Milkie, M. A. (1999). Social comparisons, reflected appraisals, and mass media: The impact of pervasive beauty images on Black and White girls' self-concepts. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 62*, 190-210.
- Molloy, B. L., & Herzberger, S. D. (1998). Body image and self-esteem: A comparison of African-American and Caucasian women. *Sex Roles, 38*, 631-643. doi:10.1023/A:1018782527302
- Moradi, B., Dirks, D., & Matteson, A. V. (2005). Roles of sexual objectification experiences and internalization of standards of beauty in eating disorder symptomatology: A test and extension of objectification theory. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 420-428. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.52.3.420
- Morgan, J. (2000). *When chickenheads come home to roost: A hip-hop feminist breaks it down*. New York: Simon & Shuster.

- Morgan, M. (2005). Hip-hop women shredding the veil: Race and class in popular feminist identity. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 104, 425-444. doi:10.1215/00382876-104-3-425
- Morokoff, P. J. (2000). A cultural context for sexual assertiveness in women. In C. B. Travis & J. W. White (Eds.), *Sexuality, society, and feminism* (pp. 299-319). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.
- Morokoff, P. J., Quina, K., Harlow, L. L., Whitmire, L., Grimley, D. M., Gibson, P. R., & Burkholder, G. J. (1997). Sexual Assertiveness Scale (SAS) for women: Development and validation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73, 790. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.73.4.790
- Murnen, S. K., & Byrne, D. (1991). Hyperfemininity: Measurement and initial validation of the construct. *Journal of Sex Research*, 28, 479-489. doi:10.1080/00224499109551620
- Nash, J. C. (2011). 'Home truths' on intersectionality. *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism*, 23, 445-470.
- Neal, M. A. (2002). *Soul babies: Black popular culture and the post-soul aesthetic*. New York: Routledge Press.
- Nielson Company. (2011). State of the media trends in tv viewing – 2011 tv upfronts. Retrieved from <http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en/newswire/uploads/2011/04/State-of-the-Media-2011-TV-Upfronts.pdf>

- Nielson Company. (December, 2013). A look across media: The cross-platform report Q3 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.nielson.com/us/en/reports/2013/a-look-across-media-the-cross-platform-report-q3-2013.html>
- Nielson Company. (September, 2013). Resilient, receptive and relevant: The African-American consumer. Retrieved from <http://www.nielson.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en/reports-downloads/2013%20Reports/Nielson-African-American-Consumer-Report-Sept-2013.pdf>
- Oliver, W. (1984). Black males and the tough guy image: A dysfunctional compensatory adaptation. *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 8, 199-203.
- Oliver, M. B., Ramasubramanian, S., & Kim, J. (2007). *Media and racism*. In D.R. Ewoldsen and J. Monahan (Eds.) *Communication and social cognition: Theories and methods* (273-294). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Oney, C. (2012). *Body, health, and African American women: Associations between body attitudes and well-being* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.
- Overstreet, N. M., Quinn, D. M., & Agocha, V. B. (2010). Beyond thinness: The influence of a curvaceous body ideal on body dissatisfaction in Black and White women. *Sex Roles*, 63, 91-103. doi:10.1007/s11199-010-9792-4
- Oware, M. (2009). A “man’s woman”? Contradictory messages in the songs of female rappers, 1992-2000. *Journal of Black Studies*, 39, 786-802.  
doi:10.1177/0021934707302454

- Patton, T. O. (2006). "Hey girl, am I more than my hair?": African American women and their struggles with beauty, body image, and hair. *NWSA Journal*, 18, 24-51.
- Peoples, W. A. (2008). "Under construction": Identifying foundations of hip-hop feminism and exploring bridges between Black second-wave and hip-hop feminisms. *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*, 8, 19-52.  
doi:10.1353/mer.2008.0012
- Petersen, J. L., & Hyde, J. S. (2010). A meta-analytic review of research on gender differences in sexuality, 1993–2007. *Psychological bulletin*, 136, 21.  
doi:10.1037/a0017504
- Plybon, L. E., Pegg, P. O., & Reed, M. (2003). The image acceptance measure: A validation study. Poster presented at the Biannual Society for Research in Child Development Conference, April, in Tampa, FL.
- Poran, M. (2006). The politics of protection: Body image, social pressures, and the misrepresentation of young black women. *Sex Roles*, 55, 739–755.  
doi:10.1007/s11199-006-9129-5
- Pough, G. D. (2004). *Check it while I wreck it: Black womanhood, hip-hop culture, and the public sphere*. Boston: Northeast University Press.
- Primack, B. A., Gold, M. A., Schwarz, E. B., & Dalton, M. A. (2008). Degrading and non-degrading sex in popular music: A content analysis. *Public Health Reports*, 123, 593-600.
- Puhl, R., & Heuer, C. (2009). The stigma of obesity: A review and update. *Obesity*, , 941-964. Doi: 10.1038/oby.2008.636

- Pujois, Y., Meston, C. M., & Seal, B. N. (2010). The association between sexual satisfaction and body image in women. *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 7, 905–916. doi:10.1111/j.1743-6109.2009.01604.x
- Radio One. (June, 2008). Black America today: The future, the past, the present.
- Regan, P. C. (1996). Sexual outcasts: The perceived impact of body weight on gender and sexuality. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 26, 1803-1815.
- Reid, S. E. (2013). *The reality of televised jezebels and sapphires: Blogs and the negative stereotypes of African American women on reality television* (Unpublished master's thesis). Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA.
- Richardson, D., Bernstein, S., & Hendrick, C. (1980). Deviations from conventional sex-role behavior: Effect of perceivers' sex-role attitudes on attraction. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 1, 351-356. doi:10.1207/s15324834basp0104\_6
- Richardson, D. (1996). Heterosexuality and social theory. In D. Richardson (Ed.), *Theorizing heterosexuality: Telling it straight*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Rickert, V. I., Sanghvi, R., & Wiemann, C. M. (2002). Is lack of sexual assertiveness among adolescent and young adult women a cause for concern? *Perspectives on sexual and reproductive health*, 178-183. doi:10.2307/3097727
- Rideout, V. J., Foehr, U. G., & Roberts, D. F. (2010). Generation M<sup>2</sup>: Media in the lives of 8-to-18 year-olds. *Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation*.
- Ridgeway, C.L., Correll, S.J. (2004). Unpacking the gender system: A theoretical perspective on gender beliefs and social relations. *Gender and Society*, 18, 510-531. doi:10.1177/0891243204265269



- Riggio, R. E., Widaman, K. F., Tucker, J. S., & Salinas, C. (1991). Beauty is more than skin deep: Components of attractiveness. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, *12*, 423-439.
- Risman, B. J. (1993). Methodological implications of feminist scholarship. *American Sociologist*, 3-4, 15-25.
- Romero, R. E. (2000). The icon of the strong Black woman: The paradox of strength. In L. Jackson and B. Greene (Eds.) *Psychotherapy with African American women: Innovations in psychodynamic perspective and practice* (225-238). New York: Guilford Press.
- Rose, T. (1994). *Black noise: Rap music and Black culture in contemporary America*. Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press.
- Rose, T. (2008). *Hip hop wars: What we talk about when we talk about hip hop and why it matters*. New York: Basic Books.
- Rubin, L. R., Nemeroff, C. J., & Russo, N. F. (2004). Exploring feminist women's body consciousness. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *28*, 27-37. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2004.00120.x
- Rudman, L. A., & Glick, P. (2001). Prescriptive gender stereotypes and backlash toward agentic women. *Journal of Social Issues*, *57*, 743-762. doi:10.1111/0022-4537.00239
- Russo, N. F., Denious, J. E., Keita, G. P., & Koss, M. P. (1997). Intimate violence and black women's health. In H. Landrine and E. A. Klonoff (Eds.), *Black Women's Health: A Special Double Issue of Women's Health: Research on Gender, Behavior, and Policy* (pp. 315-348). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Sabik, N. J., Cole, E. R., & Ward, L. (2010). Are all minority women equally buffered from negative body image intra-ethnic moderators of the buffering hypothesis. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 34, 139-151. doi: 10.1111/j.1471-6402.2010.01557.x
- Sadalla, E. K., Kendrick, D. T., & Vershure, B. (1987). Dominance and heterosexual attraction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52, 730-738. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.52.4.730
- Salazar, L.F., R.J. DiClemente, and G.M. Wingood. (2004). Self-concept and adolescents' refusal of unprotected sex: A test of mediating mechanisms among African American girls. *Prevention Science*, 5, 137-49. Retrieved from <http://link.springer.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/article/10.1023/B:PREV.0000037638.20810.01#/page-1>
- Sanchez, D. T., Crocker, J., & Boike, K. R. (2005). Doing gender in the bedroom: Investing in gender norms and the sexual experience. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31, 1445-1455. doi:10.1177/0146167205277333
- Sanchez, D. T., & Kiefer, A. K. (2007). Body concerns in and out of the bedroom: Implications for sexual pleasure and problems. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 36, 808-820. doi:10.1007/s10508-007-9205-0
- Schooler, D., Ward, L. M., Merriwether, A., & Caruthers, A. (2004). Who's that girl: Television's role in the body image development of young white and black women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 28, 38-47. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2004.00121.x
- Sheets, V., & Ajmere, K. (2005). Are romantic partners a source of college students'

- weight concern? *Eating Behaviors*, 6, 1-9.
- Shoneye, C., Johnson, F., Croker, H., Steptoe, A., & Wardle, J. (2011). Body sizes in print media: Are there ethnic differences? A brief report. *Eating and Weight Disorders-Studies on Anorexia, Bulimia and Obesity*, 16, e212-e215.
- Shulman, J. L., & Home, S. G. (2003). The use of self-pleasure: Masturbation and body image among African American and European American women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 27, 262-270. doi:10.1111/1471-6402.00106
- Simon, W., & Gagnon, J. H. (1986). Sexual scripts: Permanence and change. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 15, 97-120. doi:10.1007/BF01542219
- Skinner, O. D., Perkins, K., Wood, D., & Kurtz-Costes, B. (2015). Gender development in African American youth. *Journal of Black Psychology*. Advanced online publication. doi:10.1177/0095798415585217
- Smith, A. (2006). Heteropatriarchy and the three pillars of white supremacy. *Incite*.
- Smith, S. (2013). And still more drama!: A comparison of the portrayals of African-American women and African-American men on BET's College Hill. *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 37, 39-49.
- Smith, S. L. (2005). From Dr. Dre to dismissed: Assessing violence, sex, and substance use on MTV. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 22, 89-98. doi:10.1080/0739318042000333743
- Spence, J. T., & Helmreich, R. L. (1980). Masculine instrumentality and feminine expressiveness: Their relationships with sex role attitudes and behaviors. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 5, 147-163. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1980.tb00951.x

- Sprague, J. (2005). *Feminist methodologies for critical researchers: Bridging differences*, (pp. 81-117). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Squires, C. R., Kohn-Wood, L. P., Chavous, T., & Carter, P. L. (2006). Evaluating agency and responsibility in gendered violence: African American youth talk about violence and hip hop. *Sex Roles, 55*, 725-737. doi:10.1007/s11199-006-9127-7
- Stankiewicz, J. M., & Rosselli, F. (2008). Women as sex objects and victims in print advertisements. *Sex Roles, 58*, 579-589. doi:10.1007/s11199-007-9359-1
- Steer, A., & Tiggemann, M. (2008). The role of self-objectification in women's sexual functioning. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 27*, 205-225.
- Stephens, D. P., & Few, A. L. (2007). The effects of images of African American women in hip hop on early adolescents' attitudes toward physical attractiveness and interpersonal relationships. *Sex Roles, 56*, 251-264. doi:10.1007/s11199-006-9145-5
- Stephens, D. P., & Phillips, L. D. (2003). Freaks, gold diggers, divas, and dykes: The sociohistorical development of adolescent African American women's sexual scripts. *Sexuality and Culture, 7*, 3-49. Retrieved from <http://link.springer.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/article/10.1007/BF03159848>
- Stets, J. E., & Burke, P.J. (2000). Identity theory and social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 63*, 224-237.
- Stewart, J. B. (1979). Relationships between Black males and females in Rhythm and Blues music of the 1960s and 1970s. *The Western Journal of Black Studies, 3*, 186-196.

- Stice, E., Schupak-Neuberg, E., Shaw, H. E., & Stein, R. I. (1994). Relation of media exposure to eating disorder symptomatology: An examination of mediating mechanisms. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 103*, 836-840.
- Strasburger, V. C., Wilson, B. J., & Jordan, A. B. (2009). Children and adolescents: Unique audiences. In C. Dellelo & E. Evans (Eds.), *Children, Adolescents, and the Media* (pp. 1–35). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stroud, N. J. (2010). Polarization and partisan selective exposure. *Journal of Communication, 60*, 556-576. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2010.01497.x
- Stryker, S., & Burke, P. J. (2000). The past, present, and future of an identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 63*, 284-297.
- Štulhofer, A., Buško, V., & Brouillard, P. (2010). Development and bicultural validation of the new sexual satisfaction scale. *Journal of Sex Research, 47*, 257-268. doi:10.1080/00224490903100561
- Sullivan, G. L., & O'Connor, P. J. (1988). Women's role portrayals in magazine advertising: 1958-1983. *Sex Roles, 18*, 181-188. doi:10.1007/BF00287788
- Tangney, J. P. (1995). Shame and guilt in interpersonal relationships. In Tangney, J. P. & Fischer, K. W. (Eds), *Self-conscious emotions: Shame, guilt, embarrassment, and pride* (pp. 114-139). New York: Guilford Press.
- Taylor, R. J., Chatters, L. M., Jayakody, R., & Levin, J. S. (1996). Black and white differences in religious participation: A multisample comparison. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 35*, 403-410. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/stable/1386415>

- Tevlin, H., & Leiblum, S. R. (1983). Sex role stereotypes and female sexual dysfunction. *The stereotyping of women: Its effects on mental health*. New York: Springer.
- Thomas, A. J., Speight, S. L., & Witherspoon, K. M. (2004). Internalized oppression among Black women. In J. L. Chin (Ed.), *The psychology of prejudice and discrimination: Bias based on gender and sexual orientation* (Vol. 3, pp. 113-132). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Thompson, E. H., & Pleck, J. H. (1986). The structure of male role norms. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 29, 531-543. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/docview/1306752267?pq-origsite=gscholar>
- Thompson, J. K., & Stice, E. (2001). Thin-ideal internalization: Mounting evidence for a new risk factor for body-image disturbance and eating pathology. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10, 181-183. doi:10.1111/1467-8721.00144
- Thompson, J., Van den Berg, P., Roehrig, M., Guarda, A., & Heinberg, L. J. (2004). The sociocultural attitudes towards appearance scale-3 (SATAQ-3): Development and validation. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 35, 293–304. doi:10.1002/eat.10257
- Tiggemann, M., & Kuring, J. K. (2004). The role of body objectification in disordered eating and depressed mood. *British Journal Of Clinical Psychology*, 43, 299-311. doi: 10.1348/0144665031752925
- Tolman, D. L. (2009). Dilemmas of desire: Teenage girls talk about sexuality. Harvard University Press.

- Tolman, D. L., Kim, J. L., Schooler, D., & Sorsoli, C. L. (2007). Rethinking the associations between television viewing and adolescent sexuality development: bringing gender into focus. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 40*, 84-89.  
doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2006.08.002
- Tolman, D.L., & Porche, M.V. (2000). The adolescent femininity ideology scale: Development and validation of a new measure for girls. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 24*, 365-376. doi:10.1111/j/1471-6402.2000.tb00218.x
- Toosi, N. R., Babbitt, L. G., Ambady, N., & Sommers, S. R. (2012). Dyadic interracial interactions: a meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 138*, 1-27.  
doi:10.1037/a0025767
- Turner, J. S. (2011). Sex and the spectacle of music videos: An examination of the portrayal of race and sexuality in music videos. *Sex Roles, 64*, 173-191.  
doi:10.1007/s11199-010-9766-6
- Tylka, T. L., & Hill, M. S. (2004). Objectification Theory as It Relates to Disordered Eating Among College Women. *Sex Roles, 51*, 719-730. doi: 10.1007/s11199-004-0721-2
- Waite, L. J., & Joyner, K. (2001). Emotional satisfaction and physical pleasure in sexual unions: Time horizon, sexual behavior, and sexual exclusivity. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 63*, 247-264. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2001.00247.x
- Walby, S. (1989). Theorising patriarchy. *Sociology, 23*, 213-234.  
doi:10.1177/0038038589023002004
- Wallis, C. (2011). Performing gender: A content analysis of gender display in music videos. *Sex Roles, 64*, 160-172. doi:10.1007/s11199-010-9814-2

- Wanzo, R. (2011). Black love is not a fairy tale: African American women, romance, and rhetoric. *POROI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Rhetoric and Invention*, 7, 1-18.  
Retrieved from <http://ir.uiowa.edu/poroi/vol7/iss2/5/>
- Ward, L. M. (2002). Does television exposure affect emerging adults' attitudes and assumptions about sexual relationships? Correlational and experimental confirmation. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 31, 1–15.  
doi:10.1023/A:1014068031532
- Ward, L. M., Day, K. M., & Thomas, K. A. (2010). Confronting the assumptions: exploring the nature and predictors of black adolescents' media use. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 54, 69-86. doi:10.1080/08838150903550410
- Ward, L. M., & Friedman, K. (2006). Using TV as a guide: Associations between television viewing and adolescents' sexual attitudes and behavior. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 16, 133–156. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2006.00125.x
- Ward, L. M., Hansbrough, E., & Walker, E. (2005). Contributions of music video exposure to black adolescents' gender and sexual schemas. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 20, 143-166. doi:10.1177/0743558404271135
- Ward, L. M., & Rivadeneyra, R. (1999). Contributions of entertainment television to adolescents' sexual attitudes and expectations: The role of viewing amount versus viewer involvement. *Journal of sex research*, 36, 237-249.  
doi:10.1080/00224499909551994
- Weaver, A. D., & Byers E.S. (2006). The relationships among body image, body mass index, exercise, and sexual functioning in heterosexual women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 30, 333–339. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2006.00308.x



- Webster, J., & Tiggemann, M. (2003). The relationship between women's body satisfaction and self-image across the life span: The role of cognitive control. *Journal of Genetic Psychology, 164*, 241–252. doi:10.1080/00221320309597980
- Weitzer, R., & Kubrin, C. E. (2009). Misogyny in rap music: A content analysis of prevalence and meanings. *Men and Masculinities, 12*, 3-29. doi:10.1177/1097184X08327696
- Wells, A. (2001). Nationality, race, and gender on the American pop charts: What happened in the '90s? *Popular Music and Society, 25*, 221-231. doi:10.1080/03007760108591794
- West, C. (2012). Mammy, Jezebel, Sapphire, and their homegirls: Developing an “oppositional gaze” toward the images of Black women. In J.C. Chrisler, C. Golden, & P.D. Rozee (Eds.), *Lectures on the psychology of women* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 286-299). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.
- Whittler, T. E. (1991). The effects of actors' race in commercial advertising: Review and extension. *Journal of Advertising, 20*, 54-60. doi:10.1080/00913367.1991.10673207
- Whyte I. J. (2006). Sexual assertiveness in low-income African American women: Unwanted sex, survival, and HIV risk. *Journal of Community Health Nursing, 23*, 235-244. doi:10.1207/s15327655jchn2304\_4
- Wiederman, M. W. (2000). Women's body image self-consciousness during physical intimacy with a partner. *Journal of Sex Research, 37*, 60-68. doi:10.1080/00224490009552021

- Wiederman, M. W. (2005). The gendered nature of sexual scripts. *The Family Journal*, 13, 496-502. doi:10.1177/1066480705278729
- Wiederman, M. W., & Hurst, S. R. (1998). Body size, physical attractiveness, and body image among young adult women: Relationships to sexual experience and sexual esteem. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 35, 272–281.  
doi:10.1080/00224499809551943
- Wilkinson, M. (1976). Romantic love: The great equalizer? Sexism in popular music. *The Family Coordinator*, April, 161-166. Retrieved from  
<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/stable/582795>
- Williams, P. J. (2000). Alchemical notes: Reconstructing ideals for deconstructed rights. In R. Delgado & J. Stefancic (Eds.), *Critical race theory: The cutting edge* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 80-90). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Wingood, G. M., & DiClemente, R. J. (1998). Gender-related correlates and predictors of consistent condom use among young adult African-American women: A prospective analysis. *International journal of STD & AIDS*, 9, 139-145.  
doi:10.1258/0956462981921891
- Wood, W., Christensen, P. N., Hebl, M. R., & Rothgerber, H. (1997). Conformity to sex-typed norms, affect, and the self-concept. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73, 523. doi:10.1037/022-3514.73.3.523
- Woods-Giscombé, C. L. (2010). Superwoman schema: African American women's views on stress, strength, and health. *Qualitative Health Research*, 20, 668-683.  
doi:10.1177/1049732310361892

Wyatt, G. E., & Lyons-Rowe, S. (1990). African American women's sexual satisfaction as a dimension of their sex roles. *Sex Roles, 22*, 509-524.

doi:10.1007/BF00288167

Yamamiya, Y., T.F. Cash, and K. Thompson. 2006. Sexual experiences among college women: The differential effects of general versus contextual body images on sexuality. *Sex Roles, 55*, 421–7. doi:10.1007/s11199-006-9096-x

Zahn-Waxler, C., Cole, P. M., & Barrett, K. C. (1991). Guilt and empathy: Sex differences and implications for the development of depression.

doi:10.1017/CBO9780511663963.012

Zhang, Y., Dixon, T. L., & Conrad, K. (2010). Female body image as a function of themes in rap music videos: A content analysis. *Sex Roles, 62*, 787-797.

doi:10.1007/s11199-009-9656-y

Zubriggen, E. & Yost, M. (2004). Power, desire, and pleasure in sexual fantasies. *Journal of Sex Research, 41*, 288-300. doi:10.1080/00224490409552236