

Making Mandingo: Racial Archetypes, Pornography, and Black Male Subjectivity

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Abstract

Mandingo is a reference to a longstanding myth in American culture, that black men have an unquenchable desire for white woman. I will argue that Mandingo is an example of a *racial archetype*. Racial archetypes are specific images of a long-standing stereotypes. Mandingo is one such archetype. Mandingo conjures up an entire history of the rhetoric of miscegenation. For some it is the excitement of the big black cock (BBC) and crossing the color line, but for most blacks it invokes images of lynching, slavery, and police brutality brought on by the fear of black men while at the same time trafficking in a prurient landscape of American racial and sexual relations. Whether through words, pictures or movies, the Mandingo has become a dominant archetype in the pantheon of the African American experience. Charting the Mandingo emergence and articulation is critical project to discern how these rhetorical markers are part of a larger mythic narrative. With this in mind, I am interested in the ways in which competing racial and gendered myths and archetypes emerge and circulate within the semi-public rhetorical space of pornography. The image of the well-hung black man circulates through all forms of Western media; print, photograph, televisual, and digital. These images fill a particular void in the American racial narrative because it gives the public a framework to understand and decode black maleness with very real consequences.

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Chapter 1: An Introduction

I don't think there's any question that fear of interracial sex was the most consistent and common provocation that could create mob violence directed at African Americans.

-Bryan Stevenson, 2018

This study began more than 10 years ago on a lazy summer afternoon by a lake. I was sitting with a friend and their father when two dogs, one black and one white, ran by, playing together. Out of nowhere the black dog began trying to copulate with the white dog and my friend's father flatly remarked, "Looks like we got a Mandingo dog on our hands." I was at a loss for words. It felt racist and I knew immediately why because it was a reference to a longstanding myth in the American psyche, that black men have an unquenchable desire for white woman. Since I had been in a few black male-white female interracial relationships one of which produced a daughter, this comment hit me hard. It got me to thinking where did this idea come from? I knew about the seventies Blaxploitation movie but beyond that, I was not sure why this signifier has a currency of its own. My search for articulations of the Mandingo led me to the world of pornography. Whether through words, pictures or movies, the Mandingo has become an important archetype in the pantheon of the African American experience, in much the same way as the Mammy, Tom, or Sambo. While most of the archetypal images are rarely seen on public display, that is less true in the world of pornography. Thus, I am interested in the ways in which racial and gendered myths and archetypes emerge and circulate within the semi-public rhetorical space of pornography. This is the guiding principal of this dissertation and is an attempt to understand interracial pornography and its connection to myths-specifically the Mandingo myth.

With the onset of the digital era, pornography has become a driving engine behind the internet. To give an idea of its relative size, “Hollywood makes approximately 400 films a year, while the porn industry now makes 10,000 to 11,000” (Williams, 2004, p. 1). Pornography is big business. In America alone, we spend billions of dollars per year on pornography (Dines, 2006). Popular sites such as PornHub.com and Porn.com have become one stop shopping for the porn consumer. PornHub is one of the many “tube sites” which exist as aggregators of pornographic material. What sets them apart is that they are free, and they are changing the economics of online pornography. MindGeek, the parent company for sites like PornHub, Youporn, and RedTube, consumes “more bandwidth than Twitter, Amazon, or Facebook,” (Auerbach, 2014, para. 4). PornHub, “Mindgeek’s biggest tube, claims to have had nearly 80 billion video viewings last year and more than 18 billion visits. In terms of traffic and bandwidth, Mindgeek is now one of the world’s biggest online operators in any industry” (“Naked capitalism,” 2015, p. 6). Pornography is a large part of American culture. Unfortunately, communication scholars ignore pornography, but I want to suggest that this is a mistake for two reasons: pornography is rhetoric and as such has a profound impact on culture. Also, it is a unique site to understand the circulation of racist and sexist archetypes.

On the most popular porn sites on the internet, Mandingo is its most popular male star. Mandingo ranks as the 46th most popular porn star for 2017 with over 290 million views of his videos that year alone. His biography on the site even references the Mandingo movie character and his current persona when it states, “This Mississippi-born boy took his stage name from the bestselling novel and later film about a prize-fighting slave in the South in the 1830s. Although Tarantino pushed that genre further with "Django Unchained", the real Mandingo keeps pushing further and further up into hot white girls” (PornHub.com, accessed 9/25/2017). The image that

Mandingo portrays is of a black man that only wants white women. This image has very real implications.

Since the days of Ida B. Wells, there has been no doubt that the interracial desire and sex has led to outbreaks of lynching and racial violence. In our current America cultural moment-racial violence is often linked to the larger narrative and myth of miscegenation. Dylan Roof, the 21 year old white man responsible for the Charleston church shooting said during an interview with police, “ Well I had to do it because somebody had to do something because, you know, black people are killing white people every day on the streets, and they rape white women, 100 white women a day’” (Sack & Blinder, 2017). While it may seem like Dylan Roof is an outlier, he is not. Nearly forty percent of all hate crimes are committed against blacks (Byington, Brown, & Capps, 2018). It is my guess that this number is soft since it is not a federal requirement for police departments to report racial violence. The importance of understanding how racial myths of miscegenation circulate and create frameworks by which people make decisions and live by is an important job of the rhetorical critic.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of my study is to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Mandingo myth by investigating, theoretically, (1) how racial and gendered myths and archetypes emerge and circulate within the rhetorical space of pornography, (2) how racial and gendered myths are activated within this space and how that affects black male sexual representation and subjectivity, and (3) how these questions help to explain the allure of interracial pornography. I will connect the Mandingo myth to slavery and colonial myths, specifically deducing the allure of the Mandingo myth.

Mandingo is an image of the black man, so common that it is often overlooked. The image of the well-hung black man circulates through all forms of Western media; print, photograph, televisual, and digital. These images fill a particular void in the American racial narrative because it gives the public a framework to understand and interpret black maleness.

Mandingo is a critical internal link into the perpetuation and persistence of sexual racism in America. Therefore, an investigation into its locus and use are important. Mandingo conjures up an entire rhetorical history of miscegenation. For some it is the excitement of the big black cock (BBC) and crossing the color line, but for most blacks it invokes images of lynching, slavery, and police brutality brought on by the fear of black men while at the same time trafficking in a prurient landscape of American racial and sexual relations. Patricia Hill Collins (2005) explains that “gender has emerged as a prominent feature of what some have called the ‘new racism’” (p.5). For Collins, the new racism begins with the intersection of sex, gender, and race. Even though she focuses on sex and racism she, unfortunately, overlooks and undertheorizes how sexual racism impacts Black men (Collins, 2005; Courtney, 2004; Curry, 2017; Dines, 2011; Fain, 2015; Williams, 2004). Her oversight of black men is common.

In current academic spaces, studies into representations of black men by black men are rare. Dr. Tommy Curry (2017) explains the impact of this oversight when he writes, “Because black men are not subjects of—or in—theories emanating from their experience, they are often conceptualized as the threats others fear them to be” (p. 3). The lack of black men theorizing about black male subjectivity and experiences ensures our objectification. Our absence from the conversation allows some of the most dangerous myths and stereotypes to persist. This is not to say that there are no black men in the academy writing about black male life. There are some like Donald Bogle, Tommy Curry, Henry Louis Gates, Ronald Jackson, Cedric Robinson and

many more who are contributing to the conversation about what it means to be a black man in modern America (Bogle, 2016; Curry, 2017; Gates, 1987; Jackson, 2006; Robinson, 2007). Even with all these men, writing about black men there is still a deficit of black men theorizing black maleness. This study helps fill the void of black male scholars writing about black masculinity.

My dissertation enters a broader conversation about race, sex, masculinity, and miscegenation happening across fields and disciplines such as African American Studies, Diaspora Studies, Communication and Cultural Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Media Studies, Psychology and Sociology. Henry Louis Gates argues that the only way to ensure an African American theoretical tradition is to use theory towards our own ends (Gates, 1987). This understanding of the role of the black academic and the role of theory in the pursuit of a black academic aesthetic is a constant work in progress. My study fills a particular space in rhetorical studies as an interrogation into the rhetoric of the black male representations in pornography.

Finally, this study seeks to unpack the symbolic significance of the big black cock in pornography and society. It is my hope that my study can help scholars have a richer understanding to the ways in which white supremacy perpetuates itself through the use of archetypal images. This is particularly important now since in recent years critics such as Jennifer Nash and Mireille Young have argued that pornography is a space of black liberation and self-expression (Miller-Young, 2014; Nash, 2014); however, this study will seek to rebut that assertion by delving into the representations of the most popular black male pornography star, Mandingo, to argue that pornography is a space that recreates some of the worst stereotypes about black masculinity. In fact, I will argue that pornography's fetish for the big black cock (BBC) perpetuates a myth about black male sexuality and masculinity which sets the parameters of what it means to be black in the white imagination.

Limitations: *Mandingo Massacre*

In order to keep the scope of this project manageable I do a close textual reading of *Mandingo Massacre* to map the contours of how the Mandingo myth and archetype functions within the rhetorical space of pornography. *Mandingo Massacre*, a movie produced by the Jules Jordan production company, began as a Digital Video Disk (DVD) but has since moved to the pornography website Pornhub.com. Pornhub is one of the main aggregators of free pornography on the internet. Free pornography is by far the most consumed pornography, for obvious reasons because it is free (Fritz & Paul, 2017; Gorman, Monk-Turner, & Fish, 2010). The images of *Mandingo Massacre* have been curated from the Pornhub website and the accompanying text from the Jules Jordan website. The combination helps create a preferred narrative that the sites want to viewers to accept. I will further limit the scope of this project by studying the first *Mandingo Massacre* movie. At this writing there have been fifteen *Mandingo Massacre* movies made and likely there will be more. The points of view exhibited in the first video are representative of the later movies and really every clip which involves Mandingo (the actor). These clips fit into a larger narrative about black men, their sexuality, and who they are perceived to be. Further we will briefly speak to how the word Mandingo is a signifier that has become synonyms with the myth of the big black cock (BBC) more generally.

Literature Review: Mandingo and Interdisciplinary Studies

Writing about the Mandingo myth and archetype is challenging because so little is written about the topic. Even when authors mention Mandingo in academic writing it is usually an afterthought. However, ignoring and downplaying the Mandingo image can be dangerous because it ignores the way that archetypes are (re)appropriated into contemporary consumer culture. Scholars, who write about Mandingo usually write about the 1975 movie (Guerrero,

1993; Shimizu, 1999). Instead, I focus on how the American mythic narratives map the Mandingo archetype onto black male bodies in and through pornography; and how that curtails black male subjectivity. To support this argument, I was led to a number of different literature bases. I will break this literature review into two basic sections: Mandingo and the black body and the interdisciplinary work. Section one will focus on the Mandingo. I will examine literature written on the movie and others instances of its emergence. Because there is so little written on the Mandingo specifically, I will also focus on reviewing the literature of the the black body. Section two focuses on the interdisciplinary work that makes this dissertation possible: gender studies, legal scholarship, and mainstream cinema. The through-line is that at some level all of this literature focuses on representations black men in the white imagination and how that has evolved throughout the twentieth century until now.

Mandingo and the black body.

In October 1999, the academic journal, *Wide Angle* released an entire issue dedicated to the exploration of the black masculinity in film. Celine Shimizu's article *Master-Slave Sex Acts: Mandingo and the Race/ Sex Paradox* focuses on *Mandingo* (1975) the movie. Shimizu, "shifts the focus of discussion of Mandingo to one of the paradox of master and slave in racial subjection as this paradox constitutes the technology of racial domination" (Harris, 1999, p. 5). Her concern is how the, "moment of the sex act is not only a site of domination, but of self and subject formation as well" (Shimizu, 1999, p. 44). Shimzu argues that within the framework of the Master/Slave dialectic only the master gains pleasure from the sex act since only the master has subjectivity. Shimizu's article is helpful because she questions how we compare sexual domination to sexual freedom against a backdrop of slavery. Shimzu's article never broaches the

rhetorical space of pornography or representations. In this way there is a lot that is useful here but different from this study. Similar to Shimzu is Alexander Weheliye's monograph.

Alexander Weheliye builds on Shimizu's analysis by covering issues of power and subjectivity in *Mandingo* in his book *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Weheliye, 2014). Weheliye takes a little bit different approach to the movie *Mandingo* when he argues that his objective is to free and put into motion the, "history that hurts—the still unfolding narrative of captivity, dispossession, and domination that engenders the black subject in the Americas" (2014, p. 65). He is not focused on the sex act, per se, instead he is focused on how the cinema shows the brutality of slavery in a sexual manner; what he calls pornotroping. Quoting Frantz Fanon, he states, "We know how much of sexuality there is in all cruelties, tortures, beatings" (2014, p. 69). Weheliye argues that these images of whippings and beatings in *Mandingo* are sexual by their very nature. The beating and raping of black men and women ensure that black subjectivity remains not-quite-human: but a dehumanized object outside of full personhood. Following Giorgio Agamben, he states, "cinema enables the production of bare life as a politico-sexual form of life, wherein the remainder that is effected but cannot be contained by the legal order is disseminated in the visual realm" (2014, p. 69). In other words, cinema helps create an overarching myth about identity that is legal, cultural, and visual. Other scholars have written useful explorations into the representations at the center of *Mandingo* (Bogle, 2016; Guerrero, 1993; Hartman, 1997; hooks, 2003). Unfortunately, most of these authors are simply doing a taxonomy of blacks in films from early cinema to the Blaxploitation era of filmmaking. However, Guerrero spends an entire chapter of his book outlining the representations of black men from *Birth of a Nation* to *Mandingo* he argues that, "Mandingo reverses the myth of the slave's devotion to the master class as well as

the slave's mythical disdain for freedom, so commonly expressed by Hollywood throughout the plantation genre” (1993, p. 33). Even when Guerrero touches on the mythic qualities of the film he neglects how representations of the black men themselves have become myths that define the black body in the white imagination.

The books about black male sexuality and body have proliferated from humanities departments across America. The most significant work for this dissertation on the black body is by a rhetorician Ronald Jackson. His rhetorical study of the black body sketches an outline of the black body and how that body is imbued with meaning. In the first part of the book *Scripting the Black Masculine* he draws heavily on Donald Bogle, a film historian, who does an exhaustive analysis of the stereotypes of black men and women that are recurrent in cinema: coons, uncle toms and remus, tragic mulattos, and bucks. Jackson does a great job of explaining how ideology imbues meaning into the black body and comes to define blacks; a process he calls scripting, “the reservoir of inscriptions on the black body is very extensive. No one book can claim to catalogue all the examples of racially inscribed bodies” (2006, p. 44). His work is useful for this dissertation because it gives a model for the process of ideological marking and identification of the black body. However, even this book ignores the rhetorical space of pornography. Moreover, when he does talk about the aggressive black male, he identifies all black male aggression as part of the buck stereotype. It is my hope that this study becomes a starting point to draw distinctions between different types of black maleness. The Mandingo archetype is distinct because of the way it interacts with the white female within the white imagination. Jackson is not the only communication scholar to focus on the black male body. When other communication scholars write about the black body, they often write about lynching and racial violence.

David Marriott's *On Black Men* looks at the lynching of black men after reconstruction and the use of camera equipment to capture the events (Marriott, 2000a). Marriott seeks to understand, "the symbolic role of black men in the psychic life of culture" (p. 262). Marriott's two books, *On Black Men* and *The Haunted Life*, examine being a black object of the white gaze. He argues that the social construction of race begins in the gaze (Marriott, 2000, 2007). The relevance of the gaze for blacks in America cannot be overstated. The link between domination and the gaze is powerful when considering the role that skin color plays in racial politics in America. In contemporary culture the gaze plays role in structuring and maintaining black cultural dispossessions. Bell Hooks' book on black masculinity is a great starter about the plight of black men in America: from their role in music, sex, and family. She reminds us that that black men are commonly seen as,

animals, brutes, natural born rapists, and murders, black men have had no real dramatic say when it comes to the way that they have been represented. They have made few interventions on the stereotype. That were first articulated in the nineteenth century but hold sway over the minds and imaginations of citizens of this nation in the present day. (hooks, 2003, p. 12)

Hooks is correct that there have been very few interventions by black men to investigate and analyze the stereotypes which structure black male reality in America. The study of the black body has gone through many changes from legal discussions by authors Patricia Hill Collins in *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* to media critiques like *Media Matters* (Collins, 2005; Fiske, 1996). In this next section, I am going to outline the interdisciplinary work that has been done which build the foundation of this dissertation.

Interdisciplinary literature review.

Culture and law.

Legal scholars, lawyers, and historians are all writing about the role that the black body plays in the legal system. Perhaps the most famous of these books was written by Michelle Alexander. In her book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, she argues, that the War on Drugs has led to the mass incarceration of black male bodies throughout America. Alexander reminds us that mass incarceration of black men has become, “normalized and all of the racial stereotypes and assumptions that gave rise to the system are now embraced (or at least internalized) by people of all colors” (M. Alexander & West, 2012, p. 181). In the same vein, D. Marvin Jones book, *Race, Sex, and Suspicion: The Myth of the Black Male* prompts us that America has created a myth of the black male as violent and criminal that has allowed the state to criminalize and imprison black men. Jones argues that, “the black man’s image has been distorted by demonizing images” (Jones, 2005, p. 8). He continues that these images hold a mythic quality, in part, because of the power they hold over black male personhood in American society; he explains, “the intersection of race and gender is perilous. For the black male the cultural meaning of his identity is a sign of otherness: his identity is itself a prison” (Jones, 2005, p. 9). What he recognizes is that myths are powerful vessels of ideology functioning to limit the personhood of black men. In this way he and many others recognize the way ideologies of white supremacy get mapped onto the black body (B. K. Alexander, 2006; Collins, 2005; hooks, 2003; Jones, 2005; Marriott, 1996, 1996; Sexton, 2008, 2010; Wilderson, 2010; Yancy, 2005). It has been common for academics to argue that race and gender are bodily investments. Needless to say, Alexander and Jones make a compelling case for the effects that racial mythologies have on criminalizing black body. Moreover, Derrick Bell, often referred to

as the father of Critical Race Theory, has been arguing that the black body is under siege by American legal system and popular culture.

In *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*, Bell weaves together a collection of essays to make the central argument that racism is endemic to America (Bell & Alexander, 2018). Not in its exclusivity but in its intensity. He argues like Cornel West does in *Race Matters* that racial animus is so extreme in America that there is no overcoming racism (West, 2017). This line of argument has been picked up by a new generation of scholars such as Frank Wilderson in his books *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms* and *Incognegro: A Memoir of Exile and Apartheid* and Jared Sexton in his book *Amalgamation Schemes: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiculturalism* both argue from the basic premise that anti-blackness is a the most violent form of legal and cultural racism even experienced (Sexton, 2008, 2010; Wilderson, 2010; Wilderson, 2015). This dovetails well with other legal scholars who have argued that the legal constraints placed on the black body are substantial and inflect every part of our daily lives including, but not limited to, sexual congress and marriage.

Peggy Pascoe wrote her book, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* as a treatise on the way that anti-miscegenation law became the “bottom line of white supremacy” (Pascoe, 2010, p. 1). Even though her book highlights the legal frameworks which opposed blacks and whites marrying, she realizes early on that this is a rhetorical problem when she traces the history of the word miscegenation. Miscegenation appeared in 1864 to replace the term amalgamation. Two New York politicians, “combined *miscere* (mix) and *genus* (race) to form the more scientific sounding ‘miscegenation’” (Pascoe, 2010, p. 3). She continues, “the term miscegenation caught on quickly providing the rhetorical means of channeling a belief that interracial marriage was unnatural into the foundation of the

post-Civil War white supremacy” (Pascoe, 2010, p. 3). Amber Mouton examines the fight for interracial marriage in the pre-Civil War period. She reminds us that many regarded interracial mixing as “the Devil’s own method of degenerating and destroying the white race” (Moulton, 2015, p. 3). These works are critical to outlining the rhetoric of miscegenation and white supremacy; the Mandingo myth gains its currency from the rhetoric of miscegenation. In addition, Maurice Wallace reminds us that “at no point in the history of the New World, that is, has race *not* constituted a defining feature of our national manhood” (Wallace, 2002, p. 3). These authors unpack the role of black masculinity from reconstruction until the Civil Rights Act. Picking up where they leave off Richie Richardson interrogates the changes in the representations of black masculinity through the present in his book *Black Masculinity and the U.S. South: From Uncle Tom to Gangsta* (2007). Richardson cordons off the American South and examines the changing nature of black masculinity in a specific geographic context. Richardson argues that the American South’s influence on black masculinity is often underestimated. To complicate these representations Richardson argues that blacks themselves appropriate these images for purposes never intended by their (mostly) white progenitors (Richardson & Smith, 2007). Richardson’s work is similar to *Manliness and its Discontents* by Martin Summers, who does a history of the black middle class from 1900 to 1930 (Summers, 2004). Of course, all of these books about history and culture are fascinating and certainly help provide context but they lack a direct line to the subject of this dissertation which is pornography and the black male. Perhaps the closest we get to these subject areas is through gender studies.

Gender studies.

Drawing from scholars such as Jennifer Nash, Linda Williams, and Mireille Miller-Young gender studies seek to understand the ways in which gender and race intersect within

pornography (Miller-Young, 2014; Nash, 2014; Williams, 2004). Williams asks, “If pornography is a genre that seeks to confess the discursive truths about sex then what happens when racialized bodies are asked to reveal their particular truths,” (2004, p.8)? Even when authors from diverse feminist traditions, such as Gail Dines and Linda Williams, talk about black men in pornography, they objectify them to demonstrate their arguments about the goodness or badness of pornography for women writ large. They never analyze the affective role that pornography may play in changing how black men view themselves and their bodies or how these images may be consumed. The topic of pornography has a long history within gender studies and feminist literature starting with the anti-pornography movement of the 1970’s.

Antipornographic feminism is an outgrowth of second wave feminism. The leaders of the antiporn feminists, “actively rebut the idea that pornography is merely benign fantasy” (Nash, 2014a, p. 10). In fact, they are perhaps some of the most aggressive in criticizing racial pornography. Often the problem with antipornographic feminists rhetorical moves empower men with ability to legislate women’s sexuality and their conduct (Rubin, 2011, p. 143). In fact, it forces feminists to support censorship creating coalitions with the radical right as means to effectuate their political visions. Sadly, this form of feminism does little to address the concerns of other forms of oppression.

Pro-pornography feminists argue for a brand of sexual freedom which believes in pornography as a form of sexual freedom for women seeking to overcome sexual puritanism and feminist victimage of second wave feminism. Camille Paglia states, “Far from poisoning the mind, pornography shows the deepest truth about sexuality, stripped of romantic veneer” (Paglia, 1994, p. 66). For Paglia, and other pro porn feminists, the notion that porn needs to be regulated is an anachronism which does not reflect women’s present. In the end, this strain of feminism

gives rise to two other distinct forms of feminist criticism of pornography; sex radicals and feminist porn studies.

Sex radical and feminist porn studies share many similarities. Perhaps the most obvious is that each strain of criticism studies “how arousal, pleasure, subordination, and dominance are co-constitutive, and emphasized the contingent and complex meanings inherent in each pornographic text,” (Nash 2014, p. 16). These feminists challenge dominant depictions of women as victims and men as aggressors from within the genre. Moreover, they seek to create the cultural space for women to enjoy watching and participating in pornography. But most of these writings are not about black men, even though there is a long history of black male representations of in American cinema.

Mainstream cinema.

Jack Johnson, the first black heavyweight champion. became synonymous with the black beast archetype, beating white men and ravaging white women. In 1913, Johnson was arrested, tried, and convicted of violations of the Mann Act, for transporting a white woman across state lines for the purpose of sex. The Mann Act, named after its author, Congressman James Robert Mann, was a law passed in 1910 to combat white slavery. The Mann act quickly became used to dissuade interracial unions when it was turned against Johnson and led to his nearly two year imprisonment for transporting “a white woman across state lines for immoral purposes” (Eligon & Shear, 2018). The black beast myth had found its image--and that image was Jack Johnson. Jack Johnson’s fight films were very popular and attracted a largely white audience to watch him beat white men and, presumably, to reenact the fantasy of black men beating and raping white women. It is no mere coincidence that Johnson’s infamy was taking place around the same time as the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and the debut of the film *The Birth of a Nation*.

The Birth of a Nation.

The cultural importance of D.W. Griffin's *the Birth of Nation* is hard to undersell. Griffith invested \$110,000 in order to make over \$20 million in profit (Fain, 2015; Robinson, 2007). Others argue that the movie in fact made between \$50 and \$100 million and set the precedent of what would be known as the blockbuster (Monaco, 2009). The fact that it was one of the first widely distributed films throughout the US made its impact huge and immediate. Griffith's technical expertise has made the film a mainstay in film schools since its release and, "too many film scholars elect not to teach or write about the racist elements of Griffith's masterpieces" (Bernardi, 1996, p. 34). Drawing on the play the *Klansman* by Thomas Dixon, Griffith tells the story of white masculinity in crisis. Griffith tells an epic story where an existential threat is posed to, "white children, white women, and white patriarchy" by blacks and their mulatto offspring. It is not a stretch to argue that Griffith and Dixon see the mulatto as a, "dark evil that uses interracial sex as a tool to undermine and threaten to unravel their righteous nation" (Bernardi 2006, p. 221). It is easy to dismiss this fear more than 100 years later but there seems to be little doubt that audiences of the day took this mythic tale very seriously. Until its release the Klan was a regional organization which had been dismantled by the federal government. However, "*The Birth of a Nation's* racially charged Jim Crow narrative, coupled with America's heightened anti-immigrant climate, led the Klan to align itself with the movie's success and use it as a recruiting tool" (Clark, 2018, p. 2). As the film was shown in every state and many of the towns across the country, "Klan chapters formed and membership reportedly reached into the millions" (Clark, 2018, p. 4). It is not surprising that during this time period some of the worst lynchings and race riots happened America. The important thing to keep in mind is not just that we should be mindful of the racist content of *Birth*, but that audiences often knowingly and

unknowingly incorporate film narratives into their daily schemata. While *Birth* gets most of the attention of early racist films, it is not the only film. Fantasies of miscegenation are a critical part of early cinema but even more important may be the prohibition of those images from 1930 to 1968 due to The Motion Picture Production Code.

Interracial sex and the Stag Film: The Production Code and pushing miscegenation underground.

Between 1915 and 1925 the cost of a feature film rose from \$20,000 to \$300,000. Technological advancements in film making and the addition of sound helped skyrocket the cost. Then in 1929, the Great Depression hit and profits began to tumble for Hollywood. By 1930, Hollywood had adopted the Motion Picture Production Code, also called the Hays Code after its architect Will H. Hays. The Code was an attempt to censor controversial content in movies and regain the lost profits of the Depression (Doherty, 2006, para. 2). The Hays code functioned as both a hortatory device and a guiding principle. It was divided into two parts; general principles and the applications. Under general principles were suggestions such as the law “should not be ridiculed” or that movies should never lower “the moral standards of those who see it” (Doherty, 2006, para. 4). However, in other instances, the prohibitions were strong. Rule six states simply “miscegenation” (Doherty, 2006, para. 3). The implication was clear that the MPPDA would not approve any film that implicitly or explicitly showed or condoned the mixing of the white and black races. Hollywood executives wanted to avoid all possible backlash from their audience; specifically, their Southern audience. It is no secret that the Southern audiences had little appetite for race mixing of any kind. This drive to make profits and uphold racial codes of the day left many motion pictures without any black people in them at all, creating a landscape of white people as the norm. Further, banning miscegenation also banned the notion of the black

rapist as an antagonist. Prohibitions did not end miscegenation in film. Instead I would argue that it pushed it underground.

Due to the imposition of the Production Code, representations of miscegenation disappeared from main stream media. However, that does not mean they disappeared altogether. In fact, these representations were driven underground into the nascent pornography category of film. Between 1915 and 1968 the genre of stag films became the primary vehicle for miscegenation. It is estimated that in that time frame more than 2,000 films with a total duration of more than three hundred hours were created (Waugh, 2004). Stag films are important because they create a bridge from early pornography to the Blaxploitation films of the 1970s. However, in the case of stag films, their greatest importance is that they help construct the audience as white, male, and heterosexual. In this way, the stag films play a defining role in the way we see pornography today. While there is a developing field of research on the stag film very little has been written generally and even less about miscegenation in stag films. Gerald Rankin and Al Di Lauro (1976) explain the terrain of the stag film “the stag film or dirty movie was, and is, the cinema verité of the forbidden. . . In a time when verbal and visual images of sex were suppressed, when open art could only euphemize, the stags documented those isolated and unmentionable private experiences which were nonetheless in some form universal” (Lauro & Rabkin, 1976, p. 1). Their recognition of the dirty movie as being the cinematic terrain of the forbidden helps explain why this is the place that miscegenation got pushed.

Linda Williams’ (2004) investigation in the stag genre does a feminist’s analysis of the role of the spectator and the production of female representations. Unfortunately, neither of these studies speak to the role of miscegenation and its relation to black men and white women. Williams acknowledged that many stag narratives that involve miscegenation are based around

the master-slave dialectic, where white men possess and demean black women. The absence of the black male/white woman dichotomy is significant. Lack of critical investigation reinforces the shame/deviance narrative associated with miscegenation. I speculate that this absence says a lot about *who* gets noticed and *whose* positionality becomes important. Some of the earliest visual forms of these racialized sexual myths and fantasies have gone un-interrogated for more a hundred years. If we take seriously the absence/presence dialectic the absence of research on the subject is important because it speaks to what we as researchers' value. Lack of research on the question of black male representations in early pornography, or really pornography in general, speaks to researchers in the field of gender studies focusing almost exclusively on issues which fit into the larger feminists' narrative. However, it must be made visible that these movies have had a material, ideological, and representational consequence for black men. The myths that mark the black male body are rhetorical. This can also be seen in the movie *Mandingo*. *Mandingo* functions rhetorically through its use of metonym and synecdoche to reconfigure the black brute into a very distinct archetype; Mandingo. In particular, the relationship between Ganymede and Blanche is the template by which we view the black male/white female racialized sex acts, since the mid 1970's. Undergirded by the rhetoric of miscegenation the distinct figure of the Mandingo began to take shape. Sadly, very few researchers have used *Mandingo* as starting point to investigate the representations of black men in film or pornography.

Method: Interpretation of images

This study employs a critical interpretive reading of the Mandingo myth and its image in pornography. Through analyzing the dominant black male archetype in pornography I discuss the importance of myth as ideology and the archetypes.

Myths and ideology.

Myths matter. Joseph Campbell (1949) explains, “the myths of man have flourished; and has been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared” (p.3). He is not alone in his recognition of the importance of myth; even Rowland agrees that “myths wield great power” (Rowland, 1990, p. 102). Myths explain the world. Often, they pass from generation to generation and down through time, giving narratives stability in a changing world. Scholars argue that myths are the stories that we tell and choose to believe about others and ourselves which set the parameters of human relations (Campbell, 2008; Eliade & Smith, 2005; Frye, 2000; Malinowski, 2013). In other words, myths frame life events for us. Levi Strauss (1972) adds, “the purpose of myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming contradiction” (Strauss, 1972, p. 193). As a rhetorical analytic, myth is useful because it helps us identify patterns of signification which form our frameworks or ideologies. In their basic forms, myths unfold in narrative form (Campbell, 2008). They are the stories, which define us through their use and their repetition. Philosophers and rhetoricians argue that myths “tell the stories of the gods” and that they exist in “primordial time” (Rowland, 1990). Myths serve as a “moral paradigm structuring society” (Rowland 1990, p.102). Moreover, myths function as a “narrative resurrection of primeval reality” (Rowland, 1990, p. 102).

Patterns span time and often place to reoccur throughout different eras. In a general sense, black men exist as the shadow or darkness, a figure that threatens the peaceful existence of the light and its progeny. This myth dates back, at least, to ancient Greece. In Greece, one incarnation of the shadow figure was the Satyr. Jared Hickman argues, “satyrs, let alone ‘dark’ ones, were, in their animal sexuality, often associated with Africans” (Hickman, 2016, p. 350). Robert Hood goes even a step further when he reminds us that “Greeks in the sixth century B.C.

used the satyrs for their myths about the sexual powers of black men: naked figures, half-man, half-beast, with powerful horse-like legs and Negroid features such as woolly hair, broad noses and thick lips. Satyrs were known for their great erotic lust, fertility, bacchanal fondness for wine and revelry with unsuspecting nymphs” (Hood, 1991, para. 4). Hood continues, “households in ancient Greece and Rome had black, Negroid statuettes with erections, as symbols of fertility and as charms against evil spirits. Early Christian tradition identified the Devil as the evil black one with a large phallus who seduced Christian virgins” (Hood, 1991, para. 3). Satyrs had three real defining features; their lust for nymphs, their goat legs, and their large penises. These mythic figures shift over time to fit the context of their needs. Within condensation symbols, similar figures get bound together into a coherent whole EVEN if they are different. The more different the figures/symbols/things bound, the more likely the symbol is to be unstable or fragile. The image of the satyr is an important part of the process because it begins the association of blackness with macrophalluses, a desire for nymphs, and insatiable lust. Throughout time, these qualities of blackness are stretched onto the bodies of people who are similar; defining their bodily and psychological traits by creating a framework of identification which influences the white imaginaries’ comprehension of black male subjectivity even today. From Satyrs to savages, the slide continues through enlightenment.

In the sixteenth century, when Europeans came in contact with the continent of Africa, they described the people there as black. For the Europeans, black had a host of meanings, most negative. Paul Hoch tells us that “black was the colour of the devil and all that was base, bestial, and evil. The eighteenth-century naval surgeon John Atkins reported that at some places the Negro has been suspected of bestiality with apes. By forging a sexual link between Negroes and apes. . . Englishmen were able to give vent to their feeling that Negroes were a lewd, lascivious,

and wanton people” (Hoch, 1979, pp. 50–51). Representing Africans as fornicating with apes made it easy to dehumanize an entire race of people. Hoch continues “Richard Jobson claimed that blacks are furnisht with such [sexual] members as are a sort of bothersome unto them’ and the late eighteenth century English surgeon Dr. Charles White went on to insist “That the PENIS of the African is larger than that of an European has, I believe, been shewn in every anatomical school in London” (Hoch, 1979, p. 52). By plotting these traits onto Africans, and consequently black men, these theories left black men as a race of animals, lustful, and lewd. As these narratives became imported to the United States, the constructed a larger myth about black sexuality which, in part, gave justification for slavery and control.

Archetypes.

Myths rely on archetypal language and images. Northrop Frye explains that, “archetypes are associative clusters, and differ from signs in being complex variables. Within the complex is often a large number of specific learned associations which are communicable because a large number of people in a given culture happen to be familiar with them” (Frye, 2000, p. 151). This is important for two reasons. Archetypes are a form of symbolism and communication which make an argument about what something *is* and gives meaning to those that are looking at the archetype. Second, Frye is also correct in deviating from Jung when he argues that they are “learned associations” in a “given culture” (Frye, 2000, p. 102). For Frye, unlike Jung, archetypes get their meaning *within* and *from* the cultures they exist in. Finally, Frye makes one other observation about archetypes which are useful in this study and that is that they are essentially generic (Frye, 2000, p. 112-15). They are simple patterns that reoccur throughout time. These reoccurring patterns become signs which help define a subject. In the case of racial archetypes these definitions are often in line with the prevailing ideologies which exist about

race. Archetype is an original pattern or model of which all things of the same type are representations or copies. Images are central to archetypes. For Jung, archetypes are never visible but their manifestations come to life in the form of images (Jung, 1981). These are not always neutral. Shelburne explains “what Jung means by the archetype then is a disposition in the collective unconscious to produce such an image in the consciousness” (1988, p. 36). Jung also explains that archetypes are “the tendency to form such representations of a motif-- representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern” (Jung, 1964, p 58). The operative word in this definition is representation. Representations “are interpretative prisms” (Jourde, 2006, p. 182). Our collective consciousness produces these representations to aid in decision making about our lives and our relationships. They frame the way we understand the stories we tell about ourselves and others. Jung (1981) calls attention to the psychological and cultural dimensions of archetypes, explaining that archetypes are ‘symbolic formulas’ and that symbols point beyond themselves to the unknown, thereby functioning as interconnecting links between the conscious and the collective unconscious as they bring into consciousness in representative form the otherwise unknowable. Of images and culture, Jung says that the “symbolic quality of these images from the subconscious is eventually lost as the images and ideas are subjected to the interpretive powers of generations in order to assimilate them to the existing system of culture (Shelburne, 1988, p. 43). For the Mandingo archetype, the image becomes the main vessel for Western colonialism and racism.

The Mandingo image proliferates through American popular culture and appears in places we never would have guessed. This section will discuss the trajectory of the Mandingo archetype from its origins to its more pop culture referent. Traditional theories of archetype often argue that archetypes are broad human categories such a hero, villain, earth mother (Campbell,

2008; Eliade & Smith, 2005; Malinowski, 2013; Rowland, 1990). While these categories can be useful it seems that they lack a certain nuance that race and culture complicate. Are the qualities for black heroes the same as they are for white heroes? Sometimes. But when they are different why are they different? So much of the literature written on myth and archetype assumes that as humans we all share the same basic instincts and values and that archetypes are a response to those instincts and values. There are two problems with this line of thinking. First, it makes the category of myth and archetype so broad that it begins to lack meaning and the same is true for archetype. All stories can be boiled down to simple explanations of the world; heroes fighting villains; good triumphing over evil, and light prevailing over darkness. But what happens when there are no heroes or villains? Moreover, how do we determine who the heroes and villains are? Assigning roles such as hero and villain needs rethinking in a culture that defines villains and heroes by race and sex. In an effort to create methodological limits to how myths and archetypes work, this study argues that myth and archetypes are useful when they explain how an image reoccurs in a specific historical space. Focusing on reoccurrence also allows us to engage culturally specific appearances of archetypes and follow their rhetorical trajectory. In this respect, the Mandingo archetype's *raison d'être* is black male/white female interracial sex. It is this prohibition that brings the Mandingo archetype into existence. The white racial imagination creates these pools of identities (stereotypes) and out of them emerge specific identities (archetypes) which are culturally time bound. It is strange to think of them as being both culturally time bound and reoccurring. This conundrum can be easily resolved by thinking of them as pools of stories for which we invent the heroes, villains, mothers, and goddess of our time.

The second problem is time. When myths and archetypes exist in primordial time, they become static and unchanging. This makes them less useful. I argue that traditional conceptions of archetype fail to consider the archetype and myth in specific time. This failure has led to the inability of myth to explain the phenomena of racial representations as they exist in our media saturated culture of today.

Thinking of myth purely historically blunts their explanatory power. McGee (1980) uses the terms diachronic and synchronic to explain the difference and why that difference is an important analytic tool. For McGee the problem with doing a historical/diachronic analysis is that it does nothing to explain how phenomena “function presently” (McGee, 1980, p. 12). It is important to make mythic and archetypal frameworks malleable:

Why does [the concept of the archetype] remain useful. . . Presumably the concept survives because of our sense that it refers to something real in our experience—whether we describe that reality as a seemingly infinite variety of related forms, as images that are "unfathomable" and "necessary," as nodal points in an energy field that determine the flow of libido, or as the identifying mark of a transaction that is never fully resolved. The concept survives in these forms because it has real explanatory power . . . if we regard the archetype not as an image whose content is frozen but . . . as a tendency to form and reform images in relation to certain kinds of repeated experiences, then the concept could serve to clarify distinctively. . . concerns that have persisted throughout human history. Applied to a broad range of materials from . . . it could expose a set of reference points that would serve as an expendable framework for defining . . . experience.(Herrera-Sobek, 1990)

The importance of the process of the archetype is to pay close attention to the metonymic sliding that happens within our symbolic field. Metonymic sliding is the idea that objects do not contain an essential quality that defines their existence; however, those qualities, often affective, reside in the audience and are mapped onto objects when they are seen as being similar—in effect they slide from one object to another because they have similar qualities. As rhetorical critics, we should give special attention, within the study of myth, to how the meaning of an image can so easily slide from one body to the next and in the process bring most of its connotative meaning. It is here that archetypes can be useful in the study of race as they intersect within our frameworks of ideology which help structure our reality.

Archetypes are guiding principles that we use to create typical examples of the thing in itself. The archetype consists of ideological fragments which lack a substantive image until it is constructed to fit a particular moment, language, and culture. However, how we conceive of, and interpret that language is situational and contextual. Kenneth Burke is instructive on this point when he argues that “we should guard against an overly universalizing view of myth and its archetypes” (1971, p. 111). He continues by adding that these archetypes can only be understood if we “add (to any mythopoetic awe) an element of sheerly social mystery” (p. 111). Context matters and, in this case, culture matters. The decoding of archetypes and their manifestations happens culturally as a way to explain “social mystery”. To read an archetype is to examine images which convey an argument and decode that argument for its ideological import. Part of the reading of any text is based on how the critic approaches the text. Stuart Hall explains that there are three basic positionalities of the critic.

Racial archetypes are original representational images that are evoked within and often because of the cultural norms. They exist as supplements which suture together contradictory

narratives. At no point is this a search for origins. This study focuses on points of emergence and repetition which arise in ideologies of racism. Homi K. Bhaba argues that “the point of intervention should shift from the identification of images as positive or negative, to an understanding of the process of subjectification made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse” (Bhabha, 1983, p. 20). Racial archetypes come about at a specific time and in a specific cultural context as way to make stable dissolving narratives in a changing world. These racial archetypes become a way to produce identities which join together coherent racial fantasies. Our fantasies take on mythical significance by creating a grammar to read bodies. Grammars build on previous fantasies and are similar in their form, but their function can be different. Unconscious associations are developed and change over time. What makes the Mandingo archetype so unique is that it carries with it the ideological and historical baggage of miscegenation and the value systems and frameworks which bring sexual racism into continued existence.

Racial archetypes exist as specific images. They have names and those names become part of the larger narrative of identification and categorization of people by race. Often these images are spectacular and focus on the body. Stuart Hall argues us that spectacular images are visual representations which are the “key first moment in the cultural circuit” (Hall, Evans, & Nixon, 2013, p. 297) Images are never produced in a vacuum. Instead they are a complicated set of propositions about culture and the prevailing political views on any subject. Johnathon Marovitz explains “The spectacle itself is not merely a set of widely disseminated images, but a social relationship in which imagery forms the basis for social interaction, meaning-making and identity formation.” (Markovitz, 2011, p. 4). In this respect it is not just a collection of images; it is a network of communication where the image fits into a broader intersubjective circuit of

meaning. Archetypes are represented by images and racial archetypes are represented by images which are laden with racial ideology. When the white gaze is turned on the black body we can see how the spectacular nature invokes feelings of desire and repulsion. These images create a deep paradox for audiences and blacks because they exist as contradictions; evoking good and bad feelings from their viewers. Our affective investments are so entangled in these archetypical images it becomes difficult to know what is an appropriate interpretation. The racial images I am interested in belong to a very specific genus. They are at once the embodiment of a generic primordial figure and images of an exact place and time.

For blacks', images are the lynchpin for maintaining racism. Patricia Hill Collins calls them “controlling images” (Collins, 2005, p. 24). These controlling images of blacks hold the same stereotypes as colonial myths. These controlling images are the foundation for what Stuart Hall calls the “spectacle of the other” (1997, p. 225). One of these archetypical images of the black man is the black sexual beast, Scott Poulson Bryant explains “the flip side of fantasy, the other side of desire, was the distorted fun house mirror image of the black man as the big dicked beast” (2005, p.11). This image has an enduring quality about it and is at once spectacular and mundane—spectacular in that the images of the large black penis which are “seen” and mundane in their pervasiveness. Korbena Mercer, in referring to Robert Mapplethorpe’s *Black Males* photo exhibit reminds us that these images of black men are “a cultural artifact that says something about certain ways in which white people 'look' at black people and how, in this way of looking, black male sexuality is perceived as something different, excessive, Other” (Mercer, 1994, p. 223). Images have become the object themselves.

Linda Scott states “a key premise will be that pictures are not merely analogues to visual perception but symbolic artifacts constructed from the conventions of a particular culture,”

(1994, p. 252) and a particular time. Placing images in context is part of what this study will do for the Mandingo myth. It will trace the changing meaning of Mandingo to its current digital inception within the symbolic field of pornography. As rhetorical and cultural critics, we need to resist the temptation to separate image from experience, time, and space (Dickinson, 2006). Instead, these images must remain, as Cara Finnegan argues, “grounded in the materiality of their rhetorical circulation.” (Finnegan, 2003, p. 224). In the digital era, images are not simply static representations. Instead, they are seen by individuals and in some cases thousands or millions and each person interprets them according to their own experience. E. Jenkins (2014) explains, “the circulation of images necessarily makes them polysemous, evoking many different meanings or identifications depending upon context” (Jenkins, 2014, p. 443).

The polysemous nature of visual texts creates the space for different readings of how and why the Mandingo archetype is an important site of struggle for meaning and definition of black men. Most visual texts cannot be reduced to a single interpretation “because they contain inherently contradictory meanings,” (Rowland & Strain, 1994, p. 213). On the one hand, the pornographic film genre becomes a place where women and men, black and white, are oppressed by the capitalist exploitation of the porn industry. While on the other, many scholars argue that pornography is a space of liberation and sexual awakenings. The polysemic nature of these images creates unstable symbols which, like clay, can be molded into whatever the producers of the image want. In this way psychoanalysis is profoundly apt at explaining the way images imbed themselves in the psyche and become part of our cultural unconscious.

My analysis is layered in this project. I argue that cultural mythical frameworks form the collective unconscious where we draw our types from while arguing that certain performances of those archetypes reinforce the cultural myths which created them—I call this the double

movement of archetypes. Throughout this study I want to pay attention to that movement- archetype to image and image to archetype. Within this process, I will suggest that racial and gendered archetypes of black men and white women draw on our collective unconscious to mold specific cultural articulations of racial archetypes. To do this, my study will proceed setup by arguing that myth is ideology. I will show that while I am ‘reading’ the text/image as a critic and unpacking its relations to myth and ideology. I will do this by focusing on the way the gaze/look happens within the text how it creates its own emotional connections for the viewers and how those emotions function within the larger ideological narratives about race and desire.

Outline of Study

In *Chapter 2: A Rhetorical History of Mandingo*, I trace the historical and cultural emergence of the Mandingo myth and archetype. From the writings of Harriet Becher Stowe to the world of pornography the articulation of the Mandingo has been a long and slow process. One that we investigate in-depth in Chapter 2. I will conclude that chapter by arguing the Mandingo cannot exist without the myth of the white woman since there is a level of consubstantiation that cannot be ignored. These complimentary myths continue to make appearances all through digital media.

Chapter 3: Reading the Mandingo: Image, Myth, and Archetype, will sketch the methodology of the study. Chapter 3 will begin by explaining why I have chosen to use Visual Pleasure Theory to unpack the film *Mandingo Massacre*. Visual Pleasure Theory is a useful heuristic to show the way the white male gaze structures the space of pornographic film. It is not stretch to say that interracial pornography is made more white men than it is for any other audience. With that in mind it is important to understand how that white male gaze falls on the black male body creating ambivalence through a framework of racial fetish. Racial Fetish is at the heart of the negrophilia and negrophobia that is responsible continued importance of the Mandingo image.

Chapter 4: Mandingo, Pornography, and the Big Black Cock: The Negation of Black Male

Sexual Subjectivity is a textual analysis of *Mandingo Massacre* (2011). In Chapter 4 I analyze

the movie *Mandingo Massacre* by investigating how the representations of the Mandingo

archetype function to reinforce cultural mythologies of the spectacle of the big black cock.

While these images may be common they are important because they create the parameters for

black male personhood. I argue that this archetypical image defines what it means to be black

and male and influences the perception of white audiences and how they see the black male

body. Finally, *Chapter 5: Conclusion: Implications and Further Study* examines the

implications of this study and what would be useful further inquiries. I conclude this study by

arguing that even as we think of racial progress in American certain archetypes send the notion

of progress in retrenchment.

Chapter 2: A Rhetorical History of the Mandingo Archetype

The conquest of manhood by the victory of the white godlike hero over the bestial villain in a life or death struggle for possession of the . . . The White Goddess is . . . at the heart of almost all Western myth, poetry, and literature. —Paul Hoch

Ronald Jackson and Donald Bogle outline the buck/ brute slave stereotype when they sketch its essential attributes; “the brute was always a tall, dark-skinned muscular, athletically built character . . . The brute or buck’s primary objective was raping white women” (Jackson, 2006, p. 41). These depictions of the buck slave created an image of the black male’s body as “indiscreet, devious, irresponsible, and sexually pernicious, at best” (Jackson, 2006, p. 41). Since the dawn of American popular culture and cinema, depictions of black manhood have revolved around an axis of criminality and sexual aggression. The black buck has become the ether from which the image of the Mandingo is drawn. To get a better understanding of the Mandingo archetype and situate him within the American cultural symbolic field, I will look at the Mandingo in history, literature, and movies so that we can finally turn our appreciate how this archetype plays out in the world of pornography.

The specificity of the Mandingo as archetype is imbued with connotative meaning that is very precise and while many theorists lump Mandingo into the larger category of the buck slave image, I would argue that they are distinct (Bogle, 2016; Jackson, 2006). The buck slave is more than the Mandingo. For Jackson and Bogle, the buck slave also incorporates drug dealers, rappers, and even Nat Turner. Certainly, some of those stereotypes overlap with the Mandingo archetype but their reason for existence is not miscegenation even if it is a byproduct of a specific depiction. To get a fuller understanding of the Mandingo archetype it is important to

have a historically specific tracing of its emergence. To that end, I break the Mandingo articulations into three basic sections: history, literature, and film.

Mandingo in history.

Mandingo “refers to a large linguistic group in West Africa. The Manding languages are part of the larger Niger-Congo language family...Their population exceeds thirteen million people” (Olson, 1996, p. 366). Most writing on the Mandingo tribe uses the term Mandika, Mandingo, and Mandig interchangeably. The origins of the Mandinkas date back to the thirteenth century and is derived from Manding which was one of the states of the ancient Mali Empire. In the early part of the fourteenth century, the Mande ruler, Mansa Musa, reigned over most of central and west Africa. Beginning in the 16th century, tens of thousands of Mandinka were captured and shipped to the Americas as slaves (Pruitt, 2016). These numbers become staggering when you consider “of the approximately 388,000 Africans who landed in America as a result of the slave trade, historians believe 92,000 (24 percent) were Senegambians, from the region of West Africa comprising the Senegal and Gambia Rivers and the land between them; many were Mandinka and Bambara (another Mande ethnic group) (Pruitt, 2016).

During slavery, "South Carolina planters . . . had strong ethnic preferences in the Charleston slave market. They preferred above all to have slaves from the Senegambia, which meant principally Bambara and Malinke from the interior [both are Mande] . . . and they generally have a preference against short people" especially from the Bight of Biafra (Schaffer, 2005). Schaffer argues that because the Charleston port was one of the largest in the Americas, their preference became the preferences of many of the other slave ports; he continues, “slave-buying proclivities in the Charleston slave market, emphasizing Mande and including the Mandinka of Senegal and Gambia, might have caused other states such as Virginia to have a

slight preference for Senegambian slaves as well” (Schaffer, 2005, p. 335). This proclivity for the Mande did not end with the slave traders. It even found its way into history and literature.

Mandingo in literature

Writing in 1868, Harriet Beecher Stowe describes Frederick Douglass’ genealogy and appearance by noting that, “the mother of Douglass must have been one of that Mandingo tribe of Africans who were distinguished among the slaves for fine features, great energy, intelligence and pride of character” (Stowe, 1868, p. 385). She continues, “the Mandingo has European features, a fine form, wavy, not woolly hair, is intelligent, vigorous, proud and brave.” (p. 385). Stowe romanticizes the traits she assigns to the Mandika tribe. Stowe’s description of the Mandingo people undergirds the way many viewed the Mandingo as “energetic” and “vigorous.” These descriptions of the Mandingo became the counterpart to the Hottentot Venus and the image of the Mandingo was “an African warrior, prideful, strong, muscular...not initially sexualized; hence the Mandingo image is not riddled with scopophilic undertones preoccupied with the flesh. Instead he is a mythological hero, a proponent of justice” (Jackson, 2006, pp. 77–78). Here we return to the mythological importance of the Mandingo image in its pristine and pure sense. It is also important to note here that this difference is specific to the audience. For whites, at this during slavery, the Mande are sexualized. However, by the mid twentieth century, the sexualization of the black body was complete and hence, the Mande would become a sexualized component of popular culture. Much of this attitudinal shift can be attributed to the Dunning School and Kyle Onstott.

Kyle Onstott and Falconcrest trilogy.

In 1957, Kyle Onstott introduces us to the earliest recognizable version of the Mandingo archetype in his book series *Falconcrest*. While it received mixed reviews, Richard Wright once

stated that, “you must read that book to understand what happened to the great American dream” (Harrington, 1961, p. 84). Wright argued that the book helped clarify the “connection between police brutality during the civil rights movement and interracial sexual violence that was commonplace during slavery” (Smithers, 2012, p. 153). However, not everyone agreed with Wright’s depiction of the book as transgressive; Inge describes the book this way:

The world of *Mandingo* is a miasmatic wasteland of slave-breeding plantations, populated by vicious masters, their drunken wives, generously endowed “breeding studs,” and eager and wanton “breeding wenches.” *Mandingo* might be passed off as a prurient example of the worst tendencies in popular fiction were it not for its impact on the publishing industry. Onstott’s success was so great that hundreds of imitations, mostly paperback originals, were published over the next quarter of a century. All of them relied on sensational portrayals of interracial sexuality, degenerate aristocrats, and black people who found it impossible to control their libidinous desires. (Inge, 2014, pp. 118–119)

Onstott’s book sold more than 3 million copies between 1957 and 1960 and had a substantial impact on popular culture. All in all, *Mandingo* and its sequels are still in print and have amassed total sales for the series of around 30 million copies (Inge, 2014). In addition to selling 30 million copies of the Falconhurst trilogy, *Mandingo* was made into a Broadway play and major motion picture starring, former heavyweight boxing champion of the world, Ken Norton. Onstott’s capitalization on the *Mandingo* image helped shift the collective unconsciousness to reconfigure the *Mandingo* archetype from buck into the conflicted slave Ganymede.

The main character is a pure-blooded member of the Mandinka tribe given the name Ganymede (or Mede). Known for their intelligence and physical prowess, the *Mandingo* were highly sought-after slaves. It is not accidental that Onstott has chosen the name Ganymede.

Kenneth Burke reminds us that naming is “creative”, magic(al), and discriminating (Burke, 1969). In Greek mythology, Ganymede was a young Trojan shepherd who “was the loveliest born of the race of mortals”(Homer, 2009, 20: 199-224). In the legend that follows, Ganymede was taken by Zeus to live among the gods as a consort to Zeus and his personal cup bearer. In the myth, written by Homer, Hera, Zeus’ wife, becomes so jealous of Ganymede that she starts a war with the Trojans to punish him for consorting with Zeus (Poulson-Bryant, 2011). The focus on Ganymede’s physical beauty is not lost on Onstott who describes Mede as having legs “made of springs” and “he stomped like a stallion and yet maintained the dignity of a potentate” Onstott continues “the head was barbaric. It was like some roughhewn sculpture, some great unfinished carving devoid of detail, a head so powerful, so primitive as to inspire fear” (Onstott, 1957, p. 170). The author is building an image of a Mandingo as less than human: a noble savage. Evoking the noble savage is strategic; it allows Onstott to give Mede an air of humaneness without allowing him to traverse the space to full humanity. Mixing these two mythic figures allows Onstott to depict Mede as a beautiful noble savage who evokes feeling of desire so great that not even the gods could not resist.

The Ganymede myth is awash with betrayal, murder, and revenge. As Bryant explains, “the Ganymede myth, like other myths, has its roots in emotion, in lesson teaching parables that sometimes read like guides to living” (2001, p. 111). Arousing the range of emotions of outrage, sympathy, and disgust, the myth traffics in another emotion: desire. It traffics in the desire to traverse the prohibition as well in more physical desire for the body of Mede-especially his penis. The Mandingo myth valorizes and demonizes the size of the black penis and black sexual aggression. The Mandingo archetype has three distinct features. First, it is a black man. Second, the image relies on rhetoric miscegenation. The archetype invests in the white feminine.

Third, there is a focus on the black penis. Taken together what we get is an image of the black man with a large penis who has a yearning for white women. These socially constructed archetypal images of blackness function as condensation symbols that truncate identity into an easily understood representations. Collins calls them “controlling images” (Collins, 2005); and these controlling images of African Americans depict blacks as animals, savages, and uncivilized; many of the images that we see draw on these reservoirs of myths and stereotypes (Jones, 2005).

Mandingo as the big black cock and the myth of the pure white woman.

There is a long history of descriptions of the black penis and black sexual savagery against the white woman in the Western imagination. Paul Hoch explains “the danger to the fair heroine to the dark evil apparition was clearly the crucial lynchpin of the gothic novel, most science fiction, and pornography. Likewise, the threatened assault of the ever erect black buck on the chaste white lady has dominated the mythologies of the American south for more than three centuries” (p.44). The myth of the chaste white lady has been around for many years. Barbara Welter argues that during the 19th century; media, religion, and literature created a the myth of the white lady and they called it True Womanhood.

The phrase “True Womanhood” “attributed religion (or piety), purity, submissiveness, and domesticity to womanhood” (Brummitt, 2015, para. 3). By the 20th century these attributes became the foundation of a mythology of white womanhood. This mythology became an ingrained part of white woman gender construction. Between 1820-1860 the ideology of true womanhood was also known as the cult of true womanhood. By creating classifications of women that stressed piety and domesticity, the cult of true womanhood had a defining effect on women of the era. So much so that early feminists and suffragists sought to take back their own

agency by denying the validity of the idea of True Womanhood. Removing women from the public sphere and stressing their submissiveness and vulnerability, it only logically followed they needed to be protected. This fragment of mythology continues to circulate today. Part of what makes the myth so pertinent and alluring is that we admit its falsity and embrace it as truth all at the same time. This cult of true womanhood sets the stage for the fetish of the interracial desire. Moreover, it became a critical building block in black male subjectivity, Curry inquires, “what social life can Black men have under a regime dedicated to the protection of white womanhood? A Black man is a rapist even when he is not, so to speak. Consequently, Black masculinity is defined by the whim of white sexual anxiety” (2016, p. 98). He continues, “The white woman—or, rather, white womanhood—is the lynchpin of white supremacy. It is the representation of the order aimed to be sustained by the power and organization of society. . . . Black manhood was engineered to be subservient to this will; consequently, the body of the Black male was both disposable to this social order and in violation of it” (Curry, 2017, p. 103). Curry’s insight is that black manhood and subjectivity is produced in relation, and subservient to, white feminine archetypes. It is hard to ignore how this process has worked in the cultural sites of cinema, literature, and pornography. In these sites intersecting and contradictory archetypes produce images to be performed by the actors and interpreted by the audiences.

Herein lies the contradiction when it comes to black men during slavery and Jim Crow. White women, under white supremacist patriarchy, exist as powerless and submissive expect in relation to black flesh where they have complete control. In this way the contradiction hides the ideology present in the white female-black male sexual binary. Black men, have traditionally lacked the power to assert control over their own bodies and desires. In this space the white

supremacy become apparent- black men are both raped and rapist in the same sexual act. Curry explains:

white women not only were presumed innocent in any possible contact they had with Black men; they were defined as such, regardless of their class position in society. Even when whites knew that the sex between a Black man and white woman was consensual— or, as in the case of Edward Coy, “rested upon a yearlong liaison with a white woman”— the Black man had to be lynched for the protection of white womanhood nonetheless” (2017, p. 94).

Curry understands that even today the way the white gaze falls on the black male body it is always as object, denying him subjectivity. Onstott’s book was not the only cultural artifact to perpetuate the Mandingo myth-in fact it spawned movie.

Mandingo in film

Mandingo (1975) takes place on the plantation of Falconhurst in pre-Civil War Alabama. Once a massive cotton plantation Falconhurst has become a slave-breeding plantation. Falconhurst is owned by Maxwell and Hammond Warren. *Mandingo*’s opening scene is of a crumbling plantation overlaid with a blues track sung by Muddy Waters. This stands in direct contrast to previous plantation narratives that show the plantation as idyllic and pristine. Showing the plantation as a weakening symbol of the Old South this shot shows the audience that this story will be told from a outside perspective. What we see is the end of an era happening onscreen. Hammond and Warren represent white patriarchal masculinity and all of its excess. Aside from breeding the slaves for sale, they rape them, beat them, and even use them as foot rests. Warren, convinced that he can cure his rheumatism, sleeps with his feet resting on a young slave in order to transfer the condition to the slave. Within this ideological setting the

subtext of *Mandingo* is sex. Everything in their universe revolves around the axis of sex, specifically, sexual racism. Sexual racism is the basis of their wealth, pleasure, and progeny. *Mandingo* is abounding with multiple myths. The myth of white woman innocence is exemplified in Blanche and its shadow is recorded on Mede. Ganymede (Mede) becomes the starting point of the circulation of the Mandingo specific image and its attendant ideological investments.

In an early scene of the movie, they introduce Mede at a slave auction. Mede, played by former heavyweight champion Ken Norton, is oiled, chained, and bare-chested. As the slave owners begin the bidding process they watch as a German widow inspects Mede by reaching under his loin cloth to grab his testicles. Then the camera zooms in on her face to see her eyes widen in surprise and pleasure.



(Figure 1: Mede at the Auction in Mandingo, 1975)

She is excited by what she finds hidden beneath his loin cloth; and it becomes clear to the other slave owners that she plans to buy Mede in order to please her. As Bryant reminds us “Mandingo, as a stud slave, portrayed by Ken Norton (another athlete turned thespian) came to be called, the iconic representation of black male hung-ness” (2001, p. 110). However, at the last minute she is outbid by Hammond Maxwell who is infatuated with the idea of owning a

Mandingo slave to use him in bare knuckle fights. During chattel slavery the black body was fungible for pleasure, sports, and sex. Bryant brings to our attention the way that the film shows Mede in the first scene as “overly fetishistic” and that the “way they portray Mede’s body, the glistening, greased-up, muscular frame that is nothing more than a money making, climax inducing, object of ridicule and desire, chopping down forty foot trees, winning fights, thrusting between the legs of his plantation mistress” (2001, p. 113) is indicative of their future uses of the black body.

The real thrust of this movie revolves around the sexual interaction that happens between Mede and Blanche. Blanche is the wife of Hammond. Blanche, played by Susan George, comes to Falconhurst happy and willing to be the breed mare for Hammond. Early in the movie Blanche is thought of as the perfect wife for Hammond. Until Hammond finds out that Blanche is not a virgin. For Hammond, her lack of innocence makes her unworthy of his love and affection. Her shame is charged with anger at her husband’s infidelity with a slave so Blanche initiates a sexual relationship with Hammond’s prize fighting slave Ganymede (Mede). In predictable fashion, Blanche becomes pregnant with Mede’s child. When Blanche’s mother comes to the plantation to nurse her through the delivery; it is clear that the baby is biracial so her mother kills the baby. Hammond then poisons his wife and boils Mede to death. As he is forcing Mede into the pot of boiling water with a pitchfork another slave, Agamemnon, attempts to save Mede and shoots Warren and Hammond to death.

Since 1975 the name Mandingo has become synonymous with interracial sex when a black man is involved. It is true that, at the time (1975), there had never been a mainstream movie that depicted black men having sex with white women, so brazenly. Certainly, Blanche was the polar opposite of Lillian Gish in *Birth of a Nation*, Where Gish preferred to throw herself

off a cliff instead of sleep with a black man. This was not the case with Blanche, in fact, one scholar noted, that the Mede/Blanche sex scenes, “directly challenge the white supremacist notion of the ‘purity and sanctity of white womanhood’”(Guerrero, 1993, p. 14). However, not all scholars are as optimistic about the emancipating effects of the sex scenes. Weheliye argues, that Mede lost his dignity stripped by “displaying at once the physical powerlessness of the dysselected slave subject and the untainted power of the selected master subject (Weheliye, 2014, p. 63). No matter which side of this debate you fall the white woman/black man sexual constellation is a complicated one especially when you distill the fantasy elements from the mythic framework of the movie. What you realize is that white women, like Blanche were always already innocent. In her scenes with Mede she uses her place in the racial hierarchy of the South to act out and to force Mede to have sex with her, regardless of his consent. Her scenes show Mede always ready and willing, even if reluctantly, to please her.

The Mandingo story is a story about the taboo of black men sleeping with white women and this is a study about that relationship. In her book, *Hollywood Fantasies of Miscegenation*, Susan Courtney tells us that “representations of miscegenation have had a far more integral place in the history of American cinema that we yet to fully recognize” (2005, p. 1). Courtney recognizes black-white sexual relations, “offer particular insight into the cinema’s role in the intertwined productions of race and gender” and “the role of racial and sexual fantasy in shaping the form and content of the Hollywood cinema itself” (2005, p. 1). As an archetype, Mandingo becomes one of the default identities for black maleness. Stuart Hall reminds us that, identity is problematic and instead of thinking of it as fixed, we should consider it as “a production which is never complete, always a process” (Hall, 1990, p. 222). The prohibition of sex with white women is based in two interlocking fantasies; the sexual savagery of black men and the

innocence of white women. As Susan Courtney notes, the entire project of American cinema rests on the sexual racism of films like the *Birth of a Nation* and *Mandingo*.

Chapter 3: Reading the Mandingo: Image, Myth, and Archetype

It's hard to talk about either race or sex in this country. Mention both and silence reigns. Behind closed doors in private circles, Americans entertain a host of myths and fantasies about race and sex. Many are linked to racial fears that rise out of stereotypes. Few myths evoke more pain or seem so intractable as those surrounding sexuality between blacks and whites. —Robert Segal

The act of reading is an act of interpretation. Paul Ricoeur states that “reading is also the suspension of all reality and ‘an active openness to the text’ (131). It is this concept of reading as suspension and openness that introduces the complete rearrangement of the previous themes” (Ricoeur, 1977, p. 210). Ricoeur is speaking about learning to read images in the same way that we read words. Reading images relies on a theory of the gaze; “the gaze, rather than being a hermeneutic structure that flows out of the body/subject, is also something that impacts on, shapes, and contorts the body subject” (Fuery & Mansfield, 2000, p. 72). How we position ourselves and the point of view of the producer makes a tremendous difference in the interpretation of any narrative text.

Roland Barthes explains that every image is political, and every political image can be read on two different levels; the connotative and the denotative (Barthes, 2001, p. 135). In some cases, the denotative and the connotative readings get flattened into the same reading. This is the case with the Mandingo image. When this happens, the image becomes overdetermined with meaning, so much so that the mere utterance of the word or the sight of the image becomes a condensation symbol—where different audiences can draw wildly different and often

contradictory meanings from the same image. The paradox inherent in the image of black sexuality and masculinity represented in this film will help us answer questions about the pornographic industry and the media's contradictory representations of black sexuality and masculinity. Representations of black sexuality in the popular media are often viewed through a prism of good or bad or they are ignored altogether. Wesley Morris reminds us that while there has been a virtual abundance of penises being shown onscreen these days, some penises remain absent: "A vast majority of these penises are funny. . . Their unceremonious appearance. . . is new, and maybe progressive. But that progress is exclusive, because these penises almost always belong to white men. . . A black penis, even the idea of one, is still too disturbingly bound up in how America sees — or refuses to see — itself" (Morris, 2016). This speak volumes to the places where the black penises are shown.

Freud, in *Three Essay's on Sexuality*, argues that pleasure from looking is derived from our drive to see or scopophilia. Scopophilia is the "love of looking"; audiences enjoy looking at objects that evoke pleasurable feelings (Sellnow, 2016, p. 244). Sellnow (2016) explains "viewers are drawn to gaze at an image as beautiful, erotic, or fantastic" (p.244). The scopic drive places the look as its object of desire and is "related to the myth of origins, the primal scene and the problematic of the fetish" (Bhabha, 1983). It is important to recognize how these archetypes get circulated through social structures.

As I examine the scenes from the movie, I want to pick apart the 'look' in the scenes from three different perspectives: the camera, the actors, and the audience. I will explore how the actors react to each other based on what they say and how they behave for the camera. While paying close attention to what the camera wants us to see, I will argue that these angles and shots are intentional and meant to focus on the spectacular image of the black male penis; its length,

girth, and penetration. Finally, I will also unpack the audience perspective by proposing that the video taken, in its totality, draws upon mythic and ideological structures evoking an affect from the audience. *Mandingo Massacre* draws upon the archetypal construct of the Mandingo as fetish evoking an image of black pleasure and disavowing black pain. It is important to keep in mind that even though I am looking at images, I am less concerned about the intention of the image. I am more concerned with how it gets interpolated in relation to black maleness; in this way I will examine them as “a cultural artifact that says something about certain ways in which white people 'look' at black people and how, in this way of looking, black male sexuality is perceived as something different, excessive, Other” (Mercer, 1994).

In 2007, Adam and Eve entertainment released *Long Dong Black Kong*. The film title itself created controversy because it represented the black actors as King Kong an uncontrollable black beast with a thirst for a white woman. Peter Reynolds, vice president of Adam and Eve, responded by saying “we should all not take ourselves so seriously,” as the “name is totally innocent” (Dines, 2011, p. 122). This rhetorical move by Reynolds is an example of fetishistic disavowal. Consider another example from U.S. vernacular, people often say: “I know very well that racism is wrong, which is why I am colorblind; but you have to admit American culture is better than others.” Together these lines of thinking from Reynolds and other vernacular are critical to understanding how fetish, racism, and sexuality all function in the service of a larger ideology of whiteness.

Throughout his writings Slovenian Žižek calls this rhetorical move the fetishistic disavowal. An audience knows that these actors are the same as themselves—but their reactions to the film may still be, “just look at the size of his big black cock.” The fetish becomes *both* the object of desire and justification of difference. The “fetishistic disavowal of cynicism” (Myers, 2003) lays

the ground work for the interaction of ideology between the social and the individual. Put another way, our embrace of colorblind rhetoric allows us to be racist because we appear to be non-racists.

Appearances do matter: you can have your multiple dirty fantasies, but it matters which of them will be integrated into the public domain of the symbolic law, noted by the big Other. This double reading is not simply a compromise on the part of the symbolic law, in the sense that the law is interested only in keeping up appearances, and leaves you free your exercise of dirty imagination on condition that it does not encroach upon the public domain. The law itself needs its obscene supplement, it is sustained by it. (Zizek, 2001, “How to read Lacan”, para. 8)

For Zizek the law becomes the symbolic structure that we recognize as the defining edifice of our cultural life; our laws and our cultural ideologies become defined by what it excludes. In this instance, the dirty fantasy for the audience and the actors is the desire conjured by the miscegenation and interracial sex. Interracial sex perfectly acceptable however, in reality, the audience becomes obsessed with the Other’s difference. In our example of *Long Dong Black Kong* above, it is represented by the actor’s penis. That mark of difference is attributed to his appearance of difference, his race. This rhetorical move can be seen and heard throughout the film, where the actresses long for his Big Black Cock (BBC). Moreover, it allows the viewer and the actors to enjoy their tryst into interracial sex because as the example highlights—they know *they* are not racist even if *other* people who watch it are. This example is the hallmark of how ideology functions. Ideology, like mythic narratives, give explanations of the “why” and “how” when it comes to culture. The fetishistic disavowal functions as the obscene (literally as

in the case of *Long Dong Black Kong*) underside to the ideological state apparatus and the smooth functions of civil society.

Laura Mulvey and Visual Pleasure Theory

Laura Mulvey's 1975 essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" argues that cinema tends to favor a white heterosexual male gaze (1975, 1989). For Mulvey the notion of the look was divided into three central types: the look of the camera, the audience; and the characters. She argues that the first two are subordinated to the third as a driving force of the narrative. She elaborates that the "male gaze describes the way in which the viewers (both male and female) look at people presented and represented in the visual images by identifying with the heterosexual male actors" (2008, p. 244). In this way, the desire to identify with the male actors reinforces the male as active and the female as passive.

Psychoanalysis and criticism.

Visual pleasure theory also relies heavily on Lacan's theory of the mirror stage. Lacan argues that we begin our journey to subjectivity when, as infants, we realize that there is a world outside of ourselves. For Lacan the world is divided into what he calls the "Three Orders." These Orders are the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic order. These orders help us make sense of how our mental process work in a very general way. The Real represents the place beyond language. Incidentally, the real is also the place of blackness. For many theorists, blackness is beyond representation within the symbolic order (Fanon, 2008; Hartman, 1997; Sexton, 2008; Wilderson, 2010). Once we symbolize an object we move it from the real into the symbolic order. The symbolic order is where we make sense of the world around us. It is where communication happens. Simply, it is this intersubjective reality which gives the world around us meaning. Perhaps the most elusive and important of these orders is the imaginary. The

imaginary is the where the superego forms and shapes the individual and society. In the imaginary the subject is formed in relation to its symbolic order. Here the superego forms based on an individual's relationship with symbolic order and the fantasies that exist in the individual and society.

Fantasies constitute and direct our desire. Fantasies give us a “schema” to interact and comprehend the world. In this way these fantasies function exactly like myths, narratives and/or terministic screens; they give us a worldview. This has a wide range of implications on how audiences interpret film—particularly pornographic film—because the way that we “see” the images before us on a screen influences how we understand and relate to those images, and it influences what pleasures we can derive from them. Mulvey's theory is important to this study because it situates the view of the camera as the white male viewer. It also focuses on how the camera, the actors, and the audience all “look”: from that white male perspective. Always ensuring that the black male image is different and spectacular. Images of blacks are often spectacular. In arguing that an image is spectacular, we must first define what spectacular means. For Douglas Kellner, a spectacular image is one that embodies “contemporary society's basic values” (Kellner, 2003, p.2). While spectacle does refer to an image or event that is unusual and striking, it also refers to the ordinary. Many authors have noticed the effect that the image and consequently the spectacle have on politics, entertainment, sports, and our everyday lives (Baudrillard, 1994; Best & Kellner, 1997; Harold & DeLuca, 2005; Kellner, 2003). These authors all examine multiple media events in an effort to track the emergence of the spectacle as an organizing principle of our social narratives and myths. ,

Ambivalence and fetish.

Fetish is described as “getting pleasure from openly looking at an object” (Sellnow, 2016, p. 245). Fetish is so much more than just getting pleasure from an object. Racial archetypes generally, and Mandingo specifically, function as images so full with meaning that they function ambivalently. Fetish is also a form of ambivalence. Bhabha admits that fetish is an important tool of analysis because it focuses on the “process of ambivalence” (1983, p. 18). For Bhabha this process helps highlight how colonial discourse “ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctures; informs its strategies of individuation and marginalization; produces that effect of probabilistic truth and predictability” (p. 18). Bhabha continues:

the fetish represents the simultaneous play between metaphor as substitution (masking absence and difference) and metonymy (which contiguously registers the perceived lack).

The fetish. . . gives access to an 'identity' which is predicated as much on mastery and pleasure as it is on anxiety and defence, for it is a form of multiple and contradictory belief in its recognition of difference and disavowal of it. This conflict of pleasure/unpleasure, mastery/defence, knowledge/disavowal, absence/presence has a fundamental significance for colonial discourse. For the scene of fetishism is also the scene of the reactivation and repetition of primal fantasy (p.27).

The conception of fetish as the play between the metaphor and metonym helps shed light on the process of how the term Mandingo is first emptied of its content, and then mapped onto individuals in completely different situations. The ability to be simultaneously everything and nothing creates unintelligibility. Indeed, this unintelligibility is a function of fetish. Fetish

engenders this technology of ambivalence which subverts meaningful attempts to explain the persistence of racism. Bhabha continues:

ambivalence is one of the most significant strategies of discriminatory power—whether racist or sexist, peripheral or metropolitan. It is this force of ambivalence that gives the colonial discourse its currency: ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjectures; informs its strategies of individuation and marginalization; produces that effect of probabilistic truth and predictability which, for the stereotype, must always be in excess of what can be empirically proved or logically construed. (28).

Racial fetish undergirds a dialectic of fear and desire creating an ambivalence which allows these images to be interpreted by drawing opposite readings from the same movie, looks, and characters. In doing so, there are always multiple readings of any cultural artifact, many of which can be used to reify or transgress existing structures of power, “but the central notion of the fetish as a metaphorical substitute for the absent phallus enables understanding of the psychic structure of disavowal, and the splitting of levels of conscious and unconscious belief, that is relevant to the ambiguous axis upon which negrophilia and negrophobia intertwine” (Mercer, 1994, p. 173). Identifying the boundaries and contours of representations of black male sexuality and its role in the larger structures of ideology and whiteness is critical to a more robust investigation into the American racial project. More importantly these representations produce subjects: a process called subjectification.

Unpacking images of the Mandingo archetype can tell us a lot about how desire and fear are scripted onto the black body and how this specific form of ideological investment can transgress and reaffirm whiteness and racism. This dissertation examines the racial archetype Mandingo by applying the analytic of fetish to the Mandingo artifact in order to unpack

contradictory feelings around the image of the black male sexual savage. The resulting excess is overdetermined; ensuring multiple readings of specific archetypes. Perhaps worse than the overdetermination is the ability of this excess to be used as disavowal.

These dualisms help form a discursive assemblage where the black man becomes desired and feared at the same time. His penis becomes the focal point of this dialectic-imagined as an “eggplant” capable of producing delight and feared as tool of cuckolding and an instrument of sexual violence (Fanon, 2008; Fanon, Sartre, & Bhabha, 2005; Marriott, 1996; Morris, 2016; Poulson-Bryant, 2011). Subjectification happens when these ideological constructs are mapped onto humans and in a sense become how they are defined by those looking. These racial archetypes are “a complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation as anxious as it is assertive and demands not only that we extend our critical and political objectives but that we change the object of analysis itself” (Bhabha, 1983). This process of mapping the grammar onto the subject is called metonymic sliding.

Metonymic sliding

Metonymic sliding is the awareness that objects do not contain an essential quality that defines their existence, however, those qualities, often affective, reside in the audience and are mapped onto objects when they are seen as similar. Sara Ahmed explains:

In this sense, fear works as an affective economy, despite how it seems directed toward an object. Fear does not reside in a particular object or sign, and it is this lack of residence that allows fear to slide across signs, and between bodies. This sliding becomes stuck only temporarily, in the very attachment of a sign to a body, whereby a sign sticks to a body by constituting it as the object of fear, a constitution taken on by the body, encircling it with a fear that becomes its own. The sideways movement of fear (where

we have a metonymic and sticky relation between signs) is also a backward movement: objects of fear become substituted for each other over time. This substitution involves the passing by of the objects from which the subject seems to flee. Fear and anxiety create the very effect of “that which I am not,” through the very affect of turning away from an object, which nevertheless threatens as it passes by or is displaced. To this extent, fear does not involve the defense of borders that already exist; rather, fear makes those borders, by establishing objects from which the subject, in fearing, can stand apart, objects that become “the not” from which the subject appears to flee. Through fear not only is the very border between self and other affected, but the relation between the objects feared (rather than simply the relation between the subject and its objects) is shaped by histories that “stick,” by making some objects more than others seem fearsome. (Ahmed, 2004, pp. 127–128)

As rhetorical critics we should give special attention, within the study of myth, on how an archetypal image so easily slides from one body to the next; and in the process bring forth its connotative meaning. Archetypes are a useful heuristic in the study of race because they activate our ideological frameworks. In the case of Mandingo the marker of the big black cock slides between black bodies and becomes an essential characteristic of black men.

Chapter 4: Mandingo, Pornography, and the Big Black Cock: The Negation of Black Male Subjectivity

The black man's sword is a sword. When he has thrust it into your wife, she has really felt something and lets oneself go, that is, when one abandons oneself to the movement of images, one no longer perceives the negro, but a member: the negro is eclipsed. He is made a member. He is a penis. -Frantz Fanon

Interracial sex sells. With titles such as *Blacked*, *Fear of the Black Penis*, and *Black Cocks Matter* interracial pornography is big business. Even though the term “interracial” can apply to many different mixtures of culture and race, in the world of pornography it usually means black and often it means black man/white woman. As Isiah Maxwell explains, “the term ‘interracial’ porn is misleading — hence the scare quotes — because it generally isn't applied to scenes between a white woman and, say, an Asian man. It simply means 'a black person'” (Clark-Flory, 2015, para. 9). While this logic seems reductive the idea of interracial begins from the space of antiblackness. By doing a close textual reading of *Mandingo Massacre* using psychoanalysis, I argue that pornography reaffirms the myth of black male otherness. As Fanon recognizes in the epigraph, pornography draws on age-old myths about black male hypersexuality and the movie *Mandingo Massacre* is another example of the penis as a stand in for black manhood. In fact, the signifier is so common in the world of porn that Mandingo has become the name sake for the entire genre of interracial pornography: Mandingo Parties (“Mandingo!,” 2011). Mandingo Parties are events, usually involving group sex, where two or more black men have sex with either a single white woman or with multiple white women while their white husbands watch. I mention Mandingo parties to show the popularity of Mandingo as

a symbol of blackness maleness. Myths of the black penis as metonym for black maleness allow for a seamless narrative about the nature of blackness, hypersexuality, and sexual aggression.

Myths of black male sexuality draw on colonial narratives of black male savagery and lust for white women. When these myths and narratives are examined it reveals how such representations are complimentary to the discursive and ideological architecture for anti-black racism in America—demonstrating the very real consequences that pornography has on the everyday material conditions of black males. From the church shooting in Charleston, South Carolina to the Rodney King beating, the narrative of black men lusting after, and raping, white women has become the cornerstone dominating the American racial narrative. By unpacking the themes of *Mandingo Massacre* and focusing on the specific archetype. I suggest that the Mandingo myth is in constant circulation even in the twenty first century, in part thanks to pornography.

At the outset, I would argue that pornography is ritualistic; metaphorically and functionally. Functionally, every scene in *Mandingo Massacre* has the same elements: the reveal, the sex, and the finish. Every scene involves fellatio, the missionary position (man on top), doggystyle (women on her hands and knees with the male performer behind her), cowgirl (the woman on top facing the male performer), reverse cowgirl (the woman on top facing away from the man), and the ‘money shot’ (the male performer ejaculating into the face of the female). Metaphorically, pornography is ritualistic in the sense that “a ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs” (Carey, 2009, p. 5). In the case study of *Massacre*, I would argue that those shared beliefs are based on the myth that black men have macrophalluses. The ritualistic nature of *Massacre* means the only

thing that changes are the women but the content is always the same. In most of these of these scenes the sex is secondary to the spectacle of the black penis. The way the camera dissects his body is done strategically in order to reaffirm our understanding of black maleness as the black penis. However, before any analysis can be done it is essential to consider the basic style of camerawork in the film: gonzo.

Looking at the Artifact: *Mandingo Massacre* and Gonzo Pornography

Mandingo Massacre is a set of scenes that lack a plot. The narrative argument of these scenes and the film functions through the use cultural reference points. The producers of the film forgo storytelling to rely on already told narratives of miscegenation for the plot. For the audience there is often an enthymematic reliance on the rhetoric of miscegenation which allows the narrative to be filled in and the personas to take shape. When it comes to racialized pornography the ideology of antiblackness can help us understand why these interpretations often fail at transgression. While these scenes may appear polysemic the truth is that prevailing ideologies function as the terministic screens for much of the audience. As Ronald Jackson reminds us “the body is the primary site and surface of race and representation” (Jackson, 2006, p. 1). Looking for deeper meaning in order to deny what is on the surface seems counterproductive at worst and disingenuous at best; mostly because it denies the parsimonious explanation right before us. Most of today’s pornography, especially the free porn, is shot without narrative structure and reliant on archetypes to tell the story of the scenes. This style of pornography, lacking plot and narrative structure, is known as gonzo pornography.

Defining gonzo pornography can be tricky because currently most pornographic scenes engage in at least some elements of gonzo filmmaking; however, interracial pornography is one of the largest genres of gonzo pornography (Dines, 2006). One definition of gonzo pornography

is, “that genre which is all over the Internet and is today one of the biggest moneymakers for the industry—which depicts hard-core, body-punishing sex in which women are demeaned and debased” (Dines, 2011, xi). While Dines is not wrong—much of the sex that these women perform in this movie is punishing—this quote does not seem to differentiate gonzo from many of the subgenres of pornography. Perhaps a better definition is:

gonzo pornography is the way that it is shot from the point of view (POV) of the man having the sex or from the POV of someone involved in the scene. Specifically, it is defined as filmmaking in which the camerawork is a representation of the cameraman's senses, and in which the camera is an acknowledged participant in the scene; the person behind the camera does not necessarily have to participate in the sex, but often does.

(“The Naked Truth: Quick and Dirty Guide to Gonzo | GameLink,” n.d, para. 2.)

Gonzo pornography is a reference to gonzo journalism, which is a first-person style meant to place the viewer as inside the scene as if they filmed it themselves (Hardy, 2008). Further, gonzo style differs from traditional pornography where there is often a plot, character development, and a storyline. Tarrant explains, “in contrast, gonzo porn has no plot line. Gonzo lacks backdrops and fancy costumes (or usually any clothing at all... it is the erasure of the so-called fourth wall where there is no pretense of separation between the performers” (Tarrant, 2016, p. 31). The erosion of the fourth wall works well for the viewer because it puts them closer to the action and often involves banter with the camera and audience. This first-person style lends itself to minimizing the male participant from the scene—the only thing visible is his penis. It is important to understand how these methods of display “create contexts for the production of meaning” (Hall et al., 2013, p. 173) since these scenes lack a storytelling element, the context for meaning production happens at the level of cultural narrative and not within the

confines of the fantasy created in the movie. Finally, there is little to no character development in gonzo pornography, “The performers on-screen may be role-playing, but they are not characters in a true sense, and what they’re doing is not exactly acting...The performers—professional or not—tend to use stage names, not character names; they are portraying sexual personas, but those personas belong to them and are carried with them from film to film” (Purcell, 2012, p. 88). All of the performers in *Mandingo Massacre* (2011) perform under their persona/stage names in other films. Rhetorically, these personas create their import from invoking their type within a cultural narrative. The characters’ personae get rhetorically enacted in *Mandingo Massacre* (2011) by relying on the cultural myths of their archetypes. The producers of the film do their best to guide the viewer to understand the types in play by costume minimization, breaking the fourth wall, and camera shots. Perhaps the best place to begin unpacking this process of how the viewers are directed to the cultural archetypes in play is the DVD jacket.

Introducing Mandingo Massacre: what the DVD jacket “says.”

The cover of the DVD is important because it is the introduction and preview to what the video will present. The background is light blue. In red lettering at the top of the box are the words “THE WORLD’S LARGEST COCK!!” and “FEATURING THE LEGENDARY MANDINGO IN EVERY SCENE” (Jordan, 2011). In gold capital letters is the name of the video MANDINGO MASSACRE and Jules Jordan is listed as both the studio and the director of the video (figure 2).



(Figure 2: *Mandingo Massacre* DVD jacket, Jules Jordan, 2011)

The text graphics direct us to the images plastered across the front cover of the box: six pictures of Lisa Ann in various poses and three pictures of Mandingo’s penis. There is not a single picture of Mandingo—the only images are of his penis. Mandingo is seen as penis first and person second, if he is seen as a person at all. On the back of the box, there are action photos of all the performers in the movie: Adrianna Luna, Alanah Rae, Heather Starlet, Lisa Ann, and Jada Stevens (Figure 2). Since gonzo style lends itself to point-of-view filming, the penis becomes a character in its own right. The images of bodies on the DVD box of *Mandingo Massacre* tell us a lot about what the production team wants us to pay attention to and attribute value. The removal of the Mandingo’s body and face from most of the frames of the cover and the movie scenes accentuates the spectacle that is his phallus; “the porn industry deals with surface, exteriors, looks, bodies. And, as it turns out, like modeling, porn is full of racial inequities”(Stewart, 2013, para. 4). In fact, this style of camera work results in the shooting of the penis as disembodied, creating the penis *as* the archetype. Using the camera to sever the penis from the man is a form of symbolic castration which relies on the camera to remove the black penis from the black body.

castration. The symbolic castration of the black male continues throughout the five scenes of the movie.

The fragmented self and the myth of the Big Black Cock

Castration plays a significant role in antiblack mythology because of its linkage to the lynching epidemic of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Marriott, 1996). Lynching images tell a story of the black penis as a phobic danger in need of removal from the body in a form of dismemberment/castration. Marriott explains, the “phobic object always in danger of being castrated, is thus based on an identification with good or white masculinity as against bad or black masculinity” (1996, p. 17). In a psychic reversal, the castrated penis reaffirms white masculinity while becoming a rhetorical artifact of black male sexuality and threat neutralized. Is there a better example of this than the front cover of the box where Mandingo’s penis is nothing more than a castrated trophy? It is near impossible not to think back to photographs of lynching where the black man’s penis became a souvenir, *memento mori* for the white audience (Marriott, 1996). The disembodied penis is a reminder that black male subjectivity is erased in this moment and the only thing left is spectacle of the big black cock. It is the disembodied black penis that facilitates an imaginary projection of racial and sexual fantasies about the black body (Mercer, 1994). There are nearly twenty-five stills of Mandingo with the women on the box but only two of his face; as if to say there is no person--only his penis. The reference point of castration is hard to ignore as you watch the erasure of the Mandingo’s humanity and the foregrounding of his big black cock. For white male audiences consuming the scenes of *Mandingo Massacre* the black symbolic castration assuages their own white fragility and anxiety of power loss to black males (who otherwise are presumed to have the power in sexual encounters with white women). David Marriott explains:

The relation between white male narcissism and black castration is thus already bound up with a scotomized perception of whiteness and black masculinity. If this scotomization acts as a mode of psychic defence, accepting unconscious contents on the condition that they are denied, then what happens to this process of affirmation and repression in the photographic documenting of the black penis suggests a fundamental ambivalence and undecidability in the very form of looking...photographic representations of black men, in venturing to present this ambivalence in relation to racial difference, thus cannot be dissociated from this history of looking which endows the black penis with sexual authority in order to castrate or negate it, thereby preserving the white penis intact.

(Marriott, 1996, p. 13)

“Looking,” then, is a form of domination because it allows the viewer—in this case the cis white male audience—to displace their fear of impotence with a form of looking that amounts to symbolic castration (Fanon, 2008; Marriott, 1996, 2000a; Mercer, 1994). In these moments of rhetorical castration, anti-blackness forecloses black desire and pleasure.

The framing of the penis as separate from the body is the visual equivalent of the bodily fragmentation of the mirror stage. At this moment, subjectivity becomes split and we see the difference between the ideal image of a complete and unified self to a fragmented self. This fragmentation of the self is where the lack becomes developed and hence it is the site of ego formation. Simply, our inability to become a full subject is the moment where we begin to seek a story/narrative/phantasy/myth to suture together our reality. Our gaze then incorporates the image into from the symbolic into the fantasy. Put another way, the disembodied penis is representative of the fragmented self that relies on its meaning from the white patriarchal gaze. The gaze over-determines the phalluses’ place in the mythic narrative of subjectivity; magnified

by the way they shoot Mandingo from underneath the “action” to make his penis look bigger highlighting penetration to evoke the penis as monstrosity and spectacle. It reaffirms the notion that these men are not human (white), “the spectacle within a spectacle of individual subjects absorbed in their own enjoyment and ritualistically identifying with the socially constituted white gaze”(Marriott, 1996, p. 10). Moreover, the images of Mandingo’s dismembered penis are distinct and embody the acts of racial fetish and racial disavowal: *I know it’s not true that all black men have big black cocks but in porn they do*. The structure of this disavowal takes place at the level of the image. In the image of the penis *IS* the primordial fantasy of the black body dating back to the satyr. These myths are far from harmless since they enter into a mytho-ideological racist collective unconscious where the polysemic nature of the rhetorical image ensures a racist form of looking which overwhelms any transgression that may be possible. The spectacle of the black penis becomes part of the cultural narrative; “Sexual spectacles travel and they matter. Historical context disappears, leaving seemingly free floating images in its wake that become the new vocabulary that joined quite disparate entities” (Collins, 2005, p. 42). Marriott (1996) continues, “The black penis on display here is thus fetishistically encoded as the embodiment of ... the phallic ideal of the 'Super Nigger' - an erotic and racist fantasy which he had hoped to capture photographically in anatomical close-up” (p. 23). These close-ups of Mandingo’s penis embrace the allure of gonzo filmmaking and all its ability to separate the penis from the performer. The casting of Mandingo as the biggest dick in the world is clearly a homage to a myth about black men as purveyors of intimidating phalluses.

Massacre’s racial images speak volumes to what the producers of this film want us to see. Kobena Mercer explains:

This ontological reduction is accomplished through the specific visual codes brought to bear on the construction of pictorial space... the image of the black male body presents the spectator with a source of erotic pleasure in the act of looking.... The aesthetic, and thus erotic, objectification is totalizing in effect, as all references to a social, historical or political context are ruled out of the frame. This visual codification abstracts and essentializes the black man's body into the realm of a transcendental aesthetic ideal. In this sense, the text reveals more about the desires of the hidden and visible white male subject behind the camera, and what 'he' wants-to-see, than it does about the anonymous black men whose beautiful bodies we see depicted (p.436).

The image of the black male body accentuates the phobia and the pleasure of the white male gaze. It freezes the black body in time and space as a spectacle of otherness. The fixity of the myth and narrative is a real problem. Bhabaha (1983) reminds us that part of the colonial and racist project is that archetypes and stereotypes engender a type of fixity in their ideological construction of the otherness. In other words, the more we see these image, the less likely we are to think of them in any other way than how we are conditioned to think of them. These spectacles of the black penis function on what Daniel Bernardi (1996) calls an economy of scale, i.e. the “world’s biggest dick.” I would suggest that movies like *Mandingo Massacre* suture together a rather disparate myth about black male bodies and sexuality. Images of this type draws on age old salacious desires and prohibitions as invested in the black body, specifically black men to decenter their subjectivity by circulating the spectacle of the black phallus all the while disavowing the racist fantasy these images help suture together. The process is brought even more to the fore when we examine the role that white feminine archetypes play in activating the rhetoric of miscegenation as site of pleasure.

Interpreting the Archetypes in *Mandingo Massacre*

Everyone seems to agree that pornography traffics in type based character development (Clark-Flory, 2015; Dines, 2006; Fritz & Paul, 2017; Vannier, Currie, & O’Sullivan, 2014). Ashley Compton contends that there are basically three archetypes of white women in pornography when she states, “much of pornographic content is heteronormative, featuring searches for Moms/Hot Mom/Mother/MILF, Youth/Teen, and 18 and Abused” (2016, p. 2). I would add the blonde category to these archetypes. Websites cater to the black male/blonde woman fetish which exists for their audiences with websites like *Blacks on Blondes* and *Blacked*. *Mandingo Massacre* is no different. Two of the five actors in this video are blonde and even the Jules Jordan website recognizes the market demand when they advertise one of the scenes by stating, “here's some black on blonde action for all you interracial devotees” (Jordan 2011). The “mom/MILF” archetype is Lisa Ann. The “youth/teen” archetypes are Adrianna Luna and Jada Stevens. In the following subsections; I have broken the analysis of the women characters into these generic categories: the mom, the blondes, and the teens.

The MILF.

MILF is an acronym for “Mother I’d like to fuck” (MILF) popularized in the late nineties by movies such as *American Pie* and in the early 2000s by songs like “Stacy’s Mom” by the indie-pop group Fountains of Wayne, where the refrain coos, “Stacy's mom has got it goin' on” (*Fountains of Wayne – Stacy’s Mom*, 2003). Ogas and Gaddam (2011) found that MILF was the third most searched for term on Pornhub and that “mom” was the first. The MILF is a parodic performance of the Ideal Mother archetype. The Ideal Mother is constructed as a white middle class woman (Weiss, 2014). The evolution of Ideal Mother Myth has come to include more than

just keeping the home it also has a moral dimension. They are of sufficient morality and purity so that they can transfer these values to their kids as Oliver Phillips explains:

white women epitomized all that was felt to be refined, fair and loving in civilization, and so bore its most delicate and vulnerable qualities. Embodying both motherhood and pleasure, they signified all that was desirable in a culture worthy of protection from necessarily covetous rivals. The arrogance of imperialism dictated that civilization was more than desirable to the native, it was irresistible and necessary, but native culture contained the potential to contribute degeneracy to the metropolitan culture. (Phillips, 2011, p. 108)

Thus, sexual relations between the mother and the savage deals a blow to civilization and nation. The circulation of these spectacular images freezes the black male subject in a colonial time where miscegenation is a real threat to the hierarchical order and white purity. The Ideal Mother is also the nexus for reproductive purity. Much of the early controversy around miscegenation revolved around reproductive purity. In *Mandingo Massacre*, the MILF character is performed by Lisa Ann.

Lisa Ann has been in hundreds of pornographic movies, many of them interracial. Perhaps her most famous role was as Sarah Palin in *Who's Nailin' Palin?* (hereafter, *Nailin' Palin*). In this movie, she portrays the former vice-presidential candidate who has sex with every man she encounters—not surprisingly she also delves into interracial sex acts. During her role in *Nailin' Palin*, Lisa Ann has sex with both Sean Michaels and Mandingo. The inclusion of interracial sex in the *Nailin' Palin* franchise has an interesting subtext, considering Sarah Palin's own complicated past with transgressing the interracial boundary. As Tommy Craggs writes for about Palin in *Deadspin*, “Her attitude toward people of color was evolving...she even dated

black men. A friend says, ‘Sarah and her sisters had a fetish for black guys for a while’”(Craggs, 2011). Lisa Ann’s portrayal as Sarah Palin has catapulted her popularity in the porn industry, further evidenced by *The New York Post* reporting that “Pornhub.com revealed Lisa Ann... carried the stars and stripes from DC to Tibet as the most popular female porn star” (Blaustien 2013).

Lisa Ann is known for her interracial work. As a talent agent and director, Lisa Ann devotes her time to shooting, managing, directing and starring in interracial scenes. She is one of the few actresses that will work with black men. Within the porn industry, it is common practice for white female performers to refuse to work with black men. Keli Goff explains that “a number of white female performers are discouraged from participating in scenes with black men. Often those doing the discouraging are men in power within the industry — specifically, white men who are managers or agents”(Goff, 2013, para. 6). Goff’s revelation speaks the way that racism works in the pornography industry. Lexington Steele, perhaps the most successful black porn star in history narrates, “It's just an element of American culture that still exists, and that is the feeling that a white female will be deflowered or soiled, if you will, by doing a scene with a black male" (Goff, 2013 para. 4). It should be noted, that Lexington Steele is one of the only black male performers who owns his own production company; Mercenary Motion Pictures. Considering the interracial genre is so lucrative, it would stand to reason that actresses would be willing to perform across the color line; however, this is not the case. It is clear to the people in the porn industry that performing with a black man has negative consequences for their career. For the relatively few cases when white women stars make the decision to have sex with black men, as Lisa Ann explains, “people notice it more”(GaS Digital Exclusive, 2018). Once a white female performer appears on-screen with a black man she gets looked over for feature film roles

and becomes relegated to gonzo films. Lisa Ann argues, because the pornography industry is controlled by, and made for, white with a small interracial sub-culture many of the white women adhere to these racist conventions (djvlad, 2014). Her devotion to the genre can be seen in *Mandingo Massacre*.

The Jules Jordan website describes her scene as “Lisa Ann lusts for Mandingo's cock...taking him balls deep...love at first sight! Her wet, milf pussy is ready for the pounding of her life. Black Snake Moans are coming!” (2011). Her lust and love Mandingo is not for the actor but for his member. The invocation of the MILF archetype condenses around her performance of the Ideal Mother: white, pure, and the locus of civilization where she will be pounded by the savage animal. In an obvious reference to the 2006 movie invoking the name *Black Snake Moan* is an example of the metonymic sliding where one rhetorical figure slides into, and is mapped, onto the body of a similar but different subject. No longer is he Mandingo the man, he is a beast, more precisely, his penis is more animal than human, the black snake. On one hand, this description is funny and innocuous. On the other hand, this description conjures a field of antiblack ideological investments designed to Otherize and tap into the forbidden and taboo nature of the sexual liaison. While the sex is otherwise pretty standard in this scene with performances of fellatio, and sex positions such as reverse cowgirl, doggystyle, and missionary, two things stand out in this scene with Lisa Ann—the reversal of power relations and the money shot.

The reversal of power relations is thought-provoking in this scene, because it is the white woman, Lisa Ann, who is in control. She reverses the typical power dynamic that is portrayed by other characters of the white feminine archetype, Lisa Ann is not a young teen ‘robbed of innocence’ or a ‘dumb blonde’--instead, she is a dominant woman in power as she engages in

sex with a black man. This reversal is in line with what Vannier, et al (2014) have found in their research on this genre of pornography, “as women in MILF videos are older than women in teen videos and likely more sexually experienced, it is possible that they engage in more dominant or powerful behavior in relation to men than do their younger counterparts” (Vannier et al., 2014, p. 257). Examining the scene itself helps illustrate how this power reversal rhetorically constructs the MILF as an element of the white feminine archetype.

Mandingo entrance into this scene is full body, including his face, is shot from multiple angles. This stands in stark contrast to his other scenes where he is rarely shown as more than a disembodied penis. In the same vein he is fully clothed and must be undressed in a manner that is more erotica than pornographic. This has a way of humanizing the character since he is not just a stud there for sex. She engages him in acts of intimacy which can be read as important since black men are rarely seen as affectionate or intimate in pornographic movies. On the other hand, it can be interpreted as her being in control and being able to tame or handle his desire, much like Fay Raye and King Kong. No matter which way you read this part of the scene, it is, from the outset, happening in a different rhetorical register. Since Lisa Ann directs most of the sex in the scene, this communicates her power position, to an audience accustomed to hearing off-camera directions from an external authority figure—not a character performing in the scene itself. Her directing of sex also conveys a specific type of power she has over Mandingo. When she is ready for sex she tells him by stating “it’s ready for you” (J. Jordan, 2011). Other instances of a reversal of power relations occur when she repeatedly says “give it to me” and “give me that big fucking dick” and “I want you to fuck my wet pussy” (J. Jordan, 2011). While these statements may seem like standard pornography talk, and they are, what makes them different here is that Lisa Ann is articulating her demands within an entirely changed power

dynamic. In every other scene, Mandingo is the star, his BBC wields the power to punish “deserving” white women; but here, the star is Lisa Ann; she directs and commands Mandingo based on her individual timeline and desires. Even though this scene is shot gonzo style the focus of the camera stays primarily on Lisa Ann. Interestingly, there rarely are any shots of a disembodied black phallus because Mandingo’s full body and face are included. At one point in the scene, Lisa Ann is on top of Mandingo, and she is asking him, “are you right there?” and telling him to, “feel that fucking cum” (J. Jordan, 2011). These moments, where Lisa Ann addresses Mandingo during sex reveals her position of power symbolically (she is on top) and discursively (she tells him what to feel). There is no doubt about it, Lisa Ann is in control. While some critics might see her control as a sign of empowerment of women, I argue that this scene capitalizes on an age-old rhetorical technology of sexual racism and power that is often ignored; white female rape of black men.

The MILF archetype in interracial pornography is saturated with sub-textual and mythic meaning. She is the embodiment of the Madonna/Whore complex, where on the one hand she is polluted by her sexual freedom and decisions (Whore) and on the other, she is held in the highest regard (Madonna). This complex creates an ambivalence that plays itself out in interesting ways, especially when this MILF myth intersects with the black male sexuality. In the American mythos, white women are the central component of whiteness as an extension of the white male. During slavery and reconstruction, just the mere thought or threat of a black man sleeping with a white woman was enough to provoke white men to form violent mobs and lynch black men with impunity. This type of repeated physical violence against black bodies solidified white supremacy, and also gave white women enormous power over black men. Tommy Curry notes that “within this mythology of white female vulnerability to the Black rapist, white women were

able not only to exercise their sexual power over black men...but also use Black men's sexual vulnerability as political capital with the white men against the Blacks more generally" (Curry, 2017, p. 95). In a true reversal of power, the ideal victim (the white woman) has become the sexual aggressor and the scene with Lisa Ann drives this point home. Unlike other scenes in *Massacre*, this scene has none of the acts which have been coded as violent or aggressive; there is no gagging, no gaping, and no incidents of Mandingo barking directives. In fact, Mandingo only speaks in low guttural moans and whispers—again reflecting his diminished power and his transformed role from aggressor to victim. The predominant voice in this scene is from Lisa Ann, she gives voice to her sexual desires and demands which communicates her position as sexually experienced, knowledgeable, and in control. Her voice is prominent, until the scene's money shot.

The money shot (also colloquially referred to as pop shots, cum shots, or jizz shots), has become a standard convention in most hardcore/gonzo pornographic scenes. The cum shot, "depicts ejaculation in close-up, always occurring outside of the body of the sexual partner. Semen spurts, trickles, or gushes from the penis, and lands on the female or male skin of the buttocks, chest, belly, backside, or face"(Aydemir, 2007, p. 93). Researchers contend that the pop shot is a form of domination (Comella & Tarrant, 2015; Dines, 2006, 2011; Hardy, 2008; Jensen, 2016; Vannier et al., 2014). I contend that in this scene, the money shot arrests time in an interesting and complicated way. Lisa Ann is laid out, on her back, with her legs spread wide—a position that allows Mandingo to ejaculate onto her face. The camera films her from above providing an aerial perspective of her body, while the filming of Mandingo returns to prior instantiations of his body being cut from the scene with the camera only focusing in on his phallus. Despite the inclusion of Mandingo's full body and his face in earlier portions of the

scene, the lead up to the money shot phallus returns us to equating the power of blackness and masculinity with his penis. The camera angle used for the money shot renders Mandingo's full body invisible against the hypervisibility of his big black cock. There is no power in the man only in his penis. In fact, the man is not even acknowledged in the symbolic universe of the scene. The visual disembodiment is a form of the spectacle of castration



(Figure 3: Lisa Ann and Mandingo in *Massacre*, Jules Jordan, 2011)

Aydemir notes, “The mandatory visibility of ejaculation as well as its specific function as narrative climax in the cum shot cannot but bear on the formation of masculinity that the genre puts forth” (p. 93). In this sense, the black masculine must be foregrounded in the money shot, and the hypervisibility of the phallus helps ensure that the viewer must return to the penis *as* the sole defining element of the black masculine. When the black phallus ejaculates the scene ends. In many ways, this becomes the exclamation point on the overall narrative that the black penis *is* the black man, and since the phallus is disembodied and rendered inhuman, then it only follows that he, too, is inhuman. Rhetorically, these images place Mandingo in the role of the feminine, the object to be looked at, and not the subject (which does the looking). The subject/object dichotomy is rhetorically constructed by how the camera, and for that matter the audience, sees the bodies. As I move through the other characters, the point of view imposed by the camera makes the subject/object dichotomy even more clear because we can see the way the camera

imposes objectification on the body of Mandingo by dividing him into singular body parts negating his humanity.

The blondes.

The interracial genre is obsessed with blonde women and their sexual interaction with black men. Blonde women are seemingly the perfect victim because they exist, culturally with diminished agency; think ‘dumb blonde’. The dumb blonde narrative gives the woman an automatic excuse for her relationship with blackness because they are too naive to know better. Our cultural fixation on blonde hair on white women is noticeable perhaps because “blonde hair in females could be interpreted as an honest signal of youth and therefore reproductive fitness”(Jahme, 2010, para. 8). During the last ice age, the blonde hair signaled for Northern European men that the women were of a birthing age. However, what Jahme overlooks is how the blonde has become a cultural icon in the last 200 years-- taking a preeminent role in Western popular culture. In her book *I'm No Angel*, Ellen Tremper traces the history of the blonde as an archetype in Western culture. She argues that the blonde as archetype has undergone a significant change since their introduction in 1847 (Tremper, 2006). From the nineteenth century to mid-twentieth century the blonde transformed from a scheming manipulator (as in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* and Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*) to the apex of white male desire (as popularized by figures such as Mae West and Marilyn Monroe). Even West and Monroe were depicted as women that used sex to get what they wanted. This idea that links blonde women wielding sex as a tool/means of manipulation to blonde hair is now a strong idiom linking blonde women to sexual promiscuity.

Blonde hair is also the apex of white racial purity. Another theorist explains the allure of the blonde, arguing that white women must “not just [be] white but blonde, the most

unambiguously white you can get” (Dyer, 2003, p. 40). Because it is presumed that only white people can have blonde hair--the blonde woman becomes a test of racial purity. Dyer continues:

Blondeness, especially platinum (peroxide) blondeness, is the ultimate sign of whiteness. Blonde hair is frequently associated with wealth, either in the choice of the term ‘platinum’ or in pin-ups where the hair color is visually rhymed with a silver or gold dress and with jewelry. And blondeness is racially unambiguous. It keeps the white woman distinct from the black, brown or yellow, and at the same time it assures the viewer that the woman is the genuine article. The hysteria surrounding ambiguity on this point is astonishing (p. 41).

Racial purity is the justification for the larger rhetoric of miscegenation. Because blonde women exemplify whiteness--miscegenation with black men became synonymous with the pollution of whiteness writ large. The pollution metaphor is a metaphor that was is common in the discourse of miscegenation Jared Sexton explains, “the obsession of white supremacist discourse with interracial sexuality quickly slides into paranoia about the pollution of the white racial stock, a process resulting in a universal “mongrelization” tantamount to genocide of the white population” (Sexton, 2008, p. 23). Traditionally, the fear of the white genocide is anxiety provoking. Following Dyer’s analysis of blondeness, the blonde woman becomes the perfect archetype for interracial pornography since they represent the embodiment of sex, femininity, purity, and whiteness. Ultimately, blonde hair in white women is the virtual pedestal—upholding and centering the traits of whiteness as the standard for beauty, virtue, and character. It then follows that being sexually involved with a black man is the ultimate “fall” that a white—particularly a blonde—woman can embody.

In *Mandingo Massacre*, the blonde women, Alanah Rae and Heather Starlet, embody “the fall” narrative. Since colonial times, discourses around interracial sex have repeatedly relied on the idea that white women who copulate with black men lose their status by crossing the color line, hence ‘the fall.’ Oliver Phillips explains the danger the fallen woman poses to not just themselves but to all white women:

If these were not women who had already ‘fallen’, they were women whose inability to overcome their own naivety demanded that they be protected from themselves. Their naivety and carelessness was seen to endanger not only themselves, but also all white women. Such carelessness was therefore tantamount to culpability. The implication was that sensible women did not need to be reminded about such questions of propriety – care should always be taken because danger was always present. (Phillips, 2011, p. 111)

The tropes of naiveite and the fall are repeated themes in the rhetoric of miscegenation. If you take seriously the idea that blonde women are the apex of white femininity, then the sex that these women have with Mandingo is a reassertion of the power of the big black cock to corrupt and degrade white civilization. In the first scene of *Massacre*, Mandingo engages the power of the big black cock to unlock Heather Starlet’s licentious side.

Jules Jordan describes the Heather Starlet scene as, “Her tease alone is worth the price of admission but when Mandingo enters and Heather gets ahold of all that cock sparks fly. Oh, does this bitch love cock” (2011). Heather Starlet is always ready for sex, this can be seen by the fact she has on no undergarments. Even though she is wearing leather pants and a blouse she is naked and ready underneath her single layer of clothing. The very description of the scene degrades Starlet (“bitch”) and valorizes Mandingo’s penis (“all that cock”) (See Figure 4). How could she not “love cock”, since she is the embodiment of sexuality—a point alluded to because

she is “blonde” and also made evident by “her tease.” Robert Jensen reminds us that the one of the messages communicated in pornography is that “all women want sex from men; women like all the sexual acts that men perform or demand...and that women are sexual objects, whose job it is to fulfill male desire” (2014, p. 60). To Jensen’s point, the description and throughout the scene itself, the expectation is that the viewer will realize that Starlet could not help herself—she was entranced by Mandingo’s member. Once Mandingo appears in the scene, as if by magic, he is standing shirtless and ready for sex. As Starlet crawls toward him on the floor she says, “let’s see this cock” and when Starlet finally does she exclaims “oh my god!” (J. Jordan, 2011).

Starlet’s crawling is meant as a sign of subservience to Mandingo. Presumably, to evoke feelings of disgust and desire at the desecration of the young innocent blonde girl. The reveal is part of the ritual, where the female performer reminds the viewers the abnormal size of his penis. In this moment the film reaffirms the idea that black men are not like the “rest of us,” just look at their monstrosity between their legs. Soon after the reveal Mandingo orders her to perform fellatio where he tries to fit his entire penis into her throat. For most researchers, this is coded as gagging and as a form of sexual aggression.

Throughout the scene Mandingo performs multiple acts of pornographic aggression. Aggression can be delineated into two categories: physical and verbal. Verbal aggression is name calling or verbal threats and physical aggression includes “hair pulling, open hand slapping, or spanking, choking, and whipping” (Bridges & Jensen, 2010, p. 138). The sex acts depicted in these scenes are routine for pornography. The images of violence are meant to show the domination of the white feminine archetype and reinforce the idea of black sexual aggressiveness. Gloria Cowan and Robin Campbell did a content analysis of interracial pornography where they searched for acts of intimacy in black/white interracial pornography,

and they found that “Pornography also reinforces racial and sexual stereotypes such as the idea that the Black man is prodigiously sexually endowed. That Black men scored lowest on intimacy measures shows the reduced humanity of Black men in pornography; they are not shown as people but as sex machines even more so than other characters” (Cowan & Campbell, 1994, p. 335). The representations of black male sexual aggressiveness produce a form of irrationality and anxiety directly tied to blackness. Winthrop Jordan reminds us that “ the image of the sexually aggressive Negro was rooted more firmly in deep strata of irrationality”(W. D. Jordan, 1974, p. 80). This irrationality results from the displacement of the white male desire onto blacks. In effect it is an act of metaphoric substitution, where white men assume that since they want black women, then it only makes sense that black men would want white women. Since acting on these desires has been traditionally unacceptable, they produce shame. When this shame is displaced, it becomes the trigger for ambivalence and hence anxiety. White patriarchal anxiety then produces a narrative to justify the prohibition. This narrative includes a form of slut shaming asserting that “only the most depraved white woman would consent to sleep with a Negro, since white women of the lowest class had the least to lose in flaunting the maxims of society”(W. D. Jordan, 1974, p. 80). The sex, the description, and the ritual are all part of “the fall” of the white woman. The popularity of *Blacks on Blondes* is derived from this very reversal: blondes are the purest white flesh so it only stands to reason that sleeping with a black man is the ultimate pollution. This “fallen” narrative gets pushed even further in the second scene with the blonde Alanah Rae.



(Figure 4: Heather Starlet and Alanah Rae in *Massacre*)

Alanah Rae’s “fall” narrative adds an additional dimension to her archetype; the nurse. In her scene in *Mandingo Massacre*, Alanah Rae role-plays a nurse sent to Mandingo to care for him. Nurses main responsibility is care and healing, and the profession is often looked at with praise, “the nurse enjoyed a position of high public esteem, and public commentary tended to be laudatory and couched in sentimental language, and it contained themes of feminine devotion to duty, self-sacrifice, heroism and a willingness to serve the medical profession” (Fealy, 2004). Nursing is seen as a way for women to gain social status and to remove themselves from poverty. As for Rae her inability to maintain professional distance is due to nativity and sexual desire. Even though Rae is dressed as a nurse it is not important to the overall narrative cohesion of the movie, this movie is still shot gonzo style, there is no development of the character, and the costume is only meant to conjure metonymic associations of purity and goodness. Building on the role-play, the description continues, “Mandingo is laid out, but a nurse comes to the rescue. Knowing he is well by the emission of cum on her face” (Jordan, 2011). The pseudo-comedic style can be seen in the opening dialogue of the scene where Rae asks Mandingo, “Have you been taking your vitamins?” or when she asks him “You need your medicine? To which he responds “Oh yeah I want it, I want my medicine.” When the reveal happens, Rae looks up at a laid-out Mandingo-smiles and playfully says, “You definitely have been taking your vitamins!”

While tongue in cheek, it suggests the idea that the nurse, Alanah Rae, can through sex, work the magic of rejuvenating Mandingo. Even in the description of the video from the Jules Jordan website they describe Alanah Rae as, “A nurse with blonde hair and very large tits proceeds to bring him back to health by focusing on his fourteen-inch cock” (Jordan, 2011). These jokes feed into the larger myth that there is something thaumaturgic about the interracial encounter. Her fall from grace becomes his rejuvenation.

These narratives of social status and high public esteem ensure that part of the allure of the nurse depiction is how they are toppled from the high social perch. For Fanon, this exchange is an attempt of the black man to insert himself into whiteness—in the case of this scene, the insertion is physically portrayed through penetration of whiteness. The sex in the scene is ritualistic-fellatio, to missionary, to doggystyle, to cowgirl and reverse cowgirl, to the pop shot. During the entire scene the camera shoots her face but rarely do we see Mandingo. Each time they change position, the camera angle changes to make sure that they are shooting his macrophallus penetrating her vagina, always accentuating its size and power. This is compounded by her moans which are impossible to distinguish between pleasure and pain. Even when he has his hand on the back of her head forcing her down onto his penis during fellatio she responds with her indistinguishable moan. The scenes construction of the black male sexuality falls in line with the larger mytho-ideological construction of spectacle and aggression. While black male sexual aggression is prominent in the scenes with the Blondes, it really gets articulation in the scenes with the teens.

The teens.

Teen pornography is one of the most searched terms on free porn sites (Vannier et al., 2014). This phenomenon holds true for other internet porn sites like Dogpile, in fact, teen

searches accounts for about 7% of all the searches on that site (Ogas & Gaddam, 2011). That is more than twice any other search term. The teen category of pornography is popular in *Mandingo Massacre* since at least two of the five scenes involve women that depict teen: Jada Stevens and Adrianna Luna. I focus on these two characters in the film because of how they perform their teen identities through innocence and ritual abuse. In *Massacre*, Luna and Steven's are different sides of the same coin; the sexually demure and the sexually aware.

Robbed innocence.

In *Massacre*, Adriana Luna exemplifies innocence; her performance is that of a sexually demure teenage sprite. Perhaps the most famous nymphet in literary history is Nabokov's *Lolita*. The main character, in *Lolita*, Humbert Humbert is obsessed with his step-daughter, Delores. So much so, that he has created an entire alternate libidinal reality where he has given his sexual fantasy a different name Lolita. The Delores/Lolita dialectic calls forth an image that vacillates between the "innocent girl and her sexually aware counterpart" (Savage, 2011, p. 101). In the beginning of Luna's scene, you hear an off-camera voice ask her, "do you know what our surprise for you today is?" She responds by asking, "A big black cock?" Her question is stated in a sweet high-pitched voice so the audience associates her with a young girl or child. Also, by responding to the question with a question she demonstrates she is unsure of the answer therefore showing her naiveté (she is not wise/she has to guess like many kids do when they don't know the answer). Adrianna Luna exemplifies at least one part of this dialectic since she her voice and appearance makes us think that she is a child, even though Luna is a young woman in her twenties. However, the producers do their best to diminish her age by use of a "little girl voice." For example, Nicole, an amateur porn star and cam girl, explains how she uses the voice as part of her, "work personality which requires-getting 'in character' by doing 'the really sweet

innocent type thing’ and using her ‘little girl voice.’ (Nayar, 2017, p. 483). Luna uses the voice to seem younger, in an interview she states, “I’m 29 but I look a lot younger and the voice helps a lot too. (laughs) Sometimes in movies, they’ll tell me to say a different age like if I do a teen movie or whatever” (“Adrianna Luna Interview,” 2013). Luna’s voice and her feigned innocence is critical to maintaining the fantasy of the sexually demure teen. While I am interested in how her archetype drives home the myth of Mandingo what is interesting for Luna’s case is how they deny her the agency of woman with choice. Henry Giroux explains how performances of innocence deny subjectivity:

‘childhood innocence,’ is constructed around the notion that both childhood and innocence reflect aspects of a natural state, one that is beyond the dictates of history, society, and politics. In this commonsense conception, children are understood, as . . . ‘innocent because they’re outside of society, pre-historical, pre-social, instinctual, creatures of unreason, primitive, kin to unspoiled nature.’ Marked as innately pure and passive, children are...denied a sense of agency and autonomy (Giroux, 2001, p. 2).

Denying her access to time also denies her access to aging and agency. This denial of agency is critical to producing her static identity of youth and innocence--as one that never ages. As Luna performs innocence she also performs her own lack of subjectivity and hence can only be an object to be manipulated and used by Mandingo. This lack of agency is evident in the way the sex scene is filmed.

Mandingo, who rarely speaks, barks out commands to Luna. He never asks, he only tells her what to do and she submits to his demands. The viewers witnesses an unequal power relationship being performed in which she can never give consent because part of her performance—as embodying childhood innocence—is the denial of the agency necessary to

provide consent. The performances in this scene reify the central theme of this movie, which is that white women should beware of the power of the big black cock. The most important part of this scene is how it embraces the narrative trope of innocence lost. Recalling the *Birth of the Nation* film, Griffith forces his heroine to jump to her death instead of being defiled by the black man Gus. In sharp contrast to *Birth of a Nation*, Luna, allows herself to be tainted—she portrays innocence lost as a variant of “the fall” narrative that gets played out in a significant amount of interracial pornography. From the opening scenes where the white male producers/camera man speaks to Luna-- to the way the camera shoots Mandingo the gonzo style of pornography displays both her and Mandingo as objects.

Luna is a small woman, around five foot-two inches in height and about 120 pounds and the way they shoot her interaction with Mandingo is meant to make the size of his penis seem even larger *see Figure 5*.



(Figure 5: *Adrianna Luna in Massacre, Jules Jordan, 2011*).

These shots, from the scene, are just some examples where Mandingo, is dissected from his body and his penis is contrasted to the small size of the woman with whom he is performing. Her small frame accents the spectacle of his penis making it seem even larger, more menacing, and even more inhuman. For black men in pornography, the gonzo style camera angles call forth the earlier Jobson quote “that blacks are furnisht with such [sexual] members as are a sort of

bothersome unto them” (Quoted in Paul Hoch, 1959, p. 52). During the scene, she consistently breaks the fourth wall right up to the end when after the money shot, the white camera man asks, “That’s a big cock, huh?” she smiles and says “it’s good” (Jordan, 2011). As the scene closes, and begins to fade, you can hear the camera man scold her “You made a mess” and playfully she responds by saying “it’s a big cock it’s messy” (Jordan, 2011). This banter is distinct from the other scenes in *Massacre* because it plays up the trope of her youth and innocence; as the white father scolds her for being messy it reminds us that she is mere object to be directed, used, and scolded. How can she still be innocent after experiencing the biggest dick in the world and what we just witnessed? Mandingo has done the unthinkable he has defiled and innocent child. Luna is but one side of the Lolita dialectic; the other, is the sexually aware nymphet Jada Stevens.

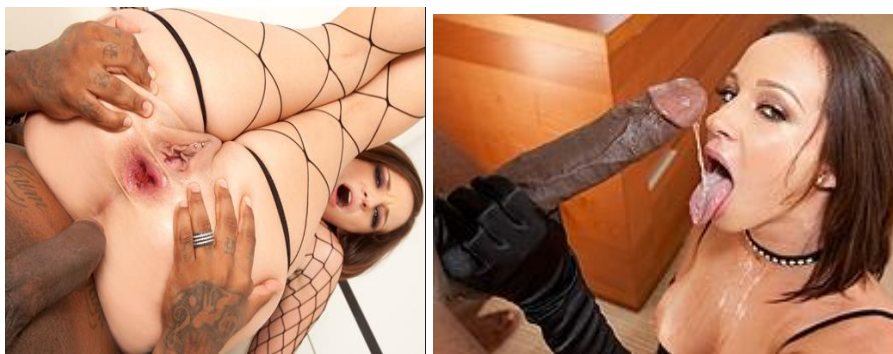
Blacked and Abused

Jada Stevens’ performs the other side of that innocence/sexually aware dialectic. She enjoys the pain of her encounter with Mandingo. She wants to push her body to the limits and who else can do that but the “biggest dick in porn”? Jada is a young woman with short brown hair and brown eyes. Her physical appearance exemplifies the ‘girl next door’ image. The first five to six minutes of her scene is her being filmed and talking to the director. Her scene begins with the off-screen voice directing her to show her buttocks. This has two rhetorical functions; foreshadowing and objectification. It foreshadows that later in this scene she will be having anal sex with Mandingo. It objectifies because it makes her (like Mandingo) reducible to a mere body part—in Stevens’ case she is reduced to her buttocks. Immediately before the sex begins, the director—who is white—begins to playfully spank Stevens and say to her, “I think you’re in trouble now.” This spanking is done less as a sense of foreboding to the anal sex and more as way to depict her youth—the white father (director) punishing his deviant child (Stevens) with a

spanking. Aside from these acts of spanking, two other actions stand out in this scene: the gaping and the gagging.

Researchers have coded the acts of gagging and gaping as forms of sexual aggression (Bridges, Wosnitzer, Scharrer, Sun, & Liberman, 2010; Cowan & Campbell, 1994; Dines, 2011, 2011; Jensen, 2016; Vannier et al., 2014). Gagging is “when an object or body part, e.g., penis, hand, or sex toy, is inserted into a character’s mouth, visibly obstructing breathing” (Bridges et al., 2010) while gaping is defined as “the excessive stretching of the rectum or vagina with the hands, other objects, or due to recent penetration depicted/displayed for the camera” (Fritz & Paul, 2017). Most researchers only code these acts as violent or aggressive if the actress seems to be in pain. For the purpose of this study, the issue of pain seems to miss the larger point that these are meant as aggressive acts even if the actress appears to enjoy the sex. I would even go as far as to suggest that their enjoyment is part of their job. Jensen (2014) recognized that the women are always already supposed to appear as if they are enjoying everything happening to them.

In both instances, gagging and gaping, Mandingo uses his penis to punish Stevens. At one point, she is gagging so much during fellatio that she starts frothing at the mouth and her eyes water. During this portion of the scene, the link between interracial sex and the black penis as punishment has not been lost on researchers. Campbell and Cowan (1994) observe, “it is also conceivable that the Black man serves vicariously, as he has through mythology and literature, as the punisher of the sexual White woman. The subjugation of White women by Black men may permit the White man’s vicarious acting out of sexism” (Cowan & Campbell, 1994, p. 336). For Campbell and Cowan, these scenes of interracial pornography and aggression serve to reify sexism and racism.



(Figure 6: Jada Stevens-Gagging and Gaping in *Massacre*, Jules Jordan, 2011)

In Figure 6 you can see the gaping and gagging. The gaping is clear; he has punished her until her body no longer even looks like a “normal” body. In the second, picture you can see the result of her gagging, the white frothy spittle, saliva all over her chest, and her make-up is tear streaked. The black penis as a signifier of punishment is complete in this scene. The myth of the black penis and black male sexuality seem to haunt the ideological structure of whiteness as violence and punishment to white women.

While Jules Jordan and the *Massacre* series are not the worst perpetrators of teen abuse, that certainly does not elide that these acts of aggression link into a larger cultural narrative about black male sexuality and desire. Both of these acts—gaping and gagging—rely on the idea that the white patriarchal gaze wants to see the degradation of the young white women by a big black cock. This is exemplified by the off-screen voice—presumably of Jules Jordan, the white director—telling Mandingo and Jada what to do. His voice interjects repeatedly to command Stevens to “suck his dick,” and Mandingo to “fuck her ass.” These off-screen commands are heard by the viewer, which solidifies the idea for the audience that these characters—young women and black men—are not subjects with agency of their own. All these scenes are shot gonzo style to keep all of the viewer’s focus on the black phallus as an instrument of gagging and gaping. This focus on the BBC focuses the white patriarchal gaze toward the black phallus as an

object—seemingly disconnected from the rest of the black male body/subject. It also focuses the gaze on the black phallus as an object that degrades and punishes white women—either by taking away white women’s innocence or by giving them the punishment that they deserve.

Conclusion

The Mandingo archetype draws on a constellation of mytho-ideological investments to enact an affective sphere where blackness works in the service of white supremacist ideologies. Within this semi-public sphere of pornography, black men crave white women, have spectacular phalluses, and are full of sexual aggression. *Mandingo Massacre* is only one of the many movies that profit from this image of the Big Black Cock. It is often argued by proponents of interracial pornography that “adult filmmakers utilize racial stereotypes in their work in order to mock the very real issues around race in our larger culture, providing audiences with an outlet for their discomfort with the subject matter while providing release for their baser urges, too” (Nast, 2017, p. 8). However, “porn, for such a long time, has been made for a largely white male, hetero, cis[gender] audience who pretty much had their fantasy catered to,” says Mickey Mod, porn actor, activist, and vice president of the Adult Performer Advocacy Committee (APAC) (Nast, 2017, p. 4). He continues, “That fantasy has some serious problems, especially when it comes to people of color and people of color serving the needs of those fantasies rather than being willing participants in creating the scenes that they want to be a part of” (Nast, 2017, p. 4). Keeping these mytho-ideological fragments alive allows them to be mapped onto the next black man and keeps the archetype relevant even if it is only in the white imagination. Sadly, these signifiers on the black body do not remain only in the rhetorical space of pornography; because antiblack inscriptions on the black body often spillover and become a technology of truth.

Within this regime of truth, the black body becomes a text overdetermined by the white gaze.

George Yancy explains:

the Black body/self-became a blood-and-flesh text upon which whites could project all of their fears, desires, resentment, fantasies, myths, and lies...In short, the Black body/self, within the scientific discursive space of whiteness, which embodied a racist epistemology, was constructed as a mere object of the white racist gaze. The Black body/self was subjected to the tactics of ... anatomo-politics, that is, those disciplines that operated on the body, regulating and subjecting the Black body/self to white racist theorizations. (Yancy, 2005, p. 218)

The black male body overflows with meaning within the white imagination becoming a text onto which their fantasies and anxieties are mapped. Pornography props-up a process of racial fetishism, and the black man's phallus, becomes burdened with the task symbolizing the transgressive fantasies and desires of the white subject. "The glossy, shining, fetishized surface of black skin thus serves and services a white male desire to look and to enjoy the fantasy of mastery precisely through the scopic intensity that the pictures solicit" (Mercer, 1994, p.437). From the way that scenes are shot, the dialogue, and the usage of white feminine archetypes *Mandingo Massacre* traffics in a form of white supremacy where the white scopic gaze extends mastery over the black male body. In today's decentralized media, pornography is made for, and by, everybody, and the circulation of these images infects all levels of the pornography industry. The archetype slides, metonymically, from one black man to another and becomes a dominant defining characteristic of black male sexuality in pornography. Regrettably, it is not just the black male body where the power of mastery invests it also in the name.

The name Mandingo hails the archetype into existence. Linda Williams explains, “the word Mandingo seems to function as a screen memory—a memory that both recalls and blocks out unresolved questions of interracial sex and violence percolating in the culture since the 1970’s” (2006, p. 290). Mandingo raises the entire unresolved tropological history of interracial desire and these issues date back much further than the 1970’s. What does happen in the 1970’s is that Mandingo takes on very specific features of the black buck stereotype to become a new archetype. An original image of black maleness in the cultural unconsciousness which is then mapped on black male bodies. Perhaps the best example of this can be seen in the traffic stop of Rodney King. Officer Stacey Koon wrote in his memoir that, “King grabbed his butt with both hands and began to shake and gyrate his fanny in a sexually suggestive fashion. As King sexually gyrated, a mixture of fear and offense overcame Melanie. The fear was of a Mandingo sexual encounter” (“AFTER THE RIOTS; Officer in King Case Writes Memoir,” 1992, p. B2). For Officer Koon, Mandingo is a stand-in for interracial rape. He marks her affective reaction, by saying “a mixture of fear and offense overcame Melanie” to show that there was real threat. Further, this fear justified the physical violence the police inflicted on King. As a name, when Mandingo metonymically slides onto another black body physical danger can be the consequence. The mere fact, that this archetype is still circulating to millions it begs the question when will this happen next? *Massacre* is a movie that invests in some of the most troubling parts of that narrative by focusing on colonial mythologies of white woman purity, black sexual aggression, and the spectacle of the black male phallus.

Lastly, the image of Mandingo subverts black male subjectivity. The image of the Mandingo embodies the Big Black Cock and symbolic castration. The gonzo style of filmmaking allows for the white male gaze to sever the black penis from Mandingo’s body and

display it as spectacle. In every scene, the man is reduced to his penis. The rhetorical enactment of the black phallus as the black man set definitive limits to black male subjectivity. For black men there is a performative aspect to these myths—when we embody them (i.e. have a large penis) we perform the black stud. On the other hand, when we do not have the mancrophallus we feel a shame that can overcome all our other accomplishments. Simply, it forces black men to perform this trope of masculinity or be de-raced. Scott Poulson Bryant explains, “I am a black man and black men are hung like horses. I am not. So what kind of black man am I?” (Poulson-Bryant, 2011, p. 7). Archetypical images of Mandingo and his penis become the ruler by which black masculinity is measured. If you have “it” then you are a man if you do not then you are not. Investing your masculinity in and through your sexual organ is not useful metric.

Chapter 5 Conclusions and Implications

It is important that we, as a field involved in film and media research and education, work deliberately to confront these complex issues. They get to the heart of what we do as educators... like publishing on pornography without images, it is not enough. It is an important start, but we need to go further. Although it is essential to keep the long view in these politically troubling times, we need to do so while following Williams's lead. The author of *Hard Core* struggled against moralistic and reductive arguments about pornography to open up the dirty genre to film and media studies." That struggle is still very much in play. —Daniel Bernardi

Key Findings of the Study

This study began by asking one overarching question: what role does Mandingo, as a racial marker and image, play in the construction of black male subjectivity? This general question leads me to a few other important sub questions. First, what is the locus of the Mandingo signifier? Where can it be found and who is talking about it? In other words, where does this sign live? Also, does this sign still have life? Second, can we read these images polysemically to garner a positive form of pleasure? If so, what does that pleasure look like and how does it function? Finally, how does the rhetoric of antiblackness and miscegenation inform the topographical spaces where Mandingo continues to exist? In answering these questions, it became clear that Mandingo had taken the place of the black brute as the archetypical figure of black male sexual aggression and the place where it was most evident is in the movie and pornography industry.

Throughout this study the Mandingo signifier kept popping up in film. The movie *Mandingo* enters into the American cultural imagination the image of the black buck as athletic and prodigiously endowed. From *Birth of the Nation* (1915), *King Kong* (1933; 1975; 2005), and *Django Unchained* (2012), much of the twentieth century cinema is predicated on creating this perfect crystallization of the black buck, seen as, part sex machine, physically imposing and the ideal sexual predator and threat to white supremacy. All of these images were created within a wider cultural context, which was/is anti-black, and until 1967, legally prohibited interracial unions. And part of the justification for this continued prohibition was the unnaturalness of miscegenation. These myths about the unnaturalness of miscegenation and the black phallus all belong to a broader structural rhetoric of miscegenation.

The rhetoric of miscegenation is a structural condition produced by the ideology of antiblackness and even today, these structural conditions influence the cultural sites of cinema, literature, and academia, so much so, that mainstream cinema, as Wesley Morris (2016) reminds us, still refuses to show a black penis. Unspoken prohibitions of black male genitalia steal us away to a past where white supremacy was the dominant public ideology of the days, back to the days of Jack Johnson, the Mann Act, and the Hayes Code where there was never even the hint of race mixing on the screen in mainstream cinema.

In the past, public prohibitions on miscegenation pushed it underground-to *black and tan* spaces-where race mixing was tolerated if not outright condoned. These black and tan spaces included bars, brothels, and pornographic movie houses. While these underground spaces did not create the myth of the black phallus, the dark rooms of smokers and pornography gave it an image which circulated and could be seen by new audiences effectively hidden from plain sight. This invisibility functions to wash it from the public imagination shielding the myth from

criticism and correction. Now today's pornography draws upon age old colonial mythologies and archetypes and deploys them in the service of capitalism.

There is very little debate about the popularity of Mandingo. He is to date one the most popular male porn stars and he IS the most popular black male porn star. His series, *Mandingo Massacre*, has fifteen movies and counting and he is celebrated, in the industry, for his longevity. By all accounts Fred Lamont is a success in his profession and Mandingo is a cornerstone of interracial pornography. Much of his success can be attributed to the turn in pornography away from features with plot, character development, and storylines toward a (POV) based form of gonzo pornography that shoots his penis from angles which make it look even bigger and more menacing add to that the acts of aggression inherent in *Massacre*; gagging, spanking, and gaping and what you have is an homage to earlier mythic narratives of the black rapist. What makes these myths so dangerous is that they have material consequences for black men. White men and white institutions criminalize blackness, especially black maleness. This criminality can be seen in the Rodney King beating which sparked off some of the worst riots in American history. Even when material violence is not the consequence, there is real physic violence as in the case of Moe "the Monster" Johnson.

Moe Johnson is a black male pornographic actor who works exclusively with Dogfart productions. Dogfart advertises themselves and the world's leader in interracial pornography. Moe Johnston is suing Dogfart Entertainment for a hostile work environment. Johnson alleges the director, Jim Camp, persuaded his white female co-star, Ryan Conner, to call him "nigger" during the shooting of their scene without his consent. During the "money shot" Conner said, "'Give me that [N-word] load. Oh yeah, give me all that [N-word] cum', the suit says"(Harriot, 2018, para. 3). There are a lot of issues at play, here including consent, hostile work place

environment, and hate speech; and director's rationale for the use of the word "nigger." The reason provided for why a white female performer should use the word toward her black male co-star was because "our fans really like it if you say the N-word"(Snow, 2018). It is hard to imagine that there are a lot of black men in their audience that want to hear Ms. Conner use the word nigger. These instances are not transgressive for black men; it is nearly impossible to imagine how they could be given the historical connotations of the N-word. Sadly, this is not an isolated instance. Layla Price, another white female performer, said that in her three shoots at Dogfart Entertainment each time she was been asked to call her black co-star a "nigger" (Snow, 2018). Usage of degrading terms such as "nigger" to reference black men is part of a representational field that maps degradation onto the participants, including the audience. In the pornographic industry where pleasure is foregrounded, it is seemingly easy to dismiss such depictions as pedestrian or irrelevant however, I would suggest that these seemingly quotidian moments are critical to understand mytho-ideological landscapes that make up interracial pornography and importantly, who it is made by and for. Even though, as Lex Steele notes, "there is no fiercer or harsher term" than the N-word (Snow, 2018), it is presumed that the white cis male audience finds the use of this term pleasurable in some way. However, bell hooks (1990) argues that pornography links black and white men around the degradation of women. Alice Walker agrees in her essay, *Coming Apart*, contends that "many Black men see pornography as progressive because the white woman, formerly taboo, is, via pornography, made available to them, [and] not simply available, but in a position of vulnerability to all men" (Walker, 1980, p. 95). Even if there is some truth to the underlying premise, that black men watch these films too, the reality is that from its inception interracial pornography was made for white men. "Black and interracial pornography came into the market in 1983 and is produced

and marketed for a White male audience. These films are a White man's fantasy of Black sexuality—the fact that Black men watch them is purely accidental” (Cowan & Campbell, 1994, p. 325). Most of the scenes, in *Mandingo Massacre* are not made for black men's consumption. These scenes are filmed, directed, and made for a white audience. Again, even if there is some pleasure to be derived from these scenes, their adverse effects cannot be ignored.

White supremacy within the porn industry determines who audiences “see” having sex, and dictates how “looking” functions for the preservation of white male audiences. Aurora Snow, former porn star, writes “on-camera race relations are a complicated topic—particularly the way they have been translated in porn's fantasyland. Racism exists, and it exists in porn” (Snow, 2013, para. 4). Snow's confession is a statement of fact. Market forces and industrial management strategies relegate what gets made and importantly, how it gets made. We have already seen that white female performers are told they should not work with black men. This has been called racial dodging (Landes & Nielsen, 2018). Landes and Nielsen argue that this phenomenon dates back to the earliest days of porn with white men making content for white male audiences. Many performers continue to have strong beliefs of the role race plays in the pornography industry. Lexington Steele explains in an interview with the *Root*, “It's definitely something that exists, and I think it's something that's built within the fabric of the industry, because if you look at the individuals that are in positions of authority over some of the white females, the ones governing them are the ones implementing this practice of no interracial”(Goff, 2013). Steele's observation is particularly astute when you consider how it constructs the rhetorical environment that these scenes are shot. Most of the women that do work with *Mandingo* do not work with other black performers. Working with *Mandingo* is spectacle.

Advancement of Rhetorical Theory

I would argue that this study advances rhetorical theory for three reasons. First, the articulation of the Mandingo archetype gives us another explanatory tool for a very specific image of the black buck stereotype. One of the many problems of casual, and even academic usage, of the black buck stereotype is that it is expansive. It has become a catch-all for every aggressive or violent black men. Theorists have applied Buck persona to Shaft, Youngblood Priest, Alonso Harris, and Ganymede causing the stereotype to lose much of its explanatory power. Each of these characters are different. Shaft is a black paladin--outside of the white law, since blacks are always outside the white law--enforcing a black law that all the criminals understand. Priest is quintessential anti-hero. Priest commits violence against women and pimps, deals drugs, manipulates and intimidates everyone and is only concerned about himself. He is a sociopath. And we are rooting for him. Harris is corruption run amok and the fact that he is black is ancillary to the story of his character. What makes the Mandingo archetype so important is that it isolates a particular mythic archetype in the rhetoric of miscegenation which has occurred throughout time and allows us to unpack its role in the American story as the darkness constantly haunting the white feminine. Second, this opens the site of pornography to rhetorical criticism. There is a dearth of rhetorical research about pornography and how it produces meaning. In doing research for this study, I had to turn to a multidisciplinary approach to unpack my rhetorical artifact. While there have been some sociological communication approaches to pornography, those approaches are, by in large, content analysis (Vannier et al., 2014; Wright, Sun, Steffen, & Tokunaga, 2015). As Lawrence Rosenfield argues, "it strikes me as odd that students of persuasion, who claim an interest in messages as they affect people, should have maintained a nearly complete silence on the clearest instance of their subject, pornography"

(Rosenfield, 1973, p. 413). It is my hope that this dissertation contributes to the overall study of pornography by opening the field up to texts which make us uncomfortable. Pornography is a tremendous cultural and economic force in American society and should be under constant criticism by rhetorical critics. Finally, the goal of this study was to open up the question of black male representations and subjectivity. When I quoted Dr. Curry in Chapter 1, my purpose was to highlight the lack of critical academic research into black male subjectivity. For too long, black men have been the objects of research, researched and theorized by people other than black men. My dissertation is meant to add to that conversation another black voice. Black men need to be part of the solution in disentangling problematic representations of themselves from the media, pornography, and academia. Hopefully this research is a move in that direction even with its limitations.

Limitations of Study

Unfortunately, every study has its limitations and, in this study, two come to mind; lack of strong structural analysis and ignoring capitalism. First, one of the main problems with representational theory is that it overdetermines the importance of a single representation while slighting the larger structural processes in play. It is no different than focusing on a single speech with only a limited awareness of the cultural context. I have tried to remedy that by speaking to the history of miscegenation in the cinema but, sadly, this dissertation falls prey to that criticism. In no way does this invalidate the study; however, it does restrict its applicability since it cannot be used to discuss all black men in every instance. On the one hand, that was the goal of this study. On the other, that is also its limitation. Moreover, I would argue that strong structural analysis allows us to develop theory to be used as part of a sustained program of education for critical consciousness. As Ronald Jackson reminds us, “Black bodies are more than flesh. They are

more than signs and symbols of an objectified text where racism and sexism is deployed. They have become mnemonic instruments reminding consumers of a larger social agenda one that feeds off of our learned desire” (Jackson, 2006, p. 144).

The second limitation, and perhaps the glaring omission, is the lack of discussion of capitalism. While capitalism is a critical component in the discussion of public images in the larger cultural sense, it was my belief that capitalism is secondary to the discussion of sexual racism. However, when other researchers read this study, they may wonder if a simpler better explanation for the use of these archetypical images is profit motive. Certainly, that is part of the explanation, but only a part. The truth is that American forms of racism go beyond, and at times supersede, a purely economic explanation because many of these archetypes have been around since European interaction with Africans (Mills, 1999). With that in mind, even though capitalism drives the demand to consume products like *Mandingo Massacre* it is hard to isolate a pure economic motive for the creation, distribution, and circulation of these spectacular images. There are white men with macrophallus however, they are not mythologized as a type rather they are singulars. In this way, capitalism can, in part, explain the myth of Mandingo and its circulation but it will never be the entire story.

Directions of Future Research

Future directions for research should take two paths: the Mandingo and racial pornography. First, research should tell the story of Tiger Mandingo. Tiger Mandingo is the online name for Michael K. Johnson, a former college wrestler and student at Lindenwood University in St. Louis. Johnson, a gay man, was arrested in October 2013 for not disclosing his HIV positive status to 6 of his sexual partners. In 2015, he was sentenced to more than thirty years in prison under an outdated and draconian Missouri law which considers every sexual

encounter where Johnson failed to disclose his serostatus as an act of attempted murder. Johnson's trial was a ““perfect storm” of homophobia, racism and criminal justice that shapes the health of so many black gay men” (McCullom, 2015, para. 4). During the trial the prosecuting attorney perpetuated outdated myths about HIV, homosexuality, and black men to turn Johnson into a monster. The intersection of antiblackness and the criminalization of HIV is fertile ground for further research into the way racial politics complicates and problematizes health issues and criminal justice. It is worth noting that Johnson fit the Mandingo archetype perfectly as Preston Mitchum, a law professor at Georgetown notes:

A black man who is muscular and attractive is accused of not disclosing his status to mostly white accusers. The trial is being heard by an almost entirely white jury. The constant repetition of the name ‘Tiger Mandingo.’ It is a deliberate strategy to say, ‘This is a brutal black man who did this intentionally to these precious, young, white accusers. (as quoted in McCullom, 2015, para. 12)

Unraveling the racist, homophobic, HIV stigma infused in the name Tiger Mandingo is an avenue of research that needs to be pursued. The other avenue of research that I would like to build on is the rhetoric of pornography.

Pornography is a rhetorical regime that researchers are just beginning to investigate. Throughout this dissertation, I found myself wondering what does a rhetoric of pornography look like? What are its themes? Commonalities? How does it change traditional methods of criticism? What kinds of questions can we answer by studying pornography rhetorically? So far, very little research has been done and it would be helpful to get into doing the work that could help us answer these questions. However, future research should test some of the many hypotheses being made in other disciplines about the utility of pornography, generally, and

(inter)racial pornography specifically. There is a lot to learn there about the rhetoric of miscegenation and the role that images of interracial sex play in perpetuating dangerous racial archetypes.

Closing Remarks

I began writing a much more sex positive account of black male representations in pornography. I, like other theorists, Nash and Young, believe that pornography can be a site of pleasure for black folks. However, as did the research, it became clear that while there has been plenty of racial progress in the world writ large, there has not been much in the world of pornography.

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