

Mammy, Jezebel, Sapphire, and Their Homegirls

*Developing an "Oppositional Gaze"
Toward the Images of Black Women*



I collect Black memorabilia such as movie posters and cookie jars that depict images of fat, Black Mammies and Aunt Jemimas. Like other collectors (Motley, Henderson, & Baker, 2003), I am able to look past the distorted physical features and feel the warmth and resilience of my Southern relatives. These items also remind me to recognize and challenge oppressive images on a daily basis. I learned this lesson after attending a large professional convention for psychologists. As I was leaving the hotel restaurant, a White woman asked me to show her to a table. She had mistaken me for a waitress.¹ I was stunned and confused. It ruined my day.

As a feminist psychologist and researcher, I wondered why I, rather than the older White gentleman who was standing next to me, was mistaken for the server. Scholars have discovered that some stereotypes have been activated so frequently, for example through media exposure, that they can occur nonconsciously in the mere presence of a stereotyped group member. If an individual chooses to accept a stereotype, or if he or she simply does not think about it, then the image can influence the way in which they perceive African American women in social situations (Givens & Monahan, 2005). In other words, it is likely that my fellow diner had encountered more Black female servants than Black female university professors, which made it easier for her to assume that I was a waitress, although my dark blue power suit and armful of books suggested otherwise.

¹This is a disturbingly common event. Many Black women professors have been mistaken for clerical staff and even prostitutes (Byrd & Solomon, 2005; Thomas, Speight, & Witherspoon, 2004).

This incident also raised a second question: Why do I care that a stranger assumes that I am a waitress? Perhaps it was an honest mistake. In any case, I could simply gather my books and move on. However, for me, this event illustrates how stereotypes can become institutionalized and sometimes internalized by Black women. For example, with few employment opportunities after slavery, many African American women worked as domestic servants well into the twentieth century. Because they were overrepresented in these fields, it appeared that Black women were inherently suited to work as domestics and caregivers. This belief can become institutionalized when powerful individuals create social policies and situations, such as job training programs, that discourage higher education and redirect Black women into such low-paying jobs like daycare provider and home health aide. As a result, Black women's formal education opportunities become circumscribed, effectively limiting their occupational options (Davis, 2004). Fortunately, Mozell, my hardworking grandmother, used her experience as a domestic servant to encourage me to stay in school, which enabled me to pursue my professional goals. Other Black women are less fortunate and may lower their academic aspirations.

In addition to caregiving Mammies, African American women are often portrayed as sexually irresponsible, promiscuous Jezebels and as angry, combative Sapphires (Collins, 2000; Jewell, 1993). If you do not believe that these images still exist, spend an afternoon watching television. Although many marginalized groups are stereotyped, including women from all ethnic backgrounds, poor people, and sexual minorities, oppressive images can be more damaging for some groups because there are fewer positive or realistic images to counter these negative representations (Hudson, 1998).

According to bell hooks (1992), a Black feminist scholar, we should take an "oppositional gaze" toward the images of Black women. This requires us to critically examine, challenge, and ultimately deconstruct these images to reflect more positive and accurate representations. This is what I will do in my lecture. First, I will discuss why the Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire images were created, why they persist, and how they have evolved into contemporary images of, among others, the strong Black woman, freak, and gangsta girl. These images are rooted in history; shaped by structural inequalities such as race, gender, and class oppression; and further reinforced by the scientific, popular, and social science literature as well as the media, politics, and the law (Collins, 2000; Stephens & Phillips, 2003). Second, researchers have documented a link between the internalization of negative stereotypes and chronic health problems, psychological distress, and low self-esteem (Thomas, Speight, & Witherspoon, 2004). Accordingly, I will discuss how the Mammy image can contribute to role strain, which is the challenge of balancing multiple roles, and to concerns about physical features, including skin color, hair texture, and weight. Next, I will discuss how the Jezebel image shapes perceptions of Black women's sexuality and victimization. Finally, I will explore how Black women's expression of anger is shaped by the Sapphire image.

MAMMY

The Mammy image, which originated in the South after slavery, is one of the most pervasive images of Black women. Christian (1980) described her as

black in color as well as race and fat with enormous breasts that are full enough to nourish all the children in the world; her head is perpetually covered with her trademark kerchief to hide the kinky hair that marks her as ugly. Tied to her physical characteristics are her personality traits: she is strong, for she certainly has enough girth, but this strength is used in the service to her white master and as a way of keeping her male counterparts in check; she is kind and loyal, for she is a mother; she is sexless... (pp. 12-13)

There is little historic evidence to support the existence of a subordinate, nurturing, self-sacrificing Mammy figure. Enslaved women often were beaten, overworked, and raped. In response, they ran away or helped other slaves escape, fought back when punished, and, in some cases, poisoned slave owners. In order to deal with this uncomfortable reality, historians and authors rewrote history to create the image of the loyal, happy Mammy. After all, if we could believe that Mammy in Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* was content with her life, we could believe that slavery was a humane institution (Collins, 2000; Jewell, 1993).

Of course, Mammy has not retired. We encounter her in our daily life, for example, as the smiling Aunt Jemima, an icon that has appeared on breakfast products for more than a century. In the 1990s, the Quaker Oats Company removed her trademark red bandana and eliminated her slave dialect. She no longer declared, "Honey, it's easy to be the sweetheart o' yo family. Yo know how de men folks' and de young folks all loves my tasty pancakes." Despite Aunt Jemima's makeover, the Mammy sightings continue. Consider the Pine-Sol lady, a dark-skinned, slightly overweight, motherly figure who smilingly announced, "Honey, it's rain clean Pine-Sol." Are we seeing things? In research conducted by Fuller (2001), college students clearly saw the legacy of the Aunt Jemima image. One student remarked, "They're giving an up-to-date Aunt Jemima image to Black women that clean" (p. 128).

Professional status and education cannot protect Black women from the Mammy image. In 1998, John Gray, an author and psychologist, appeared on the Oprah Winfrey talk show. In response to an audience member's distress, he instructed Ms. Winfrey, one of the most powerful women in the television industry, to give the woman a hug. He went on to say, "Oprah's going to be your mommy... She's the mother of America. That's why she didn't have time for her own kids. She's taking care of all the other lost children" (Burrelle's Transcripts, 1998, p. 8). Jewell (1993) concluded that like many high-achieving Black women, Ms. Winfrey has the additional burden of being a chronic caregiver as she struggles to function as a competent professional.

Role Strain

I do not want to give the impression that caretaking, nurturing, and service to others are negative characteristics. By exhibiting these traits, Black women have contributed to the survival of the African American community. I also do not want to imply that role strain is unique to Black women. Regardless of ethnicity, many women face the challenge of managing the multiple roles of mother, worker, and intimate partner. However, on average, Black women earn less money, have lower levels of education and job status, and are more likely to be single parents than their White peers. As a result, African American women must often perform multiple roles without economic security or partner support (Brown, 2003).

The Mammy image exacerbates role strain by reinforcing the belief that Black women happily seek multiple roles rather than assuming them out of necessity, that they effortlessly meet their many obligations, and that they have no desire to delegate responsibilities to others. Extreme caretaking by African American women has been referred to as *Mammy-ism* (Abdullah, 1998). Hip-hop feminist Joan Morgan (1999) coined the term *strongblackwoman* to describe this image. This spelling implies that *strong*, *black*, and *woman* are inseparable parts of a seemingly cohesive identity. Both conditions are characterized by a woman's personal sacrifice within her family, community, or workplace, at the expense of her own mental and physical health.

Performing strength as one's identity, in conjunction with role strain, can contribute to depression. For example, in a study of 100 middle-class Black women, Warren (1997) discovered that increased work responsibilities, in the absence of a strong social support system, was related to depression. Again, these feelings may be exacerbated by adherence to the Mammy image. In her memoir, Meri Danquah (1998), a young, single mother who was struggling with depression, wrote that "Black women are supposed to be strong—caretakers, nurturers, healers of people—any of the twelve dozen variations of Mammy" (p. 19). It is not surprising that this expectation made it more difficult for her to seek treatment for her depression.

In some cases, it may be undesirable or emotionally unhealthy to completely abandon important roles, such as nurturer, mother, partner, or activist. On the other hand, endless working, loving, volunteering, organizing, protecting, and saving others, while neglecting one's own needs, can be equally unhealthy. So, what are some solutions to Black women's role strain? As a larger society, it is necessary to address the economic and social inequalities that leave Black women more vulnerable to role strain. This means challenging social and political policies that assume Black women don't need community or government support in the form of social services, such as child support and daycare centers (Harris-Lacewell, 2001). At the individual level, Black women must learn to nurture themselves as well as they nurture others, set boundaries and learn to refuse unreasonable requests, and seek and accept social support. They

must give themselves permission to move from superhuman to merely human, which will allow them to express the doubts, fears, depression, and frustration that accompany the hardships they face (Morgan, 1999).

Skin Color and Hair Texture

Recall that Mammy was portrayed as a large, dark-complexioned, bandanna-clad Black woman. The devaluation of Mammy's physical features reinforced a beauty standard that valued white-/light-colored skin; straight, preferably blond hair; and thinness. Collins (2000) reminded us that these physical features "could not be considered beautiful without the Other—Black women with African features of dark skin, broad noses, full lips, and kinky hair" (p. 89). The portrayal of Black women as unappealing Mammies made it easier to deny sexual abuse in plantation households. However, rape and miscegenation, or race mixing, were common occurrences in the antebellum South, which created a variety of skin colors and hair textures among African Americans.

Slaveholders used these physical features to create a hierarchy of beauty and social status within the enslaved community. Bondmen and women with African physical features were considered less attractive and intelligent and thus more suitable for field labor.² In contrast, Blacks with lighter skin and straighter hair, often the offspring of White slave owners, were sometimes given more education, less strenuous physical labor, and better housing. These privileges continued after emancipation. In the early 1900s, consistent with the color discrimination perpetuated in the larger society, some Black community members used European physical features to determine admission to schools, churches, and social organizations. For example, in some affluent organized clubs, preference was given to African Americans who were lighter than a paper bag. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the "Black is beautiful movement" was at its height and celebrated African physical features, such as natural hairstyles and dark skin. Yet *colorism*, a discriminatory economic and social system that values light-skinned over dark-skinned people, continues to exist (Hunter, 2005).

Although many Black women are generally happy with their complexion and appearance, particularly if they have strong racial identities and family support, others sometimes feel ashamed and unattractive (Hesse-Biber, Howling, Leavy, & Lovejoy, 2004). These emotional wounds and life restrictions often begin early in life. For example, Marita was playing outside and enjoying the summer afternoon, when her mother yelled, "Come on in the house—it's too hot to be playing out here. I've told you don't play in the sun. You're going to have to get a light-skinned husband for the sake of your children as it is" (p. 4). Other restrictions quickly followed: Don't

²Researchers continue to link skin color to intelligence. African Americans who rated their skin color as "light" performed better on a 10-word vocabulary test, and Lynn (2002) concluded that "the level of intelligence in African Americans is significantly determined by the proportion of Caucasian genes" (p. 365).

go swimming because your hair will revert back to its curly texture. Don't wear bright colors, like red or yellow, which are unflattering on darker skin tones (Golden, 2004). During adolescence, this message is reinforced when girls encounter some young men who prefer to date women with more European physical features. One teenager reflected on a high school crush:

It was obvious and evident that most if not all of the black boys in my school wanted nothing to do with black girls, which was sort of traumatizing. . . . In the final analysis, I ended up feeling that there was something wrong with him, but it was hell getting there. (Carroll, 1997, pp. 131–132)

The consequences of colorism become more pronounced in adulthood. On average, darker-skinned African American women have lower salaries, less education, and are more likely than their lighter-skinned counterparts to marry less educated men (Hunter, 2005). Although darker-skinned Black women who are educated and financially successful evaluate themselves as positively as their lighter-skinned peers do, their impoverished peers, dark-skinned African American women who most resemble Mammy, report the lowest levels of self-esteem (Thompson & Keith, 2004). In an effort to increase their economic and social opportunities, some Black women use skin lighteners and hair relaxers. These products can cause adverse reactions, including severe acne, skin discoloration, and hair breakage when they are misused (Golden, 2004).

Although light-skinned Black women appear to enjoy more privileges, they are sometimes the victims of misdirected hostility. For instance, one Black woman recalled the fights she had with classmates. She wrote: "High yella culud girls with long hair were moving targets for their darker-hued sisters. When girls went after whuppin' your butt, hair was the first thing they went after" (Muse, 1994, p. 127). These rivalries can continue into adolescence as young women compete for men's attention. Although it seems that they enjoy an advantage in the dating game, they also may be highly sexualized or find themselves wondering if partners are more attracted to their physical appearance than to their personalities. In adulthood, their racial identities may be challenged by Whites who discount their Black heritage, whereas Blacks may be suspicious of their commitment to the African American community. They may be accused of trying to "pass" for White or using their physical features to gain unearned opportunities. In response, light-skinned Black women may feel isolated, guilty, and unfairly targeted. Despite these challenges, many light-skinned Black women develop a sense of pride and healthy racial identities (Hunter, 2005).

According to Patton (2006), it is time for African American women to begin their own "Black Beauty Liberation" movement to stop the pain, shame, and competition around skin color and hair texture. Simply changing our language might help. For example, we can challenge ourselves when we refer to wavy or straight hair as "good" hair and curly or kinky hair as "bad" hair. In addition, the media should reflect the diversity of Black beauty by valuing dark skin and kinky hair, physical features that are typically associated with the Mammy image, as much as lighter

skin and straight hair. As we broaden our definition of beauty, "African American women begin the process of renaming their beautiful characteristics, not as eye color and hair color, but as pride, intelligence, perseverance and solidarity with one another" (Hunter, 2005, p. 122).

Eating Disorders

Despite their higher rates of obesity, Black women generally report more positive body images than their White counterparts do. In fact, many young Black women celebrate their curves and express great pride in being described as *thick*, *healthy*, or *phat*. Acceptance of larger body sizes in the Black community and rejection of restrictive White beauty standards may enable some Black women to maintain body satisfaction (Alleyne & LaPoint, 2004; Hesse-Biber et al., 2004). Of course, these cultural factors do not protect all Black women. Some women develop eating disorders, such as anorexia, a syndrome of self-induced weight loss in which a person attempts to become thinner despite the unhealthy consequences. Others are vulnerable to bulimia, an eating disorder characterized by binge eating followed by various forms of purging, including self-induced vomiting or laxative abuse (O'Neill, 2003).

A Black woman's economic situation may interact with the Mammy image to shape the type of eating disorder for which she is at risk. For example, unlike the fictional fat, happy Mammy, Black women who work in low-status jobs are often unhappy. Overeating provides an escape, albeit fleeting, from the stress associated with poverty and emotional deprivation (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2003). One impoverished Black woman explained how her oppression contributed to overeating:

I work for General Electric making batteries, and I know it's killing me. My old man is an alcoholic. My kid's got babies. Things are not well with me. And one thing I know I can do when I come home is cook me a pot of food and sit down in front of the TV and eat it. And you can't take that away from me until you're ready to give me something in its place. (Avery, 1994, p. 7)

If they believe that obesity is culturally normative for poor Black women, healthcare providers may overlook their weight gain and possible eating disorder. As a result, treatment for eating disturbances in this population may be delayed (O'Neill, 2003).

Conversely, in their effort to assimilate into White-dominated school and work environments, upwardly mobile Black women may be pressured to conform to the dominant cultural standards of thinness. A "Mammy-like" appearance would be deemed unattractive, slovenly, and unprofessional. Despite her achievements, Margaret Bass (2000) explained that "my fat belies my new 'white' middle-class status, and I am keenly aware of that each time I enter a room" (p. 225). Her fear of reinforcing the Mammy image made this awareness more painful because "my fat signifies the perpetuation of a stereotype... I look like 'mammy' without her bandanna" (p. 230). Consequently, some Black women engage in excessive dieting in their attempt to distance themselves from the Mammy image.

To conclude, many Black women appreciate their large hips, rounded backside, and ample thighs, especially if they have strong racial identities, reject mainstream beauty standards, and receive favorable comments about their appearance from partners, family, and community members (Hesse-Biber et al., 2004). On the other hand, African American women do not differ significantly from White women in their risk for bulimia and binge-eating disorder (O'Neill, 2003). Furthermore, obesity and its associated health risks, including diabetes and heart disease, are epidemic among Black women. The challenge is to reduce obesity and its health consequences without creating negative body images and unhealthy eating patterns. This requires culturally sensitive programs to meet the health needs of African American women (Alleyne & LaPoint, 2004). In addition, we must attend to Black women's unmet emotional needs, which may lead them to binge eat or engage in restrictive dieting, as well as cultural factors, such as adherence to the emotionally strong Mammy image, which also can contribute to eating problems (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2003).

JEZEBEL

In 1619, the first ship loaded with enslaved Africans arrived in Jamestown, Virginia. Upon arrival, bondwomen were placed on the auction block, stripped naked, and examined to determine their reproductive capacity. Once sold, they were coerced, bribed, induced, seduced, ordered, and, of course, violently forced to have sexual relations with slaveholders, their sons, male relatives, and overseers. Sexual terrorism did not end with slavery. During nighttime raids, vigilante groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, whipped African Americans, destroyed their property, and savagely raped Black women. The Jezebel stereotype, which branded Black women as sexually promiscuous and immoral, was used to rationalize these sexual atrocities. This image gave the impression that Black women could not be rape victims because they always desired sex. Consequently, perpetrators faced few legal or social sanctions for raping Black women (West, 2006).

Referred to as "hoochies," "freaks," "hoodrats," or "chickenheads," contemporary Jezebels can be found jiggling and gyrating in hip-hop music videos. Their scantily clad bodies are often draped over expensive cars or fondled by male rappers. In some hardcore gangsta rap these women are lyrically raped, mutilated, and murdered (for sample song lyrics, see Adams & Fuller, 2006). When the cameras are turned off, the life of a "video vixen" is far less glamorous (Steffans, 2005). Furthermore, characteristics that are associated with the Jezebel image may be projected onto Black women, even when they do not engage in sexually explicit behavior. For example, when exposed to sexually provocative videos, followed by slides of unknown, well-dressed women, White undergraduates more often described the Black women who were depicted in these photos as indecent, promiscuous, sleazy, and slutty. The researchers concluded that the "perceived traits and conduct of a rather small sample of

female Black rappers were generalized to other members of the population, namely Black women, but not to members of alternative populations, such as White women" (Gan, Zillman, & Mitrook, 1997, p. 397).

The Jezebel stereotype also can influence our perceptions of rape survivors. In a date rape scenario, college students were less likely to define the hypothetical incident as rape, believe that it should be reported to the police, and hold the assailant accountable when the victim was Black (Foley, Evanic, Karnik, King, & Parks, 1995). According to the researchers, "racial history and rape myths thus make African American women more vulnerable to forced sexual encounters while simultaneously making accusations of rape more difficult for them" (p. 15). As a result, Black women may receive a "double dose" of cultural rape myths, those that target all survivors and those that claim that Black women are especially deserving of sexual assault. In one study, Black rape survivors who internalized beliefs that were consistent with the Jezebel image, such as "People think Black women are sexually loose," reported more victim blaming, which in turn was related to lower self-esteem (Neville, Heppner, Oh, Spanierman, & Clark, 2004). Acknowledgment of the influence of this image on the mental health of African American survivors may increase their willingness to disclose rape and seek assistance (West, 2002).

How do contemporary Black women create a healthy sexuality in a society that depicts them as oversexed and unrapeable, an image that is now broadcast around the world in the form of 24-hour music videos? Some artists have created alternative beauty standards and a self-possessed sexuality to counter negative images. For example, in her song *Video*, India.Arie asserted, "I'm not the average girl from your video / And I ain't built like a supermodel / But I've learned to love myself unconditionally" (Golden, 2004, p. 104). Other artists have attempted to "reclaim and revise the controlling images, specifically 'the Jezebel,' to express sexual subjectivity" (Emerson, 2002, p. 133) by depicting Black women's sexuality as positive and enjoyable, as, for example in the Salt-n-Pepa song *Let's Talk About Sex*. The difficulty, however, lies in telling the difference between representations of Black women who are sexually liberated and those who are sex objects. Are rappers like Lil' Kim and Foxy Brown victims of the hip-hop industry, examples of repackaged Jezebels, or savvy business women who freely exploit their sexuality for personal financial gain?

SAPPHIRE

During slavery, the "cult of true womanhood" required upper-middle class White women to adhere to a standard of femininity that was characterized by passivity, frailty, and domesticity. In contrast, the traditional standards of womanhood were not applied to Black women. They were characterized as strong, masculinized workhorses who labored with Black men in the fields or as aggressive women who drove their children and partners away with their overbearing natures. The reality is that slaveholders sold Black

women's children and husbands away, which caused unimaginable grief and understandable anger. In addition, the absence of their partners compelled African American women to assume traditional men's roles, such as financial providers. Yet, social scientists claimed that Black women's dominance and matriarchal status within their families, rather than discriminatory social policies and economic inequalities, were responsible for the unemployment and the emasculation of Black men, which ultimately resulted in poverty, single parenthood, and the production of criminally inclined, academically low-achieving Black children (Collins, 2000).

The image of the hostile, nagging Black woman was personified by the character Sapphire on the 1940s and 1950s *Amos 'n' Andy* radio and television shows. After years of complaints, the show was taken off the broadcast schedule in 1953 (Jewell, 1993). However, we see traces of this angry sister with an "attitude," such as Omarosa on Donald Trump's *The Apprentice*, and other reality shows and recent movies (Millner, Burt-Murray, & Miller, 2004). Popularized in hip-hop music and urban fiction, Sapphire has now become the "gangsta girl" who is equally as violent as her male peers (Stephens & Phillips, 2003). Sapphire also provides comic relief as Tyler Perry's character Medea (a southern term for "mother dear"). She is a pistol-packing grandmother who is frequently depicted rolling her neck, with both hands on her hips, telling off the person who has just offended her. If this conflict resolution strategy fails, she recommends, "'Take your earrings off!' This is the Black woman's national anthem. She's getting ready to fight" (Perry, 2006, p. 238). The Sapphire image implies that Black women's anger, their justifiable response to societal injustice, is dangerous or funny.

The Sapphire image has the potential to influence how anger is expressed and experienced. Although some Black women perceive this image as powerful, they may be using an angry, self-protective posture to shield themselves from discrimination, victimization, and disappointment. Displays of anger can become dangerous when they reach the "Sapphire level," defined by Childs and Palmer (2001) as a response "that takes an argument to the extreme, which includes losing the perspective of the situation, becoming verbally or physically abusive, throwing things, and venturing into tactics that are below the belt" (p. 5). By lashing out and alienating others, African American women may unwittingly undermine their support system, which leaves them without emotional support. Other African American women fear reinforcing the Sapphire stereotype. In their attempt to appear nonthreatening, they avoid appropriate expressions of anger (Thomas et al., 2004).

What can be done? I believe that we need fewer tongue-in-cheek, humorous accounts of Black women's anger (e.g., Millner et al., 2004; Perry, 2006) and more research should be focused on Black women's daily experiences with anger, which is often fueled by racism and lack of power, control, and respect (Fields et al., 1998). Second, assertiveness training can help some African American women to learn more appropriate ways to

manage their anger. Finally, anger can be used to spark change. For example, after viewing Nelly, the rapper, run a credit card through the “crack” of a young Black woman’s buttocks, the students at Spelman College, a historically Black women’s college in Atlanta, began a “take back the music” protest in response to objectionable song lyrics and videos. These young activists conducted community forums, wrote articles, and lobbied the music industry to change these images (Holsendolph, 2005).

CONCLUSION

In this lecture, I provided a historical overview of three images of Black women (Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire). These images were derived from historically constructed conditions; were shaped by structural inequalities, such as racism and sexism; and continue to exist today. They can influence the psychological functioning of many African American women. By taking an “oppositional gaze,” as bell hooks (1992) suggested, we can see, name, question, resist, and ultimately transform these and other oppressive images.

REFERENCES

- ABDULLAH, A. S. (1998). Mammy-ism: A diagnosis of psychological misorientation for women of African descent. *Journal of Black Psychology, 24*, 196–210.
- ADAMS, T. M., & FULLER, D. B. (2006). The words have changed but the ideology remains the same: Misogynistic lyrics in rap music. *Journal of Black Studies, 36*, 938–957.
- ALLEYNE, S. I., & LAPOINT, V. (2004). Obesity among Black adolescent girls: Genetic, psychosocial, and cultural influences. *Journal of Black Psychology, 30*, 344–365.
- AVERY, B. (1994). Breathing life into ourselves: The evolution of the National Black Women’s Health Project. In E. C. White (Ed.), *The Black women’s health book: Speaking for ourselves* (pp. 4–10). Seattle, WA: Seal Press.
- BASS, M. K. (2000). On being a fat Black girl in a fat-hating culture. In M. Bennett & V. D. Dickerson (Eds.), *Recovering the Black female body: Self-representations by African American women* (pp. 219–230). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- BEAUBOEUF-LAFONTANT, T. (2003). Strong and large Black women? Exploring relationships between deviant womanhood and weight. *Gender & Society, 17*, 111–121.
- BROWN, D. R. (2003). A conceptual model of mental well-being for African American women. In D. R. Brown & V. M. Keith (Eds.), *In and out of our right minds: The mental health of African American women* (pp. 1–19). New York: Columbia University Press.
- BURRELLE’S TRANSCRIPTS (1998, July 9). John Gray on loving again [Television series episode]. In Harpo Productions (Producer), *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. Chicago, IL.
- BYRD, A., & SOLOMON, A. (2005). *Naked: Black women bare all about their skin, hair, hips, lips, and other parts*. New York: Penguin.

- CARROLL, R. (1997). *Sugar in the raw: Voices of young Black girls in America*. New York: Crown.
- CHILDS, F., & PALMER, N. (2001). *Going off: A guide for Black women who've just about had enough*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- CHRISTIAN, B. (1980). *Black women novelists: The development of a tradition: 1892-1976*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- COLLINS, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- DANQUAH, M. (1998). *Willow weep for me: A Black woman's journey through depression*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- DAVIS, D. (2004). Manufacturing Mammies: The burdens of service work and welfare reform among battered Black women. *Anthropologica*, 46, 273-288.
- EMERSON, R. A. (2002). "Where my girls at?" Negotiating Black womanhood in music videos. *Gender & Society*, 16, 115-135.
- FIELDS, B., REESMAN, K., ROBINSON, C., SIMS, A., EDWARDS, K., MCCALL, B., SHORT, B., THOMAS, S. P. (1998). Anger of African American women in the South. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 19, 353-373.
- FOLEY, L. A., EVANCIC, C., KARNIK, K., KING, J., & PARKS, A. (1995). Date rape: Effects of race of assailant and victim and gender of subjects on perceptions. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 21, 6-18.
- FULLER, L. (2001). Are we seeing things? The Pine-Sol lady and the ghost of Aunt Jemima. *Journal of Black Studies*, 32, 120-131.
- GAN, S., ZILLMANN, D., & MITROOK, M. (1997). Stereotyping effects of Black women's sexual rap on White audience. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 19, 381-399.
- GIVENS, S. M., & MONAHAN, J. L. (2005). Priming Mammies, Jezebels, and other controlling images: An examination of the influence of mediated stereotypes on perceptions of an African American woman. *Media Psychology*, 7, 87-106.
- GOLDEN, M. (2004). *Don't play in the sun: One woman's journey through the color complex*. New York: Doubleday.
- HARRIS-LACEWELL, M. (2001). No place to rest: African American political attitudes and the myth of Black women's strength. *Women & Politics*, 23, 1-33.
- HESSE-BIBER, S. N., HOWLING, S. A., LEAVY, P., & LOVEJOY, M. (2004). Racial identity and the development of body image issues among African American adolescent girls. *Qualitative Report*, 9, 49-79.
- HOLSENDOLPH, E. (2005, March 24). "Taking back the music": Spelman students combat hip-hop's negative portrayal of Black women. *Black Issues in Higher Education*, 22, 8-9.
- HOOKS, B. (1992). *Black looks: Race and representation*. Boston: South End Press.
- HUDSON, S. V. (1998). Re-recreational television: The paradox of change and continuity within stereotypical iconography. *Sociological Inquiry*, 68, 242-257.
- HUNTER, M. L. (2005). *Race, gender, and the politics of skin tone*. New York: Routledge.
- JEWELL, K. S. (1993). *From Mammy to Miss America and beyond: Cultural images and the shaping of US social policy*. New York: Routledge.
- LYNN, R. (2002). Skin color and intelligence in African Americans. *Population and Environment*, 23, 365-375.
- MILLNER, D., BURT-MURRAY, A., & MILLER, M. (2004). *The angry Black woman's guide to life*. New York: Plume.
- MORGAN, J. (1999). *When chickenheads come home to roost . . . my life as a hip hop feminist*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

- MOTLEY, C. M., HENDERSON, G. R., & BAKER, S. M. (2003). Exploring collective memories associated with African American advertising memorabilia: The good, the bad, and the ugly. *Journal of Advertising*, 32, 47–57.
- MUSE, D. (1994). The Bob—Not an Afro, but still a liberating do. In E. Featherston (Ed.), *Skin deep: Women writing on color, culture, and identity* (pp. 125–132). Freedom, CA: Crossing Press.
- NEVILLE, H. A., HEPPNER, M. J., OH, E., SPANIERMAN, L. B., & CLARK, M. (2004). General and culturally specific factors influencing Black and White rape survivors' self-esteem. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 28, 83–94.
- O'NEILL, S. K. (2003). African American women and eating disturbances: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 29, 3–16.
- PATTON, T. O. (2006). Hey girl, am I more than my hair?: African American women and their struggle with beauty, body image, and hair. *NWSA Journal*, 18, 24–51.
- PERRY, T. (2006). *Don't make a Black woman take off her earrings: Medea's uninhibited commentaries on love and life*. New York: Riverhead Books.
- STEFFANS, K. (2005). *Confessions of a video vixen*. New York: Amistad.
- STEPHENS, D. P., & PHILLIPS, L. D. (2003). Freaks, gold diggers, divas, and dykes: The sociohistorical development of adolescent African American women's sexual scripts. *Sexuality & Culture*, 7, 3–49.
- THOMAS, A. J., SPEIGHT, S. L., & WITHERSPOON, K. M., (2004). Internalized oppression among Black women. In J. L. Chin (Ed.), *The psychology of prejudice and discrimination: Bias based on gender and sexual orientation* (Vol. 3, pp. 113–132). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- THOMPSON, M. S., & KEITH, V. M. (2004). Copper brown and blue black: Colorism and self-evaluation. In C. Herring, V. M. Keith, & H. D. Horton (Eds.), *Skin deep: How race and complexion matter in the "color-blind" era* (pp. 45–64). Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- WARREN, B. J. (1997). Depression, stressful life events, social support, and self-esteem in middle-class African American women. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 11, 107–117.
- WEST, C. M. (2002). *Violence in the lives of Black women: Battered, black, and blue*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.
- WEST, C. M. (Ed.). (2006). *Sexual violence in the lives of African American women: Risk, resilience, and response*. National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women. <http://www.vawnet.org>

SUGGESTED READINGS

- BYRD, A., & SOLOMON, A. (2005). *Naked: Black women bare all about their skin, hair, hips, lips, and other parts*. New York: Penguin.
- COLLINS, P. H. (2004). *Black sexual politics: African Americans, gender, and the new racism*. New York: Routledge.
- JONES, C., & SHORTER-GOODEN, K. (2003). *Shifting: The double lives of Black women in America*. New York: Harper Collins.
- THOMPSON, T. (2004). *The real lives of strong Black women: Transcending myths, reclaiming joy*. Chicago: Agate.



CAROLYN M. WEST is Associate Professor of Psychology and the Bartley Dobb Professor for the Study and Prevention of Violence in the Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences Program at the University of Washington at Tacoma. Dr. West has taught courses on the psychology of women since 1986. She is editor of the book *Violence in the Lives of Black Women: Battered, Black, and Blue* and is best known for her research on violence in ethnic minority families and on images of African American women in popular culture.