

A body that does not compare: how white men define black female beauty in the era of colorblindness

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"Just the term 'black women' conjures up thoughts of an overweight, dark-skinned, loud, poorly educated person with gold teeth yelling at somebody in public. I hope that doesn't make me racist but honestly that's the 1st thing I think of."- Lee, middle class white male in his 30's, from Florida

[1] In this quote Lee provides a highly racialized, gendered, and classed view of black women. Lee is a middle class white male with no black female friends, rare interactions with black families growing up, and who states his interactions with black women only consist of work-related experiences. Yet, he expresses strong negative views of black women as unattractive and uneducated as the first thoughts that come to his mind. This quote by Lee and several other white male respondents in this essay dispute notions that only a few highly identifiable, old, deep-south bigots hold strong deep seated racialized views of black women. These expressions by white male respondents are indicative of the consistent exclusion of black women as relationship partners by white men, and representative of a powerful mental processing at play that goes beyond the limited language of stereotype.

[2] Census data reveals that black women have the lowest interracial marriage rate of all women except white women and the interracial marriage rate of black women and white men has modestly increased from 1% in 1970 to 4.1% in 2000 (Lee and Edmonston 2005). Research also shows that black women are overwhelmingly excluded as interracial dating partners, with one study showing that white men excluded black women as dating options at 93% (Feliciano, Robnett, and Komaie 2008). Census data and interracial dating studies show a longstanding persistent trend of black women as an excluded heterosexual relationship partner for white men (and other men of color) (Quian and Litcher 2007; Phua and Koffman 2003; Yancey 2007). These trends exist in a society that today prides itself on colorblindness. Current research studies on interracial marriage decisions and the current hegemonic race discourse often leads one to believe that racism exists only within the hearts of a few bigots and that race encompasses a greatly diminished role in interracial relationship decisions (Rosenfeld 2005; Yancey and Yancey 1998). Quantitative polls that measure racial attitudes of whites today show a marked decrease in racial hostilities, however, these polls do not account for the complexities of frontstage and backstage racism, whereby whites manipulate racial performances for the settings that they are in (Picca and Feagin 2007). Research by Pica and Feagin (2007) shows that when in frontstage settings around people of color or in social settings where racism is politically incorrect, whites are more likely to engage in racial performances of colorblindness, however, when in backstage settings around other whites, these same whites are likely to express or engage racially discriminatory thoughts and behaviors.

[3] To understand the phenomenon of black women's consistent exclusion as relationship partners for white men, a critical theoretical assessment must be undertaken that debunks notions of colorblindness and imperatively places race, intersected...

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A Body That Does Not Compare: How White Men Define Black Female Beauty in the Era of Colorblindness. By Slatton, Brittany C. Read preview. Academic journal article Genders. Quantitative polls that measure racial attitudes of whites today show a marked decrease in racial hostilities, however, these polls do not account for the complexities of frontstage and backstage racism, whereby whites manipulate racial performances for the settings that they are in (Picca and Feagin 2007). This construction of black female bodies has been that of sexual licentiousness, natural immorality, disease, animalism, prostitution, and masculinity; the opposite of hegemonic, white, femininity (Collins 2005; Hammonds 1997; Jones and Shorter-Gooden 2003; St. Jean and Feagin 1998). How do we determine what makes a person beautiful? Though it might seem like the standards of beauty we have today must be historically universal, really the opposite is true. The "perfect" female (and male) body has greatly changed over the years, even though the foundation of the female form has stayed the same. So, next time you feel like your own body might be less than perfect, just remember that "perfection" is an ephemeral ideal, bound to change and transform — looking stunningly different from one generation to the next. The Paleolithic era. One of the earliest exam white female for stating that black men are increasing their presence in non black female circles across the globe, again which is a statement of truth, help me understand your position please. Again, you can't pick and choose who you decide to accept the truth from based upon their social standing/class, that is backwards thinking. A homeless bum living in the streets can rattle off just as much truth as a professor in the classroom. In the meantime please see the above video of a "middle class" white woman talking about why white women are attracted to black men. Oh, and by the way, remember this video from November 2016, these white women aren't "trailer trash" either: The Deprogramming And Decontamination Process Continues.