PROJECT MUSE®

Editor's Note: It's Time ...

Journal of Black Sexuality and Relationships, Volume 1, Number 3,
Winter 2015, pp. vii-xi (Article)

Published by University of Nebraska Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/bsr.2015.0000>

➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/576148>

Editor's Note

It's Time . . .

Dr. Marlon Bailey was right. In the article, "Who's Afraid of Black Sexuality," written by Stacey Patton (2012), Bailey suggested that it was time to talk about Black sexuality within and outside of African Studies departments. The buzz around our field is that we have evolved to a place where we are can engage in consistent formal discourse around the sexuality of persons of African descent. What leads me to believe that we are ready for this discussion is the growing number educational programs in sexuality/queer/gender studies; professional organizations targeted at the sexual expression of persons of African descent; heightened awareness of the necessity of dialogue; and movements of social activism. These phenomena strongly suggest that we are open and willing to come together from multiple disciplines and dialogue about how our past informs our present. This time is crucial in that our scholarly and clinical contributions could be strengthened if we developed a collective voice around our research, practice, and rhetoric. While there will always be divergent opinions, it should be kept in mind that our assertions merely reflect our diversity and the range of Black sexuality. Who's afraid of Black sexuality? At this point, I would say, very few of us, if any.

In my last Editorial Note, I mentioned that a collection of scholars and practitioners came together to form the Association of Black Sexologists and Clinicians and were in the foundational stages of setting up the first Black Families, Black Relationships, Black Sexuality Conference in Philadelphia. We have issued a Call for Proposals, Call for Black Film, and a Call for Black Self-Help books which concludes on April 15, 2015. The significance of this event will be transformative for the field because of the number of researchers, clinicians, filmmakers, authors, and thought leaders who will be in attendance to engage in formal conversation. The goal of the conference is to shed additional light upon how our past illuminates the work that we have done and plan to do. What will also be fascinating

will be the professional and personal narratives that will be shared as it relates to our field. As powerful as our literature is, there will be something remarkable about being engaged in conversation about how our families, relationships, and sexuality have shifted over time, context, and circumstance. Perhaps what may make the conference so captivating will be the depth of unrivaled passion, empathy, and compassion that emerges when there is a sense that many of our colleagues truly understand our individual and collective journey. In other words, the assumption will be that folks at the conference will “get it” when we share.

One of the challenges of being a Black sexologist and therapist is that sometimes it is difficult to accept, embrace, and/or move beyond our history. There are many aspects of our history that are painful, traumatic, and hard to grasp. At the same time, our history is beautiful, rich, and carries a unique set of ideas that are incomparable to any other race or ethnic background. The individual and shared struggle to constantly reframe oppression, privilege, apathy, entitlements, and power hierarchies serves as major underpinnings that shape Black sexuality. When we unpack and disentangle these multi-layered and sophisticated threads, we see sexual and mental health disparities, socioeconomic challenges for our communities, and feelings of disenfranchisement. It is for this reason that we as Black scholars and clinicians actively seek to reveal the truths that have not been given the credence that they deserve and offers a rationale for our organization, journal, and conference. Unmistakably, this is the essence of Black sexuality and what drives us to do the work that we do.

For this third issue of the *Journal of Black Sexuality and Relationships*, Dr. Sheila Baldwin serves as Guest Editor and offers us, “Scandal: Same Ol’ Stereotypic Shit, Just a Different Day.” She discusses the popular television show and how it continues to promote stereotypic Black female sexuality. What’s compelling about her essay is that she uses her background in literature to deconstruct the storylines and finally concedes that she will continue to keep watching the show.

In the next article, Dr. Earl Mowatt, of Bethune-Cookman University, shares his research in the study, “Cross-Racial Relationships on Family-Themed Television Shows: An Indicator for Larger Race Relations in the United States.” He analyzed sixty-three hours of primetime television shows to assess cross-racial interactions on television were characterized by conditions that support friendliness and mutual respect in face-to-face encounters. He suggested that broadcast portrayals may be conducive for understanding racial relationships in society.

The next manuscript, written by Drs. Erika Evans and Don Dyson uses a Black Feminist Theoretical framework to construct ideas about Black womanhood and sexuality. The authors present a new paradigm, “The Transformational Theory to Becoming a Black Queen,” which details how Black girls can develop into sexually positive Black women.

Drs. Golub and Reid of the National Development and Research Institute offer us an interesting study about cohabiting and co-parenting relationships of Black families. The researchers found that most participants of the study had extensive periods living without partner and how many Black children had none or only resident father prior to the current cohabitation. The authors discuss the role implications for having a new resident father and its influence on child development.

Dr. Johnathan Livingston and his colleagues assessed the use of theater as a health education intervention for HIV/AIDS knowledge and sexual behaviors before and after the play *Lonely Words*. The researchers suggest that theater should be considered as a viable option for increasing the likelihood of condom usage among Black males.

Another study about condoms was completed by Dr. Kimberly Boyd and her peers at Virginia State University. Using the Theory of Planned Behavior, the authors explored how knowledge, health awareness, and communication may affect college students’ female condom attitudes and behavior. The authors assert that having brief discussions about female condoms may facilitate safer sex practices.

Finally, in the Perspectives section for this issue of the JBSR, Dr. Valerie Newsome and her colleagues, Dr. Zupenda Davis and Jessica Dinac present “Re-Search: The Missing Pieces in Investigating African-American Relationship Dynamics and Implications for HIV Risk.” The authors discuss the need to address socio-systemic factors that influence African American heterosexual relationships and risk of HIV/AIDS.

What’s exciting about this issue of the JBSR is the broad range of topics covered by our scholars and practitioners. We have received a tremendous number of manuscripts to review and are grateful that you select us for your scholarly publications. We are also enthusiastic about meeting you at our conference in October, and look forward to you sharing your scholarship with our community.

REFERENCES

Patton, S. (2012, December 3). Who’s afraid of Black sexuality? *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Whos-Afraid-of-Black/135960>.