

## Unbridled Stallions and Mad Bulls: Masculinity, Race, and Sexuality in Hemispheric Perspective

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“The black brute is lurking in the dark, a monstrous beast, crazed with lust. His ferocity is almost demoniacal. A mad bull or a tiger could scarcely be more brutal.”<sup>1</sup> So proclaimed Dr. George T. Winston, president of the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, to a special symposium on “The Race Problem at the South” at the Fifth Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Science in 1901. The trope is a familiar one: the rapacious, bestial black male, his uncontrollable lust for white women set ablaze by the follies of emancipation and Reconstruction, effectively threatening to topple the enlightened, genteel civilization of the U.S. South. Black feminism has helped us to see how this trope effectively welded together patriarchy and white supremacy in the Jim Crow South, producing gendered forms of racialization and racialized gender systems, while serving as a *post-hoc* justification for the distinctly un-civilized practice of lynching. The trope endures in explicit form in avowedly white nationalist circles today, and in more implicit form in the popular consciousness, particularly in media representations of black masculinity and in popular discourse about black criminality.

Now consider a second, less familiar (to U.S. ears, at least) description of uncontrollable masculine lust:

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<sup>1</sup> George Winston, “The Relation of the Whites to the Negroes,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 18 (1901): 109.

To the wilderness, so underpopulated, with a bare sprinkling of whites, came these oversexed ones, there to give extraordinarily free rein to their passions; and the results, it may be, were advantageous to the interests of Portugal in Brazil. Attracted by the possibilities of a free and untrammelled life, with a host of nude women all around them, many Europeans of the type that Paulo Prado has described for us with such forceful realism proceeded to settle here out of predilection or of their own free will. Unbridled stallions is what they were.<sup>2</sup>

This description comes to us from Gilberto Freyre, arguably the most famous Brazilian social theorist of the twentieth century, often credited with formulating the once-hegemonic image of Brazil as a uniquely hybrid, racially mixed, sensuous and harmonious nation. Both Winston and Freyre depict wild men driven by uncontrollable lusts to pursue women of a different racial group. Both choose animal metaphors for these men to capture their essentially savage proclivities: unbridled stallions and mad bulls. Yet the stark differences are far more striking than these superficial similarities. Whereas the mad bulls of Winston's imagination threaten civilization itself with collapse through their demonic bestiality, Freyre's unbridled stallions paradoxically act as the very agents of civilization and the mythic founders of Brazil's unique and praiseworthy national character. And whereas "stallion" brings to mind a noble, proud, and elegant creature, Winston's bulls—frequently also derided as beasts—represent utter depravity and debasement.

Winston and Freyre make for a peculiar and unexpected juxtaposition: a largely forgotten former university administrator from the Jim Crow South of the United States and one of Brazil's most famous thinkers, appearing on a postage stamp and as the

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<sup>2</sup> Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*, trans. Samuel Putnam, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Albert A. Knopf, 1966), 29. The phrase "unbridled stallions" is translated from the Portuguese phrase "garanhões desbragados". See Gilberto Freyre, *Casa-grande & senzala: Formação da família brasileira sob o regime da economia patriarcal*, 48<sup>th</sup> ed. (Recife, Brazil: Global Editora, 2003), 83.

namesake of the Recife airport, descended from rural aristocracy in the state of Pernambuco in Northeast Brazil. This dissonance is by design. As Juliet Hooker explains, “[b]y definition juxtaposition places two disparate objects side by side, and it is by being viewed simultaneously that the viewer’s understanding of each object is transformed.”<sup>3</sup> Winston’s black beast is so familiar to us now as to seem the virtually inevitable product of conjoined racism and sexism, an object lesson in intersectional feminist theory. And certainly, intersectionality provides us with indispensable insights into the mutual constitution of race and sex and the consequent unique experiences and hidden knowledges of those who inhabit the subordinate positions on both axes. Yet expanding our vision beyond the particular (and ultimately parochial) histories of race, sex, and class in the United States renders the familiar strange again, and reminds us that race and sex, and racism and sexism, not only mutually constitute each other but are also themselves partly constituted by *place*. Heeding Hooker’s call for a hemispheric vantage point from which to theorize race, then, I explore how these divergent depictions of masculine lustfulness shed light on the distinctive trajectories of race, sex, and sexuality in the United States and Brazil.

I begin by examining in greater detail the constructions of masculinity in each case. Both serve precise ideological functions within the context of the specific history of each country. In the United States, strict rules of hypodescent and a horror of miscegenation undergird the Jim Crow regime of categorical racial separation as a mechanism for enforcing white supremacy and black subordination in the South. The myth of the black male rapist, as Angela Davis famously describes it, simultaneously

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<sup>3</sup> Juliet Hooker, *Theorizing Race in the Americas: Douglass, Sarmiento, Du Bois, and Vasconcelos* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 13.

emerged out of and helped to consolidate this regime.<sup>4</sup> Post-abolition Brazil, in contrast, was a more racially mixed country with no comparably comprehensive system of enforced legal segregation, much to the chagrin and alarm of those elites who had embraced European scientific racism and saw widespread miscegenation as a curse that would forever cement Brazilian backwardness.<sup>5</sup> In order to save Brazil from this curse, then, another interpretation of miscegenation was essential. Accordingly, Freyre deftly converted racial mixture from curse to blessing, in the process articulating a deeply ambivalent account of Portuguese colonists and slaveholders violently lusting after native and black women. In the concluding section, I bring these stories of wild masculinity together again, showing how they aid us in deparochializing intersectionality.

### **Mad Bulls**

The myth of the black male rapist was consolidated after the collapse of Reconstruction, and particularly in the 1880s, not coincidentally in the same period that the first Jim Crow statutes appeared.<sup>6</sup> It provided a convenient justification for segregation, political disenfranchisement, and extralegal anti-black mob violence, the most emblematic form of which was lynching. Winston's contribution to this moral panic around black male sexuality comes in the context of an extended lament for the

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<sup>4</sup> Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), ch. 11.

<sup>5</sup> See Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black Into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought*, revised ed. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> See Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 46-47; Martha Hodes, "The Sexualization of Reconstruction Politics: White Women and Black Men in the South after the Civil War," in *American Sexual Politics: Sex, Gender, and Race since the Civil War*, eds. John Fout and Maura Shaw Tantillo (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 59-61; Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 183-184.

allegedly harmonious and tender relations between blacks and whites in the antebellum, slaveholding South. Thanks to the moral tutelage of their masters, the interconnectedness and mutual reliance of extended plantation families, and the strict discipline of daily plantation labor, black slaves achieved a state of quasi-civilization that rendered them docile and affectionate: “It was this semi-social intercourse between the two races, without any approach to social equality, this daily and hourly contact producing personal interest, friendship and affection, added to the industrial training of slavery that transformed the Negro so quickly from a savage to a civilized man.”<sup>7</sup> With the end of slavery, and especially with the social and political gains of Reconstruction, these cordial relations crumbled, and former slaves sunk back into savagery. Incapable of exercising their newfound rights and freedoms in a mature and responsible manner, and “intoxicated with the license of freedom,” they cast off all restraints, refused to work, and succumbed to their darkest impulses: “In slavery he was like an animal in harness; well trained, gentle and affectionate; in early freedom the harness was off, but still the habit of obedience and the force of affection endured and prevented a run-away. In Reconstruction came a consciousness of being unharnessed, unhitched, unbridled, and unrestrained. The wildest excesses followed.”<sup>8</sup> The wildest and most abhorrent of all these excesses, of course, was the uncontrollable instinct to rape white women.

Winston’s tale was repeated *ad nauseam* in overwrought, melodramatic speeches and texts by Southern politicians, lawyers, judges, academics, writers, journalists, prominent businessmen, terrified white women, and of course Ku Klux Klan members. Thomas Nelson Page, the author of sentimental and nostalgic Lost Cause fiction, and

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<sup>7</sup> Winston, “The Relation of the Whites to the Negroes,” 108.

<sup>8</sup> Winston, “The Relation of the Whites to the Negroes,” 114.

eventually the U.S. ambassador to Italy under President Woodrow Wilson, offers the following archetypal example:

As the crime of rape had its baleful origin in the teaching of equality and the placing of power in the ignorant negroes' hands, so its perpetration and increase have undoubtedly been due in large part to the same teaching. The intelligent negro may understand what social equality truly means; but to the ignorant and brutal young negro, it signifies but one thing: the opportunity to enjoy, equally with white men, the privilege of cohabiting with white women.<sup>9</sup>

Not content merely to allege that an epidemic of rape has besieged the South, Page also asserts that black male rapists are exceptionally, unspeakably savage and brutal: “This was the unnamable brutality with which the causing crime was, in nearly every case, attended.”<sup>10</sup> These “unnamable horrors” turn otherwise decent and civilized white men into “madmen, drunk with the lust of revenge.”<sup>11</sup> Hence, the spread of lynching.

Page does not entirely defend lynching, then. The terms of his description of white lynch mobs strikingly echo the descriptions of bestial black men that pepper his article—madmen, drunk with lust. The allusions to madness, intoxication, and the loss of impulse control underscore the uncivilized nature of both rape and lynching. He even acknowledges that “lynching as a remedy is a ghastly failure, and its brutalizing effect on the community is incalculable.”<sup>12</sup> But he places the blame for lynching squarely on black shoulders: first, on the “mad bulls” themselves, the unspeakably brutal rapists, and secondly, on the leadership of the black community, whom he believes has failed to condemn the crime of rape. So, the descent into savagery, understood as untamed

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Nelson Page, “The Lynching of Negroes: Its Cause and Prevention,” *The North American Review* 178.566 (1904): 45.

<sup>10</sup> Page, “The Lynching of Negroes,” 38.

<sup>11</sup> Page, “The Lynching of Negroes,” 38.

<sup>12</sup> Page, “The Lynching of Negroes,” 43.

bestiality, of emancipated black men comes first, both temporally and logically. It acts as a contagion and a poison, infecting the white lynch mobs seeking revenge for bestial crimes against white womanhood. The only possible remedy for lynching, then, is for blacks themselves to put a stop to the rape of white women: “Until the negroes shall create among themselves a sound public opinion which, instead of fostering, shall reprobate and sternly repress the crime of assaulting white women and children, the crime will never be extirpated, and until this crime is stopped the crime of lynching will never be extirpated.”<sup>13</sup> Black savagery yields white savagery, and Southern civilization trembles.

Black feminists in the Jim Crow era and later have unpacked the ideological workings of this myth. Ida B. Wells was perhaps the leading anti-lynching activist at the time, and her pamphlet *Southern Horrors* brilliantly dismantles the apology for lynching from men like Winston and Page. She begins by noting that the myth of the bestial black male rapist is of recent vintage, and scoffs at the idea propounded by Winston and Page that emancipation itself explains the sudden emergence of a new category of criminal: “The thinking public will not easily believe freedom and education more brutalizing than slavery, and the world knows that the crime of rape was unknown during four years of civil war, when the white women of the South were at the mercy of the race which is all at once charged with being a bestial one.”<sup>14</sup> In fact, even the members of lynch mobs themselves cited rape or attempted rape as the reason for the lynching “in only a quarter

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<sup>13</sup> Page, “The Lynching of Negroes,” 46.

<sup>14</sup> Ida B. Wells-Barnett, “Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases,” in *On Lynchings* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2014), 8.

of the cases occurring between 1882 and 1968.”<sup>15</sup> Yet public discourse around lynching, not only in the South but also in the North, endlessly recycled the image of the black male rapist as the overriding explanation for the South’s descent into brutal vigilante justice.

If there was no epidemic of rape gripping the South, why did prominent Southerners feel the need to fabricate one? First and foremost, according to Wells, it functions to obscure the horrifying reality that “there are white women in the South who love the Afro-American’s company even as there are white men notorious for their preference for Afro-American women.”<sup>16</sup> In short, the charge of rape erases the existence of *consensual* interracial sexual relationships. The idea that white women, especially middle and upper-class white women, the guardians of hearth and home whose virtue and purity required masculine protection, might well find black men sexually enticing was too horrible to contemplate. By converting willing white women into rape victims, then, propagators of the myth simultaneously salvaged the honor of white women and repressed the terrifying anxiety that black men could be more sexually desirable than white men.

Wells also lambastes the hypocrisy of the self-appointed anti-rape crusaders. For they displayed no corresponding anxiety about white men who pursued black women, nor did they offer a word of concern for the genuine epidemic of sexual violence against black women in the South. Instead, the anti-miscegenation laws in the South “only operate against the legitimate union of the races; they leave the white man free to seduce

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<sup>15</sup> Orlando Patterson, *Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries* (New York: Basic Civitas, 1998), 174. Patterson is basing his calculation on underlying statistics compiled in Daniel T. Williams, “The Lynching Records at Tuskegee Institute,” in *Eight Negro Bibliographies* (New York: Kraus Reprint, 1970).

<sup>16</sup> Wells-Barnett, “Southern Horrors,” 14.



all the colored girls he can, but it is death to the colored man who yields to the force and advances of a similar attraction in white women.”<sup>17</sup> And if that “seduction” is really violent coercion? “But when the victim is a colored woman it is different.”<sup>18</sup> Nearly ninety years later, Angela Davis illustrated the intimate connection between the refusal to recognize black women as victims of rape and the portrayal of black men as rapacious beasts: “The fictional image of the Black man as rapist has always strengthened its inseparable companion: the image of the Black woman as chronically promiscuous. For once the notion is accepted that Black men harbor irresistible and animal-like sexual urges, the entire race is invested with bestiality.”<sup>19</sup> Ultimately, then, the panic surrounding the black male rapist achieved two interconnected goals. First, it justified or at least explained lynching. Second, by depicting black women as incapable of declining sex, it rendered them infinitely available as sexual objects for the pleasures of white men. Thus Jim Crow white supremacist patriarchy manifested in two antithetical racial guises: the imperative to protect white women from the scourge of black rapists, and the license to rape black women, who had always already submitted to the act.

Of course, defenders of Southern gentility and civilization could not state the latter openly. For even if black women made themselves readily available to white men, to acknowledge white male lust for black women undermined ubiquitous depictions of whiteness as beautiful and blackness as repellent. Perhaps even more troubling, it would also unravel the carefully cultivated image of Southern white men as the bearers of advanced civilization, indicated by the “ability to control powerful masculine passions through strong character and a powerful will,” as Gail Bederman describes in her

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<sup>17</sup> Wells-Barnett, “Southern Horrors,” 9.

<sup>18</sup> Wells-Barnett, “Southern Horrors,” 14.

<sup>19</sup> Davis, *Women, Race, and Class*, 182.

meticulous study of the ideological relationship between manliness and civilization at the turn of the century.<sup>20</sup> Bederman traces this account of civilization to Victorian ideologies of sexuality, which asserted that “[s]uccumbing to overwhelming emotion or sexual passion would sap a man’s force, rendering him weak and degenerate.”<sup>21</sup> Consequently, it could not be openly acknowledged that white men succumbed to their sexual passion for black women, even if this did not qualify as rape. For it would suggest that white men were closer than anyone wanted to admit to the uncivilized bestiality of black men, given their inability to control their sexual passions. Thus, a code of silence thwarted any acknowledgment of white men desiring black women, while hysterical denunciations of black male rapists proliferated at warp speed.

Finally, the refusal to acknowledge white desire for black sexual partners of either gender also derived from the particular species of scientific racism ascendant in the U.S. at the height (or nadir) of Jim Crow. Drawn from European racial theorists like Arthur de Gobineau, this racist pseudoscience held that race mixture necessarily produced degeneration and decline, especially of the superior races. Since the white race was unquestionably superior, black blood mixed with white blood would act as a contaminant, polluting whiteness and producing debased “halfbreeds” and “mongrels” as offspring. The infamous hypodescent statutes of many Southern states reflect this view. The onus of reproducing whiteness and avoiding the mongrelization of the country rested above all with white women. To choose black male partners would represent the highest form of race treachery, for they would be using their limited fertility to debase the race, rendering them complicit in the degradation of whiteness. White men with black female partners

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<sup>20</sup> Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 11-12.

<sup>21</sup> Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 48.

provoked less visceral horror, given that black women were at least not squandering their capacity to sire white children, and white men never lost that capacity. And sexual restraint was the natural domain of women, not men. In any case, hypodescent effectively excused white fathers of mixed children: “They escaped responsibility not only for including these children in their families but also for including them in their larger family of the White race.”<sup>22</sup> Besides, during the not-so-long-ago era of slavery, the law of *partus sequitur ventrem*, dictating that slave status derives from the mother, created an economic incentive for slave masters to rape their black female slaves. Nonetheless, after Emancipation, such unions were uncouth, at best, and still produced halfbreed children, so they were best left unacknowledged. Perhaps no U.S. writer better emblemizes the U.S. creed of scientific racism in this period than Madison Grant, an avid eugenicist who issued dire warnings of the imminent destruction of the civilized and noble white race in the absence of ironclad anti-miscegenation and segregation laws:

When it becomes thoroughly understood that the children of mixed marriages between contrasted races belong to the lower type, the importance of transmitting in unimpaired purity the blood inheritance of ages will be appreciated at its full value, and to bring halfbreeds into the world will be regarded as a social and racial crime of the first magnitude. The laws against miscegenation must be greatly extended if the higher races are to be maintained.<sup>23</sup>

Hence, denying white women’s desire for black men achieved more than simply salvaging their sexual honor. It also salvaged their racial honor. The myth of the black

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<sup>22</sup> Christine B. Hickman, “The Devil and the One Drop Rule: Racial Categories, African Americans, and the U.S. Census,” *Michigan Law Review* 95.5 (1997): 1176.

<sup>23</sup> Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race Or: The Racial Basis of European History* (New York: Charles’s Scribner’s Sons, 1916), <http://www.solargeneral.org/wp-content/uploads/library/passing-of-the-great-race-madison-grant.pdf>, accessed February 26, 2018.

male rapist saved white Southern women from sexual dissoluteness and race treachery at the same time, while reinforcing white male entitlement to white women.

Crucially, this myth can only do productive work if it isn't already too late. Grant and his allies were sounding an alarm: the dominant white race in the United States confronts an existential threat. Too much mixing of white blood with the blood of inferior races will lead to the end of whiteness itself. Most believed that the United States hadn't quite reached this point yet. It could still be saved as a civilized, white nation, if it took specific actions to protect whiteness – both its superior status, and its very existence. Segregation and anti-miscegenation laws work together to erect a wall around whiteness, and lynching punishes those who would transgress this wall. Hence, the myth of the black male rapist appears simultaneously as pretext for and consequence of these laws. The myth couldn't do the same work in a more mixed country, or in a country with a significantly larger and more visible Afro-descendant population – such as Brazil. Of course, it might still function as part of an anti-black ideology, but it cannot function to support a racial regime designed to protect whiteness as purity. For it is already too late for that. This too-lateness provides the interpretive key to Gilberto Freyre's unbridled Portuguese stallions.

### **Unbridled Stallions**

Freyre uses the term *garanhão* (stallion) four times in *Casa Grande e Senzala*. We have previously encountered the first occasion, in which Freyre characterizes the Portuguese settlers who came to Brazil in the early colonial period as “unbridled

stallions” roaming through a wilderness filled with naked and available indigenous women. On the second occasion, Freyre suggests that plantation patriarchs had an economic incentive to encourage their young sons to develop “the precocity of stallions”—presumably because these precocious young stallions could produce more slaves.<sup>24</sup> On the third occasion, he reiterates the same trope, proclaiming that female black slaves did not seek out and seduce the masters’ sons, but instead the sons had “grown into stallions” from a very young age.<sup>25</sup> Finally, Freyre turns his attention to members of the Portuguese clergy in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, and informs us that these holy men very often did not lead virginal and ascetic lives, but instead “formidable stallions” flourished amongst them.<sup>26</sup> Freyre seems to delight in pointing out the most scandalous manifestations of lustful Portuguese masculinity. Not only rough, adventure-seeking explorers succumbed to their hyperactive sexual instincts. So did young boys and monks.

Freyre was certainly not alone in portraying the men who settled Brazil as hyper-lustful and unable to contain their sexual desires, especially for black and indigenous women. On the first occasion when Freyre refers to Portuguese settlers as unbridled stallions, he approvingly cites Paulo Prado’s influential *Retrato do Brasil* of 1928. Prado identifies a “free and unfettered sensuality” as one of the two defining traits of the original settlers of Brazil.<sup>27</sup> The other defining trait is simply another form of uncontrollable desire: the desire for gold. For Prado, the first settlers were driven to Brazil by a Nietzschean rebellion against the strictures of Christianity, and a desire to

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<sup>24</sup> Freyre, *Casa-grande & senzala*, 455.

<sup>25</sup> Freyre, *Casa-grande & senzala*, 461.

<sup>26</sup> Freyre, *Casa-grande & senzala*, 532.

<sup>27</sup> Paulo Prado, *Retrato do Brasil: Ensaio sobre a tristeza brasileira* (São Paulo, Brazil: IBRASA, 1981), 17.

liberate the stifled instincts for power, glory, riches, and sexual conquest. But Prado does not write to celebrate this lustfulness. Rather, he holds it responsible for a ubiquitous and profound sadness that he describes as one of the singular, identifying characteristics of the Brazilian people: “In Brazil, sadness follows from the intense sexual life of the settler, led astray by erotic perversions, and by the markedly atavistic environment.”<sup>28</sup> The first chapter of *Retrato*, “A luxúria” (lust), provides a scandalous catalog of the sexual perversions that flourished in colonial Brazil, producing a depleted, melancholic mixed-race population. Excessive expenditure of sexual energy and the desperate search for gold leads to “physical and moral decline, exhaustion, unfeelingness, apathy, sadness.”<sup>29</sup> This account strikingly echoes the Victorian ideology of manliness analyzed by Bederman. Freyre unreservedly embraces Prado’s portrayal of the boundlessly licentious and promiscuous Portuguese settlers, but his account of the consequences of this licentiousness is more complicated and ambivalent than Prado’s. This ambivalence ultimately stems from his distinctive racial project.

The last decade of the nineteenth century, following abolition in 1888, saw the increasing influence of European racial ideas on the Brazilian elite. Many began to embrace the idea of black biological inferiority: “And the harder Brazilian intellectuals tried to inform themselves about the latest ideas from Europe—for them the citadel of culture and progress—the more they heard about the inherent inferiority of the black.”<sup>30</sup> The prominent Brazilian doctor Nina Rodrigues proclaimed based on his studies of skulls that blacks had heightened criminal tendencies and “recommended different treatment of

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<sup>28</sup> Prado, *Retrato do Brasil*, 92.

<sup>29</sup> Prado, *Retrato do Brasil*, 93.

<sup>30</sup> Skidmore, “Racial Ideas and Social Policy in Brazil, 1870-1940,” in *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, ed. Richard Graham (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 10.

convicted criminals according to their race.”<sup>31</sup> Of course, European racial science did not stop at black inferiority; it also taught that miscegenation produced degeneration and decline, perhaps eventual infertility. This would surely cement Brazil’s permanent status as a degenerate nation incapable of advanced civilization, given its heavily mixed population:

The relative paucity of Portuguese women among the settlers, and the license of Portuguese men who often had African and Indian women under their economic and political control, contributed to the early establishment of a substantial mixed population—which would eventually come to represent the majority of Brazil’s people.<sup>32</sup>

Many among the Brazilian elite therefore balked at accepting European views of miscegenation. Instead, they introduced an important modification to the European view, one that salvaged their young country’s future: “Based on the higher white fertility rates and their belief that white genes were dominant, these eugenicists concluded that race mixture would eliminate the black population, eventually resulting in a white or mostly white Brazilian population.”<sup>33</sup> Whereas Jim Crow in the U.S. South sought to protect whiteness against dilution via segregation, anti-miscegenation laws, and the principle of hypodescent, the Brazilian elite desperately looked for a way to whiten their already mixed population, and settled on an immigration policy that incentivized European immigration and prohibited African and Asian immigration. In the U.S., one drop of black blood contaminated whiteness and made you black. In Brazil, the superiority of white blood eventually defeated the taint of black blood and made you white.

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<sup>31</sup> Skidmore, “Racial Ideas and Social Policy in Brazil,” 11.

<sup>32</sup> Rachel E. Harding, *A Refuge in Thunder: Candomblé and Alternative Spaces of Blackness* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), xiv.

<sup>33</sup> Edward Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 28.

Needless to say, both approaches exemplify white supremacy and anti-blackness. The young Gilberto Freyre initially found himself persuaded by the anti-miscegenation position in European and U.S. racist thought, explicitly lauding Madison Grant and racial policy in the U.S. South.<sup>34</sup> He despaired of Brazil's future and viewed Europeanized Argentina as the lone Latin American nation on the proper path toward civilization. It was ultimately his close engagement with the work of Franz Boas, his former teacher at Columbia University, that began to shift Freyre's thinking. In his preface to the second English-language edition of *Casa Grande e Senzala*, he writes:

It was my studies in anthropology under the direction of Professor Boas that first revealed to me the Negro and the mulatto for what they are—with the effects of environment or cultural experience separated from racial characteristics. I learned to regard as fundamental the difference between *race* and *culture*, to discriminate between the effects of purely genetic relationships and those resulting from social influences, the cultural heritage and the milieu. It is upon this criterion of the basic differentiation between race and culture that the entire plan of this essay rests, as well as upon the distinction to be made between racial and family heredity.<sup>35</sup>

In short, Freyre came to see racial differences as products of distinct environments rather than genetic destiny. This prompted him to reject not only the racist presumptions of Gobineau and Grant, but also the distinctly Brazilian racism behind the doctrine of *branqueamento*, or whitening, via *mestiçagem*, or miscegenation. Instead of miscegenation as a tool of whitening, then, Freyre came to view it as praiseworthy in itself. Through miscegenation, Brazil could combine the best elements of Portuguese, African, and indigenous cultures, forging a robust hybrid nation. Freyre takes special care in *Casa Grande e Senzala* to elaborate the distinctive cultural virtues of Africans

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<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of the young Freyre's racial views, see Peter Burke and Maria Lúcia G. Pallares-Burke, *Gilberto Freyre: Social Theory in the Tropics* (Oxford, England: Peter Lang, 1988), 38-41.

<sup>35</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, xxvii.



“from the more advanced areas of Negro culture.”<sup>36</sup> Ultimately, he deems them co-colonizers of Brazil, an obviously problematic designation in the context of settler colonialism and slavery, but one that he nonetheless intends to highlight distinctive and praiseworthy African contributions to the Brazilian nation. This celebration of miscegenation, especially its valorization of blackness, was his signal innovation in Brazilian racial thought, the merits of which remain the subject of intense debate to this day.<sup>37</sup>

Indeed, for Freyre, Brazil represents something unique on the world stage. Centuries of miscegenation have reduced racial and cultural tensions in a way that other nations would do well to learn from: “The absence of violent rancors due to race constitutes one of the peculiarities of the feudal system in the tropics, a system that, in a manner of speaking, had been softened by the hot climate and by the effects of a miscegenation that tended to dissolve such prejudices.”<sup>38</sup> *Casa Grande e Senzala* contains numerous passages rebutting the prevalent assumption that miscegenation has caused a host of much-lamented Brazilian defects. For example, he repeatedly insists

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<sup>36</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 310.

<sup>37</sup> For harsh critiques of Freyre, see Antonio Sérgio Alfredo Guimarães, *Racismo e Antirracismo no Brasil* (São Paulo, Brazil: Editora 34, 1999), ch. 2; Michael Hanchard, *Orpheus and Power: The Movimento Negro of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Brazil, 1945-1988* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), ch. 3; Alexandra Isfahani-Hammond, *White Negritude: Race, Writing, and Brazilian Cultural Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), ch. 3; Abdias do Nascimento, *O Genocídio do Negro Brasileiro: Processo de um Racismo Mascarado* (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Editora Paz e Terra, 1978); Elisa Larkin Nascimento, “Kilombismo, Virtual Whiteness, and the Sorcery of Color,” in *Journal of Black Studies* 34.6 (2004): 861-880; Jeffrey D. Needell, “Identity, Race, Gender and Modernity in the Origins of Gilberto Freyre’s Oeuvre,” in *The American Historical Review* 100.1 (1995): 51-77. For partial defenses and rehabilitations of Freyre, see Burke and Pallares-Burke, *Gilberto Freyre*; Richard Drayton, “Gilberto Freyre and the Twentieth-Century Rethinking of Race in Latin America,” in *Portuguese Studies* 27.1 (2011): 43-47; Naiara Alves da Silva, “Virá que eu vi’: movimentos da vontade ou uma abordagem acerca da democracia racial em Gilberto Freyre,” in *Raça: trajetórias de um conceito*, eds. João Gabriel da Silva Ascenso and Fernando Luiz Vale Castro (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Ponteio, 2014), 189-209.

<sup>38</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, xii.

that a poor diet explains many physical and psychic shortcomings in Brazilians that are usually mistakenly attributed to a combination of miscegenation and climate:

An attempt is being made to rectify the anthropo-geography of those who, oblivious of diet, would attribute everything to the factors of *race* and *climate*; and in this work of rectification Brazilian society must be included, for it is the example of which alarmists make so much use in crying about the mixture of races and the malignity of the tropics in support of their thesis that man's degeneration is the effect of climate or of miscegenation.<sup>39</sup>

He makes virtually the same argument regarding the confusion of the effects of syphilis and miscegenation just a few pages later: “The advantage of miscegenation in Brazil ran parallel to the tremendous disadvantage of syphilis.”<sup>40</sup> So, contrary to European and U.S. scientific racism, miscegenation does not lead to degeneration and decline.

But we know that Freyre aims to do much more than simply rebut the ugliest consequences attributed to miscegenation. Rather, he seeks to vindicate miscegenation as a positive ideal in its own right, from which Brazilian society has greatly benefited. In perhaps his single most lyrical account of the benefits and outright joys of miscegenation, he turns to a traditional Brazilian confection as metaphor:

In coconut tapioca, known as “dipped” (*molhada*)—spread out upon an African banana leaf, powdered with cinnamon, and seasoned with salt—is to be perceived the truly Brazilian amalgam of culinary traditions: native manihot, the Asiatic coconut, European salt, all fraternizing in a single and delicious confection upon the same African bed of banana leaves.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 60.

<sup>40</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 70-71.

<sup>41</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 129.

Though Freyre does include indigenous Brazilians in his descriptions of Brazilian miscegenation (“native manihot”), he also effectively consigns them to the Brazilian past, their mark on the nation persisting only via Portuguese and Afro-Brazilian incorporation and adaptation of indigenous practices, traditions, and beliefs. Accordingly, the central analysis of *Casa Grande e Senzala* is that of Brazilian slave society, and the particular relations between masters’ families and their Afro-descendant slaves. Freyre effectively mythologizes the rural plantations of Northeastern Brazil as the originary sites of an intense cultural and sexual miscegenation that gives birth to the Brazilian nation.

Freyre’s account of the relations between slaves and masters is impossible to summarize in a straightforward manner. It swings wildly from romanticized and lyrical depictions of harmonious, familial relationships to acknowledgments of the intrinsic brutality and sadism of slavery. Both critics and defenders of Freyre can find much ammunition to serve their antithetical interpretations. Jeffrey Needell, for example, charges that “the questions of slavery and race relations are idealized to the point of caricature” in *Casa Grande e Senzala*.<sup>42</sup> And sure enough, Freyre describes the beloved status of certain slaves “brought up from the *senzala*” to the master’s house—“nurses, house-girls, foster-brothers for the white lads.”<sup>43</sup> These privileged slaves, many of them mulattoes, “would sit down at the patriarchal board as if they were indeed part of the family[.]”<sup>44</sup> None had a more privileged place in the family than the *mãe preta* (black mother, or mammy), for whom “tradition tells us that it was a truly a place of honor that [she] held in the bosom of the patriarchal family.”<sup>45</sup> Yet at the same time, Freyre

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<sup>42</sup> Needell, “Identity, Race, Gender, and Modernity in the Origins of Gilberto Freyre’s Oeuvre,” 57.

<sup>43</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 369.

<sup>44</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 369.

<sup>45</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 369.

repeatedly underscores the constitutive sadism of slavery, which he blames for distorting the personalities of masters and slaves alike: “It was not the ‘inferior race’ that was the source of corruption, but the abuse of one race by another, an abuse that demanded a servile conformity on the part of the Negro to the appetites of the all-powerful lords of the land.”<sup>46</sup> Freyre is particularly concerned with the grotesque effects of slavery on the sons of slave-holding families, who are “induc[ed] to bestiality or to sadism.”<sup>47</sup> Hence, Peter Burke and Maria Lúcia Pallares-Burke can plausibly claim that “[a]ccusing Freyre of oversimplification, the critics have themselves often simplified his argument, omitting his references to conflict and to the sadism of particular planters or their wives or children.”<sup>48</sup>

These contradictions become especially sharp when we turn our attention to Freyre’s analysis of gender relations on slave plantations, specifically those between enslaved black women and the men in the master’s family. These relations occupy a central place in Freyre’s overall portrait of Brazil’s racial dynamics, for they constitute the foundational acts of miscegenation through which the “African” became incorporated as a permanent part of Brazil. Indeed, Freyre begins his chapter on “The Negro Slave in the Sexual and Family Life of the Brazilian” with a striking assertion:

Every Brazilian, even the light-skinned fair-haired one, carries about with him on his soul, when not on soul and body alike—for there are many in Brazil with the mongrel mark of the *genipap*—the shadow, or at least the birthmark, of the aborigine or the Negro. Along the seaboard, from Maranhão to Rio Grande do Sul, it is chiefly the Negro. The influence of the African, either direct or vague and remote.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 329.

<sup>47</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 75.

<sup>48</sup> Burke and Pallares-Burke, *Gilberto Freyre*, 93.

<sup>49</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 278.

It turns out that intimate “relations” between masters and slaves are the key instrument through which Brazil becomes Africanized. And, insofar as Freyre aims to celebrate miscegenation, he must affirm these relations. Yet, at the same time, he is well aware that sex in the context of slavery can hardly be depicted as consensual. Furthermore, he must rebut the common racist allegations that African lasciviousness has corrupted Brazilian sexual mores. These contradictory impulses lead to Freyre’s striking depiction of Portuguese settlers as unbridled stallions, as well as his profound ambivalence toward this form of wild masculinity.

Throughout *Casa Grande e Senzala*, Freyre offers numerous paeans to the sexual irresistibility of black and brown-skinned slaves, helping to forge Brazil’s notorious cult of the mulata.<sup>50</sup> He describes the women from different parts of Africa in crassly objectifying language: “big-hipped women” with “aphrodisiac curves” and “protruding buttocks.”<sup>51</sup> We learn that African women from Guinea, Cape Verde, and Sierra Leone “were bad slaves but comely of body” and therefore likely “employed as pleasing concubines or light-o’-loves in those relations between master and slave girl which were so common with our colonial patriarchs.”<sup>52</sup> Ultimately, the sexual life of the plantation has left its indelible mark on post-abolition Brazil: “In Brazil, cases are known where white men not only prefer Negro women but are incapable of enjoying themselves with any other.”<sup>53</sup> If the racial and sexual ideologies of the Jim Crow South required the silencing of white desire for black and mulatta women, then Freyre’s myth of racial

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<sup>50</sup> For analysis of the Brazilian cult of the mulata, see Mariza Corrêa, “Sobre a Invenção da Mulata,” *cadernos pagu* 6-7 (1996): 35-50; Donna Goldstein, “‘Interracial’ Sex and Racial Democracy in Brazil: Twin Concepts?” *American Anthropologist* 101, no. 3 (1999): 563-578; Natasha Pravaz, “The Tan From Ipanema: Freyre, Morenidade, and the Cult of the Body in Rio de Janeiro,” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 34, no. 67 (2009): 79-104.

<sup>51</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 319.

<sup>52</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 302, 303.

<sup>53</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 279.

harmony achieved via miscegenation produces the very opposite impulse: a fantastical exaggeration of this desire, accompanied by the explicit sexualization of black and brown female bodies.

Notably, Freyre does not accompany this sexualization of the body with the expected imputations of lustfulness and promiscuity. Quite the contrary, he repeatedly contrasts allegedly tepid African sexual desire with the voracity of Portuguese sexual desire. Rebutting the idea that African erotic dances testify to a heightened libido, he insists that “such dances point to a lack, and not, as many at first believed and some still do, to an excess of lubricity or libido.”<sup>54</sup> These dances, he explains, act as aphrodisiac aids to provoke an otherwise absent sexual desire. The sexual pathologies of slavery do not come from Africa, then. Rather, they are intrinsic to slavery as an institution:

There is nothing to authorize the conclusion that it was the Negro who brought to Brazil that viscous lustfulness in which we all feel ourselves ensnared the moment we reach adolescence. That precocious voluptuousness, that hunger for a woman, which at the age of thirteen or fourteen makes of every Brazilian a Don Juan, does not come from contagious contact with, or from the blood-stream of, the “inferior race,” but rather from our economic and social system.<sup>55</sup>

And who is responsible for that system? Freyre leaves no doubt as to the answer: “The truth is that it was we who were the sadists, the active element in the corruption of family life; the slave boys and mulatto women were the passive element.”<sup>56</sup>

These passages receive scant attention from Freyre’s harshest critics. Instead, they emphasize the wistful and nostalgic accounts of “the relations of the white masters

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<sup>54</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 95.

<sup>55</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 329.

<sup>56</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 402-403.

with their slaves.”<sup>57</sup> And Freyre’s critics are certainly right to train their ire on these passages, for they do contribute to obscuring and even romanticizing the sexual abuse and rape that was endemic to slave society. Abdias do Nascimento, a leader of the black movement in Brazil, devotes one chapter of his classic *O Genocidio do Negro Brasileiro* (The Genocide of the Brazilian Black) to the sexual exploitation and abuse of black women, and specifically notes that the true record of this exploitation “refutes certain claims that the absence of prejudice permitted the colonizer to engage in healthy sexual interactions with the black woman.”<sup>58</sup> But as we have seen, Freyre does not view these sexual interactions as healthy, nor was he entirely oblivious to sexual exploitation and abuse. Nonetheless, he does persistently mitigate the horror of these interactions and avoids treating them as clear instances of rape. Consider the following two passages:

(1) The scarcity of white women created zones of fraternization between conquerors and conquered, between masters and slaves. While these relations between white men and colored women did not cease to be those of “superiors” with “inferiors,” and in the majority of cases those of disillusioned and sadistic gentlemen with passive slave girls, they were mitigated by the need that was felt by many colonists of founding a family under such circumstances and upon such a basis as this.<sup>59</sup>

(2) The planters’ sons fell into other vices; and at times, owing partly to the effect of the climate, but chiefly as the result of conditions of life created by the slave-holding system, they would precociously engage in sadistic and bestial forms of sexuality. The first victims were the slave lads and domestic animals; but later came that great mire of flesh: the Negro or mulatto woman. This was a quicksand in which many an insatiable adolescent was hopelessly lost.<sup>60</sup>

In both passages, Freyre is hardly paying compliments to virile Portuguese masculinity.

He describes Portuguese masters as “disillusioned and sadistic” and their young sons as

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<sup>57</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, xlv.

<sup>58</sup> See Nascimento, *O Genocidio do Negro Brasileiro*, 62.

<sup>59</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, xxix.

<sup>60</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 395.

“sadistic and bestial.” Indeed, Freyre’s obsessive emphasis on the uncontrollable and depraved sexuality of *crioulo* adolescents and boys makes for striking and occasionally eyebrow-raising reading. In the continuation of the second passage above, Freyre informs us that we can no more blame the lasciviousness of black women for debased male sexuality than we can blame “the banana stalk, the watermelon, or the fruit of the mandacarú with its clinging quality that is almost like that of human flesh,” all of which “were objects upon which the sexual precocity of the Brazilian small boy was—and still is—exercised.”<sup>61</sup> As with Jim Crow-era depictions of black male sexuality, Freyre’s plantation sons are depicted as savage, bestial, and animalistic, utterly incapable of containing their sexual impulses and so desperate to give them expression that they will use whatever object presents itself, be it fruit, animal, young slave boy, or slave woman.

Yet whereas the black male beasts of the Jim Crow imaginary were clearly rapacious, Freyre’s account of Brazilian plantation sons is less clear. This is because of his ambiguous treatment of the enslaved black women in these encounters. Freyre depicts them as passive and docile owing to the institution of slavery itself, deprived of the agency that would enable them to decline sex. His description of black women as a “great mire of flesh” robs them entirely of human personality and will, rendering their objectification complete, the logical next step after graduating from flesh-like fruit. At the same time he informs us that slave women “open their legs” to the boys, rather than overtly resisting, precisely because of their compulsory docility: “All that the former did was to facilitate the latter’s depravation by her docility as a slave, by opening her legs at the first manifestation of desire on the part of the young master. It was not a request but a

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<sup>61</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 395.



command to which she had to accede.”<sup>62</sup> Freyre intends this passage to absolve enslaved black women of any responsibility for Portuguese sexual licentiousness, but he does so at the price of denying any capacity for agency or resistance to the women, and shrouding countless accounts of rape in the ambiguity of a kind of quasi-consent. This is a far cry indeed from Flora Cameron of *Birth of a Nation*, who throws herself from a cliff to escape the sexual designs of a freedman.

It is in the first passage above, however, that we find the full expression of Freyre’s ambivalence toward the voracious sexuality of Portuguese settlers. Their sexual sadism, we learn, was “mitigated by the need that was felt....of founding a family.” In fact, the original subtitle of *Casa Grande e Senzala* was “Formação da família brasileira sob o regime da economia patriarcal” (Formation of the Brazilian family under the regime of a patriarchal economy). Hence, the entire text revolves around the concept of the patriarchal family as the representative family structure in colonial Brazil. And while Freyre certainly does not mince words when it comes to depicting the vices and pathologies of Brazilian patriarchs, he nonetheless recognizes their unbridled sexuality as generative rather than degenerative. Through their inexhaustible desire for darker-skinned women, who merely appear as conduits with no capacity to refuse, they give birth to the racially mixed and harmonious Brazilian nation. In a sense, they are simultaneously father and mother of a nation of brown children. In the Jim Crow South, interracial sex initiated by black men produced half-breed and mongrel offspring, bearing the seeds of degeneration and destruction in their blood. In Brazil, interracial sex initiated by Portuguese men produced an exceptionally adaptive and flexible human type, bearing the best of all races in its blood. In one case, voracious sexuality potentially

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<sup>62</sup> Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 396.

destroys civilization. In the other case, voracious sexuality literally founds a new, tropical civilization.

### **Toward the Deparochialization of Intersectionality**

Both the myth of the black male rapist in the post-Reconstruction U.S. South and the myth of sexually voracious Portuguese settlers and slaveholders in colonial Brazil ultimately prop up white supremacist patriarchies. But as we have seen, “white supremacist patriarchy” itself takes distinct forms in the two countries. This is because the U.S. South relied on a categorical color line and strict prohibitions on miscegenation to maintain white purity, whereas Brazil abandoned any hope for purity and instead refigured miscegenation as a positive force. Hence the very different affective responses to the two depictions of animalistic masculine lustfulness: horror and condemnation on one hand, and a deep ambivalence ultimately tending toward redemption on the other.

In both cases, intersectionality proves an indispensable tool for unraveling the complex interplay of racialized gender formations and gendered racial formations. Ida B. Wells expertly uncovers the disavowed truths obscured by the myth of the black male rapist in the U.S.: white female desire for black men, and white male sexual violence against black women. Angela Davis supplements Wells’ analysis by noting how black women are necessarily figured as irredeemably promiscuous once black men are figured as bestial. Yet in Brazil, the same analysis cannot simply be reproduced, though intersectionality remains essential. Freyre does not ignore white male desire for black women; quite the contrary, he amplifies it to an absurdly hyperbolic degree. Combatting

the eroticization of white sexual violence against black women in Brazil, and exposing its function as a kind of founding myth, becomes essential to the Brazilian black feminist project, then. Accordingly, the Afro-Brazilian feminist Sueli Carneiro opens her classic call to “blacken” Brazilian feminism with the following statement: “In Brazil and in Latin America, colonial rape perpetrated by white men against black and indigenous women and the resultant miscegenation are at the origin of all constructions of our national identity, structuring the so-called myth of Latin American racial democracy, which has reached its zenith in Brazil.”<sup>63</sup> Insofar as the cult of the *mulata* plays a central role in reproducing this mythology, it must be dismantled. Unsurprisingly, then, we find that Afro-Brazilian feminists have placed the analysis of the cult of the *mulata* at the center of their interpretations of Brazilian racial-sexual politics.<sup>64</sup>

If white male desire for black women is hidden in the U.S. discourse and amplified in the Brazilian discourse, the opposite is true of black male desire for white women. In the U.S. discourse, of course, it is amplified and converted into something monstrous and terrifying. And in the Brazilian discourse, it is revealingly invisible. As Idelber Avelar writes of Freyre: “If the visible, utterable scene that constitutes the country is the violent encounter between the master of the sugar mill and the black and mixed women, the unutterable scene is the obliterated, prohibited image of the black man with the white woman.”<sup>65</sup> And why is this image prohibited? Avelar suggests that Freyre effectively “exorcises the fantasy of transgressive black sexuality” by denying

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<sup>63</sup> Sueli Carneiro, “Enegrecer o Feminismo: A Situação da Mulher Negra na América Latina a partir de uma perspectiva de gênero,” *Geledés: Instituto da Mulher Negra*, June 3, 2011. <https://www.geledes.org.br/enegrecer-o-feminismo-situacao-da-mulher-negra-na-america-latina-partir-de-uma-perspectiva-de-genero/> (accessed February 10, 2018).

<sup>64</sup> See Corrêa, “Sobre a Invenção da Mulata” and Lélia Gonzalez, “Racismo e Sexismo na Cultura Brasileira,” in *Revista Ciências Sociais Hoje* (1984): 223-244.

<sup>65</sup> Idelber Avelar, “Cenas dizíveis e indizíveis: Raça e sexualidade em Gilberto Freyre,” *Luso-Brazilian Review* 49.1 (2012): 178.

black masculinity altogether.<sup>66</sup> I would push this interpretation further. As we have seen, Freyre redeems the excesses of Portuguese masculine sexuality by giving them remarkable generative power. To recognize a similar generative power in black male sexuality would be to make black men partners of white men in founding the new, mixed-race Brazilian civilization. For all his talk of Africans as co-colonizers of Brazil, this was apparently a bridge too far for Freyre.

Much remains to be said about the distinctive black feminist responses to these alternative figurations in the U.S. and Brazil. My goal here has been more modest. I have aimed to show how intersectional analysis becomes richer and deeper when it is pushed beyond U.S. borders. This is not to diminish the basis for transnational black feminist alliances. To the contrary, black women in Brazil and the United States do experience many comparable forms of subordination and marginalization, including discrimination in the labor market, insufficient political representation, victimization by sexual violence, inadequate access to health care, and denial of sufficient resources for a robust intimate and familial life. These are predictable outcomes of a global regime of coloniality.<sup>67</sup> Accordingly, Kia Lilly Caldwell advocates a “diasporic lens to explore Brazilian racial and gender dynamics” in order to “[bring] into focus the ways in which Afro-Brazilian women’s experiences are congruent with those of other women in the African diaspora.”<sup>68</sup> Certainly, this is crucial and illuminating work, and Caldwell has done the additional service of providing the first comprehensive introduction to Afro-

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<sup>66</sup> Avelar, “Cenas dizíveis e indizíveis,” 181.

<sup>67</sup> See María Lugones, “Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System,” *Hypatia* 22.1 (2007): 186-209; Anibal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America,” *Nepantla: Views from South* 1.3 (2000): 533-580).

<sup>68</sup> Kia Lilly Caldwell, *Negras in Brazil: Re-envisioning Black Women, Citizenship, and the Politics of Identity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 21.

Brazilian feminism for an English-speaking audience. In this context, underscoring diasporic commonalities is particularly useful. But we must resist unintentionally enshrining the U.S. experience of racialized gender subordination as the universal model of white supremacist patriarchy. Juxtaposing Gilberto Freyre's unbridled stallions and the mad bulls of fevered segregationist imaginations underscores the utility of deparochializing intersectionality.