

The Journal of Black Masculinity is a peer-reviewed international publication providing multiple discourses and multiple-discipline-based analyses of issues and/or perspectives with regard to black masculinities. The journal invites empirical, theoretical, and literary scholarship as well as essays, poetry, and art. Submissions from multiple disciplines beyond the humanities and social sciences are encouraged. The Journal of Black Masculinity is published three times a year and has a ten percent (10%) acceptance rate.

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From the Beginnings-Ripping the Veil by Queering Black Masculinities

C. P. Gause, Ph.D.

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *The Journal of Black Masculinity*.

Presently, in today's global community, we find ourselves bombarded on a 24-hour daily basis with mediated imagery and sounds that shape our values, belief systems, and moral structures. The constant bombardment of popular culture on our daily existence informs our global identities, as well as national identities. Throughout our global history, education has been viewed as the un-kept promise of many societies and democracies.

Scholars, researchers, and policymakers continue to inform our communities that children of color and children in poverty are being left behind, particularly the "black male." Many scholars and policymakers continue to limit the analyses of black masculinity to detached statistical data and reports devoid of the authentic (re)presentations of the voice and performance of global masculinities across multiple landscapes. There exists a full range of gender expressions witnessed by all, globally; however, given the power of the media, the only representation often presented of black males is the duffle bag boy—drug runner and money carries; the thug—an aggressive, no-holds-barred bad boy; and the convict—a prison lifer, always in and out of jail. The underlying messages in these images are ones of heteronormativity, homophobia, and patriarchy.

The constructions of aggressive male identities are still prevalent because tolerance and not affirmation of the "other" continues to be the accepted norm in our society, and schools are microcosmic representations of our larger society. The affirmation of queering masculinities by society as a whole would expand white male-

dominated constructions of masculinity beyond the heteronormative. Queering masculine characteristics would move beyond typically viewed/accepted “male” behaviors and embrace behaviors of all members of the global community regardless of sexually identified, gender-perceived, and biologically confirmed positionalities.

The political disturbances and cultural representations of black masculinity in popular culture require new and different readings and contextualizations. Currently, black masculinity is rooted in masculine hero worship in the case of rappers and as naturalized and commodified in the case of athletes. The combination of these two has yielded a new Public Enemy Number One, a sadistic and masochistic heterosexist black masculine cyborg, devoid of emotion, thought, and remorse.

The current construction/representation of the black male brings together the dominant institutions of (white) masculine power and identity—criminal justice system, the police, and the news media—to protect (white) Americans from harm. The heavily policed and illuminated image of the black male is the object of adolescent intrigue, fascination, and commodification. By drawing on deeply felt moral pains presently regarding crime, violence, gangs, and drugs, numerous black entertainers—namely athletes and rap artists—have rewritten the historic tropes of black masculinity from provider and protector to pusher and pimp.

This corrosive nihilistic construction of maleness reifies notions of (hyper)sexuality, insensitivity, and criminality, which serve as the new tropes of fascination and fear for the dominant culture. It becomes a veil of black masculinity, a veil in which, at times during my life, I was complicit. This is why I interrogate my own identity by queering black masculinity.

We say, “Not so!” We believe black males across the global Diaspora are one of the most powerful creations ever known to our humanity. As a testament to this belief, we have brought together scholars, dancers, teachers, poets, educators, Hip Hop artists, policymakers, spoken-word performers, politicians, and researchers to celebrate and affirm our black masculinities in this issue. The texts produced by these individuals, in this issue, serve as the counter-narratives to mediated hegemonic constructions of the bestial,

hypersexualized, aggressive, co-opted, and commodified cyborg that is the black male. The authors represent multilingual, multi-ethnic, and nonconforming Eurocentric gender identities and are considered national and international scholars and scholars-of-promise.

I would like to thank the editorial review board, the editorial advisory committee, the faculty, staff, students, and administration of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the University Libraries for their contributions and support. I hope you find this issue and subsequent issues intellectually thought provoking and stimulating.

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