

Black Love and Black Power: An Intersectional Analysis of Gender Violence and
Political Activism

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of distinction in the Department of
Cultural Anthropology in the Trinity School
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2014-2015

ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This thesis examines the intersections of political activism and gender-based violence in the Black student body at Duke University. Extensive interviews were conducted with members of the Black student body, as well as faculty members. Racism and sexism intersected in social interactions to produce a rape culture that was perpetuated by sexism in Black Liberation movements. Historical roots to the politically active past of Duke's Black students in the Allen Building Takeover are explored, as well as gender relationships between Black men and women. Due to the failure to intersectionally view the social positioning of Black women, intraracial sexual violence can be silenced and justified in pursuit of Black liberation.

Dedication

To my mother, who taught me the depth of unconditional love. To Black women and men and gender non-conforming people: may we grow to love one another radically and without exception.

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Preface

*he loves me
Especially different
Every time
he woos me
Excites me
Delights me
he schools me
Gives me some things to think about
Ignites me
incites me to a chorus...*

He made my skin beautiful
Beautiful enough to dream about procreating with me
“we’d make beautiful brown babies together”
he told 16 year old me as if I were ready
I had never thought about what color skin my babies would bear
And at that time in my life I sure as hell didn’t want them to bear mine

Another mister told me I was a beautiful brown baby doll
The brown top I was wearing accentuated my sexy brown skin
I was a chocolate drop in a virgin wrapper
And he imagined that if he were forceful and impatient enough
he could taste my sweetness on his tongue

Afterwards I wished to rub the sexy out of my brown-ness
Like I could wish my desirability away,
As if my ancestors didn’t work long enough or hard enough to bring it there
No amount of self-deprecation and self-loathing could remove generations
Of the sun’s kisses
I was wrapped in this unwanted beauty

he told me when I was 19 that I was the darkest girl that he had ever been with
and the sweetest in nature by far
the one he desired to marry
and he imagined that if he were forceful and impatient enough
he could taste my sweetness on his tongue

I’ve journeyed a while in this brown sheath,

thin enough to expose the largeness of my heart,
the intent of my kindness nestled between my ribs,
the strength inherited in my bones,
the fertility planted between my hips

I pray for the fortitude to bear its beauty
for no amount of self-deprecation and self-loathing could remove generations of
the sun's kisses

my skin is the nexus of my West Indian papa and my white grandmother
in it I wear the work of my ancestors
who toiled long enough and hard enough to bring me here

and though they could not bring me the privilege of love
they gave me blackness in the shade of chocolate
and eventually Love found me

The first encounter I had with gender violence occurred when my mother told me of her rape when I was 13. She went into extreme detail, chronicling her experience as if recounting it would heal her of her past wounds. That day she made herself vulnerable to my sister and me, and I only wished to turn off the sound of her voice because she did not need to tell me anything. This would not happen to me because I was careful and smart. I half-listened to her story because at the time I had discounted it as unnecessary information. I did not recognize it as a piece of my history until I was sexually assaulted at 16.

I carried that experience with me to college. I had buried it deep within the depths of my mind, covered it in a faulty acceptance. I could deal with it as long as I accepted responsibility for my actions. My experience had been the result of my own

bad choices, I told myself. I had no one else to blame, and no one else could help me cope. I had done what my mother, my aunt, and many other Black women had done before me: I handled it myself. While here on campus, I never bothered to discuss my past experiences with any of my friends, until I had been confronted with a skit about sexual misconduct during Resident Assistant training.

From that day on, I began to explore practices of healing from a violent experience. I learned that the way that I had packed away my experiences was not healthy, but harmful. I began to speak out more about it, to write poetry, to truly begin to embody my lived experiences. While I was discovering this part of myself, I began to truly recognize and to name some of the harmful things that were happening around me. The young women that I called my friends were suffering from many manifestations of gender violence from young Black men, and most had only dealt with it alone. Throughout my journey at Duke University, I felt like I had heard horrific stories of intimate partner violence and sexual assault to the point where these stories became commonplace.

A conversation about something as simple as shopping for a party would shift to the stories of Black women who had been sexually assaulted by Black men. These stories shook me, not by surprise, but by their pervasiveness. They were everywhere. Every woman in the room had a story to tell about being harassed, and more than a few had a story about being assaulted. Everyone had a story of rejection, loss, and mourning. I

began to collect them: stories of heartache, rejection, harassment, and assault. As I collected them, I began to use them as a lens to view my own life. I began to question why we as Black women choose to walk alone through our struggles.

Most recently, sexual assault on college campuses has been a topic of discussion in many circles and has become so urgent that a White House taskforce has been created per the mandate of President Obama. Women between the ages of 16-24 are 5 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than women at any other age in their lives. At this critical time in their lives, students are dealing with identity formation, friendship building, and possibly conflict with long-held values. College happens for many women within that time in their lives, and being in the university setting facilitates sexual violence. College can also be a place where alcohol and drugs are easily available and socially acceptable, which helps to create a favorable environment for sexual predators. As college campuses become increasingly diverse, a need arises to have comprehensive approach to gender violence that includes the experiences of people of color and poor people. Not only does this approach need to be inclusive of people of color, but it must also be formulated in ways that fully reflect the complexities of each person's identity and the factors that influence identity: class, race, sexual orientation, gender, ability status, etc.

Duke University is a predominantly white institution located in Durham, North Carolina. Durham is a majority-minority city, meaning that the majority of the people

who live there do not identify as white. Duke's undergraduate student body, on the other hand, has a student population that is 52 percent white. Over half the students who attend Duke do not require financial aid assistance to pay for their education: tuition, room and board plus fees totals to about \$64,000 a year. Touted as the "Southern Ivy," Duke and its students inhabit privileged spaces in society. Because of its position as a top ten school, many students from all over the world study there. Among these students, about ten percent identify themselves as African-American or Black. This percentage also includes international students from countries in Africa and the Caribbean.

While college campuses are also the sites of vulnerability for victims of gender violence, they are also the places where many students experience a radicalization of political views. Historically in the United States, college students have been major proponents of social change, which was evident in mobilization that occurred during the Vietnam War and during the Civil Rights Movement in the 20th century. Some students consider their path towards deconstructing oppressive societal structures such as racism and sexism. On today's college campuses, students are fighting for a myriad of issues, and one of those issues is appropriate and fair university policy surrounding gender violence.

Columbia University student Emma Sulkowicz vowed to carry the mattress upon which she was raped until the university changed its failing policy.¹ Students around the nation stood in solidarity with her by carrying their dorm mattresses and demanding more from their administrations. On Wednesday, October 29th, 2014, she and other members of the student body protested in front of the administration building. The battle with administration even exists Duke's campus, where survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence have demanded that the university create a more caring and inclusive reporting process. To that end, Duke administration has created a gender violence task force, headed by Laurence Moneta, to address the concerns of undergraduate and graduate students.

Minority communities² must have a dialogue about how gender violence presents itself within the community, but often these conversations are forsaken for racial injustice. This is even true on college campuses, though many students are shifting towards political activism in several arenas. My thesis joins the national conversation about gender-based violence against Black women, in particular those on college campuses. I employ the theory of intersectionality to critically analyze gender violence within a student body of Black students at a predominantly white institution. These

¹ Information about this incident was received from:
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/11/06/is-columbia-failing-campus-rape-victims.html>

² (c.f. Benedict Anderson, 1983) Anderson theorizes that national communities exist because we imagine them to. For example, the Black community on Duke's campus exists as a community because members of the community imagine it to. Though his work mainly focuses the building of nation-states and patriotism, I believe his theory could apply here.

students face institutionalized racism and microaggressions, and many choose to take an active stance against the many ways that racism presents itself in the university context. At this institution, members of this student body mobilize for issues concerning racial inequality, but often face other issues with an attitude of complacency and apathy, such as gender inequality within the student body. Why are racial inequality issues and gender-based violence issues seen as unrelated, and often competing, topics? Why do politically active Black students champion eliminating racial injustice over eliminating sexual assault and intimate partner violence?

These conversations about gender violence tend to be rooted in colorblind language and heteronormativity, despite the fact that this type of violence disproportionately affects women, men, and children of color and poor people. Black women experience intimate partner violence at rates 35 percent higher than white women. At this time, when rates of domestic violence are falling for white and Latina women, they are rising for Black women (Mills, 2008). Two in every 5 gay or bisexual men will experience intimate partner violence. Half of lesbian or bisexual women will also experience physical, mental, emotional, or sexual abuse from a partner. Yet there is very little talk about how minority communities have responded and will respond to gender-based violence. That is, until Ray Rice, running back for the National Football League team Ravens, was recently suspended for physically abusing his wife. Video footage was released of him knocking her unconscious in a hotel elevator after spitting

on her by a celebrity watchdog known as TMZ. When the decision of his suspension was released, millions of men (and some women) took to Twitter and accused his wife of ruining Rice's career, in addition to expressing the "need" to use physical violence to control women's bodies. One of the responses to this misogynistic and patriarchal madness was the hashtag *#youOKsis*, coined by Black feminist Feminista Jones. Thousands of women, both women of color and white women, used this hashtag to share their experiences with gender violence and to stand in solidarity with one another.

One in three women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime. One in four women will be a victim of severe violence by an intimate partner during her lifetime. Forty to forty-five percent of women in physically abusive relationships are raped and/or assaulted during their lifetime.³ This is not news to many people, as statistics about sexual assault and intimate partner violence are spouted all the time in popular culture and media. We are inundated with images of brutal physical violence against women, weaker men, and children—in fact, entire shows such as *Law and Order: SVU* are created around it. Usually women portray victims of violent crimes and the perpetrators as men. In the United States, it is normal to teach women to guard their bodies against men (and even within that, certain types of men) and their rampant sexual desires. Rape becomes a lesson that we teach our young daughters-- a generational story rooted in historically and socially constructed meaning.

³ These statistics were found on domesticviolence.org.

Introduction

During my time at Duke University, over ten percent of the Black men in my graduating class have left. This interests me, as the stories explaining their disappearances vary widely. Everyone had a different reason for leaving, but there are common reasons that had emerged: mental illness, drug abuse, and pressure of being a Black student at an elite university. Often Black men are assumed to have the most vulnerable positions within predominantly white contexts, and this assumption masks the issues of Black women. Conversations about these missing Black men would easily shift to stories of Black women who had been sexually assaulted by Black men. The assumed vulnerability of Black men invisibilizes the sexual assault and other vulnerabilities experienced by Black women—especially when they experienced this violence at the hands of Black men. These stories shook me, not by surprise, but by their pervasiveness.

These stories I had collected from Black women seemed to be in direct opposition to the culture of activism within the Black student body. It seemed that women were only allowed to speak out in areas concerning racial injustices and other forms of structural violence, but we were expected to keep the violence suffered at the hands and the wiles of Black men to ourselves. This tension confused me. How could we work towards making our college a better place for its students of color if we perpetuate acts of violence against one another? Within the body of this work, I intend to explore the

paradoxical relationship between the current rape culture and the student-activism that is present within the Black student body. I unpack the complex identities of both male and female Black students on this campus, specifically exploring the way that Black students form relationships with one another, and the ways that race, gender, sexuality, influence those relationships. Exploring the structural intersections of identities⁴ will hopefully lead to answers about how our current rape culture co-exists with the culture of student-activism, and hopefully it will also help guide students of color toward ways of combating that unhealthy paradox.

The population from which my study is based is mostly Black people who are usually descendants of enslaved peoples and whose social circles are also mostly comprised of other descendants of enslaved peoples. Typically, Black students tend to socially segregate based on cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This segregation occurs for a multitude of reasons. At Duke University, Black students have diverse backgrounds. Some are first-generation immigrant or international African students; some have Afro-Caribbean ancestry. Because of ethnic/cultural differences (and administrative/institutional policies), students who may identify as Black may not be considered to be a member of the Black student body by administrators or other

⁴ Kimberlé Crenshaw, *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color*, 1991

members of the Black student body. It is possible to identify as Black on Duke's campus and not to be involved in or to be considered a member of the Black student body⁵.

Throughout my writing I will be using terms such as patriarchy and white supremacy. These terms allow me to concisely describe the historical societal forces that frame our society. Patriarchy is the social system that allows for the domination of men and creates values that perpetuate the upholding of that system (hooks 2004). White supremacy creates a society in which whiteness and its values are normalized. Any other race, culture, identity becomes decentered (and often pathologized). In the United States, whiteness and its inherent values are upheld and justified socially and legally. White people are placed on top of a racialized social hierarchy that affords them unearned advantages, white privilege, based upon the color of their skin. The intersection of these social systems creates a society that oppresses women, people of color, and queer people. I intend to explore how these oppressive power systems work within the politically active Black student body at Duke to silence Black female survivors of gender violence.

In order to give as complete a picture as possible, I will be talking about the gender and sexual identities of some of my respondents. Gender identity and sexual orientation are distinct pieces of one's identity (Pascoe, 2012). Someone may conform to

⁵ The ways that the Black student body excludes others who may identify as Black or African American is through language. Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy* (1987) p. 85.

conventional forms of gender expression, but may not consider themselves to be aligned with the gender and sex they were assigned at birth. As language begins to form to combat the hegemonic ways that homophobia and transphobia has erased those with non-normative sexual and gender identities, terms for gender and sexual identity have been evolving. I will be using language such as cisgender to describe “a person whose gender identity, gender expression, and biological sex all align (e.g., man, masculine, and male)” (Killermann 2014). A person whose gender identity, gender expression, and biological sex do not align is described as transgender.

I am in no way asserting that gender violence and the subsequent silencing of rape victims is a uniquely Black problem⁶. One in three women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime. One in four women will be a victim of severe violence by an intimate partner during her lifetime. Forty to forty-five percent of women in physically abusive relationships are raped and/or assaulted during their lifetime.⁷ This is not news to many, as statistics about sexual assault and intimate partner violence are spouted all the time in popular culture and media. We are inundated with images of brutal physical violence against women, weaker men, and children—in fact, entire shows such as *Law and Order: SVU* are created around it. Victims of violent crimes are portrayed as being

⁶ These conversations about gender violence tend to be rooted in colorblind language and heteronormativity, when this type of violence disproportionately affects women, men, and children of color, poor people, and queer people.

⁷ <http://www.nsvrc.org/resources>

usually women and the perpetrators as men. In the United States, it is normal to teach women to guard their bodies against men (and even within that, certain types of men) and their rampant sexual desires. Rape becomes a lesson that we teach our young daughters; a generational story rooted in historically and socially constructed meaning. Though gender violence is not a new societal issue, it has been named “the civil rights issue of our time” by some feminists.⁸

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the ways the patriarchy and white supremacy permeate societal structures and oftentimes create parallel structures within minority communities. This thesis does not intend to reinforce existing stereotypes about the hyper-virulent sexuality of Black men. Black men are no more likely to rape than any other man. Part of the aim of this thesis is to dislodge that myth by situating gender-based violence in a student body of people of color in the larger social context of how imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy⁹ creates societal rules in which violence against women is normalized; violence against women of color, especially Black women, becomes acceptable; and Black men and other men of color are the likely culprits of this violence.

⁸ “Gloria Allred: The Battle Over Sexual Assault is the ‘Civil Rights Movement of Our Time’”, Time Magazine, 2014

⁹ I am borrowing this term from bell hooks. I first encountered it in her work *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love*.

Dr. Angela Y. Davis in her essay "Violence Against Women and the Ongoing Challenge to Racism" addresses the larger socio-political context of sexual assault. She recognizes that though gender violence happens on a deeply personal and individual level, it is symptomatic of a larger social violence, particularly "a larger continuum of systematic and equally violent assaults on women's economic and political rights, especially the rights of women of color and their white working-class sisters" (Davis, pg. 140). Violence against women is intimately related to racial violence and global imperialist violence (hooks, 2004).

Women's bodies bear this violence for many reasons, and one of them may be the construction of a capitalistic society. Silvia Federeci writes in *Caliban and the Witch* (2004) that women's bodies were the sites of violent witch-hunts because they resisted social control and male dominance over their reproductive processes (p. 14). Capitalism necessitates control over reproduction for the constant source of labor to be present. If women have control over when and how they reproduce, the capitalistic system may fail. Though Black women are not typically subject to witch-hunts, the other forms of violence exacted against their bodies express a societal need to control their reproduction, and these forms of violence serve to reproduce societal forces such as sexism and racism.

Davis asserts in "Women and Capitalism: Dialectics of Oppression and Liberation," that this violent, imperialist state arises from a capitalistic system that turns

relationships between people into exchanges that are devoid of emotion and establishes power relations between people. Women in this exchange become commodities relegated to the domestic sphere; their worth becomes attached to men, and any labor performed by women is intrinsically devalued. In this form of society, it becomes fairly easy to establish women as lesser beings. I extend this argument by looking at the ways those definitions of masculinity and femininity on Duke's campus mirror the current imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy present in society. I also examine how Black activism complicates those definitions and, at times, directly opposes them.

Gender violence, in all its forms, stems from power relations, not from the socially determined uncontrolled passions and lustful desires of men. Rape comes from the "socially imposed need to exercise power and control over women through the use of violence" (Davis, pg. 142). This definition complicates when considered along racial and class lines. Historically in the United States, the myth has been perpetuated that Black men are more likely to rape, and the women they are most likely to rape are white women. This myth of the hyper-sexualized Black male rapist is the result of the intersection of race and class on the Black man's body. Black men are no more likely to rape than any other man, yet there are a disproportionate number of Black men convicted of rape due to the racist infrastructure of the United States' criminal justice system. These racist assumptions about who rapes clouds the reality that "90 percent of all rapes are intra-racial rather than inter-racial" (Davis, pg. 145).

For Black women, rape and other forms of sexual violence is a historical reality. During slavery, masters raped enslaved Black women. Sex proved to be a useful weapon in reaffirming the subjugation of an underclass of people. Rape reinforced the ownership of the master and the property status of the enslaved woman. Sexual abuse remained an occupational hazard for Black women during the 20th century when many were domestic workers in white homes. Their white employers sexually assaulted many Black women who worked in their homes as maids. Sex has historically been a weapon of political terror, not only for Black women but also for women of all backgrounds, especially those of conquered peoples.

Sexual violence “bears a direct relationship to all existing power structures in a given society,” and this complex relationship mirrors the complicated ways that normalized forms of race, gender, sexuality, and class constitute oppression for members of that given society (Davis, pg. 147). Black women have a unique social position in which they are the “most severely encumbered by the male supremacist structures of the larger [American] society.” (Davis, pg. 148) I plan to look at how the intersections of patriarchy and white supremacy silence survivors in a minority student body on Duke’s campus. I want to examine how gender relations between Black men and Black women contribute to that silencing and to the perpetuation of this violence.

Many Black activists believe racial injustice must be handled first because it is the more urgent problem of Black people. After that is handled, gender inequality can be

critically examined. This is demonstrated historically in the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s where Black men leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X were at the forefront. The women who fought with them were expected to stand behind these men, and they often did not speak out because they did not want to be seen as counter-revolutionary. The fight against racial oppression masked the internal gender oppression within the Black community. As Kalenda C. Eaton (2004) states, “the common narratives of the time that increased Black male participation and persuasive rhetoric identifying the Black man as king increased notoriety and garnered mass support” in the Black community, but this required female subjugation (“Let Me Know When You Get Through”, pg. 2).

The image of a supportive Black woman became synonymous with the image of a silent Black woman. Black men aspired to be seen as “real men,” which meant that they wanted to be seen on the same standard as white men. In some ways, this meant performing a type of masculinity that required the domination and subjugation of women (Lorde, *Silence into Action*, pg. 47). In the pursuit of racial equality, gender becomes invisible. I intend to explore how internal gender oppression occurs among the members of the Black student body at Duke. I situate this as an extension of historical discourses about political platforms of action against race. I also examine gender relations within the politically active members of the Black student body, and how the

emergence of conversations about gender-based violence contributes to these conversations.

The myriad systems of oppression are often distinguished and treated as different entities when they are all intimately connected, and at all times inextricable from one another. While battling forms of structural oppression, one must be cognizant of how oppression falls on each individual's complex identity. Dr. Cathy J. Cohen discusses in her essay "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" how queer theory provides a powerful framework for examining and decentering individual identity to allow marginalized peoples to connect and coagulate based on their marginalization. By expanding the definition of "queer" to encompass those who fit outside the normalized definitions of sexuality, heterosexuality, economic status, race, and gender, allies of the movement for sexual equality become diversified. Moving past ascribing to a single identity, i.e. black, gay, Chicano, lower class, etc., allows for the many monolithic and seemingly homogeneous activist groups to come together in coalitions to fight against injustice because each group embraces that the individuals which comprise the group are comprised of complex, intersecting identities.

The integration of multiple identities employs a Left framework that centralizes the idea that we operate under multiple forms of oppression simultaneously. "Such a perspective also ensures that while activists should rightly be concerned with forms of discursive and cultural coercion, we also recognize and confront the more direct and

concrete forms of exploitation and violence rooted in state-regulated institutions and economic systems” (Cohen, pg. 26-27). These multiple forms of oppression arise with the interaction of white supremacy, patriarchy, heteronormativity, ableism, and classism, and they cannot be picked apart from one another. Intersectionality¹⁰, becomes the redefining force of activism.

I use Cohen’s analysis of a Left framework to examine how intersectionality could be employed in the Black student body at Duke to create a more impactful, inclusive activism network. Employing an intersectional analysis of societal issues would help inform activists on the connections that marginalized people have as well as illuminate the ways that power permeates even seemingly monolithic communities to create inequalities among its members. In the Black student body at Duke, these inequalities in power help to create a culture in which racial injustice can be at the forefront of a politically active agenda because these are the “main” issues faced by Black men. Gender-based violence, determined as a Black women’s issue, is often left out of the picture.

¹⁰ A Black feminist framework first theorized in Kimberle’ Crenshaw’s “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics.” [1989]

Methodology

This thesis is an extension of a project that I began in my Fieldwork Methods class second semester junior year. I explained earlier how I stumbled upon this topic through asking questions about the missing ten percent. During that class, I noticed the topic of my final ethnography shift from centering the experiences of Black men students to centering the experiences of Black women students on Duke's campus. My research has led me to see how the stories of Black women often go untold, so I purposed to listen to and to make social meaning of the stories of Black women. I formally interviewed 12 respondents, 2 of which were men, and informally interviewed around 20 people.

From this small sample of Black students and faculty, I was able to paint a limited picture of experiences. The bulk of my research comes from participant-observation, as I am a member of the Black student body. My daily experiences became a part of my research—public conversations, public events, Twitter and Facebook discussions. Because of my relationship with my respondents, I had to learn how to pull apart the familiar and make it not only strange, but a topic of academic study. There were many moments when I had to question the pieces of my daily experience here that I had normalized, and as I began interviewing and talking to Black women, I learned that they needed to trouble those definitions of normal as well.

My interviews, both formal and informal, ranged from 30 minutes to 4 hours. I conducted formal interviews in my room and other private places, while informal interviews, usually spontaneous, were conducted in semi-private or public settings, such as my car or the places where groups of students had gathered. The place where I would receive the most informal interviews was the Black Student Alliance office, where many Black students convene during the day between classes. Spontaneous conversations occur the most often there, with the subject matter ranging from sexual interactions to childhood upbringing to classes to upcoming political events. I also include snapshots of important events during my Duke career as points of analysis of gender relations or overall climate at Duke.

Chapter Progression

In the first chapter, I intend to delineate how Black masculinity is defined on Duke's campus, and how that definition includes domination of women and queer men. This definition of masculinity helps to pave the way for gender-based violence against women and "weaker" men. Often a masculine man is defined by whom he sexually dominates. I also conceptualize Black femininity, and I look at the ways that these definitions impact the relationships that Black students have with one another.

Following this analysis of Black masculinity and femininity here at Duke University, I share the stories of Black women survivors to unpack the historical, social, and political forces that act as silencing mechanisms.

In the third chapter, I look at the history of Black political activism at Duke and examine how gender and sexuality intersect in the roles that members of this student body play in movements. I compare this to gender relationships during the nationwide Black liberation movements such as the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. I also examine how currently the climate towards sexual violence on campus seems to be progressing towards a more feminist view, but how this might be pointing to making gender inequality invisible in word but not in deed.

Finally, I conclude with an extension of theories from noted womanist and Black feminist scholars to offer suggestions on how to better relationships between members of the Black student body. With these suggestions I hope to encourage activism that incorporates an intersectional outlook and a revolutionary view of love.

3. Mapping the Intersections of Race and Gender

*The first time I saw your suicide note on Facebook
I wanted to tell you that you were worth more than a few typed words on a screen
Your life has more value than the site on which you confess your desire to throw it away*

*little brother, God planted a seed of divine purpose between
your eyes, and He knew he couldn't give it to anyone
whose skin was lighter than a mahogany table*

*I wanted to remind you that I loved you so much
that when Momma brought you home from the hospital
I asked to hold you
but the weight of you was too much for 3-year-old me to bear*

I dropped you

*I felt the same horror as if I were watching your baby head hit the floor.
I couldn't protect you from the chokehold of whiteness
which you had woven into an imagined noose around your neck*

*you wouldn't be perfect and I couldn't make you,
and you couldn't make yourself*

all I can do is ask you to live

Every year the Black Student Alliance invites prospective Black students to discover the Black experience at Duke University during the last weekend of March. Planned activities during the weekend expose accepted high school students to the resources and social opportunities available to them there. One of the most highly

attended and highly anticipated events during this weekend is the step show¹ hosted by eight of the Greek member organizations of the National PanHellenic Council (NPHC). I will refer to these organizations as historically Black Greek letter organizations (HGBLOs). Current, former, and prospective Duke students attend this ticketed event to watch the four fraternity teams and four sorority teams compete for the prize of best fraternity or best sorority respectively. This show serves as perfect text to outline the function of respectability politics² and traditional gender roles in the Black student body at Duke University.

The members of Sorority 3 began their set in a classroom. No one in the classroom was studying. Some were talking to their friends; others were painting their nails. Every woman's hair was straightened, ensuring that each coil was at least shoulder-length. They wore knee-length schoolgirl outfits in their sorority colors, and they wore high-heeled shoes throughout the show. When they called for each step, their voices were high, and they flipped their hair often. Their chants reminded the audience,

¹ Step shows are a series of theatrical sets performed by teams, which (in the collegiate setting) typically are members of historically Black Greek letter organizations (HBGLOs). These shows include a type of performance called "stepping" that has African roots. Stepping requires a combination of clapping and stomping to relay a rhythm to the audience.

² Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham first conceptualized politics of respectability in her work, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (1993). She describes how Black people employed respectability to encourage white society to accept them. Respectability politics require Black Americans to eschew negative, racist stereotypes associated with Blackness by acting and presenting themselves as equals to white Americans. These politics took on many different forms and are especially stressed in family life and good public behavior.

and members of other sororities, that they were superior because they were pretty and well established. They paid homage to the fraternities by ascribing to their sexual attractiveness. These “pretty girls” placed value in their straightened hair and sexiness. They were also among the most petite women in the show, and they used their slimness to display delicacy. They called themselves examples of the “best” woman, performing stereotypical depictions of femininity.

Sorority 2’s set contrasted greatly with this performance. These women were not slimly built, nor did their performance indicate there was anything delicate about them. They performed in form-fitting pants and boots, for their theme was based on a novel about survival against the odds. Their hair was not straightened. Their performance included cheerleading stunts that showcased strength rather than delicacy. When they called for each step, they deepened their voices, yet they still remained feminine. Their makeup was bold and unnatural. They established their superiority through defiance of typical feminine roles. They still appealed to sexual attraction when they paid homage to the fraternities, but this was the only time during their performance that they ascribed to typical gender roles. They lauded themselves because they stepped “like men,” and that made them surpass the competition.

The performances of the sororities showcased the spectrum of stereotypes Black women face that often defines their womanhood. I chose to briefly describe the performances of the two extremes. Sorority 3 depicted a “classic” woman: thin,

beautiful, delicate, and sexy. Sorority 2 depicted a more “masculine” woman: full-bodied, strong, loud, and tough. Black women constantly bounce between these paradoxical definitions, negotiating when to be delicate and when to be strong. These stereotypes denote a space for Black women that exists outside of the standard of white womanhood. At the end of the step show, the sorority team that garnered the title was able to mix elements of the binary definitions of Black womanhood in their performance.

The fraternity teams built their performances around conceptions of Black middle-class male success. They depicted themselves as lawyers and entrepreneurs who win the affections of all the women. All performances assumed that all the men wanted to attract the prettiest, most traditionally feminine women. They depicted themselves as athletic, strong, smooth, and sexy. In the fraternity performances, virility and prowess were essential to storyline. One fraternity’s theme was based on a trial with the question being “Does Fraternity 4 run the yard?” Witness testimony from sorority members cited their handsome facial features and physical strength as reasons why they “ran the yard.” By glorifying their strength, they aimed to make members of other fraternities appear weak. Because this fraternity had the highest number of members at the time, they also appeared to have strength in numbers. Their showcase of strength and masculinity helped Fraternity 4 to win this step show.

Stereotypes about hypermasculine Black men collided with ideals about Black male success to visibly showcase Black bourgeoisie values. These men were successful

because they presented themselves as desirable while maintaining their intelligence. By practicing respectability, middle-class Black men can embody the “good” parts of being a Black man: virility, strength, and athleticism, while eschewing the “bad” parts: assumed criminality, violent behavior, and assumed lack of proper etiquette. These fraternities showcased the “perfect” Black man by ascribing to Black middle-class values.

Performing Masculinity

bell hooks in her work *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* (2004) describes how patriarchy, specifically “imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy” destroys the possibility of healthy relationships between men and women. This form of patriarchy requires male dominance by any means necessary, including sexual violence. It necessitates the differentiation between men and women through definitions of masculinity and femininity. The social constructs masculinity and femininity cannot be conflated with male- or female-bodied individuals. According to Pascoe, we must be thoughtful about framing masculinity as what men/boys do. This thought conflates masculinity with actions of those with male bodies, and produces troubling monolithic labels such as “Black masculinity” (2012, p. 10).

These definitions frame masculinity as a process in which heterosexuality and domination of “weaker” men and women are central (Pascoe, pg. 3). A weaker man is not only a man who is non-gender conforming, but he could also be a man of color

and/or poor. Men enact and embody different configurations of masculinity depending on their social positions within the hierarchy of power that this form of patriarchy dictates. Masculinity is multiple and varied, and it cannot take the same shape for everyone who embodies it because gender does not exist in a vacuum separated from other social constructions such as race, class, and sexuality.

Black men stand in a form of masculinity coined as *marginalized masculinity* (Connell, 1995). Men who embody this may be positioned powerfully in terms of gender but not in terms of class or race. This form of masculinity creates the need for manhood to be defined in different ways than conventional, or hegemonic, masculinity. Domination and heterosexuality still become centered, but their embodiments change in communities of people of color and in poor communities. Even within these communities, masculinity is varied because its definition extends from socially constructed identities. Due to this, Black masculinity cannot be monolithic. On Duke's campus, the intersection of Blackness, class, and gender inequality create definitions of Black manhood that perpetuate a culture in which Black women and weaker men are harmed.

Black men occupy a precarious social position, but due to complex entanglement of race, gender, and class, they are considered the lowest standing individuals in American society. The social and political disenfranchisement of Black men (which does not allow them to reach the standard of white men) has created a myth of black male

exceptionalism, which is propagated by both Black men and women. Black male exceptionalism is the belief that “Black men fare more poorly than any other group in the United States” (Butler, 2013). Black male exceptionalism masks the ways that Black men are privileged in gender relationships with Black women. A memorandum by Assistant Secretary of Labor Patrick Moynihan, commonly called the Moynihan Report, (1965) established the “Black man crisis” due to the ways that Black men did not exhibit hegemonic forms of masculinity. This report pitched Black men against Black women, claiming that growing up in matriarchal households did not allow Black men to exhibit hegemonic forms of masculinity (p. 26).

Black male exceptionalism allows for Black men to be the racial standard bearers because they are considered to be the worst off in society. By framing the social position of Black men in this manner, programming, activism, and other social justice acts designed to uplift Black men exclude Black women, but also do the work of reinforcing patriarchy and racism. It assumes that Black women are part of the reason that Black men are subjugated in society. The assumption that the salvation of Black people through bringing African-American men up to the standard of white masculinity does nothing to eradicate those oppressive social structures (Butler, p.488, 2013). Black male exceptionalism and respectability politics veil male privilege and intra-racial gender-based violence.

The violence Black men exact against Black women and other individuals is often not intentional. At times, the young African-American men on this campus do not recognize that they benefit from a patriarchal societal system. In their eyes, all Black people are oppressed, and they face that oppression in similar ways. This became apparent during an event led by Fraternity 4. They advertised the event as a discussion about Black masculinity. I thought that this event would be particularly useful for my project, as I imagined that Black men would have plenty to say about how they construct Black manhood. When I arrived at the event, an administrator from the university spoke about growing up and being taught how to be a real man. (I have no idea what that means, and he was not explaining it well at all.)

After hearing about seven minutes of his circumlocution, a member of Fraternity 4 asked him to sit down. He announced, "I know all of you are here for an event about Black masculinity at a PWI, but we're going to switch gears on you. This is really an event about gender violence." Everyone in the room whispered among each other. "We wanted to ensure that men would be in the room because they are never present during those important conversations." I was aghast. This was a blessing, but I had several questions. *How was a fraternity that had a long history of raping Black women going to acknowledge that history while holding an event about gender violence? Why was gender violence a concern for these men now?* I was not the only one baffled by the program change.

The audience separated based on gender for the discussion, which forced members of the audience who did not identify with either gender to choose where they wanted to continue the conversation. To assist them with facilitating the discussion, members of Fraternity 4 asked a representative from the Women's Center to lead the women's conversation. We talked among ourselves for about an hour and a half. Many of the first year women expressed reluctance to engage with the topic because they did not know any of the men there; they had very little experience with the men in the room, so they could not speak on how those specific men interacted with women. Upperclasswomen felt the need to educate them on the history of Black sexual relations. Some could not believe that their "friends" were capable of this violence. "How do we protect each other?" One asked. I am sorry to say that the answers we offered were not enough.

At this event about gender violence, a young man, whom I will call John, said: "I did not realize it was different for Black women. I thought we were all struggling together. I did not realize I had power in certain situations when I feel powerless in others." Other Black men nodded in agreement while many of the Black women in the room looked at them incredulously. In an event designed to address the gender injustice present in the Black student body, sexism was present. Black men students fail to recognize that though they identify as disadvantaged in many ways, they are still men;

they still benefit from male privilege present in patriarchy³. By thinking in this way, they do not consider gender inequality, and they equalize Black women and men's plights. This overshadows gender-based violence by prioritizing racial justice issues that center Black men.

Black men begin to believe that acquiring certain attributes during their time at Duke will make them more marketable to women. The ideal standard for Black men appeared to be easy to define for many of my respondents. Most respondents agreed that the ideal Black man on Duke's campus is physically fit, heterosexual, sexually active (with multiple partners), successful, and a member of a HBGLO. This man would have his choice of women, both black and white, and often would participate in polyamorous relationships with his sexual partners. Though most Black men do not fit all components of this definition, many attempt to master this form of masculinity. This type of masculinity stems from ideals of Black bourgeoisie gender roles.

Mastery of Black bourgeoisie masculinity takes varied methods existing within constraints of white supremacy, patriarchy, and classism (hooks 2003). These systems of oppression converge to map out societal expectations of how middle class Black men should think, live, and behave. Black men, especially those in predominantly white

³ Cole and Guy-Sheftall write, "Despite their relative economic and political powerlessness in white male-dominated society, Black men also benefit from gender privilege that operates in some manner for all males in male-dominated cultures such as the United States, though clearly white men as a group are the most privileged. This is the case for Black men even if that power is only able to be exercised *within* their own marginalized communities and within their families. *Gender Talk*, (p. 132)

environments, cling to a definition of manhood based on white masculine gender roles. Many Black men at Duke aspire to be employed in traditional professions such as medicine, law, finance, and engineering. These professional fields are markedly white middle class, and many Duke students aspire to work within these fields. Many Black men wish to be in these professions, as one of my respondents, Brian said, “to have a better life than my parents could give me.” They aspire to be men who can take care of their families, speaking to a patriarchal ideal that men should be the providers in their households. They tend to despise or shy away from professions that do not pay well, such as teaching or social work, because they do not fit within the standard professions for Duke-educated men. Men who choose these paths are not seen as masculine men, and they lose privileges that are associated with that definition.

Black men on Duke’s campus embody Black bourgeoisie masculinity in the way that they dress, a tenet of respectability politics. They choose to wear clothing that their peers will deem respectable: sports coats, tailored pants, and loafers. Their clothes are usually form fitting but not fitted enough to appear feminine. Very few Black men Duke students wear athletic gear outside of the time they go to the gymnasium, unless they are varsity athletes. Wearing this type of “respectable” clothing allows them to distinguish themselves from lower class or non-Duke (also called regular) young Black men. Duke Black men want to be seen as men who defy racist stereotypes, and partly accomplish this by dressing better than stereotypical Black youth. John speaks often

about the ways that he has to mask pieces of his identity. His height and build make him appear frightening to white people, especially white women, so he does a lot of work to keep his peers comfortable. "I have to wear khakis and speak slowly when I'm around people so I don't frighten them. I can't be angry in public," he said in a public forum after the death of Michael Brown. He internalized racist stereotypes about the inherently dangerous nature of Black men, and he controls his behaviors in order to combat them.

To illustrate this, I will revisit the set of Fraternity 4 in the step show. In the step show, Black men defined themselves as successful in economic terms through assuming the role of lawyers. They wore well-tailored suits and spoke Standard English. The women who played jurors wore business attire, and they served as witnesses to the majesty of the fraternity. They did not say anything outside of what the lawyers asked them, and when they spoke "out of order," it was to confirm the prowess and intelligence of the fraternity. Members of Fraternity 4 embodied the standard of the ideal Black man by performing as high earning, physically attractive, and dominating men.

The construct of masculinity defines what type of sexuality is normative, and the normative form of sexuality is heterosexuality. The compulsive performance of heterosexuality, in order to be seen as a legitimate, powerful Black man, is essential. Compulsive performances of heterosexuality often include the listing of sexual partners in public and private conversation, predatory behavior towards women, distinguishing oneself from men who identify as gay, bisexual, queer, or transgender (Pascoe 2012).

Men who do not identify as straight nor identify with a person who does not adhere to normative gender (cisgender) practices often have to adhere to those practices to be accepted by their male peers, especially in public arenas of conversation. If he does not choose to submit to those normative definitions, he is dismissed because he is “too gay.” This, of course, implies that openly gay or bisexual men have nothing useful to add to the conversation, though their words and opinions are valid.

In these public arenas of conversation, usually queer voices are silenced through mechanisms of denial. This is particularly true of HBGLOs. These organizations typically have tacit rules that exclude and discriminate against queer people, so if a member of a fraternity or sorority identifies as non-heterosexual, it is often “covered up” and flat out denied. One day I witnessed a public conversation about a member of a fraternity whom everyone in the community knew identified as gay. This conversation was random, and it was conducted in a way that allowed for everyone else in the room to be involved. One of the other men in the fraternity was laughing with their brother about the time they had taken him to the strip club in Durham. Someone else, a friend of the gay young man, chimed in tepidly, “Isn’t he gay? Why did y’all take him to the strip club?”

“He isn’t gay. Why do you say that?” Silence awkwardly filled the room. There was no way that his fraternity brother was going to outright deny his sexuality. Wasn’t that a part of the joke? Why else would they be laughing so hard? The bystanders to this

conversation leaned in closer to hear what was happening. “I’ve got pictures of him with women. He is not gay!” he said again. He and fraternity brother retreated to a private discussion. This denial continued until the young man graduated, and sororities perpetuated it as well. His “deviant” sexuality would have delegitimized his social position as a “successful” Black man, so, in order to prevent that, his sexuality was erased and replaced with the ideal.

He became cast as a “player who attracted all the women” because of his intelligence and bright future. Publicly, he was cisgender straight Black man, but everyone knew the truth. As a student body, everyone participated in the culture that allowed the masking of his sexuality. I submit that the public erasure of his sexuality was a form of violence perpetrated against him by heterosexual men. They had the power to determine, at least socially, his sexual practices. His fraternity brothers dominated him and practiced a different form of sexual violence than that executed on women⁴. This violence is rooted in homophobia and patriarchy, and it contributes to the ideal that masculine men are not gay.

⁴ Pascoe writes of sexuality as a range of meaning associated with identity. Sexuality not only regulates intimate relationships but also infuses social relationships and societal power structures. See also *The Quest for Modern Manhood: Masculine Stereotypes, Peer Culture and the Social Significance of Homophobia* (2001) by David C. Plummer.

Performing Femininity

Many Black students are told the narrative of supply and demand (for the sexes) our first year by upperclassmen fraternity members. The historical basis of it remains a mystery. We are told that self-esteem and desirability follow an “X” shaped graph over the course of their time at Duke University. As first years, women are the most desired and have the highest self-esteem while men are the least desired and have low self-esteem. They begin at opposite ends of the graph. Over their time at Duke, this relationship changes. By their senior year, women are the least desired by their classmates, and men are the most desired.

If you were to plot this phenomenon on a graph, it would be in the shape of an “X”. It is believed that this “X factor”, as it is commonly known, dictates and dominates how people from the two normative genders interact. This model does not consider non-normative sexualities and genders, nor does it not fully account for what happens over the course of those four years that make women “less” desirable and men “more” attractive. The “X” factor narrative does not show the ways that idealized Black masculinity shapes the relationships between Black men and Black women.

Why would anyone tell this to first year students? The narrative of the “X” factor serves several purposes within the Black student body. Black upperclassmen often employ this narrative to encourage underclasswomen to engage in sexual relationships with them without seeking the advice of older women peers. The “X” factor facilitates

the dissolution of relationships between underclasswomen and upperclasswomen because it fosters a sense of competition for a limited pool of eligible Black men. It dangerously asserts that Black women come into Duke with high self-esteem based on perceived attractiveness during high school, which is not necessarily true. Many Black Duke women matriculate with a lowered sense of self because they were tokenized during childhood and adolescence⁵. It also asserts that Black men should expect to leave Duke feeling as though they are the most desirable members of the Black student body.

A member of a HBGLO told my friends and me this narrative while we ate dinner in our first year dining hall. He believed that it would make us feel more desirable and that it would increase his chances of beginning a sexual relationship with one (or more) of us. "You're all pretty, and everyone wants you now, but as you get older you'll lose that. By your senior year, no one will be looking at you. They'll be focused on the underclassmen." The patriarchal undertones of the "X" factor reinforce that women are commodities that lose sexual value over time, and men can only give value to them. The "X" factor fallaciously teaches first year men and women that their worth and their sexual attractiveness are intimately connected. More dangerously, this narrative shows women that their value depreciates over time, and it encourages

⁵ Many Black women come to Duke from predominantly white educational and social spaces. There, they learned how Black women's bodies are racialized in mostly white contexts. They matriculate feeling as if men may not be attracted to them because no one in high school liked them due to the fact that they did not conform to beauty standards based on white middle-class femininity.

women to use their “increased” sexual attractiveness in their first and second year to engage in relationships with men. First year women students are most affected by sexual violence (Mills 2009), as men see them as new bodies that can be dominated⁶.

Black women’s gender roles differ at the intersections of racism and hetero-patriarchy. The Black women I interviewed had similar answers when I asked them “What is the ideal Black woman on campus?” They are expected to be high performing, ambitious, slender (with curvy hips, breasts, and thighs), strong, and yet submissive to their men. In our formal interview, Lisa remarked, “When I think about the ideal Black woman, I think about myself and that is the standard that I judge everyone else on. I am strong, nurturing, ambitious, and beautiful.” Not a single one of my respondents that I interviewed explicitly stated that they expected for Black men on campus to be strong, and I was not sure if it were because masculinity implicates strength or if Black men and women operated under the assumption that only Black women needed to be strong. Because Black women significantly outnumber Black men, the definition of ideal was a little harder to define for some of my respondents.

Brian’s definition of the ideal Black Duke woman exemplified policing of women’s sexualities, a major tenet of patriarchy (Davis 1981, hooks 2004, Federici 2004). He said, “She doesn’t have to be Greek, but she can’t be a [whore]. Like she must be

⁶ First year women students are the most vulnerable to sexual violence. Many of my respondents recall the ways they were subjected to sexual harassment as a first year because upperclassmen perceived them to be easy targets.

sexually active, but she can't be *too* sexually active. I don't want to be with someone everyone has had." I asked him if he thought the same of his sexual relationships, and he answered simply that it's different for men. "Though the Black community watches [Black Greek men's sexual relationships], the expectations are different. They expect for me to sleep with every woman I talk to." Black women do not have that expectation placed upon them. Instead they wrestle with the sexist ideal that women are supposed to preserve themselves for their men, but in that same vein, they cannot be virgins. As Black women, they also tussle with the historical stereotypes of hypersexuality that left them vulnerable.

Jeonna, a junior, talks about the ways her sexuality has been policed at Duke. "Black men assume I'm asexual because I don't fall for their bullshit. They can get some of my friends with the games they played, but they never got me, so I guess they assumed that because I was not sexually attracted to them that I was not sexually attracted to anyone. Now, they come to me as their friend for advice about girls, but they don't even consider me to be a sexual being." This is a painful realization for her because she always envisioned that college would be a place for her to enjoy a mature, romantic relationship, but she fears that she has been blacklisted. Because she does not strictly adhere to contradictory Black female gender roles, she may not experience a relationship with a Black Duke male student. The possibility for romantic relationships for Black women who choose to freely engage in sexual practices with partners is also

nearly non-existent because they may be viewed as tainted women. Patriarchal ideals place women within a bind, refusing them the ability to express their sexuality freely.

Making Gender Visible

Each year during BSAI there is a Real Deal Panel. This panel is supposed to be an open forum that gives the invited high school students the space to ask current Duke students questions about their college experience. This year, I was asked to participate in the panel. I do not usually get invited to these events because of my reputation as an outspoken individual, but I accepted the invitation because I wanted to speak my truth. I remember the event when I was a prospective student, and it was there where current first year students exposed me to the concept of the hook-up culture at Duke⁷. Due to my memory of the event, I thought it would be an open space for current students to talk about the good, bad, and the uncomfortable aspects of Duke.

To my disappointment, this event did not turn out to be a truth-telling session. The organizers of the event separated the prospective students by sex. The official reason for this division was to allow them to be comfortable to ask questions, but then they were not given an appropriate amount of time to do that. The event lasted about 30 minutes, and during that allotted time we had a panel and small group discussion. The

⁷ "Hook-up culture" is how many Duke students describe the culture of dating. When two people "hook up", they participate in any form of sexual action from kissing to sexual intercourse. The myth about Duke's dating culture allows for students to believe that dating does not happen there. Some of my respondents remembered when they first learned about Duke's dating culture and were extremely discouraged because they do not engage in casual sexual relationships.

panel moderator asked me and the other panelists questions such as “Where do you get your hair done?”

Current Black women students did not fully address issues of gender-based violence. Part of the reason for this was the presence of an administrator who was present for liability purposes. I asked what those liability purposes were, and this was the response given to me: “It was explained to us that, because there are minors in the room, an adult advisor needs to be in the room to ensure that if topics such as sexual assault arise, personal anecdotes may be protected.” The adult advisor in the room has no training with dealing with sexual assault, and I do not know what protection of personal anecdotes entails. Her presence served as a suppressing agent in the room, and she openly policed conversation. Because of her hovering, many conversations did not talk about anything except roommate issues. I did not get to answer the questions that the high school women students wanted to ask.

In that room, potential members of the class of 2019 experienced gender policing and silencing due to the presence of an administrator. At the end of the small group discussion, she stood to wrap up the event with these words: “I believe every young woman should have a set of pearls—I don’t care where they come from—and a set of pumps. She should also have a tailored suit—I don’t care where it comes from. It could be from Ross to Nordstrom. But if you expect to get a job in a traditional workforce, those are the things you need.... As young women, it is important to remember that you

cannot let your attitude or your dress betray you..." She went on for several minutes about the "proper" behavior and dress for a young Black woman.

The intent of her speech may have been to give smart advice to Black adolescents, but her words worked to police gender presentations. She, as a representative of the university, told the young women present in the room that well-behaved, well-dressed (meaning feminine-presenting) women succeed in her eyes at Duke. In that space, there may have been young women who are currently battling with gender or sexual identity. In that moment, they were exposed to the homophobia, transphobia, and regulation of Black women's bodies that occurs on this campus daily. Black women can experience this policing and discrimination from other Black women due to internalized systems of oppression.

After leaving, I discussed the women's event with some of the young men who participated in the "men's talk." When I asked them if there were an administrator present in their conversation, and their immediate response was "No." After some reflection, they revised their answer to yes. They said that the administrator present in their conversation said nothing, and their panel and discussion operated as the event truly intended it to be. Questions about the racist Yik Yak posts arose, and current Duke Black men students answered honestly about their experiences on campus. I do not know why policing of the women's conversations occurred, especially since both groups would have benefited from a conversation about sexual violence in college.

If left up to them, men would not bring up the topic of sexual violence because they are not adversely affected by it. Being in a room with women who have to live with the experience of and expectation to be sexually violated would have exposed them to conversations that they did not have alone. Separation by gender served no purpose except to silence and to suppress the voices of Black women, and it did not allow for men to participate in a conversation about sexual violence.

Recent programs targeted towards gender-based violence have not been effective at disturbing the norm of privileging Black men's experiences over Black women's. Typically historically Black fraternities and sororities host these programs during their week of programming as a testament to their social consciousness, but Black men do not come. When they do come, their voices are privileged, and they do not actively admit to their role in this violence. As a student body, we do a lot of work to protect patriarchy, and we do not want to harm our men (hooks 2004). Gender and gender-based violence are not made visible in these contexts due to the privileging of men.

Because these conversations are actively suppressed, it allows for gender-based violence to occur, and it facilitates the silencing of survivors. The failure to address patriarchy and sexism within the Black student body harms victims of gender-based violence. In the next chapter, I will explore the ways survivors of sexual violence are silenced and the ways they cope with sexual assault. There, I hope to continue to make gender visible.

Call it out by Name: Sexual Violence and Silence

"Our community has been a place of contradiction in the matter of protecting us women. Black men risked life and limb to save us from being battered and raped by white men during slavery. This makes the brutalizing of sisters by brothers today all the more painful."

Susan Taylor, *Essence*, 2002

At the beginning of September 2014, there was an event hosted by the historically black sororities that called for women in the black student body at Duke to come together to discuss gender violence. It would be the first of its kind-- a safe, non-competitive space for Black women to come together to reflect on rape culture. The purpose of the event arose out of the need for education on sexual violence to facilitate its prevention. Recent news of rapes and intimate partner violence on campus had left many Black women reeling, and they wanted to ensure that first-year women would not have to endure the loss that comes with sexual violence. As a senior, I went to the event to share my own experiences and give advice to those who sought it.

Over fifty women filled the bottom level on the Women's Center. Many were sitting on the floor; some sat in chairs that lined the back of the room. I was pleased with the volume of women in the room, and I hoped that the large numbers would facilitate easy, honest conversation. The opening question was simply "what is rape culture?" One senior volunteered: "A culture that teaches men to rape and women not to be raped." Several other more specific answers were given, including my favorite: "the culture that tells a guy he's entitled to my space, my time, and my body." After the

initial question, it was really difficult to get personal conversation to begin. Some of the most vocal young women spoke to violence they had never experienced in order to impress the sorority members present. They were not allowing the speaking space to be filled by those who had experienced violence; instead they filled it with hypothetical responses.

These words transformed the safe space into a potentially harmful one for survivors of gender-based violence, and they rendered many women silent. Women who had either never experienced violence or had normalized the violence they had experienced caused a perpetuation of rape culture's silencing though they expressed the need for the space to be a sheltered one. The event began to deviate from its original purpose. Thinly veiled victim blaming permeated the space when woman after woman expressed how she would behave if she were raped. "If something like that were to happen to me, I would believe that it wasn't my fault. I would never put myself in that position. I'm strong."

These statements shamed many survivors because they implied that those who were attacked were not smart enough or strong enough to avoid it. There were few who dared to break through the respectable woman act to publicly come forward about what had happened to them, but their comments were dismissed and disregarded because they were "too heavy." Truth about sexual violence and its effect on Black women could not be fully explained because of the idea that respectable women do not get raped.

Respectable women protect themselves from violence, and historically Black sororities will only accept respectable women. In an event purposed to deconstruct mechanisms of silencing, silencing and shame were being reproduced. The attempt to facilitate bonding and trust among Black women to discuss sexual violence was undermined by the very context in which it was created.

In this chapter, I explore the pervasive nature of rape culture on campus by looking at the narratives of college-aged Black women. Through analyzing rape culture, I aim to examine how silencing of Black women victims of gender-based violence occurs. These narratives provide a lens through which we can examine the role middle-class Black respectability politics plays in shaping a collegiate environment where Black women do not feel like they can share their experiences with one another or hold perpetrators of violent acts responsible. Stereotypes of Black women influence how they conduct themselves because they do not wish to be viewed negatively by peers, potential employers, potential partners, etc. This is particularly true of Black women on elite college campuses because they interact with many more people who are more likely to hold these prejudices⁸. Predominantly white campuses are sites of a culture of competition among Black women academically, socially, and romantically⁹. These

⁸ See "Social Disaster: The Duke Lacrosse Case" in *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America* by Melissa V. Harris-Perry (pg. 157- 179)

⁹ See "Discrimination" in *Experiencing Racism: Exploring Discrimination through the Eyes of College Students* (2009) by Richard Seltzer and Nicole E. Johnson (pg. 109-120)

narratives also provide insights on how Black women cope with sexual assault on Duke's campus.

Emilie Buchwald, Pamela Fletcher, and Martha Roth (2005) define rape culture as “a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent” (p. xi). These violent acts occur on a spectrum that ranges from sexual remarks to rape itself. This culture dictates the behavior of all victims, making them responsible for the violent acts committed against their bodies, while perpetrators often face no accountability. In this culture, masculinity dominates through any means necessary, including sexual violence. Rape culture teaches us that gender-based violence is inevitable. It teaches us to guard our daughters from rape while showing our sons that un-tempered and uncontrolled sexuality is vital to manhood.

All women are affected by rape culture. I am not suggesting that only Black women experience this violence; it is actually quite the opposite. Many women are taught from a young age to be wary of men, not to walk alone at night, and never to allow themselves to be outnumbered by men in private settings. As we become women, we are taught to always respond to men who catcall at the risk of violence, and there have been attacks/killings of women who have not responded to the demands of men. Rape culture, as a consequence of patriarchy, teaches men that women's bodies are their right, and when women refuse to give their bodies away, they must be taken by force.

As I have mentioned in my introduction, Black women have a particular history with this violence. Rape was a tool of control for many slave owners (Cole and Guy-Sheftall, 2009). It established and reaffirmed the power dynamics between whites and Blacks, for white men could rape Black women with no consequence while Black men were often lynched for even seeming to express an attraction to white women. Enslaved Black women were routinely denied the protections that were given to white women because of their subordinate status. Within slavery culture, Black women's bodies were constantly abused¹⁰. Racist stereotypes dictated that Black women could not be raped because they framed Black women as harlots who always desired sex or as subhuman pieces of property. This allowed white men to maintain white respectability while committing heinous acts of sexual violence. Historically, Black women have been silenced when it comes to sexual violence because there were few avenues of reporting, and Black men were powerless to protect them. Today, sexual violence against Black women goes unreported for a multitude of reasons.

Melissa Harris-Perry discusses the many stereotypes American Black women combat in her work *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes and Black Women in America* (2011). She categorizes these stereotypes (or myths) into three types: Jezebel¹¹, Mammy, and

¹⁰ This is not to say that enslaved Black women did not have consensual sexual relationships.

¹¹ Jezebel was a queen in the Bible who forced her husband to turn away from the Judeo-Christian God in order to worship pagan gods. Her name is invoked when talking about witchcraft and manipulation.

Sapphire. The Jezebel archetype describes Black women as hypersexual, conniving, and devious. Black women are constantly trying to seduce a man, and they are also consequently constantly in need of salvation. The Mammy archetype paints Black women as motherly¹² and asexual. The Sapphire archetype characterizes Black women as emasculating, angry, and bossy women who are uncompromising. This archetype typically dictates that Black women are incapable of finding romantic love because they are not able to let men dominate them.

These stereotypes intersect in such a way that requires many Black women to struggle to fit within definitions of whiteness and white femininity in order to be viewed as women. On predominantly white college campuses, the mechanisms that Black women students use to be accepted as members of the larger community are often tactics of Black respectability politics. These politics require women to dissemble themselves from their true selves for protection and assimilation (Harris-Perry, 2011). In the years during and after enslavement, Black women developed the technique of dissemblance to preserve pieces of their lives and selves (Harris-Perry, 2011). Historian Darlene Clark Hine writes,

¹² When I use the word “motherly” here, I am using the definition that Harris-Perry uses. “Motherly” in this sense meant “always willing to take care of white women’s children.” There are stereotypes that characterize black women as deplorable, immoral mothers, but these are not discussed as extensively in her work.

Because of the interplay of racial animosity, class tensions, gender role differentiation, and regional economic variations, Black women, as a rule, developed and adhered to a cult of secrecy, a culture of dissemblance, to protect the inner sanctity of inner aspects of their lives. The dynamics of dissemblance involved creating the appearance of disclosure, or openness about themselves and their feelings, while actually remaining an enigma. Only with secrecy, thus achieving a self-imposed invisibility, could ordinary Black women accrue the psychic space and harness the resources needed to hold their own in the often one-sided and mismatched resistance struggle (as cited in *Sister Citizen*, pg. 59-60).

Black women use dissemblance to create a space in which they can effect their own survival, especially when culturally produced sexual and racial environments make the world a hostile place for Black women.

When asked why they think sexual violence persists between Black men and Black women on Duke's campus, many of my respondents recall being told messages about how "lucky" they are to have *any* man interested in them, especially a Black man. Because women are taught to define themselves through their relationships with men, the definition of a successful Black woman at Duke includes being in a relationship with a successful Black man. Many Black women are told to "accept whomever or whatever comes" to them because they will be alone if they do not. "Black women are told when

they enter college that they better use these four years wisely. College is where they are going to find their husbands," Nancy, a senior, said.

The small number of Black students compounds the fiercely competitive environment of the elite university, at most 200 per class (out of over 1700 students). Many Black students at Duke lived their entire lives as "tokens," one Black face among many white faces. College is the first time that they could interact with many Black people; the first time they can create any friendships with non-white people. Many reconstruct their identities to model themselves after bourgeoisie ideals of Blackness. The student body created among some Black students is fraught with gossip and backbiting, as well as condemnation of those who do not fit within respectable forms of behavior by students and administrators.

In this competitive environment, Black women dissemble to protect from these sometimes-toxic spaces for within these spaces, Black women students do not have the opportunity to be fragile. In addition to the toxicity present within the Black student body, Black women have to deal with the micro and macroaggressions that create a poisonous environment. The relationships among students of color and their relationships with their white peers need improvement if the culture on Duke hopes to become a safe environment for all of its students, especially those with marginalized identities.

There have been attempts to cultivate healthy relationships among students of color. Students of color, not faculty or administration, head most of these attempts. The Duke Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began an initiative targeted towards minority communities about mental health. This series is entitled “No, Really?” It speaks to how Duke students ask each other how they are doing, and the usual response is “Fine.” This programming series aims to unpack why we, as students, tell each other that we are fine when most of the time we are not. Mainly Black women attended the first event, and they challenged each other to unpack why they do not trust one another to help them carry the load. Lucy, a first year student, expressed this, “Most of the time when I am facing something, I deal with it on my own. With my personal life experiences I’ve learned that I cannot trust people, so I do things myself.”

Respectability

One of my respondents, Carlise, spoke about her fear of being alone. She grew up believing that she could have any man that she desired because her family and friends told her she was beautiful. She did not date much at home because not many of the young men there were “on her level.” She recalled her self-esteem being high throughout her life until she came to Duke. The small numbers of Black men coupled with the level of success of these few black men made her feel as if she were in an “arms race” with other Black women on campus due to the belief that finding a partner after

graduating from Duke would be extremely difficult. This is complicated further by that fact that by conventional standards, Carlise is not a respectable Black woman.

Carlise describes herself as a woman who freely chooses her sexual partners. "If I choose to have sex with a guy, I see it as I'm putting my game on them; they're not taking advantage of me." She knows that many girls in the black community have ostracized her because they view her as a "ho." A "ho" is a promiscuous person (usually a woman) and is slang for the word "whore". She told me one story about how a member of the class of 2013 told another young woman that she should not speak to Carlise due to her rumored promiscuity, as if one could transfer promiscuity to another person through a greeting. Being labeled promiscuous automatically means alienation because no one wants to be associated with another person (usually a woman) of lower moral character. Promiscuous men are typically celebrated rather than alienated because male promiscuity is seen as a form of conquering. It is masculine to be able to say that one has pleased a large number of women.

Internally, Carlise battles with being a woman who freely has sex because she enjoys it. She wonders if she in fact deserves the label others have given her. I tell her that she doesn't, and that as long as she was not having sex to fill some kind of void in her life, she was fine. People see her freely engaging in sexual relations with others and label her as a mechanism of distinguishing their "respectable" sexual practices from her "unrespectable" sexual practices. Engaging in this conversation with her caused me to

reflect on how labels can harm individuals and their relationships. Reputations carry so much clout among Black students. If one has a bad reputation, it will harm his or her chances of being able to make lasting friendships. People will justify harming you through your reputation. Being unsavory means you are not worthy of respect, so you do not get any.

Women who choose not to abide by strict sexuality standards are at risk of being shamed by other Black women or many members of the Black student body when they are sexually assaulted. During beach week, which is the period of time between finals and graduation, a man sexually assaulted a young woman who stayed in the same fraternity house. A bystander remembered watching him drink with her until she became so inebriated that she could barely stand. He then said, "I'll take care of her," and carried her upstairs to a bedroom and locked the door behind him. One of the bystanders immediately went upstairs and began to bang on the door, demanding that he open it and release the incapacitated woman. He eventually opened the door and left the room, but no one was sure of what happened while the door was closed.

The young woman, whom I will call Beverly, had a reputation for being a "fast" woman. Many members of the Black student body believed that she had multiple sexual partners during her time at Duke. When the news about her assault circulated, some did not see what was wrong with the actions of the man. In conversations about the incident, men and women would say, "If she didn't have sex with so many people,

maybe he wouldn't have thought to do that to her." "How do we know that she hadn't promised him sex before she got drunk. You know she drinks a lot! You know how she gets when she gets drunk. She's all over everyone." Few came to her defense. In the eyes of many, her assault was justified through her reputation. To some, it could not even qualify as an assault.

Rape culture allows for this reasoning by justifying sexual violence against impure women. It is on the onus of the woman to ensure that she is not raped. If a woman does not abide by strict gender roles: not drinking too much, not flirting too much with men, wearing appropriate clothing, then her rape is justified, and she can be blamed for the actions of her perpetrator. In many of the conversations about Beverly, it was implied that she always wanted sex from men. Being a woman who freely engages in sexual relationships with men means she gave up the right to consent to sex. She could not look to support from other Black women because she had put herself in the position to be raped. Beverly could not publicly come forward about her attack (and her attacker) because people would frown upon it, and the violence she experienced would reflect upon her character. Beverly's perceived inability to act appropriately in her sexual relationships with men denied her the ability to reach out to her black women peers for support after the attack. I only knew about the assault through gossip about Beverly and conversations with the bystander.

Black women survivors like Beverly not only have to deal with respectable roles for women, but they must also deal with Black middle-class respectability politics. Respectability politics, as a guideline for behavior, dictate that in order for Black people to be seen as people who deserve to be treated as equal to whites, that they must adhere to normative standards of behavior. They say that in order to be respected (and treated equally), one must be respectable. It allows for individuals who do not “act right” to be denigrated and separated from the “good” ones; it allows for those individuals to be stripped of their rights because they do not act like they deserve them. When looking at this in the Black middle-class, one sees members of the Black bourgeoisie condemning the actions of lower class Black people in order to appear closer to whiteness.

A large problem with ascribing to whiteness through respectability is that respectability works to mask intraracial violence. Respectability politics call for unity among Black people in mixed spaces because of the fear that Black men and women will not be treated as equals to whites if they show tensions among themselves. The achievement of racial equality through respectability invisibilizes gender injustices, especially gender-based violence, by claiming that the race issue must be solved first. This logic implies that the race issue cannot be solved if there are gender issues too, for then Black people would not be deserving of equal rights and social positioning. Though racial injustice and gender injustice are intimately entwined with one another, respectability politics call for the championing of racial equality over women’s rights.

Black women have specific roles according to Black middle-class respectability. These politics outline acceptable behavior for Black women due to a desire to ascribe to whiteness and white femininity. Black women must present themselves as ladies publicly so they will not shame the race. Ladies are not sexual beings for anyone except their husbands. Ladies are not assertive or more knowledgeable than men. Ladies do not lead a household, but instead are helpmeets for their husbands. Respectability politics call for Black ladies to desire and to strive for marriage, and women who deviate from this ideal are not seen as respectable. The specific roles for women that respectability dictates contradict the stereotypes against Black women, but neither allow for a varied definition of Black women's behaviors.

Respectability also gives Black women the responsibility to "maintain" the race. Because Black women birth Black children, they must cultivate the right values in their households. Young Black women must espouse these ideals in order to attract a respectable Black man for marriage. When a Black man aggresses a Black woman, she must not report him because that will bring shame upon the race. With her report, she gives white people another reason to oppress Black people. She becomes a "race traitor," and she does as much harm to Black people as white people do (Harris-Perry, 2011). This attitude is one that was reflected in my interviews with my Black women respondents. Black women are more likely to be labeled as race traitors than Black men, especially when they report sexual violence.

In a conversation I had with a survivor of sexual violence, she expressed a responsibility to preserve her friend's reputation. She considered him to be a friend though he had raped her twice. She could not clearly recognize the rapes as assaults; in her eyes, they were mistakes. She had always had romantic feelings for her assailant, so when he raped her, she coped with it by renaming those assaults as sexual acts of love. Out of this love grew a need to protect him.

"What do you do when the one who hurts you is your friend? You want to see him succeed. He's a Duke student, so you know he has a bright future, but...he hurt you."

"So his success comes at the expense of you?" I asked.

"Yes. I guess it does." She expressed the need to protect this young man because she felt reporting him would not have been the best thing to do. This young man would go on to be successful and make a lot of money, and she would deal with the aftermath of the assault on her own. His success would be a positive reflection on the race, whereas his crime would have been a negative reinforcement of racial stereotypes about the hyper virility of black men. She later said that she did not want to make her friend look bad in the eyes of other women and other people in general, and she knew that having sexual assault on his record would do that. She could not be the person responsible for tarnishing his reputation; she could not be the person responsible for ruining his chance to get into graduate school, especially since he was a loved one. She

maintained her responsibility of preserving his image for the good of the race, but it came at the detriment of her own health.

Strength

Black women have been known historically for their strength and resilience. This strength was necessary for Black women to raise children born into slavery that may have been sold away and never seen again. That strength was necessary for Black women to raise children in single-parent homes. The myth of supernatural strength innate in Black women allows many Black women to survive in a world that places them in a lesser social position, but it also causes them harm (Harris-Perry, 2011). Because Black women are expected to be strong and independent, it is difficult for them to reach out for support when they are having problems, and this becomes particularly true with shameful issues such as gender-based violence, especially when one considers how racialized histories contribute to silencing. In this section of this chapter, I will explore the role that the myth of strength plays in silencing Black women.

During slavery, stereotypes about Black women justified sexual violence against them. Narratives about the inhuman strength and sexual prowess of Black women allowed white men to sexually, to psychologically, and to physically abuse Black women without legal or social consequence. This violence reinforced the ideology that enslaved Black women were property and refused them the same protections that white women had under the system of white supremacist patriarchy. Emancipation did not give Black

women those protections. Many working class Black women worked in the homes of middle-class white families as maids. They were responsible for the upbringing of white children, and often faced the danger of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse from their white employers. Their survival necessitated that mythological strength.

For Black women students at Duke, the act of dissembling constitutes strength. It allows for them to disconnect from the harmful experiences, microaggressions, and macroaggressions in order to continue being successful students. Dissemblance also allows Black women students to disconnect from sexually violent experiences, and it gives them the ability to demonstrate strength, often construed as the ability to persist through life's hardships without the reliance upon others for help. This persistence often comes in the form of denial. One respondent, whom I will call Priscilla, said, "I usually tell myself that it's ok. That I can make it. If I don't talk about what's bothering me, I won't have to deal with it."

Rape culture teaches women that sexual violence is synonymous with their womanhood, and history shows Black women that as their ancestors have survived, so must they. For Black women survivors of sexual assault, the denial of the harm of sexual violence is nearly ubiquitous. There is a collective will to persevere through the aftermath of sexual violence because of the duty to preserve the race, particularly Black men. This becomes particularly apparent on conversations about Black men students. Nancy said, "As Black women, we always owe Black men something. They don't do

shit for us. All they have to do is live. It's our job to keep them and ourselves." The mythological strong Black woman balances her responsibilities to herself, her family, and the Black race while battling the pervasive threat to her body and mind, and she does this without the assistance of others. The myth of strength operates as a mechanism of silencing for Black women survivors because it is a product of the history of the impossibility of the reporting of and accountability measures for violence against Black women. Black women cannot have healing conversations about sexual violence because it is assumed that they should be able to handle it on their own.

"How We Cope"

The language used to describe sexual assault, especially on college campuses, was recently invented. Historian Natalia Mehlman Petrzela, writes in her blog post "'In My Bed': Sexual Violence Over Fifty Years on One College Campus" (2015) how relatively new discourses about "rape culture" on college campuses are. Feminists such as Susan Brownmiller coined the term in the mid-1970s. These radical women helped to expand the definition of rape beyond the natural consequences of the acts of an individual woman to a violent result of socially constructed meanings about womanhood and manhood. The definitions of sexual violence have expanded to include much more than the forcible penetration of a woman by a man's penis. For hundreds of years, women were not able to fully articulate the violence against their

bodies and language about sexual violence continually undergoes transformation. It's little wonder why women find it difficult to discuss gender-based violence.

Jeonna knew what she was saying was heavy. She paused frequently while speaking, calculating her language in a way that wouldn't force her to reflect too deeply on her experiences. I had asked, "Had you or any of your friends ever been sexually assaulted by a Black man on Duke's campus?" And she paused for a while, mentally tabulating the experiences, counting them on her fingers. After a few moments, she stopped counting, and responded, "I guess the real question would be which one of my friends hasn't been sexually assaulted."

Her words fell quietly, but the impact they had was horrifying. I began to think back to my conversations with my friends and other women I knew, and I realized I couldn't name a single one who hadn't experienced sexual violence. The ways we talked about it (when we talked about it) were understated. There were times when sexual violence happened to us, and we were not even able to recognize it. "Sexual assault is normalized. To the point where you don't even call it that," she continued. "The first time it happened to me, I didn't even know what it was. I just knew it wasn't right." She tried to discuss the event with her roommate, but couldn't find the language to express why she felt the way she did, so she let it go. She decided that she would deal with it on her own.

Black women on Duke's campus routinely do as Jeonna did. They let go of the acts of sexual violence committed against them. They collect these violations and push them away because they do not know how to talk about it. When these conversations are had, the violent acts and their perpetrators are not usually named. These discussions become part of an everyday conversation; these acts become the punch line to an ever-growing list of gross "stories" that are told humorously. These stories are often shared during the process of getting ready for parties, in "girls-only" settings, or, occasionally, with the mentioning of a perpetrator's name. Their perpetrators are protected. Acts of assault—bluntly put, rape—are never referred to as such. They are never identified as being violent.

During our interview, Jeonna described the horrifying details of an experience her friend had at a fraternity party. She and her friends were dancing in a circle, and a man approached one of them to dance. While she and the young man were dancing together, he managed to pull his penis out of his pants, and by the end of the song, he ejaculated onto her back. Her friend did not notice the offense until she went to the bathroom later on in the evening. When telling her friends about the incident, one had the sense she was utterly incredulous: "You would not believe what happened to me last night!" But she made no mention of being aggressed; she only mentioned that it was unbelievable though she had felt violated. These acts of violation had become the norm. If they had spent time trying to identify the man, it was not for purposes of bringing him

to justice or to accountability, it would have purely been for the sake of knowing who he was.

Dealing with sexual violence results in the formation of coping mechanisms and survival strategies. Robin Warshaw details many of the coping mechanisms of survivors in her work *I Never Called it Rape* (1988). In her work, she analyzes the results of a survey conducted by Dr. Mary P. Koss in the *Ms. Project*. The *Ms. Project* dispelled many of the widely held myths that strangers only raped women; as it found that most rapes happened between women and men they knew. Many women rename the assault so that it is no longer considered an act of violence, which facilitates the process of detachment from the experience. Others may blame themselves, citing their own behavior as the cause of their assault. These coping mechanisms are so prevalent that only twenty seven percent of women whose assault fit the legal definition of rape named their assault as rape (p.26). By not recognizing their assaults as acts of unsolicited violation, they take responsibility for the assault, pushing them further into silence and shame.

Currently, many Black women survivors do not feel as if they can come to the administration to address the assaults they have experienced. Generally, women at Duke understand the student conduct process to be harmful to victims of gender-based violence. As a final project for their class, women students from *Telling Stories: Sexual and Domestic Violence in Duke and Durham* published a letter to present to Student

Conduct (See Appendix). The requests formulated at the end of the letter were produced from an informal study of current and former Duke students. The creators of this letter also interviewed women survivors about their personal experiences. As a member of that group, I interviewed a few Black women about their experiences, and they, like other women, stated that they had terrible ordeals with the Student Conduct office. One woman, who asked to remain completely anonymous, talked about how the Dean of Student Conduct expressed that he would do everything in his power to remove her from Duke's campus. These stories contrasted starkly with the (rare) story that he went to any length to protect white women victims.

In addition to this, Black women and other women of color do not have the luxury of being able to consult with a woman of color in the Women's Center or in the Office of Student Conduct. The administration believes that only hiring white men and women to serve these roles will fulfill the needs of all students without being attentive to the needs and situations of their minority students. By conflating the experiences of women of color with white women, they depersonalize them and reinforce the white supremacist idea that white women are the standard for women¹³.

¹³ Audre Lorde speaks about how Black women are highly visible and yet they are invisibilized through the depersonalization of racism. "Within this country where racial difference creates a constant, if unspoken, distortion of vision, Black women have on one hand always been highly visible, and so, on the other hand, have been rendered invisible through the depersonalization of racism. ("The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action", p. 42)

Rape culture at Duke University works to silence women survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence. Black women are not exempt from this silencing; in fact, they have particular historical and racialized experiences with it. Racism and sexism intersect in the lives of Black women to create and to cultivate environments that perpetuate silencing. In order to cope with the effects of those traumatic experiences, Black women resort to telling stories about their experiences to other Black women, but the circulation of these stories almost never result in the punishment of their assailants.

5. “Stand Up, Fight Back!”

*I refuse to be silenced
you will not strangle my words from
me to satisfy your bloodthirst for oppression
my words are not yours to drink
but yours to choke on
my truth will blind you
it will rend your faculties useless
your tongue will tie itself because it is tired of talking in circles
your feet will leave the road you've been travelling
your mind will chuck up the deuces
as the shell of you waits to restart,
waits on instruction:
1. stop
2. listen that's why I left you your ears
3. follow my voice until you reach the destination
only when you've humbled yourself*

will scales be removed from your eyes

“What are the words you do not yet have? What do you need to say? What the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence?” ~ Audre Lorde, *The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action*

In this chapter I explore how political activism demonstrated by the Black undergraduate student body at Duke champions racial injustice over gender injustice. I examine the ways that patriarchy is reproduced in Black liberation movements on Duke’s campus in comparison to national Civil Rights and Black Power movements, which often appealed to normalized white gender roles. The failure to intersectionally view “race” issues as being connected to “gender” issues, accomplished by examining the unique social standing of Black women, perpetuates a culture in which sexual violence against Black women can be perpetrated and survivors of sexual assault are silenced.

Historically Black liberation movements such as the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power movement thrived because of the unattributed labor of many Black women, even as men were most often the faces of these movements. Historians have often left out African-American women’s contributions in their retelling of the movements. Even within the movements, Men leaders asked Black women to stand behind them (as respectable white women stood behind their men) (Eaton 2004). Many Black women and their contributions were discounted publicly under the shadows of

the Black male leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. Yet women like Rosa Parks and Fannie Lou Hamer proved to be the backbone of Black liberation movements. *Hands on the Freedom Plow* tells the stories of the Black women who labored, marched, and stood at the forefront of the Civil Rights movement as members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), yet these stories often go untold in history textbooks.

Historian Danielle McGuire argues, “The real story—that the civil rights movement is also rooted in African-American women’s long struggle against sexual violence—has never before been written¹⁴.” Movements for racial equality and justice for Black people-- in particular, Black men--replaced the struggle for racial and gender equality and justice based on the legal sexual abuse of Black women by white men. The social and community connections Black women created during these feminist movements became the same avenues through which the larger agendas of the Civil Rights Movement were pushed (McGuire 2010). Black women have always been the backbone and force of Black liberation movements, but they are rarely the face.

Many Black women often cite the feeling that in times of mobilization, they have to choose between their Blackness and their womanhood. These are choices that Black men and white women do not often make due to their Blackness or womanhood being

¹⁴ McGuire, Danielle L. (2010-09-07). *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance--A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (Kindle Locations 246-247). Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

the only thing that separates them from achieving the privileges of white manhood (Crenshaw, 1989). Black liberation implicitly means Black men's liberation. Antiracist politics currently requires the equalization of Black women and men's plights.

The equalization of Black women and Black men's struggles obscures and erases the plights of Black women by casting Black *people's* problems as Black *men's* problems. According to this logic, solving Black men's problems will solve the problems of both African-American men and women. African-American women routinely do not have a place in movements that are meant to liberate them (as a Black body) because these movements center Black men. Gender becomes secondary to race due to the failure to view Black women's issues as relevant to the liberation of Black people. Kimberlé Crenshaw in her article *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color* (1991) explains how the failure of identity politics to fully recognize intersecting members of two identity groups is oppositional to their goals.

The embrace of identity politics, however, has been in tension with dominant conceptions of social justice. Race, gender, and other identity categories are most often treated in mainstream liberal discourse as vestiges of bias or domination—that is, as intrinsically negative frameworks in which social power works to exclude or marginalize those who are different.... The problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite—that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup

differences.... Although racism and sexism intersect in the lives of real people, they seldom do in feminist and antiracist practices (pg. 1242).

In other words, how can the struggle for women's rights exclude Black women and other women of color? How can the struggle for Black people's freedom ignore the needs and demands of Black women?

Duke's racial environment does not make room for politically active Black women to reside in the nexus of their identities. Often they feel forced to choose, and they almost always choose racial identity because being passionate about gender justice, especially gender-based violence, can make them appear as "race traitors" (Cole and Guy-Sheftall, 2009) because they draw attention away from antiracist movements.

Black liberation movements are not the only spaces where Black women have felt the need to choose which pieces of their identity they will fight to liberate. Historically, political identity movements have been monolithic, forcing those who align with their causes to pick at pieces of their identities in order to be true supporters of the movement (Crenshaw, 1989). Black women found value in the feminist movement because of the sexism that they faced at the hands of white and Black men. They were met with extreme racism when they attempted to join white feminist movements (Crenshaw, 1989). White men discounted the demands of white feminists because they allowed Black women to participate and to help organize the movement. In order to gain legitimacy, they removed Black women from among them. In later feminist

movement waves, white women excluded women of color through their demands for equality. White middle-class women fought for the ability to leave the domestic sphere, while many women of color and poor women wished to have the economic security to leave the homes of middle-class white women. Because they were alienated from the white mainstream feminist movement, women of color began to create their own versions of feminism to address their specific racialized needs.

We can even see today the ways that Black women and trans people are invisibilized in racial justice movements. The Black Lives Matter movement, sparked by the extra juridical killings of Michael Brown and Eric Gardner, routinely ignores the stories of women and trans people who have died at the hands of police brutality. The Black community galvanizes around images of Black men stripped of their potential to fulfill societal constructions of manhood¹⁵. The names of women killed due to excessive police force—Rekia Boyd, Pearlie Golden, Renisha McBride, Aiyanna Jones, etc.—are rarely, if ever, invoked. When invoked, they do not have same activating power. This is due to the myth that Black men stand in the most precarious social position, which is not true. Even though Black men are killed, they are still remembered (Cole and Guy-

¹⁵ In Michael Brown's case, he was killed by white police officer Darren Wilson for allegedly stealing cigarillos. He had just graduated from high school and was going to college, where he could have created a better (more economically prosperous) life for himself. Eric Gardner sold unpackaged cigarettes at the street corner where he was killed by white police officers. The narrative invoked in Gardner's case was that he was simply trying to provide for his wife and children.

Sheftall, 2009). Black women and trans people do not get that same privilege. Their stories get lost.

The state-sanctioned killing of Michael Brown, a seventeen-year-old resident of Ferguson, Missouri, sparked a Black Liberation movement that would shake social media platforms and streets everywhere. Brown's body remained in the street for four and a half hours as concerned community members watched the police gesticulate and do nothing. They finally removed his body after the crowd, convicted by the screams of his grieving mother, began to demand that his body be removed from the street. Bystanders began to tweet about the incident, and soon it gained national news and media coverage. The death of Eric Gardner, a resident of New York City, added fuel to the anger of Black people all over the nation. Black youth and activists took to social media to proclaim "#blacklivesmatter." In cities all over the country, people were taking to the streets to proclaim that Black Lives Matter. The perfect victim for these crimes is a young, heterosexual, cisgender able-bodied man.

Many Black people had grown tired and angry that Black cisgender men's bodies were subject to police brutality that ultimately ended in their deaths. Black women and Black queer and trans people organized all over the nation to create a movement that became specific to every region of the country—Black brunch disruptions in New York, highway shutdowns in Durham and major Southern cities, traffic jamming marches in Los Angeles. Black people fought back. They called on the lessons of their ancestors, the

Black liberation warriors before them, to begin the process of radically transforming justice. I participated in the black lives matter march that took place in Durham after the non-indictment of Eric Gardner's murderer. While marching among citizens of Durham and students of the Duke community, I noticed that a lot of the organizing that occurred centered the deaths of these men and boys, but when you looked at the crowds of people who were in the streets, most of them were Black and Brown women.

What does this mean? Aren't Black women subject to police brutality as well? Wouldn't they be extra-susceptible due to being female-bodied? What about the Black transwomen who had lost their lives at the end of a state-owned weapon? Where are the marches and vigils for them?

Even while conducting research for this portion of my thesis, I could find very little information about gender relationships between Black women and Black men in political movements. This could be caused by many reasons: attempts to protect the lives and reputations of Black men during an especially dangerous time in the United States' history; respectability politics that argued for the appearance of cohesion within the Black community; and shaming and silencing mechanisms such as the ones discussed in the previous chapter. My thesis will contribute meaningfully to the intraracial conversation about gender inequality in political movements, especially those in predominantly white, elite collegiate contexts.

Black Liberation at Duke University

Black students barricaded and occupied the Allen administrative building at 9 a.m. on February 13, 1969. They gave the following demands:

1. We want the establishment of a fully accredited department of Afro-American studies.
2. We want the right to establish a black dorm on campus.
3. Since Duke claims to be representative of the Southeast, and since the percentage of blacks in the area is 29%, we want the black student population to reach that figure by the fall of 1973.
4. We want the reinstatement of black students who, because of the stifling social and educational environment at Duke were unable to the required academic standing and were forced to leave the university.
5. We want financial reassurance for black students. Decreased scholarships threaten to limit the number of students returning in the fall.
6. We want a black advisor selected only by direct consultation with black students.
7. We want black students' fees which are presently paid to the student union to be earmarked for a black student union.
8. We want academic achievement in high school to be the criterion for black students for the admission to this university. We believe the criteria for entering black students are oriented towards white middle class students, and therefore are inadequate for determining academic potential.
9. We want the non-academic employees to have the power to determine the basis for their working conditions, rights, and other employment matters.
10. /We want an immediate end to tokenism of black representation in university power structures.

11. We want an immediate end to the police harassment of black students and demand protection of all black students at Duke.¹⁶

They promised each other and the administration that they would not leave the building until the demands were met. The fifty to seventy-five students who issued the demands left the building at 5 p.m. in order to avoid being arrested, and a crowd of white students and the police confronted them (Historical note written by Valerie Gillispie as part of the web exhibit, "Campus Protest: Duke University, 1967-1969.") When the crowd and the students clashed violently, the police sprayed tear gas all over the students with administrative support. Media from around the nation were present to discuss what had arguably been the largest clash between students and administration in the history of southern colleges and universities.

To get a closer to look at the event, I interviewed Dr. Brenda Armstrong, who was president of the Afro-American Society at the time of the Takeover and who is currently Dean of Admissions at Duke University Medical School. Dr. Armstrong remembers, "Every moment of that Takeover was planned. Its timing was purposeful. They accused us of being lawless and unorganized, but we were organized." They met for weeks to plan the Takeover, as it would be the demonstration that would change the trajectory of the university's history. "When it got unbearable, we did what we were trained [by our parents] to do. We changed. Power concedes nothing without a

¹⁶ Item ID: abtms01003005, Allen Building Takeover Collection, Duke University Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University. For more information, see the archives of the Allen Building Takeover.

struggle.” The students who participated in the movement received punishment from their peers and the administration, but she says proudly, “The Allen Building Takeover was worth every cent of my education.” The students received a sanction of probation for a year from the university, but that disruptive act pushed Duke University forward. She credits Duke’s rise as the “Southern Ivy” to the sacrifice of those sixty Black students. She remains forever changed from the event. “60 of us went into that building. When we came out, we knew we could not go back to being predictable people. We had to become someone special.”

I asked her about gender relationships at that time. During the time she attended Duke, women lived on East Campus and men lived on West Campus. Black men had small numbers, and they faced racist violence where they lived. The threat of physical violence often fell onto Black men’s bodies at the hands of white students. Black students served as support systems for one another, and they attempted to create community by self-segregating from the white students. Dr. Armstrong also cited the extremely virulent forms of racism on campus to be a deterrent to intraracial violence. “I did not know gender violence. The Black men protected us,” she said.

In the early years of Black students coming to Duke University, Black men matriculated in extremely small numbers. The first undergraduate class of Black students in 1963 only matriculated one Black man out of five students. The ratio of men to women made it difficult to assess gender relationships because there were so many

women relative to men. Now that there are more Black students on campus, Armstrong believes that their political efforts are more diffused. "The Black Student Alliance (BSA) has been diluted. If you diffuse the effort, the impact is lessened." The radical political activist history of BSA, formerly the AAS, has been lost because the organization places its energies into too many directions. One of those directions is dealing with sexual assault and intimate partner violence.

Since the ABT, Black students participate in less radical politics. Often the marches and rallies organized are in response to a racist incident on campus. Black students, and other students of color, have mobilized countless times against racist incidents, but the most noted years since have been 1993, 2002, 2011, 2012, and 2014-2015. After racist incidents occur, Black students meet behind closed doors with administration to negotiate solutions. These solutions almost never come to fruition. The only demand the university sought to honor immediately after the ABT was the establishment of an Afro-American Studies department. However, this department was not created in the way the students had wished it would be, and that contributed to tension between the administration and the African-American students. This pattern of non-acknowledgment of marginalized students' concerns continues today.

Though Black women comprise the majority of Black students on this campus, the demands put forth by Black students are overwhelmingly gendered to benefit Black men. Black women's intellectual labor go into producing and constructing the language

of these demands, yet demands that would directly benefit them are rarely considered. The privileging of the experiences of Black men over Black women reinforces sexism and helps to create an environment that negates Black women's voices. For the remainder of this chapter, I will examine recent political movements undertaken by Black students. I will assess the demands of the students, paying special attention to the intended beneficiaries of the demands. I will also examine the ways that race and gender, more specifically racism and patriarchy, shape these movements.

We Belong Here

In January 10, 2012, The Chronicle of Higher Education printed a news story that described the findings of a study conducted by Duke professors Peter Arcidiacono and Kenneth I. Spinner from the economics and sociology department respectively, and graduate student of economics Esteban M. Aucejo. The study concluded that the grade point averages of Black students converged to those of white students during their tenure at Duke solely due to the disproportionate numbers of Black students who switched from "harder" majors such as math and engineering to "easier" majors in the humanities. Overall, the study showed that 68 percent of African-American students majored in humanities as compared to less than 55 percent of white students. The researchers used data from the Duke Campus Life and Learning Project study, which surveyed the classes of 2001 and 2002 upon matriculation, their second year, and their

fourth year at Duke.¹⁷ This study was not peer-reviewed, yet it was being used in a current Supreme Court case *Fisher vs. University of Texas* (2013) against affirmative action at a public university in Texas.

When this article was published, many members of the Black student body at Duke were horrified. Professors had actually published “scientific” evidence that Black students were inferior to white students. The study described Black students at Duke as disadvantaged, ill-prepared, and low-income, which was not the reality for many of them at that time. They pointed to racial stereotypes about Black people, citing their ill-preparedness for Duke’s atmosphere on the likelihood that they were raised in a single-parent household, and used those stereotypes as justification for the mediocre performance of Black students in elite schools. For many former and current Black students, the study sounded too much like the pathologizing Moynihan Report (1965). Students rallied together to comfort one another in dorm rooms. That evening, members of the Black Student Alliance (BSA) called for a town hall meeting where they expressed their pain and disgust, and those present, many of whom were first years, organized for action. They determined that the university administration should know what this study

¹⁷ The researchers used information from the surveys sent to recently accepted students asking about intended majors and compared to their self-reported declared major in their sophomore year. Those who had indicated a different major in their sophomore year were considered to have switched majors, though the major declaration process for Trinity College students occurs during their sophomore year.

had done to perpetuate the marginalization of its Black students, and that it would learn publicly.

That Sunday afternoon, January 14, about twenty-five Black students stood with signs outside of the Chapel. These signs read: "I am not my GPA" "I am a black engineer" "What is a hard major?" The students had just been inside the Chapel and had walked out during the end of the Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Service to silently protest. As the remaining audience members exited the Chapel, they murmured about the Black students silently staring at them. Some students joined them. Donna Brazile, the featured speaker for the service, encouraged the students. They chose to stand at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration service because they knew that the media would be there, and their voices needed the amplification of media attention to be addressed by the administration. The administration responded to this demonstration by pointing to its resources already available to all students, from which minority students are not excluded, but due to university culture, may be dissuaded from using¹⁸.

A few days later executive members of the Black Student Alliance, under the leadership of their president Nana Asante, marched to the administration building to present the administration with a list of demands that, if met, would hopefully improve the lives of Black students on Duke's campus. The demands, named the Black Culture

¹⁸ Dr. Gary Glass, a psychologist at Duke's Counseling and Psychological Services often says that Duke attracts students who are so intelligent that they often have never had to ask for help. Asking for help is an act of shame for students.

Initiative, ranged from more administrative support of the Black Student Alliance weekend to hiring more Black faculty in all departments, especially in the science and math departments. The administration agreed to increase institutional support for the Black Student Alliance Invitational weekend by allocating an additional \$20,000 a year for programming, but the demand for increased numbers of Black faculty was tabled. For many African-American students, the goal of improving campus environment for Black students was not achieved. They perceived the money to be a Band-Aid on a gaping wound, but it appeased the leaders of the Black Student Alliance.

BSA President Nana Asante presented the recommendations and the demands to the administration, noting its continued failure to address the needs of Black students. "Duke is failing to realize that the black community is the Duke community," she said after the presentation¹⁹. In addition to giving more money to BSAI, the administration chose to respond to the outcry from Black students by reaffirming its commitment to academic freedom for its faculty. There was no public condemnation of the study, nor was there public acknowledgement of the study's effect on Black students. Duke administration had confirmed that faculty could produce harmful scholarship in the name of academic freedom.

¹⁹ Quotation from "BSA delivers list of demands to administrators" by Yeshwanth Kandimalla. The article was published on January 24, 2012.

At this time, Black women mainly comprised BSA executive board. The executive board presented their gender-neutral recommendations to the larger Duke community and the administration (see Appendix). After Asante finished her term as president in 2012, Marcus Benning succeeded her. With Benning's assumption of the presidential role came a complete shift in the goals of the executive board. The majority women board transitioned into a board of majority men, and their political activism focused on the needs of Black men on campus. New initiatives targeted towards the over-surveillance of Black men's bodies arose, and the agendas for political activism centered those initiatives (Appendix). They pushed the administration to take data on the attrition of Black students, in particular Black men, on campus and its relationship to mental health; they also campaigned for the administration to stop Duke Police department from racial profiling Black male students.

The shift towards initiatives that mainly benefit men showcase how race and gender intersected in political movements of Black students to reproduce patriarchy in the Black student body. In the next politically active moment of history, I will examine, we will see how Black students reproduce patriarchy, racism, and classism.

Respectability, Race, and Class

At 7:30 p.m. on Monday, April 21, 2014, I witnessed a young Black man being brutally attacked by the Duke University Police Department. He walked past me on his way to the bus stop. He looked me in my eyes and said, "Hello. How are you doing?" I

did not recognize him, but I didn't think anything of it. I waved. He got on a bus, and I saw my friends Henry and Kyle, so I stopped to speak to them briefly. We saw 2 white police officers run, screaming in walkie-talkies to stop the bus that he had just boarded. A larger Black cop followed them.

The young man walked off the bus, and he handed them his book bag. Immediately they threw him on the ground. 5 police officers restrained him. He screamed, "I'm not resisting you! I'm not resisting you!" He yelled as they contorted his arms behind his back. There were still 5 police officers on top of him. 5 men to this 1 unarmed young man who had already returned what he had allegedly taken. He screamed at them because he felt someone touching his genitalia. They sprayed pepper-spray in his eyes and pulled out a Taser. The young man urinated on himself and vomited white phlegm. They handcuffed him and attempted to sit him on the bench, but he couldn't even sit up straight. He screamed about the pain in his eyes. When Emergency Medical Services arrived, the police told the Emergency Medical Technicians not to ask the suspect any questions about what happened. They transported him to the emergency room because they sprayed mace too close to his eyes. Later, Duke police would deny the use of a Taser though one was present at the scene. During this entire ordeal, white students, white parents, and white professors walked by, and none batted an eye. For them, the brutal arrest of a young Black man was not worth a second look, but I couldn't stop staring.

After that incident, over eighty members of the Black student body gathered in the Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture to process the incident. Benning stated, “We are not here to talk about the incident. We are not here to discuss whether he is innocent or guilty. We are here to talk about our response.” A microphone was passed around so that people could address the crowd. Many were crying, but there were a few, mainly men, who preferred to talk about this incident from a rational point of view.

“He committed a crime. He was arrested. That’s it. He should not have stolen that girl’s backpack,” one said. He was a member of Fraternity 4, whom I will call Tim, and he currently holds a reputation for being a rapist. He blatantly ignored the brute police force used against the young man to focus on the “facts” of the incident.

Nancy responded, “You would not say that if he were a Duke student. Black men at Duke have used drugs; abused, raped and beat women; and hazed potential members of their fraternities, but you’re not out here advocating for their arrests!” Nancy’s comment pointed out how respectability and class worked in the space to allow Tim to distinguish himself from the young Black man who was brutalized. He had established in his mind that he was exempt from that kind of violence because he had a Duke education.

Racist logic operated in that space to separate “good” Black men from “bad” Black men through socioeconomic status and education. Tim was a good Black man because he had done everything he needed to do growing up to become a Duke student

and operate in a privileged position on this campus. His statements condemned the suspect because his life had not taken the same trajectory as Tim's. He truly believed that his education and status kept him from brutalization at the hands of Duke police. His education and status kept him from being labeled as a criminal, though he freely participated in illegal acts. His crimes directly impacted the lives of several women present in that room that night, but his privileged status as a Duke student kept his crimes from being punished. Sadly, his statements held truth; as a Duke student, Duke University could protect him from facing legal repercussions for his actions by allowing him to go through the Student Conduct process. He never had to go through the Student Conduct process, however, because none of the affected survivors chose to report him officially for his actions.

After several comments, Benning asked the gathered students to decide what response they wanted to see from the administration. One of the demands echoed a demand student-activists from the ABT had made: the end of police brutality and harassment of Black and Brown bodies. They decided that they would storm a pre-established meeting with the administration the next morning to discuss changes to university policy concerning the university's police department. I attended part of the meeting, so I am not able to give a complete analysis of the resolutions determined there.

Benning's political platform differed from Asante's in that it centered the experiences of Black cisgender men on Duke's campus; however, neither BSA president

championed the causes and concerns that would specifically benefit Black women, and this may be due to a failure to see the intersections of Black women's identities, a pattern in Black Liberation movements. Benning argued that solving the issues of Black men on campus would benefit the campus climate for all Black students, which is not necessarily the case. The political platforms of both BSA presidents also excluded non-academic employees, suggesting that BSA (unlike the Afro-American Society) did not want to advocate for them.

Black [Men's] Lives Matter

At around 3 a.m. on March 22, 2015, a group of white men students taunted a young black woman on East Campus. They confronted her and began singing the racist Sigma Alpha Epsilon chant: "*There will never be a nigger in SAE; There will never be a nigger in SAE; You can hang from a tree but you'll never sign with me; There will never be a nigger in SAE.*" I was sitting at an on-campus eatery when my friend received a call from the young Black woman. She cried that "drunk white frat boys" had confronted her and that they had threatened her life. My friend appeared to be visibly shaken by the news. She told all of us who were there with her about what happened. My immediate response was anger and fear.

I reported the incident to the university, and from that moment on, I was thrust into the investigation of the incident. Duke did not wish to name it as a racist incident in any correspondence with its students, only a bias-related one. Investigation aside, I

decided that as a student body, we should come together to process the event, so I sent a Facebook message to several people asking to convene later that evening. When I arrived to the meeting, there were over 60 people in the room, most of them Black women. About five Black men decided to join the discussion. I compared the demographics of this room to the event in response to the police brutality incident a year earlier, and the assessment disappointed me. Black men appeared in droves when we discussed an event that directly affected them, but the clearly racist and sexist incident on East Campus did not strike them as important enough to warrant their presence. That did not surprise me; it only made me sad and angry. The most disappointing realization was that Black women would be expected to be present at both.

At around 2 a.m. on Wednesday, April 1, 2015, a white first year posted a picture of a noose on Twitter. My friends and I were studying inside the Bryan Center when we received the news. We immediately left our books and trotted outside to see it. A yellow, knotted rope hung in the tree. We sat for several minutes in disbelief. This was not a joke. It was not a game. It was a noose, and it horrified us. Black students arrived in waves to see it, and we began discussing what we would do with the noose. Our first thought was sadness because we knew we could not report this to Duke Police, for we feared that they would take it down and cover it up as they had done in the past.

“Should we take it down?” I asked. I was concerned about other Black students seeing this noose on their way to the heavily populated entrance of the Bryan Center.

Whoever planted the noose intended for it to be seen by everyone who walked to the Bryan Center entrance.

“I want President Broadhead to see this noose. I want him to see how white students have responded to his [expletive] email,” a young man, whom I will call Jerry, responded. We formed a plan to wait there with the noose until BSA’s meeting with Broadhead in the morning. While we planned, I noticed Duke Police pulling up to the scene. One officer got out his car, walked around with a flashlight pointed at the ground, but he did not disturb us. Over the next several minutes, more officers joined him. Our subsequent interaction with Duke police was less than favorable, but the details of that interaction are not relevant to this paper.

Male members of the Black student body reacted differently to the sight of a noose than to the prior racist incident. Two weeks before the noose hung, we gathered in that room to stand in solidarity with the young woman who was verbally harassed by her white male peers, and I could count the number of Black men on one of my hands. After the noose, scores of Black men had something to say; they all felt driven to act. One even said, “When I heard about what happened on East Campus, I was shook. But this noose...That scares me. I couldn’t go back to sleep that night.”

The difference in response did not surprise me; it only compelled me to look deeper. Perhaps Black men reacted more strongly to the news of the noose because of the way narratives about lynching have been shaped to center the violation of Black

men's bodies. Lynching narratives rarely include Black women and children, even though they were also lynched. Historians shape lynching as the ultimate form of emasculation for Black men, often wrongly accused for raping white women.

Lynching, “especially images of Black male bodies hanging from trees, sometimes castrated, is perhaps our most familiar association with the horrific consequences of racism in the American landscape and the vulnerability of Black bodies. It is probably our most vivid reminder of the power of white racism to terrorize, mutilate, torture, and wreak havoc on a ‘minority community’” (Cole and Guy-Sheftall, 2009). History teaches us that Black men are the most vulnerable to racist violence because of the space they occupy as marginalized men. That singular marginalized²⁰ identity keeps them from reaching the standard set by whiteness. Their Blackness prevents them from performing at the pinnacle of their manhood. Lynching is a historical reminder of racial inequality for Black people, but narratives and images of lynching center the deadly consequences of racial inequality for Black men.

On Facebook, a Black student juxtaposed a picture of the noose with a picture of Emmett Till's mutilated body, saying that the picture of the noose could not allow him to “unsee” the image of Emmett Till. He saw the noose as a direct threat to his life, whereas the harassment of a Black woman student did not directly threaten him. The verbal harassment of a Black female student did not directly threaten him. The centering

²⁰ This assumes that the man is a cisgender heterosexual Black man.

of the noose—and by extension a history of violence against Black men—allowed for the Black men leaders of BSA to stand in the limelight and to be the spokesmen for the Black student body. No Black woman had a public platform to talk about what the noose meant for her. The administration quickly investigated the noose incident and found the perpetrator, but the assailants of the incident on East Campus have not been found. The young woman has been encouraged to seek psychological help, but the perpetrators of the incident will walk free from punishment.

That withstanding, both politically active men and women in the Black student body tend to politically activate when the issues center cisgender Black men. This contributes to the silencing and erasure of Black women's issues, even in spaces where they should be advocated and privileged. The non-acknowledgment of Black women's issues in politically active spaces perpetuates sexism in the fight for racial justice. If we work to only free Black men, are Black women really free? The transitive logic of freedom from Black men to Black women screams of patriarchal ideals that work to disconnect race from gender and sexuality in identity politics. Frankly, it leaves Black women out of many of the mainstream fights for racial justice, and it forces them to create their own spaces where racism and patriarchy are not reproduced. Currently at Duke University, there are very few spaces for Black women students to untangle the webs of systems of oppressions and also participate in political movements.

6. Redefining Love

. “Without community, there is no liberation, only the most vulnerable and temporary armistice between an individual and her oppression.” ~Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools will Never Dismantle the Master’s House”

*This student body has been a place of rejuvenation and pain for me.
A bittersweet mix of love and alienation.
A place where I am stretched thin across the poles of my existence
Black and woman.
I cannot inhabit both spaces at once.
At all moments never in both. At all moments always in both
At all moments walking and talking with my oppressors.
They will not acknowledge my space.
They question my allegiance. Quiet my dissension. Call me a traitor. A distraction.
As if I have not gone to the ends of the earth for them.
As if my back has not always been a bridge.
The first step to redemption is repentance.
When you commit to change, be thorough.
Be complete. Be gracious. Be forgiving. Be understanding. Listen.
Let go.
Start over. It’s a process.
You will start over again.*

Researching for and writing this thesis has been a painful experience for me. As a member of the student body that I chose to study, I was confronted with the notions that I held dear to me. At the beginning of this journey, I had told myself that black men should be centered in my research interests. I had believed the ideal that as a Black woman my role was to protect and to defend them at all costs. Due to this mindset, I decentered my experiences as a Black woman. I normalized the violence brought against

my body and the bodies of other Black women. When I came to the knowledge of the dismissal of that violence, I had to prioritize our experiences. That prioritization forced me to sit with pieces of my past and my identity, and it allowed me to sit with other Black women as they sat with theirs. I committed to change the culture on campus that produced, reproduced, and sustained this violence.

Too often as Black women we are told to push aside our own wishes and desires to contribute to betterment of our men. In this student body, that contribution often comes in the form of silence about sexual violations in an attempt to protect our assailants. After these assaults, we are left with the decisions of what to do. We have a cultural history of carrying that violence with us, dissembling from it, and continuing our lives without seeking refuge or help. To that I must say, "No more."²¹ In this conclusion, I aim to offer a starting point for radical transformation in the relationships among Black students. Without radical transformation, campus political activism will not be truly liberating for all of its students.

Further Things to Consider

By choosing to focus on Black women's experiences with sexual violence at the hands of Black men, I have not been able to cover the experiences of Black men who

²¹ hooks poignantly pens, "Collective female acceptance of male violence in love relationships, even if the appearance of acceptance masks rage, fear, or outright terror, makes it difficult to challenge and change male violence" We can no longer protect patriarchy (p. 68, 2004).

experience sexual violence or Black people's experiences in non-heteronormative relationships. An entire body of work can be written specifically on the ways Black queer people experience gender-based violence. My respondents did not have comments about non-heteronormative relationships because they experience another layer of silencing in the Black student body. This silencing occurs due to a multitude of factors including historical and institutionalized homophobia. As the Black student body grows to create a supportive community, we must realize that liberation from racism is interconnected to liberation from homophobia, sexism, classism, ableism, patriarchy, and other systems of oppression.

Callie Marie Rennison writes an extremely important perspective that I wish could be covered more deeply in this thesis. Her opinion article (2014) in *The New York Times* entitled "Privilege among Rape Victims: Who Suffers Most from Rape in America?" highlights the preoccupation with sexual assault on college campuses when women who are socially and economically disadvantaged are more likely to be aggressed. The focus on the victimization of educated women overshadows the struggles that poor or uneducated women face with sexual violence, especially when it comes to reporting that violence. According to Rennison, disadvantaged women, age 12 and above, are sexually victimized at the highest rates. Home ownership protects women from sexual violence, as women who live in rented properties were 3.7 times more likely to be sexually assaulted (2014). I would like to explore further the ways that

race, gender, and class complicate our ideas of vulnerability for victims of gender-based violence.

Moving Forward

The Black feminist bell hooks writes in her work *The Will to Change* to men as a way to teach them to let go of patriarchy. Men have to understand that they inherently benefit from patriarchy—whether they intentionally enact “violence” on women or not. Black men on Duke’s campus must also come to the realization that though they inhabit a dangerous social position, they still have privilege because they are *men*. The pervasive myth of black men’s exceptionalism perpetuates the idea that Black men have the most oppressive position in society, which allows the masking of gender-based oppression that Black women endure. In spaces where social justice and peace are privileged, racial justice is routinely championed over gender justice.

The idea that racial injustices for Black men should be considered before those for Black women does nothing for Black liberation except rehearse and reinforce racist and sexist belief. Audre Lorde writes in her essay “Sexism: An American Disease in Blackface” (1979), “If society ascribes roles to Black men which they are not allowed to fulfill, is it Black women who must bend and alter our lives to compensate, or is it society that needs changing?” (p. 61) Black men must learn to speak for themselves and to fight for themselves, and they must also learn to stand with Black women as equals. They should not wish to stand with white men to treat Black women as subordinates.

Until consciousness develops among Black men, they will continue to see sexism as a vital part of Black liberation rather than in opposition to it.

Duke University as a predominantly white institution in the southern United States becomes a site where this relationship between political activism and sexism can be explored. At this university where structural oppressions such as race, class, gender, and sexuality intersect, the interactions among students of different subject positionalities can become extremely violent. The environment that represents itself as supportive and inclusive does not live up to those standards for every one of its students. Only some students of color can say that Duke has been a healthy, positive environment for them. Many cannot. The university (both administrators and students) must make honest and sincere endeavors to create an inclusive environment for its students of color, and it must make specific efforts to attend to the needs of Black students. We want to feel accepted. We want to feel like Duke students. We want to know that Duke police is here to protect us, not here to protect white students from us.

The administration's reluctance to show support for students of color when white students attack them on the basis on race harms its relationship with students of color. The reluctance of support appears to be a reproduction of the ideology that we minorities should appreciate what's been given to us because it's better than what we had before. Though Duke uses our bodies to purport diversity and color their brochures, we cannot use our university to the same extent as other students. In other words, just

because you open the door to people in your home doesn't mean that they'll feel welcome to eat with you at your dinner table, especially when there is not a seat present for them. Though Duke opened its door to Black students fifty years ago, we are still not invited to sit at major conversations about policy making. It feels like we have to throw a temper tantrum in order to get any type of administrative attention, but often that attention does not result into any change.

While the university needs to do major structural overhaul to realize inclusivity, the Black community needs to redress its issues as well. As informative as gossip can be, a lot of the information passed along harms people. Safe spaces must be created among people of color in order to facilitate conversations about these tough issues. The reluctance to reach out to one another is in part due to the fact that we are suspicious of betrayal or disloyalty. Many people do not have healthy relationships with anyone, so when their worlds get shaken, they have no one to confide in. The façade of perfection persists because no one wishes to be labeled as weak. We cannot be vulnerable with one another, nor do we trust each other enough to hold our peers accountable. The atmosphere changes from one of support to one of self-sufficiency and blame. Oftentimes Black women are blamed for the violence enacted on their bodies, both structural and physical.

It is past time that the Black student body truly embodies the ideals the imagined community that we have created. This requires a critical reflection of our values, a deep

inspection of the ideals that we consider to be constitutive. The inspection and critical evaluation of our history will point us in the direction that we should go. Black liberation movements have failed in the past because they reproduce white supremacist patriarchal norms that prescribe power for men at the expense of women. We can no longer profess to be concerned with the liberation of Black people through the attainment of rights for Black men. We must understand that our fight for racial equity on campus (and in our lifetimes) requires searching for the nuanced approaches to racial justice that also consider the unique needs of Black women outside of traditional gender roles.

This will require the unlearning of institutions and battling conceptions about possibilities of human interactions. Black men have to learn how to have relationships with women without violence. Black women must unlearn the expectation to experience violent relationships. As a marginalized student body, we must learn what it means to love one another without violence, obligation, or oppression. That concept of love is radical and nuanced, and it will require a diligence that we have not previously dedicated to the practice of love.

Nuanced conceptions of social consciousness and justice are only the beginning. As we grow to become a community that utilizes an intersectional framework for its social justice work, we must also develop strategies for accountability when a member of our community is transgressed. A contemporary example of this can be found in the

community standards of Occupy Wall Street²². When women were sexually assaulted in communities that did not rely on governmental institutions such as law enforcement, other practices had to be put in place to hold the assailants accountable. Those practices included public shaming and shunning of individuals, restorative justice, and ultimately, expulsion from the community. Though they protested the inequalities inherent in capitalism, a lesson presents itself in their framework.

As they are now, Duke University's institutions for reporting (Duke Police and the Office of Student Conduct) do not encourage the reporting of sexual assault and rape. They operate as institutional mechanisms of silencing in many cases. This structural violence in addition to the reluctance that Black and other marginalized women may feel in reporting violence²³ compounds the silencing and shame that survivors experience. This necessitates a community framework where we can hold the perpetrators of sexual assault, rape, and intimate partner violence accountable while transforming larger institutions into welcoming spaces. Our current practice of alienation of the survivor does not protect him/her/them or future victims. It only

²² See "Occupy Rape Culture" by Tamara A. Lomax on the The Feminist Wire. <http://thefeministwire.com/2011/11/occupy-rape-culture/>

²³ As explained in the first chapter, Black women historically have been denied the right to report because society's conceptualizations of their bodies as bodies that cannot be sexually violated. Also, Black women may not report violence committed against them to protect the assailant from the criminal justice system. Ironically, Black men who violate Black women get the shortest sentences in prison for rape cases (Butler, pg. 496, 2013).

protects the perpetrator, and it further harms the interpersonal relationships in the Black student body.

In order to revolutionize our thinking and our community, we must be invested in knowledge and safe spaces for each other. Confronting the ways that we have internalized systems of oppression will require deep reflection, introspection, and the active challenging of our preconceived notions of community.

My hope for the future is that Duke's Black women and women learn the value in supporting each other and the necessity of loving themselves unconditionally. Audre Lorde said, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." In order to combat the ways that we have been taught to devalue our bodies and our beauty, we must employ the concept of self-love in our daily lives. What self-love looks like for each of us will be different. Our families and friends may not understand the gift of self-preservation that we have to continually give ourselves, but our survival and our political activism depends on it. Once we begin the process of loving and accepting ourselves, we can extend that love to one another. For it is not our differences that separates us; it is our inability and refusal to recognize those differences and to challenge their distortions.

Appendix A

(pg. 76) Copy of Letter to Duke Student Conduct Office:

December 3, 2014

Dear Members of the Gender Violence Task Force,

In one year 300,000 college women, over 5% of women enrolled in colleges and universities, experience rape. This does not include other forms of sexual assault (Kilpatrick et al, 2007).

9 out of 10 of those rapes will be serial assaults (Lisak and Miller, 2002).

We are the students and instructors of *Telling Stories for Social Change: Confronting Sexual and Domestic Violence at Duke and in Durham*. This semester we have been exploring theory, policy, and performance on gender violence. Using a solutions-based perspective, we have developed a multifaceted approach to end gender violence on Duke's campus and have begun collaborating with other campuses across the country to change the social and political cultures that support gender violence.

This policy letter is supported by data from a survey on gender violence, narratives from victims-survivors at Duke, and input from Duke Support. We received guidance from Duke Student Government, Duke's Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity, the Duke Women's Center, and local service organizations for victims-survivors of sexual violence.

According to the Duke Women's Center, only 5-12 cases of gender violence are reported each year to the Office of Student Conduct at Duke University. The survey showed that a majority of students who experienced gender violence decided not to report. Only 4% of students who reported that they have experienced gender violence while at Duke or who were not sure if they had experienced gender violence said they had reported all incidents to the Office of Student Conduct. These numbers are consistent with national data stating that 95% of assaults go unreported. Underreporting is the result of a number of factors including lack of trust in the reporting process and those overseeing the process. One student, who chose not to report, stated in a survey, "I did not have faith in the University's ability to deal with my situation in a manner that respected my emotional state. I reported to the Women's Center instead."

We believe that by creating a reporting process that is safer, more inclusive, and less traumatic to reporters, more victims of gender violence will be encouraged to report.

Increased reporting will make our community a more supportive place for victims and a place of accountability for perpetrators.

In our survey, we asked individuals who reported incidents to the Office of Student Conduct how satisfied they were with the reporting process and the hearing and resolution process. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “very satisfied,” the average rating was 2.63 for the reporting process and 1.63 for the hearing and resolution process. The individuals who were dissatisfied with the process cited harmful interactions with personnel in the Office of Student Conduct, the length of the hearing process, lack of support, and lack of information about the hearing process. One Duke student who went through the reporting process responded, “Please make sure that the officials in charge of this process are not prone to victim blaming. Their initial tone should not be of doubt. The immediate reaction need [sic] to be that someone who is brave enough to stand up to the crushing tide of horrific reasons not to report something to the authorities should not have to deal with someone in a position of power immediately doubting their story and taking the side of the assailant.”

Based on survey responses and shared personal narratives, we request the following changes to Duke University’s gender violence policy. These amendments will create a process that will encourage reporting. Effective reporting will ensure that Duke University is keeping in accordance with Title IX and at the same time will also ensure a less traumatizing system for survivors of gender violence.

REPORTING

- We request the option to see a female Dean or other female administrative representative, such as the Assistant Dean in the Office of Student Conduct, when an individual reports gender violence. One individual in the survey said she wanted, “Presence of a woman in cases of sexual or domestic violence, or at the very least another administrative official from Office of Institutional Equity to oversee these cases.” Another individual asserted, “There needs to be a committee which includes women and professionals trained in gender violence as well as a legal presence throughout the reporting process for it to be considered minutely fair.”
- We request the option to see an LGBTQ/Ally trained Dean/administrator to be more LGBTQ inclusive.
- We request amnesty for victims of gender violence during the reporting process. Currently, reporters can be sanctioned if they were in violation of University Policy at the time of the incident. Sanctioning reporters is an act of victim blaming, which increases the trauma experienced by the victim. It also discourages other survivors from reporting due to fear of punishment. In the

survey, 16% of students who did not report incidents of gender violence said that fear of being punished for something they were doing at the time of the incident was a contributing factor in their decision not to report.

HEARING AND RESOLUTION

- We request that the screen separating the accuser and the accused during the hearing be completely opaque. In a personal narrative one student said, “...circumstances could not prepare me for the anxiety that washed over me during the hearing as I sat down inches away from my perpetrator, separated only by a clouded glass partition. I saw his hands on the table and his feet underneath and shuddered. I felt myself shaking and could hear my nervousness in my voice as I presented my case.”
- We request that the process of reporting and adjudication be made clear to both parties at the outset. Both parties—the individual reporting and the individual accused—should have a clear and honest explanation of the following: administrative actions during the reporting process, consequences of reporting, and limitations of the reporting process. One student who reported said, “I was never given a clear answer as to how the sanction was decided upon, nor were there any clear written guidelines at the time as to how hearing panels should determine findings of responsibility in cases of sexual assault.” Another student wrote in the survey, “I’m not sure how the hearing and resolution process even works.”
- We request that the sanctions for offenders include being barred from running for leadership positions such as executive positions in Duke Student Government, House Councils, Greek Councils and Organizations. We request that offenders be barred from Resident Assistant positions.
- We request that the Deans and other parties charged with coming to a resolution work closely with the Duke Women's Center, Duke's Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity, Duke Support, and other student advocates to ensure that the students' physical, mental, and emotional needs are met. When asked on the survey, “What do you think worked well about the reporting process, if anything?,” several responses mentioned the Duke Women's Center as a helpful source for information and support.
- We request for there to be transparency regarding accountability measures for Deans and other parties in charge of coming to a resolution. Transparent accountability will ensure that the rights of both the accuser and the accused are protected. Accountability partners should include other institutions at Duke University including the Duke Women's Center, Duke's Center for Sexual and

Gender Diversity, and Duke's Counseling and Psychological Services. The aforementioned organizations advocate for the students. These accountability partners could mitigate the harm caused by the reporting process. A student who reported said, "I was discouraged through the whole process to learn how little transparency there is between the Office of Student Conduct and the Women's Center. Considering almost all students report a sexual assault through the Women's Center, they are given very little information about the process itself."

- We request that the policy definition of gender violence be made more inclusive of those with non-heterosexual/cisgender identities and sexual orientations. One student in the survey said, "I want them to take same-sex/gender relationship violence more seriously."

We are committed to changing campus climate and policy towards gender violence. We believe it is vital that our administration commit to protecting the rights of its students to its fullest capacity. Duke University can be a place to live, to work, and to study that is free from gender violence.

We have created a movement to end sexual violence: #WeAreHereDUKE. We Are Here stands for victims and survivors. We are all victims when any one of us is harmed. We Are Here stands for allies and advocates. We can take care of each other. #WeAreHereDUKE reminds us that working together, we can create a safe and welcoming campus.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

The Fall 2014 students and instructors of Telling Stories for Social Change: Confronting Sexual and Domestic Violence at Duke and in Durham

(pg. 91)

Email from Nana Asante to BSA General Body (2012)

Subject: Stand With Us
Sat 1/14/2012 5:03 PM
INBOX

Thank you for everyone who attended the emergency meeting yesterday. Just to recap what was discussed yesterday and provide pertinent details for TOMORROW:

[Protest information deleted]

We call on the University to do the following:

- Provide clarity around protocols surrounding the rights of students who participate in research to be fully informed of the capacity in which the research will be used
- Provide transparency (a complete public account) regarding the University's effort to ensure an optimal learning environment for Black students
- Provide data that can be used to determine if there is a correlation between a lack of black faculty and a lack of black student involvement in those departments
- Publically stand with us against this attack on the academic achievements of all students in the humanities and social sciences and Black students at this University
- Provide a public affirmation of the University's commitment to diversity, as well as its full support for policies and programs that promote the success of Black students

We look forward to your presence and engagement.

1. Article, The Chronicle of Higher Education <http://chronicle.com/article/Study-Disputes-Claims-That/130278/>
2. Research Report, "What Happens After Enrollment? An Analysis of the Time Path of Racial Differences in GPA and Major Choice" <http://seaphe.org/pdf/whathappensafter.pdf>

NANA ASANTE, PRESIDENT
MARCUS BENNING, VICE PRESIDENT

Email from Marcus Benning to BSA General Body (2014):

Subject: BSA Advocacy Impeded By Administrators' Silence, Lack of Action

Tue 4/1/2014 1:42 AM
Inbox
To:
dukebsagb@duke.edu;

To the General Body of the Black Student Alliance,

During the past year, leaders of BSA have met with Duke administrators to discuss issues of mental health, incidents that have drawn attention to our attrition rate, and the micro-aggressions that Black students face on campus. While acknowledging the myriad successes and positive experiences of Black students, we have sought to paint a balanced picture that highlights issues that we have yet to address.

Black students are routinely carded by the Duke University Police Department and the drivers of the Duke Van Service. Under the leadership of former BSA President Nana Asante, we raised this issue in a

meeting on **January 26, 2012** with several Duke deans, following an disparaging journal article that sparked a review of Duke's racial climate. We raised this issue again via email on **April 25, 2013** after a call by a Duke staff member prompted DUPD to send 9 police officers and 1 SUV to shut down BSA's annual Senior LDOC cookout. Once again, we raised this issue last fall in an email on **September 17, 2013** and followed up with meetings with Police Chief John Dailey on **October 8**, and a meeting with Dr. Moneta later that month. **During each of these meetings, BSA has advocated for a uniform policy for the van service - either all students should be asked to present their Duke Card or no students should be asked to present their Duke Card.** Each time, we have left these meetings without any fruitful results. Even after our most recent meeting with staff members in Student Affairs, there are still no signs that this policy will be implemented.

BSA is calling for a serious review of campus surveillance, with particular emphasis on how surveillance methods target Black social events, impact the mental health of Black students and their sense of belonging; and how this undue, unprovoked surveillance disproportionately affects the experiences of Black men. We will partner with organizations like the Black Men's Union and other Black affinity groups to move our proposals forward, and continue pressuring the University to institute this policy and others to ensure an equitable and comfortable environment for all students.

Sincerely,

Marcus Benning, *for the BSA Executive Board*

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