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“Transition with a Real Slow Fade”: The Life and Work of Richard Iton

Black Political and Popular Culture The Legacy of Richard Iton

Aneeka Henderson

Richard Iton's In Search of the Black Fantastic: Popular Culture in the Post-Civil Rights Era (2008) is one of the most important texts to examine post-Civil Rights black political and popular culture. This article uses Iton's paradigm for examining the enduring relationship between black political and popular culture and extends it in order to analyze the continuities through the political economy and cultural production of marriage in the United States. With In Search of the Black Fantastic as a foundational text, I reveal how African American political identity is increasingly defined by marriage.

Keywords: black political identity, black popular culture, Defense of Marriage Act, family, marriage, meritocracy, pathology, patriarchy, Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, policy, Telecommunications Act of 1966, welfare, Welfare Reform Act

How did African Americans engage the emerging discourses of performativity—that is, the notion, among other things, that the competitive norms of the private sphere should be extended into the public sphere—and the dissuasive campaigns that sought to persuade publics that the state could not and should not be depended on any longer, efforts that were largely energized by the countermobilizations that occurred in response to the civil rights movement? How should we understand the promotion of respectability discourses among blacks that might resemble governmentalities in their temper and texture, and in the ways they are circulated and internalized, except that they are forged and reproduced in the awareness of marginalization and are consciously designed not to challenge bases of exclusion directly?

—Richard Iton¹

Well before I knew how much *In Search of the Black Fantastic: Politics and Popular Culture in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (2008) would inform my scholarship, I met Richard Iton at Dwight McBride's home, where he regularly held informal gatherings that provided

local scholars a space to present their “work in progress.” Always festive with decadent food and wine, these gatherings allowed scholars from across Chicago and from a variety of institutions to meet and discuss their projects as well as debate current issues in academia. At one of these events, Richard and I casually, but heartily, chatted about his work on popular culture broadly, and our mutual enjoyment of current television shows, specifically—with *Curb Your Enthusiasm* being a prominent favorite. Although we did not have an opportunity to discuss the continuities between our work at length, his groundbreaking and prescient scholarship had already begun shaping my study on late 20th- and early 21st-century African American marriage.

His engagement with the contours of black political and popular culture in *In Search of the Black Fantastic* offers a template for how to do research on popular culture by unmasking broader relationships between underexplored cultural texts and sociohistorical and political frameworks. Even as he makes these links visible, Iton warns scholars that “To contend that popular culture is relevant and necessarily integral to an investigation of politics, black and otherwise, is not to argue that every gesture, exchange, or triumph in the cultural realm is tantamount and equal in value to the institutionalization of a comprehensive health care program, or an income maintenance policy that allows real decommodificatory possibilities.”² With his caveat about the danger of equating, for example, Jay-Z’s public appearance at Occupy Wall Street with radical political action, he takes on a critical issue that few scholars are willing to broach. Through rigorous analysis, he adeptly examines the persistent desire to bind black popular and political culture, insisting that the “continued overinvestment in cultural politics,” that weds popular and political culture, highlights the “perceived inadequacies of the American state (and the nation-state as a general concept); the short-comings of the civil rights movement on a variety of fronts, including most prominently class, gender, and sexuality.”³

Iton’s keen assertion about the “inadequacies of the American state” pushed me to think about how marriage moved to the center of African American political identity. In doing so, my work took shape through an examination of how a resuscitated interest in African American romance in the late 20th century, marked by novels written by Terry McMillan and her contemporaries, mirrored the political fixation on marriage in African American communities. To be sure, a robust political history of marriage bolsters this fixation. Granted the right to legally marry in the late 19th century, African Americans have a long history of identifying marriage as both a mode of freedom and bondage; it enabled former slaves to enter into a contract, but also designated African American women as marital

property, echoing their status as property under slavery.⁴ African American women authors, singers, and filmmakers as well as scholars such as Ann duCille, Candice M. Jenkins, Claudia Tate, and Frances Smith Foster have meditated on the fraught relationship between race, marriage, freedom, and citizenship in literature, as marriage has operated as a contested space of citizenship framed by race, sex, gender, and class politics.⁵ Thus, my research builds on their work by examining the link between public policies that use marriage as a way to discipline African American communities and the representation of marriage in late twentieth- and early 21st-century fiction and culture. Iton initiates this critical link when he calls attention to the racialized consequences of the 1996 Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Act (PRWOA) or Welfare Reform Act.⁶ In order to situate African American political identity within the marriage economy, my article extends Iton's analysis of PRWOA and the public and popular response to it. Rather than define the growing attention to African American marriage as a mere cultural phenomenon, my article uses Iton's template to establish how the obsession with marriage within African American communities uncovers the ways in which matrimony, specifically the unmarried/married dichotomy, with no room in between, continues to define African American political identity. It is especially when we begin to think about women's lives, family, and the black feminist politics that undergird a critical analysis of popular culture, we stretch beyond understanding the recommenced import of marriage and dating in African American communities as a "crisis" of failed gender and sex traditions. In constructing my argument, I take my cues from *In Search of a Black Fantastic*, which takes the reader through a pastiche of music, television, and cinematic texts. Iton's meticulous and energetic research covers a range of popular culture that is astonishing in its breadth; he unquestionably changed the way I think about everything from the PRWOA to Donnie McClurkin's 2000 song "We Fall Down." For this article, I examine television and fiction—an admittedly less ambitious goal, but I nonetheless endeavor to amplify the late-20th-century visual echoes and dissonance across media that he exposed and uncover their continued significance in the late 20th- and early 21st century, along with summative remarks that sketch political and cultural remedies.

Iton alerts us to the racial subtext of the PRWOA, which enacted \$55 billion in cuts to welfare over six years and sought to "reassure working- and middle-class whites that a Clinton administration would not be operating at the beck and call of black voters."⁷ Not only did the Welfare Reform Act place stricter regulations on welfare, drastically reducing its rolls, but it also declared that, "marriage is

the foundation of a successful society”⁸ and claimed that families with children born out of wedlock suffer “negative consequences.”⁹ My analysis illuminates the subtle and rather shrewd connection between PWROA and Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). As the state unceremoniously reduced and eliminated financial assistance for some of the poorest African American women in the United States, it encouraged them to seek out an alternative “safety net,” in the form of patriarchal family. Without mincing words, Clinton advocated for, and politicized, heterosexual marriage and criminalized same-sex marriage in the 1996 DOMA during the same year he decreased welfare assistance and argued for “Personal Responsibility.”¹⁰ With reports insisting that African American women are the least likely to get married, DOMA and PRWOA have particular significance to African American women, despite their rejection of, or dependence on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

Popular culture quickly latched on to the politicization of African American marriage. In 1996, the same year DOMA and PRWOA passed, Terry McMillan published her bestselling novel, *How Stella Got Her Groove Back*, which chronicles a 42-year-old single middle-class African American woman’s spontaneous decision to vacation in Jamaica. Instead of returning to the U.S. rejuvenated, as the novel’s title suggests, the titular character, Stella, arrives with a new romantic partner who moves from Jamaica to live with her. Just short of the “Reader, I Married him” *denouement*, McMillan ends the novel with Stella engaged to be married. Later adapted into a blockbuster film, *How Stella Got Her Groove Back* demonstrates the overwhelming public attention directed toward the question of black women within the marriage economy and its relationship to maintaining order in black communities. Iton rightly insists that black popular culture became “suddenly, particularly, and violently public in a unique way in the late 1980s and 1990s—a development that, by itself provoked a range of gatekeeping responses from those committed to restricting the circulation of certain kinds of information within black communities and maintaining ‘order.’”¹¹ That desire for “order” is confirmed by a cottage industry of books, from Shahrazad Ali’s *The Blackwoman’s Guide to Understanding the Black Man* (1989) to newly minted “relationship expert” Steve Harvey’s *Act Like a Lady: What Men Really Think About Love, Relationships, Intimacy, and Commitment* (2011), purporting to teach African American women how to attract a man and successfully navigate courtship toward the inevitable end-goal of marriage and patriarchal family.

My research adds to the work of Nikol Alexander-Floyd, Barbara Ransby, Tracye Matthews, Wahneema Lubiano, and E. Frances

White, who all reveal the complex ways black patriarchy, Afrocentric and nationalist ideology, mobilized by a range of iconic leaders and respected scholars, including Tupac Shakur, Malcolm X, Louis Farrakhan, and Molefi Asante, are erroneously deployed as political remedies to racial inequality.¹² I use their work on Shakur, Malcolm X, Farrakhan, and Asante among others, to understand how the allure of black patriarchy informs the popular and political significance of marriage for African Americans and their paradoxical “citizenship of exile.” Iton’s contention that “the relationship between popular culture and black politics also has to be understood in the broader context of the uncertainty about the status of black citizenship and specifically the question of whether African Americans are permanent outsiders, the penultimate other” provides a critical lens for my analysis.¹³ Through an examination of the political and popular discourse on marriage in the late 20th- and early 21st century, I demonstrate how the politicization of marriage continues to render African American citizenship untenable.

Being Seen and Unseen in the Housewife Empire

The question of African American women in particular, and African Americans more broadly, as the “penultimate other” endures in the early 21st century, despite the countless premature celebrations of a post–Civil Rights post-racial America in the age of a African American president, no less. The U.S. Supreme Court was praised for ruling that Section 3 of DOMA was unconstitutional in 2013 just as President Obama was lauded for repealing the work requirement in the PRWOA ten years after it was enacted. Nevertheless these rulings have not curtailed the national obsession with marriage, and its attendant connotations of citizenship in the United States. Consider television programming. The plethora of television shows that revolve around or cite marriage, motherhood, and family formation is staggering, including *Marriage Bootcamp*, *Married to Medicine*, *Basketball Wives*, *Wife Swap*, *Trading Spouses*, *The Good Wife*, *Sister Wives*, *Starter Wives*, *Army Wives*, *Mob Wives*, *Extreme Cougar Wives*, *Ex-Wives Club*, *Atlanta Exes*, *For Better or For Worse*, *Here Come the Newlyweds*, *16 and Counting*, *Teen Mom*, *16 and Pregnant*, *First Ladies of the Church*, *Millionaire Matchmaker*, *Househusbands of Hollywood*, *Married by America*, *Meet Mister Mom*, *One Big Happy Family*, *Raising Sextuplets*, *Renovate My Family*, *The Secret Life of a Soccer Mom*, *The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette*, and *Real Housewives of Miami*, *New York*, *Orange County*, *Beverly Hills*, *Atlanta*. As the number of adults getting married has declined, with 72 percent

of U.S. adults age 18 and older betrothed in 1962 to 51 percent in 2011, these programs echoing the political sphere and highlighting the so-called private sphere, have ballooned.¹⁴ Taking the proverbial shine off marriage, these shows include everything from cast members indicted for federal crimes to committing suicide, but they also evince a growing anxiety about the decreasing rate of couples walking down the aisle.

Race appears to be a moot issue, as so-called reality programs about the “private sphere” pretend to be democratic in exploiting women of color and white women equally. There is no denying that the level of objectification across various racial and ethnic identities is stomach churning. Patti Stranger, the madam, rather host, of *The Millionaire Matchmaker*, harangues any woman who desires a wealthy bachelor, but refuses to wear a tight cocktail dress, style hair into flowing locks, and put on a mask of passivity for all potential suitors. I can hardly bear watching horror films and television shows in part because programs like *The Millionaire Matchmaker*, *Wife Swap*, and of course, *Real Housewives of Atlanta*, exceed the amount of horror programming I am able to digest. There are obligatory scenes of yelling, belligerence, and table flipping on all the *Real Housewives* shows, but the black female characters prompt distinct conversations and are subjected to more intense forms of criticism than their white female counterparts, disturbing the façade of color-blind female exploitation. As Iton reminds us, it is impossible that “blackness [will] ever really [be] seen as separate from some larger narrative of disturbance, abnormality, or pathology...”¹⁵ *Essence* magazine signals this impossibility in their January 2013 issue article asking, “Is Reality TV Hurting Our Girls?” in which, they insist that reality television shows represent the “worst stereotypes” about black women.¹⁶ The “angry black woman,” black female licentiousness and deviance, and dogmatic black female respectability are all showcased and legitimated on these shows. Because U.S. policies lionize marriage and popular culture representations of black women are marginalized and unpredictable and stereotypes about black women endure, the burden of representation for black women is extraordinary.

The enduring narrative of a supposed black family pathology along with DOMA and PRWOA trades on a widespread preoccupation with black women’s relationship status *vis à vis* marriage.¹⁷ Evincing the married/unmarried dichotomy, gossip blog writers and readers deliberate at length about who is “really” a wife, often directing their concern toward the *Real Housewives of Atlanta* and *Basketball Wives*, shows with casts that are predominantly African American and Latina. Viewers claim that their disgust is due to unmarried women being cast on shows purporting to be about “wives,” but the condemnation is

disproportionate to the so-called crime and unquestionably outweighs the fear that these women are defined by patriarchal family or that a show pretending to be “real” is actually scripted with detailed storyboards. Programs that indict single black women and unmarried black women in serious relationships are appealing because they validate stereotypes about black women’s immorality, undesirability, sexual deviance, and an alleged black family pathology. Further demonstrating the intensity of the unmarried/married dichotomy, Jackie Christie, of *Basketball Wives LA*, has had close to eighteen weddings, one for each year she has been married to her husband, Doug Christie, seemingly overcompensating for any charge that she is not betrothed to someone and consequently, substantiating “black family pathology.” To be sure, Christie’s excessive yearly confirmations of marriage attest to the gravity of black female stereotypes in political and popular culture and the magnitude of the symbolic burden African American marriage carries.

At the same time that popular culture overstates the black marriage crisis, it excludes black men and women from shows that seek to find husbands and wives for heterosexual women and men. Iton’s argument is key at this moment of exclusion as he insists that “While simply *being seen*, in and of itself, is rarely translated into an acknowledgement of the legitimacy of one’s interests or action on behalf of those concerns, pop culture’s ability to render the invisible visible (in an Ellisonian sense perhaps) or the unheard audible and the unheard visible—gives it a certain political legitimacy.”¹⁸ Despite the objectionable paradigm of shows such as *The Bachelor*, they do have cultural power as Iton suggests. They render some groups desirable and seen and others undesirable and invisible in the public imagination. After 10 years and a collective 23 seasons, *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* have yet featured a Black, Latino, or Asian person. Out of a collective total of 610 contestants, only 16 were black; and none were selected for the lead.¹⁹ They certainly have never cast had a queer bachelor or bachelorette. In their class-action suit against *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, Nathaniel Claybrooks and Christopher Johnson allege racial discrimination, arguing that there is a “deliberate exclusion of people of color from the roles of the Bachelor and Bachelorette.”²⁰ Although the nation is troubled about the “crisis” of single black women, *The Bachelorette* or *The Bachelor* refuses to cast a black woman or a black man as the lead, hyper-normalizing white families. Against the political backdrop of Islan Nettle’s and Trayvon Martin’s murder and Marissa Alexander’s conviction, a class action lawsuit against *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* appears frivolous at best. Nevertheless, through their veneer of exclusivity, these shows, along with the cadre of others centered on love, courtship, marriage, and domesticity further substantiate how love can

become a “significant political act, particularly among those stigmatized and marked as unworthy of love and incapable of deep commitment.”²¹

Taken together, *The Bachelor* and *Real Housewives* seemingly represent incongruous notions of black female invisibility and hypervisibility within the popular cultural landscape of marriage. Black female invisibility on television as well as the familiarity and ubiquity of black female stereotypes amplifies the small group of black housewives characters and caricatures across popular cultural mediums. At the same time that black women are virtually unseen on shows such as *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, Nene Leakes, a black female television actress, and an established household name, finagles roles on Donald Trump’s *Celebrity Apprentice*, NBC’s *The New Normal*, *Glee*, guest appearances on *Anderson Live*, *The Talk*, and *The Price is Right*, all while maintaining her role on *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*. In some ways, Leakes’ hypervisibility and fame are unsurprising as she signifies power within the public and private sphere. Her ascendance from stripper to married “housewife” seems especially relevant to black women as they are hypersexualized and deemed unworthy of marriage. Moreover, her triumph as a “housewife” confirms her “Personal Responsibility,” representing what I identify in my forthcoming book project as “marriage meritocracy,” the notion that marriage is only availed to those who “work hard” at it, a cultural logic that pervades self-help relationship books and broader cultural discourse about marriage.²² Although she has three marriages under her belt, two of which were to the same man, she substantiates black female marriageability, despite reports that black women are the least attractive among all races.²³ Her “triumphant” story of overcoming an “obscene” profession and bad first marriage upholds bootstrap courtship politics and renders institutional structures, such as employment and education, which affect marriage, wholly invisible.

The hypervisibility of African American marriage and the pretense of support for same-sex marriage obscure the hetero-normativity and narrow depictions of gay and lesbian characters on many of these shows. Andy Cohen, a gay man, executive vice-president and “face” of Bravo, regularly interviews *Real Housewives* cast members on his popular *Watch What Happens Live* television show while Leakes and Cohen have been featured in the NOH8 campaign protesting California’s Proposition 8, which bans same-sex marriage. As symbols of “tolerance,” Cohen and Leakes fail to mitigate the franchise’s heterosexist notions of family, which only sees fit to legitimate relationships and marriages between men and women. Gay and lesbian characters are cast as the “sassy” truth-telling sidekicks, paralleling the token black sidekicks of white romantic comedies. Condemnation of the housewives franchise for its narrow depictions of family as well

as gay and lesbian characters is overshadowed by the spectacle of African American marriage.

Political Visibility

If we put aside the issue of “domestic” television programs for a moment, we can sort through some of the policy changes necessary in order to provide an equal footing for mothers, children, and heterogeneous families. There must be substantial modifications in the way we legitimate certain kinds of relationships and couplings, heterosexual widely and homosexual marginally, while ignoring and disenfranchising other familial patterns and kinship systems that might include, for example, two cousins or brothers living together and caring for an adopted child. The repeal of DOMA does not go far enough in widening how we think of “family” and continues to validate provincial constructions of marriage and coupling. As we rethink “family” we must also envision what kinds of economic assistance are necessary, such as increasing government subsidies for child-care and guaranteeing quality child-care in low-income and working-class neighborhoods. New York City and Chicago are some of the best examples of how child-care, education, fair and equal wages, and housing inequalities affect families from a macro to a quotidian level. The changing shape of urban cities has made quality housing unaffordable for many working-class and low-income blacks and in turn, either pushed families to predominantly white suburbs without necessary amenities such as viable public transportation to get to work and school or thrust them to “more affordable” areas where the quality of education is absurdly inferior. These issues are much ballyhooed about during campaign time, but then gutted when it is time to make progressive policy decisions.

Still, there are issues that are completely disregarded in political discourse. There has not been meaningful discussion about systemic changes in the way in which we provide safe, affordable, and enriching spaces for low-income and working-class black children during their three-month summer break from school, while some of the wealthiest children in the United States enjoy enriching activities and educational programs at Ivy League institutions that can easily cost \$11,550 for eight weeks. Meanwhile, every year we collectively distress over the rising rate of violence in urban cities during the summer, when it reaches its highest numbers. These commonplace issues that parents must navigate, in addition to changing the school system and its policy to tie funding to property taxes, need major overhauling in order to demonstrate that we as a nation, care about “family.”

As Iton suggests in *In Search of the Black Fantastic*, we cannot ignore the way in which the media is complicit in perpetuating inequality. In 1996, the same year that DOMA and PRWOA were passed, the United States also passed the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which allowed cable companies to own multiple businesses and resulted in the consolidation of major media giants. For example, Comcast currently owns several networks, including NBC, Universal Pictures, and Focus Features, as well as countless television stations, including USA Network, MSNBC, and Bravo (home of the *Housewives* franchise). This makes last year's petition to boycott VH1's *Basketball Wives* because of its "negative" portrayal of black women seem somewhat myopic in comparison to the scale of media conglomerates that depict and parrot black female stereotypes and silence same-sex unions and other kinship systems, across countless networks. Real change, in what Iton calls the "visual surplus" of black popular culture, will only happen once there is extensive restructuring of the media giants who control the racist and heterosexist images on TV.²⁴ It is only through a transformation of the political and popular realm, as Iton insists in *In Search of a Black Fantastic*, that we are able to dismantle the ways in which marriage falsely acts as a source of racialized pathology and compromised freedom.

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Notes

1. Richard Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic: Politics and Popular Culture in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 139–140.

2. *Ibid.*, 102.

3. *Ibid.*, 6.

4. For a broader discussion about the conflicted relationship between post-Emancipatory ideals about freedom and marriage within African American communities, see Amy Dru Stanley's *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and Nancy F. Cott's *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

5. Ann duCille's *The Coupling Convention* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Candice M. Jenkins' *Private Lives, Proper Relations: Regulating Black Intimacy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2007); Claudia Tate's *Domestic Allegories of Political Desire: The Black Heroine's Text at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Frances Smith Foster's *Till Death or Distance Do Us Part: Love & Marriage in Africa America* (New York: Oxford University Press,

2010) and *Love & Marriage in Early Africa America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) all offer varied and insightful analysis of this relationship.

6. Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWOA) of 1996, H.R. 3734, 104th Cong. (1996).

7. Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic*, 142.

8. PRWOA, Title 1 § 101, Subsection 1.

9. *Ibid.*, Title 1 § 101, Subsection 8.

10. Defense of Marriage Act, H.R. 3396, 104th Cong. (1996).

11. Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic*, 194.

12. See Nikol Alexander-Floyd's *Gender, Race, and Nationalism in Contemporary Black Politics* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007); "Black Popular Culture and the Transcendence of Patriarchal Illusions" by Barbara Ransby and Tracey Matthews in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought* (New York: The New Press, 1995), 526–535; "Black Nationalism and Black Common Sense: Policing Ourselves" by Wahneema Lubiano in *The House that Race Built: Black Americans, U.S. Terrain* (New York: Pantheon, 1997), 232–252; and E. Frances White's *Dark Continent of Our Bodies: Black Feminism and the Politics of Respectability* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).

13. *Ibid.*, 9.

14. D'vera Cohn, Jeffrey S. Passel, Wendy Wang, and Gretchen Livingston, "Barely Half of U.S. Adults are Married—A Record Low," *Pew Research Social & Demographic Trends*, December 14, 2011, accessed February 11, 2013, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/12/14/barely-half-of-u-s-adults-are-married-a-record-low/>

15. Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic*, 108.

16. Jeanne Amber, "Is Reality TV Hurting Our Girls?," *Essence*, January 2013, 84.

17. Senator Patrick Moynihan's specious claims about black matriarchal families in his 1965 report, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," is one important example of the way the black family has been pathologized. See Daniel Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Office of Policy Planning and Research: United States Department of Labor, 1965).

18. Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic*, 19.

19. Stacy Straczynski, "Is 'The Bachelor Racist'? ABC is Sued for Discrimination," *DiversityInc.com*, accessed March 23, 2013, <http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-and-inclusion/is-the-bachelor-racist-abc-sued-for-discrimination/>

20. *Claybrooks v. American Broadcasting Companies*, 898 F.Supp.2d 986 (2012).

21. Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic*, 8.

22. My forthcoming book project, *Love and Marriage: The Politics of Family in African American Romance*, reveals how the so-called private sphere of African American family formation is increasingly politicized and made public in the late 20th- and early 21st century by three social dynamics: the collapse of black radical organizations in the late 1970s and early '80s, the growing tension between the politics of black respectability and an alleged sexual pathology, and 1990s government policies such as the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWOA) or Welfare Reform Act and the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

23. Scott B. Kaufman, "Black Women Are Not (Rated) Less Attractive! Our Independent Analysis of the Add Health Dataset," *Psychology Today*, May 21, 2011, accessed April 4, 2013, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/beautiful-minds/201105/black-women-are-not-rated-less-attractive-our-independent-analysis-the-a>

24. Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic*, 104.

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