

Confessions and Declarations of Multicolored Men

Post-Jim Crow (?) and still integrating

Frederick Douglass Alcorn
(Papa Son Tate's Grandson)



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Dedication

This book is dedicated to Mama, Ms. Thelma Louise Tate Alcorn, also known as “Aunt T” to my first cousins, and as “Thelmoo” to her Sista Ruby, and best girlfriend, my second Mama, Ms. Helen Knox; and to my Daddy, Mr. Frederick Huffman Alcorn, who instilled the value of listening, observing, and studying what is going on in my surroundings as critical to the accumulation of self-understanding.

I love u

To the **Bloods** Southeast Asia

Preface

In the study this work is based upon, I set out to explore the function of *habitus* as it concerns self-actualization regarding learning and academic success among a small group of Black African American, bi-multi-racial males. There was this *undergirding interest* to see if there was an awareness among these men of their manly inclinations, tendencies, predispositions relative to their quest and discipline for learning, to academically achieve, to be educated; i.e. in a seamless sense of masculinity amidst a quest for learnedness as a natural part of their sense of manliness and sexuality. *Habitus*, as the conveyor of dispositions, inclinations, and tendencies, I thought could be the construct with which to shelter and reveal being as man and being educated as the fabric of manliness.

What I discovered was that although the Nigerian born participant was the only one that confessed to being directly aware and embracing of *the educated – manly self* as one, all the other participants became curious about this, as they reflectively came to realize the presence of manliness in their quest for learnedness, were in fact one. In other words, as all participants proceeded during their respective interview session they demonstrated astuteness about how their racialized-masculinity and manhood inclination and tendencies were in fact present in their quest for learnedness, education, and understanding. The perspectives they presented accounted for this, in analytical collaboration and integration with the literature.

I learnt that these men sanctioned their ethnic-cultural heritages as being an important – relevant part of their lives, as part of a diverse society. Moreover, that they endorsed education as life-long natural part of their lives that was not controlled and mandated via institutional requirements, but believed as essential to their existence and contribution to society. Education it seems is psychological and social-culturally woven throughout their sense of masculinity, manhood, and sexuality, i.e., one can be learned and sexy at the same time, one does not have to exclude the other, or cancel out the other. In conjunction, these men of color were concerned about the “Stereotype Threat” named and evidenced by Hall (1990), not just for themselves but also among their ethnic-cultural brethren.

Courtenay's (2000) study regarding how constructions of masculinity influenced men's differentiated approaches to health and well-being, helped me to realize in the analysis of participants' response, the role that social construction played in the defining, developing, and enactment of their masculinity, manhood, and sexuality, and the influence of factors such as ethnic-cultural, race, social-economic status, and cultural capital, contributed to that social construction. Very importantly, this included the social construction of world view, and respect for education as being centric in their lives. So, can the social constructions of masculinity influence men's differentiated approaches to education? Do factors such as race, the persistence of institutional racism, social-economic wherewithal, ethnic-cultural affiliation, attitudes and efforts involving degrees of participation in learning activities, influence the social construction of one masculinity, manliness, and sexuality?

I would argue yes, that this is not a leap, as literacy regarding the importance of health and well-being is intimately tied to one's sense, cultivation, and habited accumulation of self, within one's social-gendered-racialized skin, in a culturally coveted biological and cognitive intra-interactive merger.

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PAGES MISSING
FROM THIS FREE SAMPLE

Chapter One

Background Script

Layin' in the cut

July 25, 2014

Dear Mr. Baldwin, This new century has already turn 14+ corners. Dear sir, I am so glad to finally make your acquaintance. I missed and I miss you both. My sincere apologies but I did not find you until the 1990's. By then I had experienced service in a war zone, being racialized by police enforcement officers twice while in service to this government's country, and one of those times involved my being placed in a room stripped and served down to my underwear, I was too tired to protest as I was on a 7/11 leave from Nam. I simply placed these events in the recesses of my mind. But out of the blue or gray, there they were just staring me in the face. I dam near starting crying of embarrassment and anger for such rude treatment, as I remembered how dutiful I had behaved while sneering on the inside.

But, I know as among a ton of European Americans and a conservative supportive cast among people of color would say, they were just doing their job, stopping blaming us White folks, and the presence of our culture for things not going right, fix Black culture, that what you really need to do. This is what I have read, heard out loud on the news, for instance, like from this European American women pundit commenter, who was a former teacher education in an urban area. She literally stereotyped Black culture as a culture that blames what she said "Whitey," for group problems and challenges, live and in living color with a finger up in the brotha guest's face. I do believe Mr. Baldwin that there has festered in this country among certain European Americans and their cast of assimilated allies, a social resentment that has fed their attitudes, behavioral responses and reactions, and informs their political decision making mentality, regarding any form of protest for social justice and calling out loud attention to racialized contradictions in U.S. society. I clearly now understand the term "eat it."

One thing that I learned from the Black African American elders I grew up around, witnessed, and read about was that over time, they knew how to give critical analysis, discuss contradiction, and give praise and appreciation regarding this country all within the same what comes to mind cultural peopled framework. They are not, and I still see this capacity among Black folks, just either-or thinker, or with us or against us posturers. There is

a big difference between running-around blaming folks as in thought-less complaint than it is in critically calling out social injustice as democracy in error.

I unnervingly wonder with prongs of anxiety and disappointment if we have entered a modern day Willie Lynching, gun fighter street executions, where the meat flesh of young Black males is left lying in the street in unspoken protest, in the face of juried members and prosecution that sanction the death of young Black men, at the hands of the nation's marshal Dillon's; gun smoke gets in your eyes clouds your mind like "the shadow."

These and other thoughts and experiences such as walking away from a scholarship funded education at a traditional "Black" College, Norfolk State, really added to my upset-ness. You see to know that you existed and I was unaware, that you had performed such insightful under-realized human civil rights advocacy and eye-popping critiques of Black people's lives in struggles, contradiction, and protest, in written and spoken voice, during such heralding times, really pisses me off. Why hadn't I been introduced to you through my schooling, or was it simply that I wasn't paying attention, which could have been the case. But yet I now know what I didn't back then, that we were steeped in segregated dominant cultural book learning and linear old school teaching strategies, and as in jr. high the use of humiliation as punishment. I can't help but continuously attempt to re-imagine myself back then, in the sixties and seventies, possessed with some degree of cardinal knowledge of your existence and literary work, and how and if it would have veered the path that I was on.

The fact that I was bliss in my ignorance does nothing to appease a case of teenage day-dreaming, assimilated schooling, be tix and between racialized segregation right in front of integration. There was though, I must admit, my constant preoccupation with sex-uality (hours in front of the mirror and corn starching my shirts), and the pursuit of neighborhood sista's; neighborhood being in whatever Black segregated neighborhood I was in. I was in a word running the streets, as much as I could get away with – without upsetting my Mama or Aunt Bert, my cousin Arnett's Mama, to one point of bushing with jitterbugging, as not in the dance, but in the slang way for gang or as the elders would say, hard-heading. Mama once said to me sports and running saved my butt. So your work Nobody Knows My Name, , more notes of a native son (1961), really grabbed me and won't let go. It is fortunate that I worked on trying not to envision what amounts to me as carrying around manhood like a concealed weapon, I hate bullying period, and to me taunting people because of raced looks, cash flow situa-

tions, sexuality, is bullying. In angry moments it calls me to pay attention. Because of the way I left the neighborhood, in yet another time of war, like so many others, I am like a kid in a man's body still trying to figure out past-tense the meaning of and conditions of those earlier 50's and 60's experiences.

Segregation was living like somebody pulled the shades down over my eyes. But, then to the cultural insularity of Black neighborhood s in Philly and down south in Castle Hayne-Wilmington North Carolina, gave me a front row seat as an edifying witness to working women and man grounded in Dr. Rev. Richard Allen's AME churches and various other churches of spirituality in the Black community. With all my faults I do believe at the very least I am anchored in decency and civility, that surrounds my critique of democracy's, concerns about the equality of humanity, opportunity, and protest anger. I know that I have much work to do.

I came to know that as a Black male of African ancestry (a Negro male) via slavery, that historically and contemporarily, I must weigh in on the presence and constant reshaping of subtle and pronounced European American dominant social structures, such as, educational institutions (by their strong control and sway of political, capitalistic economic, media resources and peopled personal sources). This has become part of the daily contemplation on my existence. It is no happen-stance and simple such individuals wherewithal that intergroup power arrangements stand the way they are, with a bunch among certain somebodies hiding within the shadow of those arrangements in claimed innocence beyond reproach taking pot shots at social justice and economic inequality protest efforts. They do so while standing in seduction to integration's declarations-and assumed normalcy of social – private intimacy; as the heir to social justice, civil rights, and the continued need to struggle for equality of opportunity in this multicultural nation-state.

I have come to the conclusion that I cannot afford to avoid jumping in on the occurrence of constitutional contradictions (a phrase jump to action by Frederick Douglass) that amount to me as equality of opportunity issues which are raced, gendered, and classed interwoven like twine. Factual and potential pull over beat-down, abusive threat power gritting (stare down's and glace looks) and/or death by law enforcement in this country of Black African American, bi-multi-racial males, occupies my social reality, like a game of dead-block on Frazier street. I don't care how much training they take law enforcement police through, there is difficulty in providing training for any person that brings racialized gendered baggage and/or conserva-

tive socialized manliness and mentality period, that merged with either you/me, this/or that, us vs. them, attitudes and below anger psychics in with them. They need to be screened out at the front door like Mama's rule, don't bring no cussing, fussing, or confusion into this house, on the porch, or on this landing. Not happening. Seems no different than among – I say among – the nasty White dudes we faced in the military.

Mr. Baldwin I am not simply running around wanting to make things up, or say that I am not grateful for citizen-membership in this country, that I have birthright and invested in, but when it comes to race, gender-sexuality, class, religious spirituality choices, the somebody's among certain ethnic-group persuasions are always trying to make what's crooked straight, even when the facts are against them. Our self-interest and good will people in non-Western countries, are killing us, particularly in those continuous them-vs us scenarios, even when it is so obvious to democracy, that we were hooking up with the wrong regime, government leadership, class of rich folks. At any rate poor and struggling folks got no relief and most times get played on like Malcom in the middle.

So, in a sense that maybe, though time-wise saying this to you now, makes no sense, you contributed to saving my life Mr. Baldwin. Your work and gutsy living of sexuality-personhood that others placed you be tix and between (for their own sanity and this or that rationalizing), was beyond the pale standard of the American ideal of manhood and the cultural taboos within the Black community. It contributed to my eventually opening doors I had shut my mind's eye too long ago and ones that I never knew existed. Moving my lips in said thought out loud when they would have remained shut and in simplistic compliance. Subsequently, I say with all my heart and soul, thank you so much Mr. Baldwin, you have been my gateway to critiquing the man in me in the social reality of real time; to imaging myself more than what is expected and required of me in a complicated assimilatory otherness kind of democracy, with all its' materialistic and violently driven vices.

Yours truly,

Frederick Douglass Alcorn, Son Tate's grandson.

I read one of Mr. Baldwin's essays where he was talking about the controversial Black English argument and he said, "People evolve a language in order to be able to *describe* and thus *control* their circumstances, or in

order *not to be submerged by a reality that they cannot articulate*, (and if they cannot articulate it then they are submerged).”

I do think that in part this is an act of realized or subconscious resistance, seeking purposefully to breathe, think, normalize an existence as not to get crushed and taken for granted.

Language (verbal, non-verbal, written) is that part of us we use to think and express our interpretation of the world and our experiences/existence in it. Turning a corner, one could apply this assertion in thinking about masculinity-manhood-sexuality making, in this case, among Black, African American, bi-multi-racial males. They, we, work at developing linguistic style and language ability in ways that describe, mediate, and manage the circumstances of our social reality; some of us bend backward in our thinking as an instructive posture for the present. The multicolored men that I talk with refused to be submerged in social-political and the social complexity of economic positionality and circumstance that they could not articulate. Entailed in their perspectives based upon the self-knowledge of themselves in the world and social reality, it was revealed how they live double conscious lives synthesized in guarded moments, where they are not just quiet by dispositional ways, but by frame of reference, (the body of information, knowledge, and experiences that are called upon in response to social reality and interpretation). As such, requiring them to work at carving out and negotiating predominately European American social, political, work, policed, and legislated spaces. They did not speak in any way that was accusing, but simply about reality as they perceived and experienced it in relationship to and with others people. Their insights are illuminated by Clark (2002) who said taken jointly that the concept Black masculinity brings forth an overabundance of impassioned, conflicted, and often at odds responses. Clark's assertion to me is analogous and in collaboration with Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1997) authored work adeptly entitled: *“Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man.”*

This book revealed the autobiographical and deft social essays among Black males such as James Baldwin and Bill T. Jones regarding the racial gendered complexity, the contradictions, anxious moments, and successes of being a Black man; hence ways of looking at and perceiving Black African American males not as human beings mired in crisis. Yet, on the other hand, crisis issues of negative disproportionality in health, life expectancy, un-underemployment, school lateness, suspension, drop-out truancy numbers in school, incarceration, racial profiling, do stubbornly exist. It seems then when there is controversy involving a Black man, multicolored

men, there is always the danger of a sharp edged knife of criticism or stereotypical comments being unleashed, maybe that's why the men that I talked with worked hard to blend but not bend to the ramifications and unspoken expectation 's of what I call America's social cultural assimilatory contract.

Perhaps one could say there are those among Black and African American, bi-multi racial males, who are facing crisis but somehow alluding its' devastating grief and consequence, which Jackson II and Hopson (2011) provocatively asserted that there is this "debilitating pain that accompany Black masculinity in America" (p. 3). Because no matter how successful you are in this materialistic capitalistically controlled democracy, it is argumentative that the epidemiological related issues among Black African American males in categories of health, mental health have been manifesting or more directly, festering, in this racialized gender hierarchical society for centuries, (Crothers, (2008), Hall, 2006; and Watkins, 2012). Now to be simply declared among some as erased, along with declaring "The End of Racism" (D'Souza, 1996), joined by others who refer to themselves as "racial realist," with a sweep of European American and supporting cast of assimilated scholars, cultural pundits, and critics' hands.

Then again, there is the existence of the double standards thesis regarding race, sexuality, and class, among people in U.S. society which engenders a perceptual outlook from a public-private platform to comfortably view and interact with Black African American, bi-multi-racial males, outside of entertainment, incarceration, the military, law enforcement, in everyday life path crossing.¹ This is the space Ellison, in his poignantly complex book, *Invisible Man* (1952), told us that when a society is hindered with peculiar historical stereotypical perceptions, dispositions, and inclinations affected by race, this and that categories of gender status, and ethnic-culture looked upon as physical makers, one can be rendered invis-

¹ Darron Smith (2012) argued that President Obama had to maintain a disciplined composure not just as the Commander-in-Chief, but at the "risk of being perceived as 'too black' and angry, even during times in the debates where it was necessary to engage in assertive response" (p.2). Although the events were interpersonal and

intercultural most of the listening audience to include the predominantly European American media representatives, would not acknowledge or admit out loud that this was a mono-cultural public event, where so-called "mainstream rules" of communication (universal) were the norm of expectation; hence, a double-standard.

ible except in certain areas of human activities, circumstance, and conditions.

Fundamentally then, we can still be placed in otherness, wrapped safely in declaration 's of colorblind and all-ness diversity, as to relegated to a wannabe form of liberatory public space. Requiring, if we wish to continue beyond the necessity of autopilot biological function, for us to engage in private in head strategizing regarding how act in public space; as what our masculinity, manhood, and sexuality amounts to are acceptable forms of assimilatory kinds of European American – Whiteness. But there is of course the right to reject such impositions that have been devised and exercised historically among Black African American, bi-multi-racial males, as sista Dr. Sherene Razack (1999) would say while, “looking White people in the eye.”

People see you in society but don't understand certain of your dispositions, inclinations, views, and attitudes that seem to be uncharacteristically *ungrateful* for someone who as descended from slavery and Jim Crow de facto and de jure segregated time, that no longer exists as a visible representation seeable to the naked eye, having been congressionally, begrudgingly anointed with civil rights. Begrudgingly, because for some unexplainable reasons the only way to cope or fathom this is by declaring the “end of racism” or we *is* now in post-race American times. Ellison did point out via his main character, that he was not complaining or protesting, but that this state of existence he admitted was “most often rather wearing on the nerves” (p.3). I don't know, but taking a wild guess perhaps he was alluding to hypertension.

Not to belabor the point, nor to imply that Black African American, bi-multi-racial males are ascribed, that is, assigned to crisis status, but to reiterate, there exists statistical categories of *negative* disproportionality relative to the health, well-being, employed/employable, education, incarceration, and social-economic status, that are salient and compelling to pay attention to. Put another way, studies, reports, and articles, that speak to the quality of life among Black African American males in U.S. society divulge qualitative and statistical evidence and perspective showing their disproportionate presence among negative health, life-expectancy, education, adjudication and adult incarceration, and un-underemployment social-cultural indicators (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2010, Black, 1997, Davis, 1998, Gadson, 2006, Head, 2006, Johnson, 2010). One such eye-opening term coined years ago by Gibbs (1988), was the “new

morbidity,” life-threatening behavioral habitus among young Black males via homicide, suicide, accidents.

Along these same lines Rios (2009) had conducted a study arguing the negative disproportionate effects of incarceration among young Black and Latino males regarding the social-cultural construction of their masculine inclination and tendencies, and manhood practices. He claimed such experience has resulted in “the production of a hypermasculinity that obstructs desistance social mobility” (p. 150). Harris (2000) quoted in Rios (2009) defined hypermasculinity “as the exaggerated exhibition of physical strength and personal aggression that is often a response to a gender threat expressed through the physical (I would add psychological) and sexual domination of others” (p. 151). Rios contended that the criminal justice systems’ “pipeline encourages expression of hypermasculinity by threatening and confusing young men’s masculinity” (p.151). I concur and add that lack of legislative mandate and preparedness by state, local, and federal lawmakers and administrators, to more aggressively fund, plan, and conduct systemically reliable culturally responsive approaches to the full inventive *scope* and *nature* of what rehabilitation is supposed to mean, in a democratically multicultural cultural society such as ours, sustains and exacerbates this developmental phenomenon.

There is the impact of in head-self and societal tainting that needs to be recognized/weighed in on, as the result of the incarceration experience and/or general contact with the criminal justice system and law enforcement. Not to speak of the *injustice* racialized gender decision making that occurs within the justice system. The mind can take but so many images, commentaries, over-heard remarks, blank face staring, along with law enforcement police killing deaths and threat power behaviors, before it impacts our gender-making attitudes and behaviors about self and our chances in society to pursuit a quality of life existence, without distrustful general outlooks. Oh yeah, this is me with all my politeness, civil obedience, I do not trust police people, just as much as believe in their necessity. Yeah uh huh, somebody always trying to make their crooked look straight.

I have no problem saying that there have been many flames and sparks that have been and continues to be doused with self-doubt, ethnic-culturally racialized self-loathing, inward-outbound anger, and magical assimilatory acts of economic class escapism, among multicolored men throughout the communities in this country. Like Mystikal belts out – “you keep bumping me against the wall,” *but you ain’t seen bouncing back.*

Hargrow (2001), in an article discussing African American racial development, observed that African American men constitute 47% of African American people in the country, but hold fewer political positions of power. Next, although more African American men are attending post-secondary schools, their numbers are small. Hargrow said, "African American men suffer physically and psychologically," as it concerned health related issues (p.1). Parham and McDavis (1987) argued that despite the gains of civil rights and anti-discriminatory laws, Black males were at-risk in the categories of internal and external factors concerning life expectancy, un-underemployment, and raising suicide rates. Brother Head (2004) spoke about increased rates of depression and suicide among upwardly mobile Black men and social economically disadvantaged Black men, himself included in all this. For instance, Head stated that "Upwardly mobile Black men are confronted with the pressures of working in business and corporate structures dominated by Whites" (p.26). Moreover, he pointed out that "Black men must also realize that their success in the world of work is often tied to their ability to assimilate their values, behaviors, appearance, and life-styles into what the White culture deems legitimate" (p.26). Hence, it is implied that Black males must confront racialized gendered stress producing perceptions, thoughts, and circumstance regarding whether or not they are compromising their cultural selves, their sense of dignity, worth, empowerment, well-being-ness.

Parham and McDavis asserted that "Black men may feel a sense of internalized anxiety, anger, frustration, and resentment because of withheld promotions, dead-end jobs, lack of policy-making power, and the necessity for them to have a 'dual identity'" (p.26). These authors argued that the identification, study, and realizations of these psychological factors and circumstance, hold implications for mental health practitioners in public schools, institutions of higher education, community based agencies, and social service agencies, and moreover, among parents of Black children. Lastly, the authors noted the underrepresentation of "Blacks" in mental health counseling as an issue.

Know that, the complexity and subtle day-to-day conditions under which Black African American, bi-multi-racial males construct and respond to their social realities does not occur in a social-economic and political vacuum. For instance, Hogan (2001) stated that a condition of acquiescence among "ordinary people exists in the form of positively supporting an unequal social and economic system" that he called a "culture of conformism of social consent" (p.1). Hogan argued that a disproportionately unequal distribution of national wealth exists, (further exacer-

bated by the latest recession), but people still acquiesce to this condition intellectually as well as practically. I mention this because this claimed condition of acquiescence exists in the face of dogmatic ideological reasoning involved in social everyday discourse.

This daily discourse contains stereotypical lexicon regarding people of color, women, and sexual minorities, relative to people's perception and construction of social reality amidst intergroup power relationships not readily recognized and/or simply denied, in historical and real-time. Hogan argued that "it seems likely that everyone in the United States, whether White or Black has a category of common beliefs about" Blacks in their lexical entry (single word meaning developing into a phrase) for "Black." This category might include, for example, "lazy" (pp. 120-121). ²Rome (2004) in a study regarding the establishment of the Black male criminal stereotype, contended that negative stereotypes many people have of Black men as criminals were "created to a degree by the mass media" (p.1). Lexicon stereotype exists relative to individual and group stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995), and their stereotypical vulnerability.

According to Norguera (1997), rates of unemployment for males of African American descent "are higher now than they were 30 years ago" (pp. 2-3). Suicide and rates of depression are disturbingly on rapid rise among Black males (Poussaint & Alexander, 2000). Head, as cited previously, called the rise of depression among Black men a "silent epidemic," as depression largely goes mistreated, untreated, and unspoken about because of adherence to the *silent undeclared masculine I'm too tuff code* among males of African American descent. In this regard, Canada (1998) said that Black boys are "conditioned not to let on that it hurts. They are taught by coaches to play with pain." Still further, they "are told by parents that they shouldn't cry" (p. 11). Then to, they watch their heroes on the big screen getting punched and kicked and shot, and while the heroes might let out a groan or yell, they observe that they never cry (pp. 11-12). During my 60's growing up time in South, North, and West Philadelphia, PA, there were

² The author noted that the lexicon entry of lazy as a common belief out there in society in general but for the cognitive tendency toward "confirmatory bias) (the tendency among people to favor information that confirms their beliefs) (p. 121). In the case of confirmatory bias there stood the likelihood that Blacks or Mexicans being stereotyped as lazy, as the Hogan pointed out that, any person not doing his or her work is likely to be more important "than any number of persons doing their work—a point that does not affect Whites as there is no relevant lexicalized property that might be accessed to categorize them as "lazy" (p. 121).

those older teenage brother jitter-bugs who engaged in laugh-crying when in a fight and they were getting hurt in public (Alcorn, 1994). In the face of this, “what are the conditions under which we reproduce strong black men, self-respecting black men, self-regarding black men, self-loving black men, who recognize they’re in a *kind of war*” (West, 2008, p. x)?

West’s conscious Black man question/declaration is timely, as somehow my critical and oftentimes times disturbing reflection about war as sanctioned violence (James, 1996), intertwines itself with my evolving understanding of gender socialization, its definitions, beliefs, imaging, and enacting, in private places - public spheres. This includes knowledge regarding the mutilating tree and truck lynching of Black women, men, elders, and children in U.S. society. (The incontestable song “Strange Fruit” was transformed from the poem written by Abel Meeropol (1939), a White Jewish high school teacher in protest against the lynching of Black people occurring primarily in the South).

My thoughts are a daily ritual of fear, anger, redemption, and compassion. It is this reflection that raised my conscious mind to a renewed awakening regarding the subtle, alluring, and demanding presence/role that Black masculinity making plays in my life, and I would dare say among fellow African American/inter-ethnic males. That for us, there is politics and social-cultural and racial demands of cultural existence within a multicultural society that is racially-gendered, polarized, and hierarchical.

Cooper (2006) contended that poplar representations of heterosexual Black men are bipolar, as there are alternative images between a “Bad Black man, who is crime-prone and hypersexual, and a Good Black, who distances himself from blackness and associates with white norm” (p. 853). He explained that “the threat of the Bad Black man label provides heterosexual black men with an assimilationist incentive to perform our identities consistent with the Good Black Man image” (p.853). He posited that the reason for bipolar Black masculinity is that it exists to resolve the White mainstreams’ post-civil rights anxiety (cognitive dissonance). The cause of this anxiety “results from the conflict between the nation’s relatively recent determination that some black men merit inclusion into the mainstream and it’s no longer-standing belief that most black men should be excluded” (p.853). In the midst of this society anxiety, the social reality that “Working man” (Perkins, 1991), and I would add-combine “Working Women,” are no longer a regular fixture in urban neighborhoods (Alcorn, 1994).

I argue that Black African American and bi-multi-racial males, consciously and subconsciously, are subject to bipolar masculinity making among themselves, when engaging in the assimilatory cultural trade-offs in mainstream America. I suggest that Cooper's argumentative heterosexual Black men bipolar masculinity making thesis, and Du Bois thesis of two-warring souls (from his seminal historical work: "*The Souls of Black Folks*," 1903), are over-lapping. Both amount to an assimilation acculturation struggle, in which assimilation pays, (it seems to some psychologically and economically), while acculturation limits conditional equality of opportunity chances, as acculturation as opposite of assimilation, would promote the stereotypical "Bad Nigger," the crime prone Black man, the revolutionary Bloods (Wallace, 1984), from the civil rights and the Vietnam War Era. To wit, there is the *angry Black man* that is still referenced in mainstream media today, in the imagination among U.S. citizenry with limited degrees of intercultural literacy, in our multicultural society.

Under the bipolar thesis we have two manifestations of ethnic-cultural group exceptionality. There is the acceptance of conformity to the dominant rule or patterns demanded by assimilation of a conservative nature and simultaneously acculturation efforts used to engage in nonconformity to the dominant rule or patterns demanded by assimilation. Acculturation efforts involve more critical examination and interaction when faced with the demands and undeclared but societal expected normalcy of assimilation; that is, an accounting for of democracy, capitalism, and the social humanity for an equality of existence.

Thus, it follows that one kind of uniqueness I am referring to among Black African American, bi-multi-racial males is that we separate ourselves in terms of how we relate or un-relate to African American culture or Black American culture while we are immersed in and of a Eurocentrically dominant so-called "I'm just-American" society, which to me incurs some degree of social-psychological struggle or utility of cognitive energy.

Such ethnic-cultural historical exceptionality in the presence of crisis suggests that Black African American, bi-multi-racial males are all over the social-cultural ecological terrain and/or landscape as it concerns how we define, construct, and attempt to enact and represent our masculinity, manhood, sexuality, and sexual orientation in public and private spheres; we are not constrained and constricted within the undeclared normative positioning of "White heterosexuality" (Chandler, 2007, p.1). As Chandler deftly pointed out, Black males have come to perform gender in "unique and diverse ways" (p. 2), and that it is salient to examine the "context that

produces particular gender performance in African American males” (p.2). In other words, it calls for looking inside the numbers that represent the demographics to see how those among Black African American, bi-multi-racial males are working to identify and realize ways to be healthy and progressive in cultural context, while others have the potential to do so, and work to find out what’s stopping them. In part, this requires formulating inquiry that involves identifying and exploring ways in which the construction and response to social reality occurs given the historical-contemporary circumstance of racialized-gendered and patriarchal demands, contributing to the formation of habitus.

Very importantly, the formulation of inquiry should be motivated by the fundamental aim of prompting self-social-psychological reform activities among Black African American, bi-multi-racial males, that involves their working to develop healthy or healthier social-culturally responsive and progressive ways of engaging in masculinity, manhood, sexuality, and sexual orientation, while under past-present loud and subtler social siege in public sphere. Overarchingly, the formulation of inquiry should be framed in consideration of various areas of human activities - the law, economics, politics, education, public-private job markets, anti-government White supremacy circles.

Hall (1997) contested that the social-cultural daily experiences of biracial-ness (I would add multi-racial ness) masculinity and maleness identity development is socially psychologically challenging in the face of a historical racial-gendered Black/White categorical dichotomy. (In other words bi-multi-don’t fit, like what are you anyway, or those polite but rude blank face stares in public). This complexity, in consideration of identity development, is subject to subconscious and conscious observations among people during interpersonal-cultural social interactions in the public sphere of still eurocentrically dominated integrated space.

This consideration concerns skin-tone, phenotypical features such as hair texture and facial features, linguistic tones and styles, racialized gendered ideological points of view, socializing and educational experiences (or lack thereof) regarding inter-ethnic-group power relations, and sources and acts of empowerment, heterogeneous expectations, that do

not readily place bi-multi-racial males within the Black/White racial-gendered dichotomy.³

Such socially conditioned perception and assumptions also involves “threat stereotyping” (Steele, 1995), in areas such as intellectual cognitive ability limits, social-cultural linguistic and behavior expectations, that hold mental health and well-being challenges for bi-multi-racial males in the identity development of masculinity and manhood (quiet self-doubt is and can be the elephant in the room). Hall asserted that, “The need of bi-racial males for a separate identity contrasts with the degree to which race remains a cultural imperative” (p. 74).

My discussion about these study interview findings is not about the numbers per se, it is about literately going inside the numbers, to inquire, examine, and discuss the role of masculinity, manhood, and sexuality that held implications concerning social-psychological, identity development, mental health and well-being, and their social construction of reality, for a group of adult Black African American, bi-multi-racial males. I asked them to speak and frame their perspectives in contrast-comparison with the literature about other of their brethren. Fundamentally, I sought to engage in an effort to capture the understanding, perspective, habits, and emotional states of minds of participating adult males via self-reflective discourse within the context of their racialized gendered experiences.

³ Squires (2002) conducted a study aimed at rethinking the scope and nature of Black Public Sphere by introducing vocabulary that allowed for a broader more comprehensive and inclusive identification and examination for multiple public spheres via an “exploration of the history of the African American public sphere” (p. 446). The author- pointed out that people of color, women, sexual minorities, religious minorities, and “immigrant groups have created coexisting counterpublics in reaction to the exclusionary politics of dominant public sphere and the state” (p.446). Squires referred to public sphere as “physical or mediated spaces where people gather and share information, debate opinions, and tease out their political interests and social [cultural] needs with other participants” (p.448). For example, in the segregated Black enclave of West Philadelphia during the 1960s my mother, Mrs. Thelma L. Alcorn, served as a block neighborhood captain facilitating meetings at our home in which people engaged in discussion and identified issue/needs of the neighborhood to be communicated to City Hall. Squire explained that at “different times in history, African Americans have been forced into enclaves by repressive state policies,” and had to use such enclave spaces to “create discursive strategies and gather oppositional resources” (p. 458); for example, AME and Baptist churches and homes in the South during the civil rights era.

Invisibility is a dangerous and painful condition. When those who have power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you, whether you are dark-skinned, old, disabled, female, or speak with a different accent or dialect than theirs, when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describe the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium [cognitive dissonance], as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing. Yet you know you exist and others like you, that this is a game with mirrors; [now you me now you don't]. It takes some strength of soul—and not just individual strength, but collective understanding--to resist this void, this nonbeing, into which you are thrust, and to stand up, demanding to be seen and heard. (Rich, 1986, p. 119)

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