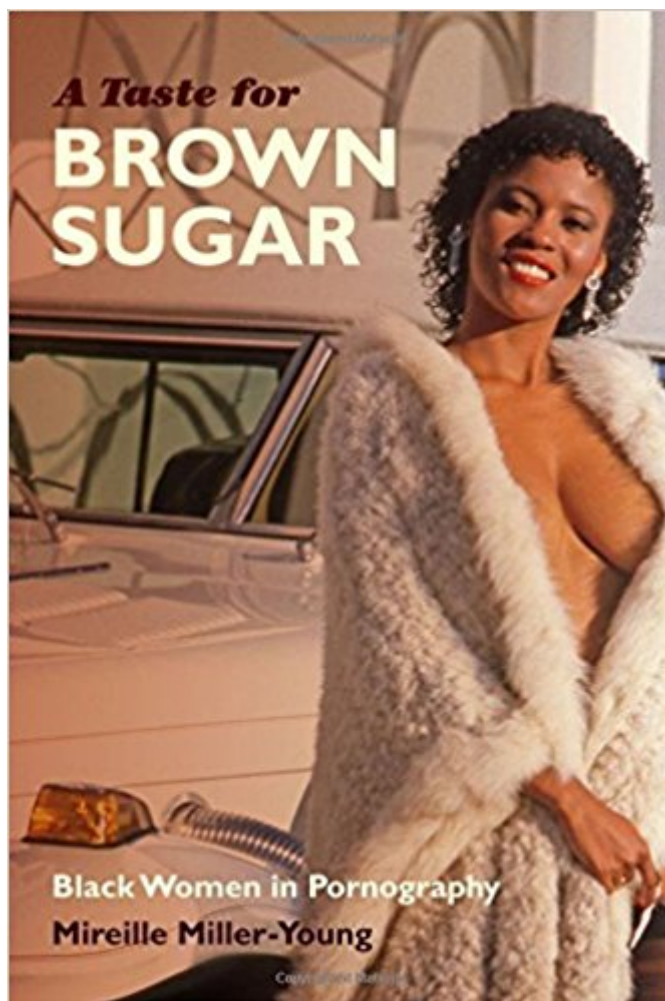


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A Taste For Brown Sugar: Black Women In Pornography



Synopsis

A Taste for Brown Sugar boldly takes on representations of black women's sexuality in the porn industry. It is based on Mireille Miller-Young's extensive archival research and her interviews with dozens of women who have worked in the adult entertainment industry since the 1980s. The women share their thoughts about desire and eroticism, black women's sexuality and representation, and ambition and the need to make ends meet. Miller-Young documents their interventions into the complicated history of black women's sexuality, looking at individual choices, however small—a costume, a gesture, an improvised line—as small acts of resistance, of what she calls "illicit eroticism." Building on the work of other black feminist theorists, and contributing to the field of sex work studies, she seeks to expand discussion of black women's sexuality to include their eroticism and desires, as well as their participation and representation in the adult entertainment industry. Miller-Young wants the voices of black women sex workers heard, and the decisions they make, albeit often within material and industrial constraints, recognized as their own.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A Taste for Brown Sugar is a game changer, a courageous and bold book that shifts the discourse on the contested history of race and porn. Mireille Miller-Young's rigorous historical and ethnographic research disrupts the 'good versus bad' binary that has dogged debates about pornography for decades." (E. Patrick Johnson, author of *Appropriating Blackness*:

Performance and the Politics of Authenticity)"A Taste for Brown Sugar is a thorough and compelling look at a subject steeped in society's anxiety and imagination: black women in pornography. Mireille Miller-Young dives head first into a thorny topic with clear, nuanced thinking. This book tackles complicated issues of race, sex work, feminism, pleasure, and representation in a rigorous, thoughtful way. Finally: scholarship that centers black women's labor and ideas in both academia and the sex industries and gives crucial voice to underrepresented workers and feminist thinkers. Miller-Young's approach is intersectional, engaging, and, above all, accessible to scholars and general readers alike. This book will enrage you, enlighten you, and make you rethink everything you know about race and sex." (Tristan Taormino, author of True Lust: Adventures in Sex, Porn and Perversion) "This much-needed volume reminds scholars of the need to deepen porn studies and strengthen its interdisciplinary possibilities through various theoretical lenses and critical approaches. Supporting her book with abundant images, Miller-Young thoughtfully exposes readers to concepts both visually and intellectually. A necessary volume for academics as well as those interested in popular culture studies that have a dialogue with race and/or women. Essential. Graduate students/faculty." (M. Martinez Choice) "Reading A Taste for Brown Sugar: Black Women in Pornography on a New York subway train will earn you some very interesting looks. Adorned with a cover photo featuring the beautiful porn star Jeannie Pepper topless in a white fur like something out of Superfly, and the customary wall of text that comes with academic books on the back, it brings out New York's best double takes. A Taste for Brown Sugar offers fine scholarship, done with the utmost respect of the subject and the workers chronicled." (Sydette Harry make/shift)"Through meticulous research and a masterly melding of the best of theoretical, conceptual, and empirical work in black women's sexuality, A Taste for Brown Sugar analyzes African American women's agency within the adult entertainment industry.... If A Taste for Brown Sugar can produce a solid analysis of such a difficult, controversial topic, Miller-Young has set a high bar for similar projects that study oppositional knowledge." (Patricia Hill Collins The Journal of American History 2015-12-01)"[E]ssential reading for anyone seeking to understand new work on feminism, critical race studies, pornography, and film history." (Svati P. Shah Women's Review of Books 2015-09-01)"A Taste for Brown Sugar is a necessary, long overdue text that should interest scholars and students of various fields and backgrounds, particularly those interested in feminist theory, media studies, histories of black women, sex work, and of course porn studies.... The book is impressive, cultivating a rich and diverse tapestry of urgent voices and images, revealing the complicated interplay between labor and representation." (Laura Helen Marks Feminist Media

Studies 2016-03-16)"Everyone interested in understanding the industry and the people, especially the Black women involved, in front of and behind the cameras, should read this book cover to cover.... There is a wide audience for this well-researched and well-produced book.... The general public as well as researchers from film and media studies, history, sexuality studies, African American studies, labor studies, critical race studies, sociology, and anthropology will appreciate *A Taste for Brown Sugar*." (Sherri L. Barnes *Feminist Collections* 2015-08-01)"Miller-Young offers a compelling examination of African American women's participation in one of the nation's most understudied industries: the porn business. Filling a void within African American women's historiography and presenting a more nuanced perspective on women's work, she situates black female porn laborers within the larger context of 20th-century work. Miller-Young has produced a bold and engaging study that challenges historians of the black female experiences to re-conceptualize ideas about race and gender and labor and black sexualities." (LaShawn Harris *Souls* 2016-06-01)"In a field so dominated by the visual, it is Miller-Young's insistence that we hear, as well as see, black women in porn that makes her book so textured, colorful, brash, and critically engrossing. Divided into six well-written and informative chapters, this ambitious scholarly tour de force offers an ethnographic account of black women's labor in the porn industry, as well as a historicist cultural appraisal of blackness in pornography from the early twentieth century into our present era." (L. H. Stallings *Black Camera* 2015-03-01)"Throughout six chapters of insightful and rigorous thought, Miller-Young traces the evolution of black sex actors as a heavily stereotyped spectacle during the silent era to a more nuanced and contemporary understanding of them as working professionals seeking, and oftentimes finding, autonomy and female sexual empowerment. *A Taste for Brown Sugar* is a leap forward in feminist thinking and sex work studies, and a crucial read for any student of women's studies." (Laura L. S. Bauer *Women's Studies* 2015-08-06)"All those who are interested in porn, African American, film, cultural or queer studies would benefit from reading this multifaceted, nuanced, decidedly non-white interpretation of the porn industry." (Angela Mika Holton *Sexuality & Culture* 2016-04-18)"*A Taste for Brown Sugar* has raised the bar for porn studies." (Whitney Strub *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2016-09-01)"By centering labor, Miller-Young deftly side-steps debates about whether pornography can be feminist and instead shows us that economies of desire are mutable and can be manipulated to find spaces of survival and even pleasure. This perspective is an important addition to black feminist sexuality studies. Audiences interested in American studies, labor history, the history of pornography, black feminism, and sexuality studies should take note of this important book." (Amber Jamilla Musser *GLQ* 2017-01-31)

Mireille Miller-Young is Associate Professor of Feminist Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is a coeditor of *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure*.

The book was very educational. And I appreciate the expedite manner in which my order was handle. Thanks. Job Well Done!

This book takes you not only into the world of black female sex workers but also into the world of all black women in their daily sex lives.

first, some words on the composition of the paperback volume. a gorgeous book, thick glossy pages, what you would expect to find in an art book or a book of photographs. as an extended text by a scholar, readers will be aware of the glare from lighting on the pages and the care required to work with thick pages.. pound wise, this is a heavy book, weighty as books twice its size. studies of pornography usually begin with images and representations of women, often grounded in european art forms. mireille miller- young instead chooses to open her study of black women in pornography with the black female body received for the visual and tactile scrutiny, under the gazing eye and probing hand of the slave master. for miller-young this was the first pornographic use of the body of the black woman. the black woman enslaved and used as `sexualized labor' is followed, historically, by the freed black woman who chooses to become an agent within photographic and cinematic pornography. once the black woman has entered the porn industry, the inquiry extends to address her reasons. the black woman in porn was silent until the 1980s, there are no documents of their identities or what happened to them after leaving porn. the actresses working in porn, beginning with the 1980s, are the women miller-young interviewed, a few of them made careers in porn. their reasons given for entering the porn industry fall under three categories, money, exploration of one's sexual self, and fame. the actresses talked of what they want from the industry and the racist barriers facing them, citing lack of respect for black women as vested workers within the porn industry. as a side note, the nature of respect is a continuing troubling paradox within the text, clearly stated when the author overhears at an adult video convention denigrating remarks about black erotic dancers spoken by a producer of extreme porn, who only hires white women for his films, films in which women have their heads shoved in toilets and are made to vomit. this is the industry in which actresses are subject to patently sexist remarks. however, discrimination becomes an issue when the remarks become racist. roles in which black actresses portray maids are found

equally offensive and stereotypical as roles portraying ghetto whores, while black actresses believe they should not be excluded from race neutral roles such as having their heads showed in toilets if those are the roles they want to perform. if you're asking wherein lies respect of anyone, actress or producer, white or black, within such an industry, you have to accept miller-young's distinction between 'respectability' associated with women not engaged in sex work and other forms of offensive unladylike behavior and 'respect' expected within the workplace as a valued worker and economic parity for work done without being penalized by race. unfortunately, without discussing respect fuller as applicable to content and acts performed, or the meaning and importance of self-respect, or the contexts of respect, miller-young, though as she may have rightfully believed, such a discussion would have expounded on a topic too lengthy for her book, does not render her paradox any less troubling by her explanation. 'When adult films like South Central Hookers and Ghetto Hoes exploit fantasies of black women, they capitalize on historical ideas about dependent black women trading on their sexualities--sexualities that black women do not deserve or have the right to mobilize for their own pleasure and liberation. The symbolic and material impoverishment of black women's value in the sexual marketplace informs these fantasies. In turn, this impoverished valuation of black sexuality creates the rationale for sexual economic exploitation, thus sustaining a hierarchal system of embodied worth.' the author's inquiry is less provocative when addressing the gaze. the gaze of the spectator shifts from the male producer and consumer of porn to the black female performer who gazes outside the confines of role, as we first see her in porn clips from the 1930s, the silent performer with a saucy mischievous gaze directed beyond the camera seemingly at the male spectator, and again the 1977 when in the film, SEX WORLD, when desiree west's gaze comes near the end of the film, a look delivered by a black woman who controlled her every situational moment on screen. in recent years, the gaze of the black woman in porn is shown as moving from in front of the camera to behind the camera, as black women become directors. miller-young uses a phrase which could describe her own method of inquiry, 'discursive binary'. what topics she puts forth as her unfolding thesis are paralleled and sometimes only shadowed by perspectives from some other studies and sources. her chapter on the alliances of ghetto porn with rap videos, i recalled recent rapper and video director, 3d na'tee (nee samantha davon james) comments on some of the responses of viewers to her video WHO CAN WE RUN TO? as she wondered why her message on racism delivered in the slurred rapid paced invective filled vocal trope of the rap culture, is lost on her viewers of the video who choose to focus on her nude body as inhabiting erotic space instead of a symbol of vulnerability situated in imagery of racial violence. mireille miller-young's inquiry shows black women in the porn acting with 'erotic

sovereignty and agency' using 'tactics of illicit eroticism' to negotiate changes in their profession. finally, her inquiry appeals to black feminist activists to consider the porn site as a workplace wherein black women are entitled the rights and respect due all workers, whatever their workplace.

Brilliant. A much needed intervention amidst the white-washing of sex workers' rights and the respectability politics of feminism and anti-racism.

Brilliant!

Long overdue! love this!

Just started to read it and already I have learned so much about the history of black women and porn.

The book does a very disservice to black woman. This book is filled with untrue data.

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