

Sexual Violence in the American South: 1865-1917

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Abstract

Following the defeat of the Civil War, whites in the American South prepared for another battle, this time against the perceived bestiality of black sexuality – a stereotype which remains pervasive in modern culture today. However, prior to emancipation male slaves had been popularly characterised as docile, submissive and childlike, transformed by the South into a sexual threat, only when they became a political one. This study aims to understand how this hysteria was engineered by white supremacists, and manipulated to justify the terrorization of the wider black community. Chapter One will consider the moral panic evident in contemporary novels and newspapers as accusations of rape increased, whilst Chapter Two identifies how the Klan took advantage of the South's wounded 'honour' to promote violent retribution against black men. The highly sexualised aspects of lynch culture will be explored at length. Chapter Three will consider the implications of an idealised 'white womanhood', and the continued abuse of black females. This study hopes to prove that defeat in the Civil War led to an obsession with black sexuality, as emasculated white men fought against the equality imposed upon the South by Reconstruction, fearing the loss of political and sexual privileges. Therefore, under the emotive and traditional rhetoric of protecting white womanhood, white racists began a violent campaign against black men's reputations and bodies to re-assert white masculinity. Despite the Klan's actions being justified as a method of defence against it, the most tangible threat of sexual violence in the American South during the late nineteenth century came from these white men themselves, as they terrorized the black community practicing the lynching of black men and rape of black women.

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Using a tone of logical reasoning, John Furman wrote to *The Watchman and Southron* newspaper in 1895 suggesting the castration of black men as the best method to control 'lusty buck Negroes'.¹ Likening black men to savage 'gorillas' going forth to 'devastate and destroy' innocent women; Furman suggests the subsequent lynching of the perpetrator is excusable. However, he claims such punishments would be unnecessary if preventative actions were taken sooner: a simple operation could create 'a better citizen, resting at home at night, instead of roaming abroad to ravage'.² It is not only the offensive content of this article that shocks, but also the inconspicuous way that it sits on the page, alongside adverts for cigarettes and a mundane report on a thief who stole jam preserve.³ The unobtrusive nature of this opinion suggest a commonplace acceptance amongst the papers readership of the stereotype it offers. Yet how had this come to be? Only a few decades earlier, throughout slavery, black men had been considered childlike, caricatured as either 'uncle Tom' figures - dutiful and subservient to their master; or as 'Sambo's' – buffoons who were docile and happy, but also intrinsically lazy, unable to live independently.⁴ After emancipation however, the 'infantilised slave' and 'paternal master' narrative were no longer necessary as a defence for slavery, and instead gave way to the 'brute' described by Furman, and in the work of thousands of others throughout the late nineteenth century.⁵

Therefore, this thesis asks why a shift against the reputation of black men emerged in conjunction with their newly claimed freedom; as with intense traction the hysterical

¹ *The Watchman and Southron*, 18 September, 1895, p.1 chroniclingamerica.loc.gov [Accessed 11.10.19]

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Donald Bogle, *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films*, (London; Continuum, 2001) pp. 4-6

⁵ *The Watchman and Southron*, p.1

fear of the rape of white women by black men spread across the American South.⁶ For whom and why was this moral panic engineered? The obvious answer to the question is a historically un-unique one – to prevent at all costs the blurring of racial lines further weakening the hierarchal system. This had always been a possibility, yet prior to the Civil War relations between lower class white women and black men had been, to an extent, tolerated.⁷ After emancipation no allowances were made as class dissolved in importance when racial matters were at hand, and the ‘protection of white womanhood, purity and honour’ became an obsession for white men.⁸

To effectively answer these questions, the relationship between sexual and political power must be explored. According to Martha Hodes, male sexuality had been transformed throughout the reconstruction period as the term ‘manhood’ took on new meaning for black and white males after the Civil War.⁹ Whilst the barbarity enabled by slavery was no longer acceptable under new legislation, the beliefs of those whose lives had centred on the institution did not change so fast: Arthur Schlesinger’s cyclical theory, proposing a period of great progression is followed by one of even greater conservatism, suggests this extreme reversion was inevitable.¹⁰ Playing emotively on the already bruised tradition of ‘Southern honour’, it is evident rape was effectively chosen as justification for the brutal pushback white supremacists desired.¹¹ To understand the mentality of Southern Americans throughout the late nineteenth

⁶ Martha Hodes, “The Sexualisation of Reconstruction Politics: White Women and Black Men in the South after the Civil War”, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol 3, (1993) pp49-410

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 402-404

⁸ Lisa Cardyn, “Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence: Outraging the Body Politic in the Reconstruction South”, *Michigan Law Review*, Vol. 100, No.4 (2002), p767

⁹ Martha Hodes, “The Sexualisation of Reconstruction Politics”, pp. 404-404

¹⁰ Arthur Schlesinger, *Cycle of American History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999) p.24

¹¹ Kris Durocher, *Southern Masculinity: Perspectives on Manhood in the South Since Reconstruction*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press), p.47

century, it is useful to consider the wider historiographical interpretations of the Reconstruction Era. The Dunning School emerged in the early twentieth century under William Dunning and John Burgess – they described the era as a ‘tragic’ one, viewing white Southerners as victims of a corrupt government ruled by ‘radical republicans’ and ignorant freedmen.¹²¹³ Central to this argument was the idea of ‘negro incapacity’.¹⁴ The return of ‘home rule’ in the redeemed south was considered a necessary triumph to remove the ‘negro government’, which E. Coulter described a ‘diabolical development’.¹⁵ These accounts are deeply racist, designed to justify the ongoing brutal treatment of blacks and continuation of white supremacy. There are many complexities to this traditional interpretation regarding the economic motives of the north, however myths of ‘negro rule’ would prove to be long-lasting.¹⁶ Ramsdell’s description of freedmen’s ‘animal nature’ is useful in understanding the white bias and hysteria surrounding black men both politically and sexually.¹⁷ Yet this interpretation was refuted as early as 1935 by W.E.B. Du Bois, as the South remained brutally segregated. Du Bois, a black activist, used the word ‘idealistic’ rather than tragic to describe Reconstruction, as it failed to develop a democratic interracial order, due to the Souths continued inability to ‘conceive of Negroes as men’.¹⁸ In 1903, Du Bois had asserted that “Negro suffrage ended a civil war by beginning a race feud”, and went

¹² William Archibald Dunning, *Reconstruction, Political and Economic 1865-1877*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1907)

¹³ John Burgess, *Reconstruction and the Constitution 1866-1876*, (New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1905)

¹⁴ Alan D Harper. "William A. Dunning: The Historian as Nemesis." *Civil War History*, vol. 10 no. 1, (1964), p. 54

¹⁵ Ellis Merton Coulter, *William G. Brownlow: Fighting Parson of the Southern Highlands* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1999)

¹⁶ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, (New York, Harper perennial, 2014) p.xviii

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, (London: Transaction, 2013)

on to describe Reconstruction as “a tragedy whose main protagonists were an embittered South and a bewildered freedman”.¹⁹ Yet at the time Du Bois work gained little attention, whereas novels such as *Gone with the Wind* flourished in 1936, upholding the Dunning School plantation myths.²⁰ It was not until the civil rights movement of the 1960s, that modern revisionism finally began to undo the work of the traditionalists.²¹ In a reversal of ideas, revisionists like Joel Williamson emphasised real political, social and economic progress for blacks, focusing on accomplishments such as the creation of public schools.²² However, due to rollback under redemption, the revisionists ultimately came to a ‘series of negative judgements’.²³ Reconstruction was now considered tragic only in that it did not go far enough, missing opportunities to generate real change.²⁴ C. Vann Woodward argued Reconstruction had been compromised from the start due to the Souths racial prejudice, and Meier described the whole era as ‘superficial’.²⁵ In the 1970s post-revisionists developed the ideas of Woodward to conclude the ‘radicalism’ had not existed and instead stressed a theme of continuity²⁶. Any progress was short lived, as American ideology such as localism and individualism returned.²⁷ Post-revisionists agreed the old planter class kept their prestige intact, whilst little evidence suggested life had improved for the freedmen, who were coerced back into work on plantations.²⁸ William McFeely described how the

¹⁹ Eric Foner, “Reconstruction Revisited.” *Reviews in American History*, vol. 10, no. 4, (1982) p.83

²⁰ Claire Parfait , “Reconstruction Reconsidered: A Historiography of Reconstruction, From the Late Nineteenth Century to the 1960s.”, *Études anglaises*, Vol. 62, (2009) p. 440-454

²¹ Eric Foner, “Reconstruction Revisited.” P.83

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.,

²⁴ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, p.xx

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Eric Foner, “Reconstruction Revisited.” *Reviews in American History*, p.84

²⁸ Ibid., p.85

Freedmen's Bureau, initially charged with radically promoting black supremacy by traditionalists, helped force blacks back into their pre-emancipation roles.²⁹ Post-revisionists doubt the development of black education, claiming northern whites used it as a means of social control, imposing northern values.³⁰ LaWanda Cox fairly accused these arguments of demonstrating presentism.³¹ Central to most post-revisionist views is the failure of proper land reform, which ensured blacks would never achieve equality.³² Economic arguments however, do not explain the fall of Reconstruction: violent, rather than economic intimidation ushered in the new era of redemption.³³ Therefore, these historians fail to deliver a convincing theory on the moral panic which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. The threat of 'Negro rule' put forward by the traditionalists was proven by later historians to have been grossly exaggerated: the few instances of genuine progression were abruptly cut short.³⁴ Furthermore, black leaders throughout reconstruction were mostly of 'the free mulatto class'; bourgeois in origins and uninterested in assisting black peasants.³⁵ Foner however, suggested in the black belt progress was genuine as many counties elected black sheriffs who acted in the interests of their citizens.³⁶ It is with the views of Eric Foner that this study most aligns, understanding that Reconstruction must be viewed from the contemporary perspective as a 'unique' period of genuine change, where freedmen gained suffrage and political power.³⁷ Whilst it's 'promise exceeded

²⁹ William S. McFeely, *Yankee Stepfather* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968)

³⁰ Eric Foner, "Reconstruction Revisited." p.86

³¹ LaWanda Cox, *Lincoln and Black Freedom*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981) pp. 142-84

³² Eric Foner, "Reconstruction Revisited." p.86

³³ John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction After the Civil War*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1961) pp.153-155

³⁴ Eric Foner, "Reconstruction Revisited." p.88

³⁵ Thomas Holt, *Black Over White* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977)

³⁶ Eric Foner, "Reconstruction Revisited." *Reviews in American History*, p.88

³⁷ *Ibid*, p.91

its accomplishments', emancipation immeasurably transformed the lives of black Americans. For Southern whites, further progression could only be prevented by its destruction and reversal, as the continuation of rising black aspirations and expectations triggered escalating acts of racial violence.³⁸

Chapter one will examine the explosion of hysteria regarding black rapists evident in a variety of newspapers and novels from 1865, demonstrating how an atmosphere of fear was first created. In particular, the work of novelists Thomas Nelson Page and Thomas Dixon will be analysed.³⁹⁴⁰ Subsequently, using data attained from contemporary newspapers and transcripts from the Klan Trials, the extent to which this threat was exaggerated will be realised.⁴¹ Once a genuine increase in rape cases has been suitably disproven, this essay will turn from the 'how' to the 'why', considering the motivation for developing a moral panic. The explicit link Frederick Douglas made between white men's sexual and political power will be investigated.⁴² It will be concluded that rape cries were an expression of male insecurity, not to protect the honour of their wives and daughters but to protect the honour of themselves.⁴³ It is a truism to say that fear of losing privilege, in regards to both access to white women and the vote were also paramount.

³⁸ Ibid. p.95

³⁹ Thomas Nelson Page, *Red Rock*, (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1899)

⁴⁰ Thomas Dixon, *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*, (Milton Keynes: Ostara Publications, first published 1905)

⁴¹ Klan Trials: *Report of the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States*, Volumes 1-13, 1872. <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu> [Accessed 20.11.19]

⁴² Frederick Douglas "The Lessons of the Hour" *The Library of Congress*, 1894 p.8 www.loc.gov/resource [Accessed 23.11.19]

⁴³ Kate Cote Gillen, *Shrill Hurrahs* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2013) p.

The second chapter will move on to consider white reaction to the perceived threat of black enfranchised men, as they sought to re-assert white manhood and protect the social hierarchy. The Ku Klux Klan had been instrumental in generating the hysterical atmosphere to justify their behaviour, and lynch culture.⁴⁴ This chapter will consider how lynching became a prominent feature of life in the south, for almost a century, as white citizens enabled its continuation.⁴⁵ Using evidence from the Klan Trials, the purpose of the mutilation and castration of corpses will be explored, considering the sexualized over tones of lynch law.⁴⁶ The evidence will suggest white men attempted to revive the same power over the bodies of their free victims as they had enjoyed over their slaves, emasculating and intimidating black men in every way to reassert their own power, both politically and sexually.

The final chapter, will consider the implications of the Souths conception and defence of an idealised 'white womanhood', specifically investigating whether there can be more than one victim in this narrative: Dowd Hall suggests white women also suffered from subordination to white men.⁴⁷ However evidence from the Klan Trials will instead support the view of Emma Coleman Jordan: white women upheld the lynch law tradition to protect their own position within the social hierarchy.⁴⁸ Despite their paradoxical situation, many successfully wielded power from a position of

⁴⁴ Michael J Pfeifer, *The Roots of Rough Justice: Origins of American Lynching*, (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2011) pp.67-68

⁴⁵ Emma Coleman Jordan, "Crossing the River of Blood Between Us: Lynching, Violence, Beauty and the Paradox of Feminist History", *Journal of Gender, Race and Justice*, Vol 3 (Spring 2000) p.557

⁴⁶ Klan Trials: *Report of the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States*, Volumes 1-13, 1872.

⁴⁷ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign against Lynching* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1993)

⁴⁸ Emma Coleman Jordan, "Crossing the River of Blood Between Us", p.556

subordination, through passive aggressive rape cries or active domestic duties within the KKK itself.⁴⁹ However, whilst the role of white women remains a topic for debate, there can be no question over the vulnerable position black women found themselves in upon emancipation. Evidence from the Klan Trials detail many accounts of violent assaults by white men against black women, as they attempted to demonstrate their continued power through unrestrained access to the women they once viewed as property.⁵⁰ The use of the 'Jezebel' stereotype as justification for such assaults will be considered, in contrast to the unquestionable purity of white women.⁵¹

By exploring these themes this study hopes to prove that defeat in the Civil War led to an obsession with black sexuality, as white men came to terms with the emasculation of defeat, and feared the loss of political and sexual privileges - the latter of which they believed could have devastating effects on the racial hierarchy, upon which their lives had been built. Therefore, under the emotive and traditional rhetoric of protecting white womanhood, white racists began a violent campaign against black men's reputations and bodies to re-assert white masculinity. Despite the Klan's actions being justified as a method of defence against it, the most tangible threat of sexual violence in the American South during the late nineteenth century came from these white men themselves, as they terrorized the black community practicing the lynching of black men and rape of black women.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.563

⁵⁰ Klan Trials: *Report of the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States*, Volumes 1-13, 1872

⁵¹ Elizabeth Ann Beaulieu, *Writing African American Women*, (London; Greenwood Press, 2006)pp.474-475

Chapter One: Creating Hysteria

From the end of the Civil War, a wealth of literature and scholarly articles can be found perpetuating the characterisation of black men as sexual 'brutes'.⁵² Genetically designed to 'hunt' and 'violate' white women, the black man was considered as much a victim of his race's inbuilt weaknesses as the 'gentler sex'.⁵³ Novels and essays erupted simultaneously and attempted to legitimise claims using the racist scientific rhetoric of previous centuries. Darwin's theory of evolution proved to be highly influential.⁵⁴ From this, H.H Ellis developed the 'Science of Degeneracy', and argued physiognomy could be used to identify rapists, for example he described common traits to be an abundance of 'bestial hair', deformed noses and wide mouths.⁵⁵ Racial anxieties were paramount to fears of further degeneracy, as the 'recapitulation' theory suggested non-whites were stuck at lower levels of evolution.⁵⁶ George Dawson used this idea to suggest that sexual attacks by blacks had become common after emancipation because freedmen's natural 'savagery' had been unleashed into modern society.⁵⁷ This chapter will begin by looking at a selection of articles influenced by these theories of rape, analysing the language used to describe not only the perpetrator, but also the act and the victim. Subsequently, the literary work of Thomas Dixon and Thomas Nelson Page, who reinforced these ideas to huge commercial success, will

⁵² *The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia*, 'Ferris State University', <https://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/> [Accessed 10.11.19]

⁵³ Joanna Bourke, *Rape: A History from 1860 to the Present*, (London: Virago, 2007) p.92

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.96

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.92-93

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.95

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

be investigated.⁵⁸ The combined picture created by these authors, of a fearful and threatened South, supports the image depicted by the contemporary Dunning school, but not the reality: an inspection of data taken from contemporary news articles and the Klan trials will prove the increase in genuine rape cases perpetrated by black men was limited, and vastly disproportionate to the hysteria being created by whites and the mass media.⁵⁹ It will be proven that such an increase would have been an anomaly within the context of the larger patterns of rape in the nineteenth century, where rape was used as an extension of existing privilege, and expression of social control.⁶⁰ Finally, the motivation for such an engineered panic will be considered, before it is concluded that the hysteria surrounding rape was an expression of male insecurity after an emasculating defeat in the Civil War.⁶¹ The threat of rape provided an excuse for men to again fight for their honour and ideology, under the guise of doing it for their women, tapping into the chivalrous and patriotic southern identity that the Ku Klux Klan would adopt for white supremacist gains.⁶²

As already established, the depiction of black men as 'Sambo' or 'Uncle Tom' figures became redundant after slavery – they would no longer be portrayed as harmless or in need of protection, as they now wielded political power and increasing expectation of further progressive change.⁶³ Therefore, it was no coincidence that the 'brute'

⁵⁸ Catherine Silk and John Silk, *Racism and Anti-racism in American Popular Culture: Portrayals of African-Americans in Fiction and Film*, (Manchester; Manchester University Press, 1990) pp.48-49

⁵⁹ *Klan Trials: Report of the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States*, Volumes 1-13, 1872.

⁶⁰ Larry Baron and Murray A. Straus, *Four Theories of Rape in American Society*, (Yale; Yale University Press, 1989) p. 61

⁶¹ Kate Cote Gillen, *Shrill Hurrahs*, p.109

⁶² John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction After the Civil War*, p.154

⁶³ *The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia*, <https://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/> [Accessed 10.11.19]

stereotype emerged at this time, benefitting from a Western society 'deluged by a glossolalia of sexual violence'.⁶⁴ However, the extreme depiction of sexual assault as a predominantly black crime, and the emotive language used by Southern writers demonstrated how, in the redeemed South, this fascination became an obsession resulting in escalating hysteria.⁶⁵ Articles reporting real rapes are hard to find, yet opinion pieces describing the threatening bestial nature of the black man and possible 'solutions' are plentiful. For example, on November 30 in 1877, *The Salt Lake Herald* wrote, 'our women are at the mercy of the Negro brute, and lynching is sometimes necessary to quell the commission of this shocking crime'.⁶⁶ In 1895, the *Watchman and Southron* described black men as of 'small intellect, less moral sense but tremendous instincts... the sexual predominating... running out mainly towards our women. Make a eunuch of him and he has time to repent'.⁶⁷ Both of these examples demonstrate how the image of the brute was played in contrast to the vulnerable white woman, in need of protection. The *San Francisco Call* in April 1899 ran a piece suggesting all homes be made into 'miniature arsenals', and an 'occasional negro lying dead in the back yard shot by a brave woman in defence of her honour' would be a fair price to pay.⁶⁸ It should be noted that none of these examples explicitly use the word 'rape', instead using suggestion, and the innuendo of a white woman's 'honour'. Other terms frequently used in contemporary articles include 'violated', 'defiled', 'ruined' and

⁶⁴ Joanna Bourke, *Rape: A History from 1860 to the Present*, p.14

⁶⁵ Robert Nowatzki, "Race, Rape, Lynching, and Manhood Suffrage: Constructions of White and Black Masculinity in Turn-of-the-Century White Supremacist Literature." *The Journal of Men's Studies* 3, (November 1994) no. 2 p. 2

⁶⁶ *The Salt Lake Herald*, 30 November, 1877 1 chroniclingamerica.loc.gov [Accessed 11.10.19]

⁶⁷ *The Watchman and Southron*, September 18, 1895 1 chroniclingamerica.loc.gov [Accessed 11.10.19]

⁶⁸ *San Francisco Call* April 1899 1 chroniclingamerica.loc.gov [Accessed 11.10.19]

'ravished'.⁶⁹ This is revealing for two reasons: firstly it portrays a voiceless victim, told from the perspective of men viewing women as property, vulnerable to losing not only their honour, but also their value if 'ruined'. Secondly, the author speaks of defending 'womanhood', yet the language chosen instead threatens women into complying with a mythical, virginal womanhood, dependent on white male protection to protect both their bodies and reputation within society. Scholarly articles, written by contemporary social commentators, were even more explicit in explaining the supposed decline of black men from slavery into savagery. In 1901 G.T Winston wrote *The Relations of the Whites to Negroes*: he described a world prior to the Civil War as being one where women slept with doors unlocked, 'safely guarded by black men whose lives would be given in her defence'.⁷⁰ He contrasts this with the emancipated South, emotively describing how women now 'shudder with nameless horror' when a knock at the door is heard.⁷¹ The source of this horror is described frequently, in the most bestial way possible. He writes of a 'black brute... crazed with lust. His ferocity is almost demonical. A mad bull of tiger could scarcely be more brutal'.⁷² Winston explains this change in temperament of former slaves using similar metaphors, describing how whilst in bonds 'he was like an animal in harness; well trained, gentle and affectionate', and until Reconstruction enabled unrestrained wild excesses.⁷³ Thomas Nelson Page continued this theme in his 1904 article *The Lynching of Negroes – Its Causes and its Prevention*,

⁶⁹ 'Chronicling America Database', *Library of Congress*, chroniclingamerica.loc.gov [Accessed 17.11.19]

⁷⁰ Winston, George T. "The Relation of the Whites To the Negroes." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 18, no. 1 (July 1901): 108

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p109

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.114

blaming the experience of Reconstruction for changing black behaviour.⁷⁴ Page claimed the teaching that 'the Negro was the equal of the white, the white was his enemy and that he must assert his authority', led to a 'number of cases where the Negro militia ravished white women'.⁷⁵ Page gives no further information on these supposed 'ravishings'. He instead explains in greater detail his theory that the 'Negro had the same animal instincts in slavery', but that these were 'inflamed' by 'racial antagonism and the talk of racial equality', after being left undisciplined and unregulated.⁷⁶ Page goes on to consider that the black man does not believe in the virtue of women, and cannot comprehend the existence of actual assault, as since emancipation his controlling force has become his passion for white women.⁷⁷ These ideas became the foundation for the wave of popular literature that emerged from the South in the early twentieth century, reinforcing the myths of the Dunning school for decades to come, as the trope of the 'black brute' became deeply imbedded in the American subconscious.⁷⁸ Page himself wrote a series of fictional novels, for example 1898's *Red Rock*, where he depicts a black rapist called Moses, describing how he gave 'a snarl of rage and sprang at her like a wild beast' during an attempted assault on a white woman.⁷⁹ However, most influential was the work of Thomas Dixon, and his trilogy of stories romanticizing the Ku Klux Klan.⁸⁰ The second novel *The Clansman* featured a 'brute' character called Gus, and included the now predictable animal

⁷⁴ Page, Thomas Nelson. "The Lynching of Negroes: Its Cause and Its Prevention." *The North American Review* (1904) 178, no. 566 p. 36

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p44

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia*, <https://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/> [10.11.19]

⁷⁹ Thomas Nelson Page, *Red Rock*, (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1899) p.356

⁸⁰ Thomas Dixon, *The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* (Kentucky University Press: Kentucky, 1904)

metaphor, describing his rape of a white woman as 'a single tiger spring... the black claws of the beast sank into the soft white throat'.⁸¹ This novel had the most success, providing the story for the 1915 film *Birth of a Nation*, which is still considered a cinematic landmark today.⁸² The contemporary commercial success of such work is unsurprising, given the overriding themes of Dixon's work are based on the 'Lost Cause' myth of the Civil War, portraying a sentimental approach to previous race relations in the South.⁸³ This would have been well received by a population looking to absolve themselves from previous wrongdoing whilst simultaneously justifying their current brutal measures against black Americans who were the villains to the Klan heroes.

However, despite the image of the South these authors sought to create, little evidence supports the claim that black on white sexual assaults increased. That is not to say that there were not genuine instances of rape – in all Western societies where masculinity is encouraged, traits of dominance or aggression can be found, therefore rape is integral to the historic powerlessness of women, across race boundaries.⁸⁴ Establishing a true picture of sexual assaults in any period however, is incredibly complicated as the numbers of unreported incidents are unknown; whilst further ambiguity over what acts count as rape make any analytical interpretations problematic.⁸⁵ However, this study is concerned with proving the manipulation and

⁸¹ Ibid., p.306.

⁸² Richard Brody, "THE WORST THING ABOUT "BIRTH OF A NATION" IS HOW GOOD IT IS" *The New Yorker*, 1 February, 2013,

⁸³ Lewis, Michael, and Jacqueline Serbu. "Kommemorating the Ku Klux Klan." *The Sociological Quarterly*, 40, no. 1 (1999), p.143

⁸⁴ Larry Baron and Murray A. Straus, *Four Theories of Rape in American Society*, (Yale; Yale University Press, 1989) p.5

⁸⁵ Joanna Bourke, *Rape: A History from 1860 to the Present*, p.12

exaggeration of evidence, used by white supremacists, to further their cause and reverse the progression of the Reconstruction era. The Grand Wizard of the Klan, Nathan Forrest, crumbled when on trial in 1872 – despite his passionate talk of women being ‘ravished by negroes’, he was unable to point to any genuine cases, finally admitting his claims were based purely on hearsay.⁸⁶ A similar outcome emerged from the interrogation of many of the Klan’s followers and sympathisers, during 1872 Klan Trials. A Klan sympathiser called Beckley, from North Carolina, claimed Mecklenburg was ‘famous for rapes’, but failed to come up with specific examples.⁸⁷ Transcripts like these are common throughout the thirteen volume trial. Yet this did not seem to be enough to prevent panic from spreading, as for southern whites (perhaps due to the flood of racist rhetoric consumed via the media), ‘one case of rape by a negro upon a white woman was enough to alarm the whole people of the state’.⁸⁸ It was not only the frequency of rapes that were exaggerated, but the act itself – as non-sexual and non-threatening actions taken by black men, were interpreted to be so.⁸⁹ The subsequent punishment of these men, to be discussed presently, was also indistinguishable to those accused of greater sexual crimes.⁹⁰ Newspapers such as *The Appeal*, chart how out of the 2516 lynch cases between 1885 and 1901, only 314 were a result of rape.⁹¹ Therefore the testimony of Hargrove seems jarringly honest in its assessment of life in the South, as he described the blacks he interacted with as ‘humble and obedient’, dismissing fears of miscegenation.⁹² This directly relates to the wider theories on rape

⁸⁶ Klan Trials: Volumes 13, Florida, pp.14-15

⁸⁷ Klan Trials: Volumes 2, North Carolina, pp.68-69

⁸⁸ Klan Trials: Volumes 6, Georgia, p.338

⁸⁹ Martha Hodes, “The Sexualisation of Reconstruction Politics:”, p.409

⁹⁰ John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction After the Civil War*, p.157

⁹¹ ‘Over 3,000 Lynching’s in Twenty Years’ *The Appeal*, Vol. 17, No. 37, September 14, 1901.

⁹² Klan Trials: Volume 6, Georgia, p.695

today: rape is now considered, in line with feminist thinking, as being linked to the patriarchies way of maintaining power, and the socioeconomic resources this power is based on.⁹³ The white men of the redeemed South fit this model far better than the black men they accused; having been brought up with heavily traditional gender values, where 'sex role socialization is responsible for shaping men into assailants and women into victims'.⁹⁴ Therefore the use of the fear of rape, generated by these white men supported a double pronged attack for the Southern patriarchy, as their destruction of black men's characters included the suppression of white women through their dependency on white protection from the perceived threat. Yet with the application of logic this threat seems unlikely – why would black men, after waiting for so long, decide to swap one set of chains for another by committing heinous crimes - as from their vulnerable position in society capture was likely, rather than enjoying the freedom they had fought hard for?

Therefore, it can be assumed that these threats were for the most part imagined and exaggerated by the South, whilst Page and Walters's belief that emancipation had unleashed a previously tethered aspect of freedmen's characters, can be considered a fabrication, but for what purpose? Frederick Douglas was one of the first to link political power and sexuality, as he wrote it was 'only since the Negro became a citizen that this charge has been made... intended to blast and ruin the Negroes character as a man and a citizen.'⁹⁵ The prevention of interracial sex became paramount once freedmen had political rights and the potential to destroy the hierarchal system – further

⁹³ Larry Baron and Murray A. Straus, *Four Theories of Rape in American Society*, p. 5

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Martha Hodes, "The Sexualisation of Reconstruction Politics", pp.415-417

blurring of race lines would not be tolerated.⁹⁶ Hodes further explains this link, claiming whites looked to withhold black suffrage, as such agency had ‘a tendency to make him feel his manhood’, and the idea of ‘manhood’ expanded to include sexual offences with white women alongside the right to vote.⁹⁷ Despite the progress of Reconstruction developing slowly and incompletely, whites considered themselves to have been removed from their rightful superior position and subjugated by an inferior people.⁹⁸ In response to this, white supremacists began to write their own narrative, to discredit blacks, and replace slavery with a new legal framework of brutal suppression. Yet still, if it was really all about power, why was rape the chosen threat? Bourke relates this to an innate obsession with sexual violence still evident in society today, particularly visible in Hollywood and graphically descriptive news articles.⁹⁹ Today, as much as it was in the late nineteenth century, rape is used as a form of social control, where ‘all men keep all women in a state of fear’.¹⁰⁰ Therefore the creation of hysteria after the Civil War served two purposes for white supremacists: discrediting black men and reminding women of their dependency upon white men for protection. This dependency meant white women’s own status remained dependent on the precarious authority of white men, ensuring they would support and aid the white male supremacist regime.¹⁰¹ This coincidentally kept women in their place, as the ‘brute’ narrative only worked in conjunction with the naïve, obedient southern virgin.¹⁰² Submissive women limited the possibility of further suffrage expansion. Therefore,

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 403

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Lisa Cardyn, “Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence”, p.691

⁹⁹ Joanna Bourke, *Rape: A History from 1860 to the Present*, p.12

¹⁰⁰ Larry Baron and Murray A. Straus, *Four Theories of Rape in American Society*, p.5

¹⁰¹ Joanna Bourke, *Rape: A History from 1860 to the Present*, p.102

¹⁰² Larry Baron and Murray A. Straus, *Four Theories of Rape in American Society*, p.61

mourning the loss of their privilege, the South tapped into their chivalrous history to legitimize the terror they would unleash to protect their own honour as they sought revenge for their emasculating defeat in the Civil War: the imagined threat provided the smokescreen necessary to justify brutal punishment and a reversal of Reconstruction progress.

To conclude, using a history of racist science to feign legitimacy, the South attempted to justify the transition of the black harmless 'Sambo' stereotype, to that of the bestial 'Brute'; unable to control his passions, as an innate threat to white womanhood. This caricature, regardless of its illegitimacy, would remain harmful and influential for decades to come in novels and films, due to the huge traction it gained in the late nineteenth century. The white South sought to re-establish the power they had lost during the Civil War and this myth enabled them to do so in defence of their own ideology, drawing on the traditions of their past such as chivalry and patriotism to gain support and compliance. The extent to which insecure white manhood had been scarred by the Civil War will become even more evident, as the purpose and methods of lynch culture is next explored.

Chapter Two: Lynch Law and Sexuality

The primitive sexual appetite, now associated with blackness, successfully perpetuated the narrative of rape, translating the white supremacists crisis of emancipation from economic to sexual terms.¹⁰³ This myth provided the justification necessary for the destruction of the 'black beast', allowing the white males to simultaneously reclaim his hyper masculinity and uphold racial identities.¹⁰⁴ White supremacist groups spread quickly throughout the former confederate states, exploiting the mood of fear and uncertainty to offer a new kind of sexualized politics, with ominous warnings about the dangers of racial equality.¹⁰⁵ The most famous of the these groups, the Ku Klux Klan headed by former Confederate general Nathan Forrest, included members from all classes and employed tactics including whipping, rape, castration and murder.¹⁰⁶ This chapter will examine the aims of this organisation's reign of terror, considering the rise of popular justice, the structure and function of the Klan in its role as defender of the old social order, policing all behaviour perceived to be 'sexually transgressive'.¹⁰⁷ Next, the support for lynch culture through mob violence will be analysed, whilst the sexualised nature of the punishment, regardless of the crime, is noted through the study of first-hand accounts recorded during the 1872 Klan Trials.¹⁰⁸ Finally, the symbolic purpose of this male-on-male sexual violence will be analysed, to discover how white men sought to feminize black men both politically and

¹⁰³ Robyn Wiegman "The Anatomy of Lynching", *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, (January 1993) Vol. 3, No. 3, pp.446-457

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.464-465

¹⁰⁵ Martha Hodes, "The Sexualisation of Reconstruction Politics War", p.404.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.405

¹⁰⁷ Lisa Cardyn, "Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence", p.763

¹⁰⁸ *Klan Trials: Report of the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States*, Volumes 1-13, 1872.

sexually, in response to the masculine 'sameness' which had arrived with emancipation.¹⁰⁹ It will be concluded that the fear of extending privileges of the patriarchy to black men was exacerbated by the Western relationship between masculinity and 'conquest': white men reduced the black male to a body of mythical excess, from which a symbolic transfer of sexual power could be exchanged at the point of execution.¹¹⁰

From 1860 onwards, attacks on former slaves were reported the Freedmen's Bureau, and within months the Klan perfected its mantra, spreading the values of "chivalry and patriotism", formed by an instinct of 'self-protection' against the perceived threat of black supremacy.¹¹¹ This wide scale counter-reconstruction unleashed escalating violence against the black community, supported by racist county newspapers, such as the *New Orleans Picayune*, who claimed extra-legal justice to be more efficient than legal process.¹¹² Others claimed execution without trial demonstrated a more convenient, faster and cheaper solution to black criminality, and with the support of influential republicans like Ben Tillman, lynching became more brutal, and torture more prominent, as whites sought to convey their superiority.¹¹³ The public spectacle of this development, enabled white men to reassert their desired role, described by David Gilmore as "Man: Impregnator, protector, provider".¹¹⁴ For this to be effective, women had to assume a role of purity and virginal innocence: defence of their 'virtue' was symbolic of their defence of the white race.¹¹⁵ Therefore, the Klan also policed the

¹⁰⁹ Robyn Wiegman "The Anatomy of Lynching", p.450

¹¹⁰ Ibid, pp.464-465

¹¹¹ John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction After the Civil War*, pp.153-156

¹¹² Michael J Pfeifer, *The Roots of Rough Justice: Origins of American Lynching*, p.85

¹¹³ Kate Cote Gillen, *Shrill Hurrahs*, pp.107-108

¹¹⁴ Kris Durocher, *Southern Masculinity*, p.47

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.55

behaviour of women, employing equally brutal sanctions against those thought to be engaging in illicit behaviour with black men – this will be explored in greater detail presently.¹¹⁶ Yet some hypocrisy persisted throughout their policing, as Klan members who had engaged in sexual relations with black women were ignored, whereas white men whose ideologies did not align with the Klan faced violent retribution for the same act.¹¹⁷ Weigman argues that the myth of the black rapist masked white men's historical participation in 'miscengenating' activities.¹¹⁸ Offences such as using prostitutes or having affairs, were also hypocritically punishable offences in the eyes of the Klan, alongside drinking and rumours of abortion, as they sought to win the support of those living within the 'bible belt'.¹¹⁹ Therefore, as the defeat of the Civil War loomed large in the memories of the white south, racists sought to reassert their authority through a new regime - the rule of law became mob rule, growing in confidence as federal government failed to effectively intervene.¹²⁰ With an audience of women and children central to its performative nature, the ritualized lynching of black men became a habit, enabled by the broad consensus supporting it.¹²¹

The nature of lynch culture will now be considered, to understand how sexualised violence promoted the realisation of a racist agenda, through a series of ritualized assaults designed to strip black men of the mythical sexual power white men had first handed them, and the political possibilities they saw as intrinsically connected to

¹¹⁶ Martha Hodes, "The Sexualisation of Reconstruction Politics", p.410

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p413

¹¹⁸ Robyn Wiegman "The Anatomy of Lynching", p.450

¹¹⁹ Martha Hodes, "The Sexualisation of Reconstruction Politics", p.413.

¹²⁰ Emma Coleman Jordan, "Crossing the River of Blood Between Us", p.560-561

¹²¹ Ibid., pp.556-557

this.¹²² We must first return to the narrative explored in Chapter One, and the transformation of black characterisation from the feminized docile Uncle Tom to the hyper masculinized sex offender.¹²³ White reaction to this perceived threat led to the transformation of the verb ‘to lynch’ to mean execution, as it became predominantly associated with violence against black Americans.¹²⁴ Participants and supporters at the time, justified the whipping, castration and murder of freedmen by suggesting no other alternatives were effective or available to relieve the terror that the white South lived under, perpetuating the Dunning School’s era of ‘black supremacy’ and corrupt radical republican government.¹²⁵ However, whilst the ‘etiquette of lynching’ required an offence against the dominant racial order, it is evident that lynching became obsessed with the eradication of black masculinity. Whilst the Grand Dragon, Forrest, may have played down the political aspect of his objectives, evidence from the Klan Trials suggest otherwise, demonstrating how the fear of interracial sex and black male political independence often collided.¹²⁶ For example, the testimony of Henry Lowther recorded at the Georgia trials, tells the story of his castration at the hands of the Klan.¹²⁷ At first he was attacked for his support of the republican party and for having ‘too much money’, yet when pushed by the judge, who refused to believe such violence could have been inflicted on a political matter alone, Lowther admitted to sexual intercourse with a white woman.¹²⁸ Another example of castration can be found in the account of William Stallings, who tells the brutal story of a couple accused of interracial

¹²² Trudier Harris, *Exorcising Blackness: Historical and Literary Lynching and Burning Rituals* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) p.23

¹²³ Robyn Wiegman “The Anatomy of Lynching”, p.459

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.454

¹²⁵ William Archibald Dunning, *Reconstruction, Political and Economic 1865-1877*,

¹²⁶ Martha Hodes, “The Sexualisation of Reconstruction Politics”, p.414.

¹²⁷ Klan Trials 6, Georgia, pp.356-63

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

cohabitation, where the black man was given the choice of severing his own penis or burning to death.¹²⁹ The sexual aspect of genital mutilation is obvious, as whilst its crude, primary function served to destroy the 'sameness' of black and white masculinity that threatened the patriarchy, the act itself required perverse intimacy.¹³⁰ Harris notes how lynchers often kept pieces of the genitals, and suggests that this embracing of the penis they were determined to destroy displays 'a sadistic enactment of the homoerotic in its most extreme disavowal'.¹³¹ Sexual overtones are also evident in the whippings carried out by Klan members, for example George Taylor describes how he was awoken in the middle of the night and taken outside to be whipped.¹³² Afterwards, whilst one man sat on his head, Taylor says a sharp instrument was 'stuck into him'.¹³³ By doing so, the Klan humiliated and feminized their victim through rape, yet these male on male assaults have rarely been branded as such, as the vulnerability of black men to sexual abuse did not fit the narrative either side wanted to portray.¹³⁴ Such treatment however, was not reserved only for black men, as the testimony by the white William Champion demonstrates.¹³⁵ Champion, accused of being too friendly with black men in the area, was stripped and whipped, before being forced to kiss a black man's posterior.¹³⁶ He was then made to whip the same man whilst the Klan watched.¹³⁷ Sexualised whippings demonstrate how physical pain was not enough, and sadistic pleasure was gained from the spectacle of humiliation, created by forcing victims to

¹²⁹ Klan Trials 6, Georgia, p.1120

¹³⁰ Robyn Wiegman "The Anatomy of Lynching", pp.465-466

¹³¹ Trudier Harris, *Exorcising Blackness*, p.23

¹³² Klan Trials 8, Alabama, p.572

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Niambi Carter, 'Intimacy without Consent', p.17

¹³⁵ Klan Trial 3, South Carolina, p.366

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

dance, feign sex acts or harm others.¹³⁸ However, the deadliest ritual of all, the act of lynching itself, was predominantly reserved for black African Americans accused of sexual assault against white women, with the concept of sexual assault itself becoming increasingly elastic when relating to black men.¹³⁹ Complimenting a white women was deemed worthy of public execution by some Southerners, and in other cases allegations were wholly fabricated, as seems to have been the case of John Walthall who was beaten to death by the Klan who, on the night of his murder, accused him of 'always running after white women'.¹⁴⁰ Walthall denied this accusation before his death, and character witnesses who had known the victim for many years attested at the later trials that these rumours began only after his murder.¹⁴¹ The judge notes that Walthall had recently voted the Union ticket, implying this was the true motivation for his execution.¹⁴² Yet for the perpetrators, the political and the sexual were one and the same, as they both provided black men the possibility of weakening the hierarchal structure and blurring colour lines.¹⁴³ Therefore, Weigman considers the ritual of lynching to have been a necessarily sexualising and engendering process: the mob severs the man from his masculinity either through castration or total submission to his fate.¹⁴⁴ He is feminized, his body dehumanized, no longer symbolically suitable for enfranchisement.¹⁴⁵ Yet whilst lynching involving castration is the most obvious link to sexuality, Harris argues that lynching itself represents the communal rape of the black man, as they 'violate him by exposing the most private parts of his body... forcing him

¹³⁸ Lisa Cardyn, "Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence", pp. 707-708

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.765

¹⁴⁰ Klan Trial 6, Georgia, pp.474-476

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Martha Hodes, "The Sexualisation of Reconstruction Politics", p.415-417

¹⁴⁴ Robyn Wiegman "The Anatomy of Lynching", pp.465-466

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

finally into ultimate submission to them'.¹⁴⁶ From this the victim becomes a source of sexual pleasure to his murderers, and dozens of bystanders.¹⁴⁷ As rumours of rape became the 'folk pornography of the Bible Belt', the mob mentality of lynching protected the perpetrators by ensuring everyone held some culpability.¹⁴⁸ For whites the atmosphere has been described as 'orgy-like', drawing in crowds of up to 10,000 witnesses, whilst the nature of such a large public spectacle added an extra dimension to its terroristic effect on the black community as the true extent of mob rule, and the norths passive acceptance of illegal executions, became apparent.¹⁴⁹ This gave whites authority over all social spaces, as blacks lived within a vigilant and violent system of surveillance, as the dominant race watched, ready to pounce on any perceived misdemeanour.¹⁵⁰

Through the examples given above, how the Ku Klux Klan used terrorism to rearticulate the social hierarchies briefly lost during the transition from slavery to emancipation can be understood. However, why the sexualisation, of both the crime and the punishment, became central to this campaign requires further thought, to understand how wounded white 'manhood' sought to control the mythical masculinity of black men to regain control over their own repressed sexuality.¹⁵¹ Firstly, it is interesting to remember that this type of vigilantism already had a long history in America, and in some ways was a continuation of the mythic 'Wild West', perpetuated in popular culture, as discontented groups had historically used violence to convey

¹⁴⁶ Trudier Harris, *Exorcising Blackness*, p.23

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p.758

¹⁴⁹ Emma Coleman Jordan, "Crossing the River of Blood Between Us", p.559

¹⁵⁰ Robyn Wiegman "The Anatomy of Lynching", p.455

¹⁵¹ Paul Hoch, *White Hero, Black Beast: Racism, Sexism and the Mask of Masculinity* (London: Pluto Press, 1979) p.54

their grievances against indifferent governments.¹⁵² However, the objectives of the Klan differ, as despite attempts at legitimacy, their program was racist and parochial rather than defensive, designed to ensure that equality for black men remained rhetorical, rather than political, economic or social.¹⁵³ Black male suffrage would take privileges such as property rights away from white masculinity, and the loss of a free labour force after emancipation threatened white economic security and increased competition amongst the white labouring class.¹⁵⁴ With the aid of the Freedmen's Bureau, black men took a 'natural' position over black women mirroring the gender codes of white families, following bourgeois ideology – this perceived 'sameness' threatened whites, who feared black men's rights over unfranchised white women were a threat to interracial relations.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, through the narrative of the rape myth, whites took action to prevent the move towards citizenship translating the crisis from one of economic to sexual terms.¹⁵⁶ The fear of economic power leading to sexual power, is clearly evident in the castration of Henry Lowther.¹⁵⁷ The terror of the potential outcome and total collapse of the racial hierarchy as a result of black political and sexual agency led to the crude desire to castrate black men both psychically and metaphorically - the rape narrative provided this opportunity.¹⁵⁸ Therefore, Harris argues white men invented the mythical excess of black masculinity for the purpose of withdrawing it through the rituals of lynching, as the stripping of the black man's power publically returned power to the white male, as he 'craves the very thing he seeks to

¹⁵² Emma Coleman Jordan, "Crossing the River of Blood Between Us", p.792

¹⁵³ Lisa Cardyn, "Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence", p. 796

¹⁵⁴ Robyn Wiegman "The Anatomy of Lynching", p.454

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., pp.457-458

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p.456

¹⁵⁷ Klan Trial 6, Georgia, pp.356-63

¹⁵⁸ Robyn Wiegman "The Anatomy of Lynching", p.465

destroy', reclaiming white hyper-masculinity and gender identities.¹⁵⁹ Dominating men sexually and physically aimed to threaten freed men into a metaphorical feminization, and the forfeiting of the rights of manhood.¹⁶⁰ Additionally, the methods of whipping and other physical forms of torture recalled the violence of slavery, whilst the harshness of lynch culture attempted to recreate the illusion of lost mastery, as the white mob controlled the black body, deciding who lived or died.¹⁶¹

In summary, the Ku Klux Klan established itself as defender of Southern honour in response to the constructed threat of excessive black masculinity. The crimes and their punishment, revolved around sexual assault, as white men projected their own feelings of castration after the Civil War onto the freedmen whose rise threatened the continuation of the white patriarchy, both politically and physically. Yet it was not only black men who suffered at the hands of lynch culture, and the continued subjugation of black women after emancipation will now be discussed, alongside the debated role of white women, as both victims and victimisers.

¹⁵⁹ Trudier Harris, *Exorcising Blackness*, p.23

¹⁶⁰ Lisa Cardyn, "Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence", p. 796

¹⁶¹ Robyn Wiegman "The Anatomy of Lynching", p.466

Chapter Three: The Virgin and the Jezebel – Conceptions of Womanhood

This study has so far focused on black and white masculinity, with the role of women secondary. This chapter aims to address that, remembering that female sexuality is not merely reactive, and women are more than spectacles of victimisation.¹⁶² Therefore, whilst the traditional view that white women were subordinated by white men, to varying degrees depending on class, will be considered first, this study will then go on to consider why the majority of females accepted the racism integral to the patriarchy to maintain their own status.¹⁶³ The extent to which some white women played an active role in oppressing the black community will then be acknowledged, as the enfranchisement of black men eclipsed their own progression, and black women emerged, rhetorically, as their equal.¹⁶⁴ The continued abuse of black women will finally be considered as, dehumanized by racial stereotypes, white men freely raped and assaulted black female bodies in a display of masculinity designed to reassert authority sexually and politically.¹⁶⁵

Early feminist historians suggest three victims of hyper white masculinity in the post Reconstruction era: black men, black women, and white women.¹⁶⁶ The belief that white women as a gender were subordinated by white men is undeniable, despite infinite examples demonstrating how some women manipulated their submissive role to exude power.¹⁶⁷ The rape-lynch complex, engineered by Southern racists for reasons already addressed, also hid fears that white men were losing sexual control

¹⁶² Joanna Bourke, *Rape: A History from 1860 to the Present*, pp.7-11

¹⁶³ Emma Coleman Jordan, "Crossing the River of Blood Between Us", p.567

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.571

¹⁶⁵ Lisa Cardyn, "Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence", p.721

¹⁶⁶ Emma Coleman Jordan, "Crossing the River of Blood Between Us", p.567

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

over white women who might otherwise seek out increasingly powerful black sexual partners, by making it undeniably clear that no 'decent' white women would engage in illicit relations with bestial black men.¹⁶⁸ The fear of rape alone, according to Baron and Straus, can be used to put 'women back in their place', and white men's perpetuation of the rape myth aided their attempt to rollback not only the progression of emancipation, but prevent any further challenges to the patriarchy, such as the feminist suffrage movement, gaining traction.¹⁶⁹ Therefore, ideology on the iconic purity and innocence of white womanhood increased alongside its antithesis, black male sexual excess, to encourage the historic feeling of powerlessness among females, integral to maintaining white male dominance.¹⁷⁰ With genuine hysteria regarding their safety running high, women may have adopted the required submissive role in exchange for the protection being offered by white men, choosing gender subordination and to uphold racial superiority as a form of self-protection during a violent and volatile period.¹⁷¹ Interracial couples, who went against this ideology, received none of the toleration shown during the antebellum years, were poorer women, who were considered the depraved agents of illicit activities, may have been ostracized and scorned, but were left physically unharmed.¹⁷² After emancipation the taboo of interracial sex increased and racial ideology replaced class ideology as paramount – even poor white women were expected to play their part, and horrific punishments inflicted on those found engaging in illicit liaisons, as the Klan sought to deter further

¹⁶⁸ Kris Durocher, *Southern Masculinity: Perspectives on Manhood in the South Since Reconstruction*, p.55

¹⁶⁹ Larry Baron and Murray A. Straus, *Four Theories of Rape in American Society*, p. 5

¹⁷⁰ Lisa Cardyn, "Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence", p.475

¹⁷¹ Emma Coleman Jordan, "Crossing the River of Blood Between Us", p.567

¹⁷² Martha Hodes, "The Sexualisation of Reconstruction Politics", p.403

miscegenation.¹⁷³ Many examples of this can be found within the testimonies given at the Klan Trials. The William Stallings account, not only detailed the castration of the black man for interracial cohabitation, but also the fate of the female: ‘they took the woman, laid her down on the ground, then cut a slit on each side of her orifice, put a large padlock in it, locked it up, and threw away the key, then turned her loose’.¹⁷⁴ Unfortunately, this kind of genital mutilation was not unique, but used as a form of discipline against white women considered to be ‘of low character’, who risked weakening the white race.¹⁷⁵ Punishments focusing on female reproductive organs might be interpreted as symbolic for the same reason men were castrated – if women failed to uphold the expected gender norms, their gender, and the privilege of gentler treatment granted by ‘femininity’, would be removed from them. The trials also describe how white women who attempted to help black men by informing on the Klan, were subjected to rituals of sexualised whippings, and in some instances, like the case of Mrs Riddle from Alabama, died from their injuries. In these circumstances of extraordinary violence, it can be assumed many women may have been scared into compliance, out of fear for their physical wellbeing and reputation.¹⁷⁶ Women who chose black sexual partners were targeted, as supremacists argued no ‘decent’ or truly ‘white’ women, would desire such a man.¹⁷⁷ An exchange between the white Caldwell and a judge at the Georgia Klan Trials depicts this, as when describing a woman accused of soliciting a black man, the judge asks ‘was she one of those low down tramps we have scattered about the country?’¹⁷⁸ Many similar questions posed by the

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Klan Trials 7, Georgia, p.1120

¹⁷⁵ Lisa Cardyn, “Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence”, p.743

¹⁷⁶ Klan Trials 8, Alabama, p.157

¹⁷⁷ Lisa Cardyn, “Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence”, p.743

¹⁷⁸ Klan Trials 6, Georgia, p.431.

committee at the trials include these insinuations, as white female victims of the Klan were referred to as women of 'bad character' and the 'worst kind'.¹⁷⁹ The link between sexual immorality and political power is evident in questions put forward, as judges would ask whether women whipped for sexual transgressions were thought to be radical, or 'union women'.¹⁸⁰ However, whilst lower class 'depraved' women were not protected by white purity ideology, amongst the middle and upper classes, girls were taught from an early age of their dependency on white men, as the protection of whiteness remained paramount to ensure their continued elite position.¹⁸¹ Prohibited from following ordinary passions, girls were also contradictorily told to fear their desires and regard their bodies as things of shame whilst simultaneously regarding their white femininity as a source of 'pride and strength'.¹⁸² Therefore, white women across classes were detrimentally impacted, albeit in different ways, by the measures white men took to prevent interracial sex and secure their position at the top of the social hierarchy for generations to come. Women faced two threats, one genuine and one imagined: the violence of the white man's retribution and the sexual violence of the black. The majority however, accepted the former in defence of the latter as the rape myth proved most pervasive, and women performed the role ascribed to them in exchange for their safety and reputation. However, modern feminists acknowledge the vast benefits white supremacy granted white women, and question the extent to which

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p.413

¹⁸⁰ Klan Trials 9, Alabama, p.772

¹⁸¹ Kris Durocher, *Southern Masculinity: Perspectives on Manhood in the South Since Reconstruction*, pp. 48-50

¹⁸² Ibid.

white women played an active role in ensuring the continuation of their white privilege, rather than passively accepting their circumstances.¹⁸³

The erasure of lynching from American history is vastly problematic, as this unpleasant legacy of trauma was first recorded by the Dunning Schools, portraying white violence as heroic.¹⁸⁴ Over time these myths became history, as white academics failed to apply the critical thinking which would shatter this image.¹⁸⁵ Jordan argues whilst the role of white disappeared from the formal histories like 'invisible ink', in reality their complicity was vital in establishing and maintaining a gender and racial hierarchy based on sexuality.¹⁸⁶ Whilst traditional interpretations would deny the presence of women altogether at a lynching, and early feminist historians emphasise female anti-lynching campaigners, Jordan puts female collaboration central, suggesting even those fighting lynch law did so to benefit themselves.¹⁸⁷ Enjoying the power of speaking on topics outside of their 'sphere' such as sex and race, these women maintained negative black stereotypes, decrying actions by black men that may 'excite mob spirit' rather than those in the mob themselves, and opposed the participation of black women.¹⁸⁸ White women with more extreme racist views were excluded from Klan membership themselves, but participated in different ways, taking on domestic duties sewing clothes or lending their own as disguises.¹⁸⁹ Whilst the performative nature of lynching can be understood as a means to control white female behaviour, the 'orgy-like' atmosphere described by Patterson, does not support the view of a passive and

¹⁸³ Emma Coleman Jordan, "Crossing the River of Blood Between Us", p.571

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p.562

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p.558

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p.554-555

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Martha Hodes, "The Sexualisation of Reconstruction Politics", pp.408-409

subdued audience, but instead portrays an excited and provocative one.¹⁹⁰ Whilst actual female participation in the violence of lynching was unusual, restricted by the necessity to outwardly uphold innocent femininity, in many cases the event itself was triggered by the false or unproven claims of white women who then sat back, allowing their husbands or son to commit barbarity on their behalf.¹⁹¹ A description from the Georgia Klan Trials shows how the female's anonymity was protected, whilst the man she accused had been executed on as little information as 'they *said* there had been a rape'.¹⁹² It can be assumed, that many rape accusations occurred when consensual relations between black men and white women came to light, as females sought to save their reputation and themselves from the Klan's retribution.¹⁹³ These accusations were readily believed by the Klan, supporting their ideology that no woman would willingly have sex with a black man and providing justification for terrorization of the black community.¹⁹⁴ The extent to which white men were prepared to believe the accusations of white women is evident in their outrage at Ida B. Wells's suggestion that the increase in rape in emancipation was fundamentally unbelievable, reasoning that freedom and education could not be more brutalizing than slavery.¹⁹⁵ She instead suggested a growing 'appreciation of white Juliet's for coloured Romeos', and that many relations were consensual.¹⁹⁶ In *Southern Horrors*, Wells tells the story of a white lady, Mrs. Underwood, who accused William Offett of rape. Offett was sentenced to prison for fifteen years before Mrs Underwood confessed she had 'readily

¹⁹⁰ Orlando Patterson, *Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries* (London: Civitas, 1998) pp.193

¹⁹¹ Emma Coleman Jordan, "Crossing the River of Blood Between Us", p.571

¹⁹² Klan Trials 6, Georgia, 1972, p. 214

¹⁹³ Emma Coleman Jordan, "Crossing the River of Blood Between Us", p.571

¹⁹⁴ Lisa Cardyn, 'Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence'p.824

¹⁹⁵ Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in all its Phases* (Global Grey, 2008) p. 6

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.7

consented'.¹⁹⁷ The affair had continued because Mrs Underwood 'could not have resisted and had no desire to resist'.¹⁹⁸ Later however, fearing exposure, she had made up the rape charge to save her reputation.¹⁹⁹ Mrs Underwood's truth came out four years into Offett's prison sentence – luckily he had avoided extra-legal justice long enough to be exonerated.²⁰⁰ It is impossible to know how many women suffered similar feelings of regret after their accusations led to lynchings from which there could be no acquittal, in a desperate bid to save themselves. Whilst they had much to fear from the power and violence of the Klan, in many ways white women created their own prison of subordination - by accepting white male protection they created a cycle of dependency from which the submission of their gender was essential to the continuation of white supremacy. Women's status was tied to the precarious white patriarchy, and with the South looking to roll back the progression of the reconstruction era, their own enfranchisement seemed unlikely, so instead they fought to discredit the rights of freed men and retain their position in the social hierarchy using the only weapons available – their femininity and sexuality.²⁰¹

Yet white women did not only try to sustain the oppression of black men, but also black women who had emerged from emancipation with, rhetorically, equal freedom to themselves.²⁰² Rather than joining together to fight the patriarchy, white feminists not only excluded black females from their movement, but allowed their husbands and

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p.8

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p.9

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Kris Durocher, *Southern Masculinity: Perspectives on Manhood in the South Since Reconstruction*, pp. 54

²⁰² Martha Hodes, "The Sexualisation of Reconstruction Politics", p.552

sons to continue the sexual abuse of the freed women in their employment.²⁰³²⁰⁴ The latter point, perhaps explains the former, as white women hoped to hold onto genetic exclusivity privileges which ensured, through the laws of bastardry, that they alone could produce legitimate heirs and retain control of the heirs economic status.²⁰⁵ With their own position pushed below the newly enfranchised freed men, white women sought to dispel the 'sameness' of their gender, and perpetuated their superiority to black women, to ensure they maintained some power over the social hierarchy.²⁰⁶ Therefore, as the ideology of white womanhood expanded, so did the idea of the over-sexed black 'Jezebel' – the female counter part to the black brute.²⁰⁷ Whilst the brute was a prolific rapist, the Jezebel was un-rapeable, and it was with this justification that white men continued the assault of black women that had been prolific under slavery due to their exclusion from law of rape.²⁰⁸²⁰⁹ After emancipation, freed females were granted ownership of their bodies, yet evidence given in the Klan Trials suggests throughout this period women became more vulnerable to assault as white men refused to freely give up their entitlement to black bodies.²¹⁰ To reclaim this access, tactics of intimidation, or worse, were used, as now women were no longer recognised as the property of one man, they became available to all.²¹¹ Perpetrators need not fear punishment by the law, as the overwhelmingly corrupted local authorities justified the

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Mary E. Odem, *Lethal Imagination: Violence and Brutality in American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1999) p.366

²⁰⁵ Emma Coleman Jordan, "Crossing the River of Blood Between Us", p.575

²⁰⁶ Sujata Moorti, *Color of Rape: Gender and Race in Television's Public Spheres* (New York: New York Press, 2002)p.56

²⁰⁷ Elizabeth Ann Beaulieu, *Writing African American Women*, p.474

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Lisa Cardyn, "Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence", pp.716-717

²¹⁰ Ibid., p.726

²¹¹ Ibid., p.718

male's actions using the promiscuous Jezebel stereotype.²¹² It is easy to see the abuse of these females as intrinsically sexual, as we already recognise the historic sexual violations they faced under slavery, yet many tactics used were the same as those deployed during the male-on-male assaults already discussed: whippings focusing on the breasts, ritualized stripping and humiliation, and genital mutilation.²¹³ Yet, the rage which prompted such barbarity to be inflicted on black males, stemmed from enfranchisement diluting the white patriarchy, and the whites subsequent need to prove their superior masculinity as they perceived their entire way of life to be under attack – unfranchised women posed no such threat, so how can the parallel extreme violence they endured be explained? Cardyn argues the rape of black women was a continuation of a broader system of oppression, that had long been used as an instrument to assert racial and gender authority, and this may be true.²¹⁴ However, it does not explain the need for the increasingly brutal rituals inflicted by white men, as according to sociologists, the fear of rape alone restricts women's behaviour and inhibits their participation in society.²¹⁵ Other theories suggest rape to be more likely in a society where women are regarded as sexual possessions of men, and these men sustain their power by imposing their rights with force – the link between this scenario and newly freed women is obvious, as with their perceived political power weakened by law, white men sought to ensure their sexual power remained unaltered, in defiance of further progression.²¹⁶ The frequency of assaults perpetrated by white males is clear in the Klan Trial testimonies, for example, in Georgia the white witness Hargrove

²¹² Elizabeth Ann Beaulieu, *Writing African American Women*, p.474

²¹³ Niambi Carter, 'Intimacy without Consent: Lynching as Sexual Violence', p.418

²¹⁴ Lisa Cardyn, "Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence", p.472

²¹⁵ Larry Baron and Murray A. Straus, *Four Theories of Rape in American Society*, p.5

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.61

speaks with surprising honesty when pressed by the judge about the 'conduct of negroes', and asked whether there were grounds to 'fear miscegenation with the coloured race', replying that in fact it was 'all on the other foot', and that 'coloured women have a great deal more to fear from white men'.²¹⁷ In North Carolina, a witness confirmed the assault of black females had been 'very common'.²¹⁸ Yet, in contrast to accusations made by white women, black females faced huge challenges when reporting their abusers, as their accounts were met with scepticism and inaction, despite their rapists often being known to them and identifiable.²¹⁹ This was the case for Ellen Parton who was raped by eight white intruders in her home, recognising one of her attackers she called for his protection, but was instead ordered to 'do what he said'.²²⁰ Parton reported her attack the following day, yet no arrests were made.²²¹ Many black women never came forward at all, as they feared reprisals by their assailant or the wider white community. Martha Harris, for example, was warned by her attacker that if she told anyone he would 'beat her to death'.²²² It is therefore difficult to accurately discover how many black women were subjected to such abuse throughout the late nineteenth century. The escalating brutality however, is plainly evident in the case of Rhoda Ann Childs, a freed woman married to a former Union soldier.²²³ She was stripped, whipped and raped, before being raped with a gun - her attacker said he had 'a hell of a mind to pull the trigger' whilst the weapon was inside her.²²⁴ These men were no longer content with 'ordinary' rape, instead seeking further

²¹⁷ Klan Trials 6, Georgia, pp.82-83

²¹⁸ Klan Trials 2, North Carolina, p.99

²¹⁹ Lisa Cardyn, "Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence", p.721

²²⁰ Klan Trials 11, Mississippi, p.38

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Klan Trials 2, North Carolina, p.148

²²³ Lisa Cardyn, "Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence", pp.726-727

²²⁴ Ibid.

humiliation and submission: the symbolic connotations of a gun inserted into a vagina are obvious. The husband's role, as a Union soldier, suggests that perhaps the female was not the key antagonist, but was instead used by white men to punish and emasculate her husband, by demonstrating his inability to defend his wife.²²⁵ Similar cases are common, as freedmen's wives or children were assaulted by the Klan, almost as an afterthought to the original attacks planned on black men, to ensure compliance.²²⁶ Sometimes, being in the wrong place at the wrong time resulted in disaster, for example, Edward Carter's daughter walked in on her father being attacked and was carried half a mile from the house before being 'ravished' by Klan members.²²⁷ Many assaults like this were triggered by the black male's support of republican politics.²²⁸ In contradiction to the whites own fears of miscegenation it seems the consequences of their actions on black women were considered collateral damage, burdening only their dehumanized victims, as babies born to a black mother would be legally recognized as black.²²⁹ Finally, it is worth noting the 'gang' rape nature of assaults by white men against black women, as whilst 'watching violent sex is itself a sexual act', it also demonstrates the extreme narcissistic need of white men to not only rape, but to witness each other's triumph in the act, and collectively congratulate themselves on their power and masculinity, irrespective of the weakness of their victim.²³⁰ The abuse of these freed women demonstrates the continued obsession of white men with sexuality and supremacy, as they used rape to control black

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid., p.721

²²⁷ Klan Report 12, Mississippi, p. 1084

²²⁸ Lisa Cardyn, "Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence", pp.726-727

²²⁹ Donna Franklin, *What's love got to do with it? Healing the rift between black men and women* (New York: Touchstone, 2001)P.31

²³⁰ Lisa Cardyn, "Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence", p.730

communities, demonstrating their continued power through unrestrained access to the women they once viewed as property.

In summary, the methods white men used to reassert their masculinity impacted the lives of both black and white women, as racism and sexism were both required to restore the patriarchy to its pre-emancipation power. Women of both races were restricted by the historical feeling of feminine powerlessness, as the fear of rape remained pervasive.²³¹ White women however, largely chose to accept sexual subordination in exchange for racial superiority, and actively fought against the advancement of black females to protect their own status and privilege.²³² The assault of black women therefore arguably increased, as white men saw their abuse as a way to fulfil not only their sexual needs (which it can be assumed became more problematic as white women were required to increasingly guard their 'virtue'), but to further enforce their reign of terror on the black community and maintain the privileges enjoyed throughout slavery.²³³ By carrying out the same crimes they were simultaneously executing black men for, Harris' view that white men were destroying in others what they craved for themselves also seems relevant, as the power that came with ultra-masculinity remained inextricably tied to sexuality.²³⁴

²³¹ Larry Baron and Murray A. Straus, *Four Theories of Rape in American Society*, p.5

²³² Emma Coleman Jordan, "Crossing the River of Blood Between Us", p.556

²³³ Lisa Cardyn, "Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence", p.726

²³⁴ Trudier Harris, *Exorcising Blackness*, p.23

Conclusion

To conclude – sexual violence became central to life in the Reconstructed South as white men sought to differentiate white masculinity from black masculinity and prevent the equality that emancipation threatened to produce.²³⁵ By establishing difference, whites could then establish superiority, and justify their terrorization of the wider black community as necessary, believing slavery had not only restrained the innate sexual excess of black men but also their political aspirations.²³⁶ Black male citizenship provided the opportunity for voting and economic independence – both of which meant a parallel loss of dominance for white men, who naturally, in a region where violence had long reigned supreme, were driven to resist.²³⁷ These new political powers, traditionally associated with ‘manhood’, combined with the fear of interracial relations blurring racial hierarchies, generated increasingly alarmist ideology fixated on black sexuality.²³⁸ This led to a sexualised response, as after their own feminizing defeat in the civil war, white men fought to re-establish gender norms where their own masculinity could rule unquestioned.²³⁹ This required the submission of white women, many of whom complied willingly, to be used as props to justify the terrorization of black men and women through sexual violence and extra-legal justice.²⁴⁰ Castration and sexualised lynch rituals emphasised white men’s obsession with black sexuality as they sought to destroy symbolically the physical ‘sameness’ which posed such a threat to the white patriarchy.²⁴¹ Klaus Theweleit argues that torture serves two

²³⁵ Robyn Wiegman “The Anatomy of Lynching”, p.450

²³⁶ Lisa Cardyn, “Sexualised Racism/Gendered Violence”, pp. 696-697

²³⁷ Martha Hodes, “The Sexualisation of Reconstruction Politics”, p.415

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Robyn Wiegman “The Anatomy of Lynching”, pp. 464-465

²⁴⁰ Emma Coleman Jordan, “Crossing the River of Blood Between Us”, p.567

²⁴¹ Robyn Wiegman “The Anatomy of Lynching”, p.450

purposes: to destroy the threat of the victim and change the torturer.²⁴² This can be assumed to be true in relation to white supremacists, who perhaps saw every lynching as an opportunity to reclaim a little of the power taken from them by freed men, after the Civil War. By operating in gangs, Klan members witnessed each other's successful domination of racial 'inferiors', and with little federal opposition, perceived themselves to be re-storing the rightful status quo, justifying their actions through the creation of racist stereotypes which played emotively on the Southern tradition of chivalry and honour.²⁴³ Unfortunately, this chivalry did not extend to aiding black women as, despite the Klan's actions being justified as a method of defence against it, the most tangible threat of sexual violence in the American South during the late nineteenth century came from these white men themselves, as they terrorized the black community practicing the rape of black women and lynching of black men.²⁴⁴

I, Bethan Abbs, declare that the above work is my own and that the material contained herein has not been substantially used in any other submission for an academic award.

²⁴² Klaus Theweleit, *Gendering War Talk* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) pp.283

²⁴³ Emma Coleman Jordan, "Crossing the River of Blood Between Us", p.826

²⁴⁴ Robyn Wiegman "The Anatomy of Lynching", p. 451

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Logbook

Date	Key Points	Action Taken
06.09.19	Refined area of study to race in the American South between 1865 and 1917, but subject area still broad, further research and primary sources needed to narrow topic down further.	Accessed <i>Chronicling America</i> database recommended by Rohan and broadened search for primary sources.
01.11.19	Confirmed title to be: 'Sexual Violence in the American South: 1865-1917'. Discussed primary sources: contemporary news articles, literature and testimonies from Klan Trials. Spoke of importance of deciding clear question for study to answer.	Re-read all notes, reorganised work to narrow focus of research down to the changing representation of black males, the motivation for this, and escalating moral panic regarding sexuality.
18.12.19	Further discussion of primary sources and difficulties in locating appropriate documents. Ideas on using different vocabulary, more common at the time, to yield better results.	Returned to original database and using different terminology located more contemporary articles referring to sexual violence.
06.02.20	Reviewed essay plan, considered the best way to approach historiography. Rohan suggested looking at the history of rape and recommended several books on the subject.	Read books on history of rape recommended and did further research before incorporating the ideas into my first chapter.
27.02.20	Feedback on Chapter 1.	Correct errors in footnotes.
19.03.20	Email regarding the appropriate length for conclusion, as concerned about word limit.	Keep conclusion brief.
27.03.20	Email addressing concerns over referencing primary sources and dissertation layout e.g. cover page, bibliography and abstract.	Follow advice on how to reference sources from the Klan Trials and how to present dissertation.