

Bound by Expectation: The Racialized Sexuality of Porn Star Keni Styles



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In the now classic 1989 essay “Looking For My Penis,” Richard Fung identifies the predominance of Asian men performing as bottoms in gay porn.¹ While critic/filmmaker Hoang Tan Nguyen’s work critiques the rendering of the bottom as undesirable, as if lacking power,² Richard Fung’s work captures a critique that I call “straitjacket sexuality” which I define in my recent book as constrained definitions of sex that privilege norms and limit our understanding of the diversities of sexuality. That is, when Fung critiques the lack of a wide range of representations for Asian men in western pornography, his point shows us how such a limited scope acts like a chokehold on the sexual possibilities available to Asian men not only in pornographic imagery, but on the horizon of representations we can further imagine. Aggravating the problem of limited Asian male representations in pornography, antipornography scholars like Melissa Farley present the representations of racialized subjects as the ultimate manifestation of pornography’s victimizing power.³ Supposedly, the kind of sex scenes featuring people of color in pornography damages and destroys subjects already assaulted by racial inequality

in scenes of everyday life. Unlike Farley's logics that simply declare the racism of pornography as matter-of-fact, Fung's writing and video work describe how pornography and explicit representations can illuminate ongoing struggles around racialized sexualities. His work *Steam Clean* (1990) educates and humanizes, especially in times like the 1980s and 90s, the AIDS crisis. And in *Orientations* (1986) and *Chinese Characters* (1990) the method of multiple perspectives is crucial in representing a wide range of identities under the categories of queer and Asian. He makes sure to represent a number of characters so that each presents a network of identities who define themselves from multiple angles. His method ensures how specific members of Asian American gay, lesbian, transgender, or queer communities disseminate the diversity of their desires, practices, and identities. Using open-ended questions, Fung's subjects not only speak for themselves in describing their sexual experiences, but understand and theorize their particular actions and their significance for themselves and in relation to others.

Pornography, like other media technologies, can be deployed by people of color to represent themselves as sexual subjects—who can own their desires and learn something about themselves. Rather than defining sexual representations as manifestations of racism, filmmakers of color like Fung do so within a framework of subjects-in-struggle, who engage sexuality as a process while making their own images. That is, they use media in an attempt to understand their sexualities within and against imposed definitions and established ideas about their racial identities. To use Michel Foucault's words, "how people actually conceive themselves and their sexual behavior" is what we see carefully set up and drawn out in methods that don't already assume the meanings of racialized sexuality.⁴

Taking Richard Fung's approach—the power of talking through one's representations to make sense of one's struggles with sexuality and race, I evaluate the impact of Keni Styles, widely regarded as the first Asian heterosexual male performer in the US pornography industry. He has received more than a dozen award nominations (including Male Performer of the Year in 2011 by AVN and the Urban X Awards) and won Best Male Newcomer at the UK Adult Film Awards in 2006 and Male Acting Performance of the Year at the XBIZ Awards in 2011, which illustrates not only Keni Styles's popularity, but his ability to cross geographic borders. Fascinating about Keni Styles is a Thai and British masculinity or an Asian masculinity that is forged within multiple western contexts, including the United States where he works. I keep this in mind as I look

at how racialized sexuality is configured in his own narrative and how his racialized sexuality is conveyed in feminist pornographer Tristan Taormino's *Rough Sex #3: Adrianna's Dangerous Mind* (2011), in a group sex scene nominated for an Adult Video News award.

As the first Asian heterosexual porn star in western pornography, Keni Styles may embody the missing penis, whose search was called for by Richard Fung. After establishing himself in the US porn industry, Styles embarked upon a business of helping other men through an instructional video: his self-representation arrives not in the form of directing his own narrative pornographic work but as a how-to pornographic video called *Superman Stamina* (2011). The product purports to help alleviate men's problems with premature ejaculation by making available the philosophies and sexual practices of porn stars. With an approach that presumably addresses both the mind and body, Styles promises to provide an education that will change lives through better sex. In close readings of the marketing of the product, I note that he uses his racial background and experiences, in terms of his racialization by others, as linked to premature ejaculation. In effect, his sexual problems are racial problems. Considering his position as the first Asian male heterosexual porn star, what does it mean for one who is a member of a group usually seen as lacking in sexual power, especially in the movies, to offer a solution to the problem of lack? In the process, does he offer an alternative masculinity to the one that judges Asian American men as inadequate? I am especially intrigued at the possibility of his showing us not only how to find your penis but what new discourses of masculinity he generates, if any. I then compare his how-to pornographic video to the feminist porn work of Tristan Taormino. Bringing together these two works will help me assess the significance of Keni Styles whose pornography teaches us about the potentialities of telling stories about race and sex today.

A Male Version of "Me Love You Long Time!": Marketing Keni Styles in *Superman Stamina*

On thesuperstamina.com, Keni Styles's *Superman Stamina* video offers for sale a video that shares the secrets of male porn stars to solve the often shameful and frustrating problems with premature ejaculation. In identifying the need for his product, Styles presents a definition of manhood that centers on women's pleasure and that clearly relies on a range of techniques for sexually pleasing a woman successfully. In a four-part

system, he outlines the need for penetration to ensure a woman's orgasm. He argues that "oral [sex] is not enough" and prescribes penetrative sex as the "biologically programmed" solution. In prioritizing the penis itself as essential to a woman's pleasure in the sexual exchange, he asserts that the woman needs a man [that is, a penis] inside of her. Styles argues that the woman does not just love but actually "needs" orgasms. This need is motivated by a reproductive charge. When reaching orgasm, she releases a chemical that supposedly "allows for her to identify a good mate." So when more is released, she is "more likely to think of you as the one; while not enough time means the brain is not flooded with the chemical long enough to register." The male challenge, then, according to Keni Styles, is to penetrate the woman "long enough" in a "firm and steady" manner so that she forges an attachment. In effect, Styles produces this structure of pleasure that follows pornography's problem of how to make female pleasure as visible as male pleasure. But beyond this pursuit of showing female pleasure, Styles ultimately defines the significance of sexual success as male prowess.

In the premise of the video, a definition of manhood emerges that says men must demonstrate ability and skill, even expertise, so as to please women. And this demonstration of a unique male dexterity produces male power. The point of learning these techniques benefits men and renders women as derivative in the male context of prowess. Thus, to use the penis proficiently and even well, can mean access to the phallus—where women are begging men for sex and moreover, as the video suggests, will forego the social rituals of receiving gifts and being taken out to dinner, just to experience the pleasures of male penetration.

In marketing *Superman Stamina*, Styles narrates how he was born of a Thai woman, a sex worker. He then grew up in an orphanage in London as the "only Asian male," where he was "made fun of and pushed around by others." They taunted his "eyes, skin, and penis size—though they did not see it." This teasing shaped his self-regard, for "he came to recognize [that] Asian men are not stallions in bed." The naming by others led to the experience of premature ejaculation as an adult. There was "not much I could do—I came, not [by way of] penetration, but in my pants." In his intimate relations with others, the "hotter the girl" the easier he "lost it." This inability to perform sexually shaped his social relations with women; when he became nervous about sex he would simply "stop flirting." Here, his intimacy issues lead to a kind of social stunting when he cannot sexually interact with women.

Recognizing the problem as bodily in nature, Styles built up his athleticism through boxing so as "to get confidence [and] work out anxiety

. . . [and become] a champion”; he looked “tough” but “inside held a secret.” He was a “bad ass in the ring” while in bed it was “another story.” Despite his strong body, he was “dumped on (sic) for someone else” when his “good oral sex [skills] of G-spot tongue twirls” were cataloged as dissatisfying to his partner. Pills did not help either, as it simply made him a “two-pump chump” who’s quick to rise and quick to fall. He did gain the appearance of strength and thus fulfilled a definition of maleness in terms of his body, but his body failed in the face of the other, especially in sexual intimacy. Lost, he joined the British Army and somehow and quite unexpectedly found a solution to his sexual problems there.

In telling his experiences at boot camp in the British Army, Styles again narrates a racialized story of manhood. He was the “only Asian guy in the platoon and the small dick jokes came fast.” His racialization, as a weak man who must be tested and bullied even by those who hold official authority over him, resonates with recent cases in the US military. Indicating the circulation of social meaning regarding Asian American men in the national imaginary, Private Danny Chen faced relentless racial bullying in the military that led to his death.⁵ In Keni Styles’s case, a drill sergeant tormented him with particular attention and special tortures every morning. The sergeant “punished him with intensive training, running in place with high knees; push ups; sit-ups; squats; and burpees.” Styles transformed his physical experience into a test of mental endurance. He built his threshold of pain by using what he called “mental preparation” and “body control” that helped him tolerate pain longer and longer every time. He enacts bodily exercises as mental exercises: to breathe against his “stomach’s churning,” to focus on preventing vomiting, and to keep going despite his “lungs on fire.” The coming together of mind and body composed what he calls a “victory [that] changed my life.” He says “body control” essentially transforms to “manhood control” when honing one’s ability to focus.

This triumph of mental exercise is a turning into oneself that is gauged through the entirely social phenomenon of recognition from another. When the sergeant saw that “he could not break me,” their relations changed. A “new feeling” and a “new confidence” strengthened and changed Styles. No longer caught by the inability to control his own body, he achieves a neutral state, one of masterful control, as that which “cracks the code to porn star stamina.”

Keni Styles thus uses his racialization as an Asian man to show his triumph in a realm where rarely an Asian heterosexual man is found: pornography and even stardom. In *Superman Stamina*, the mental preparation and the physical strength came together to create a technique he

wishes to sell. In an American context, he uses the positioning of Asian men in the racial hierarchy of sex to say it's possible to achieve what is most unexpected: porn stardom.

Mobilizing the established discourse of Asian American male sexual failure, Keni Styles animates his Superman Stamina program. Subsequently, his discussions of sexual success are not racialized but gendered. Successful manhood is achieved by sexual prowess. He begins by satisfying the needs of one woman. In trying out different positions with more women, he tests his self-control, and discovers his ability to “last even longer,” thirty to forty-five minutes rather than the initial seven minutes. Moreover, he was “the one deciding when” to cum thereby mastering his own body rather than being mastered by it. The woman's pleasure is not so much about the proof of his skills, but an acknowledgment of his power when “giving it to a girl” and in return hearing her “screaming [his] name and squirting all over [his] cock.”

The intimate site in which he succeeds establishes a new presence in the social world. He not only meets more women but palpably feels their desire for him as “the one guy in the room who could rock them in the bedroom.” He asserts his identity as a “stallion” and how “women sense it.” And how he enjoys that women “love to talk” so that others hear about his “superman stamina” and want to “find out for themselves.” The ultimate form of recognition for him, however, is when the most desirable, super hot and “drop-dead gorgeous” woman validates his sexual and thus social power. If we assert the Asian American context of the desexualized Asian man coming into sexual power, we can see that it is the desirable woman's gaze that affirms and validates him so much that he can profit from it—in the form of packaging a solution to manhood problems. In this way, the penis becomes an agent for the phallus, for a more traditional, constricted definition of manhood that emphasizes sexual prowess over legions of women as conquest, and heroism in the eyes of men, as we will see in the next example.

Styles's new swagger gains the notice of his best friend Nolan, who complains about having to take his girlfriend out to a nice dinner and buy her a present in exchange for sex. Using the Superman Stamina techniques, Nolan's usual thirty seconds of foreplay lead to his girlfriend's eyes “opened wide with mouth frozen like she's seen a ghost, [and] then cries, convulsing and screaming and shaking for five minutes.” To Nolan's shock, she declares that she's just had her “first orgasm [ever]!” So, the triumph becomes a gaining of power for men, enabling women to achieve pleasure. Nolan no longer has to bribe his girlfriend for sex, she's “begging” for it, and without “fancy presents.” Styles takes credit for

“saving their relationship!” and establishing a gender order that liberates women into the realm of heteroexual pleasure. In this new post-Superman Stamina-powered world, we can map a gender order for men as possessing the phallus that women worship as a gift.

Superman Stamina is sold as a way to gain “unfair advantage over other” men, for it enables “staying hard as long as you want; [having] sex wherever and as many times, and more than one time per night.” This ability presumably enables men to “pick up confidence” in a social world that values manhood as the ability to provide sexual pleasure for and preside with sexual power over women, who are having “multiple orgasms,” as a method of control by men.

According to Keni Styles, other male porn stars will get mad at him for “releasing their secrets.” A long way away from the racialization of weak Asian men that began his story, Styles suddenly raises the specter of that “young guy in Thailand” who is like “lots of other guys” who wish to “give women the most intense toe-curling orgasms” by offering his “tell-all course.” His project is to transform a weak Asian man into one who is strong. He professes to help others “eliminate premature ejaculation in days” with the “closely guarded secrets of porn stars! Crack the code, learn in minutes and use tonight” the ways of endurance and time that essentially beat “size” and “tricks.” He promises you’ll “last fifteen minutes or it’s free!” Finally, in returning to marketing the racialization of Asian male sexuality, Styles counts on the narrative of overcoming weakness as the one that can sell and make convincing his *Superman Stamina*.

In this mediated self-representation, or the use of one’s otherness to sell a self that wields power that can be made accessible to others, an alternative manhood emerges in popular culture. Indeed, he forms a kind of macho sex that is itself very giving, especially to one’s partner. In *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), when Vietnamese prostitute Papillon Soo Soo uttered the lines “Me love you long time!,” she promised a sexual experience that prioritized serving the white man, while also threatening an attachment with no end, like the self-sacrificing Asian woman who does not know how to stop loving him.⁶ The endurance Keni Styles’s *Superman Stamina* aspires to is the possibility of gaining access to a manhood that pleases women in order to gain male power but also to offer new possibilities for male relations with women. His story of disprized manhood leads to a liberation from this position, through sexual expertise that enables new relations. He formulates both a conscientious and aggressive sexuality that attends to the pleasures of women and the opening of new racialized manhoods through generosity in sex.

Keni Styles in Feminist Porn: Tristan Taormino's *Rough Sex 3: Adrianna's Dangerous Mind* (2011)

In Tristan Taormino's series *Rough Sex*, each sex scene starts with an interview with the actors before their performances. While the interview format is standard to gonzo porn, Tristan Taormino is unique in her ability to center the subject position of the female actor within a feminist frame. That is, unlike gonzo porn where filmmakers like Ed Powers use the interview as part of the sex scene,⁷ Tristan Taormino truly breaks down the fourth wall, with actors who provide their own interpretations. Essentially, she asks each actor to theorize their understanding of power in the sex act, specifically in terms of "rough sex." In doing so, we engage the meanings of power, strength, and consciousness around the consent of the other, especially gendered power relations.

Foremost in the interviews is the woman as the center of reference, in terms of articulating her desires, fantasies, and imaginings. The actors discuss their relationship to her and especially their role in fulfilling her wishes for pleasure. The star Adrianna's female partners also address sex and gender themes, such as what it means for a woman to participate in rough sex with another. Indeed, the thematic that speaks to Taormino's commitment to an ethical feminist filmmaking is the exploration of gendered power relations in the sex act. We see how women experience pleasure from scenes that may look like degradation but are actually enactments that explore precisely what it means to confront power and power relations.

In *Rough Sex*, consent is crucial in the production of these scenes. Beyond consent, the filmmaker fashions an ethical and responsible relationship to her actors. The filmmaker carefully listens to her subjects, especially the female performer, for it is she who determines the parameters of the scenes. The star articulates her desire for acts that may be considered perverse and taboo and Taormino attends to the concrete structure for enacting these female fantasies without judging what composes it. Instead, she respects the actor so as to free her to articulate what she desires. The ultimate ethical moment is Taormino's commitment to what Michel Foucault distinguishes as the importance of highlighting the freedom of sexual choices, rather than the freedom of sexual acts.⁸ The sex acts in Taormino's films are consensual, which is literally acknowledged in her opening credits. There is no mystery to this agreement between the actors, filmmakers, and thus, the spectators.

Prior to the "jock" sex scene in *Rough Sex #3* featuring Keni Styles, Adrianna appears for an interview set in the actual locker room where

her sexual fantasy of group “sex in the co-ed shower . . . with hot guys who go to the gym” occurs. Intercut with Adrianna, Keni Styles acknowledges the anonymity of the sex as constructed in the scene. Discussing his character, he is conscious of the factor of never seeing his sex partner again. Then Adrianna describes Nat, her first partner, as one with a “beautiful face, smile, and eyes”—and whom she really likes. We then cut to Nat, with the beautiful face, smile, and eyes, who says he “likes fucking her because she like[s] to fuck.” It is notable that in the pre-scene interviews, no one mentions the meanings and roles of any racial differences in the sex scene they perform, though the “jock” scene is composed of the blonde white woman Adrianna, the larger black man named Nat, one smaller white man named Danny, a smaller Asian man Keni, and another large man, Evan, who is white. Instead, the actors describe each other’s personalities and individual features in a kind of color-blind telling that eschews racial difference as a factor that charges the group sex scene.

What are the implications of not discussing racial difference in the construction of the sex scenes, whether positively in its ability to arouse and excite, or negatively in terms of ascriptions of perversity? Would part of the titillation involve racial difference as it is portrayed in the white woman’s fantasy of having sex with uniformly fit but racially different men? Can desire involve seeing difference and exploring interest in each other’s differences? Evan shares that what is unique about Adrianna is how she “enjoys what she’s doing, so it’s easy work there.” He describes how she “looks at you and engages you the whole time.” I argue that the look functions to address the continuing struggles of race and sexuality as they are confronted, though left unspoken, in the scene.

Adrianna introduces Keni Styles this way: “Oh, he’s a nice man,” while he describes her with much more specificity. In his cool style and calm demeanor, Keni articulates how, “She loves sex and makes you feel like you possess the last cock in the world and she is the luckiest woman to get it.” Next to him, Danny nods his head in approval. Keni’s charming and spirited speech is short but important. We note that he is British though Asian, and even this difference is unmentioned though surely part of his appeal. We then move to Evan whom Adrianna calls her “porn boyfriend.” He describes how she “has fun with sex, as someone in tune with her body.” Even though no mention of racial difference arises, even to mention that this is a truly interesting and a very currently new configuration of a multiracial cast, the actors register as conscious of the gendered dynamics of sex and power, but also clearly consenting to the sexual activity as worth shooting and seeing.

The politics of consent, especially in terms of gendered differences in physical strength, clearly emerges in the rich discussions between the porn actors. With a gleam in her eyes, Adrianna shares how she likes when “guys get rough with me,” for “it’s like fireworks!” All of the men describe how they do not initiate their sexual encounters with roughness—Keni, for example, says he likes to react and follow her lead, as if to measure what she prefers. All three other actors respond similarly when they say: “I don’t initiate [rough sex], unless the girl likes it,” or as Nat says, “It’s not what I will initiate, but if she asks for it, I enjoy it.” Danny Wylde says he does not “want to inflict harm or damage someone’s skin.” He describes possessing a “consciousness” about pain. “When it comes to rough sex,” he says, he prefers it as “part of the sex and not an activity to do outside of it.” In the thematic addressed in this conversation, acknowledgment of gender arises much more clearly than racial difference.

I offer a racial reading, however, for it is clearly part of the action, specifically in what transpires between them in the “face-to-face.” Using Emmanuel Levinas and his conception of the face as a site of “infinity” or a mystery that can never be solved even as we gain knowledge of its nuances, I identify the agency of the face so as to point to the relationality between the sexual partners. All the actors except Keni Styles establish a face-to-face connection with Adrianna. This difference, I argue, illustrates the burden of representation he shoulders in representing Asian men and also successfully shows that racial otherness persists for Asians in pornography, even in feminist porn. Because he is caught in what I call a bind of expectation as an Asian straight male porn star, his possibilities are limited. A challenge emerges: while the subjectivity of the woman is centered, the differences between men arise to remind us of the multiple complexities of power in sexual scenes where race is a dynamic struggle of subjectivities still in process.

The scene begins. A big, muscular, dark-skinned black man named Nat stands in front of his open locker, mostly naked. Adrianna walks in, presumably looking for the showers. Dressed in short shorts and a thin, see-through t-shirt, her blond hair falls in two braids framing her face. The look she fashions registers as a trope she performs: that of the young white girl with an innocent allure. He smiles, his friendly face open to her. She walks towards him. He calmly looks her up and down, informs her that she is in the men’s locker room while touching and turning her so he can see her body, as if through the clothes. He moves her shorts to reveal her butt. He looks her in the eyes and says he knows that she is “looking for something else.” She meets him with a look that is power-

fully direct and desirously big-eyed. Her whole face opens to express a longing for him too. In this look of mutual desire, they kiss and immediately entangle. He pats her bottom and says she will “be here for a while now.” And she agrees that this is what she “really came in here for.” They have a prolonged exchange on the locker room bench where each stimulates the other. She bends over, he eats her ass. She sits and rides him, smiling. There is an exchange of subjectivity that transpires between them, and it is through their eyes. While she masturbates, her eyes seek his to make a link. Their acts reveal how touch generates pleasure, and their eyes affirm it in their exchanged glances as she becomes wild, most apparent in her face and the disheveled strands of hair. She will continue looking to him even as positions change. Increasingly, they sweat and he is particularly drenched. His face spills with small streams of wetness. When he bends her over in the shower, he pulls her hair, so her face faces him. Then she bends her arm behind her, and turns to share a frenzied look. They both grit their teeth, exposing the force they expend upon each other. The interviews were right: indeed, Adrianna engages them eye-to-eye in what may be the most distinguishing element of the sex scene.

Unlike the exploitative and caricatured representations of black men in pornography discussed by Gail Dines, the sexual interaction between Nat and Adrianna differs significantly.⁹ They engage each other eye-to-eye and face-to-face in terms of a mutually pleasurable experience. However, we also have a privileging of the black male and white female encounter as the primary sexual relation. It garners the most time and focus, as well as comes first. The white woman and the Asian man enjoy the least time together, revealing that a certain politics of race exists and persists in this work.

While Nat and Arianna are bent over and leaning on the tile barrier to the shower, Keni and Danny walk in, dressed in boxing shorts with gloves in their hands. It is Adrianna’s face, in this naked state, that the two boxers see when they walk into the locker room. The expression on her face can be described as one so uncovered and exposed in its sexually provoked pleasure that its look reaches out to them like an invitation. Nat and Adrianna disentangle and he walks out of the locker room. She lies on the bench alone, as the boxers, two smaller men, stand over her, placing their penises close to her face as they take off their jockstraps.

An interview with the actors cuts into the scene to remind us of its construction as a fantasy. Danny Wylde says, “This would not happen in real life. If I walked in to that, and I did not know her, I would start laughing really hard. I don’t know if I would join in.” Keni Styles says he

“gets off visually.” And the director’s off-camera voice affirms, “you like to watch.” Adrianna says that seeing a man “standing on the side, jerking off is super hot.”

Returning to the scene, Keni pulls Adrianna into the shower and she spends equal time pleasing both actors by holding their cocks in her mouth or with her hands. Danny, the white actor, penetrates her first. He leans her leg up against the wall and spansks her. As they fuck, Keni moves away from the scene while stimulating himself. In the context of a historical representation that centers white men and puts in the periphery Asian men, as I argue in *Straitjacket Sexualities*,¹⁰ the meaning of Keni’s derivative role in this scene is part of a cinematic tradition much larger and longer than pornography. She looks for him, reaches for him on the side of the screen. The white man expresses a kind of overwhelming by her in his frequent “Oh my god” murmurings. She becomes wild with him as she leans her head back on the ground, and he almost tears at her breasts as she opens her legs. He moves, telling her to sit on his cock as he lies flat on the shower floor.

We think Keni Styles is no longer in the scene, but he appears again. This time, he sits on the ground, against the wall, masturbating with his legs splayed out. The scene unfolds like real time, as if to capture how arousal takes time. Danny and Adrianna move from grunts of pleasure to laughter. They share several intense face-to-face encounters that include kissing, laughter, or expressions of abandon. Keni disappears again, and in doing so makes apparent the face-to-face connection that he lacks in his relations with her. Danny kisses Adrianna as they face each other, even as he enters her from behind. Her eyes open super wide. While their speech is meant primarily for each other as the filmmaker does not use a microphone to broadcast their whispers, Danny states that “you deserve my cum in your face” to which she readily acquiesces. After the money shot, the calm is interrupted by Keni Styles, who rushes in to stand over her, showing himself as already erect.

The sex scene with Keni and Adrianna lasts one minute. He lies down on the ground and momentarily fucks her. He straddles her almost like they are a pair of scissors, with both their heads on opposite sides. He then moves her, pulls her hair to expose her face away from him, so she still does not face him. He soon cums all over her face and puts his penis over her mouth to catch his drip as she kneels before him. Notable here is the brevity of the Asian man’s sexual encounter and the lack of a face-to-face connection with the woman while the two other men who precede him, one black and one white, and even the one after, enjoy a much longer encounter with her, with an extended eye-to-eye and face-

to-face connection. We can read this scene of Keni as the “one-minute man” as evidence of the derivative status of Asian men in pornography, in relation to black and white men especially in the context of *Superman Stamina*. But his inability here and now could be for many reasons, including the pressures of performing as *the* Asian heterosexual penis in porn.

The last sexual pairing in this group scene plays differently as well. An actual conversation transpires. After Keni leaves, Adrianna leans back against the shower wall, with cum on her face and hair. The camera pans to reveal Evan under the shower, looking at her. He casually asks a rhetorical question, “Rough day in the gym?” And she retorts, “I’m not done working out,” which serves as an invitation for deepening their encounter to include his cleaning her up and her having more sex. Like the white Danny and the black Nat, this white man Evan connects with the white woman at the level of the face and in conversation. They look at each other and pay attention to what the other says, developing a repartee about the fantasy itself, even as he helps to fulfill it.

In the context of the three other sex scenes in “Jock,” how do we evaluate the work of Keni Styles, especially concerning the brevity of the Asian male/white female sex scene? We can interpret this in many ways including the use of race and the visibility of racial difference as a lens of analysis. And it is an important revelation, for pornography is not a site where racial politics disappear. It reveals how inequalities exist, whether in the form of screen time or in the intensity of the sex scene. Or we can forego a racial reading and say that Keni Styles was just not that into her. In *Rough Sex*, the female actor chooses her partners and defines the bounds of her scenes. In this context, we may produce the nonracial reading of their lack of chemistry, his lack of attraction, or even hers. This was also essentially the only real group scene in the “Jock” program. A nonracial reading is productive indeed, but such a reader would ignore the intensity of the connection between Adrianna and her sexual partners, except for Keni—whom she did choose! In this way, race functions in such an unwieldy yet revealing manner in understanding what transpires in this scene.

My criteria of the face-to-face in measuring the sex acts, do not intend to contain how feminist porn aims to introduce and widen new pleasures in all of its myriad forms. However, I note the lack of face-to-face as a crucial way to measure the lack of Asian male subjectivity, and not just the penis, in pornography. Adrianna’s face-to-face connection with three of the men ensures an intensity that livens the scene and shows in brief moments the distance occupied by Asian men in relation

to white women. Emmanuel Levinas discusses eros not as “possession and power” of another, but as a kind of communication between selves that is “neither a struggle, nor a fusion, nor a knowledge. One must recognize its exceptional place among relations. It is the relationship with alterity, with mystery, that is, with the future.”¹¹ Here, Levinas privileges erotic relations as a site where we may understand our relationships with others; even in our most intimate relations, where he argues that we are alone. His is a larger understanding of the self as alone. And in privileging the face as the agent of bare emotion, the lack of face-to-face connotes a kind of disappearance. Does alone then encompass the way in which Keni Styles disappeared from the sex, and when he returns, performs for only one minute, defying his promise of knowing how to last?

Is isolation a choice for Keni Styles who moves in and out of the frame when Adrianna is with the other man? It is important to emphasize the agency of the actor here for he is the one to step away from the scene. In the first instance of their *ménage à trois*, a kind of equal opportunity sexual exchange transpires, but at the crucial moment, he leaves. He literally steps away from the frame even if he continues to be welcome in the scene. Adrianna would welcome his continued presence as evidenced by her reaching for him to return. In the interviews, Danny discusses the hotness of seeing another man and woman together when he himself steps aside from the group scenes. Sex here can be lonely in the sense of the burden of expectation that Keni Styles may feel as the sole Asian man in the scene and in the larger industry of pornography. Or there may be the fact of having to step aside because the white man penetrates her first so he has to move away. Or once again, it may not seem appealing for him to stay. He does linger, masturbating. Their faces remain focused on the extraction and giving of pleasure. And he reaches for her and stimulates her as she gives Danny oral sex. Does Keni’s stepping aside render him as accepting of a kind of racial hierarchy? I don’t think this is the only option.

If we were to accept the argument, we can see the aloneness of the characters even in the entanglements of sex; we can also interpret his moving away as an indication of his alienation—whether as a European, or an Asian who finds it important not to acknowledge one’s race, even if it is very apparent. What comforts and familiarities are conveyed in the white and black pairings with the white woman? Is Keni not privy to such familiarity? To be clear, there lacks a tradition of representation for the pairing of white women and Asian men in porn. If Nat’s scene differs from the tradition of exploitative sex between black men and white women, is Keni producing tradition every time he performs?

And how about the viewer? Dark-skinned Keni with the British accent and the small, fit body—how does he fit into the repertoire of bodies we are accustomed to seeing? These questions, when raised, validate the continuing dynamics that inform our perceptions of racial difference that still persist today—as evidenced in the singular stature of Keni Styles as the most prominent, if not only, Asian male actor in American heterosexual pornography, who most certainly faces a bind not only of representation, but of expectation. If we were to follow Richard Fung’s method here, we would have more diversity and more representation. More numbers would certainly ease the burden of representing entire groups of people. Keni Styles’s performance in this scene is not the failure of all Asian men, but produces the problem not only of representation but expectation.

In a stylistic nod to cinema’s ability to provide doors and windows to existence, looking at the faces of the actors in the pleasures of sex and throes of orgasm, can we also open the doors and windows to the racial meanings of intimate relations? Ultimately, we can see that feminist porn prioritizes the subjectivity of women. In their relations with multiracial casts of men, how do the meanings of race change? And in the declaration of feminist porn’s commitment to representing diversity, how do they capture ongoing struggles with race and racial difference in sexual relations? Can they help us indicate the racial politics of sexual pleasure? And how can an ethical filmmaking accommodate the dramas not only of gender but also race?

In closing, we discover then that feminist porn is not a utopian site for representations of race. In the process of innovating pornography, which it does through centering the complex subjectivities of women such as in the method of interview in Tristan Taormino’s *Rough Sex*, feminist pornography shows the limits of racial representation and specifically the burden of expectation that Styles has to bear. We see the racial hierarchies unaddressed in Adriana’s discussion of her fantasy. We see racialized dynamics unfold even if they are unspoken. Verbally, race is not there in her descriptions of the black man’s “nice face, smile, and eyes,” or in his description of how much she “loves sex.” Whether racial difference is discussed or not discussed, meanings can and should be drawn. Studying the work and presence of Keni Styles can make sense of the process of racialization persisting even in feminist porn. In *Superman Stamina* he defines manhood with investments in redefining male power as giving. And in *Rough Sex #3: Adrianna’s Dangerous Mind*, a one-minute performance can reinscribe Asian men into a manhood still so lacking—if we read the scene in a straitjacketed lens. In both, Keni

Styles's performances exceed the assessments of victimization of racial subjects in antifeminist porn. Each of these examples shows an uneasy relationship to heteronormative manhood. Such a finding challenges us working in feminist porn to continue to find ways to talk about the role of race in pornography. Through examining the work of Keni Styles in both *Superman Stamina* and *Rough Sex #3*, what we actually learn is that he carries an unfair burden of expectation. We also learn that any blanket assessment of racism at work in pornography does not capture the fraught and promising possibilities of seeing racial subjects struggling with the power and politics of sexuality in pornography.

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Notes

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