

Proposal 5

The Forbidden Pleasure of “Scandal”: Sex, Race, Beauty and Convention

For the past two seasons, people from all walks of American life have tuned into a television show and created a phenomenon. That phenomena is called “Scandal.” Olivia Pope, main character of “Scandal” says, near the end of the show’s second season, “I am not the girl the guy gets at the end of the movie. I am not a fantasy.” Why would the main character of a hit TV show say something like that?

From “Guess Who’s Coming To Dinner” to “Monster’s Ball”, popular culture has shown unease in talking about interracial relationships and in the television landscape interracial relationships are a rarity. On “Scandal” however the main relationship on the show, between Olivia Pope and Fitzgerald Grant, is an interracial one yet that fact is never discussed. Scripture also shown an unease with intimate relationships outside of one’s own “group” (*exogamy*).

This paper will begin to explore the connections/intersections of race, sex, beauty and cultural conventions and how looking at those connections/intersections can continue to move the church into a larger conversation about pleasure and sexuality.

Some of the works to be referenced in the paper are:

In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens: Womanist Prose by Alice Walker

When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America by Paula Giddings

Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America by Melissa Harris-Perry

Just a Sister Away: A Womanist Vision of Women’s Relationships in the Bible by Renita Weems

Erotic Revolutionaries: Black Women, Sexuality, and Popular Culture by Shayne Lee