Women of Color and Representations in the Media

Week 8
Feminist Studies 60
Winter 2009
Professor Miller-Young
Women of Color Negotiating Sexual Silences

• Sexual silences and taboos rooted in histories of sexual violence and exploitation in slavery, colonialism, imperialism, & segregation
• Racial or ethnic community as enforcing sexual silences as a mode of defense against stigma and discrimination
• Respectability Politics and the policing of sexual conduct
• Abuse, Homophobia and Erotophobia contribute to disempowering women of color in terms of their sexualities
Gender and Sexual Freedom

• WOCF fight for the right to explore and express a range of genders and sexualities.
• Gender and sexual freedom assumes that subjects possess agency to make choices according to their own desires and needs.
• Deviance as resistance?
Hypersexuality

• A social construction that represents women of color as over-sexed and sexually deviant
• Functions to legitimate the sexual exploitation of women of color by framing them as always desirous of sex, and therefore immune to rape and abuse
• Portrays women of color as both desirable and undesirable OBJECTS
Representations in Hip Hop Videos

• How are women of color portrayed as hypersexual in hip hop videos? How do they embrace or resist this?
• How do the videos reflect or challenge dominant racialized beauty standards?
• Can we also see the women in the videos as AGENTS of their own sexual desires and fantasies?