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SPECIAL ISSUE: RACIALISING DESIRES

Alternative stories about race, gender and interracial intimacies at the turn of the twentieth century

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Based on empirical material from Danish exhibitions of so-called exotic people in which people of color were exhibited as mass entertainment at the turn of the twentieth century, the article aims at nuancing established scholarly understandings of interracial relationships and Asian masculinity. As the analysis of the empirical material does not follow the expected path of racial, gender and sexuality constructions established by post-colonial scholars, the article discusses if we as researchers have become blind towards alternative versions of interracial engagements. Based on Spivak's famous question 'Can the subaltern speak?', the article asks, 'Can the non-subaltern researcher listen?' The article tries to provide alternative ways of listening by supplementing written sources by photographs. Using these sources, the article explores how interracial relationships between white women and Asian men were not necessarily condemned, as generally argued, as well as how Asian men, also contrary to general scholarly belief, were constructed as hyper masculine and sexually attractive to white heterosexual women.

Keywords: History, gender, race, sexuality, photography.

Introduction

In most European cities, a large number of exhibitions of so-called exotic people took place from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. Here women, men and children, often from African and Asian countries, were on display as entertainment and education for 'ordinary' European spectators. While research has been carried out on the exhibitions taking place in the major European cities (Paris, London, Hamburg) (Blanchard, 2009; Poignant, 2004; Lindfors, 1999; Coombes, 1994; Rothfels, 2002; Zimmerman, 2001) as well as on the world fairs

which also hosted exhibitions of 'exotic' people (Brenna, 1999; Greenhalgh 1988), only very limited research has been done on the exhibitions in Europe's periphery (Andreassen, 2003; Andreassen & Folke Henningsen, 2011; Schou, 1987). One of those peripheries is Northern Europe, with Denmark hosting a large number of exhibitions between the 1870s and the 1910s. Many of these exhibitions were hosted by the Copenhagen Zoological Garden and the amusement park Tivoli. In a previously unknown archive in the Copenhagen Zoological Garden, I have discovered a vast amount of sources from the Danish exhibitions; letters, posters, photographs, contracts, performance schedules, etc. This empirical material provides valuable information about the Danish exhibitions and the racial and gendered constructions which accompanied them. Besides the empirical material from the Zoo archive, I have analyzed approximately 150 articles about the exhibitions from newspapers, catalogues and advertisements. The material discloses a series of romantic and sexual relationships between the men on display and the local female audience. Drawing upon this archival material, I aim at filling parts of the scholarly lacuna in this area, but more importantly this material has forced me to challenge and re-think some of the established academic insights on race and interracial intimacies.

For a number of years, I have been inspired by post-colonial and critical race theory scholars (among others Said, 1978/1995; Eng, 2001; Young, 1995; McClintock, 1995; Stoler, 1996) in my work and thinking. As I began my work with the archival material, I approached the empirical sources with these theoretical insights in my mind. But to my surprise, the material did not follow the paths laid down by this post-colonial thinking; rather, the material, and especially the material about the interracial relationships, challenged established thinking. In this article, I therefore want to describe and discuss these challenges and take the reader through a process of re-thinking race, gendered raciality, racialised desires and interracial intimacies. I especially examine the interracial relationships, unveiled by the historical sources, and look critically at how they did not always follow established modes of moral as well as gendered and racialised expectations. Furthermore, I explore how Asian masculinity, in these historical sources, is often constructed contrary to scholarly expectations (Eng, 2001), as the Asian men on display appear as hyper-masculine and attractive for heterosexual engagement.

Theoretical approaches and analytical framework

Theoretically, the article builds upon theories of gender and race as social constructions (Butler, 1990/1999) and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991). Furthermore, the article draws upon post-colonial feminist theory and whiteness studies. Post-colonial feminism (Lewis & Mills, 2003) has illustrated how gender, race and power are interconnected and has pointed to the importance of giving voice to people in marginalised positions, whereas whiteness studies (Frankenberg, 1993; Dyer, 1997) have shown how whiteness and privilege continue to be connected and play a central role in processes of power and domination.

In order to approach the historical sources, I try to redevelop the traditional historical method of historical criticism. I analyze the empirical material as historical remains, which, according to the conventional tradition of historical criticism, serve as pieces of information about the past. However, I also see the remains as illustrations of past performances, where certain ideas, ideologies and images of gender, sexuality and race are at play. In other words, I consider the historical remains to be representations by way of which meaning and power are constructed (Hall, 1997/2003). Analytically, I look for ways in which gender, race, sexuality and intimacy are being verbalised and negotiated, as well as where these same categories are being silenced; I also look for where the categories seem to be important, and where they might play less important roles.

A central problem when working with historical sources is the lack of sources from 'ordinary' people. In my research, the absolute majority of sources are produced by white, European, middle-class men. There are very limited, if any, sources from the hands of women and from the people on display. This creates disproportionality, as the information about women and people of color is provided by white men. Spivak has questioned whether the subaltern can speak in her famous article "Can the subaltern speak?" (1988); I want to re-phrase this question and ask whether the non-subaltern researcher can listen? In this article, I aim at showing that we as researchers need to listen to other sources than the obvious written sources from—in my case as in most others—white middle-class men. In order to listen, we might have to struggle to find alternative sources, we might ask different questions, and we might need to use different tools than the ones we use when analyzing more traditional written sources. Spivak has later nuanced her prior position by arguing that we, as researchers and teachers, should not only "be unlearning one's own privilege" but rather be "learning to learn from below" (Spivak, 2009). My aim to listen can be seen as one way of 'learning to learn from below'; however, I would argue that in order to listen we need not simply to learn from below but also to struggle to locate voices from below as well as to re-think our research approaches.

A story about condemnation of interracial encounters

The Danish exhibitions of 'exotic' people were reviewed by contemporary newspapers and magazines, much in the same fashion as film and theater are reviewed today. Often the reviews were accompanied with condemnatory descriptions of how local women became involved with the men on display. An illustrative example is a description from the so-called China exhibition, hosted by the amusement park Tivoli in 1902:

If one is near Tivoli's Chinese village in the morning hours before it opens, one can see several young ladies and young women outside the locked gate. They communicate with the sons of the East, either in English or by using sign language. Sometimes even kisses are involved. There seems to be a kind of freemasonry among the young women. Here where passions are decisive, they have no secrets for one another; rather, they unite in a

common adoration of the Chinese, who roll their slanting eyes and become very enthusiastic. This is not much different from what we have seen repeatedly every time a group from distant countries has visited Tivoli. When there is a Bedouin or a Negro in the Danish landscape, a number of girls become unfaithful to the domestic ideals and happily give themselves to the unknown. However, there is one difference from the past. Previously, it was mainly petty girls with open-minded and cosmopolitan views who became voluntary victims of the invasion. This year it seems as though young ladies from high society have also lost their heads along with their hearts. (Moustache, 1902, July 31)

According to the writer, several Danish women forget and betray their national, domestic ideals at the chance of becoming involved with a foreign man. Domestic ideals refer both to the contemporary racial hierarchy where white men were considered superior to men of color and hence more attractive (Young, 1995, p. 92 ff.; McClintock, 1995, p. 36 ff.) and to the contemporary morally correct conduct, according to which white women should be involved with, and reproduce with, white men. In the description, the women are criticised because they are held responsible for the national and racial reproduction. The women's involvement with foreign, non-white men is characterised as an "invasion", indicating that foreign men's involvement with local women's bodies is an invasion on national territory. Feminist scholars have shown how women's bodies mark the border between 'us' and 'them' in national and racialised narratives (Lutz et al., 1995, p. 91); here the border is crossed by the Chinese men's involvement with Danish women.

The phrase about how the "young ladies ... [have] lost their heads along with their hearts" indicates that the young women engaging with the Chinese men are interpreted as potentially insane; they have lost their heads (minds). At the same time there is also an indication of genuine sadness in the phrase, as the women have lost their hearts. Losing one's heart can be seen as a melancholy loss; the women's romantic engagement with the—non-white, non-national—Chinese men is a failed romance. Both from an individual perspective and from a national point of view, the newspaper article frames the interracial romances as leading to sadness and loss; the white women are scattering seeds (hearts) on barren ground (non-national men of color).

This newspaper description—with its condemnation—of interracial relationships follows the pattern of European condemnation of interracial relations at the turn of the twentieth century (Young, 1995; McClintock, 1995; Stoler, 1996). Thus, the obvious proceeding would be to interpret this newspaper article as a proof of this discourse. Scholars like Ann Stoler (1996), Anne McClintock (1995) and Robert Young (1995) all did groundbreaking work on race and sexuality in colonial discourses, and their work has since functioned as a basis for the understanding of colonial discourses on race and sexuality. Most importantly in this case, they all show how interracial sexual engagement was condemned, and how race became one of the most—if not the very most—important factor when determining human history and human character from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. Among European scientists, there was a general belief that human history and development happened as

linear progression. Different races and people had developed differently and were seen as inhabiting different stages of the common human progressive development. The white European male was considered to have developed the furthest, and he therefore embodied the highest stage of culture and civilisation; all other races were ordered in a racial hierarchy below him (Young, 1995, p. 92 ff.; McClintock, 1995, p. 36 ff.).

Alongside of this racial hierarchy was a strong fear of interracial relations or miscegenation, as it was labeled at the time; i.e. a fear of interracial sexual engagements and interracial reproduction.¹ Interracial reproduction threatened the established racial hierarchy, and racial segregation was a strong means to preserve the hierarchy (Stoler, 1997, p. 199; McClintock, 1995, p. 48; Young, 1995, p. 95). Interracial reproduction was also seen as a threat against European (white) culture. Like the white European race and the European society (civilisation), European culture was also considered globally superior, and other cultures' influence on European culture was believed to potentially contaminate and degenerate it. In European colonies, the colonisers felt a need to protect their domestic spaces and families from potential local contamination (Stoler, 1996), and interracial sexual intimacies were prohibited by law as well as morally prohibited. While Stoler argues that the European colonial fear of 'the other' as well as the fear of potential contamination from non-white colonial subjects were cultural rather than racial fears, Young argues that the fear of 'the other' was mainly racial. I do not want to get into a discussion here about whether the fear of interracial encounters was culturally or racially based, but rather challenge the idea of this fear being widespread.

When I analyze the sources accompanying the Danish exhibitions, I have a number of newspaper articles, like the one about the Chinese exhibition cited above, where interracial romance and sexual encounters are condemned and defined as morally wrong. Another illustration is an article commenting on an exhibition of Abyssinians (Abyssinia was part of contemporary Ethiopia and Eretria), cited below, in 1909. Here the author criticises European women for their lack of moral chastity when foreign men of color visit their city.

It is a rather sad fact that a certain kind of woman has a peculiar weakness for everything exotic. While the Buffalo Bill Company was in Germany, many thoroughbred Indians [i.e. Native Americans] shared their wigwam with a Berlin woman suffering from an exotic tantrum. Now we see the same phenomenon repeating itself at the Berlin Industrial Fair, with our new black countrymen [from the German colonies in Africa] exhibited in the Colonial section and the Arabs in the Cairo section ... Also the Moroccan Arab Company in the Panopticon exerts the same attraction on the female part of the audience ... By the way, these women seem to have taken a special fancy to the Japanese. Almost daily, one can witness several of these slanty-eyed sons of "the land of dawn" walking arm in arm with a beautiful girl in Tiergarten [a park in Berlin] ... Most of the women—married

¹ I use the term interracial relations instead of the term miscegenation, as I find that the term miscegenation is imbued with ideologies about racial hierarchies as well as negative attitudes towards interracial intimacies.

and unmarried—are from higher society, and the scandals that these twofold illegitimate relations cause are soon countless in number ... Lately, here in Aarhus [Denmark's second-largest city], we have had the opportunity to witness the same kind of "exotic tantrums" among several of our ladies ... It is the Abyssinians at the National Exhibition who seem to have completely turned the heads of several women, who spend every chance they get to gather around and rub themselves against the laughing black men ... The phenomenon here is the exact same as the above description in the Berliner Tagesblatt. (Kuller hos Damerne, 1909)

Typically for the time, this article, as well as all the other articles, is written by white middle-class men; i.e. the men who are being rejected as romantic and sexual partners. I have not been able to locate any sources from the women who engage in these relationships; neither have I been able to find any sources from the foreign men involved with the local Danish women.

I want to question whether we can interpret contemporary scientific utterances lecturing against interracial encounters and newspaper discourses as representative of a general public discourse? I do not want to argue that this condemnation is not a part of a public discourse, just as I do not want to question whether Stoler, McClintock and Young do locate these discourses in the colonial sources they work with. But I do want to question if we as researchers have become blind towards other less verbalised discourses. Maybe the subaltern (the women and the foreign men) cannot speak because we—as academics who are very preoccupied with words, written texts and verbalised discourses—are not able to locate (their) other, less verbal, discourses.

If I only rely on written sources in my research about interracial intimacies at the turn of the twentieth century, I will conclude, like the scholars before me, that romantic and sexual interracial encounters were morally prohibited, and women engaging in such relations were condemned. However, if I begin looking at different sources, for instance photographs, I am able to draw a different picture of the past, and hence dig out a potentially challenging discourse to the condemnation discourse.

Three couples posing—an alternative story about interracial encounters

For this article, I introduce two photographs which potentially can unveil a different story of interracial intimacy. One photograph which might provide us with another story of attitudes towards racial intimacy is the photograph posted below. It is from the Copenhagen Zoological Garden's so-called Japanese exhibition in 1902.

I have found this photograph (see Figure 1) in the archive of the Copenhagen Zoo. It has not been possible to identify the individuals posing in the photograph, except that the two Japanese men in the photo were part of the group of Japanese on display at the Zoo's Japanese exhibition during the summer of 1902. The six people are positioned as three couples; each woman is holding a bouquet of flowers with both her hands,

making room at her elbow where a man is holding her so they stand arm in arm. The women as well as the white man are nicely dressed, with clothes and accessories indicating their belonging to the middle and upper middle classes; most likely they belong to the Copenhagen bourgeoisie. One of the Japanese men is dressed in traditional Japanese clothing, whereas the other is dressed in pants and a shirt and is barefoot. The three women and the white man might have been visitors to the Japanese exhibition, and they might just have met the two Japanese men during this photo session; they might have been acquaintances or friends; or they might have been three romantic couples.



Figure 1: Couples posing in front of the so-called Japanese village in the Copenhagen Zoo in 1902. The Buddha figure is erected for the exhibition, just as the banana and palm trees are imported for the occasion. The photograph is a stereoscopic photo so popular at the turn of the twentieth century. By taking two photos of the same scenery from two slightly different angles, it was possible to gain a three-dimensional effect when viewing the photo in a stereoscope. Courtesy: Copenhagen Zoo Archive.

In this photo, they pose as couples, and most importantly, they pose as three similar couples. In the photograph there is no difference between the monoracial, white couple to the right and the two mixed-race couples. From this photograph it is not possible to argue that race is important, neither is it possible to locate or detect any condemnation of interracial relations; on the contrary, the photograph seems to embrace such relations. It was rare to have one's photograph taken, and most photographs were explicitly staged at the turn of the century. This photo is no exception; the six people are nicely organised for the photographer, and the scene that the six individuals represent performs respectability and heteronormativity rather than illicit behavior. The photographer is Peter Elfelt, a famous Danish photographer and filmmaker (he made the first Danish moving picture in 1897) who had been appointed Royal Court Photographer (*Kgl. Hoffotograf*) in 1901. It would have been unlikely that he would compromise himself, his career and position by taking photographs of illicit behavior. One could therefore argue that this photograph indicates that certain segments of the population (here parts

of the Copenhagen bourgeoisie and a royal photographer) did not consider interracial engagements morally wrong.

The story of Ingeborg and San—another alternative story about interracial romance



Figure 2: Ingeborg Emilie Danielsen (left) and San Wung-Sung (right) around 1902. The identity of the person in the middle is uncertain, maybe it is the brother of San Wung-Sung. Courtesy of the Wung-Sung family.

Today this photograph (see Figure 2) belongs to Jesper Wung-Sung, the great grandchild of San Wung-Sung (born in Canton (Guangzhou), China, in 1883) and Ingeborg Emilie Danielsen (born in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1883). According to Jesper Wung-Sung (interview January 10, 2011), San Wung-Sung and his brother came to Copenhagen in 1902, where they performed at Tivoli's Chinese exhibition, and during the summer of 1902 San met Ingeborg Danielsen, a young working-class woman. Despite their communication problems (she spoke only Danish, and he knew only a little

English) and her family's initial opposition towards the relationship, the young lovers insisted on their relationship and love. When the Chinese exhibition ended, they eloped. They left Copenhagen and settled in the small Danish rural town of Frederikshavn where they married a few years later. One of the marriage witnesses was Th. Danielsen, most likely Ingeborg Danielsen's father, so the young couple did receive her family's blessings after their runaway. When I look at the photograph of San and Ingeborg, inserted above, I do not see individuals hunted by moral condemnation. I see three young people, a white woman and two Asian men, dressed up for an occasion—possibly the occasion of having their photograph taken, which was rather unusual at the time. I see two men as the Wung-Sung family believes that the person in the middle might be the brother of San Wung-Sung, who was also at display in Tivoli in 1902. However, it might be a woman, as the floral brooch on the center of her(his) hat indicates feminine status; Ingeborg is wearing a similar brooch on her hat, whereas San is wearing a knot, indicating male status, on his hat. Judith Butler has argued how gender is a performative act: "Gender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (Butler, 1990/1999, p. 43 f.).

Photographs can similarly be viewed in this social constructionist frame, as they can be seen as performances; they perform gender, sexuality, race, and the other categories through the stylisation of the bodies they portray. In this photograph, the three figures can be interpreted as portraying, performing and hence constructing certain forms of masculinity, femininity and racial constructions. In the photograph of Ingeborg and San, all three individuals are dressed in traditional Chinese clothes, indicating an acceptance of Chinese culture rather than a view of culture where Chinese culture is seen as inferior to a white Danish / European culture. Both Ingeborg and San look as if they are about to smile, even if they are trying to pose serious, as was the ideal photographic look at the time. Importantly, the figures are positioned at the same table, Ingeborg's and San's arms mirror each other and they appear as each other's equal. Hence, while gender is indicated and performed via their clothing, there is no explicitly staged gender hierarchy by portraying the male standing and the female sitting, as some family photographs did at this time. Similarly, there is no explicit staging (or performance) of racial hierarchies; in this photograph, neither distinctions nor hierarchies related to gender or race seem to play dominant roles.

Mica Nava has argued that young, white, British women's involvement with non-white foreign men (most often black Americans) should be interpreted as "a viscerally experienced, domestically located and gendered cosmopolitanism" (Nava, 2006, p. 62). She interprets interracial romances as expressions of cosmopolitanism and sees interracial intimacies as signs of emotional cosmopolitanism (p. 66). Ingeborg's relationship with San, visualised in the photograph, could be interpreted as such. Ingeborg's love towards San, and her physical sexual relationship with him, indicate her openness towards diversity and foreignness, and her dressing up in Chinese clothing signals an embracing of 'the other' and the other's culture. However, one could also argue, in contrast with Nava, that this

openness was guided by orientalist exoticism. Engaging in a relationship with one Chinese individual might not signal a general openness towards diversity but could just as well be an expression of an attraction (or even fetish) towards Asian men as exotic.

Furthermore, it could be argued that white, European women's engagement with foreign men of color was an act of rebellion at the turn of the twentieth century. At the time, there were strong gendered and racial expectations towards the women, as illustrated by the newspapers' condemnation when these expectations were not met. By forming relationships with foreign men, and especially with men of color—and hence refusing the national, white men—the women might have been able to resist the racial and gendered expectations imposed upon them by society and hence by these national, white men. Furthermore, engaging in relations with foreign men might have been sexually liberating; maybe it was possible for the women to behave more freely instead of having to follow a morally strict script about women's passive sexuality. Interracial intimacy might have been a tool to escape the strict gender and sexual regimes of the time. Today, we cannot know this, but just because we as researchers do not have any written evidence from these women, we should not interpret them as (only) being passive, oppressed and condemned.

Different discourses at play simultaneously

These two photographs enable a different view of interracial encounters. I would argue that there seems to have been several discourses at play simultaneously at the turn of the century. There was the well-documented, scientific discourse which condemned interracial relations and women engaging in such relations. This discourse found expression in, among others, the newspapers, where white male journalists discredited European women for engaging in interracial relationships. Parallel to this discourse, there seems to have been other discourses influencing daily life in Copenhagen which allowed women to engage with, date, and finally marry foreign men of color.

As a researcher aiming at uncovering the past, one repeatedly experiences that the subaltern does not speak. But this does not necessarily mean that the subaltern *cannot* speak; rather, it may merely suggest that we are bad listeners. The problem with our lack of listening is not only that we risk creating a rigid image without nuances of the past, but also that we keep repeating a patriarchal and racist discourse. It is our task, as non-racist researchers, not simply to describe the past's racism and sexism, but also to illustrate, if possible, how that racism and sexism were challenged and resisted at the time.

Asian masculinity

Asian men have often been constructed as feminine and sexually inferior compared to white European and white Northern American men during the

nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Eng, 2001; Fung, 1999; Lee, 1999). But this does not seem to be the case if looking at masculinity construction at the Danish exhibitions of Chinese and Japanese men. The many relationships between the Chinese men and the local Danish women which accompanied the Chinese exhibition in 1902, and especially the criticism of these relationships which emphasises how attracted the women are to the Chinese men, actually make the Chinese men appear as sexually attractive to (white) heterosexual women. An article with the aim of criticizing interracial relationships nevertheless portrays an image of Chinese men as attractive to Danish women.

As many of Tivoli's Chinese are being influenced by Danish culture, the male members of the [Chinese] troupe acquire small notebooks in which they write the names of their admirers and their favorite rhymes. However, their scribbling is not always limited to this, sometimes they also write the time and place for a rendezvous, and yesterday even for an abduction. ... At a quarter past midnight, three Chinese climbed the fence ... but they were heartily welcomed by two of Tivoli's guards [who held them back]. Meanwhile there was a hansom with three nice English-speaking young ladies waiting in Bernstorffsgade [the street name where Tivoli is situated]. ... Finally, the hansom left, and the Chinese returned to the Chinese village. (Teater og Tribune, 1902)

Here the Danish women are presented as so eager to meet and engage with the Chinese men that they are willing to break the law and try to 'abduct' the men, and the men appear energetic as they climb the fence and try to escape the exhibition ground in order to unite with their Danish girlfriends.

During the Chinese exhibitions, there were articles which directly aimed at discouraging Danish women from getting involved with the Chinese. The discouragement was framed via descriptions of the Chinese men as having very different habits, as illustrated below:

The Chinese [men] want money in order to treat the ladies who come to visit them to Swedish soda pop. The other day, a salesgirl was served a barbecued rat tail, which made her so uncomfortable that she ended her relationship with Tjen-Tjim. (Kineser-Oprøret, 1902)

Or the discouragement stemmed from presenting the Chinese men as polygamous; the discouragement did not take place via representations of the Chinese as feminine or sexually inferior:

[The newspaper reporter is talking to one of the Chinese men from the Chinese exhibition] He showed us his little collection of Danish portraits, among which there was also a picture of the above-mentioned girl. Furthermore, he showed us a little note, on which the girl had provided him with information about how long it would take him to reach her home, and how much he would have to pay for the train ticket. 'She wants to marry me!', he said. 'I already have a couple of wives, so she would be number three. And I like her.' We [the newspaper] have told this story because we find it interesting in itself. But we have also told it to give pretty girls, who might want to enlarge the Chinese beauty collection, but who really should rather not. (Moustache, 1902, July 31)

These warnings against dating the Chinese men on display do not provide the reader with an impression of the Chinese men as being less masculine than the Danish men. On the contrary, the much-courted Chinese man with many relationships and three wives comes across as hyper masculine and hyper-sexualised.

I have only been able to find one article (out of dozens of articles about Asian men on display) which feminises the Asian men. This article provides a general description of the Chinese exhibition, and a small part of this description is about one of the Chinese men, Tjan-Thi, who is dressed up as a woman.

Tjan-Thi is stomping around with a woman's gestures and poses like a female comedian. (Moustache, 1902, June 28)

Here the traditional feminisation of Asian men takes place. Importantly, however, this feminisation is presented as an enactment; the Chinese man is posing as a female comedian. He is not presented as 'naturally' feminine. These findings challenge previous scholarship on racialised masculinity, or at least calls for a nuancing of previous understandings of racialised gender constructions and racialised sexuality. The tradition of viewing 'the Orient' as feminine was established with Edward Said's analyses of how the Orient was framed as feminine while the Occident was masculine (Said, 1978/1995); a tradition which has been developed by analyses of the Western feminising of Asian-American men (Eng, 2001; Fung, 1999; Marchetti, 1993). Eng argues—in his analysis of Asian masculinity in North American cultural representations—that "the feminization of the Asian American male in the U.S. cultural imaginary typically results in his figuration as feminized, emasculated, or homosexualized" (Eng, 2001, p. 16). As shown above, the Asian men on Danish display were not feminised, de-sexualised or homosexualised; rather, they appeared as masculine and sexually attractive to white, heterosexual women. My aim here is not to discredit Eng's findings but to warn against imposing the established image of Asian men as castrated on all Western empirical material, and I believe that my material might be representative of most of Europe; not just the European periphery of Denmark. One central difference between Eng's analysis and mine is that the Asian men in my material are often described and represented via their relations to women, whereas the Asian men in Eng's material are often represented as physically isolated from women (Eng, 2001, p. 17 f.). This calls for a special attention toward the local context.

In order to listen to the subaltern voice it might be of great importance to pay attention to time, space and place. Racial formations and constructions take local nuances, and local populations make different meanings of race and racial hierarchies. My empirical material, incl. the photographs, is from a period of history marked by a series of social changes. The racial formations illuminated in this article—Asian men being hyper-masculine and interracial relationships taking place between white women and Asian men—might not testify to a general Danish national construction but rather to a more locally situated formation in the city of Copenhagen. During

these years, the city of Copenhagen witnessed extensive migration of single women from the countryside to the city. Here the women formed a new workforce and challenged the landscape of the city's everyday life. These women increasingly organised, forming labour unions and demanding the right to vote. It is possible that a number of women chose to follow their hearts rather than the public moral code, and that this choice was made possible by the many changes witnessed in the city of Copenhagen.

Conclusion

This article nuances established scholarly views on race, gender and sexuality. Based on empirical findings from the turn of the twentieth century, the article discusses interracial romances and illustrates how interracial romance and sexual encounters were not always condemned. Similarly, it analyzes the constructions of Asian masculinity that accompanied the exhibitions of Chinese and Japanese people, and shows that these Asian men were not feminised but rather appeared as masculine and sexually attractive to white women. The article advocates in favour of supplementing written historical sources by visual material, as this might supply the researcher with alternative stories. The article also questions if we, as middle-class researchers preoccupied with written and verbalised words, become blind (deaf) towards the voices (stories) of 'ordinary' people (the subaltern) who do not leave any written or verbal material behind. In order to overcome this blindness / deafness which runs the risk of reproducing patriarchal and racist discourse, the article argues in favour of using visual sources and analysing these as performances, as well as to pay special attention to the local context in which the analysed racial formations take place. This will not completely remedy the lack of voices from subaltern people, but it might provide us with more nuances and more alternative stories in the field of race, gender, sexuality and interracial intimacies.

Author Note

Rikke Andreassen (Ph.D. from Dept. of History, University of Toronto, Canada (2005); Associate Professor at Communication Studies, Roskilde University, Denmark) is a researcher and teacher working in the fields of media, popular culture, race, gender and sexuality. She has published a number of articles as well as the book *Menneskeudstilling. Fremvisninger af eksotiske mennesker i Zoolgisk Have og Tivoli* (2011) (forthcoming in English as *Human Exhibitions: Race, Gender and Sexuality in Ethnic Displays*, Ashgate, 2014). She is the leader of the research network *TheoryNord: Re-developing international theories of media and migration in a Nordic context*.

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