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BUILDING NON-MONOGAMIES:
RACE, QUEER SEXUAL POLITICS, AND THE
(IM)POSSIBILITIES OF NON-MONOGAMY

Jordan Victorian

Mentor: Shanti Parikh

Scholars of race, feminism, and queer theory have long challenged compulsory monogamy as a regulation of desire and bodies who desire. Yet while the effects of monogamy have been discussed, its assumptions still limit the politics we imagine to be possible. Literature on the consensual non-monogamy often under-analyzes how structures of power affect intimacies. Racial and ethnic studies often reinforce normalizing ideas of monogamy and ‘appropriate’ sexual behaviors, stifling queer potential within these deviant practices. Moreover, queer theory and politics often gloss over how racism, as part of heteronormativity, makes people of color into sexual “others.” Attempting to bridge conversations across these fields, this project seeks an intersectional analysis of power exploring non-monogamous desire within a larger sexual economy of inequality and (im)possibility. Through critical theory and ethnography, the project engages consensually non-monogamous people of color, particularly in St. Louis, to highlight the sexual politics and sexual cultures they interact with. Ultimately, it works toward destabilizing the sociopolitical mandate toward “The [White] Monogamous Couple” and building toward a more liberated future for all of us feeling and enacting desires—whether through monogamous sexual and intimate couplings, multi-partner arrangements, or something beyond.