



Crossing the Color Line: Race, Sex, and the Contested Politics of Colonialism in Ghana (New African Histories)

Carina E. Ray

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“A fascinating exploration of sex across the color line in colonial Ghana. This book is a brilliant addition to the literature on sex, gender and empire.” —Kwame Anthony Appiah, professor of philosophy and law, New York University

Interracial sex mattered to the British colonial state in West Africa. In *Crossing the Color Line*, Carina E. Ray goes beyond this fact to reveal how Gold Coasters—their social practices, interests, and anxieties—shaped and defined these powerfully charged relations across racial lines. The interplay between African and European perspectives and practices, argues Ray, transformed these relationships into key sites for consolidating colonial rule and for contesting its racial and gendered hierarchies of power.

With rigorous methodology and innovative analyses, Ray brings Ghana and Britain into a single analytic frame by examining cases in both locales. Intimate relations between black men and white women in Britain’s port cities emerge as an influential part of the history of interracial sex and empire in ways that are connected to rather than eclipsed by relations between European men and African women in the colony.

Based on rich archival evidence and original interviews, the book moves across different registers, shifting from the micropolitics of individual disciplinary cases against colonial officers who “kept” local women to transatlantic networks of family, empire, and anticolonial resistance. In this way, Ray cuts to the heart of how interracial sex became a source of colonial anxiety and nationalist agitation during the first half of the twentieth century.

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