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BLACK FEMINIST AESTHETICS AND COSMOPOLITANISM, 1920s-PRESENT: NARRATIVES OF POSTCOLONIAL *BILDUNGSROMAN*

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Black American cosmopolitan artists, writers, and performers enjoy a strong, yet underappreciated, history dating back to the nineteenth century. This case study seeks to shed light on the recent history of twentieth-century black feminist narratives of artists, writers, and performers, living out a cosmopolitan existence in a transnational and postcolonial context, in France, Italy, England, and Mexico. Although living outside of the United States in pursuit of racial equality and economic opportunity, each female studied uses artistic expression to critically engage the notion of American citizenship, negatively impacted by Jim Crow segregation laws and institutional racism more generally. By employing an intersectional analysis of black feminist narratives, I provide critical insight into black women's diverse, yet also similar, set of experiences, all the while highlighting salient themes related to liminal U.S. citizenship, including trauma and resilience.

From the narratives that comprise this case study, I craft a unique approach to transformative learning that uses as its framework the humanist literary genre of the *Bildungsroman*, or the novel of self-formation. However, given the focus of this dissertation on historically marginalized subjects, I broaden the traditionally narrow usage of the genre to include black feminist and postcolonial lived experiences. From this revised understanding of the genre, then, I examine themes of black feminist self-becoming, or growth rooted in black women's self-healing, expression, and resilience intellectually informed by (primarily) the ideas of bell hooks and Audre Lorde, as well as by the artists, writers, and performers themselves.

Significantly, this case study of black feminist and postcolonial narratives makes theoretical contributions to the fields of black feminist studies and transformative learning. The intended outcome of this research is to materialize for black feminist studies, which historically privileges black American experiences on American soil, an intersectional analysis of self-becoming and citizenship through creative and expressive output in a transnational context. The intended outcome of this research for transformative learning studies, which historically privileges rational perspectives on ethics and self-becoming, is to broaden current perspectives on the processes of transformation by examining qualitative accounts of becoming through cosmopolitanism rooted in the lived experiences of historically marginalized subjects.

For Mom, Dad, and Moni

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CHAPTER 1: PROLOGUE

1.1. Introduction

Black feminist scholars urge black audiences toward self-definition. While some cite their own lack of exposure to black female voices during their formal education as the primary motivating force behind and inspiration for sharing personal and lived experiences,[1] others see self-definition as the essential motivating force, arguing self-definition and the use of one's voice is the source of black women's very existential and cultural survival.[2] Black feminist disciplinary inquiries not only fill the gaps of knowledge with narratives in place of silence, but they also provide an outlet for black feminist scholars themselves to engage in self-definition and the exercise of voice. Such activities, as forms of self-becoming, thereby advance aims of transformative learning.[3]

This case study will examine a group of internationally known black feminist performers and visual artists who used creative self-expression (i.e. art, music, dance, literature, and song) and their public platforms to enhance self-becoming, while at the same time advocating for social change. In addition, this study highlights the importance of intersectionality in framing black feminism and understanding better the nature of black women's lived experiences.[4] Furthermore, this study highlights as themes of black

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[1] See Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory" *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 67-79.
[2] See Audre Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, 53-59 (Freedom, California: The Crossing Press, 1984) and bell hooks, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1989).
[3] See Peter Jarvis, *Paradoxes of Learning: On Becoming an Individual in Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); Peter Jarvis, *Learning to Be a Person in Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009); Mark Tennant, *The Learning Self: Understanding the Potential for Transformation* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2012).
[4] See Kimberle Crenshaw, *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings of Kimberlé Crenshaw* (New York: The New Press, 2017).

feminist transformation the role of self-becoming through existential learning, as the selected artists chose to immigrate to new countries in search of racial equality and economic opportunity. In this way, the author argues the group of black women under examination are not only exemplars of black feminist cosmopolitan forerunners, but also of *bildungsromane*, or metaphorical novels of formation.[5]

Ultimately, the goal of this project is to include in the historical record more divergent voices and experiences of transformation so the field of transformative learning can increase its credibility, inclusivity, and accessibility within academia. By using narrative insights from the lives of women I've studied, my aim will be to broaden the discourse on transformation and extend beyond its current boundaries the field's concept of transformative learning to include the experiences of the marginalized and the global perspectives of others.

1.2 Why Transformative Learning?

Calls from within the field of transformative learning advocate for a more unified theory that reflects diverse approaches.[6] Although transformative learning has been historically understood from cognitive, and later feminist, existential, cultural, and planetary approaches,[7] in our increasingly global world there is an urgent need to include more diverse perspectives on the phenomenon of transformation. In fact, leading scholars

[5] See Geta LeSeur, *Ten is the Age of Darkness: The Black Bildungsroman* (Columbia and London: The University of Missouri Press, 1995).
[6] Patricia Cranton and Edward W. Taylor, "Transformative Learning Theory: Seeking a More Unified Theory." In Edward W. Taylor & Patricia Cranton (Eds.), *Handbook of Transformative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 3-20. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012).
[7] See Jack Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991); Edmund V. O'Sullivan, Amish Morrell, and Mary Ann O'Connor, *Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning: Theory and Praxis* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002); Peggy Gabo Ntseane, "Culturally Sensitive Transformational Learning: Incorporating the Afrocentric Paradigm and African Feminism" *Adult Education Quarterly* v. 61, no. 4 (2011); 307-323.

of transformative learning have called upon the researchers who seek to broaden the field's perspectives to make explicit the ways new research contributes to transformative learning theory.[8]

To contribute to the creation of a more unified theory of transformative learning, this dissertation uses a narrative inquiry approach[9] to better understand black feminist voices and expressive output as contributing to existential becoming. This dissertation aims to understand better the nature of transformation from three standpoints: 1) the epistemological aspects of identity that diverge (i.e. racial, gender, ability, class, and sexual) from the privileged, cisgender, white male norm, 2) the ontological nature of the self in the midst of existential becoming expressed through voice and artistic skill to perform identity formation and name injustices, and 3) the activity of existential self-reflection by the subject who creatively (re-)constructs lived experiences of trauma and disenfranchisement to understand better the nature of individuals as both human beings and social subjects contending with unjust institutions and imbalances of power. In these ways, this dissertation contributes a critical social perspective to transformative learning theory.[10]

As an educator invested in transformation, I think about experiential learning on the individual and social levels. When teachers take on the role of transformative leaders, they become radicals committed to human liberation from oppression.[11] Paulo Freire describes "radicals" as individuals committed to fighting alongside those who have been

[8] Patricia Cranton and Edward W. Taylor, "Transformative Learning Theory."
[9] See D. Jean Clandinin, *Engaging in Narrative Inquiry* (London: Routledge, 2016).
[10] See Stephen D. Brookfield, *The Power of Critical Theory: Liberating Adult Learning and Teaching* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2004).
[11] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. By Myra Bergman Ramos. (New York and London: Continuum, 2007), 39.

oppressed,[12] not unlike an advocate. S/he is unafraid to know people, build rapport with and engage in dialogue with them.[13] The radical doesn't make the mistake of believing s/he has liberated the people.[14] Rather, having participated in the process of radicalization, radicals have acquired a critical and creative spirit, committed to transforming their very realities.[15] Therefore, the position of the teacher renders it impossible for him/her to become a prisoner of a "circle of certainty," in Freire's theory.[16] Rather, the teacher is an advocate of those students whose identities are still forming, and yet who have already experienced symbolic violence, if not real, physical violence.

To gain some sense of this violence, it is useful to imagine the experiences of blacks and other historically marginalized groups. On a phenomenological level, this requires a Black Orpheus-like journey into the black experience through the expressive arts. From this activity, those of us invested in liberation gain insight into the traumas that blacks have experienced and can understand why such events are life-shaping, especially since the trauma often starts during childhood. It begins when the black child in

> his recognition of his own coloredness, with all the implications of that fact. The realization can come as mild awareness that is taken in stride, or it can come as a rude shock that results in a trauma; but whatever the circumstances, a new understanding of the self influences the child's every thought and emotion from that day forth. Truly, he sees the world through different eyes, from a different perspective, with somewhat less of the innocence of his earlier years.[17]

[12] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 39.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. By Myra Bergman Ramos. (New York and London: Continuum, 2007), 37.
[16] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 39.
[17] Jay David, ed. *Growing Up Black: From Slave Days to the Present- 25 African Americans Reveal the Trials and Triumphs of the Childhoods*. (New York: Avon Books, 1992), 3.

Historically, the burden has fallen on black Americans to develop healthy race relations to not only get along in the world, but also to cope with the suffering condition in which they find themselves, and especially at a young age, having to rise above the constant assault, and subordinate position.[18] These experiences, sadly, have not much changed over time.

In this dissertation, I will examine the ways to promote transformative learning by putting forth a model of the *Bildungsroman* as a metaphorical novel of formation. I have selected the *Bildungsroman* of black feminist artists of a kind, those who have been socially excluded from the U.S. and subsequently relocated abroad. These artists, the singer and dancer Adelaide Hall (1901-1993) in United Kingdom, the printmaker and sculptor Elizabeth Catlett (1915-2012) in Mexico, the singer and pianist Nina Simone (1933-2003) in France, and the sculptor, poet, a novelist Barbara Chase-Riboud (1939-) in France and Italy. I turn specifically to these black American females as examples of the *Bildungsroman* because each reveal, through their biographical narratives and expressive works, the nature of social and political conditions in the U.S. that point to the need for the intervention of transformative learning among the general population. However, there is little doubt educators and other professionals can benefit from learning about this specific case study and acquire knowledge of specific black females' legacies and imagine the ways empathy and understanding can contribute to social transformation.

Here, I will use the model of *Bildungsroman* in the attempt to demonstrate how examining biographies, artists' life experiences, and artistic output can contribute to transformative learning. Specifically, as educators and learners gain additional

[18] Cornel West, *Race Matters*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 6-7.

knowledge about the life experiences and historical contexts in which admirable popular and public figures existed, as well as the challenging social and political contexts with which they had to contend, empathy toward the lives of those who have been socially and politically disenfranchised might develop. In addition, such learning can expose people to the different aspects of U.S. history that typically goes un(der)reported. Moreover, educators gain greater insight into the diversity of experiences that exist within a singular racial group. Finally, by using *Bildungsroman* as a model, my hope is to demonstrate for educators and learners alike can learn from texts, artworks, performances, films, etc., how to draw out narrative qualities that point to larger historical contexts and political trends.

By gaining more nuanced understanding of racial inequity in the U.S., there is stronger potential for educators and learners alike to experience a stronger immersion in transformative learning. The result of transformative learning experiences will be increased preparation to see history, people, and society differently and in more empathic ways. The work of what Mezirow calls perspective transformation,[19] I argue, must take place prior to the transformative work an educator or learner engages in with colleagues, pupils, and people more generally.

Of note is the fact that each of the women whose lives I have examined was an internationally known artist and performer. These transnational feminists represent examples of people who have wandered the globe, in search of their freedom and sense of home outside of the U.S., away from racial tensions though never far from them, as Langston Hughes reminds us in his poem "White Shadows"

I'm looking for a house
In the world
Where white shadows

[19] Jack Mezirow, "Perspective Transformation, *"Adult Education Quarterly* v. 28 no. 2 (1978): 100-110.

Will not fall.
There is no such house,
Dark brother
No such house
At all.[20]

Similarly, I will attempt to shed light on the political, economic, and social factors contributing to black American artists, writers, intellectuals, and scholars leaving the U.S., and point to the ways in which these artists have been understudied and why. I also ask how this phenomenon might be better integrated into academic scholarship.

I will use case study method to examine the narratives of the lives and works of black feminist artists, with three primary aims: 1) to open a path for the genuine promotion of culture in a robust rather than a narrow sense in transformative learning, 2) to promote critical, inquiry-driven based discussions that come with examinations of the lives, statements, and works of black female artists, 3) to assist educators and learners alike as they think through questions of race, gender, class, and sexuality, and how these concepts intersect, again by turning to the evidence of artists' lives, statements, and artworks produced, and 4) to question notions of canon, specifically which black artists have and have not been recognized for their achievements, and the reasons for their recognitions, or exclusion.

1.3 Background and Personal Narrative

According to Peter Jarvis, all learning is transformative.[21] The time period when significant learning took place in my life was during my final two years of high school.

[20] Faith Berry, *Langston Hughes: Before and Beyond Harlem* (New York: A Citadel Press Book, 1992), 131.
[21] Peter Jarvis, *Learning to Be a Person in Society*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 29.

Jarvis describes the process of learning that begins with disjuncture.[22] For him, disjuncture occurs on three levels: divergence, separation, and distinction.[23] Divergence requires some overcorrection, and adjustment to overcome. Separation consists in a wider gap in which genuine confusion and questioning occurs and "where our conscious learning starts."[24] Separation encompasses a gap so wide that a significant amount of learning must occur in order to close it. In fact, Jarvis acknowledges there are cases of separation in which no amount of learning can close the gap.[25] As I vacillated between each of these levels, looking back on this period, I primarily participated in the separation and distinction levels, as I entered an entirely different region of the country and set of cultural norms.

I was going about living my life as a teenager, when one day I was jolted by the news that my family and I would be moving across the country, from sunny southern California to the bitterly cold suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. The announcement of this move due to my parent's job reassignment came unexpected. Furthermore, I had only one month to prepare myself emotionally and psychologically for this major life change. When the time came for my family and I to move, I was not ready to leave my home and did not make a smooth transition. In fact, I had a difficult time adjusting to my new town, another new school, the new school curriculum, my new neighborhood, and the new community. I found it difficult to make new friends and felt unmotivated to get involved with school activities.

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[22] Peter Jarvis, *Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Human Learning* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 78.
[23] Peter Jarvis, *Adult Education and Lifelong Learning: Theory and Practice*, 4th ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 84.
[24] Peter Jarvis, *Adult Education and Lifelong Learning: Theory and Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010),84.
[25] Ibid.

This move across country signaled multiple losses. The first loss was the proximity to all that had been familiar up to that point: my friends and the physical landscape. I was quite unhappy to leave behind the sunshine, the beach, palm trees, and the mountains, all of which roused feelings of familiarity and comfort associated with home and afforded a feeling of nostalgia, and to some extent even safety. In addition, I left behind my childhood friends, from whom I was now physically separated by a great distance only navigable by airplane. Although this move to the Midwest was not my family's first move away from my childhood friends, as we had previously moved twice, both due to job-related reasons, this move was the most life-altering for me as it increased the distance from my birthplace.

The second loss I experienced was my intensive study of the violin. I had spent my sophomore year of high school at a well-regarded performing arts school in Los Angeles, studying the violin and even learning to play the viola. I played in the string ensemble, in the symphony orchestra, and in the orchestra pit for the spring musical. I took private lessons from a black male violinist, a member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Sadly, at my new high school in the Chicago suburbs, I lacked comparable connections and did not pursue them. It took years to build up the network to audition, gain admittance into the school, work with a private teacher, etc. To make matters worse, I was unable to join the high school orchestra due to a schedule conflict.

My guidance counselor informed me that as a junior, I needed to "play catch up" to complete some high school requirements in order to graduate and receive a diploma from my new high school without needing to take summer school. Whereas my previous high school required courses in Music Theory and History of Music to graduate, these

courses were now counted as electives at my new school. At my new school, I now needed to take courses in the subjects of Consumer Economics, Driver's Education, and Swimming in order to graduate. This meant I had no room in my schedule to take elective coursework, such as Symphony Orchestra, if I still wanted to avoid summer school. In addition, I needed to continue to take honors and advanced placement courses if I wanted to remain competitive for college admission.

The third loss I experienced was a lack of access to an inclusive cultural setting to which I had been accustomed my entire life. In my most recent high school in West Los Angeles, I was fortunate to be surrounded by politically progressive friends and classmates. At my new school, I literally felt as if I was living in a John Hughes film, that was set against a racially segregated suburb or school context. Perhaps for the first time in my life, I felt socially and culturally isolated from classmates. To cope, I acted in a congenial manner toward classmates, whereas I remained cool, distant, protective, and closed off, unwilling to befriend many people. Already at my third high school, as my family had moved at the start of my sophomore year as well, I was satisfied with having mere acquaintances in my classes, on my sport team, and at church. My awakening would be on the way soon enough, but not before some period of struggle, especially during my final years of high school. By sharing my personal experiences, my hope is to demonstrate what one tale of young black female struggle and perseverance looks likes.

1.4 Schooling in America

When I first arrived in the Chicago suburbs, I felt as if I were living in an alien environment, and like a complete outsider. For the first time, I lived in a place where one's family name, socio-economic status, and community standing were seriously

considered, and classmates judged one another on that basis. This is because I attended school with mostly middle, upper middle class, and upper-class students, with some working-class students. If a student didn't have a history in the area, then the student was immediately sized up according to their physical appearance. If a student wore upscale clothing, displaying their family's wealth and accomplishments (e.g. J. Crew, Abercrombie & Fitch, or Eddie Bauer), then the student was considered socially acceptable. To become an acceptable member of the high school community, one needed to become involved in extracurricular activities, especially sports teams to earn a varsity letter, to participate in student council, yearbook club, or theatre, etc.

But it seemed that no matter the activity, to become an inside member of the high school community, one had to enact one's privilege. In other words, one had to participate in the rituals of complaining about luxuries, as in the things one was lucky to have access to. For instance, my classmates regularly complained about having to drive their parents' "junk vehicle," even though this supposed piece of junk was a well-functioning Subaru Wagon, Chrysler Minivan, or Saab Turbo. In addition, to become a member of this community, one seemed to have to participate in the "normal" rituals of drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana, and listening to classic rock and hip-hop music. In sum, one needed to assimilate, or take on "the dress, speech patterns, tastes, attitudes, and economic status of the dominant group."[26]

Nevertheless, I was unconcerned with fitting into this crowd. Even if I had wanted to, I could not afford to meet the expectations of this contrived standard of style! Looking back on this time in my life, I now recognize that I maintained a certain obstinate attitude

[26] Walter Feinberg and Jonas F. Soltis, *School and Society*, 4th ed. (New York and London: Teachers College Press, 2004), 25.

toward my social situation. In other words, when faced with this materialistic environment, I sought ways to cope with, or even escape, my situation, even if such resistance was futile.

First, of the utmost importance to me at that time was my Christian fundamentalist set of beliefs, which rejected materialism. I interpreted my social world as consisting of fellow high schoolers who maintained an insatiable, unhealthy obsession with wealth, status, and economic privilege. In fact, I disassociated myself at all costs from what I perceived was an obsession with a self-indulgent lifestyle and status level, rather than the landscape of my social world and a set of particular conditions with which I, as a human being, needed to learn to contend, and a space to learn to navigate rather than completely reject.

Second, even if I could overlook what I interpreted as the rampant materialism at my high school and attempt to better fit into my school's social scene, I could never convince my parents to buy me the specific brand names and styles of clothing and shoes required to convey to the rest of the high school population that I "fit in," by wearing then-stylish bootcut jeans from J.Crew, sweaters from Abercrombie & Fitch and Gap, corduroy pants and flannel-lined jeans from Eddie Bauer, and a pair of Doc Martens shoes, etc. Furthermore, unlike some of my classmates, who (like me) also had parents unwilling to purchase unnecessarily expensive and trendy style of clothing, I was unwilling (unlike some classmates) to engage in "five-finger discount shopping" simply to fit in.

But even if I had the prowess to shoplift, the desire and the ability to acclimate to this suburban Chicago culture, I was still aware of the limitations my identity imposed.

As a black, middle-class female, with no name recognition, and new to the area, there were no guarantees I would be granted full membership into the school community even if I had successfully completed all obstacles placed before me. I was still an outsider, by virtue of my skin color, my hair texture, my speech, my body shape, etc. These facts were undeniable, and unchangeable, as the intersectionality of my race, class, and gender presented multiple strikes against my prospects of assimilation into this new cultural space.[27]

This knowledge of my different identity subconsciously affected, or perhaps even determined, my decision not to go above and beyond measures to fit into my new community. As a result, I was fully aware that even by wearing the correct clothing, associating with the right people, taking the right classes, and hanging out at the right spots to be seen around town still would not grant me full membership into the community to which I had desired to belong. Ultimately, I ended up quietly revolting against majority culture. Instead of attempting to fit in with the cool crowd, I created my own community, and associated with a small group of like-minded individuals. Happily, I was eventually able to transcend my local environment and connect to greater ideas. The key ingredient that facilitated my transcendence was the introduction of poetry into my life.[28]

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[27] Geta LeSeur, "One Mother, Two Daughters: The Afro-American and the Afro-Caribbean Female *'Bildungsroman*'" *The Black Scholar* 17 no. 2 (March/April 1986): 26-33; 32.

[28] For Heidegger, transcendence is "surpassing," linked to the individuation of a self, and is constitutive of authentic selfhood. Dermot Moran, "What Does Heidegger Mean by the Transcendence of Dasein?" *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 22 no. 4 (2014): 491-514; 497.

1.5 Beyond America, in Africa

I can recall my French teacher reaching out to me during my senior year of high school and attempting to engage me in a meaningful way. Looking back, she was attempting to provide a creative solution to what I can only describe as my profound disengagement from and disillusionment with my life, which was then surfacing in my academic performance. She took my culture and stated interests into account and stirred my curiosity and desire to learn further. Her use of culturally responsive teaching kept me engaged academically during my final year of school. My French teacher introduced me to the poetry of the Senegalese Negritude poet, Birago Diop. She knew I had spent two weeks of the previous summer in Côte d'Ivoire, participating in humanitarian work alongside the members of my church.

Birago Diop writes of transcending one's local, social context and communing with one's natural environment:

Ecoute plus souvent
Les Choses que les Êtres
La voix de Feu s'entend,
Entends la voix de l'Eau.
Ecoute dans le Vent Le Buisson en sanglots :
C'est le Souffle des ancêtres.

Birago Diop, (1906-1989), *Les Souffles*[29]

English translation:

Listen to Things
More often than Beings,
Hear the voice of fire,
Hear the voice of water.
Listen in the wind,
To the sighs of the bush;
This is the ancestors breathing

[29] French, with audio: "Souffles" http://neveu01.chez-alice.fr/birasouf.htm

Spirits[30]

In my own way, I was able to achieve a spiritual awakening by engaging with the nature that surrounded me. I spent many lunch periods taking solitary walks outside of school, even if the weather was freezing cold. I observed the tree-lined streets of the suburban neighborhood, and looked up at the expansive Illinois sky, which noticeably lacked mountains and a seascape, unlike my hometown in California. Perhaps I was searching for answers to larger questions about life and wanted to (re)connect to a place beyond the suburbs.

It was also during this time that my English teacher asked me to write a paper in place of one I did not submit. I would be required to address the text we read for class, but incorporate meaningful experiences on the African continent, performances I had given in the presence of children lining the streets, which I had shared with the class. He took information I had shared that was meaningful to me, representative of my cultural pride, and was now asking me to relate this information to a story we had previously read for class. Not unlike my French teacher, my English teacher was looking for ways to engage me on an intellectual level but also on a cultural level, as if to validate my experiences, my culture, my intellect, and to help restore me from what was most certainly the experience of social alienation I was experiencing. His attempt to engage me in a culturally responsive way is memorable.

During my high school years, my classmates likely viewed me as somewhat eccentric, as I made virtually everyone, I encountered aware of my affinity for Africa, as an idealized homeland. Before spending time in Côte d'Ivoire, I had spent the previous

[30] English translation : "Spirits" http://skewwiff.weebly.com/les-souffles---birago-diop---an-english-translation.html

summer in South Africa for a period of two weeks, also performing humanitarian work. I often shared with my teacher and classmates my fondness for African arts and expressive cultures. This was visually evidenced by the frequency with which I wore beaded necklaces and earrings and other "exotic-looking" pieces of jewelry I had purchased during my visit to the continent. In addition, I wore dashikis and tie-dyed scarves I had picked up from the market in Côte d'Ivoire. I also wore braids in my hair at the time, which for me served as a more authentic way to "be black" and to separate myself culturally from the majority white population that attended my school, and other middle class and upper-middle class black students, who I felt at the time were more materialistic, and assimilated into mainstream white culture than I.

In addition to having supportive teachers, I had some allies at school. These figures ranged from certain friends to teachers, whose attempts to reach me were noteworthy, and stick with my memory to this day. Specifically, I enjoyed friendship with two other black classmates, who also wore braids and a short natural hair style. As a small group, we occasionally spent time together to discuss what I now understand to be our outsider status. They both spent time explaining the class and racial dynamics of the school to me, which led to my disenchantment, if not a certain air of superiority, in the first place. Their willingness to reach out to me, someone who was far removed socially, existentially, and culturally from my new setting, was noteworthy.

Looking back on this challenging period in my life, I also recognize the myriad ways I exercised existential intelligence.[31] I survived a potentially traumatizing experience, after having moved clear across the country, begun my third high school, and

[31] Howard Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons*. (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

entered a new community, all of which required me to learn a new set of cultural norms. My survival depended on my ability to remove myself, if not physically then somehow culturally, spiritually, and existentially, beyond my high school and the community, and well as new people. Put a different way, I needed to develop the skill of seeing past, or rising above, my current circumstances, immediate surroundings, and social environment. In other words, I needed to become resilient.

I believe my positive relationships with certain teachers, friends, and allies helped contributed to my eventual academic success and my desire to learn more about African peoples, and frankly my own ancestry, during college and graduate school. My pursuit of African Studies was born out of early exposure to African expressive cultures. Without the validation I received from teachers and peers, and encouragement from my family, I would not have developed the pride and passion to study African history and the arts. More black students like me are out there, and waiting for similar validation and recognition from teachers, peers, and family.

As a graduate student pursuing a master's degree in African Studies, I eventually returned to Africa for one summer. With an internship to provide financial support worked in Dakar, Senegal as an assistant art teacher. At the same time, I studied Wolof, and Negritude poetry. I grew fascinated by the life narratives and the poetry written by the poet/scholars of Negritude. At the same time, I developed a fascination with the metropole itself, which made it possible for colonial subject-scholars to meet in the first place, to congregate and transcend colonial thinking by developing a progressive set of politics and creative poetic set of ideas. Specifically, I examined the poetry produced by the founders of the Negritude movement, the first president of Senegal, the poet and

statesman, Leopold Sedar Senghor (1906-2001), the poet, playwright, and politician Aime-Ferdinand-David Cesaire of Martinique (1913-2008), and the writer Leon-Gontran Damas of French Guiana. To each, I was drawn to their narratives of travel, transcendence of colonial order, and a cosmopolitan existence,[32] no matter one's physical location on earth.

My summer spent in Dakar solidified certain convictions that had been long germinating. First, I had simultaneously become a world traveler, and a lifelong learner. Having returned to Africa as a graduate student researcher, I developed, tested, and strengthened my ideas and built upon new knowledge, and was able to conduct original research. Second, I had developed an imaginative and resilient attitude toward my location in the world, with the recognition that I would not always be limited to a single place. As a college student, I imagined I would one day settle elsewhere in a different place. Although I would later settle in Illinois, I committed to traveling to different places to study other cultures, languages, and histories. I imagined I might someday could visit new places, converse with different people, and learn about other societies. In other words, my desire to explore and to wander led to developing a greater curiosity about the world, and an expanded notion of what was possible to think, value, and live. In my mind, I had become cosmopolitan.

[32] According to Appiah, the Cynics of the fourth century BCE coined the term "cosmopolitan," to mean "a citizen of the cosmos." Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2006), xiv.

1.6 Ethical Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism appears in myriad forms. Here, I will refer to intellectual, cultural, and ethical forms of the idea. Although these forms are related, each form is distinct from the next. However, the underlying commitment is to open-mindedness, self-reflexivity, and empathy. I will focus on ethical cosmopolitanism, but also relate this to its intellectual and cultural forms.

Gerald Delanty (2012) describes the general characteristics of cosmopolitanism in the following terms

> The general characteristics of cosmopolitanism include: centrality of openness and overcoming of divisions; the interaction, the logic of exchange, the encounter and dialogue, deliberative communication, self and societal transformation (transformational), critical evaluation. Despite the western genealogy of the word cosmopolitanism, the term is used today in a "post-western" register of meaning. In this sense it is "post-western" orientation that is located neither on the national nor global level, but at the interface of the local and the global.[33]

The intellectual form of cosmopolitanism is fostered, particularly within educational settings such as higher education and academia. Hannah Arendt argues, the faculty of imagination is able to make others present, think critically from multiple perspectives, and thus become a Kantian world citizen.[34] Arendt asserts, one can think with an enlarged mentality, which means that "one trains one's imagination to go visiting."[35] This intellectual form of cosmopolitanism is abstract, and rooted in Kantian political philosophy. However, this intellectual cosmopolitanism relates closely to the ethical cosmopolitanism to which I refer, but the two are not the same.

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[33] Gerald Delanty, "The Idea of Critical Cosmopolitanism." *Handbook of Cosmopolitan Studies*, ed. Gerald Delanty, 1-11 (London and New York, 2012), 5.
[34] Hannah Arendt, Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 43.
[35] Compare the right to visit in Kant's Perpetual Peace. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 43.

Besides intellectual cosmopolitanism made manifest in the form of critical thinking, what is also often associated with cosmopolitanism is the notion of travel. Global travel tends to be rooted in wanderlust, and can manifest in the activity of backpacking, tours through Europe, study abroad participation, or even voluntourism. Some version of world cultures appreciation relates to ethical cosmopolitanism. However, ethical cosmopolitanism does not necessarily involve global travel, as a hobby traveler or life-long learner might undertake. In addition, it need not entail sustained learning about, or even admiration of, others' cultures, customs, and histories, as multicultural understanding is not a prerequisite for ethical cosmopolitanism.

Delanty continues to describe shared characteristics between myriad forms of cosmopolitanism, as he fleshes out a critical evaluation of the term

> Taken together, these dimensions and characteristics of cosmopolitanism suggest a broad definition of cosmopolitanism as a condition of openness to the world and entailing self and societal transformation in light of the encounter with the Other. Central to such transformation is pluralisation and the possibility of deliberation. It is evident, too, and it follows from the above that cosmopolitanism is not the same as internationalism, globalization, internationalism or transnationalism. Thus cosmopolitanism is better seen more in terms of a normative critique of globalization and as an alternative to internationalism. Transnationalism is more a non-necessary precondition of cosmopolitanism and one should resist the equation of cosmopolitanism with mobility per se.[36]

Underlying principles of cosmopolitanism include openness, which often is achieved in pluralistic societies, and within spaces where deliberation occurs and in fact is encouraged. Significantly, cosmopolitanism purports a hermeneutic design, as "a condition of openness to the world and entailing self and societal transformation in light of the encounter with the Other." In other words, the subject engages in relationship with self and society through transformative encounters with others. The ethical

[36] Delanty, "The Idea of Critical Cosmopolitanism," p. 5.

cosmopolitanism to which I refer focuses on the relationship between the self and the others it encounters.

The ethical conception of cosmopolitanism I invoke here is rooted in the work of Kwame Anthony Appiah. In Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006), he argues "...cosmopolitanism shouldn't be seen as some exalted attainment: it begins with the simple idea that in the human community, as in national communities, we need to develop habits of coexistence: conversation in its older meaning, of living together, association."[37] In essence, cosmopolitanism as an ethical ideal is one in which one strives to recognize the humanity, and grant world citizenship and rights to another. It is also a struggle to achieve and maintain respect and tolerance toward other human beings. As an ideal, ethical cosmopolitanism shows up in the form of the learner seeking and achieving a sense of belonging and recognition in local and global contexts.

It could be argued that coexistence is too conservative an effort to make toward human respect for difference and, basic recognition of the humanity of another is far too neutral. To this critique, I would offer the seemingly abstract and non-committal version of cosmopolitanism Appiah posits is designed to capture a basic quality of empathy. In fact, I would argue blacks living under Jim Crow laws would have preferred basic recognition of their humanity and empathy over the systemic viciousness and hatred they encountered as part of their day-to-day lives during the era of state-sanctioned segregation and violence.

In short, I found resonance with the notion of ethical cosmopolitanism. Ethical cosmopolitanism implies an underlying moral commitment to world citizenship, basic

[37] Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, xviii-xix.

acknowledgement of and respect for human dignity and diversity. Although I acknowledge there can be, and often is, overlap between the different cosmopolitanisms, each form serves a unique function. In this project, I wish to expound upon the ethical form of cosmopolitanism, as I see it fits the present study.

Personally, I have recognized cosmopolitanism, or freedom through sharing in conversation and association, has helped release me from the feeling of being stuck, or trapped within a single community or place. Rather, through travel, I felt free to associate freely with others, discover new possibilities, and learn from the perspectives of others. In other words, I was able to transcend the tight strictures of my daily environment when I embraced global citizenship in the truest sense, at home and in new places around the globe.[38] Traveling helped me feel at ease abroad, but also more tolerant of differences I encountered at home. A comfortable globe-trotter can visit dozens of countries and remain close-minded. In other words, merely visiting places during travel does not necessarily result in a person becoming more tolerant. I recognize that I developed a basic respect toward others the more I encountered difference.

At the same time, as I traveled regionally throughout the U.S., I developed a greater appreciation for the diversity I encountered at home within the U.S. If one place did not satisfy my needs, or fully allow me to flourish, I could leave. I could also find new places to study, work, and live. To this day, I continue to travel and imagine new locations to discover that will allow me to connect with my ancestral roots, study world history more generally, and develop a greater understanding of and appreciation for

[38] Tania Friedel, *Racial Discourse and Cosmopolitanism in Twentieth-Century African-American Writing* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008).

transformative learning experiences, both personal and ones that others have and share with me.

Admittedly, my account of cosmopolitanism departs slightly from Delanty's critical cosmopolitanism. That is, although the author warns against the kind of cultural cosmopolitanism that rests on mobility, which implies an inherent privilege not afforded to all, my life experience tells me that if traveling can help one to develop a cosmopolitan disposition, then so be it. Travel should neither be a necessity nor a requirement for ethical cosmopolitanism. At stake is the development of the kind of cosmopolitanism that implies a modicum of respect and empathy afforded to all human beings, regardless of background or social standing. This, to me, is rooted in the ethical aspect of the idea.

1.7 Significance

The narrative approach and methodological bricolage,[39] which describes the use of any and all the tools available to researchers to complete a task, which in this case is research.[40] I employ bricolage to this case study, which contributes a nuanced socio-cultural approach to transformative learning. Furthermore, I employ an intersectional analysis to the phenomenon of black marginalization, inequity, and resilience that describes black feminist cosmopolitanism. In this study, I use black feminist narratives to interrogate prevailing twentieth-century notions of race, gender, class, sexuality, and citizenship. I consider these feminist narratives as *Bildungsromane*[41] that have the

[39] Joe L. Kincheloe, "Describing the Bricolage: Conceptualizing a New Rigor in Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Inquiry* 7, no. 6 (2001): 679-692; 680.
[40] Kincheloe, "Describing the Bricolage," 680.
[41] Here, I am using the term *Bildungsroman* in a way that is broader than its original, intended usage to include not only the "novel of formation" but also "work of art of formation." See Tobias Boes, "Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*: A Historical Study of Critical Trends" *Literature Compass* 3, no. 2 (2006): 230-243.

potential to foster a transformative experience for learners. By researching this topic, I intend to model a new way for educators and learners alike to understand critically historical figures and their legacies.

Feminist scholar and literary critic Barbara Christian spent her professional career developing the field of black female writing and criticism. She devoted her scholarship to the critical examination of such novelists, poets, and writers as Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Paule Marshall, Audre Lorde, and Gwendolyn Brooks.[42] Her research helped fill in a noticeable gap in knowledge by contributing to Black Studies new understandings of who black women writers were, what their lived experiences as black women in the U.S. have entailed, and how their experiences manifested in their expressive, creative works. The silences in the historical record were given a louder voice with Christian's help.

In a spirit of inquiry and wonder like what led Christian to question the absence of black women writers in literary studies and pursue their representations, I venture into my research topic of interest. In this dissertation, I ask why significant black female artists and performers became cosmopolitans, where made to flee the U.S., and why they were able to achieve such acclaim during their lives. As such, I will conduct a critical examination of the lives, works, and narratives of cosmopolitan black American female artists who relocated and worked in transnational contexts and, presently, receive less attention in America than they do around the globe, for their artistic, political, and cultural contributions.

[42] Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory" *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 67-79.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Black female cosmopolitans are an important community to study, given their double displacement, first as blacks displaced from Africa to America due to slavery, but second as Americans, who relocated to other parts of the globe and became minorities several times over, in racial, gender, and citizenship terms. Further complicating their situations is the matter that as cosmopolitan black American females, they enjoyed more inclusive experiences and economic mobility outside of their native country of America. In other words, these feminist artists enjoyed some semblance of freedom that was otherwise not granted in their homeland but could be more attainable in by working in transnational contexts.

Black American feminist artists working around the globe empowered and emancipated themselves by leaving the American context, in which they suffered discrimination, injustice, and hatred due to their racial group membership. In some small way, I hope my project will help restore the significance and richness of their life narratives by investigating their experiences and successes while living abroad. This chapter examines each artist's and performer's presence in the scholarly literature, and the ways the specific women I have chosen to examine have and have not been remembered and represented.

In Europe, North America, Africa, and Asia, black American female cosmopolitan artists regained some dignity and humanity that they were otherwise not afforded back home in the U.S. due to their lack of rights as black American females,

who regularly experienced racism, gender and class discrimination, and homophobia. For example, the early black-Native American Edmonia Lewis produced notable works on the subject of abolition during the nineteenth century, and enjoyed a successful career as a sculptor in Italy, while Josephine Baker enjoyed a long career as a singer, dancer, and entertainer who worked for the French resistance, performed in front of desegregated American troops in North Africa, and even adopted children of all racial backgrounds. Such successes achieved would not have been possible for these women had they not lived and worked abroad. Yet, significantly, each woman remained committed to advancing American racial equality and social justice. Absent their professional success and social freedom achieved while living abroad, these black feminist artists and performers would not have earned the respect and credibility from audiences that listened to, appreciated, and empathized with the social change they had been advocating. In short, they would not have been able to achieve what they did.

2.2 Exclusions

There are two notable omissions from Darlene Clark Hine's three-volume edited, award-winning, second edition set, *Encyclopedia of Black Women in America* (2005). The first is Barbara Chase-Riboud, who is a sculptor, novelist, and poet who has been omitted as an entry altogether, which is unfortunate, given her status as an award-winning novelist, poet, and sculptor of international acclaim. Chase-Riboud is the author of the famous books *Sally Hemings: A Novel* (1979) and *Echo of Lions* (1989), on which the screenplay for the Steven Spielberg film Amistad was based, or because Chase-Riboud has chosen to live a cosmopolitan existence in Europe since the 1960s. The writer Barbara Chase-Riboud was included in the Yolanda Williams Page's edited two-volume

set *Encyclopedia of African American Women Writers*. Although the entry was informative, the biographic information largely excluded information on Chase-Riboud's international experiences, which shaped her perspectives and development as a writer. Moreover, the entry lacked information on her connection and commitment to US citizenship, which in her own words remains firm and uncontested. The recent exhibit *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965-85* (2017), included Chase-Riboud's early works alongside the artworks of other black women artists of the Black Arts Movement. However, she was not situated as a transnational artist. One must ask whether this omission from Hines' edited Encyclopedia a mere oversight was, or intentional disregard, as Chase-Riboud is not a black female artist who lives in America, but rather is a black female who has chosen to live a cosmopolitan existence in European since 1961.

The second notable omission was Adelaide Hall, who, like Chase-Riboud, was curiously missing from any discussion in Hines' *Encyclopedia of Black Women in America.* Hall was a musical theater performer, singer, and dancer who was famous during the Harlem Renaissance, performed regularly at Harlem's Cotton Club, and she eventually settled in London. As a singer, dancer, and entertainer during this era, she garnered a reputation throughout Europe and yet she is less remembered than Josephine Baker. However, her contributions to black American culture and politics are nothing short of astounding. Hall made famous the "scat" in jazz, a fact which Ella Fitzgerald acknowledges.[43] She performed "Creole Love Call," with the Duke Ellington Orchestra in 1927, a Cotton Club favorite.[44] When the more famous Florence Mills died

[43] Iain Cameron Willis, *Underneath a Harlem Moon: The Harlem to Paris Years of Adelaide Hall* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002).
[44] Willis, *Underneath a Harlem Moon.*

prematurely, Hall took over her role in the Broadway show Blackbirds of 1928. Her political contributions are noteworthy, for she stood her ground when racism of the day was fierce. When she lived in a wealthy section of New York and received hate mail, and even a strong threat to her safety, family, and dwelling, she fought back by defending her racial heritage and rights to co-exist alongside her majority white neighbors, which her fans applauded.[45] She later toured Paris, Berlin, and other parts of Europe, and eventually settled in London, with her British husband, and lived out a cosmopolitan and professionally successful existence.[46]

That Hall's entry is also absent from Hines's edited encyclopedia is indicative of a pattern of what I posit is a tendency within the black American imagination to downplay, or even dismiss, the contributions cosmopolitan black figures have made to black popular culture, the arts, and cultural and political history. Elizabeth Catlett is an example of someone who is beginning to be recognized as not only a talented artist, but also a political exile.[47] A recent analysis casts her as an exile, given the fact that her birthright citizenship was revoked for a decade.[48] This interpretation greatly enhances her legacy.[49] I maintain that Chase-Riboud and Hall are anything but minor players and are well deserving of recognition for their artistic, cultural, and political contributions. One general observation is the need to further conceptualize black women artists' time spent,

[45] Willis, *Underneath a Harlem Moon.*
[46] Willis, *Underneath a Harlem Moon*.
[47] Elizabeth Catlett, whose works were also featured in the same exhibition as Barbara Chase-Riboud We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965-1985, was situated as a transnational artist, her departure and subsequent citizenship ban from the U.S. are not highlighted, which excludes important contextual background for her work.
[48] Melanie Anne Hertzog, *Elizabeth Catlett: An American Artist in Mexico* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2005).
[49] The exception I recently encountered was a group exhibit featuring the works of international artists, including Catlett, and story of living and working abroad. Frauke V. Josenhans, *Artists in Exile: Expressions of Loss and Hope* (Yale University Press, 2017).

international experiences had, and work produced when abroad. More telling, there is a long tradition of black artists who not only spent time abroad but who relocated and made their homes abroad, and their reasons for doing so.

If these omissions were unintentional, then they are unfortunate because other black female artists who have physically relocated abroad and yet have enjoyed inclusion in these historic volumes, whereas Chase-Riboud and Hall have not. For example, Elizabeth Catlett, at the time of Hines's publication, had been living in Cuernavaca, Mexico since 1946.[50] Yet, she had not received an entry in the first edition of the publication. In addition, Nina Simone had been moving about the globe since 1970, but eventually settled in the south of France.[51] Still, her entry discusses her in terms of being a once-famous performer.

Catlett and Simone have been discussed in ways that do not emphasize their global displacement and enduring legacy, but rather in ways that highlight their connectedness to the American experience. This is not necessarily a problem, as certainly their connectedness to America and their Americanness would be highlighted in such a volume. However, part of their extraordinary legacies and appeal as artists lay in the fact that they were exiled from, abandoned or felt let down by, or in other ways displaced, physically if not existentially. An encyclopedia entry may or may not go into the details of such experiences. Nevertheless, the narratives of their life experiences and creative output certainly leaves room for further exploration into the context as well as the significance of their oeuvre.

[50] Melanie Anne Hertzog, *Elizabeth Catlett: An American Artist in Mexico* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005).
[51] Liz Garbus, director. *What Happened Miss Simone*? Netflix, 2015.

2.3. Purpose

My project aims to flesh out fuller pictures of black artists' and performers' lived experiences by focusing on their migration, or more accurately their dislocation from America during Jim Crow segregation. By contextualizing their lives spent abroad and their artistic output from those years, I seek to shed light on the material and social conditions of black people and exemplary black artists in the early twentieth century. I focus on the experiences of black females to highlight the extraordinary efforts made, and the risks taken by blacks, to participate in expressive and creative culture in the attempt to beautify, critique, and sanctify humanity, especially in America.

The narratives I weave together are meant to will add richness and complexity to each artist and performers existing biographical archive and oeuvre. I do so by using content from artist and performer interviews, statements about their own artistic output and its significance, and artists' and performers' own voices featured in documentaries. I will weave together a narrative for understanding in a new way the experiences of black American female artists and performers of the 20th century who have been overlooked and not well represented or understood in formal educational curricula. I will use the framework of transformative learning, which is the notion that learning can extend and enhance not only knowledge, but also perspectives, and understanding. However, I will contribute to the field of transformative learning black feminist insights into social and cultural critiques to ways of knowing. In addition, I will uphold what I am calling black feminist and postcolonial *Bildungsroman* as a model for transformation that describes black aesthetic ways of knowing.

This project treats the narratives of cosmopolitan black female artists and performers as a case study. The focus in this case study on the life narratives of disenfranchised cosmopolitan black female artists and performers has several aims. It: 1) offers increased exposure to notable expatriate and exiled black American female artists working abroad who excelled in their respective crafts but are not very well known in the American context, 2) adds another layer/ context to understanding the plights of twentieth-century black female artists who notably examined their "estranged" relationship to the U.S. and liminal citizenship as an American living abroad; 3) enables educators and learners alike to appreciate the histories and legacies of resilient black artists and performers.

2.4 Transformative Learning Theory

Underlying any consideration of narrative selfhood is the role of transformative learning and a humanist understanding of the learning itself. Humanist approaches to learning focus on human potential, freedom, and dignity.[52] Rooted in the work of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which culminates in self-actualization,[53] humanist approaches to learning take a holistic framework for charting the growth of a human being.[54]

Jack Mezirow's groundbreaking research on transformative learning is rooted in perspective transformation. This very idea provides a foundation for the field of transformational learning studies. In its first expression, Mezirow's theory of

[52] Sue Tangney, "Student-Centered Learning: A Humanist Perspective" *Teaching in Higher Education* 19 no. 3 (2014): 266-275; 267
[53] Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).
[54] Ibid.

transformative learning, defined as perspective transformation, encouraged a heightened sense of self awareness and criticality of learners by enhanced self-determination through the exercise of rationality. [55] The first element of transformative learning is the disorienting dilemma, the traumatic severity of which is a factor that establishes the probability of any future transformation at all.[56] Even within the first element of transformative learning, the individual learner is responding to a struggle for self in the context of the other to achieve understanding. In other words, the self grapples with the other through a dynamic exchange of conflict to acquire understanding.

Lisa Baumgartner identifies subsequent approaches to transformative learning theory and research. These include emancipatory, rational, developmental, and spiritual approaches. The developmental process of transformation emphasizes the interplay between education and student development that occurs during life transitions, as students turn to education in the attempt to make sense of their lives.[57] This process, exemplified by the work of Daloz, posits that the learning process is intuitive, holistic, and context-based. The role of the educator is likened to that of a guide or mentor, who is responsible for guiding a student through a dynamic, even mythical, journey of identity development, filled with various negotiations and transitions. The notion of journeying implies a relationship with surrounding forces that both encourage and challenge

[55] Mezirow has argued that transformative learning regards the development of the autonomy of individuals, who grow through a dynamic exchange of dialogue and reflection and the exercise of critical reasoning. Although Mezirow's original formulation has since been revised, his transformative education maintains a cognitive-rational emphasis. Jack Mezirow, "A Critical Theory of Adult Learning and Education" *Adult Education* 32 no. 1 (1981): 3-24.
[56] Jack Mezirow, "A Critical Theory of Adult Learning and Education" *Adult Education* 32 no. 1 (1981) 3-24, 7.
[57] Lisa Baumgartner, "An Update on Transformational Learning," *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 89 (2001): 15-24; 17.

becoming. Furthermore, Daloz's narrative approach to development humanizes transformational learning, as filled with stories of human struggle, growth, and change.[58]

The spirituality approach to transformational learning, exemplified by the work of Dirkx and Healy, focuses on the "soul"[59] of the individual learner. They argue that the imagination facilitates learning through the soul, beyond ego-based, rational approaches to transformation that rely on communication with others.[60] Instead, through different strategies, such as meditation and a range of mindfulness techniques, learners can gain self-awareness and self-understanding through meaningful relationship with the surrounding environment and the greater world. This approach focuses on strengthening the personal resources of the individual to contend with sources outside of, but still related to, the self.

Underlying transformative learning discourse is a joint enterprise between the rational and spiritual dimensions of transformative learning, with the rational related to knowledge acquisition and the spiritual related to understanding. Here, the hermeneutic event of transformative learning interlocks rational and spiritual approaches. As Hannah Arendt has argued, understanding is based on knowledge, and built into knowledge is preliminary understanding.[61] But true understanding, Arendt continues, is the basis of all knowledge, and ultimately understanding succeeds knowledge and makes it meaningful through interminable dialogue.[62] Interrelated understanding and knowledge, are in constant hermeneutic dialogue, with understanding preceding and succeeding knowledge.

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[58] Baumgartner, "An Update on Transformational Learning," 17.
[59] Baumgartner, "An Update on Transformational Learning," 18.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Hannah Arendt, *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1994).
[62] Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*.

This sense of understanding in hermeneutic dialogue with knowledge becomes the basis for human becoming.

When becoming is understood as an event of hermeneutics that unfolds through dialogue, participants can acquire an agentic approach to their social learning. Arendt trusts the faculty of imagination allows people to exercise judgment and attain true understanding. Using imagination, people can acquire a new perspective on a given situation and use judgment to understand without negative bias or prejudice as they participate in dialogue. This is what Arendt calls enlarging one's thought, which precedes when adopting the mindset that allows one to think from multiple standpoints. In this way, students can participate in the existential event of becoming in which students acquire greater understanding, and ultimately self-understanding. This becoming facilitates transformative learning.

Humanist approaches to transformative learning serve as the foundation for social and political critique, as well as feminist pedagogies.[63] These examples of social transformation underscore the hermeneutic dialogue between the self and society. Themes of personal growth, consciousness-raising, empowerment, and social justice are present in both critical pedagogy and black feminist critique.[64] Paulo Freire's transformative thought focuses on disenfranchisement, oppression, consciousness-raising, and empowerment.[65] Feminist transformative thought focuses on oppression, liberatory social action, consciousness-raising, empowerment, and challenging epistemological assumptions and bases of knowledge.[66] In short, there is an existentialist and hermeneutic

[63] Tangney, "Student-Centered Learning" 267.
[64] Tangney, "Student-Centered Learning" 267-268.
[65] Tangney, "Student-Centered Learning" 268.
[66] Tangney, "Student-Centered Learning" 268.

framework for understanding the world that makes ripe the potential for participating in dialogues about social justice, as well as supporting members of groups historically excluded from social and political belonging in society. My interest in a hermeneutic and existentialist framework of becoming is rooted in an investment in social transformation, and not just self-transformation.

2.5 Selfhood and Self-Transformation

To be certain, hermeneutically informed languages of selfhood involve the self in relationship to broader society, others, history, and the world. Accounts of selfhood, from Charles Taylor's concept of authenticity to Alasdair MacIntyre's concept of the narrative quest, are rich. Taylor's notion of authenticity and MacIntyre's concept of the narrative quest are useful for examining notions of identity, particularly in the context of the modern age. However, both fall short of the aims of social transformation this project seeks to explore.

In *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Taylor defines authenticity as the particular way in which an individual discovers his/her own way of being that cannot be socially derived, but rather is generated inwardly.[67] Importantly, Taylor posits human identity is not worked out in isolation from others, but is instead negotiated through overt and internalized dialogues with members of society.[68] Taylor's notion of authenticity is linked to the idea of the human being as a self. This self has an identity, which, in the modern age, Taylor argues is defined by a combination of personal values, self-understandings

[67] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1991), 47.
[68] Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, 47-48.

and self-interpretations, others, significant contexts, and a language to articulate one's identity.[69] Important features of the argument regarding the self were retained in his later notion of authenticity. For example, self-understandings and self-interpretations continue to be achieved through dialogue with others in society, and not in isolation. This is the case not only because Taylor rejects narcissism, but he also reinforces the notion of inescapable horizons of significance that shape identities, lives, and personal contexts.[70] However, it is the language to articulate individuality that I next turn to that has bearing on the argument.

MacIntyre's concept of the narrative quest fleshes out such language used to articulate individuality in actual story form. In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre posits the narrative concept of selfhood is twofold, both intelligible and accountable, or correlative.[71] On the point that the narrative concept of selfhood is intelligible, MacIntyre argues an individual is the subject of the story of what s/he lives out that runs from birth to death, and that history belongs to him or her, and s/he is able to give an account of the events, meaning s/he is able to provide a narrative that is intelligible when prompted by others.[72] Furthermore, this identity is presupposed by the unity of the character, which is required by the narrative, without which there would be no subject upon whom the story would be based.[73] As it relates to the point that the narrative is accountable, or correlative, he insists that part of the storytelling is motivated by the idea that narratives are interlocking, meaning I am part of a narrative, and others are part of

[69] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), 34-35.
[70] Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, 33-35.
[71] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1981), 217.
[72] Ibid.
[73] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 218.

my narrative.[74] In other words, giving account plays an important role in constituting narratives. MacIntyre argues the purpose of constructing such narratives is to provide unity for the human life in the narrative quest for the good life, however it is defined, which may differ according to historical era, place, time, and from one individual to the next.[75] From MacIntyre, I focus not on the intelligibility of narratives, which can be a challenge for which many strive to achieve, but few actually succeed in their attempts, particularly artists.

In sum, Taylor's concept of authenticity and MacIntyre's notion of the narrative quest contribute to the foundation for understanding the importance of lived experiences in the ethical, existential, and historical understandings of human living. There are clearly merits to both approaches. However, I am unable to effectively connect either approach to social transformation, even when personal transformation is evident.

2.6 *Bildungsroman* and Social Transformation

Bildungsroman is historically a conservative approach to representing life narratives. However, within this approach, I have located a progressive strain that reformulates the genre by considering the trajectories, perspectives, and experiences of marginalized members of Western society. In this way, *Bildungsroman* has become a particularly malleable tool with which to examine the notion of the narrative self in relationship to society and raise the possibility for social transformation. Specifically, the form of postcolonial, and more specifically black, *Bildungsroman* further cements possibilities of social transformation. The narrative self as coming-of-age has the

[74] Ibid.
[75] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 219-220.

advantage over a model of personal transformation for charting the growth of the individual during his/her journey in the face of moral growth, particularly in the social context of institutional racism, as in the case of postcolonial *Bildungsroman*. However, the postcolonial context modifies the existing *Bildungsroman* tradition. To flesh out the significance of this modifier, I will first examine the historical understanding of *Bildungsroman*.

Bildungsroman grows out of the concept of *Bildung*. According to Tobias Boes, *Bildung* is based on ideas of cultivation developed from Weimar Classicism. Specifically, Johann Gottfried Herder's *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, 1784-91, posits that *Bildung* refers to the products of an impersonal genetic force that drives human beings toward greater and higher cultural achievements.[76] *Bildung* also refers to spiritual or aesthetic education, which is derived from Wilhelm von Humboldt's *Ideas to Determine the Limits of State Authority*, 1792, which influenced Herder's work. [77] From these sources, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was inspired to theorize *Bildungsroman*.

As a genre, *Bildungsroman* articulates well with a hermeneutic framework for transformative learning. When one considers the transformative impact of *Bildungsroman*, it is important to note *Bildung* has been historically associated with notions of self-cultivation, civilization, movement of spirit, and culture,[78] all of which

[76] Tobias Boes, "Apprenticeship of the Novel: The *Bildungsroman* and the Invention of History, ca. 1770-1820" *Comparative Literature Studies* 45, no. 3 (2008): 269-288; 275.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Gadamer provides a brief synopsis of different historical interpretations of the concept of *Bildung*: Herder posits "rising up to humanity through culture" (p. 9); Kant doesn't use the word, but discusses the cultivation of a capacity, or a "natural talent," which is an act of freedom by the acting subject, and a duty the subject has to oneself not to let one's talents rust (p. 9); Hegel uses Kant's concept of the duty one has to oneself, and calls it educating or cultivating oneself (or *Sichbilden*) and *Bildung* (p. 9); von Humboldt distinguished between *Kultur* and *Bildung* (higher and inward, out of which has grown intellectual and moral character, and sensibility) (p. 9). Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd Revised ed. Trans. Rev. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York and London: Continuum, 2006), 9.

have implications of linear progression of moral completion, sensibility, and finality, toward a sense of perfection.[79] Gadamer's notion of *Bildung* departs from notions of culture and the cultivation of talents, and develops out of the formation of an inward process of constant becoming, transition, and the achievement of goals for individual and society.[80] Therefore, narratives of education, learning, and becoming more generally lend easily to the framework of *Bildungsroman*.

Bildungsroman is an appropriate framework for analyzing the lives of artists and performers over other potential frameworks due to its conceptual malleability and practical application of the idea. However, I revise standard understandings of *Bildungsroman* and actively reshape it to include postcolonial and black feminist contexts. More specifically, the language of selfhood that is narrated over time by people of color, women, and cosmopolitans, has important educational implications that should not be dismissed. My focus, therefore, is on the narrative of coming-of-age and moral growth of black female individuals. These narratives are informed by a hermeneutic part-whole interplay and exemplified by increased awareness and understanding of individual subjects on three levels: the self, others, and history.

Furthermore, the model of *Bildungsroman* I employ is postcolonial in that it displaces the historic narratives of the European, British, and white American male coming of age in the context of imperialism, Western hegemony, New World slavery, and European colonialism from the center to the margins. My postcolonial analysis,

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[79] John Cleary and Padraig Hogan, "The Reciprocal Character of Self-Education: Introductory Comments on Hans-Georg Gadamer's Address 'Education is Self-Education" *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 35 no. 4 (2001): 519-527; 526.
[80] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, revised ed. (New York and London: Continuum Impacts, 2004), 10.

instead, will attempt to replace these standard narratives with accounts of the aftermath of such global projects, told specifically from the standpoint of those most directly and adversely impacted by the consequences of European imperialism, Western hegemony, trans-Atlantic slavery, and colonial conquest. In other words, the analysis of cosmopolitan black female artists' and performers' narratives is designed to highlight the ways oppressive institutional forces informed the creation of and motivated the responses to black experiences of racial, political, and economic disenfranchisement.

2.7 Postcolonial *Bildungsroman*

According to Boes, Goethe's *Bildungsroman* related the individual formation of its protagonist to the historical development of the era in which he exists.[81] In addition to relating the protagonist to his era, there is a rite of passage he must undergo, as part of the Apprenticeship, and which much of the nineteenth- and twentieth- century form of *Bildungsroman* as a genre maintained.[82] As the novel of formation, the *Bildungsroman* was initially characterized as a nineteenth-century modernist phenomenon, in which authors detailed the mundane and epiphanic life events and humanizing experiences of characters over time in stories.[83] According to Boes, Wilhelm Dilthey first introduced the term *Bildungsroman* into critical vocabulary, as he used it in the biography of Friedrich Schleiermacher.[84] Its appearance in popular texts dates back to 1910, when it appeared in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, used to defined "any novel that 'has as its main theme the

[81] Boes, "Apprenticeship of the Novel," 274.
[82] Boes, "Apprenticeship of the Novel," 270.
[83] Tobias Boes, "Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*: A Historical Survey of Critical Trends" *Literature Compass* 3 no. 2 (2006): 230-243; 231.
[84] Boes, "Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*," 231.

formative years or spiritual education of one person' (II. 188)".[85] As with any tradition, canonical modernist works became established and associated with the genre.[86]

However, as Boes attests, there is no shared consensus as to what the genre of *Bildungsroman* now consists, and even criticisms of its perceived narrow or rigidly defined aspects.[87] At the same time, there has been a rise in its global usage as a genre. Boes attributes the rise of feminist, postcolonial, and "minority studies" (author's phrase) during the 1980s and 90s to the expansion of the traditional *Bildungsroman* definition and the broadening of the genre to include coming-of-age narratives that bear only some resemblance to its nineteenth-century predecessors.[88] Furthermore, Boes notes that scholars of this genre has witnessed an era of transition from "traditional metropolitan novels of formation and social affirmation to increasingly global and fragmentary narratives of transformation and rebellion."[89]

Moreover, Boes asserts this shift in *Bildungsroman* studies towards postcolonial and "minority writing" (author's phrase) indicates the genre is not in decline, but rather is thriving, albeit in different forms accommodating multicultural and immigrant literature worldwide.[90] Not only does this attest to *Bildungsroman*'s malleability more generally as a framework, but, as Boes argues more specifically, it is a testament to the form's adaptability to modernist and postmodernist techniques.[91] It is in this postcolonial spirit

[85] Quoted in Boes, "Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*," 231.
[86] Boes cites James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and other authors associated with the genre, from Dickens, Woolf, Lawrence, and Mann. Boes, "Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*," 231-232.
[87] Fredric Jameson dismissed it as "natural form," while March Redfield called it a "phantom formation," and a construct of aesthetic ideology. Quoted in Boes, "Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*," 230.
[88] Boes, "Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*," 231.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Boes, "Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*," 239.

and out of this new world order of *Bildungsroman* as shifting, adjusting, contesting, and decentering tradition and power that black *Bildungsroman* should be analyzed and situated as a framework for understanding black lives and experiences.

2.8 Black *Bildungsroman*

Geta LeSeur more pointedly focuses on the black *Bildungsroman* in her critical and scholarly work. She begins by fleshing out the differences between traditional *Bildungsroman* and black *Bildungsroman*. As LeSeur examines the heritage of European and British *Bildungsroman*, and compares it to black *Bildungsroman*, there are many commonalities, but also important differences that are evident. As the novel of education in the formal and informal sense,[92] its usage in the black *Bildungsroman* tradition has been both broadened and extended. To compare the similarities and differences, LeSeur has compiled a list of themes drawn from canonical works by West Indian and African American writers, as compared to traditional European and Anglo-Saxon writers. Her list of themes, or common forms, include the following: gender, age, provinciality, surrogate parentage, education, leaving home, change/transformation, initiation, experiences of isolation, move to the city or an enlightened place, experience of paranoia, conflict with parents, leave childhood and place only to begin a new phase of life (or journey into adulthood), and basing or exulting sexual experience.[93]

As LeSeur's methodology indicates, the responses to life events of black characters compared to white characters in these stories are quite different, which is owed

[92] LeSeur, *Ten is the Age of Darkness*, 22.
[93] LeSeur, *Ten is the Age of Darkness*, 19.

to these authors' uses of different forms of presentation,[94] and to this I would add individual authors' lived experiences and level of privilege. Although Black American literature has no specific prototype for the *Bildungsroman*, other than European and Anglo-Saxon American traditions, there are prominent features apparent in the form, as LeSeur reports. She notes the stories are highly autobiographical, and the hero is often male, and tends to be gifted and extraordinarily sensitive.[95]

The protagonists in black *Bildungsromane* (plural form) meet many setbacks prior to choosing a proper philosophy, mate, and vocation.[96] In these ways, LeSeur maintains her belief that these texts are considered black novels of childhood (another descriptor she uses for black *Bildungsroman*) and they undoubtedly contain the characteristics of European white *Bildungsromane*. However, LeSeur maintains black *Bildungsromane* cannot be grouped with traditional *Bildungsromane* because they are distinct in content and presentation. More importantly, black *Bildungsromane* cannot be grouped with traditional *Bildungsromane* on grounds that they represent different sets of sociological and historical contexts.[97]

Another important distinction in LeSeur's interpretation of black *Bildungsroman* is the emphasis on initiation. Significantly, Boes notes Goethe's protagonist, Wilhelm, also had to undergo a rite of passage as part of his apprenticeship, which signaled his having reached the end of his apprenticeship, as well as the end of the story itself.[98]

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[94] Ibid.
[95] LeSeur cites such examples as texts including *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African* (1789), *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (1845), Langstgon Hughes's *Not Without Laughter* (1930), Richard Wright's *Black Boy* (1945), and Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land* (1965). LeSeur, *Ten is the Age of Darkness*, 18.
[96] LeSeur, *Ten is the Age of Darkness*, 18.
[97] LeSeur, *Ten is the Age of Darkness*, 22.
[98] Boes, "Apprenticeship of the Novel," 270.

Undoubtedly, LeSeur acknowledges black writers' indebtedness to the European tradition, as well as adopting, whether consciously or unconsciously, the storytelling form from Goethe's *Apprentice*, as many black writers have been educated in the European mode of writing.[99] However, the difference is LeSeur makes initiation the very focus of all black *Bildungsromane*, that is on the rites and rituals of initiation as part of the structure, prescribed action, routine, and pattern of the initiation process, including the role of sex, as part of black *Bildungsromane*, adapted from traditional *Bildungsromane*.[100] In essence, her text analyzes fictive works by African American and Caribbean writers, using as a conceptual framework the idea of initiation to flesh out the process children undergo as they approach the rites of passage into adulthood.

However, what is striking is, given LeSeur's emphasis on rites of passage into adulthood, the absence of a robust definition of the term "initiation" itself. In other words, LeSeur does not provide a concrete analysis of the term initiation. By not explicitly stating, or clearly defining, her understanding of the term, the challenge is to ensure the reader shares the same definition and understanding of the term that she has in mind. Also missing is LeSeur's explanation of criteria that sets apart one text from another that qualifies it as thematically aligned with the concept of initiation.

LeSeur applies the term initiation to everyday contexts and refer to the concept in practice and in application. She refers to initiation as childhood assuming entry into adulthood.[101] LeSeur also refers to initiation as the painful introduction into society's roles children experience.[102] LeSeur elaborates on some of the qualities of the initiation

[99] LeSeur, *Ten is the Age of Darkness*, 21.
[100] LeSeur, *Ten is the Age of Darkness*, 25.
[101] LeSeur, *Ten is the Age of Darkness*, 7.
[102] LeSeur, *Ten is the Age of Darkness*, 10.

process and set of experiences, other than describing it as painful. LeSeur notes the qualitative aspects of the experience are often accompanied by the first shock of childhood, as children start off by often seeing themselves as leaders, but through initiation they are required to perform meaningless rituals that negate their individual freedoms.[103]

LeSeur's omission of a robust definition of the term may be attributed to inadequate existing theory of initiation. Existing initiation theory has most likely been inspired, if not heavily influenced, by Victor Turner's extended analysis of Arnold van Gennep's concept of the liminal phase of the initiation process. I acknowledge Turner's findings of Ndembu children of Zambia undergoing the initiation rites of entering adulthood, and the broader conclusions he drew about the workings of social and political rules and life as far-reaching. However, his methodological choice of structural analysis had limitations and for this reason would not have best served the purposes of understanding the concept of initiation as it relates to the vast implications of black *Bildungsroman* for human experience, which LeSeur may have recognized.

According to Turner's analysis, when a child enters the transition period to begin the rituals related to the rites of passage, s/he undergoes a period of separation from society in which s/he experiences life on the margins of the community and the rest of society, accompanied by other ritual passengers, also known as liminal personae or threshold people.[104] By nature, these individuals are ambiguous, neither here nor there, betwixt and between, likened to death, being invisible, in the womb, darkness, the

[103] Ibid.
[104] Victor Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, 358-374 (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969), 359.

wilderness, and bisexual.[105] Furthermore, these liminal neophytes undergoing initiation rites possess nothing, and are expected to obey their elders without question, and with military precision.[106] The outcome, according to Turner, is the development of military comradery and egalitarianism through shared hardships.[107] In essence, Turner argues social life is a dialectical process of successive highs and lows, between *communitas* and structure, homogeneity and difference, equality and inequality, in which passage from lower to higher states is through a limbo status is through a process of statelessness of liminality.[108]

I maintain analyses such as these are thoroughly structural in their makeup, even as Turner posits his findings are dialectical. Turner calls this process dialectical, as "the opposites, as it were, constitute one another and are mutually indispensable…each individual's life experience contains alternating exposure to structure and *communitas*, and to states and transitions."[109] Yet, a dialectical process typically yields a new synthesis as a result of interacting opposite dynamics. Instead, Turner argues for the complementarity of each entity. In fact, Turner then lists "rather in the fashion of Levi-Strauss, …the difference between the properties of liminality and those of the status system in terms of a series of binary oppositions or discriminations."[110] Turner continues by listing such binary opposites as unselfishness/selfishness, sacredness/secularity, silence/speech, foolishness/sagacity, etc., to provide examples of the liminal situations/processes each ritual subject encounters.[111]

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[105] Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," 359.
[106] Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," 359-360.
[107] Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," 360.
[108] Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," 360-361.
[109] Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," 360-361.
[110] Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," 366.
[111] Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," 366-367.

However, in no place does Turner mention the emergence of a new phenomenon as a result of liminal engagement. For example, the betwixt and betweenness of unselfish and selfishness does not result in a new, empathic understanding of how to behave toward and interact with others. Instead, the limen, or ritual subject, vacillates between the selfish and unselfish mode, which describes aspects of human nature, but insufficiently supports Turner's contention that his theory is dialectical and thereby results in a synthesis or a new phenomenon. Therefore, even though Turner's concept of liminality is considerably influential, its methodological approach of structural analysis is limiting in what it reveals about human phenomena.

Limitations, such as these, may have led subsequent researchers, like LeSeur, to create their own understandings of the concept of initiation. LeSeur creates understanding by closely examining the phenomenon of black *Bildungsromane* through the lens of better understanding the phenomenon of black childhood by providing readers with exegeses of the texts. She also performs of textual analyses, comparing different forms of traditional versus non-traditional forms within literary genres, weaves into her analysis socio-historical understandings of race, class, and gender to strengthen her interpretations of the significance of the literature under examination.

On a different level of analysis, LeSeur's emphasis on rites of passage, or transition, is fleshed out in her analysis of the works of black American authors, whose black *Bildungsroman* focuses on themes of racial injustice. In her analysis of black *Bildungsroman,* LeSeur makes a distinction between African American and West Indian writing traditions and compiles a list of basic characteristics in the course of comparing the two groups. She posits the comparisons between the childhoods of African-

Americans and West Indians share a common connection, even if slight, when one examines the sociological themes of race, class, and gender displacement.[112] Through African diasporas, James Baldwin growing up in Harlem and George Lamming growing up in Barbados, share a connection with Camara Laye of West Africa.[113] Each one, using the mode of European storytelling, share common themes in their coming-of-age storytelling that differ from their European counterparts.[114]

Although West Indian and African American *Bildungsromane* share common themes, there are still notable differences between these two traditions, as LeSeur points out. According to LeSeur, whereas the focus of African-American *Bildungsroman* is centered on exposing racial injustice, unequal social structures, and political disenfranchisement, West Indian *Bildungsroman* recalls childhood roots, landscapes, and community.[115] In addition, West Indian *Bildungsroman* is often constructed as narratives from a place of physical exile in the attempts to remember home and childhood.[116] African-American *Bildungsroman*, on the other hand, tends to remain in the homeland, not physically exiled, but exiled in a different sense within one's own country, and motivated to expose the conditions that robbed the individual of the opportunity of having a happy childhood.[117]

Since the 1950s, more African American female writers have made use of the model of *Bildungsroman*, including Gwendolyn Brooks, Paule Marshall, Alice Walker,

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[112] Geta LeSeur, "One Mother, Two Daughters: The Afro-American and the Afro-Caribbean Female '*Bildungsroman*'" *The Black Scholar* 17, no. 2 *The Black Woman Writer and The Diaspora* (March/April 1986): 26-33; 26.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] LeSeur, "One Mother, Two Daughters," 26.
[116] LeSeur, "One Mother, Two Daughters," 26.
[117] LeSeur, "One Mother, Two Daughters," 26-27.

and Toni Morrison, to tell their narratives. LeSeur posits very early on, black girls find out what is means to be black and female in America and recognize it is a "double whammy."[118] If given the chance and a sympathetic audience, young black females can share their insights.[119] In this way, LeSeur argues it is possible to use the *Bildungsroman* form to see how global emergent cultures act upon the developing minds of children of color.[120]

However, in a truly postcolonial sense, children of color around the globe act upon the form and turn it into their own and end up changing it. Discussing the Black British *Bildungsroman*, Mark Stein suggests it "has a dual function: it is about the formation of its protagonist as well as the transformation of British society and cultural institutions."[121] In other words, whereas traditional novels of formation feature society as a normative construct, the novel of *trans*formation (author's emphasis) entails a dialogical process, in which "the hero no longer merely changes with the world; instead, the world also changes with and through him."[122] In other words, the *Bildungsroman* when employed by postcolonial subjects and racialized others departs from its monological tradition and emerges in dialogical form. More significantly, the *Bildungsroman* genre itself is changed through the expressive narratives of colonized and racialized subjects deemed as "others." In other words, authors of color writing within the *Bildungsroman* tradition are necessarily engaged in postcolonial work, as they disrupt

[118] LeSeur, "One Mother, Two Daughters," 32.
[119] LeSeur, "One Mother, Two Daughters," 33.
[120] LeSeur, "One Mother, Two Daughters," 33.
[121] Mark Stein, p. 22. Quoted in Boes, "Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*," 240.
[122] Ibid.

narratives of the one-dimensional black subject, and introduce to readers the myriad subjectivities of black subjects.

The model of postcolonial *Bildungsroman* I employ in this project is used as tool to exercise imagination, inspire empathy, and encourage the inclusion of black feminist artists and performers who have been traditionally excluded from the canon, particularly those who left the U.S. As literary form, the *Bildungsroman* is deployed by the author employ to create a as the character makes keen observations about life, the nature of existence, conflict, and growth. The character can explore the human condition. As I will argue, the process of personal and social change for black Americans begins with tending to the self. This process entails self-healing from trauma and self-assuredness through the pursuit of excellence. These concepts are deeply connected to the self-love and self-compassion through struggles with others and the world. This process of becoming and social transformation told in narrative format exemplifies postcolonial and black *Bildungsroman*.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS & PROCEDURES

3.1 Introduction

Undergirding this project is the recognition of the role of hermeneutics. Since part of human science aims at better understanding people, consciousness, history, and purposeful acts, whereas natural science studies objects of nature, things, and natural events,[123] I find the framework of understanding quite helpful, which then shapes method. To better give a sense of what human science research entails, I consider the lengthy quote from Max Van Manen's discussion on method in human science research that is in line with Gadamer's thinking:

> A human science researcher is a scholar: a sensitive observer of the subtleties of everyday life, and an avid researcher of relevant texts in the human science tradition of the humanities, history, philosophy, anthropology, and the social sciences as they pertain to his or her domain of interest—in our case the practical and theoretical demands of pedagogy, of living with children. So in a serious sense there is not really a 'method' understood as a set of investigative procedures that one can master relatively quickly. Indeed it has been said that *the method of phenomenology and hermeneutics is that there is no method*. [124]

Researchers carefully follow their procedures, obtain feedback on the data collected and generated, but then the aim is really in fact immersion into our disciplines and into the phenomenon of investigation. The problem, or perhaps the temptation, can occur when researchers ride the methodological trends that have little (or nothing) to do with the research problem. I am deeply committed to philosophical and hermeneutic thinking, and through the preliminary research I have conducted thus far, researching life narratives of

[123] Max Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience, Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 3-4.
[124] Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 29-30.

artists and the artworks produced in the form of *Bildungsroman* makes the most logical sense, which I explain in this chapter.

As a committed hermeneut, this exercise is a logical one. The *Bildungsroman* as a form allows for accessible method, discussing the artist's life and biography, and larger social and political context of the time in which she produced her work. However, I will dismiss a strong notion of methodology in the human sciences, as my goal is to achieve clearer understanding rather than exactitude or certainty of meaning.

3.2 Constructivism and Narrative Case Study

My decision to rely upon human sciences as a mode of inquiry assumes constructivism is a useful research paradigm. Unlike objectivism, which takes for granted that knowledge is discoverable, constructivism presupposes that the mind actively constructs or creates knowledge. Postmodern constructivist epistemology posits that multiple realities are constructed, that knowledge is constructed or created.[125] According to Schwandt, constructivist research assumes the researcher and participants co-construct knowledge and understanding.[126] This is an ongoing hermeneutic activity. The researcher does not simply explain points of view and contrast these with opposing views, which is where a strictly philosophical inquiry would fall short of what I am attempting to do. Instead, I seek to facilitate the co-construction of knowledge and understanding.

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[125] Thomas Schwandt, "Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutics, and Social Constructivism" *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*, 2nd ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., 292-331 (Thousand Oaks, California, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage Publications, 2003), 306-307.
[126] Thomas Schwandt, "Constructivist, Interpretivist Approaches to Human Inquiry" *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 221-259 (Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage Publications, 1998), 235.

Regarding constructivism, Denzin and Lincoln assert this conceptual interpretive framework assumes

> several images are juxtaposed to or superimposed on one another to create a picture. In a sense, montage is like pentimento, in which something that has been painted out of a picture (an image the painter 'repented' or denied) becomes visible again, creating something new. What is new is what had been obscured by a previous image.[127]

Each research subject is a participant who adds a new perspective and experience I will consider. As with phenomenological research, the challenge of which is to bracket my assumptions and describe richly the phenomenon one observes,[128] a constructivist framework allows the voices and experiences of other subjects to add new information, insight, dimension, and complexity to the phenomenon under review. As a researcher, I will study and observe film, literary text, visual art, poetry, performance, and music, and in doing so will interact with "the phenomenon," specifically the notion of black aesthetics among female cosmopolitans underrepresented in U.S. curricula and attempt to make sense of it as I grapple with and attempt to make meaning, even as I reflect upon and examine my own life story.

Constructivism undergirds the narrative approach to case study research. Narratives are defined as "discourses with a clear sequential order that connect events in a meaningful way for a definite audience, and thus offer insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it."[129] Developmental psychologist Jerome Bruner (1986) identified the underlying structure of narrative that predominates Western culture. He

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[127] Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., "Introduction: The Discipline and the Practice of Qualitative Research" *The Landscape of Qualitative Inquiry*, 1-44 (Thousand Oaks, California, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage Publications, 2008), 6.
[128] Clark Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods*. (Thousand Oak, California, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, Inc., 1994).
[129] Jennifer Case, Delia Marshall, and Cedric Linder, "Being a Student Again: A Narrative Study of a Teacher's Experience." *Teaching in Higher Education* 15 no. 4 (2010): 423-433; 427.

discusses narrative in a classical sense, as consisting of a legitimate, or steady, state that is routinely breached, resulting in crisis and terminating with redress, though there remains a possibility this cycle will recur.[130] Given this standard narrative, as well as the tendency in the West to embed self-narrative into our culture, there exists a limited range of discursive resources for what Kenneth Gergen calls "the social construction of self." [131] Along similar lines, Atkinson and Delamont (2006) argue narratives, though highly personal, are shaped by cultural conventions.[132]

Although the practice of creating narratives is widespread throughout the West, the researcher must nevertheless do the necessary work to acquire understanding of others' narratives and expressive output. Narrative analysis requires the researcher to search for and ask questions of the narrative before them. To acquire meaning and significance, the researcher must look for patterns, identify thematic strands and themes, and examine tensions.[133] Prose is not automatically considered narrative.[134] Instead, the researcher must carefully select key ideas from a series of events that indicate causal linkages.[135]

The case study is often defined as an in-depth study of the particular, where the researcher seeks to increase his or her understanding of the phenomena in question.[136] However, one challenge posed to case studies is the perception that knowledge from such

[130] Jerome Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 16.
[131] Kenneth J. Gergen, *Realities and Relationships: Soundings in Social Construction*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), 254.
[132] Paul Atkinson and Sara Delamont, "Rescuing Narrative from Qualitative Research," *Narrative Inquiry* 16, no. 1 (2006): 164-172; 166.
[133] Case, Marshall, and Linder "Being a Student Again," 427.
[134] Case, Marshall, and Linder "Being a Student Again," 427.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Lee Peter Ruddin, "You Can Generalize Stupid! Social Scientists, Bent Flyvbjerg, and Case Study Methodology," in *Qualitative Inquiry* 12, no. 4 (2006): 798-812; 798.

studies cannot be generalized. As Ruddin (2006) asserts, "Often case studies and particularly interpretative case studies have been criticized because of the assumed difficulty with generalizations."[137] Ruddin rejects this idea. He continues by insisting, "It is correct that the case study is a comprehensive examination of a single example, but it is not true to say a case study cannot provide trustworthy information about the broader class."[138] I selected case study because it affords in-depth examination of a particular phenomenon that provides insights into broader themes.

Ruddin explains the ongoing question of generalizability is rooted in our attempts to infer. He writes,

> We avoid the problem of trying to generalize inductively from single cases by not confusing case inference with statistical inference. Case study reasoning should be seen as a strong form of hypothetico-deductive theorizing, not as a weak form of statistical inference. We do not infer things "from" a case study; we impose a construction, a pattern on meaning, "onto" the case.[139]

Ruddin's point illustrates a connection between constructive meaning-making and the case study. Not a science in the formal sense, a case study is effective when it highlights patterns that reveal new knowledge and understanding of a phenomenon.

3.3 Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics fills in the void of knowledge concerning interpretation. As a reflective tradition that no doubt involves the acquisition and (re)production of knowledge, hermeneutics can be traced back to scholarly investigation into various humanities disciplines, including law, theology, literature, history, and classics, as early

[137] Ruddin, "You Can Generalize Stupid! "798.
[138] Ruddin, "You Can Generalize Stupid!" 799.
[139] Ruddin, "You Can Generalize Stupid!" 800.

as the Middle Ages.[140] However, and more importantly, it involves advancing understanding, which in itself is a kind of event.[141] Just as human beings and disciplines are misunderstood, so too does hermeneutics begin with the assumption of alienation from tradition and foreignness. It also begins with the assumption that human beings have a desire to achieve the common goal of being understood, though we frequently are misunderstood, which is the risk of dialogue and interaction.

Gadamer offers insights into human science research as it relates to the context of language and understanding. Regarding methodology, Gadamer objects to the trappings of methodology for the way it inevitably separates people from meaningful immersion into subject matter, experience, text, and the other. As his philosophy was concerned with exploring and restoring understanding to the human sciences, his magnum opus Truth and Method, and subsequent iterations of it explored the ways in which human understanding gets impeded, and how we can go about reconnecting it to tradition, bit by bit, relating part to whole, cycling through the hermeneutic circle in which meaning gets continually interpreted.[142]

Gadamer's view of hermeneutics was informed by the historical romanticist tradition. Following the founder of modern-day hermeneutics, Gadamer recognized the importance Friedrich Schleiermacher developed and aims to reach full understanding through careful exegesis of text and drawing upon shared connections between author

[140] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 22-23.
[141] Gadamer, "On the Problem of Self-Understanding," in *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed. Trans. and Ed. by David E. Linge, 44-58 (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, Ltd., 1976), 50.
[142] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2004.

and audience, so as to avoid misunderstanding.[143] Gadamer attempts to develop a deep sense of accord with the other, and to find the common shared experience that takes place between the I and the thou in which, "there is neither the I nor the thou as isolated, substantial realities."[144]

Gadamer begins with the attempt to avoid misunderstanding, as if to acknowledge that misunderstanding is a likely outcome of the interpretive act. But at the same time, he has not given up on the possibility of common shared experiences that substantially isolate human beings from one another. While we might recognize the limitations of, or even more strongly push back against, the idealism embedded within some strands of hermeneutics that seek to achieve full understanding of people, events, and texts, or find commonality between the lived experiences of people that could appear to be strikingly dissimilar, we would be nevertheless remiss to deny Gadamer our scholarly attention.

Schwandt's theorizing of Gadamer's contribution to qualitative research, specifically Gadamer's concept of play. In 1999, Schwandt wrote about Gadamer's concept of play as "grasping the educational experience, the participation, the to-and-fro movement that characterize the encounter" much like we as researchers in education seek to better understand phenomenon.[145] Using Gadamer's concept of play in a different sense, though it undoubtedly remains educational for us all, I extend its use to the interaction between researcher and materials, and the nature of the research process itself.

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[143] Gadamer, "The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem," *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed. Trans. and Ed. by David E. Linge, 3-17 (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, Ltd., 1976), 7.
[144] Gadamer, "The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem," 7.
[145] Thomas Schwandt, "On Understanding Understanding in Qualitative Research" *Qualitative Inquiry* 5 no. 4 (1999): 451-464; 455.

Gadamer also analogized games, whether in the language we use, or in the meanings we attempt to create during our encounters with others. Based in part on his analysis on the findings of the Johan Huizinga's historical writings, Gadamer theorized about play as a basic mode of being.[146] Human beings engaged in the play mode become absorbed into the activity of games. Play is an ecstatic self-forgetting, that does not involve loss of self-possession, but instead freedom and buoyancy, an elevation above oneself.[147] Playing goes hand in hand with seriousness in the context of games.[148] As players, we adapt to each other through the medium of games, adopting its rules, language, and engage dialogically in the game.[149] When dialogue and intensity are elevated, there is no loss of self-possession but rather there is an enrichment of ourselves, but it happens unbeknownst to us.[150] These games we engage, and the play mode our being takes on in these contexts, is a transportable idea, especially for understanding as it can relate to the research and writing situation and encounter. Play also is a helpful educational concept for understanding better the inner dialogue that occurs in learning.

3.4 Hermeneutic Phenomenology and *Bildungsroman*

Hermeneutic phenomenology is an appropriate form of research, as it invests in reconstructing the lived experiences of others historically situated in the world. As this study weaves together narratives of self-becoming through *Bildungsroman*, hermeneutic phenomenology becomes an important inquiry into this phenomenon of black cosmopolitan narratives.

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[146] Gadamer, "On the Problem of Self-Understanding," 55.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Gadamer, "On the Problem of Self-Understanding," 56-57.
[149] Gadamer, "On the Problem of Self-Understanding," 57.
[150] Ibid.

Max van Manen asserts when scholars do research, it is always to question the ways humans experience the world, and out of a desire to want to know the world in which human beings live.[151] Human sciences research investigates beings that have consciousness and act purposefully in and on the world, creating objects meaningfully, and that are expressions of how human beings exist in the world.[152] As a subfield of human sciences, phenomenology describes how one orients to lived experiences, while hermeneutics describes how one interprets the "texts" of life.[153] Van Manen posits research in hermeneutic phenomenology raises questions in how one experiences the world, and wants to know the world in which human beings live.[154]

Van Manen argues engaging in hermeneutic phenomenology research can result in the researcher's growth as a human being. This is the case when researchers introduce reflective awareness upon natural attitudes, everyday events. When researchers instead impose a reflective lens to such events and pose critical questions, human beings can experience the growth or transformation of *Bildung*, or education.[155] Van Manen argued furthermore, in agreement with Richard Rorty (1979), hermeneutic phenomenological research edifies the personal insight contributing to one's thoughtfulness and ability to act toward others, children or adults, with tact or tactfulness, thereby itself serving as a kind of *Bildung*.[156] Moreover, Van Manen considers human science research a curriculum of being and becoming, with hermeneutic phenomenology serving as a philosophy of the personal, individual, pursued against the background of an understanding of "the evasive

[151] Max van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy* (London, Ontario: The State University of New York Press, 1990), 5.
[152] van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 3-4.
[153] van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 4.
[154] van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 5.
[155] Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 7
[156] Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 7.

character of the logos of the other, the whole, the communal, or the social."[157] How is this the case?

Although Van Manen acknowledges hermeneutic phenomenology does not rely on methodological, or an interpretive, schema, and in fact to do so would undermine the very spirit of the practice, [158] he does nevertheless describe a model for research engagement. To gain a deeper appreciation for, or to acquire a more tangible grasp of, phenomenological thinking and inquiry, van Manen insists that researchers must grasp the idea that hermeneutic phenomenology is a method of abstemious reflection on basic structure of the lived experience of human existence that require a particular way, or attitude, of approaching phenomenon under study.[159] Van Manen recommends the following: 1) reflecting on experience must aim to abstain from theoretical, polemical, suppositional, and emotional intoxications; 2) reflecting on experience must aim for discursive language and sensitive interpretive devices that make phenomenological analysis, explication, and description possible and intelligible; 3) reflecting on the pre-reflective or pre-predicative life of human existence must aim as though living through it.[160]

Van Manen furthermore recommends hermeneutic phenomenology begins in wonder about a phenomenon as it appears, or as a question when human beings encounter things and experience events in the world, especially questioning those ideas, events, and situations one might take for granted.[161] Phenomenology allows space for humans to

[157] Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 7.
[158] Max Van Manen, *Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 22.
[159] Van Manen, *Phenomenology of Practice*, 26.
[160] Van Manen, *Phenomenology of Practice*, 26.
[161] Van Manen, *Phenomenology of Practice*, 26.

reflect on experiences, to question, to pause, and to develop an attitude that breaks with taken-for-grantedness, and to become more thoughtful and reflective about events, experiences, and everydayness.[162]

This is where the transformation of the individual and the society can occur, and *Bildung* as education in the truest sense can develop. However, as *Bildung* is the basis on which the traditional Western coming-of-age novel of formation is built, the contexts of racial, gender, class, and sexuality difference present departures from the standard, or norm of Western white male experience. In other words, the narratives of postcolonial, racial, gendered, etc., difference present a new context and add a rich layer of transformation to the discourse. This is another reason for examining black feminist self-formation and social transformation, and expressive output. This is the work of *Bildungsroman* through a new framework to consider. In this way, the framework, and the methodology will work in concert.

Accordingly, the *Bildungsroman* becomes an important form for clarifying the transformative learning process of self-formation among black individuals. In essence, the Bildungsroman is understood as a hermeneutic process of becoming, on an individual, social, and historical level. It is what Claudine Raynaud (2004) regards as a

> [c]oming of age–reaching the age of "maturity" or "discretion"...process, a moment, or a scene akin to the structural "scenes of instruction" inherent in African American narratives . . .The discovery of American society's racism is the major event in the protagonist's development and in his "education."[163]

[162] Van Manen, *Phenomenology of Practice*, 31.
[163] Claudine Raynaud, "Coming of Age in the African American Novel." *The Cambridge Companion to the African American Novel*. Ed. Maryemma Graham, 106–121. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 106.

The *Bildungsroman,* then, forms the basis of black feminist truth-telling, rooted in her personal existential and social experiences.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with interpretation and understanding of lived experience. It focuses on shared features of an experience of an object, event, or phenomenon, thereby identifying basic structures of the experience. While transcendental phenomenology in the Husserlian tradition focuses on bracketing one's own judgments and biases,[164] hermeneutic phenomenology accepts the knower's prejudices, biases, perspective, and historical situatedness as fact.[165] The goal is the co-construction of knowledge and understanding of experiences that individuals have of a phenomenon. Relating myself meaningfully at both points of connection and disconnection, is an excellent autoethnographic exercise in reflection that serves as a helpful reminder of the vast differences in experiences that exist among black American females.

I selected the literary form of *Bildungsroman* and modified the term to include and specify the descriptors black feminist, as a way to examine social justice, but also to engage culturally responsive teaching. Following the German and British traditions prior to adapting to the American context, I propose studying black female artists and performers through the *Bildungsroman* lens. Employing *Bildungsroman* allows learners to focus on life narratives during discussions of race, gender, class, ability status, citizenship, and sexuality, as well as the different intersectionalities of these. Given its fairly accessible format, narrative structure, human element, and the basic coming-of-age format, *Bildungsroman,* I argue, can be used as a lens to advance empathy. As the researcher, I will aim to give full expression to the *Bildungsroman*, artwork, performance,

[164] Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods*, 1994.
[165] van Manen, *Researching Lived Experiences*, 1990.

musical piece, films, etc., while employing phenomenological analysis to describe form, and analyze related context, as part of an exercise in exegesis.

3.5 Black Feminist Cosmopolitan Case Study: Selection Criteria

I selected black cosmopolitans as the subjects whose life narratives and artworks I would study because I found this group had been, more often than not, left out of, underappreciated by, or not thoroughly examined in, black history books. Originally, I was moved by their lack of inclusion in many African American art books and cultural and history textbooks and was driven by a desire to rehabilitate their images, explain their absences, figure out their places, or find some way to shine light on their legacies. The more I meditated on their exclusions or underappreciation within these circles, the more I turned my project into an educational question. Why had these female artists, writers, and performers been left the U.S. for another country to live a cosmopolitan existence? And, how could their departures be understood as a show of strength rather than as a sign of retreat? In other words, I wanted to find a way to celebrate their bravery, courage, and resilience, while also highlighting the historical context and social and political conditions that led to their leaving the U.S. in the first place.

I selected female artists in particular to highlight gender norms of the time, and specifically the unusual circumstances of a woman, let alone a black woman, to relocate abroad. In this way, I was attempting to fill in the blanks to answer my question. One might ask why I had not included some of the notable black male literary giants, visual artists, and performers of the era, including writers Richard Wright and James Baldwin, musicians Jimi Hendrix, and artists Henry Ossawa Tanner and Bob Thompson. Although fascinating options were apparent from the beginning, the more I researched, the more I

realized that studies had been carried out on these individuals already. Therefore, I wanted to learn more about those artists, especially marginalized cosmopolitan females, who were underrepresented in scholarly literature.

Also, for a woman to completely relocate was highly unusual. That these women found and maintained work and patronage and a faithful following says a great deal about their abilities to network and persist, not to mention their talent and ability to work hard in new contexts, often where the first language spoken was not English. For their tenacity, cosmopolitanism, and strong commitment to producing political art and music about home, Hall, Catlett, Simone, and Chase-Riboud eventually became the artists and performers on which I focused my energies.

However, I have included important forerunners in the discussions of black aesthetic cosmopolitanism, specifically Edmonia Lewis and Josephine Baker. Well-known in art and performance studies, I also carefully selected which women I would study. I settled on 20th-century women in particular to stick with a common era. If I decide to broaden my study in the future, I will include Edmonia Lewis into the group, as she has a compelling history and experience with racism in the U.S., and enduring legacy as an abolitionist sculptor of the 19th century.

In addition, I selected 20th-century women who for the most part retained their American citizenship, and one who could not have reasonably given up her U.S. citizenship. Expatriates Josephine Baker (Paris) and Tina Turner (Zurich) were early candidates featured in this project, until I learned they both surrendered their American passports. However, I do cite Baker as an important foremother for black feminist *Bildungsroman*. I also chose to focus on artists who permanently relocated, rather than

some who took extended trips abroad, but then returned to their homes in the U.S., as if traveling back and forth. In essence, I sought out artists who were committed to creating a new home for themselves in a distant place.

The artists I examine each manage traumas associated with racial dehumanization and disenfranchisement in the U.S., as a result of the impact of Jim Crow laws, wars, and the brutal state-sanctioned violence against blacks during the Civil Rights movement. Living abroad, in a different racial and class context, afforded artists an opportunity to "reset" on the struggles and injustices of home. The histories of these cosmopolitan artists, evident in artworks, and evident in interviews, should be taught as part of a curriculum of social justice and U.S. history.

3.6 Concluding Thoughts

My study is a reminder that I am a *bricoleur*. Similar to the human sciences, which requires the flexibility of the researcher to go in search of meaning,

> ...bricolage can also imply the fictive and imaginative elements of the presentation of all formal research. Indeed, as cultural studies of science have indicated, all scientific inquiry is jerryrigged to a degree; science, as we all know by now, is not nearly as clean, simple, and procedural as scientists would have us believe.[166]

I not only engage in myriad methodological practices and commit to a transdisciplinary approach to knowledge production; I also embrace different kinds of knowing. As I study recordings of performances and interviews from documentaries, and take notes on the artworks I study, I engage in various ways of knowing in order to enhance my own understanding. This is the enterprise of research itself, or it should be.

[166] Kincheloe, "Describing the Bricolage" 680.

As I learned about the subjects of my study, I have come to recognize in them my own subjectivity and began to relate meaningfully to their narratives. Part of my own self-formation as *Bildungsroman*, the research process has become an important way for me to clarify my aims phenomenon of which I am attempting to understand at a fundamental level, and I am clarifying my research questions as well. I will engage in coding, writing up preliminary ideas, and observations, and emerging themes based on the analyses of interviews, performances, and visual artworks, as I continue to generate new ideas. This is the long, sometimes arduous, process of meaning-making, which is why Gadamer's analogies of play and the game are appealing.

As I engage in Gadamer's hermeneutic circle of understanding, I relate parts of the project back to the whole of the phenomenon, and back again to its parts in order to make sense again of the entire story, all of which serves as a basic model for human science research. In addition, his theorizing about play and the game as ways to engage in research provide a framework for me as I embark upon my dissertation research and reflect critically on my practices and procedures. Watching, listening to, re-watching, and listening to again, concert performances and sound recording, or reading, and re-reading, have been, in my experience, a hermeneutic dialogue in the form of playing, and engaging in the back and forth, between myself, my research phenomenon, and my research questions. The game of meaning-making reminds me that I am but one piece of co-constructing meaning, while the research subjects, the contexts, and environment, are the others.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contributes greater understanding to transformative learning, grounded in critical approaches to black feminist studies. As the field of transformative learning continues to grow, particularly in the areas of cultural, gender, and critical social approaches, there is a need to contribute new perspectives on citizenship and feminism. Once contributed, the field of transformative learning will represent a greater range of ideas and experiences from which scholars and researchers can theorize.

The present chapter first establishes the demand for the inclusion of more diverse black female narratives. This is in part due to the relatively small amount of information published on the contributions of particularly outstanding yet underappreciated black artists and performers. Once more is known about these exemplars, I argue these females should be included in educational curricula as important female examples of survival and resilience that have come to characterize the black Atlantic experience. Furthermore, each woman's story adds a new layer of complexity to the current discourses on black citizenship, feminism, and cosmopolitanism. In short, as I introduce new black feminist narratives to the curriculum, I will be simultaneously contributing epistemological complexity to 20th century black historical studies.

4.2 Background and Aims

Here, I posit two primary ideas. First, after Peter Jarvis (2009), I reiterate the idea that learning, albeit at times painful, can be transformative, and therefore growth-

inducing, for the individual learner.[167] Although it is widely accepted among adult education scholars that a disorienting dilemma is often a catalyst for transformative learning,[168] it is still debatable whether negative outcomes of such learning or disturbing aspects of the learning experience can themselves be transformative.[169] Examples of the kind of negative, often traumatizing, experiences of existential angst and suffering lead some to question whether such negativity can actually lead to transformation, which is understood generally to mean growth.[170] John Dewey (1938) famously declared such negative experiences, for example Mezirow's disorienting dilemma, as miseducative, and therefore an obstacle to further growth.[171]

Setting aside for now the controversy over the value of disorienting dilemmas themselves, which do not all result in transformation, I focus instead on those dilemmas or experiences that do. In other words, my focus on the resulting transformation, or growth[172] is indeed positive. More specifically, I latch onto Mezirow's admittedly narrow notion of transformative learning as growth that "assumes the perfectibility of human beings when this refers to improving our understanding and the quality of our actions through meaningful learning."[173] That is, as one acquires new knowledge and understanding, whether by formal means of training or schooling, or informal means of undergoing life experiences or engaging in self-reflection, this growth from learning that

[167] Jarvis, *Learning to Be a Person in Society*.
[168] Mezirow, "Perspective Transformation."
[169] See Dana Naughton and Fred Schied, "Disturbing Outcomes: The Dark Side of Transformative Learning" Adult Education Research Conference (2010): 333-343.
[170] Mezirow, "Perspective Transformation."
[171] John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: MacMillan, 1938).
[172] Jack Mezirow, "Transformative Learning as Discourse" *Journal of Transformative Learning* v. 1 no. 1 (2003): 58-63.
[173] Jack Mezirow, "Learning to Think like an Adult. Core Concepts of Transformation Theory." In *Learning as Transformation. Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*, Jack Mezirow & Associates (Eds.), 3-33. (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 9.

occurs can, though does not always, alter an individual and contribute to their ultimate flourishing as an individual and as a social subject.

The second primary idea I put forth grows out of idealistic notions of empathy and dialogue from philosophical standpoints. From philosophical anthropologist Max Scheler, I take empathy to mean shared feelings, recognition of another's feelings, and the feeling of pity for another.[174] Providing more insight into relational ethics, existential philosopher Martin Buber's *I and Thou* model presents an instance of dialogical relationship and communion, as opposed to objectifying another. Buber writes "When I confront a human being as my Thou and speak the basic word I-Thou to him, then he is no thing among things nor does he consist of things. He is no longer He or She, a dot in the world grid of space and time, nor a condition to be experienced and described, a loose bundle of named qualities. Neighborless and seamless, he is Thou and fills the firmament."[175]

My firm belief is dialogue between individuals, cultures, and histories often results in disorienting dilemmas, or even breakdowns in understanding and communication. However, this dilemma can and does become a catalyst for transformation. As such, the learning experience becomes ultimately positive for those who meaningfully participate in that process.

4.3 Growth and Transformation

As audiences face the disorienting dilemma and, with education and guidance, develop critical awareness of the standard narratives that have informed their ways of

[174] Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*. Trans. by Peter Heath. (New York: Archon Books, 1970).
[175] Martin Buber, *I and Thou.* Trans. Charles Schribner's Sons (New York: Touchstone, 1970), 59.

thinking, feeling, and living, they have choices to make. The first option is a positive response to new knowledge. People learn to adjust their lives, whether gradual or immediate, with the full knowledge that there may be future changes to make to lead to one's ethical flourishing, or success. The key is to never give up, keep going, and keep striving, even in the face of setbacks. This positive approach describes the will to constantly improve oneself, as if a lifelong learner, and compares to Carol Dweck's growth mindset.[176] The next three options consist of negative responses to new knowledge, and ultimately exemplify the antithesis of growth, which is Dweck's fixed mindset.

The first negative option is to continue comfortably along the same path, remaining non-committal to making changes, but not rejecting anyone who does. This neutral live and let live attitude exudes libertarian personal autonomy and radically upholds the value of personal choice when contemplating major life decisions. However, when approached with new knowledge and experiences, the individual is caught like a deer in headlights. Their decision to remain agnostic in the face of human suffering and injustice is morally questionable at best and cowardly at worst.

The next option is to feign a good faith effort toward listening to the new knowledge presented to them, but with the full knowledge that they were never going to accept change. This is an example of hearing a person out simply to say one has done it, or rather to be able to say they let a person speak and make their point. But because this option is not open to expanding one's perspective, the person ends up paying lip service to others and in the meantime digging in their heels. This rather disingenuous approach

[176] Carol Dweck, *Growth Mindset: A New Psychology of Success* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2007).

maintains a defensive stance, finds holes to poke into arguments, insists on the use of proper form and definitions before entertaining new knowledge, clings to skepticism, whether healthy and warranted or not, and upholds tradition no matter what because that is the way it has always been.

The final variation on fixed mindset is the option of responding to new knowledge in a manner that more or less rejects it outright without even having the decency to entertain the possibility. One might elect this option on grounds of upholding one's said values or beliefs, but when pushed to define what those values or beliefs are, the person is unable to articulate them. In addition, the person is unable or unwilling to reason differently, and the result is often a highly defensive, or even explosive, individual. This Sartrean bad faith character is like the extreme version of a political pundit.

To clarify my approach to understanding responses to disorienting dilemmas, I differ from Dweck's orientation in that I do not type individuals as having a fixed or growth mindset, or even a particular disposition more generally. I look to different instances of how one responds to various forms of knowledge and tease out the ways growth or fixedness are exhibited. Similarly, one negative outcome to the disorienting dilemma that resulted from acquiring new knowledge does not indicate an individual will be fixed in mindset across different areas of life. My belief is that one might be more inclined to respond from a mindset of growth or fixedness depending on the situation. In other words, a person who exhibits a growth mindset in their response to one learning experience may not respond similarly when faced with another learning experience. My approach to mindset leaves room for human idiosyncrasies, complexities, and contradictions.

In this study, I recognize that acquiring knowledge about the institutionalized racism that undergirds American society can lead to the learner's experience of a disorienting dilemma. One learns about historical events, policies, and experiences that challenge their expectations of this country, and upset their understanding of sociological discourse. If one chooses to become a lifelong learner of history and social relationships, committed to broadening their perspective, knowledge, and understanding of human experiences, they will undoubtedly experience disorientation, and potentially growth and transformation. My hope is for everyone, particularly those endowed with power and privilege, will not only become more empathic as a result of learning, but more importantly will be moved to effect social change.

Notwithstanding the painful, negative, and disorienting experience of learning about the suffering and inequality of others, particularly affected by institutionalized racism, my hope is those recipients of new knowledge can reshape their perspectives and way of being in the world, in ways that inspires racial justice for the people who are underprivileged and disenfranchised. My explicit hope is for more people to become moved to correct racism on an individual and interpersonal level. On the institutional level, my hope is that we as social actors can create and enforce laws to end unjust racist practices in the United States. However, these actions can only take place when participants have the occasion to reflect upon the current social and political events, and the historical conditions that have perpetuated inequality. For this to happen, new knowledge needs to be produced and disseminated from new sets of experiences.

4.4 Foremothers of Black Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitan black feminist *Bildungsroman* does not develop in a vacuum. Instead, there are important artist and performer foremothers that provide insight into early black feminist accomplishment. Sculptor Edmonia Lewis from the late nineteenth century and performer Josephine Baker from the early twentieth century present diverse narratives of healing and self-formation that predate this study's twentieth-century examples. Common threads of artistic genius and individual, social, and political limitations of living in Jim Crow-era America are examined, as is the ongoing attempt throughout their works to make sense of an unjust American context in which their very birthright citizenship has been denied them.

Edmonia Lewis: Between "Wildfire" and Classicism

Mary Edmonia Lewis (1844-1907) is an important forerunner to black feminist artist narratives of becoming in a cosmopolitan context. She was the first black person, and female artist, to achieve international acclaim, as she made her career in Rome, Italy. Known by her childhood nickname "Wildfire," Lewis is the first noted African and Native descent artist in American history.[177] This Haitian black and Canadian Ojibwa Native woman worked in the neoclassical tradition of sculpture. She most famously sculpting portraits of abolitionists and Civil War heroes, allegorical figures of freedom in the form of ex-slaves throughout history, and fictitious Native Americans. Notably,

[177] Lynda Rose Hartigan, *Sharing Traditions: Five Black Artists in Nineteenth-Century America: From the Collections of the National Museum of American Art*. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985).

Lewis made her career in Europe, yet continued to create works whose subjects were the American experience and American history.

She is a memorable historical figure who makes an important contribution to black studies and art history. However, as an example of resiliency after whom many black female artists followed, she captures the spirit of self-creation, through her artistic works, her interviews, and her biography. From these sources, readers and learners can develop a stronger sense of how her self-recovery and transformation occurred, and the ways she was able to articulate her self-formation.

Lewis was born in upstate New York, in Greenbush (now Rensselaer). Her ancestry is West Indian (Haitian immigrant) descent on her father's side, and African American (American ex-slave) and Native American from Mississauga, Ontario Canadian (Ojibwa) descent on her mother. She reports having spent her childhood swimming, hunting, fishing, and weaving baskets. In addition, she spent little to no time with her father after her mother's untimely death prior to her fifth birthday.[178] As an orphaned young child, she lived with her mother's people and was "raised Native American," frequently referred to by her nickname "Wildfire." As a member of her native, nomadic tribe in New York, she reports regularly making crafts to sell as goods, including moccasin shoes and weaving baskets.[179]

During the 1850s, Lewis transitioned from her nomadic life with the Ojibwa to receive a formal education. Her older brother Samuel, called "Sunshine," was a

[178] Lynda Roscoe Hartigan, "Mary Edmonia 'Wildfire' Lewis." in *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*. Ed. Darlene Clark Hine et al. 2 vols., 286-290. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).
[179] Hartigan, "Mary Edmonia 'Wildfire' Lewis," p. 286-290.

California miner and her elder by almost ten years.[180] He funded her education, and connected her to abolitionists, who would fund her studies, as well. When she was twelve years old, her brother sent her to a Baptist college run by abolitionists that maintained a significant black population of students called New-York Central College, McGrawville (1856-8). There, she received academic preparation in general fields. According to Lewis, by the age of fourteen, the staff determined they could not further her education, citing her wild nature. In 1859, Lewis's brother and a group of abolitionists began their sponsorship of Lewis's education at the Oberlin Academy Preparatory School in the Young Ladies Preparatory Department, where she spent the next three years strengthening her reading and writing skills.[181] Again, the school admitted a large number of blacks. After three years, Lewis then entered Oberlin College, where she studied liberal arts subjects.[182] However, her time at Oberlin College was short-lived.

Unfortunately, Lewis experienced a number of racist incidents that disrupted her education. In 1863, she was prosecuted for having supposedly poisoned two female classmates.[183] In fact, she likely served them spiced wine, from which both became intoxicated and later dangerously ill.[184] As historians report and accept, Lewis was likely bisexual or lesbian, and thus any social activities with females have been interpreted as amorous ones, or worse as attempts to take advantage of young and impressionable white women. After her friends reported the incident, Lewis was incarcerated for a brief period of time. Once released, a white mob of townspeople beat her severely, and very likely

[180] Hartigan, "Mary Edmonia 'Wildfire' Lewis," p. 286-290.
[181] Kirsten Buick, *Child of the Fire: Mary Edmonia Lewis and the Problem of Art History's Black and Indian Subject* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 4.
[182] Buick, *Child of the Fire*, 5.
[183] Hartigan, "Mary Edmonia 'Wildfire' Lewis," p. 286-290.
[184] Ibid.

sexually assaulted her.[185] She was left in a field on a cold night, bloody, bruised, naked, and with broken bones.[186] She was eventually found by sympathetic locals, and nursed back to health. For a progressive northern town, one of the first to admit blacks to their colleges, Oberlin and its surrounding areas still harbored dangerous and violent people who held onto racist resentment and exerted violence.

A local black lawyer, also an alum of Oberlin named John Mercer Langston, offered Lewis legal assistance and later served as her defense lawyer.[187] He was subsequently shot for his support of Lewis's case, but lived.[188] The trial was dismissed and charges against Lewis were dropped, as there was not enough evidence for a conviction.[189] One year later in 1864, when she was one semester shy of graduation from Oberlin, she was accused of stealing art supplies, which she denied and was never found guilty.[190] In fact, all accusations against her proved to be bogus and very likely racially-motivated. Nevertheless, Lewis was dismissed from Oberlin and was therefore denied a degree.[191]

After her experiences in Oberlin, Ohio, she reports Frederick Douglass advised her to "seek the East and by study, prepare herself for work and further study abroad."[192] Lewis moved to Boston in 1864. Upon recommendation and with the support of abolitionists, Lewis was provided with a letter of introduction, which she used to

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[185] Buick, *Child of the Fire,* 240.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Buick, *Child of the Fire*, 9.
[188] Buick, *Child of the Fire*, 10.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Buick, *Child of the Fire*, 10.
[191] Buick, *Child of the Fire*, 10.
[192] Sandra Weber, et al. "Sculptor Edmonia Lewis: From Albany to Rome, Italy." *The New York History Blog*, 17 Mar. 2020, newyorkhistoryblog.org/2016/02/sculptor-edmonia-lewis-from-albany-to-rome-italy/. https://newyorkhistoryblog.org/2016/02/sculptor-edmonia-lewis-from-albany-to-rome-italy/

approach the famous sculptor William Lloyd Garrison.[193] Through Garrison, Lewis was then connected to the sculptor Edward A. Brackett, under whom she would train and learn her craft as a sculptor.[194]

She was masterful at getting patrons, which included noted writers, poets, and abolitionists, to support her work.[195] Specifically, she had the support of abolitionists and female writers, who were influential in getting her name spread widely throughout abolitionist circles. Thus, Lewis was able to make a name for herself. Her patronage was secure enough that she was able to sell enough works to afford travel to Europe in 1865.[196] Once there, she traveled to London, Paris, and Florence, but eventually settled in Rome.

Once she relocated to Rome, Lewis built a community of support among fellow American female sculptors and writers, all of whom lived in an expatriate American artist section of the city.[197] But Lewis didn't only associate with American artists in Rome. She maintained a strong connection with family members back in America, such as her brother and benefactor, Samuel, and other prominent abolitionists. For example, Frederick Douglass, with whom Lewis kept in regular contact, and who was a visitor to her studio in Rome.[198]

In Rome, Italy, Lewis made a career and home for herself. Notably, she is the first black and indigenous female sculptor who did so successfully.[199] There, she became well-known for her Neoclassical, academic sculptures. Her subject matter, however, was not

[193] Buick, *Child of the Fire*, 11.
[194] Buick, *Child of the Fire*, 12.
[195] Buick, *Child of the Fire*, 11.
[196] Hartigan, "Mary Edmonia 'Wildfire' Lewis," 286-290.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Weber, et. al., "Sculptor Edmonia Lewis."
[199] Buick, *Child of the Fire*, xx.

limited to merely mythological figures and religious subjects. Rather, her subjects ranged from the historical to the literary tradition of the American context.

Her most notable sculptures fall under the categories of subjects of slavery and the Civil War, Native American literary figures, biblical subjects, and historical figures. Lewis's *Bust of Robert Gould Shaw*, 1864, sculpted in white marble, was her first well-known work. She met Union General Robert Gould Shaw in person. When Lewis learned he was the commander of the all-black 54th infantry unit from Massachusetts, she was inspired to create a portrait bust of his likeness.[200] After observing Lewis complete the Shaw bust, poet Anna Quincy Waterston wrote a poem called "Edmonia Lewis"

> Tis fitting that a daughter of the race
> Whose chains are breaking should receive a gift
> So rare as genius. Neither power nor place,
> Fashion or wealth, pride, custom, caste, nor hue
> can arrogantly claim what God doth lift
> Above these chances, and bestows on few.[201]

The Shaw portrait is simple and understated in design, yet naturalistic and elegant in appearance. Created from white marble, the Shaw bust features a youthful-looking man, with relaxed facial features, meaning no wrinkles visible on his forehead, cheeks, lips. Yet, he appears calm and expressionless, with neither a smile, nor a frown. He appears to represent the epitome of dignity, in the classical Roman tradition. True to his contemporaneous portraits, whether drawn or painted, his hair parts on the side of his head, with the majority of it swept over to his left side. His slightly wavy hair is long enough to cup behind his ears. He exhibits facial hair, with a well-groomed clearly combed mustache, as well as a thin goat patch that runs the length of his chin. As if

[200] Buick, *Child of the Fire*, 14.
[201] Weber, et. al., "Sculptor Edmonia Lewis."

reporting to duty, he comports himself as the dignified soldier, with eyes gazing outward in front of him. The only element missing is his soldier's uniform. He is instead bare-chested.

The absence of clothing would not have been highly unusual in the Roman portrait bust tradition, though a good many other portraits, featuring soldier-emperors, patricians, and wealthy society members, tend to be clothed. That Shaw is unclothed could speak to the innovation of departing from classical Roman style more generally, blending antiquity ideals with emergent, American Neoclassical style. This possibility is general enough so as to be undeniable. However, this possibility does not explain the subject's bare chest. Another possibility is Lewis was creating a memorial, funerary portrait or effigy of sorts, since the bust was created in 1864, following Shaw's death in battle in 1863. However, funerary effigies and memorial portraits still tend to feature clothed subjects.

Yet another possibility is Lewis was working in *a l'antique* mode to capture her subject, Shaw. This stylistic hybrid between the 18th century and classical antiquity was in use throughout the art world among academic artists during the era of the Enlightenment. Examples of this style are found in the portrait busts representing French philosophes, from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Denis Diderot. Lewis may have been attempting to evoke Shaw's intellectual character in this portrait, and so employed *a l'antique* mode in service to his subject. In 1837, Shaw was born into a wealthy, socially connected family of intellectuals and abolitionists in Massachusetts. He was raised among literati and abolitionists in New York. He attended the Second Division of St. John's College at Fordham, where he studied classical and contemporary European

languages and studied the violin. He attended St. John's for three years until he and his family relocated overseas for an extended European Tour that lasted nine years. He returned to the states and attended Harvard University. Given his upbringing and education, it is not inconceivable to imagine Lewis would adopt this 18th-century hybrid style, which Ronit Milano argues is meant to evoke both antiquity and Enlightenment ideals of calm and self-exploration, respectively.[202] Furthermore, Milano states "the bare-chested bust conveys psychological exposure through physical exposure." [203] Working in the *a l'antique* mode afforded Lewis a way to communicate the subject's biographical sketch and intellectual background. With the earnings from the replicas of Shaw, Lewis was able to afford her trip to Rome in 1865.

Lewis reports having felt forced to leave the U.S., due to rampant racial inequality and the need to pursue economic opportunity. Regarding her decision to move abroad, Lewis stated "I was practically driven to Rome... in order to obtain the opportunities for art-culture, and to find a social atmosphere where I was not constantly reminded of my color. The land of liberty had no room for a colored sculptor." [204] In reference to Lewis's decision to make Rome her home base, she declared, "I like to see the opera, and I don't like to be pointed out as a negress."[205] In other words, she wanted to pursue aesthetic ambitions and opportunities in a place where her race would not be the central topic of interactions with her. She also sought to build her career and develop finer skill as an artist. She was disinclined to accept praise simply because she was black. She stated "I

[202] Ronit Milano, "Communicating (with) the Self in the French Enlightenment: Intellectualism, Naturalism and Embodiment in the Bare-Chested Portrait Bust," *Studies in Visual Art and Communication* v. 1, no. 1 (2014): 1-25; 8.
[203] Milano, "Communicating (with) the Self in the French Enlightenment," 8.
[204] Weber, et. al., "Sculptor Edmonia Lewis."
[205] Ibid.

don't want that kind of praise. I had rather you would point out my defects, for that will teach me something."[206] With her focus firmly set on her professional development, rather than her perceived exotic qualities, Lewis continued to produce works from her new home and studio in Rome.

Forever Free, 1867, sculpted in marble, is perhaps Lewis's most well-known sculpture. Originally named "The Morning of Liberty," Lewis's sculpture was created in commemoration of the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution.[207]Completed during the era of American Reconstruction, just two years after the Civil War ended, this work testifies not only to the spirit of the time, but to the promise of a future in which freedom for all can be achieved, regardless of skin tone or racial categorization.

The statue consists of two figures, male and female, expressing joy at their emancipation. The statue features a standing male, raising his left hand to demonstrate the broken chains of bondage, and a kneeling female, with hands clasped in a supplicant manner. Both figures gaze upward with head tilted, as if in a state of wonder. Both have noticeably non-European features, as the male has a thick head of large curls, and the female has loose, wavy curls. Both figures have broad, rather than narrow noses, and plump lips.

Lewis's subsequent *Hagar in the Wilderness*, 1867, sculpted in marble, is remarkable for its implicit reference to human suffering under the yoke of slavery. Furthermore, the work appears to resemble the female slave figure from *Forever Free*. Although the statue is carved from white marble, which was in keeping with the

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[206] Weber, et. al., "Sculptor Edmonia Lewis."
[207] Eric Foner and Olivia Mahoney. "A New Birth of Freedom: Reconstruction During the Civil War." *America's Reconstruction: People and Politics After the Civil War*, 2003, http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/exhibits/reconstruction/section1/section1_03.html

neoclassical style, Lewis clearly took pains to accentuate each figures' African features. In doing so, she makes a statement about the beauty and dignity of African peoples more generally.

The Death of Cleopatra, 1876, sculpted in white marble, is a reference to a historical subject who lived during antiquity and exuded female strength. Cleopatra is depicted at the moment following her death from a poisonous snake bite, as if lying in repose. Independent and strong, Cleopatra is the sole subject of the statue, and occupies the throne from which she governed. Her body is massive in size, as she nearly fully occupies the space of her throne. She wears royal garments as well as her crown and is shown with the snake that caused her untimely demise wrapped around her right wrist. It is all the more ironic that Lewis exposes Cleopatra's right breast, a symbol of life, when Cleopatra is lifeless. Furthermore, in keeping with neoclassical depictions, the expression on Cleopatra's face is wholly idealized, with a small hint of a grin. In the moment of a painful death, it is unlikely that Cleopatra would exude such calm. However, the representation of noble strength and dignity in the midst of suffering is in keeping with idealized, neoclassical depictions of literary, biblical, and historical figures.

Despite the praise she regularly received, Lewis still encountered critics and skeptics alike. Notably, some called her work a hoax.[208] Therefore, to prove she could be a black female sculptor, Lewis opened up her studio to visitors so people could watch her carve marble without the help of assistants.[209] This act is all the more remarkable, given that most sculptors typically hire professionals to do the rough work of initial carving. [210]

[208] Hartigan, "Mary Edmonia 'Wildfire' Lewis," 286-290.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Weber, et. al., "Sculptor Edmonia Lewis."

Lewis's talent was clear, as she wielded both chisel and mallet, as tourists looked on. [211] Still, this situation only seems to reinforce the proverbial idea that blacks must work twice as hard to receive half as much as their white counterparts.[212]

Put differently, writer Ta-Nehisi Coates writes of the double standard of treatment that exists of blacks and whites. He states "So I feared not just the violence of this world but the rules designed to protect you from it, the rules that would have you contort your body to address the block, and contort again to be taken seriously by colleagues, and contort again so as not to give the police a reason." [213] Coates speaks to the systemic inequalities that exist between black and whites, emphasizing the extra work blacks must exert in order to receive humane treatment.

Although Lewis had left the U.S. in search of racial equality, economic stability, and career advancement, racial prejudice was still a global phenomenon, even if not to the extent that existed back home in America. Still, Lewis was able to make a life and successful career in Italy, working in the neoclassical style, and producing noble representations of black Americans and American indigenous peoples. Some portrait busts she created included an acquaintance, abolitionist Frederick Douglass, and the eighteenth-century black poet Phillis Wheatley.[214] Her sculpted works undoubtedly served as political acts, thereby intervening in the historical record of representations of

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[211] Ibid.

[212] Recently, President Barack Obama made the remark as part of his commencement speech, stating, "Every one of you has a grandma or an uncle or a parent whose told you at some point in life as an African American you have to work twice as hard as anyone else if you want to get by." Barack Obama. "Obama: 'As An African American You Have To Work Twice As Hard As Anyone Else If You Want To Get By.'" From Morehouse College Commencement, May 19, 2013. *RealClearPolitics*, 19 May 2013, www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2013/05/19/obama_if_you_think_you_can_just_get_over_in_this_economy_just_because_you_have_a_morehouse_degree_youre_in_for_a_rude_awakening.html.

[213] Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Penguin Random House LLC, 2015).

[214] Hartigan, "Mary Edmonia 'Wildfire' Lewis," 286-290.

non-Europeans, which traditionally presented blacks and native peoples variously as mere property, ancillary to the main European subjects, or as threatening primitives and savages. Lewis instead represented blacks and natives as honorable, individualized subjects, thereby subverting negative depictions from the historical record. She exhibited such works not only in Europe, but also took these to America, where she regularly returned to participate in exhibitions.[215]

Near the end of her life, Lewis lived in London, UK, and no longer made sculptures, as neoclassicism had fallen out of favor. She died in relative obscurity and was subsequently buried in a Catholic cemetery in London.[216] Still, Lewis remains an important forerunner for black women who moved overseas to begin a successful career in the arts. In essence, she forged her own path and achieved success, with some skill, hard work, resilience, and luck.

Josephine Baker: From Vaudeville to the Folies Bergere

Freda Josephine McDonald (1906-1975) is another important forerunner for black female artists and performers moving abroad and achieving global success, as she later became an international star, sex symbol, and activist during her lifetime. Variously referred to as the "Bronze Venus," "Black Pearl," and "Creole Goddess," the international star Baker was born in St. Louis, Missouri.[217] She is now believed to be the byproduct of a mixed-race relationship between her black mother and a white man,

[215] Hartigan, "Mary Edmonia 'Wildfire' Lewis," 286.
[216] Hartigan, "Mary Edmonia 'Wildfire' Lewis," 290.
[217]"Josephine Baker." *Biographies.net*. STANDS4 LLC, 2020. Web. 3 Apr. 2020. https://www.biographies.net/people/en/josephine_baker.

whose identity she never uncovered. [218] However, she was raised by a black male vaudeville drummer and her mother, who primarily worked as a washerwoman.[219] As a child, she worked by cleaning houses and babysitting, and by the age of thirteen she took up waitressing.[220] Also by this age, Baker entered an abusive marriage with a twenty-five year old, though their marriage was never technically legal due to her young age.[221] At the age of fifteen, she married her second husband, a man with the surname Baker, whose name she kept even after their divorce.[222] She took up dancing to perform on the streets and on the black vaudeville traveling circuit. By 1919, she began touring throughout the U.S. with a band of musicians, called the Jones Family Band.[223] Baker later joined the vaudeville group the Dixie Steppers, first as the dresser for the blues singer Clara Smith, who later became her mentor and lover, and subsequently as a performer in her own right.[224]

With the Dixie Steppers, Baker was featured as a chorus girl and comedic act, which led to further success and opportunities.[225] In 1921, Baker, now fifteen, was cast as a chorus girl in the comic position in Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake's all-black musical *Shuffle Along* in New York City.[226] As the comedic force of the show, she "took advantage of the opportunities in this role and tripped over her own feet, crossed her

[218] Christine Tran, et al. "La Danse Sauvage: The Extravagant Life of Josephine Baker." *Factinate*, 13 Aug. 2019, www.factinate.com/editorial/la-danse-sauvage-extravagant-life-josephine-baker/.
[219] Jean-Claude Baker and Chris Chase, *Josephine Baker: The Hungry Heart*
[220] Peggy Cervantes, *The Many Faces of Josephine Baker: Dancer, Singer, Activist, Spy.* Chicago: Chicago Review Press, Inc., 2015. (2015).
[221] Cervantes, *The Many Faces of Josephine Baker*.
[222] Baker and Chase, *Josephine Baker: The Hungry Heart*
[223] Cervantes, *The Many Faces of Josephine Baker*.
[224] Cervantes, *The Many Faces of Josephine Baker*.
[225] Baker and Chase, *Josephine Baker: The Hungry Hear*t.
[226] Allen Woll, *Black Musical Theatre: From Coontown to Dreamgirls* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 74.

eyes, stuck her tongue in her cheek, and folded her knees together in a froglike position."[227] Her unique performance in this musical helped launch her career, but also the careers of Adelaide Hall, Florence Mills, Fredi Washington, and Paul Robeson, among others.[228] After her success in *Shuffle Along*, Baker advanced her career by performing in *The Chocolate Dandies* (1925) in New York City. She also received an invitation to perform at the Plantation Theater Restaurant in Harlem, a venue known for launching the careers of black stars.[229]

In 1925 at the age of nineteen, Baker joined a cast of twenty-five members that were featured in an all-black revue in Paris. The show was the mastermind of white American socialite Caroline Dudley Reagan, with the backing of a Swiss financier, who since watching eight girls dance the Charleston at a small theater in a black neighborhood developed the idea of the revue in Paris, where she imagined Paris audiences would appreciate black dancers.[230] As Petrine Archer-Shaw notes, the blacks who resided in Paris largely found themselves there after having been courted by benefactors for their style and sense of vitality.[231] The success blacks experienced in Paris is in part attributed to what Archer-Shaw describes as avant-garde Europeans avowing a kind of "cultural outsiderism," which was a statement in contrast to the violence and nationalisms that brought upon the first world war.[232] With this cultural outsiderism came white admiration

[227] Cervantes, *The Many Faces of Josephine Baker*.
[228] Woll, *Black Musical Theatre*, 74.
[229] Cervantes, *The Many Faces of Josephine Baker*.
[230] Cervantes, *The Many Faces of Josephine Baker*.
[231] Petrine Archer-Shaw, *Negrophilia: Avant-Garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s* (London: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., 2000), 15.
[232] Archer-Shaw, *Negrophilia*, 15.

of blacks for their cultural difference and their perceived connections (which, in actuality were tenuous) to a fantasized, "primitive" Africa.[233]

Baker traveled to Paris to serve as the comedic act performing the Charleston on the chorus line, despite her initial misgivings.[234] Although Baker had heard blacks were accepted in France, she didn't know if the rumor was in fact true.[235] Caroline assured her the city of Paris was beautiful, and her friends encouraged her to accept the opportunity overseas.[236] The year of 1925 marked the beginning of her long and sensational career overseas during the period of what became known as *Les Années Folles*, or *The Crazy Years*.[237]

Baker spent her evenings performing with Revue Nègre at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. There she entertained famous people of cafe society, including writer Ernest Hemingway, artist Pablo Picasso, among others. In fact, Hemingway regarded Baker, "the most sensational woman anyone ever saw."[238] In Paris, Baker acquired the reputation of being an exotic woman, as she was scantily clad in unconventional costumes during her performances.[239] She equally played up an exotic demeanor outside of her performances, as she was known to keep zoo animals at her personal residence.[240]

Baker is well-known for her exotic style of dance, though her first plan was to dance in a comedic manner rather than in an exotic one, and to transition into singing. On

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[233] Ibid.
[234] Cervantes, *The Many Faces of Josephine Baker*.
[235] Cervantes, *The Many Faces of Josephine Baker*.
[236] Cervantes, *The Many Faces of Josephine Baker*.
[237] Also known as *The Roaring Twenties* in America. Emmanuel, Juliette. "Les Années Folles: Influence of Jazz on 1920s French Fashion." *Musical Geography*, 15 June 2017, musicalgeography.org/2017/06/15/les-annees-folles-influence-of-jazz-on-1920s-french-fashion/.
[238] Tran, et al. "La Danse Sauvage".
[239] Baker and Chase, *Josephine Baker*.
[240] Cervantes, *The Many Faces of Josephine Baker*.

the way to reaching her goal, the largely untrained professional performer became famous for *La Danse Sauvage*. As one blogger notes,

> Baker moved to France in the 1920s to devote herself to working as a dancer. Almost overnight, she became the toast of the town, and young men roamed the Paris streets dreaming of her lithe body dancing the Charleston while (barely) clad in bananas, boa feathers, and diamond chokers. She received film deals, recording contracts, and live performance slots all around Europe, though she learned to call France her home...[241]

She often performed the dance in a scandalous costume, though her first response to the idea of the costume was one of shock.[242] At first, Baker flatly refused to dance in so revealing a costume and demanded her return to the U.S. shortly after she arrived in France.[243] However, the deal struck with the revue's choreographer from the Moulin Rouge, Jacques Charles, was Baker would perform the dance for one night, and the next day would be allowed to return home to the U.S.[244]

Years after the debut of *La Danse Sauvage*, Baker recalled the experience of her first time performing it. Baker stated, "The first time I had to appear in front of the Paris audience...I had to execute a dance rather...savage. I came onstage and... a frenzy took possession of me...seeing nothing, not even hearing the orchestra, I danced!"[245] Baker clearly overcame her misgivings and remained with the revue, and in Paris, long-term. Archer-Shaw notes that blacks often traveled to Paris in hopes of exchanging their historical displacement and dislocation for membership in the avant-garde's postwar cosmopolitanism.[246] Though, with the avant-garde patronage that could catapult black

[241] Tran, et al., "La Danse Sauvage."
[242] Cervantes, *The Many Faces of Josephine Baker*.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Baker and Chase, *Josephine Baker*.
[246] Archer-Shaw, *Negrophilia*, 20.

artists to international superstardom came Paris's bohemian culture and its distortions of black culture that effectively distilled blackness into essential qualities of otherness that could be then desired and consumed by audiences and also financially profited from by patrons.[247]

Reaction from critics praised Baker's performance, while noting the difference she brought to her performance that was both innovative and sensual. Then-contemporary writer, poet, and art critic Pierre de Régnier described watching her perform the dance. He writes "She is in constant motion, her body writhing like a snake or more precisely like a dipping saxophone. Music seems to pour from her body. She grimaces, crosses her eyes, wiggles disjointedly, does a split and finally crawls off the stage stiff-legged, her rump higher than her head, like a young giraffe."[248] Writer Philip M. Ward explains the difference Baker's style made in the European performing arts scene. He writes, "Where European dancers showed the front, presenting the body as a unified line, Baker contrived to move different parts of her body to different rhythms."[249] He continued, "Most shocking to dance purists, she used her backside, shaking it, as one of her biographers says, as though it were an instrument."[250] Clearly, Baker's performance resonated with audiences as, yet another, fantasy of a so-called "primitive" Africa.

In two senses, these critics were correctly reminded of the sources for modern European Primitivism, namely African, Oceanic, Native American, and Middle Eastern

[247] Archer-Shaw, *Negrophilia*, 20-21.
[248] The Australian Ballet, "Josephine Baker and Her Danse Sauvage." *The Australian Ballet*, 6 Aug. 2010, australianballet.com.au/behind-ballet/josephine-baker-and-her-danse-sauvage/.
[249] The Australian Ballet, "Josephine Baker and Her Danse Sauvage."
[250] Ibid.

expressive cultures and art forms.[251] Widely accessible to artists in curiosity cabinets and ethnographic museums, non-Western ceremonial objects drew inspiration and fascination from artists who admired their formal qualities.[252] However, it is important to note that Primitivism was a modern European invention: a movement based in the European perceptions and interpretations of these cultures and expressive practices originating in then-European colonies in "primitive" Africa, and elsewhere.[253] Given the historical context of 1920s Paris, and the nearly 40-year old obsession modern European artists had with all things "tribal,"[254] and Baker used performance to extend the modern tradition to include a black American interpretation of, or innovation on, European Primitivism. For the European audience, Baker's dancing rightly evoked a wide-spread colonial European fantasy of the exotic, and available, African female body. Certainly, the writings of various critics support this assessment, likening Baker's bodily movements to that of animals in Africa. As Archer-Shaw notes, *negrophilia*, from the French negrophile, indicates a love for black culture that is less about black culture itself than it is about the white avant-garde's expectations of black people fulfilled through expressive performance, an admiration of which is a sign of being fashionable and modern.[255]

Baker subsequently returned to America for a visit in 1936, after becoming a highly popular and well-paid performer throughout Europe. However, Baker was not greeted warmly for her performance as a black woman who romances a white man. In

[251] Robert Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Art*, enlarged print edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986), xxii-xxiii.
[252] Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Art*, 5.
[253] Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Art*, xxiii.
[254] Colin Rhodes, *Primitivism and Modern Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1994). Consider, for instance, the Spanish Pablo Picasso's sources of African and Iberian sculpture or the French Peruvian Paul Gauguin's inspiration from Oceanic and rural French societies.
[255] Archer-Shaw, *Negrophilia*, 9.

fact, one reviewer called her a "black wench."[256] In addition, she was spat upon by a white female fellow patron while dining in a restaurant.[257] Understandably angry by the treatment she received in her native country, Baker took political action. Defiant, and objecting to the U.S.'s ill-conceived social policies, Baker gave up her American citizenship.[258] She became a French citizen in 1937. [259]

Newly minted a French citizen, Baker accepted the opportunity to contribute to the war efforts of her adopted nation, France. Recruited by the French Deuxieme Bureau to work as an honorable correspondent and gather information from German officers during parties and gatherings at embassies, Baker began her work in earnest for the French Resistance in 1939.[260] During her time working as an agent, she passed along information to England for transmission through invisible ink on her sheet music.[261] In 1941, she relocated to North African colonies to continue her work, though she became dangerously ill from an infection that required a hysterectomy.[262]

Baker took a stand for racial equality during her time in North Africa. As she entertained American, British, and French soldiers, she demanded that the audiences be integrated.[263] After the war, Baker received the Croix de guerre and the Rosette de la Resistance. Later, general Charles de Gaulle appointed her a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. Baker would wear her French military uniform on special occasions for the rest of her life.[264]

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[256] Baker and Chase, *Josephine Baker*.
[257] Baker and Chase, *Josephine Baker*.
[258] Baker and Chase, *Josephine Baker*.
[259] Tran, et. al., "La Danse Sauvage."
[260] Baker and Chase, *Josephine Baker*.
[261] Baker and Chase, *Josephine Baker*.
[262] Baker and Chase, *Josephine Baker*.
[263] Baker and Chase, *Josephine Baker*.
[264] Ibid.

For the rest of her life, Baker wore her military uniform with pride, even during her visits back home to America. During Baker's active participation in the Civil Rights movement, she delivered a speech while wearing her French uniform. As she addressed the crowd of the March on Washington in 1963, she wore her uniform and stood alongside Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She came to represent a key figure in the U.S. Civil Rights movement, given her fame and international notoriety, as well as her money and passionate commitment to racial equality. After King's assassination, King's widow Coretta Scott King asked Baker to take a more active role in leading the Civil Rights movement. However, Baker refused, and declared the work too dangerous for a mother of twelve adopted children, nicknamed the Rainbow Tribe.[265]

Baker's participation in the Civil Rights movement was not out of step with her political commitments, for even prior to her involvement with the movement, Baker had made waves with her personal activism. Starting in the 1940s, she refused to perform in front of segregated audiences in the military. During the 1950s, she spoke out against racial segregation when she and her white husband were denied hotel reservations in the U.S. She wrote articles critical of U.S. social policy. In addition, Baker gave a talk at Fisk University titled "France, North Africa and the Equality of the Races in France." She continued her resistance to segregation in the U.S. by continuing to demand she perform only for integrated audiences in the U.S.[266] Although she received many threatening phone calls from people claiming to be part of the Ku Klux Klan, she stated publicly that she was unafraid of them.[267]

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[265] Ibid.
[266] "Josephine Baker (1903-1986)." *African American*, 26 May 2011, afroame.blogspot.com/2011/05/josephine-baker-1903-1986.html.
[267] "Josephine Baker (1903-1986)."

Baker encountered an incident of racial significance in 1951 when touring the U.S. She accused Sherman Billingsley's of the Stork Club of racism in October of that year, after having to wait an extraordinarily long time for service.[268] She accused the club and its proprietor of insulting her and black people more generally by not serving her for the hour she'd been at the venue.[269] Gossip columnist Walter Winchell, a vague acquaintance of Baker, was at the club at the same time as Baker, when she accused him of silently standing by to watch as the injustice of being denied service occurred.[270] She argued Winchell should have done more to defend her, as well as her husband and actress Grace Kelly, both of whom had accompanied her to the club. Winchell was upset and insulted by Baker's accusation and talked to contacts about digging up dirt on Baker.[271] In addition, Winchell went on the offensive and started to spend more time with black Americans (e.g. Sugar Ray Robinson), as he considered himself a political progressive, though Winchell had embraced McCarthyism.[272]

Winchell then attempted to discredit Baker. He found quotes from the 1930s in which Baker claimed Mussolini was a friend to blacks, and a separate quote in which she stated blacks in Harlem were the victims of Jews.[273] He then claimed she held communist sympathies. His political connections may have played a role in the cancellation of Baker's work visa, which she then needed to stay in America, since she had become a French citizen.[274] She was therefore required to leave America, and subsequently cancel

[268] Alan Royle, "Josephine Baker 'the Black Venus'." *Historian Alan Royle, Film Star Facts*, 1 Jan. 2016, filmstarfacts.com/2016/01/01/josephine-baker-the-black-venus/.
[269] Royle, "Josephine Baker 'the Black Venus'."
[270] Royle, "Josephine Baker 'the Black Venus'."
[271] Ibid.
[272] Ciaran Conliffe, "Josephine Baker: Superstar, War Hero and Activist." *HeadStuff*, 5 Sept. 2016, www.headstuff.org/culture/history/josephine-baker-superstar-war-hero-and-activist/.
[273] Conliffe, "Josephine Baker: Superstar, War Hero and Activist."
[274] Conliffe, "Josephine Baker: Superstar, War Hero and Activist."

all scheduled performances, and she was not permitted to return to the US for nearly one decade.[275] Baker in response to Winchell filed a $40,000 lawsuit that was eventually dismissed.[276] For her part, Baker did visit Cuba and Yugoslavia during the 1960s, but these trips should not be viewed as Baker's embrace of communism. Rather, Baker was attempting to embrace those countries that promoted racial equality and discuss ways to achieve that very aim with her counterparts from around the globe.[277]

4.5 Black Feminist Cosmopolitan Artists

In my estimation, hooks' inquiry into the arts, aesthetics, and politics begins with developing critical consciousness, wellness, and a vision of prosperity. She writes

> We need to theorize the meaning of beauty in our lives so that we can educate for critical consciousness, talking through the issues: how we acquire and spend money, how we feel about beauty, what the place of beauty is in our lives when we lack material privilege and even basic resources for living, the meaning and significance of luxury, and the politics of envy.[278]

From a place of wonder but also of desire, hooks attempt to understand competing forces, namely the aesthetic, the socio-political, and the economic. This driving motivation of wonder on the one hand and desire on the other, is behind hooks' theorizing about art, the black artist and their lived experiences in America, and the role of the black artist living in a white supremacist capitalist patriarchal society. If we value beauty and the arts in our lives, but at the same time must contend with systematic oppression, degradation, obstruction, and marginalization, particularly as artists, it becomes necessary to adjust our expectations and determine how we can best live, and not just survive, but to thrive.

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[275] Conliffe, "Josephine Baker: Superstar, War Hero and Activist."
[276] Conliffe, "Josephine Baker: Superstar, War Hero and Activist."
[277]Conliffe, "Josephine Baker: Superstar, War Hero and Activist."
[278] bell hooks, *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics* (New York: The New York Press, 1995).

A study on black aesthetics, self-recovery, and political action is warranted to understand better black identity development, flourishing, and transformation. In the next section of the chapter, I will examine the lives and artistry of exceptional black females, some of whom receive little to no recognition in the canon of successful black American females. In doing so, my goal is to showcase not only their virtuosity, but also their determination toward hard-earned self-recovery, and continued love for and commitment to the promise of America from a cosmopolitan context.

Elizabeth Catlett: Beauty, Resistance, and Exile in Mexico:

Elizabeth Catlett (1915-2012) was a renowned sculptor, printmaker, and activist. Catlett was born and raised in Washington, D.C., and later lived in various places in the U.S. before she permanently moved to Mexico in 1946. Although raised middle class, from a young age, Catlett was a socially conscious, engaged activist, concerned with social justice issues and matters affecting blacks of all socio-economic standing caused by systemic racism, oppression, and discrimination.[279] As a teenager, she took part in an anti-lynching protest in D.C., despite her family members' objections.[280] These concerns for social justice followed her, as she took these up as themes related to black liberation during her career as an artist.

After Catlett was denied entry into Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburg, despite having received praise for her work during a week-long entrance examination, she opted to attend Howard University, from which she graduated cum laude in 1935

[279] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 15.
[280] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 15.

with a BS in Art.[281] At Howard, she studied design, painting, printmaking (largely linocuts), and life drawing, primarily with teachers Lois Mailou Jones, James Porter, James Herring, and James Wells.[282] From Catlett's professors Porter and Wells, both of whom arranged for her to participate in Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), she became aware of the work of Mexican muralists.[283] Catlett pursued an MFA at the University at Iowa, studying modernist sculpture technique with Henry Stinson, and drawing and painting with Grant Wood. As a black student attending a segregated university, she lived at an off campus boarding house and, with her family's support, largely funded her own education by working in the university's cafeteria.

In 1940, after having graduated with her MFA, Catlett embarked upon her professional career. To financially support herself, she taught art at Dillard University in New Orleans.[284] Later, she taught adult education classes at the George Washington Carver School in Harlem. She also continued to develop and refine her technique through informal education and training. During her summers, she took ceramics at the Art Institute of Chicago, as well as lithography at the South Side Community Art Center.[285] It was in Chicago, where she met and later married her first husband in 1941, the painter and muralist Charles White. Together, the two developed a strong social network within black artists' circles, notably including artist and writer intellectuals W.E.B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Bennet, Jacob Lawrence, Paul Robeson, Aaron Douglas, and Ralph Ellison.

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[281] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 19.
[282] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 18-19.
[283] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 16.
[284] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 24.
[285] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 26.

In 1946, Catlett was awarded the prestigious Julius Rosenwald Fund.[286] With the financial support from this award, she and her husband traveled to Mexico, where both engaged in mural- and printmaking. However, not long after they arrived in Mexico, she and White decided to divorce. Catlett continued her work in Mexico while on fellowship.

Catlett studied with the Taller de Grafica Popular, a workshop group dedicated to education and producing prints that promoted left-wing social causes.[287] In 1947, Catlett married her second husband, Francisco Mora, a printmaker and muralist, with whom she eventually raised three sons. One year later, she began her studies at the Escuela Nacional de Pintura, Escultura y Grabado "La Esmeralda" to study wood sculpture with Jose Ruiz and ceramic sculpture with Francisco Zuniga.[288] However, she also continued her work with the Taller until 1966. In 1958, she became the first female professor of sculpture and head of the sculpture department at the National Automous University of Mexico's School of Fine Arts in Mexico City.[289]

Notably, she had ties to the Communist Party, which threatened her American citizenship.[290] Her political activities, including participation in a railroad strike that led to her arrest, caused her to come under the surveillance of the local American embassy.[291] Her decision to later declare Mexican citizenship led to the forfeiture of her American citizenship.[292] Henceforth she was declared an ”undesirable alien," and was barred from

[286] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 47.
[287] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 131-2.
[288] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 132.
[289] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 129-130.
[290] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 130.
[291] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 130.
[292] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 130.

entering the United States for more than a decade.[293] She was even denied permission from visiting her ailing mother before the latter's death.[294]

The details of the revocation of her American citizenship are important, as the narrative advanced by notable voices in the art world conflict with Catlett's personal account of the experience. Some have claimed Catlett surrendered her American citizenship. However, Catlett maintained she declared herself a Mexican citizen in accordance with her growing identification with Mexican causes and politics.[295] Throughout her life, she maintained she was not rejecting America, American identity, or American-ness, per se. Rather, she was exercising guaranteed rights extended to all American citizens. However, by relocating to another country during the Cold War, and directly criticizing American social policy, Catlett was perceived a threat.

As an exiled expatriate, Catlett spent her time applying for and securing funds to travel throughout Great Britain and Europe. She visited art schools throughout Europe and Great Britain and exhibited her work. She also continued to work as a professor in Mexico City until her retirement in 1975.[296] Her work, from the 1940s when she began her career, until the time of her death in 2012, engaged social and historical matters of conscience affecting black Americans and Mexican peoples alike. Whether in two-dimensional print or in three-dimensional form, Catlett's artistry caught the attention of many admirers, and she gained a world-wide following that enabled her to express hopes, frustrations, and racial pride.

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[293] Ibid.
[294] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 130.
[295] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 130.
[296] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 129.

Catlett's "In Harriet Tubman I helped hundreds to freedom," is from *The Negro Woman*, 1946-47, series. This linocut is created in black and white, printed in 1989 on ink and graphite on paper. The subject is Harriet Tubman, the former black American female slave, born in 1822 and died in 1913. Tubman is a famous former slave, who worked the underground railroad in which she helped black American slaves escape slavery in the south and find refuge and resettlement in the north, whether in the United States or in Canada. In this linocut, Catlett depicts a hero in the midst of a historical act of helping former slaves find their way toward freedom.

Tubman is the clear subject of the work, as she is the most prominent figure of the cut, depicted in the foreground, occupying the most physical space of all other humans in the work. Furthermore, Catlett has assigned a leadership role to Tubman, as she in fact occupied in real life. Tubman's back is turned to the viewer and her right arm is extended in a commanding gesture, as if directing weary journeyers toward freedom. Yet, her face looks over her shoulder, and out to viewers rather than in the direction to which her arm points. Tubman's gaze toward the audience is in essence recognition of the fact that there are witnesses to this historical moment.

Upon viewing her outstretched arm, it becomes apparent that Catlett has chosen to highlight both Tubman's masculine and feminine features, thus blurring the line between the two. Tubman wears a head covering, as well as a long, loose skirt, with multiple folds. One gets the sense that the skirt is a basic, working woman's skirt, suited for a worker in the fields. It is not decorative with patterns, or lace, or held up with a large hoop to conceal her shape, as would be the case for a lady. Rather, the viewer sees the

way the skirt folds fall over each leg, outlining its shape, as Tubman lunges forward in a commanding stance.

Tubman is feminine in dress, and masculine in her stance, thus embodying both features. Catlett indicates Tubman's musculature, visible along her lower and upper arms, as Tubman's sleeves are rolled up. Catlett could have chosen to depict Tubman wearing long sleeves, to cover up her arms, as another woman closest to the foreground, carrying an infant child, wore long sleeves. The only other figure closest to having slightly rolled up sleeves is the male walking beside her, who's cuffs are rolled back mid-forearm. Instead, Catlett chose to emphasize and make visible two facts about Tubman as an historical figure: 1) her work ethic as someone who literally rolled up her sleeves to do the work along fugitive slave routes, and 2) her physical strength and endurance as a result of years of labor as a slave and fugitive, on the run and working on behalf of other escaped former slaves. Catlett is challenging the imagination of what traditionally constitutes feminine and masculine by blending the two, as artists have long done, from the Renaissance on (e.g. Michelangelo, Caravaggio, and others). Catlett does so here in the context of the black female former slave and resistance heroine.

Catlett's *Cosechadora de algodón,* or Sharecropper, 1950s (before 1952) is also a linocut. Catlett initially named the piece after the Spanish title, which translates as "harvesters of cotton" in English.[297] Sharecropping was a wide-spread occupation black American former slaves took up throughout the southern United States following emancipation well into the 1940s and 50s. Although sharecroppers were part of the rural poor population, Catlett has said her goal was to "present black people in their beauty and

[297] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 104.

dignity for ourselves and others to understand and enjoy."[298] Catlett's portrait of an anonymous sharecropper attempts to depict a dignified person, regardless of station in life. Catlett provides great detail of this sharecropper. The multiple lines running across her face can be interpreted as signs of physical wear, stress, and age from living a life of labor.

Numerous works Catlett created during the late 1960s and early 1970s contain features of her engagement with the Civil Rights movement and Black Power Movement, even from afar. Relevant themes include the call for radical self-redefinition, racial unity, and resilience. In *Negro es bello* I, a lithograph produced in 1968, one finds the promotion of a black aesthetic characteristics of the Black Arts Movement. Visible in the print is the face of a black male child in profile view. Catlett features, even in profile view, a pronounced nose and lips, and kinky hair. This work, which conforms to the tradition of black pride, attempts to redefine black as something more than "other," "negative," "indelicate," or "unworthy." Rather, black is in the process of undergoing redefinition, as it is reconceptualized to convey "good," "agreeable," and even "attractive."[299] This aesthetic redefinition is fitting for the cultural age.

Linked with the black liberation movement, Catlett's mahogany sculpture *Black Unity*, from 1968, commemorates the black power salute American Olympic athletes John Carlos and Tommie Smith gave during a medal ceremony of the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City.[300] The Black Power salute given on an international platform was a powerful gesture and statement that evoked Black Nationalist ideals. The three-

[298] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 136-7.
[299] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 135.
[300] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 146.

dimensional solid block consists of two African faces on one side, and a balled-up fist on the other side. The stylized faces, in line with Afri-Cobra (African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists) aesthetics, echo the sources of West and Central African masks, thus reminiscent of a Pan-African perspective.[301] The balled-up fist, though directly recalling Black Power, had as its source, according to Catlett, the Cuban poet and revolutionary Jose Marti's poem about the strength of individuals unified in solidarity.[302]

Catlett's *Political Prisoner*, 1971 is a polychromed cedar standing sculpture. Produced during the era of the Black Power Movement and affiliated strongly with "the aesthetic and spiritual sister" the Black Arts Movement,[303] Catlett's *Political Prisoner* is remarkable from political and aesthetic standpoints. From a political standpoint, the sculpture echoed the Black Nationalist sentiments of resistance, self-determination, and separatism.[304] This solitary figure is a black female, as evidenced by her perfectly rounded pair of breasts, child-bearing hips, and what appears to be a dress, or merely a cloth, covering her groin area. Significantly, this work was completed in 1971, during which time Dr. Angela Davis was incarcerated in the U.S. Starting in 1969, Catlett became involved in the international movement to free the Black Nationalist activist Angela Davis.[305] With other black women living in Mexico City, Catlett organized the Comite Mexicano Provisional de Solidaridad con Angela Davis, and produced multilingual leaflets and posters to publicize this cause.[306] The patterning of her dress is red, black, and green in large square blocks. These Pan-African flag colors tie into the

[301] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 144.
[302] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 146.
[303] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 134.
[304] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 134.
[305] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 136.
[306] Ibid.

aesthetic significance of the work, which promoted the ideals of Afri-Cobra.[307] The use of saturated colors, and the accessible form and style of the work added to the Afri-Cobra aesthetic.[308]

Catlett's artist statement neatly summarizes her ethical and cultural commitments. She states, "I am black, a woman, a sculptor, and a printmaker. I am also married, the mother of three sons, and the grandmother of five little girls [now seven girls and one boy] ...[I] was born in the United States and have lived in Mexico since 1946. I believe that all of these states of being have influenced my work and made it what you see today."[309] Indeed, Catlett strongly identifies with causes affecting the lives of black people in general, and black females in particular. But she is clearly a mother focused on her children, to which her numerous mother and child statues attest. Less obvious from this statement is her commitment to freedom and racial equality. To gain a stronger sense of Catlett's political and aesthetic commitments, one must examine her artistic output.

Barbara Chase-Riboud: The Africana Renaissance Artist

Barbara DeWayne Chase (1939-) is a multi-talented minimalist sculptor, and award-winning novelist and poet. Chase-Riboud was born in 1939 in Philadelphia, where she was raised and ultimately completed her college degree. She was the only child of a medical assistant mother and a building contractor father.[310] Chase-Riboud's parents were committed to supporting her artistic endeavors.

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[307] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 135.
[308] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 135.
[309] Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, 3.
[310] Barbara Chase-Riboud, *Everytime a Knot is Undone, a God is Released: Collected and New Poems, 1974-201*1 (New York and Oakland: Seven Stories Press, 2014).

Her love for the arts was evident from an early age. At the age of 8, she won her first prize for art she had produced.[311] Also at the age of 8, she entered the Fleisher Art Memorial School, where she achieved success in the literary arts.[312] At the age of 12, she wrote the poem "Autumn Leaves." Unfortunately, she was suspended from the school after she was falsely accused of plagiarizing the poem.[313] This unfortunate incident led to Chase-Riboud's mother's decision to pull her out of school, and to educate her at home. Chase-Riboud, then, was homeschooled until she began the Philadelphia High School for Girls in 1948.[314]

As a 15-year old, Chase-Riboud achieved early success as a visual artist. She carved a woodcut and sold it to the Museum of Modern Art.[315] Seventeen magazine published an article featuring the woodcut print.[316] She graduated in 1952 summa cum laude. Her text, "Of Understanding" was read at graduation.[317] She then went on to train at the Philadelphia Museum School of Art, also known as the The University of the Arts. She later entered the The Tyler School of Art at Temple University in Philadelphia and earned her degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1956. Also, in 1956, the Temple University yearbook *Templar* published images of her fourteen woodcuts.[318]

In 1956, Chase-Riboud was awarded the John Hay Whitney Fellowship to study at the American Academy of Rome for twelve months.[319] In Italy, she began working on

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[311] Chase-Riboud, *Everytime a Knot is Undone, a God is Released*
[312] Ginette Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" *Encyclopedia of African American Women Writers, Vol. 1*, ed. Yolanda Williams Page, 76-78. Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 2007), 76.
[313] Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 76.
[314] Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 76.
[315] Chase-Riboud, *Everytime a Knot is Undone, a God is Released.*
[316] Chase-Riboud, *Everytime a Knot is Undone, a God is Released.*
[317] Chase-Riboud, *Everytime a Knot is Undone, a God is Released.*
[318] Chase-Riboud, *Everytime a Knot is Undone, a God is Released.*
[319] Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 76.

her first direct wax-casting sculptures. During her time there, she created her first bronze sculptures and exhibited them. Also during her time in Italy, she conversed with other black American expatriates, and even met the famous author Ralph Ellison at the American Academy.[320] It was during her time abroad that she traveled to Egypt and learned about non-Western art, which became an inspiration to her design aesthetic throughout her career.[321] After spending a year abroad, she returned to the U.S. and in 1959 began graduate school at Yale University in the architecture program.[322] She received her masters of fine arts in 1960 from the School of Design and Architecture.

After her graduation from Yale, Chase moved to London and then settled in Paris, France. She married French travel photographer Marc Riboud, with whom she would eventually raise two sons. In Paris, she established a studio at 48 rue Blomet, which was a famous street in the 1920s known for Le Bal Negre (at 33 rue Blomet), where four decades earlier Josephine Baker regularly performed.[323] As Chase-Riboud's husband worked as a travel photographer, Chase-Riboud accompanied him to attend photoshoots around the world.[324] She was the first American female to visit the People's Republic of China after its revolution in 1965.[325] Together, she and her husband also traveled to Russia, India, Greece, and North Africa.[326]

Chase-Riboud became associated with Pan-African artistic circles through her overseas trips and by participating in art exhibitions. In April 1966, she participated in the First World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, Senegal, where she took part in the

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320 Chase-Riboud, *Everytime a Knot is Undone, a God is Released.*
321 Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 76.
322 Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 76.
323 Chase-Riboud, *Everytime a Knot is Undone, a God is Released.*
324 Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 76.
325 Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 76.
326 Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 76.

exhibition "Ten Negro Artists from the United States."[327] There, she displayed two bronze figures, executed in an abstract style, making full use of organic shapes and contrasting materials.[328] In 1969, participated in the Pan-African Festival of Algeria.[329] Of her time in Algeria, she stated "I found myself there...with all the freedom fighters and liberation groups--the Algerians, the South Africans, the Black Panthers from America. A kind of historical current brought all of these people together in a context that was not only political but artistic."[330] Clearly inspired by the gathering, Chase-Riboud shortly thereafter began work on her *Malcolm X series*, 1969-70, which was initially exhibited at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

The *Malcolm X series* constitutes a study in contrasts, taking full advantage of modern sculpting materials. With these monumental sculptures, Chase-Riboud played materials against each other, using metals and fibers. However, she exchanged the functions of each material by using braided, knotted, wrapped fibers, soft wool, and silk fibers to support bronze and steel. In doing so, Chase-Riboud makes fibers become hard, and metals almost appear soft.[331] This play of opposites characterizes her modern design aesthetic. The style and use of materials are also reminiscent of some West African dance masks that combine various materials, whether these include wood, raffia, leather, hemp, metals, or feathers.[332] Her occupation became playing with different forms and materials to create lyrical compositions that nonetheless contain striking contrasts.

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[327] Chase-Riboud, *Everytime a Knot is Undone, a God is Released*.
[328] Jessie Carney Smith, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" *Notable Black American Women, Book II*, ed. Jessie Carney Smith, 177-180 (Detroit and London: Gale Research Inc., 1992), 177.
[329] Smith, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 178.
[330] Smith, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 178.
[331] Smith, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 178.
[332] Smith, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 178.

In addition to her visual art, Chase-Riboud has won prizes and awards for her poetry and fiction writing. In addition, she was awarded the Chevalier of Arts and Letters by the French government.[333] She successfully sued the movie company DreamWorks SKG for 10 million dollars for copyright infringement of her novel *Echo of Lions*.[334] Her claim was the screenplay for Steven Spielberg's film *Amistad* plagiarized her novel.[335] She filed a second lawsuit in France, and settled out of court for an undisclosed amount.[336]

Chase-Riboud's novel *Echo of Lions* (1989), centered on the Amistad slave ship mutiny, received praise from a variety of audience types, from accomplished writers to book critics. The novelist Alex Haley, known for his masterpieces *The Autobiography of Malcolm X (1965)* and *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* (1976), called the work a "brilliant dramatization of the most gripping, significant and epic saga that a century of slave ships ever produced."[337] Historian Gary B. Nash wrote a review of the book for the L.A. Times, and similarly praised the author's vivid descriptions of enslavement. Nash wrote, "Historians have written shelves of books on the slave trade, which brought about the largest forced migration in history, but they have never adequately captured, as this skilled novelist has done, the terror and trauma of the enslavement experience."[338]

Her first major work was *Sally Hemings: A Novel* (1979). The book won the Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize for best historical novel.[339] Chase-Riboud's book was praised for

[333] Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 77.
[334] Michael Peil, "Echo of Lions, by Barbara Chase-Riboud." *Legal Information Institute*, Cornell Law School, 29 Jan. 1998, www.law.cornell.edu/background/amistad/echo-of-lions.html.
[335] Peil, "Echo of Lions, by Barbara Chase-Riboud."
[336] Peil, "Echo of Lions, by Barbara Chase-Riboud."
[337] Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 77.
[338] Gary B. Nash, "Justice Sails on the Amistad Slave Ship: Echo of Lions by Barbara Chase-Riboud." *Los Angeles Times*, 18 June 1989. https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1989-06-18-bk-3559-story.html
[339] Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 77.

the breadth of its historical research on the lives of Africans in America.[340] In it, Chase-Riboud attempted to capture a complicated love story between a president and his slave, with whom he shared six children. An example of the complex relationship between Hemings and Jefferson is revealed in the narrator's third-person assessment of the title character Hemings. Chase-Riboud writes, "She had reached out beyond her triple bondage. She had clung stubbornly to the only thing she had ever found of her own in life, and love had been more real to her than slavehood. And she had survived both. This was the truth of her life."[341] The picture Chase-Riboud creates is one that holds romantic love as the highest attainment, even above freedom. This idea is certainly a controversial, if not threatening, one.

Twenty years after the book's publication, a reporter asked Chase-Riboud why historians haven't widely braced her perspective. Chase-Riboud's response is insightful. She replied to the question by stating,

> I don't think it's because everyone has amnesia. And I don't think it's because I live outside the country. There is a political reason my point of view has been ignored. I have always posited the Hemings-Jefferson relationship in a complex, ambiguous way. It's easy to fall back on stereotypes and see her as the powerless slave and him as the exploiter. But the image I projected is not this black and white. She is neither rape victim nor Angela Davis, and Jefferson isn't hero or villain. Everything about their story is a shade of gray. And it's not just whites who are uncomfortable with this picture, but blacks as well.[342]

Chase-Riboud is clearly at home with the in-between space she occupies as, what I am calling, an insider-outsider. By this, I mean she reveals sacred insights into America's character and troubled history regarding race relations, as any insider would do. But she

[340] Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 77.
[341] Barbara Chase-Riboud, *Sally Hemings: A Novel* (New York: Viking Press, 1979), 343.
[342] Lisa Jones, "A Most Dangerous Woman "*The Village Voice*, 3-9 Feb. 1999. https://www.villagevoice.com/1999/02/02/a-most-dangerous-woman/

is also an outsider, as a black woman and expatriate living abroad, but who brings to her analysis a nuanced perspective on intercultural relations in the country and across the globe. This is no easy space to occupy, though she firmly and successfully exists within it.

Also, during this interview twenty years after the novel's first publication, Chase-Riboud looked back on the novel's historical and contemporary significance. She stated,

> The story of Jefferson and Hemings embodies the love-hate relationship that exists between white and black Americans, and this intimate and almost Shakespearean interaction began with the invention of America itself. If we don't come to terms with this relationship, we can't come to terms with anything. It's the amalgam Hemings and Jefferson represent that upsets old-guard historians so much. They're delighted there's something called "black history" because it gets them off the hook. But the story of whites and blacks in America is not two separate histories, but intimately entwined, and Hemings and Jefferson symbolize this on every level.[343]

Again, Chase-Riboud occupies a liminal space of critique, of her native country and its hypocrisies, but as a writer of historical fiction, attempting to bring light to a perspective typically undervalued and not considered. As Spencer and Miranda have asserted, Chase-Riboud is unafraid of contradiction, conflict, and multiplicity, and her provocative work is as challenging as it is inspiring.[344] Furthermore, Chase-Riboud herself has stated, "If you have to have acceptance...then you shouldn't be an artist. There is no such thing as an 'acceptable artist.'"[345] Chase-Riboud admonishes those who abandon themselves for the acceptance of others and remains committed to her authenticity and vision as an artist.

In 1998, Chase-Riboud created an 18-feet tall bronze memorial sculpture in New York City, called *Africa Rising*. This work is situated at the African burial ground in New

[343] Jones, "A Most Dangerous Woman.
[344] Suzette A. Spencer and Carlos A. Miranda. "Abrading Boundaries: Reconsidering Barbara Chase-Riboud's Sculpture, Fiction, and Poetry." *Callaloo* v.32, no. 3 (2009): 711-716; 711.
[345] Ibid.

York City, on which the Ted Weiss Federal Building currently stands. Africa Rising is inspired by the Nike winged statue from antiquity, as well as the memory of Sara "Saartjie" Baartman, the so-called Hottentot Venus.[346] Chase-Riboud notes she was inspired by a desire to restore humanity and dignity to this infamous figure, whose nearly nude body was featured in front of European audiences due to the large size of her buttocks.[347] Her body, displayed in a way that was similar to a circus animal when she was alive, was preserved in jars after her death and displayed as part of a scientific collection by the naturalist George Cuvier at Musée de l'Homme in Paris.[348] There, her body parts were displayed to support racist pseudo-scientific discourse about black bodies.[349] Chase-Riboud's depiction of Baartman not only undermines the historically racist representation of this woman, but it rehabilitates her image, as a phoenix rising from the ashes.

By celebrating Sara Baartman as the winged goddess *Africa Rising*, Chase-Riboud is commemorating this figure as resilient and powerful. Not surprisingly, *Africa Rising* at the African Burial Ground was awarded the Best Public Arts Design Award for artworks produced between 1993 and 1998.[350] Chase-Riboud further commemorated Baartman when she published *Hottentot Venus: A Novel*. In 2004, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association named the book "Best Fiction Book of 2004."[351] Both

[346] Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 77.
[347] https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/sara-saartjie-baartman
[348] "Sara 'Saartjie' Baartman." *South African History Online: Towards a People's History*, 3 Sept. 2019, www.sahistory.org.za/people/sara-saartjie-baartman.
[349] Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, revised and expanded. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1996).
[350] Spencer and Miranda. "Abrading Boundaries: Reconsidering Barbara Chase-Riboud's Sculpture, Fiction, and Poetry." *Callaloo* v.32, no. 3 (2009): 711-716; 711.
[351] Curry, "Barbara Chase-Riboud" 77.

a sculptor and writer, Chase-Riboud has made clear that her work as a writer is just as important as her work as a visual artist.[352]

4.6 Black Feminist Cosmopolitan Performers

At first glance, the connection between the two singer/musician/performers Adelaide Hall (1901-1993) and Nina Simone (1933-2003) may not appear to be obvious. Besides their racial identities, as both were black American women born and raised in the United States, and their professions, as both were singer/musician/performers, the link between the two is not immediately apparent. Furthermore, a generation sets apart Hall and Simone, as Hall was a major name and performer during the heyday of the Harlem Renaissance, whereas Simone was a major name and performer during the time of the Black Arts Movement. Additionally, upon closer examination of each artist's life biography, it is clear whereas Simone was a politically active member of the Civil Rights movement, and in fact a proponent of violence if necessary, Hall's commitment to civil rights is less overt.

By analyzing their vocal and musical performances, I argue each performer, Hall and Simone, actively narratives her story, contributes to her own becoming, and shapes history in ways unforeseen. Each musician found sources of strength in their own creativity, artistry, and musical output, particularly overseas in Europe and outside of the United States. Each individually found her poetic expressions and articulated new life narratives through her musical work and by doing so asserted her freedom.

[352] Sarah McKee, "Barbara Chase-Riboud (1939-)." *Contemporary African American Novelists: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook* ed. Emmanuel S. Nelson, 82-87. (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1999).

Adelaide Hall: New York-born Star of Harlem and London

Today, Adelaide Louise Hall (1901-1993) is a little-known jazz virtuoso. However, during her time, she was best known for her musical collaborations with Duke Ellington at the Cotton Club during the Harlem Renaissance. Hall was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1901, and died in London, UK in 1993 after a long career in the entertainment industry. She made her start in black vaudeville and black Broadway, most notably in the *Chocolate Kiddies* Tour of 1925 and *Blackbirds* of 1928. Also notable is her connection to Duke Ellington and his Orchestra, as he had a residency at the Cotton Club in Harlem.

Although Hall began her career in the U.S., she and her husband/manager, Trinidadian-British Bertram Hicks, promoted her abroad, first in Paris and in London, where there were more performance opportunities, less social restrictions, and more money to be made. In addition, a mysterious house fire in 1938 was a major catalyst for her to permanently settle abroad, first in Paris and later in London. Her biographer notes she had previously endured racist attacks on her property leading up to the fire.[353]

Adelaide Hall's song "Creole Love Call," from 1927 is a jazz standard, consisting of a variation on a theme, an African call and response, and an emergent feminist, empowering voice. The piece consists of instruments and Hall's vocals, improvising melodies and rhythms in response to Duke Ellington's orchestra. The orchestra plays at a slow, intentional pace that is lingering. To create a smooth and uninterrupted pace that is slow, Ellington employed the legato technique of slurring multiple notes together. When employed on string instruments, the musician's plays multiple musical notes in one bow

[353] Williams, *Underneath a Harlem Moon.*

movement, whether up or down, without changing directions. In doing so, the musician slurs musical notes together. Similarly, when employed on wind instruments, the musician uses breath and tongue to articulate a single set of musical notes, rather than individually articulating each note. This technique creates the mood desire, and one that is evocative of romance, slowly building over the course of the piece.

As noted, Ellington's "Creole Love Call" is a variation on a theme repeated throughout the course of the piece, growing with intensity until towards the end when literal musical climax is reached. One hears the clarinet, trumpet, tenor saxophone, piano, alto saxophone, jazz guitar, trombone, piano, and the female vocalist (Hall) as the primary participants of this piece arranged in an African-styled call and response tradition. The wood winds start off with phrasing, as if collectively representing birds calling out into the wild to their fellow mate. In response, Hall, as if mimicking the sound of the instruments, using wordless phrases, just mere sounds stringed together. Yet, as a fellow bird, she responds in a soft, echoing high-pitched tone. Her voice beckons the caller to come forth. In response to her call, the original caller then replies to her, only for her to respond again. The next call changes slightly in key, and in response she as vocalist adjusts to the key change. Also evident is the intensity of her voice, as the vibrations of it increase.

The call and response duality harnesses a new energy that goes beyond traditional categories of meaning attributed to the players involved in the performance, that is male-female, hard-soft, dominant-submissive, and ultimately all categories collapse into fluidity. In the middle of the song, different players of the orchestra take turns doing solos, for example the trumpet and the clarinet. When the woodwinds take lead, the brass

section responds. In other words, the call and the response echoes but takes on a new form. It is similar to Hall's female voice that returns, embodying both soft and hard characteristics, masculine and feminine. The woodwind section responds to her vocal scatting, and at the final few bars the brass section joins in on the final notes, as do the cymbals, signaling the end of the piece. These opposing spheres of the band and the vocalist play off, or with each other. In doing so, what has emerged is the embodiment of both dominant and submissive, sweet and rough, but ultimately fluid identity.

Brilliant as this was, between Hall and the orchestra, and subsequently the wind and brass sections engaged in back and forth sensual dialogue, this energy inevitably was to erupt into a new creation, or new understanding. Beyond vocalist and orchestra, wind and brass, female and male, this duality became insufficient for containing the very identities involved in the performance. Interestingly enough, such a phenomenon played out in music. Ellington, a man of his time, socialized as he was, arranged the piece and was partially responsible for composing it. Yet, she empowered his black Creole to become headstrong feminist leading lover by the end of the piece, beckoning her lover. She defies simple categorization of her day and was empowered through her vocals to be both dominant and submissive when she wanted to be, following and taking the lead at will, and as she played back and forth with the musicians in the orchestra.

In "Baby," from Lew Lewis's Blackbirds of 1928, Hall established the theme of love, and its humanizing aspects. Hall wants, and desires romance. A playful, swinging tune, sung in a high pitch. It is a jazz standard from the black Broadway musical. It is delicate and soft sounding in voice, as if not clearly enunciating all words sung. In fact, one can easily get lost in the sound of the backing instruments. The piece is also light in

theme, matching the playful, and swing-style of music. She's not asking for a long-term commitment, but perhaps a short-term love affair. She is in control. She is an independent woman, who desires a heartfelt experience, bonding through romance with a partner.

On the other hand, in "You're Blasé" from 1939, Hall is perceptive in calling out a romantic partner as missing the mark, and no longer worth her efforts or energy. This a jazz standard represents a critique of a certain type of man who is troublesome. Hall, as independent woman, tells a man he fails to measure up. She sings "no enthusiasm, you're tired and uninspired."[354] This man lacks interest, but also basic energy. Elsewhere, she sings at the chorus "you sleep, the sun is shining, you wake, it's time for dining. There's nothing new for you to do."[355] She is definitively calling this man a bum. He's sleeping all day, which one can presume he's been up and active all night. But he's also uninteresting. He's been doing the same activities, over and over again. This is her warning to audiences: leave this man to his own devices. And to women? You don't need this type in your lives. She's teaching us, using as an example her own negative experiences with this type. Significantly, this is the first of the songs Hall recorded abroad in London with the BBC, in 1939.

Hall's song "To Have You, To Hold You, To Love You Again" in the 1935 black and white film is a visual study in contrasts. From formal and contextual standpoints, the performance serves as a metaphor that highlights, reinforces, and perpetuates racial and class differences between black and white peoples in the United States context during this

[354] Lyrics are author's transcription.
[355] Lyrics are author's transcription.

time. I argue Hall engaged in an in between space reserved for her own identity development, ultimately independent of others' expectations.

The vocalist, Hall, who is the more prominent of the two, stands wearing a white diaphanous gown, contrasted with black tulle or nylon around her shoulders and knees, much like the fabric one sees a ballerina wear. Her accompanying pianist, sitting behind her, is wearing a simple yet elegant tuxedo and bowtie, dressed in black with the exception of his dress shirt. Again, the contrast is stark between Hall, standing center stage, dressed in a white dress, and her pianist, seated behind her, and wearing black, seated at the piano, which also is black. These color choices create an effect and contribute to the dramatic appeal the performance and the mood of the song. These choices were intentional, and the contrasts between black and white contribute to larger socio-political and historical meaning.

Compositionally, the placement of both singer and accompanying pianist are arranged against the starkness of a white wall that is interrupted by the contrast of the musical staff. The staff consists of five horizontal, parallel black lines, a black treble clef, and black musical notes. Furthermore, when one looks closely at the black musical notes on the white wall, one finds the musical notes themselves are adorned with blackface. This racial parody, created by white performers who wore black makeup, often black shoeshine, outlined oversized lips, and enlarge circles around their eyes to create a bulging effect, exaggerated the physical appearances, behaviors, and attitudes of blacks in minstrel shows. Blacks, too, participated and performed in such shows. Or, they were expected to perform in the spaces where minstrel acts were the norm but creatively

subverted, defied, or engaged with subtlety in such environments. I argue that Hall did the latter, walking a fine line between near-parody and legitimate love song.

As a serious love song, Hall sings in a manner that alternates between hopeful dreamer and determined lover. In all, the impression is she is lovesick. She achieves these emotional effects through dramatic appeals in her performance. She tilts her head and closes her eyes to smile while singing then opens her eyes, as if waking from a hopeful dream. She folds her hands together in supplication, and later clenches her fists while gazing up in the air, as if praying to the heavens. She also uses her hands in seductive ways, with one hand on her chest, just over the heart, and another rubbing her thigh, which highlights both her desire as lover, and her lovesickness. She holds a handkerchief in her hand, but never to dot her eyes from tears. Rather the effect created is that she could be on the verge of tears from the slight melancholy in the tone of her voice. To further emphasize the somber attitude underlying her performance, her voice trembles at points, as if to imitate the sound of crying, or perhaps less strong a plea of desperation. Her skillfulness as performer indicates her seriousness of purpose.

But just as audiences have become convinced that the song is expressly, slow, melancholic, and serious in tone and resolutely focused on reclaiming one's lost love, the mood of the piece slowly shifts into a quick, upbeat tempo. There is then suddenly a powerful burst of energy that follows Hall climbing down the elevated stage and onto the lowered platform, as she bursts into an exuberate tap dance reminiscent of her early black vaudeville and then more recent black Broadway days. Notwithstanding the fact that she performs the tap dance portion of the song in high heels, which requires enormous talent and skill, the contrast between serious love song and energetic tap dance underscores the

need for audiences to not take too seriously the black female performer, particularly on the subject of love, longing and heartfelt emotions. This quick burst of energy tap dancing and smiling widely in the middle of the song, in and of itself could signify happiness at the thought of the vocalist's dreams having come true: her lover has returned and she's over the moon about the prospect. Read against the backdrop of minstrel imagery, however, the reading must contextualize the socio-political and historical significance of blackface and black vaudeville.

If one recalls black vaudeville performance, one recognizes bodily movements that consist of exaggerated movements of the arms and legs, and facial expressions. Yet, she does so in a ball gown and in high heels. In other words, she does so on her own terms. At the end of the song, she returns to the style of the love song, as if the quick, energetic tap dance interlude had never happened. She ended the piece in the same manner she began, as calm, controlled breath, standing still and composed, having vacillated between these two traditions, of black vaudeville, borderline minstrelsy, and serious love song.

It is important to note that Hall's performance both plays up and engages aspects of minstrelsy without committing fully to the tradition. However, she also attempts to create a serious love song about desire, longing, and hope for a reunion. These two contrasting styles, found within the same song, are a testament to her creativity as an artist, as well as her resilience as a performer, negotiating the demands of her audience and the entertainment world, with her desire to be taken seriously as an artist and a musician.

In all, her performance was quite the feat, requiring her to exercise multiple talents at once. Her chief concern, signified by the length of time devoted to this effort, was to sing a serious love song, and garner sympathy for her cause of lovesickness. Secondary, almost an afterthought, was to satisfy the expectation of white patrons and white audiences, which was to fulfill the white imagined stereotype of a black minstrel show. However, Hall only briefly engaged in this tradition, and did so on her own terms, as a sophisticated vocalist, who more than part way through her song broke with the mood, and entertained the audience in a brief, energetic tap dance and singing number, reminiscent of black vaudeville, which relied upon early minstrel tropes. However, in winding own the performance, she returned to the serious tone of the song, as if no tap dance number had even occurred. Although she could have sounded breathless from the tap number, her voice sounded no different from when it had sounded at the start of the song.

Hall continues the method of advice-giving to her audience in 1941 when she records the song, also from abroad, "Mississippi Mama." This somber-sounding tune is, oddly enough, a lemonade from lemons song. The song makes use of the church organ, piano, and jazz clarinet to accompany her vocals, all of which serve as a reminder of love in a sad state. The lyrics invoke colorism, female competition, and serve to remind listeners that relationships are not guaranteed to last but require hard work. Sung in a flat key, Hall wails "colored gals are yellow gals with eyes of blue, gonna steal your Mississippi man from you. Honey, whatcha crying for? There's Ol' Man River. Ain't cha done with taking? Can't cha be a giving? Many funny fellas, honey. Right or wrong.

You've just gotta string 'em along."[356] Hall informs listeners of the realities of the domestic relationships in the Mississippian context and attempts to prepare them for the inevitability that their partners will stray from them. Her solution was to find comfort in the company of another.

Hall continues to sing about the need to adjust to new cohabitation realities, problem-solving within the domestic relationship context, and the need to adjust to life expectations. But in the spirit of advice-giving, Hall nevertheless extols listeners to look after and obey their men, even if these men suffer from laziness and indulge in too much gin. "Fix him dinner, fix your face so spic and span. Try a little loving from your old sweet man."[357] Hall encourages listeners to obey their philandering husbands and make the best of their newfound situation, while having discreet fun on the side. One might imagine an alternative reading in which Hall abandons the man and pursues a different, independent life. Unfortunately, in the context of Mississippi and this particular song, such a reality would not likely lead to flourishing in the greater sense. Rather, it could potentially leave her abandoned. Staying in the domestic space could afford her the opportunity to negotiate her identity.

This in-between state in which Hall operated is where her artistry resides. It is here where her power to navigate social relations, between racial, class, and gender norms, that her work as an artist shine. It is within this third space that Hall could negotiate her identity, enjoy some freedom within constraints, and negotiate the challenging balancing act called of her. By operating within this liminal space reserved

[356] Lyrics are author's transcription.
[357] Lyrics are author's transcription.

for her own identity development, Hall reserves room for herself to grow as an individual, to attend to her own integrity as an artist and as a human being, and to potentially experience the effects of flourishing.

Nina Simone: From Classical Pianist to Blues Singer

Although born Eunice Waymon (1933-2003), she later became known by her stage name Nina Simone. Simone was born in 1933 in Tryon, North Carolina and died in Carry-le-Rouet, Bouches-du-Rhone, France in 2003. Simone was a child prodigy at playing piano, which she began playing during church, and was sponsored for private music lessons to work with a teacher during youth and teenage years. She studied at The Juilliard and later auditioned for entry into the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia but was denied entrance for what she believed was based on her race. As her dreams of becoming the first black female classical pianist were shattered, Simone worked in bars and clubs as a pianist and later a lounge singer to support her family. She later made an album and began touring, under the management of her then-husband, Andy Stroud. She booked many shows abroad, which became important for her later as her militancy during the Civil Rights movement increased, and her FBI file, and paranoia living in the United States, grew.[358]

Nina Simone's "Mississippi Goddam," performed on March 25, 1965 marks the end of The Selma-Montgomery March. The airport has shut down. Singer-entertainer-dancer Sammy Davis Jr., composer-conductor Leonard Bernstein, writer-novelist-essayist James Baldwin, actor-singer-activist Harry Belafonte, actor Anthony Perkins, and singer-

[358] Recorded interview with Nina Simone, featured in the Liz Garbus film "What Happened, Miss Simone?" 2015.

pianist-activist Nina Simone arrive. A show is given in front of 40,000 people. Nina Simone and her bandleader and lead guitarist, Al Schackman, perform the song that at this point is now two years old. Nina Simone sings, "Alabama's got me so upset. Selma's made me lose my rest."[359] The crowd cheers upon hearing the substitution of the city of "Selma" for the state of "Tennessee," as Nina was apt to substitute place names during live performances, in accordance with where the most recent injustice or atrocity had taken place, or had made recent headlines in the news.

"Ain't Got No, I Got Life," 1968 is another live performance, but not in the United States. Instead, the performance takes place abroad in London. The performance is slow, prodding, dramatic, and somewhat melancholy piece in which the first part of the medley begins with the lyrics of "Ain't Got No" from the Broadway musical "Hair." There is no money, no skirts, no class, no love, no faith, no culture, no schooling, no country, no water, no air, no smokes, no money, no wine, no God, no mother or no father. The subject has been abandoned by the material things of this world, no sustenance, and by people of significance. She has no faith, no belief. This is the ultimate test. She then poses the question: "What have I got? Why am I alive anyway? Yeah, what have I got? Nobody can take away."[360] But midway through the performance, the mood shifts to one of determination and even joy, as the beat picks up. The tune shifts to the second part of the medley, "I Got Life," also a song from "Hair."

> I got my hair, got my head, got my brains, got my head, got my eyes, got my nose, got my mouth, I've got my sex. I've got my arms, got my hands, got my fingers, got my legs, got my feet, got my toes, got my liver, got my blood. I've got life. I've got life. I've got headaches, and toothaches, and bad times, too, like

[359]Nina Simone, "Mississippi Goddam," performance on March 25, 1965 in Selma, Alabama. Lyrics transcribed by this author.
[360] Nina Simone, "Ain't Got No, I've Got Life," 1968 performance in London. Lyrics transcribed by this author.

> you. I've got my hair, got my head, got my brains, got my ears, got my eyes, got my nose, got my mouth, got my smile. I've got my tongue, got my chin, got my neck, got my boobies, got my heart, got my soul, got my back, I've got my sex. I've got my arms, got my head, got my fingers, got my legs, got my feet, got my toes, got my liver, got my blood. I've got life. I've got my freedom. Oooh! I've got life.[361]

The subject is her body, her life, and her freedom. And that is judged enough. The juxtaposition of these two works in one performance that is more upbeat and determined.

"To Be Young, Gifted, and Black," June 1969 performance at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. Inspired by the words and play of Lorraine Hansberry, the playwright and friend of Nina Simone. The adlibbing is remarkable for its shout out to young black authors and singers who died too young, or too early. Upon singing the line, "to be young, gifted, and black, your soul's intact," she proclaims,

> Yes, yes, yes. Langston Hughes is gone, but he meant the same thing. And you know about Billie. Poor Billie, they killed her for the same thing you can have a party on, you know? They killed her 'cause she smoked pot. Really, they killed her. Now, of course, Lorraine is gone...[362]

Nina was connected to Langston Hughes and Lorraine Hansberry socially and politically but was only musically associated with Billie Holiday. In fact, Nina Simone was well-known to have had a strong disliking for Billie Holiday's voice and musical style. However, Nina Simone's career was launched in 1958 when she covered Holiday's famous "I Love You, Porgy" (1949), and renamed it "I Loves You, Porgy." Again, Simone covered one of Holiday's song in 1960, when "Strange Fruit" (1939) was released. Simone likely recognized the roots of her success and gave credit to where it was due.

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[361] Nina Simone, "Ain't Got No, I've Got Life," 1968 performance in London. Lyrics transcribed by this author.
[362] Nina Simone, "To Be Young, Gifted, and Black," 1969 performance in Atlanta, Georgia. Lyrics transcribed by this author.

In the final verse of this live performance, Simone appropriately uses the historically black college setting to instill and encourage black pride while looking toward the future. She sings "To be young, gifted, and black. Oh, how I long to know the truth. There are times when I look back, and I am haunted by my youth. But my joy of today is that we can all be proud to say, to be young, gifted and black is where it's at."[363] Not only has Nina Simone moved closer to a radical vision of equality, based on her civil rights activity, she has affirmed and embraced her power as a black person, and a black woman.

"I Wish I Knew (How it Would Feel to Be Free)," from 1976 at the Montreux Jazz Festival, where Nina Simone returned to give a performance after a long break from giving performances at all. Her absence from the stage can be explained by festival after a long break and having left the United States. The beat is bouncy, and light in feel at the outset, with piano sounding almost jazzy, bouncy and crisp, staccato style. The audience has no preparation for the intensity of the ride they would endure during the performance. This is a gospel tune.

In one verse, Simone surprises the audience with a sneaky-like add-on to one verse. She sings, "I wish I could share all the love that's in my heart. I wish I could break all the things that bind us apart. I wish you could know what it means to be me. Then you'd see, you'd agree, everybody should be free! (Because if we ain't, we're murderers!)."[364] This impromptu add-on to the verse came about as she gradually warmed up to the audience to relax in tone, comportment, bodily movement, facial

[363] Nina Simone, "To Be Young, Gifted, and Black," 1969 performance in Atlanta, Georgia. Lyrics transcribed by this author.
[364] Nina Simone, "I Wish I Knew (How it Feels to Be Free)," 1976 performance in Montreux, Switzerland. Lyrics transcribed by this author.

expression. Then, as if once the audience were comfortable enough with her presence, Simone brilliant caught them off guard with the quickly spoken, matter-of-fact tone, that was astonishingly sharp, provocative, and quite possibly unscripted. In the live recorded performance, one hears a faint number of claps, and quite possibly a few gasps heard from the crowd. These responses to Simone's add-on, spoken at the end of the verse, no doubt surprised members of the audience.

Her overall tone demonstrates a break from the original recording, or even subsequent versions, of the song. In this version of the piece, Simone enters a postcolonial moment of freedom to pursue her own self-development, managed over the course of playing the tune on piano and singing the song over the microphone. Her becoming is an aesthetic of playfulness engaged in the liminal space of back and forth, give and take, pouring out and taking back and holding within. in forged in which her own sense being as a confident, self-affirming, black woman challenges the white status quo. But she is only beginning her challenge against the norm of white supremacy.

In the next part of the song, she reveals a secret to the audience: she already knows what it means to be free against oppression! She sings in an improvisational tone,

> I've got news for you. I already know. Jonathan Livingston's seagull ain't got nothing on me! Free! Free! Free! Free! I'm free! And I know it!"86 She proclaims this freedom. She ends with "I already know. I found out how it feels not to be chained to anything, to any race, to any faith, to anybody, to any creed, to any hopes, to any…anything! I know how it feels to be free![365]

Simone's rendition of "Moon Over Alabama," from a 1977 performance at Drury Lane continues with a show tune-like appeal to the audience to play with and appeal to them in the most creative of ways. This song is a Doors cover, and originally a piece composed

[365] Nina Simone, "I Wish I Knew (How it Feels to Be Free)," 1976 performance in Montreux, Switzerland. Lyrics transcribed by this author.

by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht. She is responsible for the arrangement, and makes lyrical changes, word substitutions, and inserts additional lyrics that pay homage to black American culture and struggle. Of course, Simone does so in the only way she can: in a way that is playful, ironic, sometimes explosive, but always thought-provoking.

Simone begins the performance seated at the piano, seated upright, with fingers positioned at the keys of the piano, and tightly controlled movement. She has a nearly vacant facial expression, until she snaps to attention, as if to remind audience members she's alive, awake, and alert and is all too happy to catch someone off guard. This is the kind of playfulness for which Simone is famously known. In this performance, she is accompanied by a piano, jazz guitar, trombone, and drums. In addition to drums, at one point toward the end of the song she lifts a hand from the piano to snap those fingers in sync with the trombone. She also taps her foot.

In "Alabama Song," Simone departs from her predecessors, both Weill and Brecht and the Doors, to change the lyrics that will better suit her purposes. Instead of just whiskey and opposite sex, as in the original and Doors versions, Simone adds money. Clearly, Simone has an understanding that without capital, there is next to nothing that can be accomplished. Therefore, Simone pursues whiskey, money, and men. However, Simone doesn't pursue just any type of men. She wants "the next breed of wonderful men."[366]

Then Simone made a controversial move. She sings, "we've lost our good ol' mama, our prince, our king of love, we've lost him, Al Jolson, and his mammy."[367] Here, Simone makes a reference to minstrel shows and vaudeville, in a playful and subversive

[366] Lyrics are the author's translation.
[367] Lyrics are the author's interpretation.

manner. She no doubt sang this song in front of a majority white audience in England, many of whom may or may not have understood the social context and significance of blackface. Furthermore, she pushed the boundaries of respectability and political correctness by invoking the line "our prince, our king of love" in the same sentence as "Al Jolson and his mammy," in playful juxtaposition. Perhaps she combined these two in the context of the UK, where she could get away with this kind of playfulness, whereas in the U.S. she could not. She ends the piece by emphatically stating she must have men, money, and whiskey. The flurry of sound and rhythm returns, and the piece ends. Simone could create a space for herself in this context to make and break rules as she saw fit.

Simone performed “Pirate Jenny” live in 1992 and provided a background for how she adapted it to fit an American U.S. southern context. Interestingly, Simone performed this piece in France, where she could make and break rules as she pleased. However, getting advanced in age, she appeared less concerned with being controversial, and more determined to be a contrarian. Another Weill and Brecht collaboration, Marc Blitzstein provided English-language lyrics, with Simone adapting and altering them as needed for her own purposes.

The setting is a "crummy southern town" and a "crummy old hotel" invoked by the discordant piano notes played together in unison and striking of the drums. This song is about revenge against those patrons she's serving. These patrons insult her, tell her to earn her keep, or give her pathetic tips, but in general treat her in less than humane ways. She's a hotel maid, who scrubs floors. But in reality, she's a pirate, who is getting ready to board a ship – The Black Freighter – that will set out to sea. In the meantime, she's engaged in revenge fantasy, smiling to herself. She sings "But I'm counting your heads as

I'm making the beds. 'Cause there's nobody gonna sleep here, honey. Nobody. Nobody!"[368] The pirates from the ship will flatten every building in the town, and kill every person inhabiting it. As the heroine in the song is "piling up the bodies," she shouts, "that'll learn ya!"[369] She will get her revenge, and those who do harm will pay the price with their lives.

The song is reminiscent of her stance during the Civil Rights movement that she would not remain non-violent. Although she may not have used physical violence, her music was certainly a tool against oppression. In addition, she once said in an interview that if she'd owned a weapon, she would have used it during the Civil Right movement.[370] At the disagreement of her then-husband, Simone was urged to put her energies toward her performances rather than violence, which she would do, such as in performances like "Pirate Jenny."

4.7 Black Feminist *Bildungsroman*

In this project, I have attempted to pose larger questions: 1) what is the nature of the literary form of the *Bildungsroman* that it engenders audiences' members' sympathies toward its subjects? 2) related to question one, what is the relationship between transformative learning and the *Bildungsroman*? and 3) in what ways can using the example of black feminist cosmopolitan artists inspire empathy and social change?

By electing to examine the *Bildungsroman* of black feminist cosmopolitans, I assert the importance of learning through deriving life narratives and expressive artworks.

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[368] Lyrics are the author's translation.
[369] Lyrics are the author's translation.
[370] Nina Simone, *I Put a Spell on You: The Autobiography of Nina Simone* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 1993).

In addition, I examine the sociological reasons why black feminist artists and performers left the U.S., which primarily had to do with racist treatment and policies, and the opportunities that they were afforded abroad.

I do not interpret these women's departures from the U.S. as a form of abandonment, betrayal, or forfeiture of their country or American identity. Rather, I will attempt to demonstrate how and why twentieth-century black feminist cosmopolitan artists and performers, from Adelaide Hall nearly a century ago to Barbara Chase-Riboud in the present day, living and working abroad should be interpreted as a sign of strength, personal and professional excellence, and success. This is the transformative, interventionist lens that hooks and Lorde contribute to a culturally responsive theory. In addition, I counter the notion that any of the women whose legacies I examine gave up on, or ran away from their countries, or grew hardened toward their homeland, as a result of racist treatment. On the contrary, each artist continued to demonstrate a great love for, and commitment and care toward the U.S., even while maintaining a critical stance toward and distance from it while living abroad. This experience is evidenced in their works produced after leaving the U.S.

For black females, this creative expression of *Bildungsroman* is crucial for demanding a right to, and insistence upon, her existence. This insistence upon their existence was born out of a shared search for and desired self-articulation, self-definition, and self-formation. Most fitting this described notion of existence is a concept I borrow from literature: *Bildungsroman,* or the novel of formation, or education.[371] This strategic borrowing is lifted in an effort to examine themes normally relegated to the genre of the

[371] Geta LeSeur, *Ten is the Age of Darkness: The Black Bildungsroman* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press), 1-2.

coming of age relates well to the examination of human lives. These lives, interpreted as narratives in the metaphorical rather than the literal sense, refer to the stories one pieces together to make logical and existential sense of one's life journey.

Furthermore, the framework of *Bildungsroman* can articulate a notion of becoming as related to freedom. This freedom of choice, cultural expression, and acceptance or rejection of norms of femininity, I argue, is what the cosmopolitan artists and performers sought in life and in their musical expressions, especially in their visual arts, writings, performances, and recordings outside of the United States. Absent the greater context of twentieth-century racial unrest in the United States, I argue these artists may not have been able to pursue their self-development as black feminist musicians and performers. This is not to imply that other black musicians who remained in the U.S. were not fully self-developed as artists, musicians, or people. Rather, the artistic and personal emancipation of artists and performers specifically during this era required the expanse of the global context.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS & SYNTHESIS

5.1 Black Narratives of Transformative Learning

Missing from transformative learning literature is a robust treatment of 1) lifelong existential learning and 2) lifelong existential learning from a black feminist standpoint. My goal in this chapter is to establish a need for critical discourse on black feminist transformative learning, and within this scholarship to establish the case for promoting existential and holistic well-being as a form of healing that is desperately needed among members, particularly women, of the black community.

The case for promoting black feminist transformative learning discourse is even stronger when examining the narratives of black cosmopolitans. From James Baldwin to Richard Wright in France, cosmopolitan black writers have connected in a critical style to their American homeland. From literary fiction to impassioned political essays, black cosmopolitan writers enjoy a strong tradition of looking from afar and using a critical eye to challenge the country they still loved.

Whether we speak of Langston Hughes, who spent time abroad in England but then returned to the U.S., or of W.E.B. DuBois, who lived in the U.S. for the vast majority of his life but toward the end relocated to Ghana, audiences learn a new perspective on the black experience described by black men, who use expressive means to explain inequality in the U.S. For every Langston Hughes, Stokely Carmichael, and Paul Robeson, there is from the black female perspective, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, Nina Simone, Adelaide Hall, Elizabeth Catlett, and Barbara Chase-Riboud. This chapter will review the lives, experiences, and narratives of black feminist artists and performers within an ethical cosmopolitan context.

5.2 Black Feminism and Self-Formation

To further explore the contexts of social or racial injustices, an exploration into informed accounts on race and gender is needed. The informed insights of black feminist bell hooks make a helpful intervention into transformative learning discourse. In *Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery,* bell hooks accepts as historical fact the plight of black American females and highlights the crucial role of emergent selfhood in actualizing individual and social change.[372] This self-recovery, hooks argues, facilitates self-actualization as well as social change on a grand scale.

Self-recovery is foundational to black liberation and other social movements based on liberation.[373] hooks places responsibility on the individual learner to manage trauma and life challenges, and to work toward achieving self-actualization. hooks endorses self-help education, in the form of programs, books, therapy, or other means, but places responsibility on the individual to heal.[374] In this way, the individual is still engaged in the work of self-healing, but, if connected to social justice causes, will work toward efforts to change society.[375] This, in effect, is hooks's transformative learning theory, which takes into account history, patriarchy, and institutionalized racism. However, it does not discount the possibilities of self-recovery and self-healing by individuals making a commitment to self-actualization.

Another insightful black feminist perspective is advanced by Audre Lorde. In her essay "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," Lorde advances a transformative black

[372] bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery* (New York and London: Routledge, 2015).
[373] Ibid.
[374] hooks, *Sisters of the Yam,* 2015.
[375] Ibid.

feminist educational treatise. At the heart of Lorde's argument is a distinction between pornography and the qualities of the erotic, the latter described in phenomenological detail as a distinctly feminine drive that fuels the pursuit and achievement of long-term success and excellence in all areas of life, whereas the pornographic is characterized as a superficial and momentary experience of sensual and/or bodily fulfillment.[376] It is a life force that operates through creative energy and functions through a woman's act of loving, working, dancing, daily living, and making history. Our erotic knowledge becomes the lens by which we scrutinize all aspects of our existence in terms of its relative meaning, and erotic value.[377]

Lorde insists the erotic becomes the standard by which all other experiences or feelings are judged.[378] The erotic has been historically suppressed by men and others in patriarchal societies, and women have learned to distrust this state of being, as the erotic has been confused with mental illness, moral corruption, and perversion.[379] However, Lorde describes it as a depth of feeling and passion that is all-consuming when unleashed that helps those who embrace it to pursue excellence, and to be strengthened by it during this pursuit.[380]

Lorde's essay contributes to the foundation of transformative theory of black self-formation in which the individual, as the learner, even though socially disenfranchised, politically alienated, and the victim of white male privilege, is nevertheless motivated to achieve the best outcome possible of self-formation and excellence. This goal is achieved

[376] Audre Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, 53-59 (Freedom, California: The Crossing Press, 1984).
[377] Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic," 1984.
[378] Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic," 1984.
[379] Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic," 1984.
[380] Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic," 1984.

through a commitment to self-healing and self-compassion, communion with others, and embracing the causes of all those who also experience disenfranchisement of any kind. The erotic undergirds shared joy, serves as the basis of knowledge production and the growth of understanding, and helps to lessens the fear of difference.[381]

In relation to understanding, Audre Lorde writes that learning to use her voice and work through her silence was transformatory, self-revelatory, as well as dangerous, as her silence turned to language and action.[382] Like hooks, Lorde's pursuits of feminism and racial justice contribute to transformative learning tradition as both explore black female ontologies in the context of racially-segregated American society. Their contributions provide insight into racial and gender challenges and opportunities for the study of transformative learning through existential insights from life biographies. As such, bell hooks notes, her collective hope for black women in the world is to attempt to name their pain and find ways for healing, which in itself is a liberatory practice.[383]

5.3 Roots of Black Trauma and Recovery

Black American women have historically needed to make their own ways, and in doing so have attempted to navigate uncharted waters. As the examples of black feminist artists and performers demonstrate, such endurance and resilience make history, even if that history is not widely known. My project aims to disseminate knowledge about the women who have endured oppression and in their own ways successfully managed the circumstances with which they had to contend. This is not to say these women left the

[381] Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic," 1984.
[382] Audre Lorde, "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action" *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, 40-44 (Freedom, California: The Crossing Press, 1984).
[383] hooks, *Sisters of the Yam,* 2015.

U.S. and suddenly experienced no more obstacles. Rather, this is to say these women problem-solved and in some ways leaving the U.S. led each of them down a path to achieving more racial equality and economic opportunity than they were afforded in their home country.

What I am calling problem-solving, hooks refers to as self-recovery. In *Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self Recovery,* hooks writes, "I mostly want to remind her of the recipes of healing and give her my own made-on-the spot remedy for the easing of her pain. I tell her, 'Get a pen. Stop crying so you can write this down and start working on it tonight.'"[384] In other words, the remedy to ease pain among black women is to express or exorcise it, whether it be through journaling or the types of creative writing. The same could be said about artmaking. This creative, expressive activity is meant to promote self-healing, though the steps toward may be many and the length of time it takes to achieve healing may be long.

Part of self-recovery also includes practicing self-preservation and self-care. hooks continues, "My remedy is long. But the last item on the list says: 'When you wake up and find yourself living someplace where there is nobody you love and trust, no community, it is time to leave town – to pack up and go (you can even go tonight). And where you need to go is any place where there are arms that can hold you, that will not let you go.'"[385] Given that black lived experiences in the segregated U.S. are often discouraging, tumultuous, and at times downright deadly, hooks advises black women to trust their guts and find a way back to freedom and acceptance. In other words, hooks advises black women that it is sometimes best to pick up, leave, and start over someplace

[384] bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam*.
[385] bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam*.

else, where they can find healing circles of support, understanding, and love. This action is far from selfish but is instead wise and self-loving. Furthermore, contrary to the belief that one is a quitter or lacking commitment to the goal of improving the country, this choice is a good option for those who have the resources, opportunity, and ability to relocate.

Throughout her text, hooks promotes (though often reports others' opposition to) black people having a strong and healthy psychological and emotional well-being. hooks believes having a strong mental and emotional state as she argues it is needed to successfully engage in black liberation struggle. She writes about mental health dilemmas, stating "They persist in our daily life and they undermine our capacity to live fully and joyously. They even prevent us from participating in organized collective struggle aimed at ending domination and transforming society."[386] Such dilemmas, hooks argues, rob black individuals of their ability to live well and happily. Furthermore, they interfere with engaging in collective struggle to end domination and ultimately transform our American society. Therefore, the struggle begins first and foremost with the self. Then the reformed individual can take on society.

One might object to the idea that black women are objects of scorn, oppression, or are long-suffering and in need of self-recovery. However, the collective trauma endures, resulted from the abuse black women have suffered and have had to endure for centuries in American society. In fact, hooks argues this trauma is so endemic to our lived experiences that we have lost the sensitivity to be able to perceive it. Thus, we are often times unaware of our need to heal. Nevertheless, simply because we might be unaware of

[386] bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam*.

our need to heal, does not mean trauma does not manifest itself in our lives in myriad ways. Ignoring even its possibility of existence will not make it go away, or let it cease to exist. Rather, our vital need is to unearth it, identify it, navigate it, manage it, and hopefully resolve it.

5.4 Lived Experiences of Anti-Black Racism

Merleau-Ponty (1945) reminds us that our lived experiences of being-in-the-world remain in your bodies. In other words, all experiences, even of physical and psychological pain, get stored in our psyches and in our bodies in ways we may not perceive. Given that we do not always have access to, or awareness of such experiences does not mean these are not present or manifesting in our lives in ways that are not obvious. Stress and trauma can result in psychological and physical illnesses. In fact, blacks experience higher levels of stress-related diseases and illnesses than whites. We therefore owe it to ourselves to ask the questions of how we are doing, feeling, and experiencing life if for no other reason than to prevent, manage, or navigate stress-related illness and disease. To ignore our psychological, physical, and emotional well-being, especially given our long global history of disenfranchisement, and more specifically our disenfranchisement in the U.S., and the higher rates of stress-related illness we suffer, would be completely irresponsible.

Where does the abuse originate that results in the collective trauma of black people? Frantz Fanon theorized about the "white gaze," specifically the ways it racializes and historicizes an individual, and therefore determines the individual's social, political, and moral categorization even prior to recognition of the individual's humanity. Fanon's

concept of this racialized gaze is rooted in Sartre's phenomenological insights into the social construction of the body. Sartre theorizes

> I exist my body: this is its first dimension of being. My body is utilized and known by the Other: this is its second dimension. But insofar as I am for others, the Other is revealed to me as the subject for whom I am an object. Even there the question […] is of my fundamental relation with the Other. I exist therefore for myself as known by the Other—in particular in my very facticity. I exist for myself as a body known by the Other. This is the third ontological dimension of my body.[387]

Note, the individual begins as a unique self and subject, but ends as an object. This occurs as a consequence of intersubjective relationship with the Other.

Fanon adds further phenomenological description when he identifies the Other as having a racializing gaze that de-subjectivizes the subject. In the chapter ‘‘The Fact of Blackness’’ from Fanon's book Black Skin/White Masks, the problem of racism is described in phenomenological terms, perhaps for the first time in philosophy. Based in Sartre's bodily theory of being-for-others, Fanon does justice to Sartre's existential factum: For the black man, the white man is not simply ‘‘only The Other but also the master, whether real or imaginary."[388] Michael Staudigl regards the following a concrete failure of Sartre's dialectic of recognition made manifest, as is demonstrated in the form of symbolically instituted power-relations, as this factum informs and performatively reproduces the habitus of bodily self-experience of the ‘‘racialized objects."[389]

Fanon writes the following lengthy passage, using phenomenological description to convey the experience of racism. He writes

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[387] Michael Staudigl, "Racism: On the Phenomenology of Embodied Desocialization "Continental *Philosophy Review* v. 45, no. 1 (2012): 23-39.
[388] Staudigl, "Racism"
[389] Michael Staudigl, "Racism: On the Phenomenology of Embodied Desocialization "Continental *Philosophy Review* v. 45, no. 1 (2012): 23-39.

> The black man among his own in the twentieth century does not know at what moment his inferiority comes into being through the Other…(…) And then the occasion arose when I had to meet the white man's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. The real world challenged my claims. In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema.[390]

One may find it challenging to understand how the gaze levels an intense burden onto the person of color, but there is no other explanation for how the person of color suddenly feels: weighed down, heavy, incapacitated, and burdened. To be clear, this is not the person of color's doing, or even something they can control. It is as if the person of color has entered into an altogether new reality as a result of this intersubjective encounter with the Other's white gaze.

Fanon continues by describing what consciousness of one's body consists of

> Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third person consciousness. The body is surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty. I know that if I want to smoke, I shall have to reach out my right arm and take the pack of cigarettes lying at the other end of the table. (…) A slow composition of my self as a body in the middle of a spatial and temporal world—such seems to be the schema. It does not impose itself on me; it is, rather, a definitive structuring of the self and the world—definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world.[391]

Based on Fanon's theorizing, readers gain a fresh understanding of how race informs the structure of one's living space, the very physical reality in which one exists, as well as one's comportment in the world. Race depersonalizes the individual, thus removing the person's subjectivity as a human being and transforming the individual into a mere body in space. This dehumanizing schema informs one's self-perception and identity formation.

[390] Staudigl, "Racism"
[391] Staudigl, "Racism"

The gaze acts as both a metaphor, and a real action that results in violence, as an individual's subjectivity and humanity become not only immaterial, but outright denied. Drawing from Fanon's insights, we can understand better the bodily experience of racism black people and other peoples of color undergo in the social world. His vivid descriptions of a black person and a person of color carrying out actions in space and time allow readers to appreciate how racism operates systematically.

Some of the primary features of black women's phenomenological experiences of racism are outlined in hooks' work. hooks maintains, "Widespread efforts to continue devaluation of black womanhood make it extremely difficult and oftentimes impossible for the black female to develop a positive self-concept."[392] The devaluation of black womanhood begins with objectification. Devaluation ranges from the historical sexualization of and assault on her body, to her intentional economic disenfranchisement, ultimately robbing black women of their freedom and positive self concepts. hooks continues by writing "The idealized woman becomes property, symbol, and ornament; she is stripped of her essential human qualities. The devalued woman becomes a different kind of object; she is the spittoon in which men release their negative anti-woman feelings."[393] Once a black woman has been devalued, objectified, and dehumanized, there is no limit to the abuse men can heap upon her, ultimately leading to her traumatization.

From where do the powerful male few receive permission to actively participate in and continually perpetuate the systematic devaluation, objectification, and dehumanization of black women? hooks argues "For we are daily bombarded by negative

[392] bell hooks, *Art on My Mind*
[393] bell hooks, *Art on My Mind*

images. Indeed, one strong oppressive force has been this negative stereotype and our acceptance of it as a viable role model upon which we can pattern our lives."[394] Images and stereotypes are but twisted versions of the truth of human existence. However, if the powerful male few inject racial inequality into the discourse by perpetually circulating negative black (i.e. black female) imagery, narratives, and stereotypes, this leads to mass indoctrination of society members.

Taken for granted truths are mere falsehoods, based on exaggerated notions of truth. None of us living in what bell hooks calls a white supremacist capitalist patriarchy has escaped this context.[395] Indeed, black women and black people on the whole, have passively accepted, whether consciously or unconsciously, this indoctrination. To this end, hooks calls on black people to develop critical consciousness through the practices of self-reflection, self-recovery, and self-love.

5.5 Black Feminist *Bildungsroman* as Becoming

The theme of postcolonial self-transformation, which Stein writes about, is a useful framework for understanding black *Bildungsroman* more generally, and the specifically the kind developed in Audre Lorde's *Zami: A Biomythography of My New Name* (1982). Aspects of her narrative have particular application for understanding the life narratives and expressions of Hall and Simone, which would be helpful to draw out. The ultimately transformative, postcolonial aspect of Lorde's narrative is the heterogenous account of race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability status, thus contributing to the intersectional analysis for which Lorde is known in her work.

[394] bell hooks, *Art on My Mind*
[395] bell hooks, *Art on My Mind*

Furthermore, I regard Audre Lorde's autobiography, or biomythography (as she terms it), a model for articulating what Geta LeSeur calls black *Bildungsroman*.

Based on Lorde's account of her childhood through her early adulthood experiences of coming of age, readers are given a complex portrait of a black child's identity formation. Lorde is an interesting case of LeSeur's black *Bildungsroman*, as her identity is both African American and West Indian. Her narrative account is made even more rich by her linguistic and ethnic identity, as her parents are West Indian and speak Patois in the home. In other words, she isn't just merely black, even if the sisters or fellow children at her Catholic school would see and treat her that way. But the outside world, that is, beyond the home, would perceive her as just black.

She and her family members, perhaps with the exception of her light-skinned mother, are still characterized as black, without regard for their heritage. Strangers in the street spat upon Audre and her sisters, as they walked with their mother. She and her family were denied the right to sit at the diner for ice cream while on vacation in Washington D.C. for her sister's graduation trip, but instead were told they had to carry out. In fact, the very reason her father took the family to D.C. and turned the visit into a family vacation in the first place was because her older sister's graduating class would be staying at a hotel that did not allow blacks. In order to participate in the class trip, the Lorde's would have to drive the eldest separately.

Lorde begins to reclaim her identity in small ways during her process of socialization, beginning inside the home, then at school, and ultimately in the larger social setting of the world. Lorde's most immediate threat to identity formation is her mother, with whom Lorde fights on a regular basis to achieve her autonomy, but also

maintain a sense of connectedness. Her first significant love relationship with Muriel also struggles to achieve the much-needed autonomy, and ultimately is doomed. At school, Lorde pursues her an agenda of her own making, insisting upon creating her own opportunities, starting from grade school when she ran for class president. As an adult, she pursues her self-development and political liberation abroad in Mexico following the executions of Ethel and Julius Rosenburg. Her narrative continues to unfold as an adult, working and traveling for justice causes, insisting upon using her voice, and helping others to find and use their own voices, regardless of how inarticulate or unpolished it might sound.

In the same way, these artists and performers can be understood as cultural and historical icons through the lens of the black feminist and postcolonial notion of *Bildungsroman*, or transformative narratives of becoming. Although *Bildungsroman* is traditionally understood as the novel of self-education, I argue, in conjunction with Mark Stein and others, in the postcolonial context the sense of becoming is no longer a one-way notion of self-formation, but rather a dialogical phenomenon, and a transformative encounter in which the agentic individual both transforms and is transformed by his or her society.

5.6 Cosmopolitan Black Narratives of Becoming

As a black American female, my citizenship is, at best, liminal, since I do not enjoy equal rights in practice with white male, or even white female, counterparts.[396] My people's long history in the U.S. as chattel slaves, later subject to segregation laws, and

[396] Patricia Hill Collins, *From Black Power to Hip Hop: Racism, Nationalism, and Feminism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 178-180.

now managing institutionalized racism that fails to afford all Americans equal rights as human beings, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, and ability status continually perpetuates a system of inequality that is replicated in schools.

Each artist and performer's race, and gender, remained with them throughout their journeys abroad in the cosmopolitan context, as anecdotes and stereotypes followed them as well. With regard to the performers, Hall was dubbed "The Blackbird of Song," and Simone, "The High Priestess of Soul." At the same time, each was no longer limited by American racial dynamics. Catlett catapulted to international fame as a black American expatriate living in Mexico. Similarly, Chase-Riboud has been recognized as an important artist within the Black Arts Movement. Each artist and performer's life constituted a shift in her life narrative, and another chapter in her story of becoming.

To review, black feminist and postcolonial *Bildungsroman* as a helpful tool to facilitate transformative learning. The *Bildungsroman* can be used as a transformative teaching tool to facilitate social justice education. One important lesson come from racial inequalities, perpetuated through institutions that persist to this day. Learning about these histories by studying black artists' life narratives, sheds light on the reasons why these artists left the country, as many went in search of achieving greater political autonomy, better professional opportunities, and racial harmony. Such histories should be explored and can be critically examined, through the *Bildungsroman* in our daily learning.

The new contexts of Europe and the UK allowed each performer to accomplish her intended goals. For Hall, she could live without the restrictions imposed by segregation, charge the fees she knew her performances could command, and sing to mixed audiences. Simone could exercise more creative control overseas and more

directly and regularly critique her country's policies. Hall could do so in a more subtle way, as she sang particular song selections. In each case, the performer could draw from her life experience, musical talent, and reputation to make her desire to live independently of racism and the social limitations imposed by the U.S. context a reality.

Specific accounts of becoming from the standpoint of black experiences add flesh to the bone. Narratives of becoming, from the standpoint of the black feminist tradition, provide much-needed insight into the diversity of black experiences across the black female population. What does becoming look like from a black existentialist perspective? Hughes, Wright, DuBois, and Baldwin offer readings. From some of their key texts, audience members can gain an appreciation for the black experience from individualized standpoints of the black man as outsider within his homeland, American context. However, there are general themes that resonate clearly: trauma, intersectionality, and freedom. To expound upon the themes of trauma, intersectionality, and freedom in black writings, I turn to the works of hooks, as I attempt to interpret and understand the significance of black feminist cosmopolitan through the frame of transformative learning.

hooks' contribution to black feminist wellness is done as a means to address traumatic experiences often shared by members of the black community, particularly women. Her work highlights the significance of self-healing as a process connected to one's engagement with political action. She writes "Black female self-recovery, like all black self-recovery, is an expression of a liberatory political practice. Living as we do in a white supremacist-capitalist patriarchal context that can best exploit us when we lack a

firm grounding in self and identity (knowledge of who we are and where we have come from), choosing 'wellness' is an act of political resistance."[397]

Also, in hooks' work, she establishes the importance of intersectional analysis. In Sisters of the Yam, hooks writes, "For black females, and males too, that means learning about the myriad ways racism, sexism, class exploitation, homophobia, and various other structures of domination operate in our daily lives to undermine our capacity to be self-determining."[398] Arguing for the importance of undergoing Freirean conscientization, hooks links super structural impediments on what is in essence becoming. In other words, an important aspect of transformation becomes learning about and understanding those larger systems that keep ourselves, and our mentalities, enslaved or colonized. Once one is able to pinpoint the roots of colonization and white supremacy of static existence, we can work toward removing white masks, as Fanon called it, from our black skins.

Freedom is another important theme in black feminist discourse on transformative learning. In *Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism*, hooks addresses the intended outcome of enacting feminist principles. She writes, "[Our] struggle for liberation has significance only if it takes place within a feminist movement that has as its fundamental goal the liberation of all people."[399] In contrast to first and second waves of feminism that tended to locate analyses in the experiences of privileged white, upper middle class, college-educated women, many of whom ironically (and unfortunately) imported the exercise of white supremacy and patriarchy within the movement through the systematic exclusion of black, immigrant, poor, and uneducated women, black feminism,

[397] bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam*
[398] bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam*
[399] bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism*,

womanism, and other movements of feminism from women of color and women from the global south emerged as a way to advocate for inclusivity. By framing feminism as a struggle for liberation and arguing that the significance of feminism will only be recognized when all members of the movement promote the liberation of all, hooks outlines in her very argument the conditions of freedom, and ways to achieve self-enactment.

As discussed, themes of becoming from black feminist narratives include double or triple disenfranchisement and the resulting trauma, intersectionality given the diverse experiences of black peoples, and the achievement of freedom through a self-enactment process of becoming. The narratives I examine highlight these themes, particularly in the cosmopolitan context.

One nagging question has been, is getting out of/going away from the U.S. context and in search of social and political autonomy a privilege afforded to only a lucky few blacks? Decidedly, yes. Their travels might be likened to discovering new worlds as pilgrims and pioneers once did in America. Instead, black artists and performers (as well as musicians and literary figures) ventured out into Europe, the UK, the Caribbean, or Africa, and subsequently reported having experienced greater social, political, and artistic autonomy. However, it is important to point out that some couldn't really afford to go but were funded during their journey. In other cases, blacks have the means to leave the U.S. But chose instead to stay. In other words, it was not simply the case that those who could afford it went, and everyone else stayed behind and suffered but also endured. Likewise, there should be no moral judgement on those who left. This is especially the case since many cosmopolitans maintained close ties with America, even after their relocation

abroad. Furthermore, in these contexts, though not race neutral, they did not actively experience their blackness as a type of moral stain that determined their social, political, and economic opportunities. Rather, their blackness was a point of curiosity, which itself became a marketable commodity.

In *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*, hooks laments cultural essentialism. She writes,

> Sadly, at a time when so much sophisticated cultural criticism by hip intellectuals from diverse locations extols a vision of cultural hybridity, border crossing, subjectivity constructed out of plurality, the vast majority of folks in this society still believe in a notion of identity that is rooted in a sense of essential traits and characteristics that are fixed and static."[400]

In other words, in our contemporary era, and with it a surplus of theories and methods to understand culture, pluralism, and subjectivity, we as an academic community do not push ourselves to expand our imaginations and use the tools available to us. It is in this spirit that I delve into theoretical and methodological approaches to black feminist transformative learning, using the case of narratives from cosmopolitan artists and performers.

Narratives of becoming can also inspire empathy. In *Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism*, hooks writes,

> All the myths and stereotypes used to characterize black womanhood have their roots in negative anti-woman mythology. Yet they form the basis of most critical inquiry into the nature of black female experience. Many people have difficulty appreciating black women as we are because of eagerness to impose an identity upon us based on any number of negative stereotypes.[401]

Each woman's creative choices are informed by her life narrative. Nevertheless, the racial and gender aspects of her identity did not so cravenly inhibit her from creative self-

[400] bell hooks, *Art on My Mind*
[401] bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman?*

expression and making a career to the fullest extent. This is because each performer and artist's existence as a black American female did not have the same legacy in the UK and in Europe and the same effect as it did, given the different histories, baggage, and relationships that existed with African Americans. In other words, without the same context of the United States, I argue Catlett, Chase-Riboud, Hall, and Simone enjoyed a certain amount of mobility, autonomy, and citizenship that the context of the greater world, meaning any place but the United States, could offer. That is, citizenship that was outright denied them due to their racial status as black Americans, which in the case of Hall was an oversimplification, but in the greater context of the United States was deemed an adequate description. A transformative framework of black *Bildungsroman* can contribute to reinterpreting each artist's legacy in a new way.

When considering the narrative model of *Bildungsroman*, and in particular the transformative potential of the black, postcolonial example of Audre Lorde, it is important to bear in mind the importance of intersectional analysis and heterogeneity. Lorde was influential for her ability to individualize identity markers and take seriously each facet of identity for its own merit, be it race, sexuality, ability, language, and gender. Additionally, two people who share the same identity can have vastly different experiences, meaning two women, two lesbians, or two Jamaicans, which Lorde deeply believed and respected. Only hegemonic contexts and uncomplicated understandings of race and colonial supremacy assume sameness across human experiences. Lorde embraced and promoted differences and viewed these differences sources of strength. These narratives tease out power dynamics that assume supremacy and exercise power

over lives in an attempt to highlight hegemonic thinking and break it loose from the phenomenon of feminist resilience and self-development.

What the artists and performers share is a commitment to freedom, particularly expressed through their music and performances on stage. The pursuit of freedom fueled the existentialist and black feminist sense of becoming. Notably, this freedom was achieved, ironically enough, in the very heart of metropolitan European capital cities and during the era of colonialism. In other words, it was in the locations of London, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, and elsewhere that Hall and Simone performed music that allowed them to enact their freedoms as artists, performers, women, and black Americans. Their performances captivated overseas audiences. At the same time, these performers achieved autonomy, and captured a sense of freedom.

Furthermore, the achievement of freedom in the European metropole is ironic in another sense for black female performers in search of genuine autonomy and citizenship in a Western colonial context. But their empowerment was not gained by traditional means. As the feminist, poet, lesbian, warrior Audre Lorde has powerfully articulated, it is an essential skill to learn how to stand alone and to survive, to be different, and to be an outsider, and use that difference as a source of strength. In this way, Lorde argues the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. Even if the master's tools temporarily beat him at his own game, these will never bring about the genuine change that social justice demands. In other words, the same rules would not apply to black performers in the metropole. Each expatriate would need to carve out her own space, create her own narrative, and embrace the difference that made her stand out within a context of sameness (i.e. as a minority within a majority setting).

In terms of the theme of freedom, bell hooks' 1981 book *Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism* attempts to re-appropriate the term "feminism," thereby rescuing it from its narrow usage as it applied to white women. Instead, hooks aimed to "focus on the fact that to be 'feminist' in any authentic sense of the term is to want for all people, female and male, liberation from sexist role patterns, domination, and oppression."[402] Here, hooks is advocating for an expanded notion of feminism, one that would be applicable to her own situation and the situations of many women of color.

In hooks's *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics,* she argues appropriation can be a progressive and positive cultural and political act. I would add this is particularly the case in a postcolonial context. She writes "...Acts of appropriation are part of the process by which we make ourselves."[403] In other words, none of us exists in a vacuum, void of resources, inspirations, and history. The contexts in which we find ourselves throughout our lives will undoubtedly lead to appropriation of some kind, even if it is language. It is through this appropriation that we craft our identities.

To clarify her stance, hooks establishes what appropriation is not. She goes on to write "Appropriating - taking something for one's own use - need not be synonymous with exploitation. This is especially true of cultural appropriation. The 'use' one makes of what is appropriated is the crucial factor."[404] Without defining the uses for cultural appropriation, hooks is more concerned with what was appropriated and how, rather than the act of appropriation itself. Again, the implication is that appropriation is a normal

[402] bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman?*
[403] bell hooks, *Art on My Mind*
[404] bell hooks, *Art on My Mind*

aspect of the human condition. Since early in hooks' scholarly career, she was preoccupied with appropriation.

In addition, hooks became invested in expanding the boundaries of the tradition, particularly of academic concepts. For example, hooks sought to broaden the canon to include liberation for everyone, regardless of sex, with the aim of ending oppression. By broadening the use of the term feminism and expand it beyond its then-current meaning and application, hooks was able to combat narrow ideas of the American woman's experience. She writes "While it is in no way racist for any author to write a book exclusively about white women, it is fundamentally racist for books to be published that focus solely on the American white woman's experience in which that experience is assumed to be the American woman's experience."[405] By this, hooks was objecting to the wholesale dismissal of women's experiences from across different races and ethnicities.

The white woman's experience does not stand in for the experiences of all women. In fact, the experiences of white women tend to be the exception, when compared and contrasted with the experiences of women of color. Furthermore, it is racist to assume white women's experiences are somehow representative of American women's experiences. But to imagine a scholar who puts forth such a contrarian idea in the early 1980s that breaks from the standard discourse on feminism seems a radical move. However, hooks sought to shake up the readers from an epistemological and standpoint, while presenting new knowledge. No doubt disorienting dilemmas likely ensued.

[405] bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman?*

Throughout her 1981 text, hooks took the opportunity to challenge white feminists. In particular, she drew attention to the need of feminists to re-imagine oppression in its starkest forms. hooks writes "When feminists acknowledge in one breath that black women are victimized and in the same breath emphasize their strength, they imply that though black women are oppressed they manage to circumvent the damaging impact of oppression by being strong—and that is simply not the case."[406] In other words, black women's strength does not overcome or make less salient institutionalized racism, white supremacy, and patriarchy.

By characterizing black women as stoic, resilient, and patient, writers give audiences the short shrift, as audiences become excluded from a broader, more accurate depiction of black women. In other words, these descriptors leave no room for powerful and privileged members of society lift a finger on behalf of blacks. This is a serious mistake and indicates not only a lack of thoughtfulness but also a way out for whites not to take collective responsibility for institutional racism, empathize with blacks, or work as allies on their behalf. After all, despite enduring systematic oppression, the black woman remains proud and strong.

She goes on to critique white women's perceptions of black women, as she links their perceptions to a patronizing myth on which the American dream was built that one must pull oneself up by the bootstraps. She writes "Usually, when people talk about the 'strength' of black women they are referring to the way in which they perceive black women coping with oppression. They ignore the reality that to be strong in the face of oppression is not the same as overcoming oppression, that endurance is not to be

[406] bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman?*

confused with transformation"[407] Here, hooks helpfully distinguishes between endurance and transformation, as she notes white women have confused the former for the latter. Furthermore, hooks reminds readers that coping is not the same overcoming. That hooks is seemingly pointing out the obvious that should not need to be restated (but often does), indicates this phenomenon was perhaps widespread, particularly within feminist circles, and thus needed correction.

In reference to trauma, hooks discusses a holistic approach to recovery from the experience of oppression. She continues by stating the need to prioritize self-care prior to taking on the larger institution of systemic racism. She writes "Before many of us can effectively sustain engagement in organized resistance struggle, in black liberation movement, we need to undergo a process of self-recovery that can heal individual wounds that may prevent us from functioning fully."[408] That is, only after self-recovery can one fully commit to organized struggle, though self-recovery is in its own right a political victory. Therefore, the black female individual remains engaged from the very start of actively pursuing self-recovery, through the stage of collectively organizing with others.

[407] bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam*
[408] bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam*

CHAPTER 6: EPILOGUE

6.1 Toward Transformation: A Personal Quest

As a college student, I was a sponge when it came to learn about black artists, writers, thinkers, and performers. It was not by accident that I studied sub-Saharan African history and African Art as electives during my undergraduate years. As an Art History major, I regularly noticed the absence of black artists featured in course textbooks. I therefore regularly crafted my own research topics, discovering the artworks and legacies of artists underrepresented in the art historical canon. I wrote term papers on the lives and artworks of Archibald J. Motley, Jr. for an American Art class, Bob Thompson for a Contemporary Art class, and Picasso's African and Iberian-inspired Cubist style for a Modern Art class. My interest in black expressive cultures came from a desire to learn and understand more about a people who seemed to lack a coherent history.

In addition, I set out on a solitary journey of self and cultural exploration. Inspired by public intellectual Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s popular PBS documentaries *African American Lives* (2006) and *African American Lives 2* (2008) and *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross* (2013), I began in earnest studying African-American history texts and cultural commentary, including W.E.B. DuBois's *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Carter G. Woodson's *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (1933), Henry Louis Gates Jr's *Life Upon these Shores: Looking at African American History, 1513-2008* (2011), and Ta-Nehisi Coates's *We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy* (2017). In addition, I read autobiographical works by Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Ida B. Wells, Maya Angelou, and Malcolm X. What I found in common across these very

different life narratives were testaments of trauma, struggle, survival, and resilience. Inspired to learn more, I found myself on a solitary journey of self-awareness and global connection.

In addition to books and documentaries, I visited museums to fill in knowledge gaps of African presence in the New World. I traveled to Cincinnati to tour the Underground Freedom Center. While there, I toured galleries, read texts, watched films, and viewed displays that described not only black male contributions to African American culture, but also the contributions of noted abolitionist Sojourner Truth, Civil Rights icon Rosa Parks, and other brave black female historical figures. For the first time, perhaps ever, I felt seen, heard, and recognized.

This recognition was epiphanic in nature. As Jack Mezirow describes, perspective transformation begins with accessing and grappling with new knowledge and is fully fleshed out when the individual personalizes, or draws meaning from, their learning through reflection. The meaning that is constructed can occur as “a-ha” moments, or can more deliberately develop over time, such as in metamorphosis. My perspective transformation was a cumulative, sudden push toward learning, and making sense out of that which had been previously ineffable.

My museum visit provided me the opportunity to reflect upon and come to realize two important ideas. The first was, as a black person, I recognized how lucky I was to have been raised by parents who regularly shared with me the sacred knowledge of black peoples' cultural, historical, political, educational, military, and economic contributions to the U.S. Unfortunately, this knowledge was only made available to me at home, and not

at school. Why was this the case? And at the same time, why wasn't this knowledge more widely disseminated?

The second realization was, as a black female, I recognized what little knowledge had been passed down to me in school settings about black female leaders. When February's Black History Month was celebrated, we learned about Martin Luther King, Jr., Frederick Douglass, and other black male leaders. Curiously enough, during Black History Month, the legacies and contributions of such women as Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and Rosa Parks had been left out. I do concede that I still acquired a good deal of knowledge about black Americans in general as part of my informal learning inside of the home, and not from my formal learning outside of the home at school.

It was a privilege for me to acquire knowledge about black Americans in general as part of my informal learning inside of the home. This access to cultural knowledge was due in large part to my family's commitment to learning our people's stories. Through genealogical searching, recording family histories as retold by relatives, and reading the books of Alice Walker, Langston Hughes, Toni Morrison, Malcolm X, Maya Angelou, and Ralph Ellison, I was able to acquire a good deal of knowledge about black Americans and black experiences in general. But realizing this fact, that formal learning about my people and culture had been denied me, was saddening. This lack of exposure to cultural history in the formal settings of schools was in fact a deprivation of vital knowledge. My knowledge gained through the informal, private setting of the home was fortunate. On the one hand, parents and families of marginalized groups must make do with the tools and resources at their disposal. On the other hand, knowledge about black cultural history and contributions remains a tangential concern within schools.

That I was able to access this knowledge amounts to the privilege I enjoyed as a child of educated and culturally conscious parents, concerned that their daughters know their people's cultural inheritance, history, and, really, a broader perspective on American history. Although as a child, my parents encouraged me to assimilate into the dominant culture of American society (socially, culturally, and politically), they also gave me access to learning about the legacies of black Americans at home, and in public by participating in non-formal learning opportunities at local libraries, museums, and cultural centers on a regular basis. How can a more complete version of history and the experiences of marginalized others become central to the narratives of history we pass along to youths?

6.2 The Case for Children in Transformative Learning

Mezirow has called transformative learning a uniquely adult preoccupation, as adults have acquired the necessary autonomous thinking, and perhaps maturity, that children typically lack. Upon further examination of Mezirow's foundational ideas of autonomous thinking, it becomes apparent that Mezirow has focused primarily on the cognitive development of adults that contrasts starkly with different literatures, including the *Bildungsroman* literary sub-genre and works in aesthetic education that address the transformative dimensions of qualitatively enriched experiences children can have with art.[409]

As has been argued within the black *Bildungsroman* sub-genre, children are the agents of individual and social change. In Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John,* it is the child

[409] Maxine Greene, *Variations on a Blue Guitar: The Lincoln Center Institute Lectures on Aesthetic Education* (New York and London: Teachers College Press, 2001).

who is the agent of individual and social awakening, from her sexual development to her emotional and psychological growth as a person and a citizen of her society. In Gwendolyn Brooks' *Maud Martha*, the child demonstrates great emotional depth, poetic mastery, and keen perceptions of the world around her. These examples, then, contradict the idea that transformation is the property of adult learning.

To limit the introduction of perspective transformation to adults undermines the potential children have to participate in such experiences. Although Mezirow's model of transformative learning focuses on adults, as adult learners are assumed to have the cognitive reasoning and an ability to participate in dialogue that children do not yet have, transformation should by no means preclude the participation of children, who may have the emotional maturity and cognitive capacity to gain significantly from such experiences.

In contrast to Mezirow's assumptions about children, I argue youths have more than adequate reasoning apparatuses to understand, appreciate, and respect different points of view. In fact, some might argue that it is the important work of empathy and imagination exercised and built upon during the formative years of one's life that makes all the difference for a child's future and enables an individual to have transformative experiences throughout their lives. My argument is the foundation of transformative learning should be laid as early as possible in a human being's development to prepare individuals for perspective transformation, which could begin at childhood, adolescence, or adulthood. Where I differ from Mezirow is in my belief that perspective transformation is uniquely an adult phenomenon, not only because exceptions and outliers exist in which children or adolescents could acquire autonomous thinking early,

but also because the broad assumption is that adult learners have both the ability and willingness to exercise autonomous and critical thinking, and the evaluation of assumptions. With the careful guidance and support of adults who understand, appreciate, and respect different perspectives, children and adults alike can participate in meaningful experiences. In this way, we might begin to hope for personal and social transformation throughout our lives.

6.3 Multiculturalism, Cultural Appreciation, and Diversity Training

One avenue toward transformative learning has shown up in the curriculum as multicultural learning. We need more than multicultural celebration. or additional general education requirements. For instance, it has increasingly become commonplace in schools to celebrate Hanukkah, Diwali, Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Indigenous Peoples' Day, and Chinese New Year. However, these celebrations imply a sense of commemoration of heroes' past, rather than respecting these marginalized peoples in the present. No more proof of respect lacking is required than recounting the number of shootings of unarmed people of color by police officers and "concerned" neighbors. In other words, I can go to school and celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, but still harbor offensive and dangerous views of Latinx persons. Certainly, these celebrations constitute an admirable start. And, these are good efforts, since the learning starts at a young age. However, a more holistic, organic, and sustained effort toward justice for historically marginalized peoples is required.

Another avenue toward transformative learning purports cultural appreciation. Misguided cultural appreciation runs the risk of not only disrespecting and alienating marginalized others, but also passing down to the next generation problematic practices

and misinformed ideas about others. Some of the most popular diversity initiatives, for example school performances featuring children reenacting slaves' life experiences, or instances of teachers recreating events from black history (i.e. wearing costumes and even make up), frankly offends the very people they claim to represent and often results in alienating community members and the public, and embarrassing the school. Rather than welcoming historically marginalized individuals, majority communities easily further marginalize and disenfranchise the most vulnerable members of the community. Such examples point to the problem with appreciation without empathy.

Yet another approach is the certification and credentialing craze in diversity training. Ally trainings for LGBTQ, racial justice, disability rights, etc., provide a helpful knowledge base on which to promote respect and empathy, and tools for combating injustice. But trainings by themselves are a means to an end, and not the ends in themselves. In other words, the goal should not merely be to participate in training, as if ticking a box of completion. Rather, the training should serve to facilitate long-term change, or at the very least begin the process. The ends are recognition, respect, and empathy to marginalized others, as perspective transformation implies.

6.4 Toward Empathy and Inclusion

Empathy needs to be a central feature of any solution. The absence of deep empathy results in superficial recognition of marginalized peoples. In addition, the absence of empathy runs the risk of becoming superficial appreciation of world cultures and marginalized others. Thus, any efforts toward equity without empathy would in essence amount to ineffective, unhelpful, and often offensive gesturing toward the very populations it is attempting to honor.

Educating youths is the obvious place to start. But how, in practical and logistic terms, can equitable and empathic appreciation be accomplished? How does inclusive education for equity really look? Begin with experiential, informal lifelong learning. Inclusion comes in the form of conversations with others, associating with them, rather than admiring others as objects from afar. Instead of cold, often offensive, admiration without sensitivity, I would argue one should try immersion into the contexts of others.

Although I know, intellectually, I have ancestors who were slaves, that historical fact and piece of knowledge fails to capture my reality, though that piece of information informs my perspective. More accurately, the most memorable aspects of my life were the opportunities of informal learning through means of conversations around the dining room table, storytelling of events, exchanging pictures, sharing family albums, attending various family events and reunions, attending church, sharing meals, or styling hair, whether this includes braiding, combing, or rolling up, or straightening hair. In addition, my parents routinely bought my sister and I black music, dolls, books, and videos that celebrated black peoples' contributions to American history. Inclusion begins with appreciating the lives and realities of others lived and historical experiences, which involves immersion into the world of others.

6.5 Reclamation of Narratives and of Legends

In addition to immersive experiences that promote inclusion, empathic and equitable appreciation also involves reclaiming spaces we inhabit to welcome the achievements and histories of those historically marginalized. Reclaiming spaces, physical environments, locations, and monuments is one effective way to promote empathic and equitable appreciation. In addition to having immersive experiences and

reclaiming spaces in physical and built environments, honoring our foremothers' lives and experiences, and the cultural contributions of marginalized others can be a daily practice, and ongoing commitment.

To enhance life-long and self-directed learning, one could supplement understanding by learning from marginalized poets, artists, and musicians. The arts (from literary, visual, and dramatic) are a rare medium that contain a unique perspective that facilitates immersion and investment of the narrative another weaves, and empathy toward a particular perspective. In addition to the arts, documentaries often chronicle events, lives, perspectives on the histories of marginalized groups. In addition, one can become adept at paying attention to various new sources and perspectives, in the spirit of Arendtean "visiting" of different perspectives. In doing so, one weaves together life narratives and histories to build upon one's knowledge and understanding of others.

In many ways, my learning continues. As an adult, I continue to refine the language necessary to articulate what it means to be a black American female living in the U.S., who possesses a long ancestral history in this country and yet also has firsthand experience of institutional racism and gender discrimination. Part of what I have learned to articulate is an ironic truth: even though my roots in the U.S. run deep, my citizenship is not assured.

6.6 Awakening Understanding from Narratives

The awakening I seek for myself and for others is awareness of the oppressive conditions under which I was raised, to work first toward liberating and healing myself, and then to work alongside others toward improving oppressive conditions for them. It is now that I wish to adopt a transformative curriculum that, over time, allows youths and

adults to move through and beyond silences so they can use their voices, as so many black American females, like myself, have learned, and are learning, to do. This aim facilitates the acquisition of selfhood in dynamic relationship with social transformation.

Understanding why artists and performers left/are leaving/are staying away the U.S. can be attributed to threats, and real experiences of, state-sanctioned violence, institutional racism, and denial of opportunities to flourish. Why do enclaves of black ex-patriates still exist throughout the world? For instance, despite the 400-year old presence of blacks in America, why do African Americans head to some place beyond America? Consider Black Paris, Black London, Black Berlin, etc., or the black travel movement. I continue to question what do other countries offer blacks that America does not? Or, question what Europe can offer to blacks that America cannot, or does not?

Thus far, my life has been a journey toward self-definition. This culminating work is bricolage, "concerned not only with multiple methods of inquiry but with diverse theoretical and philosophical notions of the various elements encountered in the research act."[410] It is simultaneously my *Bildungsroman*, or story of self-formation and development. Additionally, I hope my use of first-person narrative accounts of experiences, memories, emotions, that have been shaped by history, societal structure, and culture, provide a context for which to understand the role of oppressive forces in shaping lives. Finally, through hermeneutic phenomenology I attempted to gather a richer sense of the subject under scrutiny, and recognize the researcher's role in the research process, and perspective on the chosen research subject.

[410] Kincheloe, Joe L. "Describing the Bricolage: Conceptualizing a New Rigor in Qualitative Research" *Qualitative Inquiry* 7 no. 6 (2001): 679-692.

As I write, I place myself in hermeneutic relationship with black American foremothers and forefathers. More specifically, I place myself in relationship to other black American females, particularly artists, poets, and performers who attempted to effect social change by their very presence and creative output. But for many years, I searched in vain to find them. As James Baldwin stated,

> When I was growing up, I was taught in American history books, that Africa had no history, and neither did I. That I was a savage about whom the less said, the better, who had been saved by Europe and brought to America. And, of course, I believed it. I didn't have much choice. Those were the only books there were. Everyone else seemed to agree.[411]

There were pivotal points in my education in which black voices and images were represented, underrepresented, and absent. Learning their stories has given me a transformation of perspective, but also a greater self and cultural knowledge. As I have learned about the lives and works of exceptional black historical figures, and researched their lives, so too do I hope my work reaches and appeals to the sensibilities of others, breaking through silences, inspiring knowledge creation, and contributing to greater understanding, while also transforming lives.

In my project, I have attempted to demonstrate how showcasing artists' narratives in nuanced ways, introducing the contexts of racial, class, and gender bias in the U.S., and transnational experiences abroad, helped facilitate my personal transformation. In addition, I have examined the political, cultural, social, and economic contexts that influenced black artists' initial decisions to change their lives and move abroad. I introduced the framework of postcolonial *Bildungsroman* as a way to understand better

[411] Rima Regas, "Transcript: James Baldwin Debates William F. Buckley (1965)." *Blog #42: Answers To Life, The Universe, And Everything*, Rima Regas, 7 June 2015, www.rimaregas.com/2015/06/07/transcript-james-baldwin-debates-william-f-buckley-1965-blog42/.

black female narratives of experiences of becoming. This framework can be instructive, as individual voices and artistic output can be understood to provide insight into the individual, their traumas, challenges, and hopes and aspirations.

As I seek transformation on a personal and social level, it is necessary for me to select narratives that question and address racial and social injustices. The very fact that American-born black female citizens left their homelands for foreign countries in hopes of finding a more promising life abroad speaks volumes about American society, its racial dynamics, and unresolved and unhealed legacy of slavery, segregation, and systemic racism. Studying black feminist cosmopolitan narratives within an educational context can facilitate transformation for participants, who gain insights into, and hopefully empathy toward, marginalized groups within American society, who lefts the country to fulfill ethical cosmopolitanism.

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