

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Destination Gorée: A Dialogic Analysis of the Dialectic of Un-Belonging and Belonging As Rehearsed and Performed Through Diasporic Tourism

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1251d4mn>

Author

Hamm, William Michael

Publication Date

2015

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Destination Gorée:
A Dialogic Analysis of the Dialectic of Un-Belonging and Belonging As Rehearsed and
Performed Through Diasporic Tourism

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Culture and Performance

by

William Hamm

2015

© Copyright by

William Hamm

2015

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Destination Gorée:
A Dialogic Analysis of the Dialectic of Un-Belonging and Belonging As Rehearsed and
Performed Through Diasporic Tourism

by

William Hamm

Doctor of Philosophy in Culture and Performance

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Cheryl L. Keyes, Co-Chair

Professor Christopher Alan Waterman, Co-Chair

Since the beginning of the triangular African slave trade, many African Americans have held a fascination with Africa as demonstrated through the recirculation of the “return to Africa” meme found in their storytelling, religious practices and music. From sequestered spaces of un-belonging such as plantations and Jim Crow segregation, African Americans have rehearsed and repeated tropes of the simultaneous duality of pain and transcendence that the earliest African slaves had encoded. Over the course of time, few African Americans could successfully fulfill their dream to return home to the Promised Land, on the other side of their pained and terrorized lives that their collective narratives had assured. Not until the Post Civil Rights Era have descendants of the legacy of slavery completed the actual ritual of the return to Africa. Since the 1970’s diasporic tourism by African Americans to popular sites of memory like Gorée Island in

Senegal has increased. By illuminating the inextricable relationships between hegemonic and cultural narratives, Black Atlantic and mainstream American religions, and African American musical traditions, I analyze the “performance of transformation” that occurs at sites of memory such as the *Maison Des Esclaves*, the Slave House, on Gorée Island in Senegal. To explicate this transformational process, I engage dialogues between ethnographic recordings, historical data, news reports, interviews and personal memoir writing. Drawing from Critical Race Theory, Ethnomusicology, and Performance Studies, I situate the dialectic of un-belonging and belonging with an overlay of the rehearsal/performance paradigm onto the ritual process. By using the metaphors of music and theater, I will validate diasporic tourism as a means of redressing cultural alienation and un-belonging. As sequestration persists today in hyper-segregated spaces like Ferguson, Missouri and the Ninth Ward in New Orleans, diasporic tourism may serve as an antidote to the problems in those spaces.

The dissertation of William Michael Hamm is approved.

David Delgado Shorter

Cheryl L. Keyes, Committee Co-Chair

Christopher Alan Waterman, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2015

DEDICATION

To Marie Hamm (1921 – 1997) and Charles Hamm (1913 – 2000)

You gave your eight children wings.

To my seven sisters and brothers.

You showed me how to fly.

To Umalali Green-Moore

Now, take your wings and soar.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....x

Curriculum Vitae.....xvi

Overture: Destination Gorée.....1

 Creolization of Theory.....6

 Racial Formations and the Blues People.....9

 The Veil.....18

 Dialogism.....21

 Ritual Process.....23

 Organization.....25

 Interview: Post Civil Rights Traveler.....28

 Memoir: Belonging/Un-Belonging.....31

 References.....38

First Movement: The Script: A Narrative of Un-Belonging.....40

 The Genesis.....43

 The Second Coming.....48

 Constructing Race and Ambivalence.....50

 Rehearsal Scenes and Spaces of Sequestrations and Un-Belonging.....55

 Rehearsal Script.....59

 Reoccurring Characters.....62

 The Rehearsal and Performance of Memory.....64

 Interview: Who Will Tell the Story?71

Memoir: Rehearsals and Re-Enactments of Subjection.....	74
References.....	79
Second Movement: Rehearsing Religion.....	83
Between Heaven and Earth.....	89
Rehearsal Spaces: New Orleans.....	92
Rehearsal Spaces: Savannah.....	95
African Roots:	98
Memes of Recirculation: Water.....	101
Walking on Water.....	103
Rehearsing Transformation.....	105
Interview: Pictures of the Door of No Return.....	108
Memoir: Elberton, Georgia.....	112
References.....	118
Third Movement: Rehearsing the Musical Score.....	121
“Africa” in the Music of America.....	129
The Sea Islands: Recapitulated Spaces of Harmony.....	137
Congo Square: Recapitulated Spaces of Rhythm.....	142
Music in the Great Migration.....	149
The Dialectics of Sorrow and Transcendence.....	154
Interview: Training.....	158
Memoir: From Belonging to Un-Belonging.....	161
References.....	167

Fourth Movement: Performing Transformation: The Stage, the Script, the Producers and the Cast.....	171
The Stage.....	180
The Script.....	185
The Producers.....	189
The Casts.....	196
The Diasporic Cast.....	197
The Senegalese Cast.....	199
Recent Performances.....	201
Interview: Painted Horror.....	205
Memoir: Improvisation and Personal Narrative.....	208
References.....	215
Fifth Movement: Cool Down and Reintegration.....	219
Mourning and Melancholia.....	224
Remains.....	234
Fragments to Whole.....	241
Interview: Return to Gorée.....	246
Memoir: Life as a Work of Art.....	254
References.....	260
Coda:	263
Music.....	267
Theater.....	274
Art.....	276
Narratives.....	278

Popular Media Narratives.....	280
Political Narratives.....	282
Hollywood Narratives.....	286
School Narratives.....	289
Recapitulations.....	291
Interview: Saint Louis Blues.....	293
Memoir: Personal Connections.....	300
My Search for Belonging.....	301
Mount Kilimanjaro.....	301
Dar Es Salaam, Zanzibar, Mombasa, Nairobi.....	303
Uganda and Rwanda.....	305
Mali.....	306
Ghana.....	307
Togo.....	309
Haiti.....	309
Black Atlantic Connections.....	310
Morocco.....	310
Teaching.....	311
Hollywood.....	312
Fatherhood.....	313
Conclusion.....	314
References.....	320

Images.....	323
Bibliography:	338

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before embarking on the project of completing a Ph.D., I had not imagined the individuals I would need along the way who would assist me in moving through the maze of triumphs, obstacles, paradigm shifts, breakdowns, and breakthroughs. Through the process of developing a critical analysis and writing this dissertation, I learned about the solitude of writing and at the same time, I learned to seek out the help that I would need to finish the project. In every aspect of my network of advisors, family, and friends, I am sincerely grateful. I could not have envisioned the worlds I would travel both within and around the globe to complete this amazing journey. I could not have completed this project without such an understanding circle surrounding me.

First of all, I am deeply indebted to my committee. As co-chairs of the committee, both Cheryl Keyes and Christopher Waterman brought their unique perspectives to the research and the process. Cheryl Keyes made me aware of a magnificent library of foundational thinking in the field of African American Ethnomusicology, from which I began to imagine the music in its cultural context. Not only did her course help me to understand the historical evolution and context of African American music, I began to understand the inextricable religious, geographic, political, economic and narrative connections. Additionally, throughout the process, Cheryl Keyes always gave me unwavering support. Similarly, Christopher Waterman provided substantial moral and critical support throughout the process. As far back as 2000, well before he agreed to serve on my committee, I had seen him deliver a warm and supportive pedagogy to the students around him. After he agreed to serve on my committee many years later, that support never fluctuated. I could not have gotten through the process without his non-

judgmental and critical support. When I saw him tap out a complex polyrhythm on a table as a guest in the African Oral Traditions class I was assisting, I knew he had an astute ability to cross the chasm between theory and practice. Having studied many years ago in a conservatory of music, I had a particular idea about the relationship between theory and praxis. Both Cheryl Keyes and Christopher Waterman bridged their unique musical practices with theory, which made their contributions invaluable.

During every step on the course of starting and finishing the dissertation, David Delgado Shorter has offered support beyond measure. His commitment to teaching makes him stand out. During the development of the dissertation, when I wanted to take short cuts and rush through the process, David Shorter stood in his integrity and asked that I go back and start again. I will be forever thankful for his sharp analysis and commentaries throughout the writing process. I could not and would not have finished this project without his contributions.

Sometimes, we stumble upon literature, music and films that change the way we view the world. In the year of 2000, I took a course with Donald Cosentino on Nigerian Literature, which served as such a turning point. After I took a leave from school, I thought about that literature until I returned to UCLA in 2007 and could take other courses with Donald Cosentino. His courses in Black Atlantic Religions, Myth Analysis and Folklore gave me foundational knowledge that has continued to inform my studies. I am very thankful for his firm and constant support throughout the duration of my studies. Over the years, he and his wife, Henrietta, always welcomed me with open arms. Also, having the opportunity to serve as Don Cosentino's teaching associate during his courses of "Black Atlantic Religions" and "African Oral Traditions" gave me an additional knowledge base to carry out my analysis for this dissertation.

I am also indebted to Janna Shadduck-Hernandez. For three years, I served as a

teaching associate with Janna her for the course “Arts in Communities.” Not only does Janna possess an impressive knowledge of arts resources throughout the diverse communities in Los Angeles, she also demonstrates a passionate commitment to social justice through her work at the UCLA Labor Center. She has worked tirelessly with groups around Los Angeles dealing with justice for immigrants, low-wage workers, and students who only know the United States as their home but who were not born in the country. During my association with Janna, she demonstrated an attitude of respect towards me that I will always appreciate.

I also served as teaching associate for Peter Sellars for several quarters for the courses “Art as Social Action” and “Art as Moral Action.” In these classes, I watched as Peter captivated an auditorium of 400 undergraduates through his impassioned call to action. Each week, he wove his exhaustive knowledge of activists, artists and philosophers with his own stories of impactful experiences that left the students inspired. Peter made each of the students feel as if they are an important piece of the puzzle. I will remain grateful for his generosity of time and spirit and his demonstration of positive influence.

None of my recent experiences at UCLA would have been possible without my association with the African Studies Center. I first became aware their impact when I participated in their “Teachers as Scholars” program and their “Summer Institutes.” I had already started my independent travel around Africa at the time but what I learned through their programs added immensely. It was through these programs that I first met Allen F. Roberts. As Director of the African Studies Center at that time, he informed me of aspects of Senegal that I had not experienced in my travel. Through his inspiration, I continued to travel to Senegal numerous times. I will always thank Al Roberts for seeing my keen interests in the country. I am additionally deeply thankful to Polly Roberts, who alongside Al, made profound

contributions to the study of Mourides in Senegal. They established an important foundation in the understanding of the Senegalese Sufi movement. Through their research and influence, I formed some fond and close relationships with members of the community in Senegal. I am also indebted to Polly for his course on “Memory,” which gave me a new perspective on how we view, embody and retell things that happened long ago.

Also from the African Studies Center, I am indebted to Andrew Apter, Francoise Lionnet, Sheila Breeding and especially Azeb Tadesse. Over the years, Sheila’s diligence, competence, and dedication always made it easy to go into the office for any help I might have needed. Through the center, I traveled to Morocco with Azeb through the UCLA Fulbright-Hays GPA, first as a participant and subsequently for two years as the curriculum coordinator. This program opened up tremendous opportunities for deepening my learning about North Africa and Islam. The program also gave me an opportunity to develop long-term relationships with committed teachers from around the county. Over the years, I have turned to Azeb because of her deep knowledge of various aspects of Africa.

Besides the considerable support I received from the faculty and staff at UCLA, I am also thankful for the opportunity to be in an environment of such great students. Some of the students really stand out in my mind. My cohort provided great opportunities to exchange ideas, especially that first year. Mathew Sandoval, Yehuda Sharim, CedarBough Saeji, Lorenzo Perillo, and Marjan Vayghn all added to my learning curve immensely. Others from the School of Art and Architecture who also influenced me include, Giavanni Washington, Wes Days, Damola Osinulu, Anthony Blodiovic, Leonard Melchor, Hayley Safonov, Sharon Clark, and Lara Rann.

Without the people I interviewed for this project, I would have no dissertation. I am so grateful to Theresa Anderson, Carol Bacon, Samad Raheem Guerra, Denise Hamilton, Estella

Holeman, Dennis Jones, and Maxine Williams-Gboizo. I am deeply appreciative of their time, analysis, memories and honesty. Their contributions helped to shape the arc of my analysis in sometimes surprising ways. They helped to tell the story of Gorée and raise the voices of the ancestors who still sing through our memories.

I am overwhelmed with the support that I received from the University of Maryland at College Park during my participation in the 2015 Worldwide Arts and Humanities Dean's Lecture Series: Art, Peacebuilding and Social Change. I am particularly thankful to Karen Kohn Bradley, who I first met in 1979 as I took my first dance classes at the University of the Pacific. I am also very thankful for the welcome that I received from the dean and associate dean, Bonnie Thornton Dill and Sheri Parks. Along with Ashley Richardson Miller and Alvin Mayes, I will remember their flawless welcome for a long time.

The Department of Art History at Emory University also offered support for the symposium: Critical Encounters, in Honor of Sidney Littlefield Kasfir. I appreciate the support and welcome that I received from Sidney Littlefield Kasfir, Elizabeth Hornor and Peri Klemm.

During my first tenure as a graduate student at UCLA in the School of Theater, Film and Television, several people meant so much to me in the process of completing an MFA in Film Producing. I am very thankful for Howard Suber for his support over the course of 25 years, Denise Mann for her efforts to assist me in completing the degree and Lew Hunter for her mentorship in screenwriting. At Cal State LA, I am thankful to Joanne Gordon for her passionate belief that theater can make a difference in the world. From the University of the Pacific, so many people from the Conservatory of Music and the Theater Department held up a young man from a small town in Georgia and gave me the experiences I would need to go out into the world. I appreciate Karen Bradley, Dale Fjersted, William Dehning, William Wolak,

Darell Persels, and Sandy Persels.

To my bothers and sisters: Janice, Charles, Terry, Patricia, Barbara, Aurolyn, and Sandra, thank you for being examples of the nicest people I know and for being role models as my older siblings. Thank you for clearing the pathway. I am also thankful to my daughter Umalali and her mothers, Lorna and Nicole. Thank you all for your many gifts to me.

So many friends have supported me through this process: Eisha Mason, Barbara Hunter, Donna LaBrie, Melba Neal, Paulette Donald, Amina Humphrey, Tonikiáa Orange, Sholanda Proctor, Teri Young, Ramona Moralez, Jennifer Edwards, Dawn Banks, Susan Jamerson, Jacquelyn Mack, Gingi Rochelle, Giselle Lee, Rachelle Robinson, Cherise Pounders, Wendy Goldman, Katie Morrison, Mary Grosso, Francesco Ortman, Rosemary Vaughn, Maggie Smith, Lorraine Edwardsen, Anna Scott, Deborah Silverman, Madge Woods, Debi Smith, Julie Gage, Marilyn Levy, Marlon John, Denise McKee, Kathleen Hunt, Ellen DeLeston, Ruth Gooley and the French group, all the fellow teachers from the Fulbright program, the teaching staff at Crescent Heights Language Arts Social Justice Magnet, Hobart Elementary, Alto Loma; and all of my friends from Senegal who made the time on the ground in the country rewarding and interesting. Thanks you.

Curriculum Vitae William Hamm

EDUCATION

UCLA Department of World Arts and Culture – PhD Candidate

Currently studying various areas of interests such as Critical Race Theory, African American and African Ethnomusicology, Slavery in the United States, Black Atlantic Diasporas, Mouride Movements in Senegal, Arts in Public Education, American Popular Media.

Dissertation Title:

Destination Gorée: A Dialogic Analysis of the Dialectic of Un-Belonging and Belonging As Rehearsed and Performed Through Diasporic Tourism.

Committee:

Christopher Waterman, (Co-Chair,) Cheryl Keyes, (Co-Chair,) David Shorter, Donald Cosentino

UCLA Department of Theater, Film, Television, **MFA** - Film Producing, 2010

California State University, Northridge, - Education Specialist Credential, 2003

California State University, Los Angeles, Theater Department, **MA** – Theater, 1985

University of the Pacific, Conservatory of Music, **BM** – Music, 1983

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Associate, UCLA World Arts and Culture
Art as Moral Action

Teaching Associate, UCLA World Arts and Culture
Art as Social Action

Teaching Associate, UCLA World Arts and Culture
African Oral Traditions

Teaching Associate, UCLA World Arts and Culture
Arts in Communities

Teaching Associate, UCLA World Arts and Culture
Black Atlantic Religions

Lecturer, California State University, Dominguez Hills
Public Speaking

Additional K – 12 Teaching Experiences

Upon Request

PUBLISHED BOOK REVIEWS

(2011) Review of *Ousmane Sembène: The Making of a Militant Artist* by Samba Gadjigo, translated by Moustapha Diop, Forward by Danny Glover. In *African Arts*: MIT Press Journals.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

(2011) Presenter: *Black Is, Black Ain't: Reconceptualizing the African Diaspora, An Interdisciplinary Symposium*. Indiana University, Bloomington: "Rags, Gumbo and the Bittersweet: Reframing Hegemonic Memory in the Black Atlantic Through Lessons from Gorée Island."

(2011) Presenter *Critical Encounters: A Symposium in Honor of Sidney Littlefield Kasfir*. Emory University. "Return to Gorée: Examining the Experience of Cultural Tourism in Dakar, Denegal."

(2011) Presenter: *African Studies Association Annual Meeting*. Washington, D. C. "A Saint, An Apostle and a Movement: An Analysis of the Baye Falls as an Urban Spiritual Tradition in Dakar."

AWARDS HONORS

University of Maryland, Dean's World Wise Lecture Series, 2015
Featured Speaker

UCLA Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad Morocco, Curriculum Coordinator, 2011.
Facilitated teachers from around the United States in developing diverse curricula during a six-week stay in Morocco.

UCLA Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad Morocco, Curriculum Coordinator, 2010.
Facilitates teachers from around the United States in developing diverse curricula during a five-week stay in Morocco.

UCLA Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad Morocco, Curriculum Coordinator, 2009.
Participated in a five-week program to develop a curriculum focusing on Gnaoua Movements in Morocco.

Summer Mentorship Award, UCLA

Studied African oral traditions in Mali and "Sites of Memory" of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Ghana and Senegal.

Destination Gorée

Each year, thousands of pilgrims cross the heaving waters between Gorée Island and Dakar, Senegal to visit *La Maison des Esclaves*, the Slave House that sits on the western edge of the island. Gorée Island, one of the greatest treasures of Senegal, lies 1.2 miles off the coast of the metropolis capital. The tiny island, merely forty-five acres in size and home to one thousand inhabitants, attracts attention from all over the world. Numerous times each day, ferries leave the dock at the port of Dakar, filled with international tourists, local beach goers, enterprising tour guides and souvenir sellers. Vendors with sand and reverse glass paintings, women with baskets filled with brightly colored beads on their heads and old men with detailed wood carvings move through the bustling boat to find people who want to take a little piece of Africa back to their respective homes. All of these vibrant exchanges started with the life mission of one man, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye. Curator of the little slave house since the 1960s, Ndiaye dedicated his life to retelling the story of the triangular slave trade. Since his death in 2009, the small structure on the island has continued to attract visitors from around the Black Atlantic and world leaders such as American presidents, throughout the year. During his tenure as curator, Ndiaye frequently delivered a masterful monologue on the horrors of the slave trade and the atrocities that occurred within the walls of the memorial slave house.

Today, descendants of slavery mark the Slave House as an important mnemonic for healing the dark legacy of slavery, and world leaders elevate Gorée Island as a significant stage for performing decrees of “never again.” Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye claimed that millions of slaves left Gorée Island, “never to see Africa, again.” However, since the 1980s scholars have refuted his claims and deemed the island as insignificant compared to other locations in Africa that sit at the mouths of great rivers. Research has documented large slave factories at such estuaries as Saint Louis in Senegal, and the Gambia and the Casamance Rivers, in the nearby

regions, as more important sites of departure. No such grand river flows near Dakar. These scholars note great waterways like the Volta, Sierra Leone and Congo Rivers as critical transit channels in the transport of millions slaves. The preeminent scholar of the Atlantic Slave Trade, Phillip Curtin, submitted that possibly as few as one hundred slaves passed through Gorée Island each year.¹ Still, thousands of diasporic tourists pass through the portal of the little house each year on their return to Gorée.

Bayo Holsey proposes that for those who make these pilgrimages, the slave dungeons evoke the “horrors of the slave trade and the suffering and struggle of black people.” She calls these pilgrims “well-seasoned travelers.” In other words, she proposes, these travelers have been there before-- such “diaspora tourists are primed for what they encounter in the slave dungeons,”² and their profound emotional reactions suggest the awakening of deeply engrained collective memories. I maintain that this having “been there before,” lies in the earliest codes that the first slaves embedded deep within their consciousness and that permeated their storytelling, their music, their bodies, and their very beings. From the bellies of the slave ships to their bows, the slaves learned the distinction of their public and private selves. They encoded the space between the profane and the sacred. In that dualistic state, in the space in between, exists the whole person where the coexistence of the bifurcated consciousness synthesizes.

In one moment of time, the slaves learned how to simultaneously hold the dark and the light, the horrible and the hopeful. Choreographer David Roussève called this dialectic the “bitter/sweet.”³ Through the “bittersweet,” the individual does not negate the existential angst or the sorrow and pain of life. She simultaneously holds a space for transcendence into freedom, deliverance and home. For example, in Roussève’s dance-theater piece *Saudade*, he explores “that single moment when the greatest joy and agony are experienced together.”⁴ In one of the

monologues, a character reveals being raped by her master in a tiny cabin and at the same time, she finds solace in squeezing her sister's hand right outside the small enclosure. African American performances have maintained this dialectic of the bittersweet through music, story telling, dance and sermons. The "well-seasoned traveler" knows the brutality of her master's whip and can simultaneously sing with assurance, "and, before I'd be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave." Crossing the portal of *La Maison des Esclaves* on Gorée Island, the pilgrims are called to stand in the liminal space of their imagined recollections of slavery and their intangible knowledge of freedom. They bring to the Slave House their tortured experiences that the shadows of slavery have cast and their coinciding steadfastness in knowing the divine. They have come to the little house to purge their blistering memories of un-belonging and to find solace with the ancestors. In the betwixt and the between, the pilgrims weep, some moan, and others solemnly walk through the little house, touching the walls as if to feel the spirits of their ancestors. This transformative cathartic response that occurs in the liminality of the slave house closes the rupture of the shadows of slavery, if only momentarily.

Between the harsh conditions of slavery and the choice to transcend those conditions, slaves encoded repeated memes that would recirculate throughout African American narratives. At the slave house on Gorée Island, tourists recall these memes that have echoed throughout Sunday morning worship services, lyrical verses from the Harlem Renaissance, and sorrow-filled blues. In these narratives, transcendence always comes. Bayo Holsey asserts that these responses derive from prepared positions and that these emplacements in the slave dungeons come from a long tradition in African American discourse. What she refers to as "being primed," I prefer to call "rehearsed." I would argue that diasporic pilgrims have encountered the in-between space of existential experiences under the darkness of the institution of slavery and a

concurrent epistemology that heaven was at hand. From the shackles of slavery, to the lynching nooses of Jim Crow, the indefinable systemic alienation of the “color-blind society,” and the re-emergence of Jim Crow in the “post racial society;” well-seasoned travelers have traversed liminality between the harsh and the sublime in order to find their personhood. From the earliest accounts in North America, Africans and their descendants have retold stories of violence and terror. Even though the most extremely violent acts of the first five centuries have diminished, the history of African American lineage continues to carry forward tales of micro-aggression and brutal injustice. These extended encounters add to an environment of un-belonging for African Americans which they have sought to remedy through their cultural practices. Particularly through the use of music, slave descendants have inextricably woven into the practice of their every day lives and their religious ceremonies a recapitulation of the dialectic of harsh experiences and spiritual determination.

In the slave sites, these travelers find their power, their gifts, and their very survival. In the same space where slaves found ways to live through their brutal realities, diasporic tourists have long rehearsed their transformation. Using the metaphors of music and the theater, I will analyze the “performance of transformation” that occurs at sites of memory such as the Slave House on Gorée Island. By engaging dialogues between ethnographic recordings, interviews, historical data, news reports, and memoir, I will explore the transformational process experienced by diasporic tourists as demonstrated by the phenomenon of the popularity of sites such as Gorée. I will investigate the factors of diasporic tourism as a means of redressing cultural alienation by situating the dialectic of un-belonging and belonging within the framework of Richard Schechner’s Seven-Step Ritual Process.⁵

From deep within Africa, along the Congo, the Gambia, Niger, Casamance, Senegal, Volta, and Zambezi Rivers, slavers raided villages and carried Africans to estuaries along the Atlantic and Indian Coasts, holding them captive in slave factories like Elmina, Cape Coast, Bunce Island, Saint Louis, Quidah, and Quelimane. In the African slave trade, Europeans set up trading posts along the coast where great rivers poured into the ocean. At these portals, they made relationships with enterprising Africans who would travel into the heart of the continent to capture other humans. The grand waterways served as thoroughfares for trafficking as the smugglers captured strangers on their greedy and heartless peregrinations back towards the ocean. They filled their boats with terrorized captives from different villages and carried them to human factories along the coasts where waiting ships would then carry them to distant lands. For many, their last visions of “home” were from the boats along beatified rivers that carried them to the prisons on the coasts. Blessed by the blood of their beaten and shackled bodies, the rivers held the essence of their memories. The deep moaning rivers had taken them away, the same hallowed rivers that would continue to call them home. Since the beginning, slaves planted the idea of going “home” into their songs, stories, dance, worship, and music. Standing at the waters at the Door of No Return on Gorée Island, travelers summon the old people’s voices, humming songs of travel to the water to be baptized and reborn anew.

Creolization of Theory

The slaves who arrived at the ports in the United States came from many parts of Africa. These Africans synthesized languages, religions, musical traditions and every aspect of culture. Over time, they created a vast quilt of diversity stitched together by unifying threads that would make up African American culture. The story of African American diasporic tourists cannot be told as an isolated or unified event. These narratives have evolved over time, stitched together

from scraps of experience and pieces of stories lived and recounted long before the tourists arrived at the Door of No Return.

Like the fragments that make up the polychromatic whole cloth of African Americans themselves, various theories must be woven together to explain the pieces of the quilt that constitute the descendants of slaves. No one theory can tell the whole story. Therefore, in this dissertation I employ a variety of theoretical ideas, emphasizing the work of scholars from around the Black Atlantic and from differing eras. Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih call this merging of theory *The Creolization of Theory*. They contend that Euro-American theories may not offer the flexibility and dynamics needed for reciprocal and asymmetrical exchanges required in the Postcolonial age. Lionnet and Shih want to “encourage scholars to see historical, social, political, and cultural issues as forming part of a creolized system of knowledge.” Noting the transformative potential of critical theory for untangling uneven exchanges in a global society, and the importance of institutional developments such as the emergence of ethnic studies departments, Lionnet and Shih argue that the Creolization of Theory is “an intervention that underscores the mutually constituted nature of both sociocultural realities and intellectual formations.” Creolized theory allows for “polycentricity” and the multiplicity of reciprocal voices and decolonized thought.⁶

Often, the silenced voices of slavery and the shadows of slavery go unheard in the broader discourse of the American Narrative. Book publishers, curriculum creators, legislative bodies, and mainstream storytellers have often negated the existence of the slaves. As Edward Baptist advances in *The Half Had Never Been Told*, histories have not enunciated the importance of African slaves in establishing American and European world status.⁷ The slaves no longer exist and cannot directly speak for themselves. Dwight McBride calls these quieted voices

“impossible witnesses.”⁸ Like the discrete patches that make up the diverse stories of diasporic tourists, these voices form a polyphonic chorus that speaks indirectly through their passed-on songs, and narratives. They also speak through slave ship manifests and sales receipts that tell from where they came. From runaway slave posters, they declare their unique existence as musicians, artisans, builders, and skilled laborers. They whisper from unmarked gravesites at Lower Manhattan and Lower Louisiana. They call out in lone and distinct voices that combine to make a multi-layered chorus. At the Door of No Return, they nudge the diasporic tourists. Through dialogical engagement over the discourse of slavery, I want to help un-mute those voices and contribute to the multi-vocal story of slavery and the shadows that it continues to cast onto American life.

In this introduction, I have been using the metaphor of the quilt as a way to talk about the dialectic of African American historical experience and identity. Jacqueline L. Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard analyzed quilts from the Underground Railroad to decode the “secret stories” of the slaves.⁹ They recognized the patterns, symbols and stitches that the slaves used to piece together what we now know as guideposts and signs for escape to the North in the Underground Railroad. These quilts, like griots invisible to the unknowing eye, transmitted the pathways to the slaves’ survival. In a similar way, in their everyday practices, the slaves pieced together swaths of knowledge that they carried from the many places they had come. To understand these seeming random panels and fragments of knowledge, one must be able to “read” the symbols. As not every piece of the quilt holds the same meaning, every different pair of eyes will yield a different set of meanings. Each contrasting scrap would intersect together to form one unified patchwork of knowledge and experiences.

Similarly, held together by a unifying oppressive institution, the swatches that together make up the story of the African slaves in the United States involve contrasting stories of patriarchy, class, religion, and race. Kimberlé Crenshaw, for example, looks through the lens of “intersectionality” to analyze the interaction of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation as a way of understanding the multiple factors that contribute to oppression.¹⁰ This approach offers a means for analyzing patterns across time and location in the context of oppressive power. The unifying frame of American law, race, class, and power have held divergent voices into one whole cloth, a complex, multi-stranded process that has sometimes appeared to promote justice, while essentially maintaining longstanding patterns of social inequality. The Emancipation Proclamation, Reconstruction, Civil Rights legislation, and the election of the first African American president all appeared to bring about an increase in racial justice in the United States, yet class disparities along racial lines persist.

Against this unifying backdrop of American legal and cultural practices, I use the creolization of theoretical ideas to explore the intersection of time, political contexts, religion, ethnicity, and gender as these have shaped the dialectic of un-belonging and belonging that have characterized African American experience and identity. To illuminate the stages of rehearsal and performance of transformation among diasporic tourists on Gorée Island, I draw from such theoretical frameworks as Critical Race Theory, Black Atlantic Religious Studies, Ethnomusicology, Tourist Studies, and Performance Studies.

Racial Formations and the Blues People

As biology has proven, the underlying genetic unity of humans connects us all as one species, *Homo sapiens*. However, over time, various powerful entities have created racial difference through hierarchical ordering. Race, a social construction, has served hegemonic

powers and supported the oppression of less powerful groups. Nell Painter, in *The History of White People*, traces the construction of race, beginning with the European civilizations. She demonstrates how social constructions, through the recent DNA discoveries, disprove racial classifications. Painter explicates the early classifications of early British cultures that would eventually migrate and populate the early colonies. She situates these early these early classifications and how they would inform the thinking founding fathers such as Thomas Jefferson and philosophers like Ralph Waldo Emerson. Early in the American project, politicians like Jefferson inscribed superiority into the hegemony of the United States. This superiority would weave into the seams of the legal and mythic fabrics recirculate through the centuries that followed.

In the early days of the American colonies, societal categorizations included constructed statuses such as free men, indentured servants, and property owners. In the beginning, entrepreneurs captured children, women from brothels, and alleged criminals to use for free labor in the United States, scouring the streets of London for victims. Later, wealthy property owners held Irish as slaves, even though they descended from similar ancestors as the British. (It could be argued that the English at the time did not consider the Irish to be “white” people, in the contemporary sense of the term.) Since the beginning, economic class has always been complexly related with classifications of status and race in the United States. Early settlers inextricably wove class and race together to determine which rung of the ladder one occupied. This knotted relationship formed a pattern that continues to shape American social relations today.

In the beginning, wealthy male property owners held the highest position and power of classifications in the colonies, and only men with property could vote. As the ethnic makeup of

the colonies changed, so did the classifications. Classifications of races have also changed over time for most ethnic groups in the United States. As slavers brought more Africans to the colonies and the need for white labor decreased, the position of poor whites improved. Former white slaves became the overseers who would patrol the slaves. They garrisoned the tobacco and cotton fields, wielding their newfound status within the matrix of capitalistic enterprises. Their economic livelihood depended on maintaining the hierarchy. While they did not possess the same power as wealthy slave owners, they could survive above the harsh conditions of the slaves as they profited from surveiling and controlling the slaves. As slave populations increased, wealthy property owners eventually extended the right to vote to non-property-owning white men, beginning in 1792. In 1868 the Fourteenth Amendment, which addressed citizenship rights and granted equal protection under the law, granted former male slaves the right to vote. However, the states soon began enacting codes that restricted the ability of black men to vote. Some states ratified laws that required that black men own property while some other states concocted complicated literacy tests. Especially in the south, states wrote laws that grandfathered voting rights to white men but required onerous requirements for black men. The struggle over voting rights, including local attempts to apply unfair competency tests, continues today in the United States a half a century after the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The slavery project in the United States relied on the devaluation of the slaves. Once the slaves were captured and bound in chains, the slavers, rich white men, could tell the story of these Africans who had come from diverse linguistic, religious, and ethnic groups. Some of the slaves had descended from strong matriarchal lineages while others had come from patrilineages. Some practiced Christianity while others professed Islam. They had all come from varied ways of listening to and honoring the spirits of nature, destiny, and change. The Africans had arrived

in America with many different stories to tell, but the slavers reduced them to a people with a monolithic narrative that would suit the needs of the masters and their continued accumulation of wealth. Michael Omi and Howard Winant have described a racial formation as the “sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed.” They hypothesize that race is formed through projects in which humans are represented and organized: “a racial project is simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines.”¹¹ Since the beginning, these racial projects have always been inextricably intertwined with the acquisition of capital.

Even before their encroachment on indigenous lands in America, early settlers had crossed the Atlantic with a layered system of entitlement embedded with the intention of gaining more capital. First, they came with enslaved Europeans. They had raided encroached lands from peasants in England. Wealthy men invaded brothels and jailed women that they would send to America, the new Promised Land. From the streets, they snatched up innumerable children, to fill the hellish hulls of ships bound for the new lands. Even as parents protested, they captured their soon-to-be white slaves. Some who would make the voyage across had signed up as indentured servants. Even for many of those “free-willers,” their masters would extend their servitude beyond their contracts. From Ireland, enterprising captors abducted and imprisoned a labor force that would assist in settling the original colonies. Once on the American soil and armed with stolen British and Irish bodies, the settlers could more easily capture land from the indigenous populations. The project of colonization and usurpation of land was supported by the logic of racial classification, in which culturally and linguistically diverse native peoples were denigrated. Now on new lands, the British businessmen used the white slaves in establishing the

foundation for the triangular Trans-Atlantic Slave trade. As Don Jordan and Michael Walsh write in *White Cargo: The Forgotten History of Britain's White Slaves in America*, "a creation myth has flourished in which early American settlers are portrayed as free men and women who created a democratic and egalitarian model society more or less from scratch."¹² Colonial America arose from appropriated lands and was initially built on the backs of poor, non-landowning British and Irish people.

While the African slave trade, driven by the Dutch and Portuguese, flourished in the Caribbean in the early Seventeenth Century, slavery in Virginia consisted of non-African slaves. According to Jordan and Walsh, even after the first African slaves arrived in Virginia in 1619, decades would pass before large numbers of Africans would arrive in Virginia.¹² Eventually, as encroachments on American lands expanded and settlers realized the profits they could make through the growth of such products as cotton and tobacco, the need for more labor also increased. Capitalists saw how an expansion of the African slave trade to Virginia could solve that problem. Once they began capturing and selling African slaves, planters and traders cast the slaves as a lower, less civilized group as they were transported across the ocean.

The population of African slaves expanded during the early Eighteenth Century. By the time of the arrival of the masses of African slaves, the elite property owners had already mastered the system of hierarchies that favored their special interests. They had enacted laws in their favor that left non-property owners at a disadvantage. Omi and Winant employ Antonio Gramsci's notion of *hegemony* as means to explain how European settlers in the United States created a hierarchical system of repression in the United States for Native Americans and Africans.¹¹ Gramsci had written in *the Prison Notebooks* on the process of cultural hegemony in creating hierarchical societies in which lower classes enroll into their own oppression by

accepting as “common sense” values promoted by their oppressor, such as religion, popular media and education.¹³ In the early formation of racial hierarchies, the Europeans used weapons and force to capture African slaves and to bound them into servitude. They then created a narrative that supported their elevated lot in life and at the same time legitimized the oppression of others. I propose that even before the Africans arrived, the slave owners had to have had a system in place that would insure the maintenance of their power. At the outset, the established property class devised narratives of capricious children, evil prostitutes, and deviant criminals running around London to rationalize their thievery. This entitled the capture and transport of free European-born labor throughout the Sixteenth Century, so that by the time the masses of Africans arrived, a well-rehearsed system of oppression was already in place.

On the slave plantations, slave owners used practices of public torture to punish slaves for misbehavior that sent a clear message to all the other slaves that they must submit. No longer needing to use direct force, slave owners used coercion and consent as essential for the continuance of rule. This is akin to Gramsci’s idea of hegemony in which ruling groups maintain power through a shared popular system of ideas, or “common sense.”¹³ These notions could be produced and disseminated through schooling, the church, and popular culture. In this process, the governed, in essence, consented to their own subjugation, a process that moves from explicit domination to hegemony. As the institution of slavery developed over time, slave owners no longer had to use weapons and chains as their primary source of maintaining power. I propose that racial formations, with their early foundations of white slavery of America, resurfaced as a tool for oppression and capitalism. The fundamental ideology that values securing wealth over honoring the dignity of personhood has morphed into various institutions and cultural forms, helping elites maintain hegemonic control.

While slaves never completely submitted to the institution of slavery, they performed the act of slavery with varying degrees of coercion and consent. Some toiled in sight of their masters and plotted their escape at the same time. Others bravely resisted even if it meant death. Many performed their jobs, unable and unwilling to face the alternatives. The masters of slavery had systematically instituted ways of forcing the slaves to comply. For example, rather than watching family members tortured or taken away, many slaves complied with the demands of their overseers. The masters devised actions that insured the slaves' consent.

To understand the conversion between coercion and consent, I propose the concept of *ambivalence* as used by Freud, who believed that the coexistence of contradictory emotions functioned in the dichotomies of mourning and melancholia. He states that, "melancholia contains something more than normal mourning." Ambivalence, a necessary component of melancholia, keeps the individual stuck in a complicated conflict. I offer that this continuous state of internal conflict and ambivalence oscillates between coercion and consent. The oppressed slaves moved towards consent as they took on the narratives of the oppressor as a means of survival. In essence, the ambivalent oppressed slave adopted the refrain of, "well, things could always be worse." In the Colonies, the former white slaves accepted the ambivalent trope when the African slaves arrived. As all slaves were subject to various degrees of oppression and rewards from the slave owners, the higher positioned slaves rehearsed and repeated the ambivalent role while the slaves in the lower positions aspired to rise to the higher oppressed position. Since the Colonial days, this dynamic has repeated throughout the American narrative. Carter G. Woodson, the son of slaves and the second African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard, after W. E. B. Du Bois ably describes how this functions in relationships of oppression in the *Mid-Education of the Negro*:

If you can control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his action. When you determine what a man shall think you do not have to concern yourself about what he will do. If you make a man feel that he is inferior, you do not have to compel him to accept an inferior status, for he will seek it himself. If you make a man think that he is justly an outcast, you do not have to order him to the back door. He will go without being told; and if there is no back door, his very nature will demand one.¹⁴

Perfecting the systems of hierarchy in the early days, elites first used coercive force over powerless people that they transported from England and Ireland to America. Then, enacting laws and narratives in their favor, they prompted many to submit. With the arrival of the Africans, this submission became easier and the new narrative cast the former white slaves as superior to the African slaves. As slave owners could more easily classify Africans because of their darker skins, they developed racial projects through slave traders, governments and religious organizations that placed them at the bottom. Over time, these projects were disseminated through theater, radio, politicians, corporations and media monopolies. These formations have changed from blatant aggressive appropriation of human bodies to subtle institutional micro-aggressions, negations, stereotyping and hostilities. I will refer to this continuance of these intertwining structures as “racial formations” throughout this dissertation, as these recapitulations play an important element in the context of rehearsal spaces and the transformational process.

To use a musical metaphor, the development of African American racial formations in the United States can be thought of as broadly similar to jazz compositions where identifiable themes are recapitulated, each musical phrase commenting on a bygone memory or embellishing a fact or condition from the past. Like the multi-layered parts of a great jazz work by Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington, racial formations are made up of divergent voices merging into a complex, multilayered, bittersweet totality. Claude Lévi-Strauss employed the metaphor of the

musical score when describing myth.¹⁵ Applying this analogy to the melancholic yet transcendent score of American racial formations, one could identify motifs that began long before capitalistic enterprises were initiated on the eastern shores of the United States.

Since the beginning, the use of racial projects has been inextricably woven into the discursive arc by myth, religion, music and law. Since the inception of the slave trade, the expectant motif of the “return to Africa” motif has simultaneously clashed against the confines of racial projects through various stages of the shadow of slavery, including the period of slavery itself, the period of Jim Crow, and the Post Colonial/Civil Rights Era. Slaves encoded the melancholic/transcendent binary of their existence into the music with harmonies and melodies that challenged or just ignored the distinction between “major” and “minor” chords that is central to much European art and popular music. Major chords are stereotypically associated with positive or happy emotions, while minor chords are frequently linked with sadness and melancholy in the European tradition. Whereas European classical music often used the diatonic scale, early African American music used the flattened 3rd, 5th and 7th of the scale, sometimes called “blues notes”. Amiri Baraka, formerly Leroi Jones, referred to slaves and their descendants as “blues people” because of the deep relationship between this encoded music and the harsh realities of the lives of slaves and their descendants.¹⁶ The ambivalence of the blues came out of the initial unequal encounter of African and European cultures under slavery and has continued throughout the history of African American music. Within every blues progression, the pain of everyday life meanders to find its way back home to the transcendent state. Commenting on Ma Rainey’s rendition of “Ya Da Do,” Angela Davis illumines the singer’s lyrics with the claim that the blues and its “harmonizing minor refrain” can take away your pain.¹⁷ Davis argues “the power of the blues to exorcise black people’s emotional anguish is

successfully and buoyantly praised here.” Music and the African American experience cannot be separated. For this reason, I have devoted a chapter of this dissertation to music as a crucial medium for transcendence from un-belonging to belonging, from sorrow to joy, and from pain to freedom.

The Veil

On the tightly packed slave ships, captured human beings cried out in the dungeons below the deck as they suffocated in the stench of vomit, waste, sweat and dead bodies. As their captors unshackled them, paraded them on the decks, and demanded that they dance, they danced. From those moments on the deck, they learned the dance of survival that would carry them for the rest of their lives and the lives of their children. On those ships, they showed their captors what they wanted to see. As they soaked in the abundant salty air of the ocean, free from the bloody shackles that contained them, they learned the dance of ambivalence; weaving through the in-between spaces of survival and death, compliance and rebellion, submission and freedom, and torture and pleasure. While they maneuvered through the dichotomies that ambivalence holds, they held the simultaneous split of complying with the cruel traffickers and maintaining their abilities to hope and dream. The tortured beings did whatever they could to receive the minimal pleasures of the slave deck by pleasing the overseers. Below the slave deck, they sank into the reality of their torture where they plotted and dreamed of returning home. They learned to perform on both sides of the veil that W. E. B. Du Bois described.¹⁸ In front of their masters they acquiesced, but in the privacy of their shared spaces with other Africans, they imagined their escapes. This act of “two-ness” would inform every aspect of their public lives. The roots of the bifurcated expressions would sprout up in music, quilting, language, art and religion. On the one side, the masters could understand the slaves’ demonstrations but they

remained blind and deaf to the simultaneous coded life that lived alongside the seeming conformity of the slaves. Throughout the history of oppression of the slaves and their descendants, these coded distinctions have persisted. In the contemporary era, where many descendants of slavery navigate through disproportionate power structures, the idea of the veil still lingers.

As the asymmetry of these structures continues, many African Americans live within the constrained legacy of demarcated public spaces, inequitable opportunities, and unequal legal remedies where they find themselves systematically excluded. They survive in and through states of alienation and exclusion. The term I use for these alienated states is *un-belonging*. Throughout the history of racial formations in the United States, this state of un-belonging has had many different faces. Certainly, on the slave plantations, when captors sequestered slaves onto places “where they belonged,” slaves understood how to limit their own freedoms for fear of punishment. After slavery, these sequestrations continued through brutal systems of prison lease programs and Jim Crow. These sequestered spaces have lingered in different manifestations over the course of American history. From these sequestered spaces, when slaves and former slaves tried to create security within their community as outside these spaces, they often also found terror. They often survived by employing the doubled expressions that they created for their survival and also their transcendence.

After Reconstruction, politicians instituted laws such as vagrancy laws that insured the imprisonment of former slaves for not having jobs. These former slaves were then imprisoned and leased out to corporations for profit. During slavery when the lives of the captive were valued, former slaves were murdered at high rates and easily replaced by other imprisoned vagrants. Profiteering from cheap labor during these times relied heavily on the idea of un-

belonging. Another example of un-belonging could be seen with the institution of Jim Crow laws where whites lynched thousands of black and poor citizens who had found themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time. During this time, sharecropping also played an important role in institutionalizing the consciousness of un-belonging. Many sharecroppers were sequestered on lands as workers with the notion that their labor would allow them to stay on the land and consume a portion of the crops. Often, these sharecroppers never left their land, essentially reinstating them as slaves through another system. During the Great Migration, where millions of former slaves migrated to the North and the West, migrants settled in areas where they had contacts or in places where other African Americans were known to live. Many migrants did not find the Promised Land that they had imagined in the North and West. They often resettled in areas surrounded by hostile white communities, living in rehearsal spaces of un-belonging.

These racial formations continued well after the end of sharecropping, Jim Crow, and the Great Migration. The consciousness of un-belonging has been disseminated and enforced through Ku Klux Klan patrols, demographically unrepresentative police forces, “whites only” religious organizations, limited employment, segregated schools transformed into so-called voucher programs and charter schools, government subsidized housing, and economically depressed living conditions. This consciousness of un-belonging can also be tied to specific events in history. For example, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina (2005), media personalities referred to the victims of the disaster as “refugees,” a term more correctly used for identifying those fleeing governments or political persecution. On February 26, 2012, George Zimmerman shot and killed Trayvon Martin because he thought the 17-year-old did not belong in a predominantly white gated community in Florida. In fact, the boy was staying with his father who lived there. A jury later found Zimmerman “not guilty” of murder. The jury essentially

gave greater value to Zimmerman's right to protect property than to the boy's life, a verdict that must be interpreted in the context of the history of sequestration of African Americans. Michelle Alexander calls the proliferation of mass incarcerations of people of color by the private prison complex "The New Jim Crow."¹⁹ Through these and similar racial projects, the consciousness of un-belonging has persisted from slavery to today's real estate "red lining," banking foreclosure programs, and for-profit prisons. Today, reminiscent of slave auctions, insurance sales for slave ships and commodities trading in the Colonial North, corporations trade the value of human lives on Wall Street. Corporations garner huge profits by incarcerating masses of people of color, acid-etching the consciousness of un-belonging into the minds of new generations of the poor and people of color.

Dialogism

African American discourse performs as an elegant piece of be-bop jazz. As the trumpet smoothly swoons its lyrical melody, the drummer taps the steady beat, periodically throwing in a syncopated jab that accents the screeching saxophone section, answering the trombones in an antiphonal rag-tag that all makes sense. All of the other instruments support the main conversation that the trumpet is wailing, just like the call and response in the Baptist church with the amen corner. Just as in musical traditions like the blues, jazz, and gospel, the conversation of un-belonging and belonging includes the whole community, the then and the now, the there and the here. The discourse includes the present company as well as the venerated ancestors. In the field of literary theory, Mikhail Bakhtin engaged various literary works in communication with each other in the dialogic process.²⁰ Believing that literary works and authors could dialogue and mediate between each other, he introduced a way for works to inform one another over time in a reciprocal manner. While he first used the process as a means of understanding literary works,

Bakhtin's ideas have extended into other areas of analysis. For the purposes of mediating the diverse voices of the consciousness of "un-belonging," I will use this intertextual process to validate and engage historical voices such as the former slaves whose stories were recorded by the Federal Writers' Project. Through the dialogic process, I will bring these recordings into active communication with ethnographic interviews of diasporic travelers and memoir narratives of my own personal experiences as a traveler to Gorée Island, and with an accompanying ensemble of theorists who comment on un-belonging and belonging. Slave narratives, stories, and songs also validate the longing and desire of diasporic citizen. While the voices may not always agree, they will parley between the dialectic of un-belonging and belonging.

The orality of African expressive traditions endured over time throughout the Black Atlantic. Many of these oral traditions utilized the "call and response" form, where a griot may lead a story but other voices also played roles that made the stories complete. Henry Louis Gates called this interplay between texts in African American expressions "signifying."²¹ Like quilt-making and musical expressions, griots and their respondents often used coded messages in the interplay between the participants. This same syncopated, multi-vocal and polyrhythmic style exists in African American music where instruments and voices make commentaries throughout, adding meaning and nuances to the central message being delivered.

Because of these stylistic patterns in African American expressions, the process of dialogism is appropriate as a means of hearing the many voices of the dialectic of un-belonging and belonging. Through historic narratives, recordings, ethnographic interviews and my personal journals, I intend to analyze the juxtaposition of these narratives and their interplay in support of the notion that many African Americans travel to sites such as Gorée Island as a means of repairing their sense of un-belonging, displacement and alienation. No single voice can

tell the complete story of the healing of the repercussion of slave trade. But, like African oral traditions, multi-voiced, intertwined and repeated over time, these narratives lead to a similar conclusion, just like the musical blues progression meandering back to the home key.

To add a personal voice to this project, I collocated my own memoir writing as a means of illuminating the process of performing transformation through travel to slavery sites of memory. In her book *Autoethnography as Method*, Heewon Chang notes that memoirs have become a way for scholars to express more personal perspectives. “Memoirs tend to follow themes around which memoirists gather autobiographical stories.” Using my body and my memories as a primary source of data, I juxtapose fragments of my experiences with other diverse voices, a format that, as Chang notes, “allows for a thematic approach to one’s life story but with moderation in scope. Memoirs tend to focus on fragments of memorialists’ lives, not the whole life.”²² In those fragments, memoir writing can offer different perspectives on diverse topics that the academy has often minimized, negated, and ignored. Memoir writing offers a holistic view of discourse from multiple purviews.

Ritual Process

Richard Schechner builds on Arnold Van Gennep and Victor Turner’s three staged process of the “rites of passage” to illuminate the transition from one state to another through departure (separation), initiation (liminal) and return (re-incorporation.)⁵ Schechner illuminates Turner’s concept of restored behavior as performance by overlaying the analogy of “the theater.” Recognizing that the stages of the “rites of passage” resemble theatrical performances, Schechner identified seven stages that performers execute as training, workshop, rehearsal, warm-ups, performance, cool down, and aftermath.

The “separation” stage of the performance includes the first four steps--training, workshops, rehearsal, and warm-ups. Schechner situates performance as the liminal stage, and cool-down and aftermath as the rites of incorporation. In essence, rehearsals consist of repeating known skills performed over and over through. The basic functions of theater and ritual consist of processes to restore behavior. Performers must be removed from familiar contexts and placed in performative environments such as sacred space, special space, and non-ordinary time spaces. The performance of initiation or transition evokes new behaviors. The new behaviors consist of the rehearsed behaviors but in a new context, the liminal space. In reintegration, restored behaviors are practiced in order to become second nature. Schechner argues that the purpose of transformation performances and initiation rites is to transform people from one status or social identity into another.

At sites of memory, such as Gorée Island, diasporic travelers recreate behaviors of transformation that they have practiced over and over through the processes of every day life through story telling, music, and religious worship. Through each of these practices, the travelers have essentially rehearsed and integrated memes that exist already in their daily experiences. At each act of torture, slaves embraced a recall of stories and songs encoded with ideas that lifted them into liminal states that helped them to sustain and to transcend. Enduring hard labor, slaves sang and told stories of paradise, thus rehearsing transformation, if only momentarily.

As the terrain of racial formations changed in the United States, the existential experiences directly linked to the institution of slavery continued to cast shadows onto the daily experiences of diasporic citizens. Descendants of slaves continued to live in sequestered spaces and outside those spaces often faced terror. The consciousness of un-belonging outside those

spaces has prevailed even after the most dreadful aspects of slavery and its shadows have ended. The persistence of institutional exclusions and reoccurring racial projects continues to promote feelings of un-belonging, while at the same time creating opportunities to seek relief, such as the liberation found in African American storytelling, song, and dance. Coded narratives continue to offer relief in light of these lingering existential experiences. African American music, for example, still holds the coded prospect of a better life “on the other side,” continuing to offer the rehearsal of transformation. Crossing through the “door of no return” on Gorée Island, travelers enter into a performative liminal space. Many pilgrims call their return journey “transformative,” as they mourn their own experiences of racial formations and the memory of the shadows of slavery. In the liminal space they take on new stories, conjured up by great griots like Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye.

Organization

In accord with the stages of performance, I have organized my dissertation into three main sections that coincide with Turner’s ritual process. The first section, Rehearsal, includes three chapters that explore the ways in which diasporic citizens “rehearse” recapitulated codes that lead up to the final performance at *La Maison des Esclaves*, on Gorée Island. I center my attention on the narrative script of the travelers as seen through the oral and written texts that are often recapitulated and repeated through daily common and spiritual practices. I position the narrative as the foundational marker on the rehearsal space, and religion and music as the main vehicles for the separation mechanism of the rites of passage cycle. In section two, which includes the performance/liminal stage of the cycle, I investigate the context and conditions of the arrival of the pilgrims to the site on Gorée Island. I explore the actual actors, producers, and stage of the performance. The third and final section involves the reincorporation phase. I

explore what the travelers bring back and the ways in which the performative/ritual transformations they undergo at *La Maison des Esclaves* feed into what many of them report as “life changing experiences.”

In *Chapter 1*, I focus on the hegemonic narrative of un- belonging and how it developed over time. Since the invention of race in the United States, the narrative of un- belonging has imbued American discourse as an inextricable fiber within racial formations. Early colonists intertwined capitalism, religions, property, and race into the narrative that holds structures of power inextricably in place. The American legal system, supported by this narrative, has aided in the maintenance of inequality. I also investigate popular entertainment and schooling as means for perpetuating the narrative. Narratives have served as a generative marker within racial projects and formations that have recirculated over the span of North American history. I also examine how the concept of *ambivalence* contributes to the persistence of the hegemonic narrative. Despite systematic oppression, African Americans have relied on a counter-narrative that continues to sustain them. Pushing on one side, the hegemonic narrative serves as one of the pairs of the dialectic of un-belonging and belonging. Shedding light onto its function and purpose will also illuminate positive solutions within American racial discourse.

In *Chapter 2*, I focus on religion as a foundational formation throughout the discourse of slaves and their descendants in the United States. Whereas the hegemonic narrative has perpetuated a consciousness of un- belonging, religion has offered a collateral consciousness of both un-belonging and belonging within the existential context of American polity and civil life. By including an analysis of Black Atlantic Religions within the context of racial formations, I illustrate the dialectical relationship and further embellish the synthesis that occurs in the performative spaces like Gorée Island. As racial formations have changed over time, so have

various manifestations of religious formations. The concept of ambivalence woven between race, narrative, and religion has always kept a close bound relationship.

In *Chapter 3*, I analyze the role that African American music has served as mechanism for “rehearsing” transformation. While the hegemonic narrative and religion have maintained dialectical formations throughout the discourse of diasporic African citizens in the United States, music, I argue, has served as the constant code carrier. As different epochs, styles, and genres of music have arisen over the course of American history, the embedded codes of the in-between space of the contrast of alienation and redemption have prevailed. African American music has always offered a coded response to the existential context in America.

In *Chapter 4*, I analyze the principle participants in the Theater of Transformation on Gorée Island. I examine such participants as the producers, the local actors, the pilgrims who are themselves traveling performers, and the local setting. I also contextualize the performative space on Gorée Island as a world stage with multiple interests such as the diasporic tourists, local tourist industry, UNESCO, local political leaders, and international political and religious leaders. As I examine the performance of transformation, I will explore the idea of ambivalence, as it relates to melancholia and mourning in the process of transformation. I also shed light on some of the contradicting historical information in this chapter and how it serves the cathartic process in re-scripting the counter-hegemonic narrative.

In *Chapter 5*, I investigate the return from liminality. This chapter synthesizes the process of the return of travelers to Gorée Island. In the *epilogue*, I summarize the findings of this investigation of African-American diasporic tourists to sites of memory such as *La Maison des Esclaves* Gorée Island. I will also contextualize the implications of the findings as a positive intervention, not only for the travelers but also for the broader critical race conversation in the

United States. In this final section, I also explicate the relevance of this study to such disciplines as culturally responsive pedagogy, political discourse, the analysis of narrative representations, and popular culture and media studies. Unraveling the fibrous layers of racial formations, I assert, can illuminate the sometimes distorted and warped comprehension of racial foundations in the United States. This process requires an examination at the foundational cultural level.

Each chapter also includes ethnographic interviews with people who have traveled to Gorée Island. While they all have had differing experiences, I have attempted to situate their interviews within the analytical and thematic focus of each chapter. I have also tried to align my personal narratives with the ideas of belonging, un-belonging and transformation.

Interview: Post Civil Rights Traveler

Paulla Ebron traveled to Senegal and to the Gambia with a group of 100 Americans who won a “roots” homecoming excursion back to Africa in the summer of 1994. One of the people that I interviewed had participated in similar group that traveled ten years earlier in 1984. This interviewee had participated in what she calls “revolutionary activities” in the 1970s but by the 1980s had decided to try a “spiritual” approach to creating a better world. She states that she went “during a time when black people wanted to know more about their roots.”

Ms. Ebron participated in a tour established by Stanfield Simmons Jr. of Brooklyn, New York. Stan Simmons owned, operated, and curated the Simmons Collection of African Arts Museum in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn, and his group travel is one of many organizations in the post-Civil Rights Era that have taken advantage of the rise of demand for travel to Africa. According to a legislative resolution, the State of New York recognized Simmons upon his death in 2010:

“WHEREAS, Stanfield Simmons Jr. was well known across the United States for organizing and leading group tours to countries in Africa, Asia, the

South Pacific, Central and South America, and the Caribbean; he was widely appreciated and acknowledged for his contributions in the areas of global culture and art forms; and

WHEREAS, Throughout Stanfield Simmons Jr.'s lifetime, many schools, colleges, churches and private and public institutions gained a wealth of information from his vast knowledge of global culture which he imparted through his expansive collection of antiquities, artifacts and videos, slide shows and special exhibitions; he showcased the work of many artists, voluntarily mentored students, participated in career days, and was a guest speaker at graduation ceremonies....”

This interviewee reports:

I was a part of the first big tour group of Stan Simmons. First we traveled to the Canary Islands and then we traveled to Senegal. I remember being so excited because this was my first time in Africa. We were about 100 in the group. I remember how welcoming the people were. They all were so nice and they welcomed us home. I felt like I belonged on that island.

This interviewee described differences from more recent pilgrims as she tells of the people on Gorée Island who differed from the people who live there now. On Gorée Island today, the inhabitants speak of a time when the citizens of the island, the Signares, constituted a local aristocracy. The Signares were bi-racial descendants of African slaves on the island and Europeans traders. According to UNESCO, young slave girls sometimes sought sexual relations with the traders so that they could be freed. “The mixed-race girls in Gorée, commonly called ‘Signare,’ a deformation of the Portuguese word senhoras, formed the aristocracy in Gorée, like

the Creoles in the French West Indies.’²³ In 1984 the Signares still remained on Gorée Island but, today, they have vanished from the island. This interviewee states:

I remember the muddy waters and getting on the boat to cross over to the island. When the boat approached the island, I remember children jumping into the water. They wanted people to throw them coins. I remember how the people looked different. They had a lighter skin tone than the other people that we saw in Senegal, who had much darker features. I have not seen these people anywhere else in Senegal. I remember all the people selling things, I especially remember all the women approaching us and selling jewelry. I also remember the art. I think it was the first time that I had ever seen sand paintings.

When I went into the slave house, I just remember all the tears welling up in my eyes. I thought about how the people who were in these houses could have possibly been my ancestors. I don't know if they really were my ancestors, but I thought about the possibility. When I was in Senegal, people kept telling me that they knew that I was a Fulani. I remember all the tour guides telling this story about the people who were locked up in that little slave house and I remember them telling us about the Door of No Return. This made me really sad and this is where the tears started welling up.

The music in Senegal was a different kind of music from the music that I knew. But, there were parts of the music that are recognized. I could hear little pieces of music that sounded like home to me. The rhythms in the music reminded me also a something that I knew. We all could recognize it. We all wanted to dance and feel the rhythm of the brilliant drummers who were on the island. It felt like they had really welcomed us home.

This tourist traveled to Gorée in a group like hundreds of African Americans during the Post Civil Rights Era in the United States. The African American middle class had started to emerge, and many had seen the inspiring calls from newly independent African leaders meeting African American leaders like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. Many of the leaders of the Civil Rights Era had been assassinated but they left behind the call for African sensibility. At the same time, touring companies like the one led by Stanfield Simmons began to flourish. The Black Consciousness and Arts movements had called African Americans to look towards Africa to find the true Black History and to find unity in the struggles for freedom. By the 1980s when this tourist made her first journey, college students across the country were signing up for

summer travel through newly formed Ethnic Studies departments. A new class of African Americans had started writing their own scripts of belonging.

Memoir: Belonging/Un-Belonging

In 2003, I made my first journey to Senegal and Gorée Island. The moment I returned from Africa, I knew that I had to go back to the tiny island off the coast of Senegal's capital city of Dakar. Not only did I go back to Gorée Island, I would eventually go back 13 times as of the writing of this dissertation. Since that first visit, I became fascinated with the idea of transformation because I certainly experienced a new outlook on life. I realized the chasms that existed in my own learning about the slave trade and the story that I learned on Gorée. After that first visit, I wanted to learn the physical, psychological, spiritual and economic structures of enslavement and freedom. I immersed myself in the study of West Africa, the slave trade, memory, music, and Black Atlantic Religions. Because the first journey was so liberating, I wanted to know if the island had gifts for others who might also travel there.

When I started writing this dissertation on the Gorée Island in 2013, I could not help seeing the overwhelming recirculating sense of alienation and un-belonging pervading the American discourse and the parallel discourse of American racialized power structures. On February 26, 2012 George Zimmerman a Florida vigilante had shot and killed an unarmed African American youth, Trayvon Martin, because the boy looked as if he did not "belong" in the gated community. On July 13, 2013, a jury found George Zimmerman not guilty of the charge of second-degree murder of the 17-year-old youth. Six people had decided that Florida's "stand your ground" gun laws supported the shooting of the boy. The "not guilty" verdict allowed the self-appointed vigilante to retrieve the very gun used to kill Trayvon Martin. The verdict restored Zimmerman's right to carry a weapon. In the year following the verdict, police would interview or arrest Zimmerman on several occasions for assaults and threats committed against his wife, different girlfriends and an array of private citizens. In February 2015, the Department of Justice decided that the "high standard" did not exist with sufficient evidence to convict Zimmerman of violating the boy's civil rights. In the context of the dissertation, I recognized the inextricable intertwining structures of un-belonging that weaves through American discourse. During the process of writing I would be reminded of the profound relationship between property, security, and capitalism that would perpetuate the idea of un-belonging. Gorée Island had offered me a place of belonging and I continue to long to hear the cries from the slave prisons that call out to their descendants.

As I began writing, I recognized that while the American hegemonic narrative and structures of power had always alienated most African Americans, a simultaneous sense of hope had offered an assurance of place and belonging in the world. Through acts of domestic terrorism, slaves, former slaves and their descendants have continued to receive injustices through structural inequities.

From the beginning, systems of power had used racialized structures that continue to cast shadows on justice. Using my own body as a site of witness, I reflected on the idea of un-belonging/belonging in my own journey to find place. After completing my qualifying examination to write the dissertation for the Ph.D., I could not help but to situate my own body, experiences and memories of what was happening in the United States and my own fascination with the idea of belonging. George Zimmerman, a self-appointed neighborhood watchman, had shot and killed the unarmed African-American boy. The volunteer watchmen claimed that the community had experienced a series of burglaries committed by young black men. Although Zimmerman had been told by the police dispatch not to follow boy, he did so anyway which resulted in a scuffle. The boy had done what any boy had been taught to do when confronted by a strange man. First he ran and then he fought back. Zimmerman shot and killed the boy. I watched and studied the case for months and was devastated when the jury acquitted George Zimmerman of second-degree murder.

After such a long history of injustices, I thought that, surely, the jury would see the culpability of Zimmerman. Trayvon Martin could have been me when I was younger. On the announcement of the acquittal, I felt as if I couldn't breathe as I pondered the weight of un-belonging. Writing the chapters for the dissertation, I would be reminded over and over again how poor and unarmed black people became victims of overseers, slave patrols, vigilante and police violence. News reports of new police killings of unarmed black men and women seemed to appear in the headlines every day. Given the long history of lynching in the United States, I wondered if things had gotten worse. Describing lynching, Ashraf H. A. Rushdy noted that between 1880 and 1930, "the word did not conjure up another unwholesome tradition of frenzied white Americans ritually dismembering and murdering African Americans at the rate of one person every five days." Lynchings have constituted one of the vilest reoccurring horrors of American history that the hegemonic order has often negated. Throughout much of American history, the legal system turned its back on the gruesome practice, essentially rendering it a state sanctioned tradition. In 2013, after anti-lynching laws had long passed, the phrase "every 28 hours" became a popular meme through social media as state sanctioned laws allowed police forces to kill unarmed black people every twenty-eight hours, according to the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, more frequently than more than 100 years ago. Laws such as "stand your ground" inscribed higher value to property over human beings.

On top of situating my own life within the repressive context of the news, closer to home, the idea of un-belonging struck me as news reports emerged from UCLA. In 2013 a black surgeon at UCLA's medical school, Dr. Christian Head, won a racial bias lawsuit that he had filed accusing the University of not preventing harassment and discrimination. The doctor had alleged that he had been publicly humiliated during a faculty presentation when a slide presentation included him as a gorilla being sodomized. When he complained to the university, the doctor claimed that he was denied further opportunities at the University. After this

incident, a review of UCLA minority faculty revealed systemic complaints of racial bias. The report found that, often, faculty members were advised not to jeopardize promotions and teaching opportunities by complaining. The University had even failed to investigate sometimes-overt racism. According to the report, most of the faculty members surveyed stated that they had experienced some level of racism.

In November 2013, Sy Stokes, An African-American student released a spoken word video that went viral on the internet, revealing that UCLA had more NCAA basketball championships than black men in the freshman class. In the video, he stated that in the fall of 2013, UCLA had an enrollment of African American men of 660 or 3.3% of the total population of the university. Black freshman males consisted of only 48. With a graduation rate of 74%, only 35 were predicted to graduate. Stokes pointed out the discrepancy between management salaries and financial aid. While the university used diversity as a public relations talking point, the university did not reflect that claim. Later that year, in February 2014, black students from the UCLA law school released a video highlighting an alarmingly low representation within the student body. The video stated that out of the student body of 1100 students, only 33 were African American. One student lamented, "I am so tired of being on this campus every day and having to plead my humanity essentially to other students. I feel like an outsider constantly and I don't feel like, at my own school, I can solely focus on being a student." Another student stated, "Feels like I'm in another country, European country." The student reflected on the pressure they felt in being the only member of their race in classrooms. They described their experiences as alienating, and unwelcoming.

In February, Los Angeles County Superior Court judge, David Cunningham III, alleged that officers stopped him in Westwood, shoved him, handcuffed him and locked him in the backseat of the police car. The UCLA police had pulled him over alleging that he did not have his safety belt attached. The judge alleges that he was racially profiled. In July 2014, UCLA reached a settlement of \$500,000. Of that settlement, the University established a \$350,000 scholarship called David Cunningham III scholarship for civil rights for undergraduate and law students. These public examples of alienation on un-belonging called me to reflect on my own experiences at UCLA.

In 1985, in the UCLA Film School, I had no name to attach to my own feelings of alienation and being lost. With my belief in UCLA's rich history of progressive social participation, I thought my feelings came from my experiences of growing up in a small town in Georgia, even though I had rich experiences in my undergraduate and graduate programs at other universities. At UCLA, I thought someone would find out that I was an imposter, a country boy from Georgia. After completing a Masters degree in 1985 at California University at Los Angeles, I entered UCLA's film school. After a few weeks, I realized that completing an MFA in film producing would best suit my long-term goals and plans, so I chose the focus of Film Producing. Since Hollywood had not demonstrated a rich diversity in the 1980's, I thought I would learn the process

for raising capital and producing films that felt more representative of what I knew about black people. I wanted to see films that reflected the world from what I saw growing up as a boy in Georgia. I wanted to be a part of filmmaking that had inspired me as much as I had been inspired by certain films. I enjoyed the classes in the program often taught by Hollywood professionals. Some of the classes were even taught on the big studio lots around town. I felt that I was on my way to success.

Because of life occurrences and the expense of tuition, I left UCLA after several years without finishing the degree and focused on teaching school. Teaching allowed me to focus on my artistic endeavors as an actor but I never forgot my desire is to refine my skills in the film and television industry. During my time off, I enrolled in screenwriting courses through the UCLA extension. On the first submission, I was accepted into the advanced class. I loved the vibrant classes as many of the students worked in various aspects of the film industry but wanted to pursue writing. I went on to complete several years of screenwriting courses. After a long hiatus from the official UCLA film school, I reentered studies in the late 1990s. With the confidence of having completed several years of courses through extension and having been chosen as a finalist in the Diane Thomas Screenwriting Competition through UCLA Extension and DreamWorks, I felt that I could finish The MFA and transition from my teaching job in Los Angeles Unified School District into the film industry. At that point, I had taught school for more than 10 years and I could have quickly moved up the hierarchy of the school system but I knew that it was not my first desired career path. Well into my 30s, I felt ready to easily complete the requirements for the MFA. Quickly, I began having feelings of un-belonging after returning to the film school although I could never quite put my finger on what I was feeling. In the outside world, I maintained a vibrant social life with many friends but in the classes, I always felt withdrawn, like I didn't belong.

In one of the classes, each week was dedicated to one of the students from the producing program in which I had enrolled. An executive producer of one of the top film stars from Hollywood taught the class. For my week of presentation, I thought I would use the screenplay I had workshopped through several quarters in UCLA Extension and written for the screenwriting competition. I confidently passed out a copy of the screenplay to each student and the teacher. I anticipated the following week when I would receive notes and critiques.

The screenplay, set in the Gullah/Geechee Islands of Georgia, involved a young African American musical genius, who had gotten out of the swamps and traveled the world making music as a trumpet player, only to return home to be accused of murdering his mother. As the story unfolds, and after spending years in prison, we learn that the real murderer was the white landowner who happened to be his mother's lover and also the trumpet player's father. I had enjoyed creating the interesting and eccentric characters on the islands of Georgia.

The following week, after the class settled in, the executive producer/instructor wasted no time in giving her scathing critique of my writing. I will always remember her comment regarding the central character in the screenplay. She blurted out, "What is he, some kind of retard?" I was stunned and speechless, and she continued her relentless critique of the work for what felt like hours. I was too stunned to speak and the rest of the students remained quiet, also. The young instructor, who was probably younger than me, spoke to me as if I was a child. During the break, no one walked near me or said anything to me. The people I had befriended in class and at parties were now strangers. If I could have turned into a vapor and disappeared, I would have and it would have suited me just fine.

The following week, I went back to that class. Immediately, I raised my hand to speak. I explained to the instructor that I was returning to school after a long recess. I revealed I had completed many years as a schoolteacher and I was not used to being spoken to in such a way. I explained that I had come to the class, open for thought-provoking critiques. Instead, I had received a belittling and an unconstructive lashing. Again, all of the other students remained silent.

Many of the students found opportunities in the classes as working Hollywood professionals taught many of the classes. The students made relationships with industry professionals and started their careers in the movie industry from those classes. Many of the students in the producers program had already become vice presidents of various divisions of the major companies in the industry. Because this instructor headed the production company of such a major Hollywood star, none of the other students were willing to contradict her or offer a differing analysis. They wanted to make relationships.

Again, the other students avoided me at break time. They certainly would not have spoken up on my behalf. Speaking up for myself, I had voluntarily stepped into the world of the "angry black man," even though no one in my private world would have ever described me as such. I enjoyed a very active and positive social life. Being called "an angry black person" had been used throughout American discourse as a means of shutting down conversation and quieting any dissenters. In the South, white people often called black people who spoke up for themselves as "uppity." Now, I had become an angry black man. I always felt that if the class had had other African American students, she never would have talked to me that way. She would never have felt so entitled. The instructor did not talk to any of the other students, all white, in such an aggressive way. She probably would have never done so. From my small town in Georgia, I had not experienced that type of treatment. I had never had a reason to rehearse an appropriate response to such aggression. Elberton, Georgia had been a somewhat easy place to grow up.

As an undergrad, the co-advisor for my major from the business school had talked to me that way in the privacy of his office and I certainly did not know how to

process his inappropriate treatment then, either. I always knew that if he thought I was some rich donor's son, he would not have spoken to me in such a manner. I also knew that he would have never felt so entitled to scream at me the way he had in the privacy of his office if our meeting had been in public. As the veins popped out of his neck and puffy red face, he took out on me whatever was bothering him. I had visited his office for a simple required advising session. I left his office and broke down in my African American voice teacher's studio in the middle of a singing lesson where I found "belonging." Mr. de Valentine, with his basso profundo voice, stopped playing the piano and walked over to me to place his hand on my shoulder to ask me what was wrong. I had never rehearsed in twenty years what to do when a person did to me what that advisor did to me that day so with my voice teacher, I was as surprised with my outburst as he was. Fortunately, the rest of my undergrad experiences tremendously outweighed his entitled yelling. Another thirty years passed before I knew that private assault as a micro-aggression.

With the big micro-aggressive moment in the producer's program class at UCLA, the quarter ended. Again I left school to recalibrate my intentions. I decided that perhaps continuing to teach school would best serve my purposes... for a while. Not until the fall of 2013 could I put a name on what had happened in that class in the producer's program. When I saw the video of the young black men standing on the steps of UCLA's Campbell Hall in Sy Stoke's video and the videos that followed from the black students of UCLA law school and the students of Harvard's, "I, too, am Harvard," I started to place myself into the realm of being the representative of the "other" in the classroom. The videos from UCLA and Harvard sparked other videos at universities around the country such as Michigan, Princeton, NYU and Oxford. In the videos, students talked about the loneliness, isolation, alienation and un-belonging. In the fall of 2013, I learned about micro aggressions.

Remembering my experiences at UCLA, I thought about the other Hollywood professor/professional in the producer's program class who had called me out in front of the whole class as I was leaving a lecture. In African-American culture, we call this "loud talking," to talk about someone's personal business in front of everyone. This Hollywood professional had wanted to tell me that I had done the assignment incorrectly and that was the reason he had given me the lower grade of a "B." Embarrassed, I did not respond to him at the moment. Later, I sent him an email explaining that I had completed the assignment based on the instructions that he had given. He had not talked to any of the other students in such a loud and brash manner. He changed the grade but the fact that he felt it okay to speak to me in such a manner in the first place when I was clearly not a child. The fact that he did not speak to all students in that same manner, posed the problem. Listening to viral videos of students around the country, I learned about "micro-aggressions." Everything came into focus.

From where I grew up in that little town in Georgia, we had learned how to endure ambivalent structures. From my neighborhood on the black side of town, we learned how to be good citizens. We rehearsed not making too many waves and we learned how to perform well. We became doctors, engineers, teachers, politicians, and ministers. On one hand, we loved out schooling and at the same time, we knew that some things were just not fair. We stuck together and we had each other to commiserate. We belonged. Many of us migrated out of our small town and fanned out around the country. We knew that all we had to do was hold on because times were changing. Growing up in that town, we had learned to walk the fine line of ambivalence. We had to stay focused with the reasons we had struggled to get to some of the universities and positions we had dreamt about. To lose focus, we would fall to the dark side of ambivalence. We had witnessed the sacrifices of our parents and we couldn't afford to allow anger to consume us, even though, from time to time, we certainly had things to be angry about.

Entering a Ph. D. program, I knew what had driven me to want to pursue the degree. After learning about micro-aggressions, the every day jabs, slights, put-downs, cultural assumptions, cultural categorizing, culturally irrelevant pedagogy, negated histories, absent literature, missing theorists, and stereotypes, I realized that the belonging that I had searched for on Gorée Island had been lost along the way through the racialized structures in the United States. The micro-aggressions that I had experienced at UCLA felt like death by 1000 little cuts. For every one that I experienced, I had left a piece of me behind. I had walked into classrooms on campus as one person, but I had left parts of my personhood back in those classrooms. I had optimistically walked into classrooms with dreams and then left them in the seats at the end of class. I left those classrooms as a stranger to myself. Without realizing it, I had returned to UCLA for the Ph.D. to rescue the man I had left behind.

I think about that idealistic 24-year-old who entered UCLA in 1985 and I think about the young students of color in those videos thirty years later. Some, battered, scraped and scarred, will walk away from the campus, never to return. Some will leave their dreams in the seats of the classrooms all across campus and across campuses around the United States. I think about all the lost knowledge that the university loses each time a student leaves the university because of micro-aggressions and subtle racial assaults. Each time a student walks away, the university will lose all the solutions that we can only find in plurality. Within the heart and mind of every student, a whole universe exists. I went back to school to retrieve the universe I had left behind.

- 1 Curtin, Philip D., *The Atlantic Slave Trade; a Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), pp. xix, 338 p.
- 2 Holsey, Bayo, *Routes of Remembrance : Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. xiii, 280 p.
- 3 Roussève, David, 'Lecture on the Dance Production of "Saudade"', (UCLA: 2009).
- 4 ———, 'Reaity'2009) <<http://www.davidrousseve.com/saudadeoverview.html%3E>.
- 5 Schechner, Richard, *Between Theater & Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), pp. xiv, 342 p.
- 6 Lionnet, Françoise, and Shumei Shi, *The Creolization of Theory* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2011), pp. viii, 306 p.
- 7 Baptist, Edward E., *The Half Has Never Been Told : Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (2014), pp. xxvii, 498 pages.
- 8 McBride, Dwight A., *Impossible Witnesses : Truth, Abolitionism, and Slave Testimony* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), pp. xvi, 205 p.
- 9 Tobin, Jacqueline, and Raymond G. Dobard, *Hidden in Plain View : The Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*. 1st edn (New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1999), pp. x, 208 p.
- 10 Crenshaw, Kimberlé, *Critical Race Theory : The Key Writings That Formed the Movement* (New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton & Co., 1995), pp. xxxii, 494 p.
- 11 Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States : From the 1960s to the 1990s*. 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. xii, 226 p.
- 12 Jordan, Don, and Michael Walsh, *White Cargo : The Forgotten History of Britain's White Slaves in America* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2007), p. 320 p.

- 13 Gramsci, Antonio, Quintin Hoare, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London,: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), pp. xcvi, 483 p.
- 14 Woodson, Carter Godwin, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, S.I.: Distributed by Amentam L.L.C.,, 2010. sound recording.
- 15 Levi-Strauss, Claude, *The Structural Study of Myth*. ed. by Ed Thomas Sebeok, *Myth: Symposium* (1968).
- 16 Baraka, Imamu Amiri, *Blues People : Negro Music in White America* (New York: Perennial, 2002), pp. xii, 244 p.
- 17 Davis, Angela Y., *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism : Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), pp. xx, 427 p.
- 18 Du Bois, W. E. B., *The Souls of Black Folk / by W.E.B. Du Bois*. 1st Vintage Books/Library of America edition. edn (New York: Vintage Books/Library of America, 1990).
- 19 Alexander, Michelle, *The New Jim Crow : Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York, Jackson, Tenn.: New Press ;Distributed by Perseus Distribution, 2010), pp. xi, 290 p.
- 20 Bakhtin, M. M., and Michael Holquist, *The Dialogic Imagination : Four Essays, University of Texas Press Slavic Series* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. xxxiv, 444 p.
- 21 Gates, Henry Louis, *The Signifying Monkey : A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. xxvii, 290 p.
- 22 Chang, Heewon, *Autoethnography as Method, Developing Qualitative Inquiry* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast Press, 2008), p. 229 p.
- 23 UNESCO, *Unesco World Heritage Lists*.

First Movement
The Script: A Narrative of Un-Belonging

We had no home, you know. We was just turned out like a lot of cattle. You know how they turn cattle out to pasture? Well, after freedom, you know, colored people didn't have nothing. Colored people didn't have no beds when they was slaves. We always slept on the floor, pallet here, and a pallet there just like... a lot of... wild people... we didn't... we didn't have nothing. Now, I couldn't go from here across the street, or I couldn't go through nobodies house without I have a note or something from my master. And if I have that pass... that was what we called a pass... if I had that pass, I can go wherever he sent me. And I have to be back... you know... when whoever he sent me to, they'd give me another pass and I bring that back so as to show how long I'd been gone. We couldn't go out and stay a hour or two hours or something like that.... Maybe they give me an hour... I don't know just how long they give me. But, they give me a note so there wouldn't be nobody interfere with me, and it will tell who I belong to. And when I come back, why, I carry it to my master and give that to him... That'd be alright but I couldn't just walk away like the people does now, you know.

It was what they call... we were slaves. We belonged to people. They'd sell us like they sell horses and cows and hogs and all like that. Have an auction bench, and they put you on... up on the bench and bid on you just same as you bidding on cattle, you now.¹

Fountain Hughes
1949 Library of Congress
Recording by Hermond Norwood

Recalling an experience after Emancipation, former child slave Fountain Hughes describes the terror of being lost one night with his brother. Knowing the dangers of being caught outside of where they “belonged,” the brothers crept into a livery stable and hid until sunrise, when “we got back where we belong before the people got up.” Hughes and his brother knew the realities of the extraordinary anger, contempt and retribution that former slave owners felt towards their “lost capital.” During slavery, the lives of slaves maintained value for capitalistic enterprises. However, once slavery ended, white hegemony hunted former slaves like sport. Former slaves knew the limits of their “freedom” and they stayed in their place. During slavery, Fountain Hughes “belonged” to his slave masters. After slavery, he was “un-belonged.” He belonged to no one, yet had no place to belong.

Born into slavery, Fountain Hughes lived from around 1848 until 1957. The Library of Congress engineer Hermond Norwood recorded Hughes's narrative in 1949 and captured one of the last individuals who had lived through Slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow and the beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement. From two hundred years before Fountain Hughes's mother gave birth to him in Virginia, throughout his life and continuing in the decades after his death, the idea of "un-belonging" has been one of the strands of the American racial landscape.

In this chapter, I focus on the genesis and development of this racial discourse and its relationship to capitalism in relation to the historical trajectory of the trope of "un-belonging." By analyzing the genesis, I will explore the contribution of script and character (to use Richard Schechner's terminology) to the continuance of the hegemonic narrative. Then I discuss the sequestered spaces that have set the stage for many African American experiences throughout the history of the United States -- from the slave plantations to sharecropping, Jim Crow, the Great Migration, and contemporary economic segregation--as scenes for rehearsals on the theme of un-belonging. I also dissect the rehearsal and performance of memory as a foundational inner narrative, which slaves and their descendants have employed as a counter narrative for their survival. The trope of un-belonging has evolved over the time and birthed varying manifestations with the changing machinery of racial formations in the United States. To exemplify the recycling of subtle acts of aggression, I will highlight an ethnographic interview of an African American who twice traveled to Gorée Island in search of belonging. Finally, as a performer of the transformation process on the island and as an African American, I will mark the beginnings of my own rehearsal for un-belonging by using autobiographical data as a witness. While the most egregious acts of violence, such as lynchings among private citizens, have decreased, assaultive acts of everyday micro-aggression still persist. Also, affiliations with

hate groups have risen as reported by the Southern Poverty Law Center, which has tracked hate crimes since the Civil Rights Era of the 1960's.² All of these incidents add to the feeling that many African Americans have that they do not fully belong in American society.

Slaves and their descendants have maintained a keen familiarity with the American hegemonic narrative and have simultaneously maintained a counter narrative inextricably woven within the context of capitalism. Over time, special interests such as corporations and governments have employed various mechanisms to maintain racial hegemony. At the same time, an evolving terrain of the counter narrative has continued to circulate through the Post-Civil Rights and the “post-racial” periods of recent history. The trope of un-belonging that informed Fountain Hughes’s statement continues today to serve as a rehearsal narrative and space for diasporic tourists who travel to such sites of memory as Gorée Island. The data for the trope of un-belonging lies largely in the voices of diasporic citizens as demonstrated through stories, art, dance, music, and the material relics of daily life. In this chapter I seek to illumine the data of un-belonging found in the diverse narratives over the discursive course of slavery and its shadow by engaging historical and contemporary narratives documented in sources such as recordings, ethnographic interviews, and autobiographical and auto-ethnographic information.

The Genesis

The original slaving ships that sailed across the Atlantic to the colonies carried the stench of entitlement. Starting in 1607, when the British landed at Jamestown, ships landed with assorted people who had come to the Colonies for different reasons. Many came as convicts who had been emptied from British prisons. Children, abducted from the streets, arrived alongside prostitutes and ordinary citizens. Many had come against their will, while others voluntarily signed up to make better lives for themselves. The entitled ones, royalty,

wealthy capitalists, ship owners and captains who saw economic opportunities, held the enterprises together. Fearing the plague that had struck the slums of London, King James had many ideas for the city after he took the throne. According to Don Jordan and Michael Walsh, James had a castle built for himself about 70 miles outside of London at Newmarket, “an extravaganza of drunken feasting, masques, jousting and horse racing.” The castle served as a place where James “paraded his homosexuality”³ and entertained his male lovers. To clear the streets on the slums of London, James had vagrants imprisoned. Eventually James and his advisors shipped the convicts to the New World. When rowdy children became a nuisance around the court, he had them sent to Virginia. These evictions set the foundation for what would become a recipe for the exercise of entitled power over the weak.

After King James had issued England’s claim to Virginia (the name then used for all of the territory from Canada to Florida), he and his advisors set about turning the colonies into investment opportunities. While they thought they would discover gold like the Spanish and Portuguese had done in the Caribbean and South America, this was not to be. Their disappointment was ameliorated, however, when they learned that the soil of Virginia yielded an excellent grade of tobacco. Over time, they would learn that the fertile lands of the eastern coastal regions of North America would bear other crops such as cotton and indigo. To grow these crops, they would need people to harvest the fields. As more and more people left England, the need for human labor in the New World increased. Various capitalistic schemes emerged that influenced the practice of human trafficking. Children began disappearing from the streets of London. Free-willers signed up as indentured servants to pay their fares on the ships that would cross the Atlantic. Wealthy property owners often took advantage of these travelers and extended their terms of servitude for several years. Jordan and Walsh note that by the end of

the Seventeenth Century, “200,000 men, women and children from the British Isles would have been transported to British America. The vast majority would be indentured servants.” As the crops continued to bring large profits to investors, the necessity for labor continued. In due time, these investors would look to Ireland for forced labor. In all, Jordan and Walsh offer that no one knows the total number of abused migrants. “100,000, 200,000, 300,000? It is impossible to know. No one did compile, nor could they have compiled such statistics. All we can be sure of is that the numbers were considerable.” These writers question the ambivalence of contemporary white Americans to identify with descendants of these chattel slaves. “It is a shame that few in America claim these largely forgotten men and women of the early frontier as their own.”³ This denial of history continues to circulate and contributes to the ambivalent state as racialized projects in the United States developed and gave these descendants the notion that even though their lives are difficult, at least they were better off than (and supposedly superior to) the African slaves and their descendants.

The early Seventeenth Century brought terror to many citizens of the British Isles as capitalists scoured the streets for cheap labor. At the very core of settlement projects in the original colonies, the entitled profited from the misery of others. In their book, *The Many Headed Hydra*, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker contend that contrary to prevailing beliefs about early American history, it was capitalism and not the rule of government that created the diverse and intricate relationships that lay at the foundation of the American colonies. Early American capitalists used Hercules's battle with the Many Headed Hydra to symbolically represent their drive for land and commercial development. These capitalists needed to suppress the leaders of those forces that might impede their acquisition of wealth and land, such as landowning peasants. The myth of Hercules symbolically remedied disorder and resistance by

social elements that might impede the building of “state, empire and capitalism,” and provided the ruling class with a rationalization for advancing what they saw as their destiny. These ideas of entitlements began in Europe when early colonists began projects of expansion in metropolitan areas. For example, in England, the development of racial and class projects facilitated the ruling class in violently expropriating land and property from peasants by justifying terror, banishment and forced labor. These processes were reflected in English popular culture of the 16th and 17th centuries, including the folk image of the Black Dog of Newgate, a ferocious creature with ears like snakes who cleared the streets of vagabonds, tossing them into prison. Eventually, the ruling capitalist class began using the same tactics by classifying groups of people and then portraying them as dangerous, un-godly and unworthy. They would then brutalize them, seize their property, and imprison or even execute them.⁴

Because of a growing population and diminishing land ownership, England began increasing trans-Atlantic activities. Increased maritime expertise allowed ships to take advantage of circular currents of the oceans, and travel became easier. The European ruling classes found a means for dealing with the problems of the masses by sending various groups to the Americas. Eventually, these enterprising capitalists needed more labor in order expand their encroachments in the Colonies, and importing more British citizens--usually victims from whom they had expropriated property, arrested for petty crimes, or even kidnapped--became necessary. To complete their enterprises in America, they captured British convicts, children and prostitutes. As Don Jordan and Michael Walsh explicate, “England was in danger of being overwhelmed by the poor and the lawless” and American became “a place for the unwanted.”

Of the many who came to the Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, some freely signed up to come to take advantage of the growing opportunities. In many American history books, the

people who volunteered as indentured servants to come to the colonies, free-willers, “would discover that they were no more free than the convicts or the street urchins and were wide open to abuse.” Jordan and Walsh argue that what historians call “indentured servants” actually lived as slaves as the wealthy settlers extended many of the contracts that the servants had signed far beyond the agreed upon years. The indentured servants’ work consisted of harsh free labor. In 1618 the Virginia Company began offering tracts of land to wealthy citizens. For every new settler, the company gave headright grants of fifty acres per settler. Parties who owned the land paid for the settler’s passage across the Atlantic. With this new incentive, wealthy English businessmen rushed to pay for the passage of as many people as possible. Once in America, they would sell off the excess appropriated land and put the indentured servants, whose bodies had funded their real estate acquisition, to work as manual laborers. The indentured servants suffered under the master-servant laws of England of that time and were bound to the contracts they had signed.³

During the Early 1600s the demand for tobacco expanded, as did the need for more human labor. Until the end of the Seventeenth Century, the system of indentured servitude powered plantations all along the eastern coastal region of British America. Wealthy capitalists transported two hundred thousand people from the British Isles across the Atlantic during this early period. In addition to sending criminals, street children, prostitutes, and indentured servants to America, the landowners hired “spirits,” unscrupulous men who kidnapped and “spirited away” British citizens. According to Jordan and Walsh, “Spirits became the colonies’ chief recruiting officers.”³ These heartless men, insatiable for wealth and power, took common citizens without remorse and sold them into servitude. Having honed their callous practices on the British populace, they soon began to expand their trade into Africa.

The Second Coming

The simultaneity of improved maritime technology, expanding trade routes to Africa and around the Mediterranean, the quest for imperial expansion by ruling European classes, and the preexistence of systems of servitude in Africa was a precondition for the birth of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Another key factor was the rise of global trade. Eric Williams argues that Negro slavery originally derived from economic desires, not racial. “Slavery was not born out of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery.”⁵ He notes that the early period of slavery in Europe consisted of unfree laborers who were Catholic and Protestant. Initially, Europeans brought their expropriation tactics to the New World, which involved the enslavement of Native Americans who rapidly succumbed to poor diets, European diseases, and excessive labor. Poor whites followed Native Americans as indentured servants. As we have seen, many had signed contracts that bound them to service for a stipulated time as payments for their passage. To fill the needs of growing populations in the colonies, firms such as the Royal African Company were eventually established to take advantage of cheaper African labor. While indentured servants could theoretically pay for their freedom after years of servitude, most African slaves would never be able to buy their own freedom. The Portuguese and Spanish had exploited the African trade system long before the British, who did not begin transporting Africans to the North American Colonies in large numbers until the Eighteenth Century. When they started trading in Africa, they took advantage of the elaborate system that the Portuguese and Spanish had established many decades earlier.

Portuguese, Spanish, French, Dutch, and British ships scoured the coasts of Africa seeking opportunities to obtain slaves. They capitalized on willing intermediaries along the coasts at the myriad slave forts. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall argues that while African cultures practiced slavery, they did not practice the *selling* of slaves. She draws a broad distinction

between slaves in Africa and slaves sold abroad: “Slaves were often viewed and treated as inferior members of extended families while in the process of being absorbed by them,” and normally could not be sold. Hall contends that although slavery existed throughout the world, “the transatlantic slave trade was uniquely devastating. It was surely the most vicious, long-lasting example of human brutality and exportation in history.” She disagrees with the often-used argument that Africans and Europeans share equal responsibility. African traders consisted of a small minority of Africans while the vast majority were actual or potential victims.⁶ Saidiya Hartman states that Africans did not sell their brothers and sisters.⁷ “They sold strangers: those outside the web of kin and clan relationships.”⁷ The Europeans built the large factories along the estuaries of Africa. In collaboration with some Africans, they penetrated deep into Africa to kidnap strangers. Africans sold strangers. On the local level, brothers never sold brothers into slavery.

Establishing the systems of exploited free labor, first with the white slaves from the British Isles and then the slaves from African, early capitalists set the foundations for the rise of the original colonies to world dominance. The international desire for crops grown in the colonies incited global markets that were fed by the exploitation of forced human labor. Stephan Palmié claims that the “brutal exploitation of enslaved and forcefully transplanted African labor in the Americas formed the mainstay of some of the most profitable colonial economies emerging in the New World.”⁸ This exploitation transformed Europe through the accumulation of capital and agency. The complex relationship between slavery and capital accumulation was represented by memes of human classification and by a hegemonic narrative that justified the mass theft of land, property and labor. With the increased need for the expertise of African slaves as the primary source of labor, early capitalists soon realized that in order to maintain domination

over the slaves, they would have to use force. As Robin D. G. Kelly argues, “racial slavery shaped virtually every aspect of our nation’s history. Slavery provided one of the essential legs on which modern capitalism was built.”⁹ With these systems in place, the deep relationship between capitalist accumulation and narratives of racial difference and exclusion would circulate and re-circulate throughout American social discourse. In this discourse, the demonization of certain people became a necessary ingredient in the recipe for exploitation.

Constructing Race and Ambivalence

Over time, race began to play a more important role in the accumulation of wealth as colonists categorized Native Americans and African slaves and associated them with such adjectives as dangerous, subhuman, inarticulate, savage, wild, overly sexed, untrustworthy, and unintelligent. Having rehearsed this narrative while exploiting poor Europeans during the Seventeenth Century, they now turned the same demonization tactics on Africans in the Eighteenth Century. In the 1700s African slaves were relegated to sequestered areas and slave owners put into place a spectrum of hierarchies that would insure they could maintain power. As more African slaves were brought to the original colonies during the early Eighteenth Century, many former indentured servants began enjoying a higher status on plantations. Many had plowed the fields, but as Africans began performing these arduous duties, some whites worked alongside the African slaves, while others began performing roles such as overseer and slave patroller. As they were not yet property owners, these whites could not vote, and wealthy property owners could subject them to brutal treatments. Faced with the reality that they could easily be dethroned from their newfound status above the African slaves, the former indentured servants sometimes carried out their duties with more brutality than the slave owners. On the one hand, the former indentured servants enjoyed their status and at the same time they detested

the system that kept them in servitude to the property owners. Even when they had gained their freedom, they remembered their tortured treatment and the treatment of their ancestors. This state of ambivalence would recirculate throughout racial projects in the United States.

Ambivalence would continue to function within the hegemonic process by enrolling a relatively small group of oppressed people to maintain the status quo over a much larger group of oppressed people. This dynamic of ambivalence and consent would perdure for centuries in the United States. African slaves would also participate in maintaining the hegemonic order through their satisfaction and fear in the ambivalent state. Some accepted the “it could be worse” meme, while others were simply afraid to challenge the slave owner’s agenda. As new African slaves came to the colonies, older slaves exercised power over the newcomers. As Stephanie E. Smallwood notes, slaves and planters articulated their differences between newly arrived Africans, or “Salt-Water Negroes,” and slaves born in the United States. Recalling John Oldmixon’s notes, she states that “those that are born in Barbados are much more useful men than those that are brought from Guinea.”¹⁰ The American born slaves often ridiculed the African slaves because they did not speak English or practiced traditional religious beliefs. The indoctrinated, American born slaves often earned places of status because they already understood how the capitalist system of slavery worked, thus creating a rift between the American and “Salt-Water Slaves.” This state of ambivalence within African-American communities would continue in the United States in situations where less oppressed African-Americans co-sign with the hegemonic order over more oppressed African-American citizens by co-scripting and repeating the narrative of the oppressor, a dynamic that has re-circulated throughout the course of American history.

The fact that some blacks owned slaves also added to the state of ambivalence among African Americans in the United States. Some Blacks owned slaves as a means of buying their loved-ones into freedom, as, for example, when a slave would gain their freedom and then buy their spouse and children. Other Blacks owned slaves as a means of capital investment. Carter G. Woodson stated that in 1830 that nearly 14% of the black population was free. In the data he cites, 3,776 free Blacks owned 12,907 slaves. Most free Blacks owned only 1 to 9 slaves, while only 1% of free Blacks owned between 20 and 84 slaves. Some freed slaves bought others in order to later free them for a small price.¹¹ A few did own slaves as outright property, adding to the ambivalent state as it institutionalized the hierarchies from which the capitalists had profited in the past. Some of the enslaved aspired for their freedom and acquisition of wealth and the freed property owners aligned with the hegemony.

Over the course of American History, race has played a vital role in the development and maintenance of social orders. European settlers used race as a way of defining “otherness.” Invading and occupying American soil, the settlers were able to justify the deaths of millions of indigenous people by painting them as savage and inferior. These early racial projects established a foundation for the early settlers to then enslave and transport millions of Africans to the “New Continent,” to be used as labor in creating capitalistic enterprises. By the mid Nineteenth Century, as international abolitionist movements began to flourish and the need for the transportation of additional Africans across the Atlantic decreased, slave owners needed new mechanisms to maintain power. Early capitalists had already displaced Native Americans, first through negotiations and finally through warfare in which the Europeans used more advanced military technology. Because many of the Europeans were Christians, they created narratives that the Native Americans were deficient and naïve in their worship.

With their Eurocentric understanding of the world, the settlers created narratives that rationalized their putative “superiority.” As Africans began arriving on American soil, settlers began using the same tactics they had previously used for classifying the European poor and the Native Americans whose land they had appropriated. The slave owners cast Africans as barbarians, sub-humans without the capacity to develop fully formed, sophisticated cultures, religions or languages. In *The Melancholy of Race*, Ann Anlin Cheng theorizes that racialization was the institutional process of creating and excluding the racialized “other” in order to solidify a dominant, standard American ideal. There is of course a terrible irony in the fact that this process helped to construct a nation that prides itself on being founded on principles of freedom and liberty; and that it was carried out with the vicious appropriation of land from, and in many cases the genocidal erasure of, the Native Americans. The economic wealth of the nation was built on the legalized exclusion of “others.” These shameful and traumatic events, acted out in a theater of democratic ideology, depended upon the creation of an imaginary vision of superior *whiteness* that complete denied the viciousness of the imperialist grounds of its own history.¹²

Today, American society remains divided, separated along economic and racial lines where, on one side, affordable housing, access to health care, and higher education remain unobtainable. The ambivalent state that developed in the Seventeenth Century continues today as poor Whites stand against their own interests in their efforts to remain separate from Blacks. Prison populations continue to escalate for both these groups of individuals. Finding living wage employment proves elusive for both people of color and the poor of all races. On the other side of the equation, large corporate and special interests continue to benefit from institutional systems that maintain American hegemony and segregation at home. While more African Americans gain access to graduate level education, find seats of power, and secure multi-million

dollar bank accounts, a growing bifurcation exists between the classes. The divide between a devastated poverty class and a super wealthy class has ballooned. Since the early periods of the American colonies, ruling classes have inextricably linked racial categories, religion, the accumulation of wealth, and the hegemonic narrative of American democracy, opportunity, and success in order to maintain power. These relationships have continued to solidify racial formations over the course of American history.

As the international community began to outlaw slavery in the early Nineteenth Century, slave owners feared that expanding slave populations might have the means to revolt. The Haitian revolution (1791-1804) struck fear into the hearts of American slave owners, who instituted rules that would insure retention of their power, inscribing racist laws and codes even more deeply into the American narrative. In order to constitute dominance, capitalistic enterprises equated the idea of *whiteness* with *Americanness*, just as they associated *non-whiteness* with *otherness*. Institutions of power, such as political, governmental, religious, social and economic groups, held up wealthy whites as the cultural ideal. The negation of others, in law, meant that people of African descent were legally defined as 3/5 of a person (as agreed upon at the United States Conventional Constitution in 1787). During slavery and in Jim Crow times, African Americans could neither vote nor own guns or property. At the same time, Native Americans were relocated to reservations. Their participation in American society did not count, according to the settlers who had taken ownership of the United States.

As slaves were forced to remain “in their place” on such locations as plantations, they first were shackled forcibly. They would learn to remain where they “belonged” for fear of violence. After slavery, former slaves, with the protection of the federal government, lived as free people during the brief period of Reconstruction. However, this period ended with markedly

increased violence against the former slaves. New, more restrictive laws, promoted by corporate interests, were placed on the books. These laws focused on acts of “belonging,” where former slaves were often punished for petty crimes or for being in the wrong place. Jim Crow laws increased during this time as well as institutions like the prison lease program, which relegated former slaves to restricted spaces “where they belonged.” Former slaves were often imprisoned and forced to do hard labor for corporate interests, such as work camps for mining companies and farms. Douglas A. Blackmon documents this new manifestation of forced labor, usually carried out against black men, which continued to rest upon racialized and hegemonic narratives that promoted the interests of wealthy corporations.¹³ He categorizes this period after Reconstruction as a new form of slavery. This period coincided with many of the practices of the Jim Crow Era, often supported by negative memes and narratives about the former slaves. As I have argued, these interwoven narratives have persisted over the entire history of the United States.

Rehearsal Scenes and Spaces of Sequestration and Un-Belonging

Since the very beginning of the United States, African Americans did not possess the privilege to live where they wanted. Laws allowed only restricted spaces for the African American, and many in the White American majority either implicitly or explicitly supported vicious practices such as the institution of slavery, lynching, and legalized and economic segregation that helped to keep African Americans “in their place.” The institution of slavery established the foundation of racial formations and of a deep consciousness of un-belonging that continues through contemporary times. The end of slavery brought a brief period of redress during Reconstruction (1865-1877), when some former slaves served in government. However, this period ended with harsh retributions for former slaves, fueled by economic uncertainties and

bleak living conditions of the time for many. Whites passed restrictive legislation that relegated Blacks again to sequestered spaces, once again codifying terror for African Americans.

After World War Two, the eventual ending of Jim Crow ushered in the era of the civil rights movement, but like Reconstruction, this period brought harsh responses to the progress of disenfranchised citizens. The 1950s and 1960s saw landmark Supreme Court rulings such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and *Loving v. Virginia* (1967) and important federal civil rights legislation (e.g., the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968). But over time, in close relationship with corporate interests, lawmakers in the mainstream legal system have weakened these advances toward equal treatment under the law. In the Post-Civil Rights Era, special interests began dismantling progressive enactments.

I call these changing strategies “scenes of sequestration.” The tactics have changed but the outcomes of “un-belonging” remain the same. For example, special interest groups, such as for-profit charter schools and policy makers with vested interests, have eliminated desegregation projects, which followed the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. These groups have instituted re-segregation projects by influencing popular narratives like the increased attacks against schoolteacher unions and the dissemination of negative discourse about the “failures of public schools.” After desegregation, these groups promoted separate schools by creating “segregation academies” around the country, and consistently sponsoring voucher programs, charter schools and neighborhood schools designed to create racially segregated learning environments. According to UCLA’s Civil Rights Project, school segregation has reached levels close to the period of the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.¹⁴ The re-segregation of American schools is a vivid demonstration of the continuation of racially sequestered spaces.

In *Walking in the City*, Michel de Certeau, uses a street plan to differentiate between *tactics* and *strategies* as he described the act of walking as if someone is watching from above. *Strategies* consist of entities with power that structure pathways that influence the journey. In the analogy, structures of power, producers, named the areas that were allowed to traverse. These entities with power drew up maps to delineate permissible paths as if someone were looking down from above. Stop signs, traffic lights, pedestrian walkways, flowerbeds, locked doors and fences give more detailed guides to the walk in the city. *Tactics* constitute how pedestrians move through the city, how they respond to the structures established by the producers. These pedestrians, consumers, could follow the paths or they could take shortcuts. The strategies of masters of slavery sought to demarcate and limit places of belonging in order to maintain a panoptic view over individuals and to define their access to knowledge, communication and liberties. This control insured, as de Certeau maintained, “the uncertainties of history into readable spaces.”¹⁵ In essence, in a similar manner that de Certeau described, the panoptic purview of the slave master insured that slaves stayed within the confines of the plantation. These sequestered spaces persist in economically depressed areas around the United States where poor schooling continue to recirculate underachievement, few economic opportunities exist and strong unrepresentative police forces patrol the areas. These conditions recreate longstanding patterns of sequestration.

In the days of slavery, the slave owners clearly delineated spaces of belonging. They first sequestered the slaves onto plantations by force, and then held them there through fear and ambivalence. Saidiya Hartman presents this performance of power over the slaves with her analysis of everyday practices on subjected bodies. Over time, slave owners did not have to use force to maintain power over the slaves because of the brutal maneuvers that slave owners

displayed that informed all the other slaves to witness. Hartman argues that, “The exercise of power was inseparable from its display because domination depended upon demonstration of the slaveholders’ domination and the captives’ abasement.”¹⁶ The slave master needed to demonstrate his power in order to confirm his power. In the process of demonstrating this power, the slaves understood their sequestered places. While some slaves escaped, slave owners exerted severe public punishment upon those who had the misfortune of being captured, which presented an undisputed message to the other slaves that they had to remain sequestered. These “re-enactments of subjection” controlled the other slaves and drove the will of the escapee into submission. While living in those sequestered spaces, slaves learned the consciousness of “un-belonging” whenever they dared to cross the boundaries of the plantation.

To ensure that African slaves stayed where they “belonged,” slave patrols circulated around the plantations. As rebellions occurred in the Caribbean and fear among North American slave owners increased, the colonies began passing laws that gave all white people the responsibility of patrolling slaves. While many poor whites took jobs as patrollers, the ranks of the patrollers consisted of men from all classes. As Sally Hadden explicates, white men of all classes patrolled for runaway slaves. “Slave patrols between 1704 and 1721 frequently included men of superior social status, not just for sleeveless whites. Wealthy South Carolina man angled for appointments a slave patrollers to avoid having to serve in the military when it was called away from home.” The patrollers rode in groups of five men, each called a “company beat,” and would search the slaves’ homes, without warrants, in search of runaways of any illegal activities that the slaves might engage in. As these patrols offered a means of ascending the economic and social ladder for whites, the racially segregated structure of power did not end with the

Emancipation Proclamation. These structures would transition into official and unofficial police forces after the end of slavery.

At the end of the Nineteenth Century, brutal Jim Crow laws continued to relegate former slaves to specific areas of belonging. Even after the Great Migration Movements to the North, the United States as a whole took on intolerant Jim Crow laws that had been previously situated only in the South. Over the ensuing decades, the nation outlawed these harsh enactments during the civil rights period but powerful interests implemented new strategies to segregate blacks from whites and the rich from the poor. These new institutionalized enactments constitute new forms of sequestration, supported by corporate hegemonic narratives. As many African Americans continue to live in sequestered spaces, the narrative warning of their danger persists. Surrounding many communities, police patrols insure that African Americans will stay in their place, as recently demonstrated in Ferguson, Missouri, where the police force did not represent the population that they were charged to patrol and many citizens feared the police. Just as the slave patrollers used to police plantation boundaries, police forces use scare tactics to maintain ambivalence and fear in Black communities.

Rehearsal Script

Practicing a consciousness of “un-belonging,” slaves and their descendants also learned how to demonstrate a bifurcated consciousness that only other slaves could understand or decipher. The other slaves could understand the profound pain of torture and at the same time demonstrate a void and numbed response to the maltreatment. The other subjected could understand the desire to transport to other places, places of belonging. These shared desires inspired fabrications of “going home,” “crossing over,” and “getting to the other side.” Slaves recirculated shared stories of going home to Africa, where they belonged. In addition to using a

mental state of transcendence, Glenda Carpio, proposes that slaves also used a narrative of humor to counterbalance the harsh realities of slavery: “Black American humor began as a wrested freedom, the freedom to laugh at that which was unjust and cruel in order to create distance from what would otherwise obliterate a sense of self and community.”¹⁷ Out of the brutality of slavery, slaves found a means to take control of that which they could. Through this humorous discourse, slaves could simultaneously insult the slavers and also communicate to the other slaves. These trickster narratives developed on the sequestered spaces as counterpoint to the repressive practices on the plantation. Over time, these responses passed around from plantation to plantation and served as communal memories after the ending of slavery. Humor brought the slaves and the descendants into bonds of belonging.

By casting the slaves as inferior and threatening, dominating bodies, interested in maintaining power, could continue to keep blacks enslaved by using force, by tailoring laws that insured a systematic hierarchy and by inscribing memes that assured the white power structures would remain solid. One can clearly comprehend the use of force and the enactment of laws to maintain power that supported the hegemony. However, the process of inscribing negative memes into the hegemonic narrative required subtle nuances within the discourse. This discourse legitimized the violence of slavery and the encroachment of Native Americans lands. In other words, the slave traders and owners could not have justified the brutal practices without diminishing the civility and vilifying those that they would come to oppress. To carry out the mass slaughter of Native Americans and the transport of millions of slaves to form the institutions of slavery, slavers would have to dominate the narrative such that many settlers could rationalize the ruthless practices. They dominated the narrative by casting the enslaved Africans

as savage, demonic, unintelligent, violent and other negative frames in order to justify brutal practices.

As the accumulation of wealth drove much of early appropriation of land and labor during the early colonies in America, Cheryl I. Harris contends that, “the racialization of identity and subordination of blacks and Native Americans provided the ideological basis for slavery and conquests.” They differed in process as one involved seizing and appropriating labor from African. Early settlers appropriated land from Native Americans. Ratified laws identified classes of citizens where Africans were classified as unfree, different from indentured servants. Africans and Native Americans did not own land. She notes that, “while not all Africans were slaves, virtually all slaves were not white.”¹⁸ Therefore, laws prohibited certain categories of free men from owning property. White identity provided privilege and protection since many laws were tethered to property ownership. Since slaves could be owned, they were viewed as valuable assets. Property rights, as a legal construct, provided power under the protection of the law. Since slaves could not own property they can therefore not own themselves. On the other hand, whites could own property and base on the legal benefits of maintaining power, property owners continue to cast racialized categories, which Harris contends produces “whiteness” itself as a radicalized privilege. These privileges, through laws, embedded race with power, economic class and liberties. Laws such as the “one drop rule” (a sociological and legal principle of racial classification that asserted that any person with even one ancestor of African ancestry, i.e., “one drop” of African blood, was Black) provided even more institutionalized disenfranchisement. In other words, power structures manufactured the reviling narratives woven into the legal and economic structures.

Reoccurring Characters

These hegemonic narratives of racial difference were widespread in American popular culture of the Nineteenth century. Published in 1852, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became a bestselling novel that inspired theatrical productions based on the characters of the book. Harriet Beecher Stowe introduced characters that have not only become classic stock characters but have also part of the American vernacular. Theatrical producers inserted terms and characterizations such as “Uncle Tom,” “Mammy,” “the tragic mulatto,” “happy darky,” and “pickaninny,” into common day-to-day usage within popular culture. As the best selling novel of the Nineteenth Century, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* transformed stage productions many times around the country with productions that popularized the melodrama format and further embedded the idea of America as a racialized nation.¹⁹ Producers used melodramatic techniques to direct the audience’s empathy toward certain characters by focusing on the victim-heroes and their virtues.

Another way that the American narrative of the white hegemony became more institutionalize surfaced in the Nineteenth Century with the emergence of the Minstrel Show. In the early Nineteenth Century, theater was a popular type of entertainment in cities like New York. Just as the law did not allow Blacks to participate in government, they also were not allowed to participate fully in formal theater. Because Blacks were not allowed in these halls of entertainment, Whites began using “blackface,” artificially darkening their skins in order to imitate the slaves. It could be argued that in so doing white entertainers were appropriating, or rather misappropriating, the African tradition of the griot. In some West African cultures, the griot served as an important member of society. The griot, often considered, mystical, magical and sacred, sang historical narratives and praise poetry and was an important holder of memory. On the plantation, the griot also developed into a central figure. Instead of appropriating the sacred and important role of the griot in African and American slave traditions, the Whites used

the appropriation as a way to deepen the inscriptions of the American narrative. White performers frequently depicted blacks as “coons,” simple and untrustworthy, infantile and pathological. These characters paraded under a thematic backdrop of the importance of democracy in America. While lawmakers enfranchised all white men, they characterized black men were painted black men as inferior, incapable of fulfilling the duties of being a full-fledged Americans. The minstrels introduced stock characters that remain today in the depiction of blacks in popular culture. Minstrels became very popular, and the Minstrel Show became the first American theatrical form that had not been imported from Europe, and the foundation for many genres for follow.

In the earliest full length American film, *The Birth of a Nation*, D. W. Griffith used melodramatic techniques to present the point of view of the white “victim.” Portraying Whites as virtuous characters, he provoked the audience to feel empathy when they felt threatened. For example, he directed the audience to have sympathies with the female character Flora Cameron when she feels a threat by a black man. Griffith incites pathos after she jumps off the ridge rather than fall into the embrace of Gus, a black man, played by a white man in black face. Griffith employed the happy ending in *Birth of a Nation* with the double honeymoon at the end of the war by using the image of Christ to embed the American religious/racial narrative deeper into the American psyche. Happy endings, common to the melodrama genre, have used suspense, anxiety and catharsis as a means of building alliances in American story telling and reaffirming racial orders. Griffith built upon the earliest narratives and popular cultural media that sought to denigrate Africans and Native Americans, establishing a foundation for negative hegemonic narratives in American film that continue to recast stereotypic memes and characterizations.

In *Not Yet Human: Implicit Knowledge, Historical Dehumanization, and Contemporary Consequences*, the psychologist Phillip Goff and his colleagues analyze the Negro-Ape Metaphor. European explorers described Africans as being “ape-like” in their appearance. This trope has also surfaced in popular American discourse, most noticeably in the 1933 film, *King Kong*, a film that inscribed a racist trope about interracial relations into the popular imagination. (King Kong’s pivotal scene involves the giant ape capturing a white woman who is the object of his affections.) The Goff Study asks such questions as: “Do people associate Blacks with apes in contemporary U. S. society?” “What are the consequences of Black-ape associations?” The study found that both Whites and non-Whites held the Black-ape association. The team of psychologists drew the conclusion that dehumanization leaves individuals open for “cruelty, degradation and state-sanctioned violence.” The Goff Study prompts all parties to take action, and proposes, “Examining specific historical representations, investigating the mechanisms of implicit knowledge, and exploring the cognitive antecedents of human-animal associations can all be in the service of remedying dehumanization’s savage consequences.” The Goff team’s studies revealed the depths to which the Black-ape narrative is embedded in the American psyche. For example, in Denver, police officers used the phrase, “gorillas in the mist,” the title of a popular book by naturalist Dian Fossey, to imply the presence of black men in the area.²⁰ Even over the course of centuries, the tangled relationship between the American Narrative and institutions of power continues to uphold racial formations.

The Rehearsal and Performance of Memory

Eli, we carry these memories inside we. Do you believe that those hundreds of Africans dropped here on this other shore would forget everything they once knew? We don’t know where these recollections come from. Sometimes we dream ‘em. But we carry these memories inside of we...Eli, I’m trying to learn you how to touch your own spirit. I’m trying to give you something to take along

with you. Count on those old Africans, Eli. They come to you when you least suspect 'em. They hug you up quick and soft as the warm, sweet wind. Let 'em touch you with the hand of time.

Nana Peazant
*Daughters of the Dust*²¹

In this chapter I have traced the threads of an interwoven fabric of a narrative of unbelonging that runs from the earliest days of American slavery through the days of Jim Crow and the contemporary exclusions of racial segregation. We turn reflect to Gorée Island, Senegal, a privileged space for the rehearsal and performance of this complex narrative by diasporic tourists. From the early days of slavery, from the slave ships and the plantations, slaves recalled Africa and dreamed of their return. Some of their recollections actually occurred but they modified, invented and pieced together other stories over time. While slaves and former slaves waded through the misery and terror of slavery and its aftermath, they retained and re-circulated fragments of memories of Africa. From sequestered spaces, they have rehearsed, performed and re-performed pieces of their memories. They have taken the hegemonic narrative, what was said about them, and mediated their own stories between history and memory. Those who crossed the Atlantic centuries ago, no longer live to tell their stories. Their descendants sometimes still carry the wounds of the “pained bodies,” like the survivors of genocide or any devastating and violent event. The descendants of the Middle Passage act on embodied memories inscribed through cultural practices and collective memory. They seek to hold onto what was or may have been. Saidiya V. Hartman has posited that “these traces of memory function in a manner akin to a phantom limb.”¹⁶ Just as someone who has lost a limb continues to feel the presence of the lost limb, and the descendants of slaves move through the world feeling the palpable spirit of what has been taken from them. They hold on to memories as if to fill the void.

What is memory? According to Polly Roberts and Allen Roberts, “memory is not passive, and the mind is not simply a repository from which memories can be retrieved.” The contend that memory “is a dynamic social process of recuperation, reconfiguration, and outright invention.”²² Unlike histories that are based on archived written properties, typically owned by powerful entities that focus on exact events that occurred in a diachronic series of events, memories reflect a synchronic sense of happenings. The dynamic process of remembering and forgetting occurs in the present. For cultures that practice ancestor veneration, cultures that practice epistemologies embracing synchronic time, ritual practices are based on a non-linear time. Therefore, events from the past are fluid into the present and memory is open to interpretation. Often, imagination feeds memory. Those with a consciousness of “un-
belonging” piece together the fragments of what they do know with what they have heard and what they imagine. Julie Dash’s *Daughter of the Dust* became one of the most celebrated films to combine real and imagined materials of Africa.²¹ In relation to the film Laura Marks describes the process that Julie Dash used in setting the period and ambiance for the film.²³ Dash imagined the physical context of the story at the turn of the last century, as no pictorial histories existed of the Gullah Islands of that time. Dash used her imagination as she prodded memory with strong visuals of foods, clothing, colors and movements. Dash constructed a memory. African American storytellers, like Dash, have used actual and constructed memories to perform recapitulated myths, narratives and fragments of memories. Others, such as corporate mass media have used historical and constructed memories for purposes like entertainment and political agendas, to manufacture popular notions.

Popular entertainment and media events have also contributed to the recirculation of narratives. Like the stories from the plantations, some of the theatrical and media storytellers

built on repetitions from actual events. They also connected fragments of stories, invented and modified narratives. In 1977, the miniseries, *Roots*, became one of the most watched television productions of all times.²⁴ By the eighth night, the final episode garnered an estimated audience of 36 million viewers. For the first time, Americans were publicly talking about the institution of slavery as a nation. *Roots* changed the national conversation for all Americans. For black Americans, the series promoted an increased fascination with the continent of Africa. For American citizens who still struggled with the notion of civic belonging, the “return to Africa” meme provided the imagination with a solution. At the same time, *Roots* played into American hegemonic narratives of the homestead, owning a piece of American land, equity to be passed through generations. With this example, where television producers seem to paint a sympathetic picture of the slave, they also create narratives that have hegemonic and counter hegemonic implications.

Using the “return to Africa” meme that Africans used during and after slavery, contemporary corporations have appropriated the meme as a tool for commercialization. Paulla Ebron details her experience of traveling to Gorée Island with a group of about 100 American citizens, mostly black, on a trip sponsored by McDonald’s.²⁵ The trip included cultural seminars on African-American history and the slave trade presented by scholars from the United States and Senegal. The pilgrims visited the slave house on Gorée and then traveled to the country of the Gambia to visit the birthplace of Alex Haley, the author of *Roots*. Sponsored events such as these became commonplace for corporations when targeting African-American markets, especially during February, Black History Month. These companies exploited narratives, memes, histories, music and images in order to promote their commercial enterprises. In a similar way, political leaders began appropriating these cultural ideas in order to promote specific agendas.

The appropriation of the “return to Africa” meme has not ended at the American shores. Local entrepreneurs, such as the residents of Gorée Island, began to consciously market the narrative of “return” as they welcomed diasporic tourists to the island.

Documentary film can also play a critical role in the process of promoting memory as an act of rehearsal. *Return to Gorée* fits perfectly into the imagination of the descendants of slavery.²⁶ In this film, music is tied into the narrative relationship of the slave trade and contemporary African-American life, as we see and hear diasporic travelers visiting the Slave House on Gorée Island and musicians solemnly walking through the tiny memorial site. In another music focused film, *The Language You Cry In*, ethnomusicologists Joe Opala and Cynthia Schmidt trace a song from the Gullah Sea Islands of Georgia--originally recorded during the 1940s--back to a remote village in Sierra Leone.²⁷ Opala found the daughter of the woman who sang in the original recording, who also knew the song. Their research suggests that the song is at least 250 years old, making it the longest surviving piece of African music. . One of the musicians in *Return to Gorée* says, “it’s in the music, it’s in the music,” and one can agree that for many diasporic communities, the memory is in the music.

According to Elizabeth Tonkin, “ the construction of ‘oral history’ is treated as a profoundly social process which is also bound up simultaneously with different social temporalities.²⁸ To some, a social perspective and a historical one are antithetical, the one looking at connections over time, the other to relationships at any moment and so in a sense timeless.” For oppressed cultures, such as slaves and their descendants in the Americas and colonial subjects in Africa, a tension exists between hegemonic histories and constructed memories that support their spiritual and psychological epistemologies. These cultures find release from the tension of history versus memory, through ritual practices, dance and music.

Melion and Kùchler submit that “memory is socially and culturally constructed, and recourse to the processes of construction must mediate the understanding of memory, especial the understanding of its embeddedness in active processes of cognition and image production.”²⁹

What happens when there are no bodies to bury, when the ones who experienced the direct violence are long gone, as is the case with the descendants of the victims of the transatlantic slave trade? Their bodies still carry the pain, some from cultural shame and others from systematic exclusion from opportunity and power. What happens when their rupture is psychological and emotional? Paula A. Ebron asserts that the past haunts us.²⁵ “The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us, as a simple, factual ‘past,’ since our relation to it, like the child’s relation to the mother, is always-already ‘after the break.’” Ebron asserts that the past is “always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification or suture, which are made within the discourse of history and culture.”

Descendants of the slave trade imagine Africa. However, the Africa for which they yearn is long gone. Some study historical fragments and invent an imagined Africa that does not exist, as was the experience of anthropologist Kamari Maxine Clarke who traveled to Nigeria as an ethnographer and auto-ethnographer with a group from the Òyótúnjí African Village in South Carolina.³⁰ While Africa has changed, the need to heal the rupture still exists. On the pilgrimage back to Africa, most mnemonic markers have disappeared. Only the “flashes of memory” that the descendants embody endures. Like the “phantom limb,” the emptiness continues to haunt. Each year, thousands of descendants return to Africa, retracing the steps of their ancestors at Gorée Island and the slave castles of Ghana. In tracing those steps and

shedding the tears, the descendants are empowered to transform and strengthen that place that was broken.

Pierre Nora's concept of collective memory promotes the idea that memory privileges groups and how they imagine themselves as obligated to the social reproduction of representations of the past.³¹ Stephan Palmié notes that the “mnemonic essentialization of collective identities” making claims over such a long period of time is implausible and problematic for individuals.³² He notes the house of slaves in Senegal as one such site, declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1980. Palmié calls Joseph Boubacar Ndiaye an amateur historian who was able to propel the site into international attention. Ira Berlin has called out some of the problems of “memory of slavery” movements stating that memories have become a language to talk about race when race is difficult to discuss. He draws attention to the importance of both history and memory. While they both serve as markers of time, place and space, they often meet in unpleasant points and they need each other.⁹ Each serves a function and compliments the other. While historians can erect statues and write books about specific events in time, they cannot mark all the diverse perspectives. Unlike memories, histories usually accentuate stasis. Memories can change over time and space and still maintain relevance as with the memorialization of the triangular slave trade. The slave memorials, along the Atlantic Ocean, archive static moments in time. The embodied memories of the travelers tell a different story. They both bring us closer to the truth.

In his essay *Slavery, Historicism, and the Poverty of Memorialization*, Stephan Palmié explores the contradictions between “history” and “memory” on Gorée Island.³² World leaders such as Bill Clinton, Pope John Paul II, Nelson Mandela, George W. Bush and Barack Obama have all visited Gorée Island to express political platitudes of “never again.” Descendants of the

African slave trade have tried to use “memory” as a means for retribution. Local African communities near the slave factories have often left out their histories of complicity during the slave trade and now capitalize on the pilgrims who return. Some have called the slave house, on Gorée Island, a scam or hoax. Others say that UNESCO has “fixed” memorial sites, such as a Slave House on Gorée Island, into the international psyche with motives that undermine historical accuracy. Ira Berlin notes: “history and memory both speak to the subject of slavery in the long experience of people of African descent in their American capacity, but they both speak in different tongues, and not surprisingly, where history and memory meet, the results are often unpleasant.”

Throughout the epoch of slavery, diasporic citizens have used memory as a means of recirculating narratives of their sorrows and consciousness of “un-belonging.” At the same time, they have used memory as an instrument of strength and determination. In the midst of the struggles, alienation and displacement, they have called upon their ancestors to guide them and lead them to their transcendence. The flash of memory allows them to remember the struggles of “un-belonging” that they rehearse, and to recirculate and simultaneously rehearse the ability of their ancestors to subsist and thrive. This “double consciousness” of memory allows them to prevail.

Interview: Who Will Tell The Story?

One of the African-American women I interviewed, who had visited Gorée Island, asked the question: “Who will tell the story?” Feeling alienated on her journey to Gorée Island, she realized that the people who allowed the Middle Passage had all died. Who, she wondered, would tell the story of those who have returned to Gorée? On her trip to Gorée, she questioned where she belonged. The Senegalese woman that she was with did not consider her to be an

African, but an American. The interviewee had traveled to the island to connect and to find a sense of belonging. Senegalese people consider diasporic travelers as *gan*, foreigners. Other than those who work in the tourism industry, Senegalese citizens rarely discuss the topic of the slave trade. In Ghana, Saidiya Hartman notes that locals call foreigners *Obruni*, meaning “from across the sea.”⁷ Like the interviewee who discovered that she did not necessarily belong, Hartman wrote, “*Obruni* forced me to acknowledge that I didn’t belong anyplace.” Because of the lack of discussion of the slave trade, Bayo Holsey interrogates the “hiding and displacing negative histories” of the slave trade in Ghana as a mean to reform the image of their complicity in the slave trade.³³ She argues that the term *Obruni* identifies those who come from over the horizon. Even though this interviewee did not find a connection of belonging at Gorée Island, she did make a connection to her understanding of history and the story of the slave trade.

I interviewed the following woman who had recently returned from visiting Gorée Island. I wanted to interview her because of her intense desire to carry a group of African American women to the island for “healing.” She had traveled to the island before her recent trip. I was mostly curious about why she wanted to visit the island so I asked her some questions, but she spoke very freely and I did not interrupt.

What were your experiences of visiting Gorée Island?

The first time I went to Gorée Island, I am sure I didn't feel it like I felt it this last time. I think that the second time going to the island, I appreciated it more because I was older... because I'm more open, because I'm more grounded, because I am more, more intuitive and more accepting of those gifts. The first time, I purposefully did not want to touch the walls. I purposefully did not necessarily want to touch the ground. I wanted to the second time. I wanted to hear as much as I could... the energy fields that's always present there, that lingers there and I think that's why it attracts. I found myself going into the rooms once the crowd left.

Why did you want to be alone in the rooms?

With all the people, I felt there was little reverence for the people who had passed through there. You know, we were there with a tour guide, the three of us, and a small family from Gambia. The tour guide took us through the castle and, you know, explained a variety of different things to us. The woman from Gambia turned to my girlfriend and said, "You're the slave that got sold, you're the slave that left. My girlfriend turned to the woman and said "Yes, I have returned. Yes, better and stronger." The woman kind of chuckled in an awkward kind of way.

How did you respond to this?

You know I try to stop being insulted by ignorance a long time ago but it brought up a lot of questions for us, perceptions of Africans about African-Americans on the continent. It brought up questions of identity, belonging for us in terms of how we are perceived by them and where we belonged... how we perceive ourselves based on how they perceive us. So we started asking questions.

So, we started asking questions and we asked question of one of our friends who is well-off and has a Ph. D. and goes to Cheikh Anta Diop University. We asked her what she thought about African-Americans and she said that she did not see us as Africans. She saw us as Americans and when they see white people from America, they see them as Europeans. And, then later on that evening, we were at a casino listening to a Cape Verdean artist. There was a German guy who really wanted to engage in conversation. So, he turned to me and started asking questions. He asked me why did I come to Gorée, did I come to find my family roots but it was very lighthearted, you know. The story of those of the middle passage has been told but the story of those who returned has never been told. You know the best and the brightest were taken from the continent. One of the people with us was a doctoral student from Senegal. She says that when griots tell the stories, they go back eleven, twelve generations in the villages. The story of slavery is silent. I realized, okay, those who were who assisted in the slave trade don't tell the story. Those who went through the middle passage for 400 years don't tell the story... because it's so painful still for us. So, we'll tell the story. The people who are buried at sea can't tell the story... All life has purpose and all life is equally purposeful. All life has value. Who tells the story of people who went away and never came back? I was speaking at a church recently and what emerge from me is that we have to tell the story. If we don't tell the story the story will not be told. It's a story that takes us through slavery. I realized that 400 years of human trafficking went unaddressed, went unmarked, went untold and because 400 years of human trafficking went untold people think it's okay.

What do you mean by this?

Today, I am happy gangs are no longer selling drugs but gangs are now taking 10, 11, 12-year-olds from foster care and group homes. They have what they called a

“breaking pimp,” a gang member who breaks them and he rapes them. And, then they have a “choose pimp,” who chooses who puts them out on the street and who will protect them... so it occurred to me, we have come full circle, it made me think what makes people think that they can makes sex slaves out of little girls that look like them. Why will they even think that that's okay and it goes back full circle to what was never addressed in the first place and as long as it's not addressed, it continues. So, yesterday I went to an empowerment conference with our local councilman. I found out that the average age for these young girls, being put into prostitution, is 13 years old. Human trafficking is one of the major crisis areas in his district. Some of these girls are picked up from the streets and placed into a different group home. They then recruit other girls from the group homes to be put back out on the streets.

Rehearsals and Re-Enactments of Subjection

In the Post Civil Rights Era, most African Americans do not witness the overtly aggressive acts of oppression, servitude or violence that many witnessed during slavery and the Jim Crow Era. Many cannot personally relate to mass incarceration or police brutality. Some will report of improvements in their lives since the civil rights legislations of the 1960s. Nonetheless, while African Americans have experienced individual triumphs, there is no way to ignore statistics regarding the re-segregation of schools, increased incarceration rates for people of color, and a rise in police killings, and the fact that most African Americans alienated from American narratives of fairness and equal opportunity. To punctuate experiences of alienation, African American lament the everyday indignities of un-belonging. Since 2008, one of the repeated memes in the American political arena has come from dissatisfied sections of the country who accuse the president of the United States as a Kenyan born Muslim. In other words, they insinuate that the President of the United States, Barack Obama, does not belong. Since the beginning of his presidency, this group has continuously called for him to prove his American birth. Even though many white Americans would deny the persistence of these slights, most African Americans would testify to their continued presence.

I contend that these consistent everyday slights add to the feeling of un-belonging. This feeling underscores the attraction of sites such as Gorée Island. African Americans see relief from the day-to-day consistent and prevailing narrative. Practitioners of these day-to-day negations and disregard rarely recognize their insensitivity but those who receive their barbs suffer the wounds. In 1979, Chester M. Pierce introduced the term *micro-aggressions* as a form of assaultive behaviors directed towards less powerful individuals. He defined the concept as subtle everyday aggressions with no physical contact.³⁴ Every interviewee of this study on pilgrims to Gorée noted some feelings of un-belonging and separation based on micro-aggressive assaults. Derald Wing Sue defined micro-aggressions as brief indignities that convey negative insult against people without power based on race, gender, sexual orientation and ability.³⁵ Because of the difficulty in compiling data for micro-aggressive occurrences, Sue relies on personal to demonstrate episodes of subtle aggressive violations. Daniel Solorzano defines three types of micro-aggressions as racial micro-aggressions, interpersonal micro-aggressions, and institutional micro-aggressions.³⁶

In the following autobiographical scenario, I intend to establish the foundations for the occurrence and expectation of the subtleties of micro-aggressive assaults in the context of contemporary “post-racial” United States. In the cycle of transcendence for “well-seasoned” diasporic travelers, the Slave House on Gorée Island can serve as a space for the “performance of transformation.” Our society has become a recited society driven by stories written by the powerful. Nonlinear expressions of time, juxtaposed alongside consistent and constant racial formations, re-circulate alongside systemic racial formations. The context, for many of the narratives, has changed over time. In this final section of this chapter, I use autobiographical data to identify the continuance of American racial formations as I experienced them in the

1960s. Like the interviewee who realized that contemporary occurrences have direct links to the slave trade and that if we do not tell the stories, the stories will go untold, what I learned about un-belonging as a boy in Georgia, I used to re-create and experience over and over. Traveling to Gorée, I learned to begin to transform the accumulated micro-aggressive experiences into a sense of belonging.

Elberton, Georgia, 1967

The boy danced around the old woman's legs as he attempted to avoid the excruciatingly painful lashes of her whip. The rest of us sat in perfect rows like obedient acolytes as we watched the horror being played out in front of us. We knew that if we dared to make a sound or protest, we could be called to the front for our own lashing. Some of us put our heads down for fear of snickering at the maneuvers of the little black boy slipping out of the grasp of the old black and wrinkled hands of the woman, causing her to stagger and almost fall. Regaining her balance, the teacher repeatedly whipped the boy, with all of her 65-year-old might, wherever her 4-foot long whip would land. The cracking sounds of her whip made us all flinch as she struck his back, his legs, his torso or his arms. The boy, refused to cry, knowing that if he did, he would admit that the beating mattered. Later that day he would boast as he proclaimed: "It didn't hurt!" But, we knew it did hurt because his ashy face revealed a river of tears that he had cried when he went back to put his head on his desk. We knew that it did hurt because we have all been beaten at school, especially the boys.

I received my first beating in the first grade when the teacher accused me of whistling in the classroom during independent math time. Another boy had whistled. Later, a screeching sound from outside the window echoed through the old dilapidated classroom as someone turned the rusty TV antenna outside. The teacher raced over to me with her thick leather strap and began hitting me, declaring that she had told me to stop whistling. I tried to explain that someone was turning the TV antenna but she kept hitting and hitting. When I couldn't stop sobbing, she began flogging me again, directing me to go to the bathroom to "dry it up!" At the end of the day, when my books became tangled in the desk below and when I wasn't moving fast enough for her, she came and begin lashing me once again. She said she was tired of looking at me. When I finally was able to release my books from the desk and when I had had enough of her brutality, I threw the books and hit her in the head. That's when she really became violent and lashed me even more.

When I went to my grandmother's house after school, and when she asked me how was my day, I planned to do what we had all learned to do. I had planned on

keeping a secret. I had planned to tell her that my day was great but the pain and sense of betrayal caused me to sob once again. When she asked me what was the matter, I explained that my first grade teacher, my aunt, my father's sister, her daughter, had beaten me for something I had not done. My grandmother became very angry. When my aunt came by that afternoon, my grandmother demanded that my aunt never do that again. For the rest of that year in first grade, my teacher, my aunt, teased me and told me that I had told on her. She was wrong. I had not told but my tears had betrayed me that day just as my teacher had.

My aunt taught me that day how to keep secrets. We all learned how to keep secrets about our beatings. We learned how to laugh it off even when we were hurting. I already knew how to comply at school having completed a successful year of kindergarten as a star student. However, my aunt further instilled in me to quiet down and never makes waves. In our little school, in Elberton Georgia, on the colored side of the railroad tracks, teachers beat us for anything. They would send us to the blackboard to solve math problems and if we did not solve the problem fast enough, they would lash us. If we were late to school, they might beat us. Sometimes, we would get a hit for every spelling word that we missed. If we played too long at recess, or talked to loud in the classroom or said a bad word, they would beat us. They used straps made of rubber or thick leather. They used oblong shaped wooden paddles. At times, they would grab a yardstick or even use their closed fists. Some of the teachers even named their weapons: The slightest mention of "Black Boy" or "Sally-Jane" caused enough fear in us that we would submit like docile sheep.

In the mid to late 1960s, in segregated schools, like Blackwell Elementary School that I attended, many of the black teachers were direct descendants of slaves. They beat us, like their parents and teachers had beaten them and like their parents' masters had beaten them. These teachers were certainly children of the Jim Crow Era. They had rehearsed survival their whole lives. They had practiced how to stay in their places where they belonged. They trained their impressionable students how to stay where they belonged. Through these "workshops," they wanted to prepare us for the impending full implementation of school desegregation.

In third grade, as we practiced for a holiday program, our teacher grabbed a boy and began furiously striking him with "Sally-Jane." I didn't see that the boy had done. Mostly likely, he had danced or played in the line when she wanted perfectly straight lines. When she finished the whipping, she introduced us to a word that I had never heard before and have not heard since. She chastised the boy for coming in public and showing his "niggerisms." In 1969, I don't remember ever remember hearing the abhorrent N-word and I certainly had not heard her new rendition of the word. She dramatically imprinted in our minds that we needed to act a certain way in the presence of white people. She made us aware that were had been "born with a veil."

By the time I had matriculated to eighth grade, our schools have finally completely integrated. My family, by our participation in church activities, had taught me that the world was filled with all kinds of people, from all around the world. I didn't get beatings at home, but at school, I learned to constantly compare myself to white students. As we were beaten in school, we were consistently told that white students were outperforming us. Even though I was a bright elementary student, when I arrived at the middle school, I was filled with doubts and worry. At home, I had learned that we were all smart. My dad had come from the same town and graduated college and pharmacy school. All of my older brothers and sisters were attending some of the top schools in the nation. Some had attended historically Black colleges in Atlanta. Others attended prestigious Ivy League universities. They were becoming doctors, teachers, and engineers. On the other hand, at school, I had learned that white children were somehow smarter than me. I learned to hide in the crowd at school. While the beatings had stopped in middle school, the secrets did not. Public humiliations became common. I had learned to never tell about the beatings, both physical and psychologically, that occurred at school. Later, as I found myself as the only black person in many situations, who could I tell? In my mind, I entered the land of "un-belonging."

From that place of un-belonging at that elementary school on the black side of the tracks, we learned how to participate in the ambivalent state. On the one hand, we learned to love school. From school, we developed a close group of supportive friends. The school on that side of town was the centerpiece of our neighborhood. We planted the seeds of our dreams from that school and we knew that schooling would give us a way to see more of the world and to have grand experiences. On the other hand, at our school, the beatings and comparisons made me kind of numb. The comparisons to white children would replay from time to time in my head like a dirge. The teachers at the school had appropriated the hegemonic narrative and planted the seeds of self-doubt and limiting thoughts. We had hand-me-down book for many of those years. Before we settled into our new school, we had learned to put up with the horrible conditions. The old school was so bad. We often returned from lunch and discovered that the rats had paid a visit. But, in those early years, we learned to "be grateful" that we had a school at all. The refrain of "things could be worse" echoed through dusty halls and we learned the ambivalent state.

- 1 Cogress, Library of, 'Voices from the Days of Slavery: Stories, Songs, and Memories - Fountain Head', ed. by Hermond Norwood (1949).
- 2 'The Year of Hate and Extremism', Southern Poverty Law Center, (2014)
<<http://www.splcenter.org/%3E>.
- 3 Jordan, Don, and Michael Walsh, *White Cargo : The Forgotten History of Britain's White Slaves in America* (Washington Square, N.Y.: New York University Press, 2008), pp. 320 p., 8 p. of plates.
- 4 Linebaugh, Peter, and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra : Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), p. 433 p.
- 5 Williams, Eric Eustace, *Capitalism & Slavery* (Kingston ; Miami: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005), p. 285 p.
- 6 Hall, Gwendolyn Midlo, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas : Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), pp. xxi, 225 p.
- 7 Hartman, Saidiya V., *Lose Your Mother : A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. 1st edn (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), pp. xi, 270 p.
- 8 Palmié, Stephan, *Wizards and Scientists : Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition* (Durham, [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2002), pp. xi, 399 p.
- 9 Berlin, Ira, *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk About Their Personal Experience of Slavery and Emancipation* (New York, New York: The New Press, 1998).
- 10 Smallwood, Stephanie E., *Saltwater Slavery : A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 273 p.
- 11 Woodson, Carter Godwin, *Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the United States in 1830: Together with Absentee Ownership of Slaves in the United States in 1830* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015).

- 12 Cheng, Anne Anlin, *The Melancholy of Race : Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief* (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 288 p.
- 13 Blackmon, Douglas A., *Slavery by Another Name : The Re-Enslavement of Black People in America from the Civil War to World War II / Douglas A. Blackmon*. 1st edn (New York: Doubleday, 2008), pp. x, 468 p.
- 14 Epperly, Jessica, 'Ucla Find Changing U. S. Demographics Transform School Segregations Landscape 60 Years after Brown V Board of Education', UCLA, (2014) <<http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/%3E>.
- 15 Certeau, Michel de, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. xxiv, 229 p.
- 16 Hartman, Saidiya V., *Scenes of Subjection : Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America, Race and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. viii, 281 p.
- 17 Carpio, Glenda, *Laughing Fit to Kill : Black Humor in the Fictions of Slavery* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. xi, 287 p., 16 p. of plates.
- 18 Harris, Cheryl I., *Critical Race Theory : The Key Writings That Formed the Movement* (New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton & Co., 1995), pp. xxxii, 494 p.
- 19 Stowe, Harriet Beecher, *Uncle Tom's Cabin, Dover Thrift Editions* (Dover Publications, 2005), p. 384.
- 20 Goff, Phillip A, Eberhardt, Jennifer L, Jackson, Jackson, Matthew C, Williams, Melissa J., 'Not yet Human! Implicit Knowledge, Historical Dehumanization, and Contemporary Consequences', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94 (2008), 292 - 306.
- 21 Dash, Julie, *Daughters of the Dust* (United States: Kino Video, 2000).
- 22 Roberts, Mary Nooter, Allen F. Roberts, S. Terry Childs, Museum for African Art (New York N.Y.), and National Museum of African Art (U.S.), *Memory : Luba Art and the Making of History* (New York: Museum for African Art, 1996), p. 259 p.

- 23 Marks, Laura U., *Touch : Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), pp. xxii, 259 p.
- 24 Wolper, David, 'Roots', (United States: Warner Brothers, 1977).
- 25 Ebron, Paulla A., *Performing Africa* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. xviii, 244 p.
- 26 Borgeaud, Pierre Y., 'Return to Gorée', (France: Axion Films, 2007).
- 27 Toepka, Alvaro, 'The Language You Cry In', (United States/Sierre Leone/Spain: 1998), p. 52 minutes.
- 28 Tonkin, Elizabeth, *Narrating Our Pasts : The Social Construction of Oral History, Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. xiv, 171 p.
- 29 Kuchler, Susanne, Walter Melion, *Images of Memory: Remembering and Representation* (Washington, D. C., London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).
- 30 Clarke, Kamari Maxine, *Mapping Yorùbá Networks : Power and Agency in the Making of Transnational Communities* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. xxxiv, 345 p.
- 31 Nora, Pierre, *Les Lieux De Mémoire, Bibliothèque Illustrée Des Histoires* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), p. v. in <7>.
- 32 Palmié, Stephan, *Slavery, Historicism and the Poverty of Memorialization in Memory : Histories, Theories, Debates*. 1st edn (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), pp. ix, 561 p.
- 33 Holsey, Bayo, *Routes of Remembrance : Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. xiii, 280 p.
- 34 Pierce, Chester M., *Television and Education, Sage Contemporary Social Science Issues 44* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1978), p. 104 p.
- 35 Sue, Derald Wing, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life : Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation* (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2010), pp. xxiii, 328 p.

- 36 Yosso, T., Ceja, M., Smith, W. & Solorzano, D., *Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate for Latina/O Undergraduates*. Vol. 79, *Harvard Educational Review* (2009).

**Second Movement
Rehearsing Religion**

The slave prison and the church stand near each other. The clanking of fetters and the rattling of chains in the prison, and the pious psalm and solemn prayer in the church, may be heard at the same time. The dealers in the bodies and souls of the men erect their stand in the presence of the pulpit, and they mutually help each other. The dealer gives his blood stained gold to support the pulpit, and the pulpit, in return, covers his infernal business in the garb of Christianity. Here we have religion and robbery the allies of each other-devils dressed in angels' robes, and hell presenting the semblance of paradise.¹

Fredrick Douglass

Religion has been a strong collateral fiber enmeshed alongside the American hegemonic narrative and capitalism throughout the fabric of the country's history. Even before the beginning of the African slave trade, the relationship between religion, narrative, and capitalism had braided together to hold the emerging operation of the original colonies together. Once the original settlers had established the commercial, social, and symbolic bases of slavery during the Seventeenth Century, they moved their trading operation to Africa, where collaborators captured, kidnapped, bought, and sold slaves from various locations deep within the continent of Africa and then brought them to the colonial shores. Since those early days, religious formations have cooperated with capitalistic enterprises of terror. Thieving boats filled with slave traders captured Africans from remote villages and transported them to slave factories along the mouths of the great rivers. Thrust into suffocating quarters, these slaves brought with them heterogeneous religious practices that would soon meet the unifying christening of their captors. Early on, Portuguese traders began to baptize their human "cargo" to ensure that they would make the treacherous journey across the Atlantic without harm or delay. By baptizing the Africans, both Catholics and Protestants sought the blessings from God for safe passage to the New World, using religion to justify their abhorrent operations. Capitalism, racial formations, and religions have been closely interwoven throughout American history.

During the Elizabethan Era, European monarchs commissioned various parties to set out around the world to claim land in their name. As an example, Sir Richard Raleigh, who landed on Roanoke Island, named the colony of Virginia after Queen Elizabeth I, the Virgin Queen in the year 1585. During Elizabeth's reign, individuals sought sanction from the sovereignty to initiate most English ventures to the New World. When King James ascended to the throne in 1603, wealthy individuals began creating joint ventures that better insured positive returns. If one attempt did not succeed, since many trips ended in disaster, perhaps the next enterprise would reach solid ground. Though the earliest According to Don Jordan and Michael Walsh, the early Seventeenth Century saw the rise of the "joint stock company," which "could take a long view and ride the kind of setbacks that had been the ruin of so many previous ventures."² Individuals wanted some guarantee so they diversified their investments in these new ventures. King James himself chartered one such joint venture, the Virginia Company, in 1606.

Having restated England's claim to the colony of Virginia, James authorized the establishment of settlements along the eastern coastal areas of the colonies inspiring various joint venture groups to form and set out for the New World. Jamestown became the first such settlement, established by the Virginia Company in 1607. As we have seen, these new joint ventures helped those in power address the problem of London's rapidly increasing population and the widening disparity between the rich and the poor, while creating opportunities for wealthy investors who formed corporations to profit from schemes of transportation and appropriation on land in the New World. Some of England's less well-off citizens also saw opportunities in the new land and volunteered as indentured servants whose labor would build the infrastructure in the New World. From the very beginning, the experiment in America consisted of numerous joint venture projects. In essence, wealthy men established the new colonies as capitalistic enterprises.

These wealthy men maintained all the power as the young colonies espoused democratic ideals, creating an un-democratic patriarchy.

Between 1604 and 1611 King James authorized 47 scholars to translate the Holy Bible. Several references to slaves occur in the Bible. In Ephesians 6:5, Servants are warned to “be obedient to them that are (your) masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ.” The call to honor the master is also invoked in Titus 2:9, which dictates that “servants shall be obedient unto their masters and to please them well in all things. To instill the idea that descendants of slaves belong to the master and not the parents of the child, Exodus 21:4 states that “if his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself.” This official version of the Christian Bible was used to rationalize the exploitative practices that underlay the birth of the colonies as thriving capitalistic enterprises. By the time the African slaves arrived, slave owners admonished them to serve their masters well on earth so that God would reward them in heaven. The slaves internalized the ambivalent contradiction between salvation and servitude, persevering as they heard the call to honor God in heaven and felt the lash of the whip at the same time.

Fredrick Douglass disclosed the vicious and implicit collaboration between the institution of slavery and the hypocrisy of churches that ignored the abhorrent violence visited upon the slaves for the sake of greed. In his autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Douglass detailed the brutality of slave life, recounting his early recollections of witnessing the beating of his Aunt Hester. He wove his unfolding narrative around the dichotomy between the merciless institution of slavery and one of its primary accomplices, the church.¹

The origins of this close relationship between the Christian church and subjugation lie in commercial enterprises in England. Some of the companies established the American colonies with predominantly white servitude, while other operations pillaged the slave factories of the West African Coast destined for the Caribbean. Like the close proximity between the church and slavery that Douglass described in America, many of the slave dungeons in West Africa contained chapels. When the Portuguese took over Christiansborg Castle in Ghana from the Danish in 1679, they built a Roman Catholic Chapel within its very walls.³ In the many castles along the Gold Coast of Ghana, huge prisons contained Christian chapels as the cacophony of the horrors of slavery and the harmonious solemnity of prayer echoed all across the Black Atlantic over space and over time. Indeed, Frederick Douglass knew of other varieties of churches in America as he joined with the Quakers and other abolitionist sects on their mission to abolish slavery. Moving to Massachusetts after gaining his freedom, Douglass worked actively as an abolitionist and found a home in the black church by becoming a preacher in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

While many white churches played the role of accomplice to the institution of slavery, slaves formulated their own religious practices. Even though traders had baptized them into the Christian Church, slave owners did not allow slaves to worship with them. In certain slave holding locations, slave owners did not allow the slaves to worship at all. However, the slaves found various means to subvert attention away from their religious practices and worship anyway. As an example, when slavers outlawed drumming in the Sea Islands, the slaves embellished the music with syncopated rhythms in their songs. They made their words and phrases percussive. Stomping their feet and clapping their hands, they gathered in circles in the woods away from the master's house and served their spirits. All across the Black Atlantic,

slaves worshiped their own gods masked behind the face of their Christian captors' gods. By the end of slavery, the black church had become an institution where the black preacher had transitioned from the West African griot to the master storyteller, the one who would cast stories that would repeat and retell of the lives and beliefs of the ancestors. As slaveholders sequestered slaves into specific locations, these preachers imbibed the spirit of the griots and fashioned an oft-repeated theatricality that African Americans adopted as an important element of their culture. The dramatic fire and brimstone sermons of the black preacher, who repeated messages of hope, reminded his followers to "hold on." These tropes served as rehearsals throughout the periods of subjugation. Continuing through the Jim Crow epoch, Post Civil Rights and currently, this theatricality has maintained and served as a mnemonic within many African American groups through the Black Church experience.

The Black Church possessed a narrative of hope in response to the violence of slavery and all of the continued brutality of the institution's progenies. Ensclosed within the Biblical narratives that the preachers repeated, the slaves recognized the "double consciousness" of the Biblical text, and appropriated narratives from the Old Testament to their own purposes, for example, seeing their own bondage through the lens of Moses's escape to freedom. They embraced the Biblical teachings and asked through song, "Didn't my lord deliver Daniel?"⁴ Seeking their own meaning in Christian texts and imagery, they found narratives and songs that offered a message of deliverance, and trained themselves to "hold on" for their own salvation. These teachings of hope sustained the slaves in the harsh conditions that their oppressors forced upon them. Thus was formed the inextricable link between capitalism, religion, and narrative in Black Atlantic culture.

In the remainder of this Chapter, I first analyze the contradictory relationship of the church and the institution of slavery. The slaves moved beyond the mental state of surviving, and learned to live in the space between the vicious cruelty of slavery and the transcendence of their mental paradise--between earth and heaven, as it were. Next I examine the sequestered spaces of the plantation that served as the primary rehearsal spaces for African American religious formations. In these closed spaces, slaves practiced a “double consciousness” in the form of coded songs and syncretic religious practices, which helped them to subsist. By examining the structural foundations of slaves in closed spaces, I maintain that this organization forced slaves to recapitulate and rehearse memes within sequestered spaces over time. Tropes, codes and practices of transcendence that originated in Africa became common and continue to signify today. I explore some of the African roots that re-circulate and then bring light to some of the dominant troupes within the Black Church that continue to circulate and serve as rehearsals for the performance of transformation. The chapter concludes with an interview with a diasporic tourist to Gorée Island, who reveals his rehearsed expectations and some of his religious experiences in Senegal; and, finally, with a memoir of my own rehearsed experiences with religion as a boy in Georgia.

Between Earth and Heaven

In *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, written a century before Frederick Douglass’s declaration against the contradiction between Christianity and the institution of slavery, the former slave Olaudah Equiano, begged the question, “but is not the slave trade entirely a war with the heart of man?”⁵ Equiano chronicled the harsh treatment of his own enslavement and the inhumane conditions of being transported in the ships. He questioned the cruelty of men who professed their Christianity and at the same time carried out

vicious treatment of other human beings. Even though he brought attention to the vicious institution, he later chose to be baptized as a Christian in London. Though Equiano lived at the callous end of the slave master's whip, he also came to believe that only the baptized would enter heaven. Equiano's Eighteenth Century declarations evolved into the Nineteenth Century Afro-Christian consciousness that birthed other abolitionists, such as Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth.

Like Olaudah Equiano and Frederick Douglass, the abolitionist and women's rights activist, Sojourner Truth, critiqued the hypocritical chasm between the church and the institution of slavery. She called out the hypocritical, adulterous, man-stealing slave owners as atheists, "professing to believe in the existence of a God--yet trading in his image, and selling those in the shambles for whose redemption the Son of God laid down his life! Professing to be Christians--yet withholding the Bible."⁶ Having escaped from slavery in the State of New York, Sojourner Truth insisted that slave owners could not boast of the democracy of the nation and simultaneously withhold religion because of the "texture of their hair and the color of their skin." As a Methodist, Truth believed that all slaves should have access to the Christian religion, but during the Nineteenth Century many laws prohibited slaves from practicing Christianity.

According to Ira Berlin, Marc Favreau and Steven F. Miller, many owners did not allow slaves to have access to Christianity for fear the slaves would question the contradictions between the message of the Bible and their treatment by their earthly masters.⁷ Many owners also did not allow slaves to learn to read, so the slaves had only an indirect relationship with and understanding of the religion. Berlin and his colleagues noted that, "slave owners meted out Christianity in carefully measured portions."⁷ Slaves could gather fragments of the message of white sermons and they brought the messages back to the slave quarters. Other slaves, who had

practiced Christianity in the Caribbean or Africa, shared their knowledge as well. On the plantations, slaves brought their diverse religious practices to their worship services. Particular value was placed on texts that addressed their immediate needs as humans kept in bondage. “They identified particularly with the people of the Old Testament and the heroic exodus from bondage. The message of the fundamental equality of all in the eyes of God and--when the master was out of range--in the eyes of man remains a central tenet of African American Christianity long after that ceased to echo in the slaveholders’ church.”⁷ In the text, the slaves knew that a day of judgment would come and the scales would be balanced. In the Old Testament, the slaves found a vivid metaphoric expression of “double consciousness.” From one point of view, the slave preacher reminded the congregants of the salvation and freedom of Moses and his people. At the same time, he prodded the slaves to hold on until the day when they would enjoy their own exodus to freedom.

Many of the worship practices occurred after the workday when slaves would gather in their sequestered spaces on the plantations. The slaves incorporated the Christian practices that aligned with their own worldviews into their own services, alongside African indigenous practices that they re-circulated over and over. When slaves moved on from plantation to plantation, they carried these practices with them, holding onto a double aspiration—that they would find their own salvation, either as a just reward in heaven or, more immediately, through emancipation by necessary means. While some slaves envisioned an escape, other held onto the idea that one day, they would all be free. These hopeful re-circulated practices and ideas in sequestered spaces served as critically important rehearsals. With the dominant colonizers from England and France, two distinct types of rehearsal spaces that would later merge during the Great Migrations formed in Savannah and New Orleans in the South. While many other such

locations existed in the American South, Savannah and New Orleans provided particularly rich cultural elements that would exert profound influence on African American culture.

Rehearsal Spaces

New Orleans

At the beginning of the Eighteenth Century—the same time that the British colonies began importing African slaves along the East coast of North America—King Louis XIV of France also had plans to dominate the continent. The King did not want England to make more gains in the continent, especially at the mouth of the Mississippi River, where it empties into the Gulf of Mexico. During the early years of the century, France had a population of less than 300 people in Louisiana. Over time, the region became a penal colony to which vagabonds and poor people in France were deported. According to Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, “by 1719, deportation to Louisiana had become a convenient way to get rid of troublesome neighbors or family members.”⁸ Deportation lists grew so that by 1726 the census showed that 1952 French citizens lived in Louisiana.

The French faced many challenges in developing Louisiana. Hurricanes and flooding occurred frequently. French rule lasted several decades and was generally quite chaotic, as they could not initially develop constructive relationships with the various Native American groups in the region and did not understand how to best use the land and natural resources. In order to decrease revolts by Native American groups, the French began using African slaves. In the beginning, according to Philip D. Curtin, the largest group of African slaves came from Senegambia, where the primary ethno-linguistic groups were Sereer, Wolof and Pulaar.⁹ Senegambia is in a region of West Africa that has similar topography to Louisiana. Midlo Hall notes that “during the 1720s, African and Indian slaves, sometimes owned by the same masters

and sharing the same fate, ran off together, stealing food, supplies, arms, and ammunitions from their masters.”⁸

Unlike British controlled slave locations in the United States, where the Anglican and other Protestant religions dominated, Catholicism was the dominant religion in New Orleans. Under the control first of the French, then the Spanish, and once again of the French, Africans in New Orleans publically observed Catholic rites while at the same time practicing African-based indigenous religions in private. Because of the “double consciousness,” they could practice their African religions right in front of their masters without their masters recognizing it. Sometimes, new religious practices were born through the process of syncretism as Africans integrated their Gods with the Saints of Catholicism.

Midlo Hall explicates the diverse mix of ethnicities that made up the early African American population of New Orleans. The dominant African groups in New Orleans came from the Senegambia and Congo regions. Hall suggests that the significant presence of Fon and Yoruba women during the period of Spanish rule (1763-1803) influenced religious practices. Creole populations grew as slaves mixed with Native Americans. Because of this influence, she notes that unlike cognate religious practices in Haiti (Vodun), “Louisiana Voodoo was dominated by women.”⁸ Creole practitioners like Marie Laveau, who was born at the end of the Eighteenth Century and lived almost to the end of the Nineteenth Century, accumulated substantial power and status. The Africans created dynamic religious practices in New Orleans, and in no place was this more evident than Congo Square.

In 1685, King Louis XIV of France established rules for the treatment of slaves under France’s colonial empire. These rules defined the terms and activities for slaves. The *Code Noir* held that Roman Catholicism would be the only religion and that every slave would have to be

baptized in the church. Slave-owners were also required to bury slaves under the rules of the Catholic Church. The code specified how slave owners could discipline their slaves, up to the extent of corporal punishment. With the strict adherence to Catholicism, Sundays and holidays were strictly observed. Slaves enjoyed a free day on Sundays, when they usually engaged in celebratory activities. The people of New Orleans would observe mass in the mornings and then participate in jubilant celebrations in the afternoons. Congo Square was one of the few sites where slaves had permission to participate in African-style drumming and dance. As fears arose of influences from practitioners of Haitian voodoo, the Americans put stricter laws into place after the Louisiana Purchase from France in 1803. The *Code Noir* became the Black Code in 1817 under American rule, and the slave celebrations were restricted to one location, Congo Square, with strict curfews enforced at sunset.

During the Haitian Revolution, many Haitians left for New Orleans. Others fled to Cuba and resettled in New Orleans after being expelled in 1809. As the black population of New Orleans grew, the celebrations at Congo Square increased in size. The city enforced more restrictive laws and Africans were forbidden from many gatherings at night. In 1811, the Slave Revolt occurred. Cabarets were shut down, and black men were not permitted on the streets past sundown. The authorities did not allow overnight visitors in private homes. The city feared more slave revolts. With the increase of refugees from Haiti, officials in New Orleans did not want the events that had happened in Haiti, culminating in the overthrow of European colonial rule there (1804), to occur in New Orleans. Police surveillance increased.

During the Reconstruction Period after the Civil War, blacks began to have certain freedoms. However, the Louisiana Separate Car Act of 1890, which required segregated accommodations on trains for blacks and whites, curtailed those liberties. In 1892, Homer

Plessy bought a first-class ticket as a challenge to this law in New Orleans, where racialized spaces had been more loosely defined. Eventually, Plessy's case went before the Supreme Court, and in 1896 the Supreme Court ruled that "separate but equal" laws such as the Separate Car Act were legal. *Plessy v. Ferguson* legitimized separate spaces for blacks and whites. Harsh Jim Crow practices increased and these practices, legitimated by the Supreme Court, began to transpire in northern regions of the United States where they had not previously been the norm. In terms of music, these laws helped to reinforce the concept of "recapitulated rehearsal spaces" where blacks "stayed in their places." Before the Great Migration, blacks were sequestered in specific areas around the United States, such as New Orleans, where they "rehearsed" cultural markers. Over and over again, old and newly invented tropes marked the music.

Savannah

British colonies along the eastern coast of North America did not have a legal framework like the *Code Noir*, which detailed rules for treatment of the slaves as dictated by the Catholic Church. Under the laws in most of the British Colonies, slaves had no option for practices such as the freedom days in Congo Square, when the Catholic Church required all subjects to observe the Sabbath. Therefore, in places like Savannah, Georgia, slaveholders sequestered slaves onto plantations with no relief. However, these sequestered conditions allowed for the recapitulation of traditional and invented cultural practices including music, song, dance, storytelling, and myths. Thus, the masters' attempt to prevent public religious practice and expressive performance created private spaces for the slaves to rehearse and carry forward aspects of their hybrid traditions.

In the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, English intersected with various West African languages and yielded a hybrid linguistic system, not dissimilar to dialects that arose in other English-speaking black Atlantic locations. Because of the legal sequestration

of the slaves and the natural barrier that the islands created, this common language, known as Gullah or Geechee, became standardized among the inhabitants of the islands. In a linguistic practice known as “code-switching,” inhabitants of the Sea Islands used the Gullah language to rehearse and repeat songs, stories, and political discussions within their own group, and switched to English in public settings such as the marketplace. Whereas the music of New Orleans gave the rhythmic arm to the body of rhythm and blues, music from the southeastern United States contributed to the vocal arm of black music in America, especially the spiritual tradition.

Slaves in the Sea Islands would often meet after the slave-owners had gone to sleep to worship. In these camp meetings, the slaves participated in a ritualistic movement of walking around in a circle called the “ring-shout.” In many places, slave owners had outlawed drums, so the Africans in the ring-shout circles used their feet in rhythmic shuffles, body percussion, and handclapping. Slaves would sometimes gather in the woods to participate in the circles, away from the slave owners. Within these circles, slaves would “get the spirit” or “get happy.” These “possessions of the spirit,” linked to African indigenous religions, allowed the slaves to enter a transcendent state of consciousness. Their incantations in the liminal space at the edge of the woods provided the slaves with the opportunity to practice traditional rituals. Sylviane Diouf believes that the circular shuffle comes from Afro- Islamic roots, similar to the *tawaf*, the circular procession in Islam,¹⁰ in which the repetitive movements often induce a spiritual state of consciousness. Robert Farris Thompson proposed that the tradition of spirit possession and its close connection with music and dance demonstrate clear cultural connections throughout the African Atlantic Diaspora.¹¹

Others have related the ring-shout to the Congo Cosmogram. As Thompson notes, “the Kongo *yowa* cross does not signify the crucifixion of Jesus for the salvation of mankind; it

signifies the equally compelling vision of the circular motion of human souls about the circumference of its intersecting lines.” He posits that the circular shape of the soul permits spiritual possessions. “The Kongo cross refers therefore to the everlasting continuity of all righteous men and women.” The cosmogram, similar to the Haitian *vèvé* marks the circle of life between the life and the afterlife. The cosmogram represents movement and transcendence. Because of this movement across time, slaves valued the ancestors. This valuation continues with diasporic travelers to sites of memory. When describing a cosmogram at a Federal Office Building built over a burial ground, historian Nell Painter stated, “the whole cosmogram represents an allegorical dance floor for the “ring shout,” a traditional black dance found throughout the African Diaspora.”¹⁶ Jason R. Young describes the archaeological finds of submerged bowls in South Carolina marked with the Kongo cosmogram cycle of life and draws an analogy between them and the counter-clock shuffle of the “ring-shout.”¹²

Because of the exposure to Christianity and Islam in Africa, slaves syncretized practices to form new religions in the New World. According to Albert J. Raboteau, “it is clear that elements of Islam were often mixed with or adapted to forms of traditional African beliefs.”¹³ By the time of the proliferation of the slave trade, Christianity had begun to flourish in various locations across Africa. Islam had also become established in West Africa. William S. Pollitzer notes linguistic evidence of Islamic influences in the Sea Islands, including words such as, “*Aluwu* (Wolof) a tablet in wood on which one writes verses of the Koran; *Hadijata* (Mandingo) the first wife of Mohammed”.¹⁴ Other signs of Islamic influences come from interviews with former slaves on the Sea Islands by the federally-funded Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930’s.¹⁵ During the WPA interviews, grandchildren talked about the life of their grandfather, Bilali, a Muslim, who along with his brother, Salih, practiced their religion in the

mid-1800s. Bilali wore Islamic clothing and wrote Arabic and established himself as a leader, responsible for his master's plantation. Still today, Bilali is still talked about by his descendants. At the end of the Nineteenth Century, Bilal's children converted to Christianity and helped to form the First African Baptist Church on Sapelo Island.

Slaves in the United States have continued a mix of practices. They have taken the Christian, Muslim and indigenous practices and altered them to meet their needs. While the practices have changed over time, the slaves continued to carry forth many of the themes of the old practices. These recapitulated religious practices have influenced Black culture since the early days of slavery. Slavery, Jim Crow, economic disenfranchisement, voter suppressions, racial profiling, and legal inequities have marked these experiences with the promise of home, embedded in both sacred and secular spirituals, where the troubled are taken to the water. Gorée Island, at the edge of the water, serves as the portal of the return "home," where the "Door of No Return" has been reversed and pilgrims enter into the liminal space of transformation.

African Roots

The estuaries along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, with flowing rivers meeting the Atlantic Ocean, possess similar terrains to the waterways along the West African coast. Before the Transatlantic Slave Trade, various Native American groups inhabited the Sea Islands. However, as Charleston and Savannah became important ports in the slave trade enterprise, these coastal areas became populated with Africans. According to David Eltis, the principle investigator of the Electronic Slave Trade Database Project and author of *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, by 1867, Georgia and South Carolina had become one of the most populated sites for the arrival of African slaves.¹⁶ An estimated total of 211,800 Africans had arrived; almost double the numbers that arrived in Chesapeake Bay, the second most African

populated location. Because of higher growth rates in the United States, slave populations grew more rapidly than in other locations in the triangular slave trade. The Sea Islands, with slaves from the Senegambia and Sierra Leone regions, possessed a similar terrain as the coastal wetlands of West Africa where Africans grew rice. Because of their already established agricultural expertise, plantation owners used Africans to grow rice. By transporting slaves from similar regions, slave traders helped to create groups in the United States with similar backgrounds. Not only did the slave owners establish conditions for homogeneous utilitarian work groups, they also made way for groups with similar religious practices and worldviews. This enabled slaves in the Sea Islands to carry forward in practice what they knew from their homeland.

While slave owners attempted to eradicate African culture because of their fears of unified resistance, African religious beliefs persisted. Albert J. Raboteau contends that the strength of African religions was grounded not in purity but in transformation. “Adaptability, based upon respect for spiritual power wherever it originated, accounted for the openness of African religions to syncretism with other religious traditions, and for the continuity of a distinctively African religious consciousness.”¹³ Early African American religion incorporated diverse practices from the unique regions from which the slaves had come. From the many regions with diverse ethnic groups, religious practices that emerged at each sequestered location offered varying manifestations of practice yet also contained identifiable and consistent signifiers. These signifiers helped to unify practices across the Diaspora.

The slaves who came to America practiced various religions such as Islam, Christianity and diverse indigenous traditions. According to Raboteau, West Africans had practiced Christianity since at least the Fifteenth Century, when Portuguese sailors had sailed along the

West Coast of Africa seeking wealth and trade. Richard Brent Turner observes that “West African Islam can be traced to the introduction of Islam in the Sudan in the eighth or ninth century.”¹³ He argues that even though Islam had expanded in West Africa amongst ruling elites, the religion “had little impact on the traditional religions praxis of West African peoples in rural areas before modernity.” In essence, West Africans combined their own religious practices with the dominant religion. These hybrid religions arrived with diverse groups of slaves on the slave ships on American soil.

Lorand Matory reveals the differences between Abrahamic and Afro-Atlantic religions. He declares that Afro-Atlantic religions “tend to acknowledge a multiplicity of divine personalities and a multiplicity of rule sets surrounding each.”¹⁷ In each sequestered location, this belief in a pantheon of gods was manifested differently because of the context of government and religion. In the Sea Islands, under British control, Protestantism prevailed, while in had colonized Louisiana, France and Spain promoted Catholicism. Unlike Catholicism, Protestants have no Saints. Syncretism in the French colonies occurred more easily as the Africans identified the traditional pantheons of multiple gods with the Catholic Saints. In Protestant locations, slaves could not make these substitutions. Therefore, besides the one High God, Jesus Christ became the intermediary. With Catholic-African syncretisms, slaves in Protestant locations focused their attention on the Son of God, Jesus Christ. This attention became the focus of many of the Gullah songs, beliefs, and stories. In addition to praising the High God with Jesus Christ as the intermediary, other elements of African indigenous religions, such as charms, pacquets, gris-gris, and the use of roots and herbs for medicinal purposes could also be found in the Protestant-African syncretisms. As Gullah accepted the story that Jesus walked on water, they repeated the story that some of the slaves walked across water and back to

Africa. Christianity bonded the slaves to new beliefs because, according to Robert Farris Thompson, the Bible is itself a syncretic text constructed from Hebrew and Greek sources that made sense to the Africans. When analyzing the film, *Daughters of the Dust*, Thompson noted that, “the images that are in the Bible can become masks to hang your Africanness on.”¹⁸ In other words, syncretism in Black Atlantic religions between African indigenous religions and Christianity works because of the similar core meaning that they found between the two systems of belief and practice. Thompson contends that the mixing comes from the discovery of codes that match in the two religions.

The “rite of passage” code within the oeuvre of Negro spirituals re-circulates stories of crossing the water. Some of the slave stories spoke of Africans flying back to Africa, reminiscent of stories of the angels. The recirculation of these songs and stories constituted rehearsals in the psyche of the Africans and their descendants. While Africans spun new songs and told new stories, the foundational essence of African myth still resided within the hearts and minds of the slaves. The process of these intersecting elements made the Sea Islands distinctive. Paul Gilroy argues that “the syncretic complexity of black expressive culture alone supplies powerful reasons for resisting the idea that an untouched, pristine Africanity resides in these forms, working a powerful magic of alterity in order to trigger repeatedly the perception of absolute identity.”¹⁹ Intersections at each location produced new cultural productions; even when identifiable elements continue to circulate over different times and spaces.

Memes of Recirculation

Water

In his autobiography, *Of Water and the Spirit*, Malidoma Patrice Somé, explains how water plays a significant role in the healing and reclamation process for the Dagara People of Burkina Faso. He borrows the title of his narrative from the biblical reference of John 3:5 where

Jesus says, “unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.”²⁰ Somé chronicles his rites of passage as he reclaims his ethnic identity after years of abusive isolation from his family at the hands of Catholic priests. One of his ritual processes required that he enter a sacred pool, where he discovered a living world beneath the surface. In the liminal space of the water, he is transformed. This broadly parallels the myth of *Lasirèn* and *Simbi* in Haitian Voudou. These two female divinities live under the water and love, protect, and heal. Each year, Haitians travel to Saut d’Eau to bathe under the waterfall and to purify themselves.

Jason R. Young observes that water played a key role in the slaves’ worldview and proposes that the Christian ritual of baptism would have made sense to slaves who originated from Kongo. “Even where rituals of water immersion in Kongo...and Christian baptism in the slave South differed quite markedly, certain cosmological and symbolic notions, first developed in Kongo, made slaves more amenable to Christian conversion.”¹² Young argues that enslaved Africans used their religious inheritance from Africa as a way of “putting Africa to use in their own lives.” Melville Herskovits, in his pioneering effort to find African connections in America, drew links between the importance of river spirits and water cults in Africa and the importance of baptism by total immersion in African American Christianity.²¹

In Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, the fully-grown daughter of Sethe wakes from the dead, arises from a stream and goes to pay a visit to her mother at 124.²² Across the Black Atlantic, many West African and Black Atlantic peoples understand a world beneath the surface of the water. Water exists as the “betwixt and between,” where life meets death, the old meets the new, and the sacred meets the profane. Water provides the place for transformation. In Haitian Voudou and other Black Atlantic religions, *an ba dlo*, beneath the water, represents the other

side, Africa or homeland. At sites of slavery, the water that had brought the slaves would also take them back. Many of the slaves recalled the rivers which carried them from their villages to slave factories as the last memory of “home,” and were transported to the Americas along rivers like the Savannah, the Mississippi and through the waterways of the Chesapeake. They knew that water could transport and transform.

Edouard Duval-Carrié recirculates this meme of the significance of water in the Black Atlantic through his paintings.²³ His vibrant images sprinkled and protected with *pwen* (Haitian Creole for “points”) depict boats filled with the *lwa* (African-derived gods) crossing over the dangerous seas where Africans drowned in the Middle Passage. British/Guyanese sculptor Jason de Caires Taylor has created an underwater sculpture garden in the Caribbean where he shows a circle of children chained together facing outward and solitary figures beneath the sea which are now the makings of a manmade coral reef.²⁴ While these figures have not been specifically identified as the Middle Passage, the popular conversation through social media has popularized the idea that millions of slaves lie at the bottom of the ocean. In the 2007 film, *Return to Gorée*, African American, Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) proclaims:

At the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean there's a

Railroad made of human bones.

*Black ivory, Black ivory*²⁵

Walking on Water

While the bones of many slaves are thought to live in the bottom of rivers and oceans, the Gullah and Geechee of the Sea Islands believed that some of the slaves walked on water.

According to one story, a group of Igbo captives arriving on a large ship looked around and realized they did not want to be slaves; so they turned around and walked across the water back to Africa. (Other variations of the story tell of a group of dissatisfied slaves who got off the boat

and decided to fly back to Africa.) These references were gathered during the Federal Writer's Project in Georgia in *Drums and Shadows*.¹⁵ Several of the informants narrated some variation of the stories of Igbo going back to Africa. Various African American storytellers like Paule Marshall and Julie Dash locate and recirculate Ibo Landing as a site where Africans can return home. In popular culture, the story of the slaves who walked on water continues to circulate. Paule Marshall repeats the story of the slaves who walked on water in *Praisesong for the Widow*.²⁶ In *Daughters of the Dust*, Julia Dash's 1991 film, she recreates the scene of walking on the water as Eli walks across the water and has a transformation.³ Writing in the *Journal of American History*, Terri L. Snyder reports a different story.²⁷ In 1803, group of Nigerian slaves rose up in revolt and took control of a ship. The vessel landed in Dunbar Creek in the Sea Islands near Savannah. When the slaves got off the boat, they jumped into the creek and drowned. Rather than endure indignity of slavery, the proud Nigerians chose to die. Documents called the place where they landed Egbos Landing. In 2012, Laura R. Gadson created a quilt called *The Water Brought Us Here, The Water Will Take Us Home*.²⁸ In the quilt, she tells the repeated Legend of Ibo Landing. In the image of the quilt, water spirits cross between the water world and the air world.

In version after version, the recirculation of the water meme continues, crossing between the liminal space of the spirit world and the existential realities of life throughout the Black Atlantic. These repeated memes of return and transformation through songs, music, literature, and quilts correspond metaphorically to the rite-of-passage of diasporic voyagers' trips to Africa. Rehearsed water memes bring the diasporic tourist to the edge of the water at Gorée Island. At the edge of liminality, the tourist prepares to transcend just as she had done when she sang one of

the many spirituals where the music delivered her from the troubles of the world and took up to a place of solace.

Rehearsing Transformation

Repeated religious practices, narratives, and songs, at their core, contain the essence of transcendence in African American religions. Claude Lévi-Strauss believed that myth was the cultural glue that held communities together.²⁹ He postulated that myths function as a means of providing meaning and order within a society. Humans form myths in a similar manner as they form language in that the parts constitute the whole. Levi Strauss proposed that myths consist of the smallest units of meaning, which he called *mythemes*. The sum total of all the *mythemes* constitutes the myth, the “gross constituent units.” These small units of meaning exist in the one moment of time and can recirculate over time and hold the same meaning. They can exist both synchronically and diachronically. I will call these small units of information such as the smallest units found in a musical chord, an image, or part of a story, a meme. The combination of these memes evokes complete formations of knowledge. Because of the synchronic and diachronic nature of a meme, what was true before continues to be true in the present and in the future.

Small units of meaning can manifest themselves visually, auditorily, and corporally. For example, the picture of a Confederate flag or slave shackles can instantaneously signify specific memories from the period of slavery. These floating signifiers can evoke various different meanings when placed in different contexts while maintaining the basic meaning of the objects of slavery. In a similar manner, specific markers like words and phrases can act as floating signifiers in various different contexts but also hold the basic core meaning. *Water* is one such example in the realm of African American religions. The recurring meme of crossing over water

presents ideas of purity, freedom, and transcendence in African American religions. As I have discussed, Kongo cosmograms signified a profound relationship with life and the afterlife. This relationship with the ring of life allowed slaves to maintain a rapport with the ancestors with the clock-wise directionality of the four moments of the sun. Like African oral traditions and music, these basic core signifiers re-circulate throughout the religious discourse.

Like the recirculating phases of the cosmogram, water acts as a means of recirculation. While water in the Middle Passage represents the brutal memory of the journey that changed humans into slaves, that same water holds the potential to transform slaves back to freedom. The paradox of double consciousness has existed continuously throughout the history of slavery and the subsequent epochs. Robert Farris Thompson described the Kongo cosmogram as an example of double consciousness as Africans maintained the symbol in the Black Atlantic as the Christian cross.¹¹ Slaves used the cosmogram as a representation of life. African slaves used the cross in ways that signified the memory of their Kongo past. In Christian practices, they substituted their worldview onto the cross. In *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, James H. Cone includes the symbol of the Jesus on the cross as also having double meaning, a symbol of death that simultaneously signifies resurrection. “The paradox of a crucified Savior lies at the heart of the Christian story.”³⁰ . During the period of slavery, the beaten slave on the whipping block symbolized the harsh reality of slavery and also reminded the slaves of the just rebalancing that would come. Cone applies this theory to slavery’s lineage of Jim Crow.

In that era, the lynching tree join the cross is the most emotionally charged symbols in the African-American community—symbols that represent both death and the promise of redemption, judgment and the offer of mercy, suffering and the power of hope. Both the cross and the lynching tree represented the worst in human beings and that the same time "an unquenchable ontological thirst" for the life that refuses to let the worst determine our final meaning. The clearest image of the crucified Christ was a figure of the innocent by them, dangling from a lynching tree.³⁰

As in earlier times, when the incomprehensible contradiction of the church and slave prisons coexisted side by side, the continuance of the impenetrable alliance of religion and torture still pushes hope-filled religious practices in the black church. While the enslavement of Africans no longer exists in the same way as the Nineteenth Century, the pain of harsh realities continues. Ashraf H. A. Rushdy proposes that different manifestations of lynching persist. In *The End of American Lynching*, he analyses the ways in which violent murders of black men have continued in the United States. “When white men burn a black man or drag a black man behind a truck--these are not acts of simple violence but ritually enacted hate crimes that have historically been understood as lynching.”³¹ When George Zimmerman killed 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, some churches condoned the murder, even when no proof existed that the boy threatened the killer’s life and the dichotomy continues. Trayvon Martin, the crucified being, represents the recirculating dichotomy of death and resurrection. Just as the dichotomy recirculated repeatedly on the sequestered spaces of the plantation, the dualities emerge again and again in the contemporary context of African American culture. In the middle of the contradiction of the church and the slave prison, the slaves, through their religious practices, found hope to survive. In a similar manner, in the midst of condoned injustices by institutions entrusted with carrying out justice, African Americans have the double consciousness of the “cross and the lynching tree” as they have practiced transformation and resurrection.

From the founding years of America, slaves found a means to mediate between the contradictions of slavery, such as the steeple of church casting a shadow up the dungeons for slaves. Later, the freed slaves resolved the gaps between the Christian narratives of American terrorist groups like the Ku Klux Klan during the Jim Crow Era. In the years since, during the

Civil Rights Period, descendants of slaves found meta-narratives in the Black Church to fill the dichotomous spaces between injustices and righteousness. The Black Liberation theologian James Cone has observed that “one has to have a powerful religious imagination to see redemption in the cross, to discover life and death and hope in tragedy.”³⁰ “The cross is a reminder that the world is fraught with many contradictions-many lynching trees. We cannot forget the terror of the lynching tree no matter how hard we try. It is buried deep in the living memory and psychology of the black experience in America.” Nonetheless, Cone asserts that the cross “points in the direction of hope.”³⁰ The interwoven and sometimes contradictory relationship between capitalism and religion reaches back to the early foundations of the United States and continues to provide a means of rehearsals of transcendence.

Dominant African American religious narratives offer a means to rehearse the concept of “hope” through recapitulating difficult realities such as the increasing statistics of violence, mass incarcerations, police brutality, declining wealth, and decreasing access to education. Richard Schechner has theorized that rehearsals consist of “the building blocks of performances.” As an example, he positioned the church in the paradigm of rehearsals. “Indeed, in some Pentecostal churches the laying on of hands is the key representation of Christ, the demonstration of his presence. Or it may be speaking in tongues, dancing, or taking up serpents. Each of these scripts has developed its own way of being performed.”³²

Interview: Pictures of the Door of No Return

Just as recapitulated religious tropes reinforce the idea of transcendence in the Black Church, sites of memory such as Gorée Island serve as markers for the performance of transformation. Like worship services in the Black Church, voyages to places like Gorée offer the participants, diasporic tourists, an opportunity to assemble the building blocks of all of their

rehearsals in order to perform their transcendence. Diasporic tourism offers a means of closing the chasm within the ambivalent state.

In 2011, the State of Georgia executed Troy Davis, an African American man who had been accused of murdering an off duty police officer, even though most of the witnesses came forth to testify that the police department had coerced them into making false claims. Another man admitted to several people that he had actually killed the officer. The Pope, former president Jimmy Carter and thousands of activists pleaded for Davis's life to be spared. Chaz Guest, a celebrated artist who has commissioned works on the United States Congress and in the Oval Office also petitioned the State of Georgia in the form of a painting. In the piece, Troy Davis reaches out towards the viewer.³³ In the background, the pink open arm staircase of the slave house on Gorée Island reveals the "Door of No Return." The image of the door of the slave house has become an image of hope. Indeed, the slave house possesses the accepted remembrance of the institution of slavery but also the hope of resurrection and justice.

Salamishah Tillet unpacks the work of Chester Higgins and Carrie Mae Weems, two African American photographers who captured the Door of No Return and the Slave House on Gorée. Tillet asserts that "by privileging and reconstructing the House of Slaves on Gorée Island as a visual symbol of the entire slave trade, Higgins and Weems are able to remember slavery and reclaim Africa as an original site of African-American identity."³⁴ In the following interview, the respondent saw a picture of the Door of No Return and immediately wanted to buy the picture but then realized that he wanted to actually take the picture himself, so he traveled to Senegal with his wife. Tillet asserts that African Americans consider traveling to Gorée "as part of an obligatory process of self-identification and cultural affirmation."³⁴ Certainly, this interviewee embraced traveling to Gorée as a means of making connections to other fragments of

his understanding of slavery such as the American sites of memory. He also connects what he discovers in Senegal to his religious foundations as a man with a Christian upbringing experiencing a Muslim country for the first time.

Why did you go to Gorée Island?

I've always had a fascination for the slave trade. I've been to different places... slave plantations where there was a slave quarters, Civil War type battle fields... I knew that there was a picture. I can't remember if I read it or if I saw a program on Gorée Island's the Door of No Return. There was a picture in a Black Art store. I saw the picture, I knew that's what it was, the Door of No Return. I'm into Black art. So, initially, I was going to buy the picture, the Door of No Return and I thought about it. I'm not gonna buy the picture. I want to go there, stand in the door and take a picture of myself in the Door of No Return on Gorée Island. I've always wanted to take a trip to Africa but I never really had a focal point. I really want to go until I came about the Gorée Island. Now, I did hear about Alex Haley's trip when he was at the Gambia. To tell me the truth, I'm not going to lie to you. I thought Gambia was a river but it's a country kind of enclosed in Senegal. If I had really been familiar with Alex Haley's trail, I may have decided to do that but Gorée Island was my focal point. I went in January of 2011. I have a picture on my wall that I just had to have, my Door of No Return.

Was the older gentleman there, the curator?

I'm not familiar with that older man. When I got there, there are a few places that I wanted to go, but first things I saw on the computer. I've traveled a lot of other places; sometimes those tours are not what they're cracked up to be. So, the first evening got there, my wife and I just took off and went to Gorée Island because we could see it from our hotel room. And, then the following day, which was a Monday, my wife had a friend, who works with her who had a friend in Senegal so he came and just hung with us for the rest of the time and he took us to various places, some of those places that were on the tourist like the pink lake, the market centers, and the statue, the tall one, the Renaissance Statue. It's pretty much an art museum. He took us and gave us about four days of his time. He even took us to his house for a meal, which was really good. It was a good trip. That was my, if you want to say bucket list, that was my bucket list trip to go to Africa I want you to Egypt but that was the year that all the turmoil started. When we were in France, Tanzania had started to burn up.

You know, I can see peoples saying they had a spiritual connection. I can really see people doing it because, you got a walk in the past. I make the whole connection with the church, with how important the church was with religion and how they talked about slavery. Religion, you know our religion was changed. That I know. I am a Christian and that's what I've been taught from the day I was

born. Do you know how I feel about most of religious, when you think about it is the spiritual feeling, to be in the slave quarters, there right as the people were there and going out onto the slave ships. The religious aspect of it, I could feel it.

Have you ever been in an environment such as Senegal which is more than 90% Muslim?

No, and the guy who was with us he was Muslim and he took the time throughout the day to pray. And even that in and of itself is not a religious thing, I'm not Muslim but to hear a certain time of the day when everybody pretty much kind of stops and prays. They wash their feet and hands and going to pray, you know we respected him. When he did, he kind of went off to the side to the prayer area where he was going to pray. There was one place where we were, the Renaissance Statue. It's on a high hill. We were there and you could hear a call out to go to do the prayer and everything. That was unique. To be in an area where at a certain time in the day where I was and everybody stopped and went to pray, enough people that you got to just experience that, you got the feeling that this was a sacred time, you know. That was different and you know you can actually hear them chanting. I think it was some kind of loudspeaker. It was a pretty good distance away. We were up high and you could hear the chanting and praying over the loudspeaker. I make a connection here at home in the US. If something like that was happening everybody something came on, from a chapel or whatever and everybody just stopped and started praying. That would be a unique experience, to see that.

Stopping five times a day and pray is quite different from here where Sunday morning pretty much is worship time. In truth I've never been exposed much to the Muslim religion. I've worked in the prison and I'd take my guys to service. There was one guy there who was really good at English. So I was kind of able to listen to what was being said and there another guy and his accent was so strong I really could not understand what he was saying. But, I do agree with some of the teachings, especially for my guys where I worked and it help them. I believe that any religion that helps any individual is a good religion. I have to honestly say that when I was there in Senegal, I did not see any churches, mostly mosques. And I have to say, I relied on my guy Ishmael, without him there, I don't know what my wife and I would have done.

I'll tell you of how hard it was, the first day we were there, we were on our own, the day that we went over to Gorée Island. You know what you have to go and wait to get on the boat and they closed the door. Well, we got there right when they closed the door so we have to wait for the next ship. While we were outside, we walked round and looked at the shops. I don't know what they were saying but one of the guys spoke his language put the call out to his other friends and all I heard was American and it was like the feeding frenzy was on. This is not unique to there. I know other places where we have gone and it's the same thing. It's a tourist place, people want to make their make a living on tourists. When we got to Gorée Island, we met some sellers who were very persistent. Maybe it was

because while we were on the island, we probably paid a little bit too much of the stuff that we bought there in comparison to when we had the guy who showed us around. He spoke the language and kind of did the negotiations. We spent a lot less money with him.

You know when our guy Ishmael took us to the market he told us to watch our pockets. But that's something you have to be aware of anywhere. We saw pickpockets in Paris of the Eiffel Tower. Overall, it was definitely a good trip. It was an experience we were looking for. I have a lot of art that's around the house, but that one is mine. Give you an example, we were just told that we had to be evacuated from the fires. Other than the pictures of families, the one picture that I wanted was my door of the return picture. As I was sitting there thinking about evacuating everything, I was thinking, "what do you take?" It is surprising when someone tells you have to leave your home because it might catch a fire, whatever. The picture of the door of no return was on my list. Other than pictures of parents, kids, grandkids, that was a picture of my wall that I wanted to take. We have some nice pictures on the wall but I felt that my family pictures and that picture were only pictures that could not be replaced.

You saw Pres. Obama and Michelle Obama looking through the "door of no return?"

Yeah, you know, that was a unique feeling, too, because, like I said, we see things on TV and then you say, "I've been here." I was very happy to go to Gorée Island and then to see the president there. That was probably my ultimate trip that I wanted to take.

Memoir: Elberton, Georgia

In sequestered spaces all across the United States railroad tracks separate un-belonging from belonging. Demarcated by as the wrong side of the tracks, the sequestered spaced have traditionally separated black from white and poor from privileged. In *Belonging, a Culture of Place*, bell hooks explores the notion of belonging in a world with stark contrasts, where the lush green rolling hills of Kentucky, on one hand but the other hand, "a world of greedy exploitation of big homes and little shacks." Similar contrasts exist in towns all over America where railroads and freeways cut through stark divides of race and class as if to represent the less tangible partitioning of humanity through the interlacing of religion, law and commerce. In her treatise, hooks imagines a different world. "I dreamed about a culture of belonging. I still dream that dream. I contemplate what our lives will be like if we knew how to cultivate awareness, to

live mindfully, peacefully; if we learned habits of being that would bring us closer together, that would help us build beloved community.” Often, when trying to create this world, the rigidity of structural practices in religion, law and economic histories, causes the dreamer to defer the dream of the beloved community as religious, spatial and economic separations continue to inform the notion of belonging.

In the following passages, I present an example of a structural practice that many African Americans and other disenfranchised groups experience that leads to feelings of un-belonging, that is, encounters with police. I juxtapose these experiences with religion as African Americans have used their complex religious foundations as a means to balance the structural limitations like encounters with police officers and other documented experiences of unfair practices in the United States. Such persistent engagements add to the micro-aggressive and sometimes violent universe that deepen feelings of un-belonging for African Americans in the United States. The indivisible weaving of religion throughout African American lives has helped us to redress the partisan application of structured power.

When we saw the flashing red lights come out of nowhere behind us, we knew what we had to do. We were always driving somewhere through the state of Georgia and we knew we always had to be cautious of police. From the earliest time that I could remember, my mother drove us to Atlanta to visit my oldest sister who had graduated from college in the city. During the 60s, my dad worked in a drugstore in Savannah that he eventually bought. Every weekend, we traveled to either Atlanta or Savannah. In those years, we had gotten accustomed to those scary flashing lights as police officers routinely stopped us as we drove the four-hour stretch between my hometown of Elberton, Georgia and Savannah, where we worked in my father’s drug store. Police officers always pulled my mother over and accused her of speeding or running a red light when she had not done either.

On one cold night, we did not know why the officer had stopped us. This time, my mother was driving us back from Atlanta to visit my oldest sister in college. My mother and three of my sisters had spent the day meandering around the campus and we were excited to get home. When the officer approached the car, he shined the light throughout the car and asked my mother where she was headed. “You in

a hurry?" He bellowed at my mother and accused her of speeding. He demanded that she get out of the car. She quietly complied. Escorting her into the little police station, my sisters and I were left in the cold car, worried and scared. After a long while my youngest sister began to cry and scream, which made me cry. We had been stopped and harassed many times but they had never taken my mother. My older sister tried to calm us and assure us that everything would be just fine. Almost weekly, it seemed as if we were surveilled, intimidated or harassed by these public servants. After what seemed like forever, my mother did return to the car. After we drove off, she explained to us that the police officer had arrested her so she called the president of the bank of our hometown, who was also a member of our church.

Mr. Wilson, a white man from St. Mary's Catholic Church, said to the police officer, "You let that woman go!" and he did. Our little Catholic Church in Elberton was a special place. Different from other spaces in our town, I sat and played where I wanted in the church. We did not have a segregated section in the church, although, we often sat near the back left corner. Not all places in my hometown afforded us the luxury of sitting where we pleased. I remember sitting in the balcony of the segregated movie theater. When my oldest brothers and sisters took their senior year trip to Washington, D. C, in the late 1960's, we waited in the "colored waiting room" at the train station. I remember how that same sign hung in the separated space at the doctors' and dentists' offices. Our newspaper provided a special section called, "Colored News." Over time, this column changed to "The News of the Blacks" and finally, it became "Society News." These demarcated spaces existed all over town but in the Catholic Church, I played right along side the white children. I made my First Holy Communion and confirmation with the other children. Once, in the middle of mass, I accidentally dropped an open bag of marbles onto the hardwood floor. Another time, during a high holy mass, I set my hair on fire with a candle. My mother always apologized profusely and glared at me to behave in this mixed crowd. The white parishioners always assured my mother that we belonged in that church. Having grown up in New Orleans, the Catholic Church was the only church that my mother knew. Over the years, I often wondered how my mother must have felt walking into that church in the late 1940's when she could have experienced danger, like in so many other parts of the south.

Even in the 1960's, we knew that we could not cross the line of certain segregated spaces. We knew where we could go and where we could not go, so we mostly stayed on our side of the train tracks. By 1970, one of my sisters integrated the public library near the town square. Like church, we felt safe in the library because the librarians welcomed us. In my hometown, I never saw any big racial violence but we knew about surrounding counties that we should avoid. Over time, my mother learned which routes to take when traveling to Atlanta and Savannah. I never saw "Sundown Towns" at night, but we knew they existed. Once, in the mountain area near Tennessee, I traveled with my mother to pick up my sister who had participated in a summer program. We drove through a town

where no black people lived. As people lined up for a parade that day, we drove down the main highway. As we passed, all the white people applauded. They had never seen black people before. I am certain no black person would have wanted to be in that town at night.

In 1974, all the schools in our county had finally fully integrated. While black and white students positively participated in classes and activities together, we usually sat together at separate tables at lunch. I don't remember any hostile situations between Blacks and Whites. We had lots of activities together, like band rehearsals, bake sales, car washes... On out of town field trips, we crowded onto the same buses. When the bell rang at the end of the day, we went back to our side of town mostly. On my side of town, many of the black students found safety and belonging in their segregated churches. Outside of school, neighborhood churches embraced all the children and filled their time with choir rehearsals, Bible study, Sunday school and church.

Watching my mother in the Catholic Church, I learned about quiet contemplation as she would just sit and not say a word. I also learned I could feel safe in a white world, as in her soft way, she made friends with all the church members. My mother made friends with Italians, Irish, East Indian, Filipino, and various European people at church. When we were not traveling, my mother never missed a mass and I always tagged along with her. I rarely went to church with my father as he was usually working in the drugstore in Savannah. From my dad's side, we occasionally went to church with his mother. From her, I learned other things that I would not recognize until many years later. Different from the solemnity of my mother's church, my sister and I would snicker, as people in the Baptist church would "shout" when they "caught the spirit." We loved how my grandmother would talk back to the preacher with responses of "Amen!"

In the neighborhood, we used to play under my grandmother's Chinaberry tree next to the unpaved street that stretched in front of her house. She used to sweep her dry and dusty dirt yard with scratches from her broom made of sticks. Decades later, I saw the same patterns in a dirt yard in Senegal and I learned that the zigzag patterns were intended to break the course of the bad spirits in case they wanted to come into the yard. Every night my grandmother turned down the rocking chairs on the front porch so that the bad spirits would not find a comfortable place to sit down and feel at home during the night.

Born in 1884, my grandmother loved sitting in her rocking chair on her front porch to tell stories. One of my strongest memories was the story she told of the "colored man" running away from the Ku Klux Klan. She never told us what the man had done but she recalled how the KKK went from house to house searching for the man. When they could not find him, they set all the houses on fire. She was a baby and remembered how they handed her out of the window to safety. After that, she and her family left and moved to Elberton.

I always felt safe with my grandmother, my protector. I knew that I always had a place to run if my older brothers or sisters bothered me. Sometimes, I would run out to the woods to hide or I would find cover between the corn stalks in our garden. Mostly, I loved to run up the street to my grandmother's house. I always had a place of belonging with her. At night, I would crawl up into her big bed and watch, as her flickering kerosene lamp would silhouette her thin frame the wall. She would crawl onto her knees and recited a prayer that I could never understand what she was saying. She never told me what she was saying but she spoke a different language, an old African American language with words we no longer use. To me, it did not matter what was going on in the world when I was with my grandmother. Sitting on her porch at the foot of her rocking chair, I listened to her stories with the other old ladies from the neighborhood. Many of those women worked as maids in white homes. I remember how they warned on the dangers of the world, mean police officers and boss ladies who would try to trick them by leaving money lying around to test them to see if they would steal. Sometimes, these women would gather together with scrap material to make quilts.

My grandmother, like my mother, never talked about religion. She lived it. She never quoted Bible verses and parables to teach me any lessons. When it would rain, my grandmother would usher all of us into the house and we would have to get really quiet and turn off the lights because "God was at work." My grandmother lived what she believed. Usually, she quietly hummed as she did her work. I can still hear and see her sitting on her porch humming. I remember how I would visit the tall dark skinned, white haired woman and she would sometimes give me a nickel to go to the store across the street to buy penny cookies. Her passing in 1972 marked a new chapter in my life.

I no longer had a place to go to sit on the porch endlessly rocking in her big chairs watching raindrops beat onto her dusty yard until little rivers started forming before she called for us to come inside. Even though I no longer went to her house to gather pecans and pears from her trees, I still carried the memories of her teachings and her quiet examples of kindness. I did not know then how much her teachings, along with the examples of my mother would influence me for the rest of my life. Both these women taught me how to fill in the gaps of life as I mediated through tough times.

In high school, I always went to church with my mother. By my senior year, I had joined the feeble three-member choir in the loft. For Midnight Mass, the priest had asked me to be responsible for special music so I enrolled my best friend, Roosevelt, to play duets with me. He played baritone horn and I played trombone. To rehearse, the priest had given me the key to the church sits right in the middle of a white section of town. In 2014, two black teenagers might be accused of breaking and entering into a white church filled with silver and gold chalices but in 1978, the wrath of popular media had not decimated the image of young black men. I carried what I had learned in the catechism classes with me

when I went away to college. At the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California, I went to mass every morning when I was a freshman. By the second year, people started requesting me as a paid singer at two local Methodist churches. By my senior year, I had become the cantor for the Sunday night masses on campus and a paid choir member at Annunciation Cathedral in Downtown Stockton. Even though I had started searching for different answers, my mother and grandmother's demonstrations had given an idea the my searching and my actions mattered.

In 1981, I witnessed something frightening. The music librarian asked me if I would like a job playing trombone for a special church performance. I knew she called herself a "born-again," but I had never paid close attention to the meaning. Jimmy Carter had called himself the same. All of the musicians gather at the library to travel to the church. I had assumed the church was situated somewhere around Stockton but we drove quite a distance to another city. Inside the church, I was speechless when I saw a very large American flag and a picture of Ronald Reagan. Up to that point in my life, I had never seen such a blatant display of a church and politics. Throughout the history of the Back Church in America, many preachers served many functions of leadership in sequestered communities. These preachers promoted the principles of justice, fairness and equality. My heart raced as I sat through the sermon in the church with the American flag. The minister pontificated on the opposite principles that the black churches had promoted over the years. I felt betrayed that the music librarian had asked me to accompany this ensemble. How could she possibly think that any of the black musicians would approve of the message of hate? We all sat quietly on the return trip to Stockton. From that night on, I became keenly aware of the use of the church in "conservative" politics. I always remember that night as the night when I realize that America was moving into a "color-blind" society but I knew that politicians, like Ronald Reagan, would attempt to erase the gains in equality that started in the 1960s.

- 1 Douglass, Frederick, and David W. Blight, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. 2nd edn, *Bedford Series in History and Culture* (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 2003), pp. xii, 188 p.
- 2 Jordan, Don, and Michael Walsh, *White Cargo : The Forgotten History of Britain's White Slaves in America* (Washington Square, N.Y.: New York University Press, 2008), pp. 320 p., 8 p. of plates.
- 3 Anquandah, Kwesi J., 'Castles and Forts of Ghana', (Belgium: Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, 1999).
- 4 Song, Traditional Slave, 'Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel'.
- 5 Equiano, Olaudah, and Robert J. Allison, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, The Bedford Series in History and Culture* (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995), pp. ix, 222 p.
- 6 Washington, Margaret, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*. 1st edn, *Vintage Classics* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), p. 138 p.
- 7 Berlin, Ira, *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk About Their Personal Experience of Slavery and Emancipation* (New York, New York: The New Press, 1998).
- 8 Hall, Gwendolyn Midlo, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana : The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), pp. xx, 434 p.
- 9 Curtin, Philip D., *The Atlantic Slave Trade; a Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), pp. xix, 338 p.
- 10 Diouf, Sylviane, *Servants of Allah : African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), pp. ix, 253 p.
- 11 Thompson, Robert Farris, *Flash of the Spirit : African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy*. 1st Vintage Books edn (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), pp. xvii, 317 p.

- 12 Young, Jason R., *Rituals of Resistance : African Atlantic Religion in Kongo and the Lowcountry South in the Era of Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), pp. xii, 258 p.
- 13 Raboteau, Albert J., *Slave Religion : The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. xi, 382 p.
- 14 Pollitzer, William S., *The Gullah People and Their African Heritage* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), pp. xxiii, 298 p.
- 15 Granger, Mary, *Drums and Shadows : Survival Studies among the Georgia Coastal Negroes: Survival Studies among the Georgia Coastal Negroes* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), pp. xlv, 274 p., [32] p. of plates.
- 16 Eltis, David, and David Richardson, 'Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade', in *The Lewis Walpole series in eighteenth-century culture and history* (New Haven: Yale University Press,, 2010).
- 17 Matory, James Lorand, 'Free to Be a Slave: Slavery as Metaphor in the Afro-Atlantic Religions', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 37 (2007).
- 18 Webb, Floyd, 'Robert Farris Thompson Speaks: Daughters of the Dust (Dvd Extra)', (1991).
- 19 Gilroy, Paul, *The Black Atlantic : Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. xi, 261 p.
- 20 Somé, Malidoma Patrice, *Of Water and the Spirit : Ritual, Magic, and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman* (New York: Putnam, 1994), p. 311 p.
- 21 Herskovits, Melville J., *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), pp. xliii, 368 p.
- 22 Morrison, Toni, *Beloved : A Novel*. 1st edn (New York: Knopf : Distributed by Random House, 1987), p. 275 p.
- 23 Cosentino, Donald, *Divine Revolution : The Art of Edouard Duval-Carrié*. 1st edn (Los Angeles, Calif.: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, 2004), p. 68 p.

- 24 Taylor, Jason de Caires, 'Underwater Video'
<<http://www.underwatersculpture.com/pages/gallery/film/film.htm%3E>.
- 25 Borgeaud, Pierre Y., 'Return to Gorée', (France: Axion Films, 2007).
- 26 Marshall, Paule, *Praisesong for the Widow* (New York: Plume, 1983), p. 256 p.
- 27 Snyder, Terri L. , 'Suicide, Slavery, and Memory in North America', *The Journal of American History*, 97 (2010), 39-62.
- 28 Gadson, Laura R, 'The Water Brought Us Here, the Water Will Take Us Home', (St. Simons Island, Georgia: 2012).
- 29 Levi-Strauss, Claude, *The Structural Study of Myth*. ed. by Ed Thomas Sebeok, *Myth: Symposium* (1968).
- 30 Cone, James H., *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2011), pp. xix, 202 p.
- 31 Rushdy, Ashraf H. A., *The End of American Lynching* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2012), pp. xv, 208 p.
- 32 Schechner, Richard, *Between Theater & Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), pp. xiv, 342 p.
- 33 Guest, Chaz, 'Artist Chaz Guest Paints Troy Davis', (Amnesty International, 2011).
- 34 Tillet, Salamishah, *Sites of Slavery : Citizenship and Racial Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Imagination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), pp. xvi, 224 p.

Third Movement
Rehearsing the Musical Score

Just as the American narrative, the church, and capitalism have been inextricably bound together since the early days of America, music also played a part, as it animated that rope that extends through time until now. During the Middle Passage, the African slaves cried out in response to the vicious conditions under which the slave trader captured them. From their moans, hollers, antiphonal responses in communal agreements, and percussive and syncopated accents, the slaves began encoding music with the dialectic of sorrow and transcendence that their descendants would recapitulate through various evolutions of musical genres over time. From the dread of those first moments on the ships, the African slaves and their descendants have always looked back to Africa. They have always rehearsed their transcendence through music that promised movement from despair to freedom. In sequestered spaces on the plantations, the slaves rehearsed the imagined freedom that many never attained, and found joy in knowing that someday, freedom would come. Their eschatology provided for a day of judgment—if they could not get their rewards here on earth, they certainly would receive them in heaven. So, they held on to the idea of transcendence in their music as they rehearsed and repeated the narrative through their songs.

In the 2007 documentary film *Return to Gorée*, Senegalese singer Youssou N'Dour makes connections between Senegal and African-American music as he travels to the United States to gather musicians from diverse religious backgrounds and regions to return to Gorée Island for a concert.¹ The film symbolically represents the African Diaspora as N'Dour calls musicians from the Diaspora “home” to Gorée to make music communally. Fragments of African music have long circulated in black life in America and continue today to influence engagements with “sites of memory” in locations such as Gorée Island. The roots of contemporary black music in the Americas run deep, back to pre-colonial times and back to the

decks of the slave ships, where African captives encountered each other's musical traditions and diverse music of Europe. The earliest African American music from sites like Savannah, Georgia and New Orleans, Louisiana continues to influence Black culture in United States. These sequestered locations became "rehearsal spaces" where the music of Africa, by means of dynamic syncretism, was blended with other traditions, creating musical markers that tell the story of African Americans in the United States. The early music from these sites held much of the data that has preserved the worldview that the slaves encoded. Not only did the music underscore the rehearsal space in which memes, narratives and myths were repeated and recapitulated, music itself has also played the role of a master griot recounting stories within the diverse diasporic communities. The original colonies, New Orleans, and the Sea Islands held the primary data for the re-circulated tropes, themes, intersections and inventions for black music in America. This data carries the ritual movement of transcendence.

Music, an integral component of African American culture, has always commented on the collective experience of Black people, and on the existential context in which slaves and their descendants have lived, and has also offered a means of assuaging their pain and suffering. With each release from dissonance to harmony, the music delivered the very act of transcendence. African American music contains this code in each musical phrase as well as the total progression. For example, in the twelve bar blues progression, the final chord ends up with the beginning chord, where the musician "brings it on home." Like orality in African and African American narratives, music draws upon the community to create totalizing experiences where call and response, antiphonal hollers, and accentuated repetition form multi-vocal, polyphonic, and multi-rhythmic conversations. From the forced migrations out of Africa to the internal

American migrations that followed, black people held onto the original data through music, songs, stories, and dance.

During what historian Ira Berlin has called the Second Middle Passage of the Nineteenth Century, when “Georgia Men” marched coffles of chained human beings from northern slave states to the southern states to toil in the prosperous cotton fields, slaves carried with them their moans, cries, hollers, rhythms, and harmonies. “Sold down the river” from the North to harsher southern plantations, the coffles that bound the slaves also tied them to rigid black codes in southern states that insured that no slaves would rise up and threaten the immense cotton profits. Unified by the oppression and exclusion of severe laws and racist custom, these slaves recapitulated stories and music from Africa that they had rehearsed in the North, creating the basis for shared African American traditions.

According to David Eltis and David Richardson, a total of approximately 400,000 slaves were brought from Africa to the North American colonies.² By the end of the 1700s, the African slave population had multiplied enormously and high birth rates in the colonies made forced migrations from Africa less desirable. During the Second Middle Passage of the early Nineteenth Century, planters and opportunists forced more than a million slaves and free Blacks from the North. Slavers snatched babies from mothers, sisters from brothers, and husbands from wives. By stealing the home that the slaves had known, they thrust black people into the space of unbelonging and marched them off to distant lands. Ira Berlin, who marks four great migrations in African American history, writes that black people “were forced from the homes they and their forebears had created in the most difficult of circumstances.”³

Like the forced migrations of people from the British Isles in the Seventeenth Century and Africans in the Eighteenth, avarice drove the forced internal movement of black people

during the Nineteenth Century. Eli Whitney had invented the cotton gin, a machine that eliminated the arduous task of separating the seeds from cotton lint, and positioning the United States to begin producing massive amounts of cotton. When cotton became king, planters in the South needed huge numbers of laborers and many acres of rich land. While opportunistic white men marched slaves to the South, by 1830 white settlers had begun to encroach on Native American lands. The Trail of Tears—a forced relocation of the Cherokee nation from its homeland east of the Mississippi River to “reservations” in modern-day Oklahoma (1838-39)—made way for planters to settle on the newly acquired land on the alluvial floodplain of the Mississippi and to rise to a higher level on the American hierarchy through the acquisition of new wealth. Indentured servitude offered Whites something that slaves would not see for a long time, an end to their servitude and the use of their skin color as a source of advantage, a kind of property. Amiri Baraka wrote that, “a freed serf, if he was lucky, could hope at least to matriculate into the lower rungs of the general society and perhaps find some genuine niche in the mainstream of society in which to function as a citizen, a man.”⁴ Many former non-property owning white men found a means of acquiring wealth by becoming human traffickers to the booming cotton trade in the South, and then settling onto rich earth that had been taken from the ones who lived there first. While some remained on the lower rungs of society, others climbed the ladder of the hegemonic order. No matter what their place on the ladder, they could boast of being higher up than the slaves (a claim always underlain by the ambivalence of being lower than wealthy Whites). Pushed by the oppressive systems and their states of ambivalence and unbelonging, the slaves united through what they could control, their non-material culture. They rehearsed their transcendence, in part, through their songs.

The massive migration of black people from the North did not vindicate northerners from the inhumanity of the slave trade and the theft of Native American land. Wall Street continued its complicity with the trading of insurance, slaves, and cotton. Cotton not only generated wealth for the investors and planters, but also created ancillary jobs for less prosperous Whites. According to Edward Baptiste, “the interlinked expansion of both slavery and financial capitalism was now the driving force in an emerging national economic system that benefited elites and others up and down the Atlantic coast as well as throughout the backcountry.” He contends that the expansion of the cotton trade made the United States a world power. “In 1802,” Baptiste notes, “cotton already accounted for 14% of the value of all US exports, but by 1820 it accounted for 42%.”⁵ For many people in North America during the early Nineteenth, slavery served as their source of living in one way or another, and provided a means of ascending the economic ladder. Stephan Palmié suggests that “it is undeniable that the modern capitalist world system was erected, at least in part, on the unmarked graves of African slaves whose lives were systematically wasted in the service of what Marx identified as *primitive accumulation*.”⁶ Under the weight of this capitalist regime, the slaves found solace in their music, using it to mediate between their physical torment and a sense of belonging.

The harrowing era of greed and accumulation of wealth from the labor of the slaves lasted until the end of the Civil War. For few years after the war, it seemed as if the freed slaves would succeed in America. The Civil Rights Act of 1866 granted equal rights to all citizens. Former slaves could move about freely, and many tried to reunite with their families, from whom they had been separated during the second middle passage. When these black people had been pulled away from their families to toil the fields of cotton, they continued to sing of going home. Reconstruction offered a short moment of hope. Black churches expanded, no longer dependent

on white preachers, and the music within those churches evolved to express its own style and flavor.

In the midst of all the jubilation, the former slaves still struggled to survive as Whites carried out racist actions against them after the war. Angry whites often objected to the new opportunities enjoyed by the freedmen, and sought to sabotage their success. The Ku Klux Klan, a secretive vigilante group committed to white supremacy and opposed to freedmen's rights, was founded in 1865 in Tennessee by a small group of Confederate veterans. Their interference in black life in the South ranged from violence and murder to attacks on the economic basis of everyday life. As the historian Eric Foner has written, "Klansman...objected to blacks owning animals of their own, sometimes killing the freedmen's livestock in order to make them more dependent upon their employers." While the second middle passage brought new forms of torture, the period of Reconstruction brought still another form of terror. For many of the Whites who had benefited from the institution of slavery, the Emancipation Proclamation brought an end to their livelihood. These Whites blamed the former slaves for their own decline in status, and found the new successes of some Blacks offensive. Eric Foner has argued that "the most 'offensive' blacks of all seem to be those who achieved a modicum of economic success, for, as a white Mississippi farmer commented, the Klan 'do not like to see the Negro get ahead.'" The end of Reconstruction rekindled the ambivalent state for Blacks and poor Whites: "a new southern class structure and several new systems of organizing labor were well on their way to being consolidated."⁷ The former slaves would have to find new ways of survival. Through their culture, and especially their music, they created family and community, and also fashioned a vision for the new day when they would eventually find freedom.

After Reconstruction, when millions of former slaves left their sequestered spaces in the South, they carried with them what they had rehearsed in the captive spaces like New Orleans and the Sea Islands to northern and western spaces. The African drum that played in Congo Square kept the tempo while the tonal hollers and calls from the Sea Islands invited an ageless and timeless mnemonic harmonic chorus that still carries data of remembrance from the shores along the rivers of the malevolent Transatlantic Slave Trade. One strike of the blues chord and the musician evokes the mnemonic of sorrow, which can be heard as the heavy-hearted experiences of slave life. African-influenced chordal progressions and melodic patterns, which to European trained ears seemed to challenge or perhaps ignore the distinction between “major” and minor” harmonies (and their customary association with “happy” and “sad” emotions), represented the emotional complexity of Black music, and its ability to mediate between pain and pleasure, resignation and optimism. These dissonances and resolutions often re-circulated in Black music and reflected the conditions of sorrow and transcendence, the brutal realities and hopeful longings of African American experiences. Starting with the harsh conditions on plantations where slaves embedded their moans into sorrow songs, to the wailing trumpet in the nightclub commenting through his horn on the Jim Crow conditions in the world in which he lives.

In this chapter, I examine how African musical sensibilities have influenced African American music. Christopher A. Waterman has written that, “in many sub-Saharan African cultures aurality and social experience are inextricably linked.”⁸ These African sensibilities have continued to influence black music in America, and the inextricable rapport between the music and the social experience remains a central trait of music within the African American experience, which has always animated the discourse of the conditions in which we live. Next,

by locating two important sites of African Music in America, I intend to examine how slaves encoded the music that serves as rehearsed memes within the music of the primary sequestered locations of Savannah, Georgia and New Orleans, Louisiana. Because of the sequestered existences of the early Africans in America in Louisiana and the Southeastern United States, musical forms became standardized and began to act as mnemonic markers for African Americans who repeat, re-circulate and recapitulate tropes in music. These tropes can be found in almost any Black musical form in the United States, including spirituals, gospel songs, blues, jazz, and rhythm and blues. Next, I examine how these two locations served as the foundations for music in the United States as former slaves migrated to the North where distinctive ethnic, political, religious and musical traditions merged together to form new musical expressions. During the Great Migrations, African American performers and composers mixed rehearsed shards of musical memes to form new musical pieces, styles, and genres. I then examine the contrast of sorrow and transcendence in African American music, which provides rehearsals for the script of ancestral memory. The chapter concludes with an interview of a filmmaker that focuses on the preparation and training she received before traveling to Africa for the first time, and on her first visit to Gorée Island; and, finally, with a memoir of my own rehearsals and training for transformation on Gorée, revealing my experiences with the dialectic of belonging and un-belonging.

“Africa” in the Music of America

In the 1998 documentary, *The Language You Cry In*, Joseph Opala and Cynthia Schmidt trace a song from the Gullah Sea Islands of Georgia to a remote village in Sierra Leone.⁹ The American folklorist and musicologist John Lomax originally recorded the song during the 1940s, and Opala, a Sierra Leona anthropologist, located the Gullah/Geechee daughter of the singer in

the original recording, who also knew the song. In the film, Opala takes members of the Gullah community to Sierra Leone where they locate the original village of the song. The traditional sorrow song in Sierra Leone had become a children's play song in Georgia. While the meaning and use of the song had changed, the language, melody, and rhythm had been maintained. Anthropologists believe Africans brought the song to the Gullah Islands at least 250 years ago, making it the longest surviving individual piece of African music yet documented. In a similar discovery, historian Emma Christopher has identified a Spanish-speaking group living in Cuba who sing and dance in the same language as people found in a remote Sierra Leone village. Christopher documents the reunion of the two groups, separated almost 200 years ago, in the 2013 film, *They Are We*.¹⁰ Like African oral traditions that imbue African American narratives, these musical traditions maintain the unwritten African fragments that seek to tell a story. The "Africa" in the music, which I will explore further in this section, endures.

While these films and discoveries provide direct evidence of the African connection to African American music, ethnomusicologists argue about the specific nature of the connections. They do not dispute the relationships between African and African American musical styles, practices, and values, which are generally agreed to be obvious. Joseph E. Holloway has argued that the slave traders forced enslaved Africans to leave behind much of the worlds that they knew, their relationships, their family, shared religions, and material culture during the Middle Passage. However, the slaves carried the immaterial aspects of their cultures with them. As Holloway puts it, "they dematerialized their cultural artifacts during the Middle Passage to rematerialize African culture on their arrival in the New World. Africans arrived in the New World capable of using old world knowledge to create new world realities."¹¹ In other words, they took what they knew and re-invented and re-imagined new worlds of expression. The

slaves took the music of their diverse ethnic groups and created new musical forms through the intersectionality of their groups in their new sequestered locations. In the beginning, Europeans tried to separate the slaves from their traditional religious practices and ceremonies. Later, when slaves had more access to the slaveholders' musical forms and religions, the enslaved Africans created even more forms of cultural and musical expression. The dynamic process of learning European musical and religious traditions yielded new musical forms.

The anthropologist Richard A. Waterman summarized the impact of African music on African American cultures in his 1952 article *African Influence on the Music of the Americas*.¹² He differentiates African music from European music by drawing attention to the distinctive features of African music such as the importance of percussion, syncopation, polyrhythms, and call and response. His research established a precedent and acknowledgement of the importance of specific features of West African music. His early findings in the 1940s and 1950s established a foundation upon which other scholars built their research. In his essay, *On Flogging a Dead Horse: Lessons Learned From the Africanisms Controversy*, Waterman argued for the need to analyze the influences of West African music on the music of slaves in the New World as a dynamic process. He argues that, “the lesson that any attempt to deal with the dynamics of musical culture, without reference to the complete kit of anthropological tools for dealing with the dynamics of culture in general, is almost certain to prove unsatisfying, frustrating, and—what's worse—a plain waste of time.”¹³ Waterman's research emphasized the persistence of African musical styles and elements in the music in the New World, but he also recognized that the slaves changed and reinterpreted these styles and elements in creating a new, distinctively African American culture.

More recently, John Miller Chernoff analyzed unique African musical qualities in *African Rhythm and African Sensibilities*.¹⁴ He explores technical connections between African and African American tonal and rhythmic features, but he stresses the fact that African music promotes the sensibility of community. “In the African context,” Chernoff argues, “performance in music and dance responds ultimately to a single aesthetic concern, the realization of community.”¹⁴ He points out that Africans integrate music into commonplace activities as a framework that helps people to relate to one another. “Music is essential to life in Africa because Africans use music to mediate their involvement within the community, and a good musical performance reveals their orientation towards this crucial concern.”¹⁴

The ethnomusicologist Portia K. Maultsby also proposes that one of the functions of African music is the promotion of community. She argues that “the fundamental concept that governs music performance in African and African-derived cultures is that music-making is a participatory group activity that serves to unite black people into a cohesive group for a common purpose.”¹⁵ In her essay, *Africanisms in African American Music*, Maultsby also recognized that the slaves maintained their African roots in order to “create a meaningful existence in a world where they were not welcomed.” At the same time, they created new styles by recycling old concepts to form new musical styles. The slaves continuously re-invented themselves through their dynamic participation in the world around them, even though they largely remained in sequestered spaces.

Paula A. Ebron problematizes the notions of “Africa” and “African music” that Chernoff and others use, arguing that these terms do not reveal specificity such as class and ethnicity. She takes issue with the fact that Chernoff writes about community yet does not give voice to the community in which he gathers his experiences. By adding their voices, she

contends, Chernoff would have added specificity to his work and would have been able to critique the “monolithic story of ‘African music.’”¹⁶ She agrees with the notions of the larger traits of African music as compared to European music but stresses the need for more accurate and specific analysis. Having completed her studies in the Gambia, the small coastal country surrounded by Senegal, Ebron frames her analysis in the context of the *Jali*, a trained griot who performs the role of storyteller in the context of global expectations. She notes the rubric of “styles, presence and performance genres” as links to Africa. While she notes these connections, she also stresses the dynamic nature of these cultural markers because of the changing contexts and intersections that the slaves encountered. “Performance practices are unstable, shifting in the histories, debates, and contingencies of enactment.”¹⁶ Certainly, the diversity of the slaves that the traders captured and brought to the sequestered plantations created variant forms of musical expression, intersections that have continued to shift over time, yet maintained certain core similarities.

These intersecting shards of the past and the present of performances occur in African American music throughout history. Ebron marks the desire of African Americans to make connections between the plantation and West Africa by imagining the *Jali*, as the master storyteller, the retainer of history. She frames her comparison in the context of Alex Haley’s *Roots*, which portrayed a Gambian storyteller who could recite oral history and recover slave histories. She describes the *Jali* as the “master of memory and the oral arts, skilled at oration and wordplay,”¹⁶ described by many as the “precursor of contemporary rap artists.” She notes that people in the Diaspora want to link their histories and maintain connections with Africa through their “remembrances.” Other scholars assert the connections between the West African griot and African Americans oral traditions with more certainty. They contend that these

performances demonstrate a genealogical link between present day performances and traditional roles in West Africa. Because slaveholders on many plantations did not allow slaves to participate in their white Christian services, the slaves remained in their sequestered spaces and continued worshiping in their own manner. Martha Simmons and Frank A. Thomas draw parallels between the folk preacher and the African griot, noting that the slaves did not leave all of their traditions on the shores of Africa. In *Preaching with Sacred Fire*, they argue that “it must be fully understood that African culture was not totally stripped from those in bondage during the Middle Passage, nor in the early years of the so-called ‘breaking in’ of enslaved African Americans.”¹⁷ They argue that the “training function, content, mode and style of performance” of African American preachers and the African griot demonstrate that African culture was not rooted out of early slave traditions. What the slaves recapitulated and rehearsed on the plantation established the foundation for other genres of performance within African American oral traditions.

Cheryl L. Keyes proposes that Rap demonstrates one of those continuations deriving from African orality. In *Rap Music and Street Consciousness*, she asserts that the foundations of the genre have evolved from Africa, stating that, “Rap music is the confluence of African-American and Caribbean cultural expressions, such as sermons, blues, game songs, and toast and toasting—all of which are recited in a chanted rhyme or poetic fashion.”¹⁸ While she notes the African American and Caribbean junction, the deeper roots draw upon African foundations. Keyes identifies the West African bard as the principle figure who demonstrates the performative characteristics that oral performers continue to circulate. While she focuses on the rap artist, she also notes these traits in other performers such as preachers, singers, and storytellers. Keyes adds that the bard, like the griot, “is a storyteller-singer and above all a historian who chronicles

the nation's history and transmits cultural traditions."¹⁸ Through performance, this figure transforms "chaos into peace." The bard/griot acts as a commentator on the society. Keyes notes that the figure of the bard has continued through African American culture over time. From the 1930s to the 1950s, when millions of southern blacks moved to urban areas, they brought with them the verbal performance styles in sacred and secular settings that transmuted into *Jive*. Preachers, writers, actors and poets, acquired the language and rhythm of jive, and integrated it into African American culture. During the turbulence of the late 1960s, this jive talk emerged as rap, "an expressive tool through which its creators responded creatively to change to their environment."¹⁸

Throughout the history of Africans in America, music has provided a way of functioning under mostly brutal conditions. Ira Berlin accented the importance of music asserting that, "music was not simply a window into African-American life; it was a means by which black people understood the circumstances and articulated their deepest beliefs and most powerful yearnings."³ Music helped slaves to rhythmically coordinate and safely complete harsh work assignments. It gave the slaves a means of speaking to each other in code, "a way to speak the unspeakable, both to themselves and those who dared to listen."³ From the insides of the slave vessels, Africans incorporated the tapping and creaking metronome of the ocean's push and pull into their music, a means of communication that they carried with them to the plantation.

Music has never played a merely incidental role in African American life. In his article *Black Music as an Art Form*, Olly Wilson argues that music played a functional role in early African American culture.¹⁹ Whether using rhythm to facilitate heavy work projects during slavery, sending messages during the Underground Railroad, or healing from the brutal reality of slavery, African American music has served core, integral functions for slaves and their

descendants. Wilson adds that while you will not find museums, theaters, or concert halls in the traditional African village, you will find “an abundance of functional products of human creativity which involves painting, sculpture, drama, and music as an intrinsic part of their content” that cannot be detached. From religious songs to work songs, music coexisted with the Africans. He cites the example of the work song as facilitating the completion of a task where, “the function of this song is to facilitate the task of chopping wood” and “becomes the intrinsic part of the music.”¹⁹ The rhythmic sound of the ax functioned as the accompaniment to the work as well as a part of the song.

The functional aspects of African music endured throughout the Black Atlantic. Music served as a means of building community through its use of many voices just as it had in Africa. In much African American music, the act of making music involves the accepted idea that the whole group will join in, thus creating a more elaborate production. Music underscored quotidian life as slaves used field hollers to call the start of the workday, just as some Islamic Africans had used the cry of the *muezzin* (religious official) as a call to prayer. At times, slaves used rhythms and lyrics to relay coded messages with double meanings. Music served the same function as tricksters in African oral traditions. Unlike European music, where the audience and musicians took up distinct spaces to watch a performance, no separation existed in African music between the performers and their community. These functions transpired over time and sequestered spaces in the colonies and continue today. The performance style, content, and function of the music continues to build communities over time from the past to now; and in spaces around the Black Atlantic delivering “remembrances” provide the rehearsal score that supports dominant tropes in African American culture.

The Sea Islands: Recapitulated Spaces of Harmony

In the film *Return to Gorée*, Youssou N'Dour travels to Atlanta, Georgia to meet a Christian gospel men's quartet that he then takes to Gorée Island for the return concert.¹ Black music from the southeastern part of the United States evolved specific tonal qualities and harmony that continue to influence music today. By choosing this gospel quartet, N'Dour validates that region's rich contribution to African-American musical traditions. Although Africans who came to Charleston and Savannah had come from similar regions and made up similar ethnic and linguistic groupings as the slaves in the French colonies, several factors explained their different experiences and creations. From the ports of the southeast American colonies, emerged the harmonies of the Negro folk song that would become the Negro spiritual that W. E. B. DuBois called "the rhythmic cry of the slave." He described these American songs as "the most expressive of human experience born this side of the seas."²⁰ Through various intersections of diverse ethnic groups, these songs established a sound and sensibility that would influence music across the United States through the movements and interactions of the slaves.

In addition to the rich harmonies of the slaves, rhythm played an integral part in the music on the Sea Islands, as the slaves used their voices as percussive augmentation to the songs they sang. William S. Pollitzer states that, "foremost among attributes of music of African-American Sea Islanders is rhythm. Whether in the ring shout, spirituals, the song of the oarsman and the rice-flailing, or the fiddler at a dance, it is the beat that counts."²¹ The singers used vocal syncopation to replace the drum, which legislature had outlawed. After the Stono Rebellion in South Carolina (1739), the lawmakers outlawed drumming and other loud instruments. Literate natives from the Kongo had recruited other slaves to revolt, causing the largest slave rebellion of the British colonies. Catholicism had reached the Kongo Kingdom as early as 1491 so some of the Kongo slaves had acquired the language and religion. They had fought battles alongside the

Portuguese so they knew the art of war and acted as “ringleaders in the revolt in 1739.”²¹ The legislature also outlawed literacy and large assembly of slaves. Because of these tight restrictions, slaves were forced to gather late at night, away from the masters’ house. They congregated in circles in the woods. Pollitzer adds: “Above all, music of the Sea Islands is a group activity, the sharing of a creative experience, and avenue of expressing, and sentiments. Call and response, noted in preaching, produces antiphony in music, as a phrase is repeated or answered by the chorus or an instrument.”²¹ Pollitzer calls the human voice “the crowning instrument of music.” The potential for the human voice increased in places like The Sea Islands as slave owners forced the slaves into sequestered spaces. From those spaces, emerged the Ring Shout.

Music scholar Samuel A. Floyd believes that the ring-shout was the foundation for African-American music.²² As the singers walked around in the circle, they also utilized elements of other African musical forms including, call and response, repetition, closely stacked harmonies, syncopation, and rhythmic accents. Floyd theorizes that the ring-shout of the Sea Islands, not unlike the dances at Congo Square, had not been “straightened” into the second-line (a practice in New Orleans which was influenced by European parade marching). He calls the ring-shout a march, but circular so as to not lead away from the meeting place. With the call and response, common in the ring-shout, Floyd considers the “signifying monkey” and the responders comment on the call. The character of the “signifying monkey,” popular in African and African American culture, derives from African oral traditions that involves a back and forth counterpoint of verbal one-upmanship and trickery. Henry Louis Gates proposed the notion in literary criticism as a means of analyzing double-talk and interplay in African American vernacular. Gates states that “Thinking about the black concept of signifyin (g) is a bit like

stumbling unaware into a hall of mirrors: the sign itself appears to be doubled, at the very least, and (re) doubled upon ever closer examination.”²³ In other words, in the context of exchanges, speakers can use language that could have multiple meanings. Claudia Mitchell-Kernan stated that in signifying, “complimentary remarks may be delivered in a left-handed fashion. A particular utterance may be an insult in one context and not another.”²⁴ In music this dynamic occurs when, for example, a jazz player makes a musical comment within a 12-bar blues progression and another musician responds back in an antiphonal manner as though they were participating in a verbal exchange. On the Sea Islands, signifying might include the improvised conversational-like responses within songs that various singers sing as a way of accentuating a truth that has been sung.

Samuel A. Floyd draws distinctions between African-Catholic syncretism and African-Protestant intersections. He notes that with Protestants, Africans “had more direct access to the high God through song in praise.”²⁵ What emerged from the intersection of diverse ethnic African groups and Protestant hymnody was the African-American spiritual. Floyd believes that with the emergence of spirituals, “slaves made the Christian religion their own.”²⁵ Slaves added their own harmony and rhythmic phrasing and accents that they brought from West Africa. Floyd delineates two types of spirituals, sorrow songs and jubilees. Through the sorrow genre, songs such as “Nobody Knows de Trouble I Seen,” and “Sometimes, I Feel Like a Motherless Child” were developed. Jubilee songs, such as “When de Saints Go Marching In” and “Little David Play on Your Harp,” expressed joyful expectation of the future. These types of songs flourished in the Sea Islands, as the slaves encoded their African religions, their understanding of Christianity, and their encoded lyrics. The contemporary McIntosh County Shouters of Georgia serve as primary examples for this music, preserved and re-circulated for generations. Building

on the long oral tradition, these Sea Island singers have also maintained the tradition of the ring shout for decades. Because former slaves did not leave the Sea Islands after Emancipation and had little contact with the mainland, they retained many of the same traditions that they performed during the days of slavery. Because of their purpose of preserving the musical traditions, they have been honored around the United States. According to their website, “the slender threads of memory and information will remain strong only as long as we continue the tradition of ‘passing down’ the unique culture of our ancestors from Africa’s Rice Coast who were brought here in bondage just a few generations ago.”²⁶

In *The Power of Black Music*, Floyd identifies connections between the music of the Sea Islands and Africa. For example, he likens “field hollers” of the American South to yodelized songs of the so-called “Pygmies” from the Congo, and cites examples of the field holler in Africa in making announcements, organizing meetings, and hunting prey.²⁵ He connects these African expressions to their Americanized analogs. For example, he proposes that the African holler came to function as street vendors’ cries in the twentieth-century. In Floyd’s comprehensive text, he makes connections across geographical spaces as well as connections over various historical periods. As he believes that black music in America derived from the ring-shout, he connects the genres of music that emerged after. He argues that specific elements of black music, such as calls, cries, hollers, moans, bent notes, polyrhythms, offbeat melodic phrasing, hand clapping, and competition between performers, are foundational for each subsequent period and genre, connecting the “ring” to spirituals, gospel songs, blues, jazz, and music of the 50s and 60s. Floyd also situates his analysis within the social and artistic context of each time period (for example, the Harlem Renaissance).

Bernice Johnson Reagon has researched the Sea Islands and music of Southern Georgia from a more personal, self-reflexive point of view. In *If You Don't Go, Don't Hinder Me*, she details her experiences as a young woman who learned to sing spirituals in her church.²⁷ She writes over various time periods in order to demonstrate the changes in music from the Sea Islands and the migration to the North. Starting with her own experiences as a young singer, she reflects back on other times of music from the southern part of Georgia, detailing the history of spirituals based on her own participation as a singer and then as a researcher. Reagon also explicates the function and meanings of spirituals, explaining that many spirituals, such as *Wade in the Water*, *Steal Away*, and *Run Mourner Run*, were escape songs for participants in the Underground Railroad. The Fisk Jubilee Singers, she explains, developed out of necessity to raise funds for Fisk University, a post Reconstruction institution, which helped to popularize spirituals as a concert genre as the group became an international sensation. The genre continued to develop during the civil rights movement with groups like the SNCC Freedom Singers, which she helped to create. This group actively participated in bringing about social change during the Civil Rights movement by engaging in sit-ins, starting in Albany, Georgia. Later, as an active member of the group of Sweet Honey In the Rock, she used her voice to bring social justice issues to international audiences. Sweet Honey In the Rock used the *a cappella* (without instrumental accompaniment) singing style that many performers from the Sea Islands had traditionally used. Without accompanying musical instruments, they used their voices to create harmonies and percussion. During the Great Migration of the Twentieth Century, when millions of African American citizens migrated to the North, many musical ensembles, like the Freedom Singers, took the musical practices that they had known in the South and transformed them into new genres. Reagon writes that “African-American gospel music began as the exciting new

Congregational and composed sacred music in urban Pentecostal, Baptists, and some Methodist churches.²⁷

Congo Square: Recapitulated Rehearsal Spaces of Rhythm

Unlike the rigid spaces that gave birth to the Ring Dance on the Sea Islands, in New Orleans's Congo Square, diverse groups of Africans, Europeans and Indians gathered for celebration, community, and trade. Africans continued their ethnic traditions in this location, often gathering in their groups of origins, and using their indigenous languages. The mix of these groups established one of the foundations for African American musical and mythic traditions more than three centuries ago, creating new cultural practices through the intersections of the various ethnic groups. Because of this strictly sequestered location, slaves were able to rehearse and repeat musical, oral, dance and cultural traditions. These traditions would continue throughout American slave history, Reconstruction, and the epoch of migration. Under French rule, Louisiana had a close relationship with Haiti, since they were both colonies of France, and the two sites participated in constant cultural exchanges. When Louisiana fell under the rule of Spain, a similar rapport occurred with the Spanish colony of Cuba.

In the film *Return to Gorée*, Senegalese musician Youssou N'Dour travels to New Orleans to recruit the Muslim percussionist, Idris Mohammad, to his project of bringing the Diaspora back to Gorée.¹ Outside the French quarter, at the intersection of St. Ann Street and Rampart Street, lies one of the most vibrant and historic spaces in America, Congo Square. Marie Laveau, the famous Voodoo priestess, lived steps away from the park on St. Ann Street. Today, one can find drumming circles, music festivals, and heritage and cultural celebrations in Congo Square.

Since the colonists allowed drumming in Congo Square, many think of New Orleans as the rhythmic arm of the “rhythm and blues” foundation in black music in America, where dance allowed for a common language amongst mixed ethnicities. Freddi Williams Evans writes “in Congo Square, dancers used their bodies as instruments. Handclaps, footsteps, chest and thigh pats, shouts and ululations accompanied the drums and other percussion instruments.”²⁸ Africans used instruments from the Senegambia region including traditional string instruments that were the antecedent of the banjo. Sometimes they used instruments that were not African at all, but were instruments they had incorporated from other cultural groups, such as the Europeans. The music found in Congo Square and the makeup of the instruments used signified the diverse makeup of the people who participated in the Sunday freedom celebrations. In addition to the joyful celebrations, Congo Square had also been the site of executions, as well as pillories used for public whippings. Not only did the slaves recapitulate joyful traditions, they also learned to respond to repeated conditions of terror performed by vicious slavery agents. Serving as witnesses to such violent acts as public executions and beatings, the slaves learned to stay in their place. These violent acts served as a means of state control. The slaves learned how to encode their sorrows in the harmonies and rhythms of the music.

Samuel A. Floyd incorporates the spiritual and mythical foundations that intertwine music, religion and myth. He examines the generalized spiritual foundations of many West African religions and makes the case for the dual practices of worshiping the transcendent God (High God, Supreme God, the father, king, lord) along with a pantheon of lesser gods. Floyd argues for the importance of rituals of dancing, drumming and singing in the process of worshiping these gods. He contends that performance traditions directly linked to the act of storytelling in Africa through the use of drums as rhythmic foundation, along with syncopated

words and melodies that helped to maintain the rhythmic progression of the music and drive the story. Like African oral traditions, African music is multi-vocal and multi-rhythmic. According to Floyd, “scholars seem to agree that the aim of African music has always been to translate the experiences of life and of the spiritual world into sound, enhancing and celebrating life.”²⁵ Music, song and dance were integral parts of African cultures, “inseparable from the traditional communities in which it existed.”²⁵

Floyd also connects the distinctive African-Catholic syncretism that pervaded New Orleans and how this syncretism allowed for the continuation of African traditions. He finds the appearance of “the ring” in Southwest Louisiana with a community of Creoles called “Black Cajuns.” He makes the link with the performance of the “juré,” where men sit and perform “testifying shouts.” This Catholic practice, performed during Lent, involves “continuous stamping and clapping accompanying a short, repeated melody” While onlookers dance with their upper bodies. Floyd includes New Orleans in his description of “ring” ceremonies when he describes funeral possessions with marching bands, which served as the foundation of jazz. While some argue that Europeans established marching bands, Floyd observes that Africans also practiced processional traditions, and asserts that “the primary influences on black jazzmen were most likely the African antecedents.”²⁵

The role of the “signifying monkey,” according to Floyd, is generally employed in African American music. Black vernacular practices such as loud talking, testifying, calling out, sounding, and playing the dozens, used to say one thing but mean another, have also been used in African-American music. “Musical figures signify by commenting on other musical figures, on themselves, on performances of other music, and other performances of the same piece in completely new works of music.”²⁵ Jazz music in and outside of ring performances have been

improvised musical phrases in jazz, blues, ragtime and gospel where “call and response” is deployed for commenting on the master trope and secondary tropes in narratives and music. Floyd notes that Louis Armstrong, for example, became an expert at signifying in music with jazz riffing and improvisations. These elements all have roots in the music that the diverse African groups birthed in Congo Square.

In her book *Congo Square: African Roots in New Orleans*,²⁸ Freddi Williams Evans describes Congo Square as elevated land along the bayou where more than thirty Native American nations, such as Quinipissa, Acolapissa, and Houma, held celebrations such as the corn feast before the arrival of Europeans. “Native Americans “considered the area of Congo Square to be holy ground.”²⁸ Evans explicates the double nature of Congo Square during the slavery era as a site for dance, music, political activity, and commerce and a site of terror where public beatings and executions were carried out. She describes the African derived instruments that were used in performances there, including “objects from nature like shells and those that were otherwise useless...Singers who encircled the dancers shook gourds filled with seeds, grains, or pebbles, and musicians beat ox, horse, or cow bones together as well as on barrels.”²⁸ Some people wore nails and other objects that jingled and rattled when they moved, a common practice in African ritual performance. The slaves danced and sang songs encoded with African words, performances that casual outside observers mistook as haphazard and disordered, reinforcing “the falsehood that [the slaves] had no history.” Congo Square, on the edge of the city, attracted varied groups of people who came as vendors, dancers, singers, drummers, and spectators. Theater scholar Joseph Roach wrote of the space, “vortices of behavior tend to occupy liminal ground.”²⁹ From the many names of the site, *fête du blé* (Indian corn feast,) Place des Nègres, Place du Cirque or Place Congo, the site has attracted diverse interests where

differing appropriations and intersections birthed new expressions. Roach explains that “For a time voodoo rites were practiced there, until they were driven further underground.”²⁹ As the Africans brought their musical traditions, they also injected their religious worldviews.

In *Jazz Religion, the Second Line and Black New Orleans*, Richard Brent Turner explores the historical roots of jazz and indigenous religion in “second line” performances in New Orleans.³⁰ The second line is a tradition in brass band parades in New Orleans. The “main line” or “first line” is the front section of the parade, often comprising the members of a social club with an official parading permit as well as a brass band. Those who follow the band just to enjoy the music are called the “second line.” The second line’s traditional style of dance, in which participants walk and sometimes twirl a parasol or handkerchief in the air, improvising steps as the spirit moves them, is called “second lining.”

Turner analyzes the relationship between past and present communities and embodied practices that are not always “visible.” In what he calls “second-line culture,” Turner contends that blacks in New Orleans had African spiritual connections that interacted with Christianity. These interactions, played out at jazz funerals, and initiations to secret societies and clubs, are mostly unknown to outsiders and mainstream culture. Turner locates Congo Square as the site for the creation and the continuation of these African derived practices. Like the ring shout of the Sea Islands, the second line consists of similar steps but through a straightened line, usually performed after a funeral without a body. Some believe that the second line, such as those seen after funerals, started in Congo Square but adapted to the processional nature of a funeral. These performances have also been associated with less public events held by private and benevolent societies. The performances are a source of pride for the members, and encouraged a high caliber of musicianship on the part of players who also performed in other organizations such as

bands. Second line performances with propulsive rhythmic accompaniment attract dancers to join in from the crowds along the way. Through these performances, Turner writes, “Black New Orleanians re-create ‘flashes’ of memories, rhythms and rituals that evoke the spirit world of the African Diaspora.”³⁰ From the second line culture of jazz funerals, street parades, and Mardi Gras Indians, intersections of new music emerged.

Turner draws upon the research of Gwendolyn Midlo Hall and Zora Neale Hurston, who from the 1920s studied Vodou, as a foundation for understanding the various ethnicities that comprised the early African American population of New Orleans. He observes that slaves from Senegambia and the Kongo had a large impact on religion, music, and dance in New Orleans. He also sheds light on the practice of torture for public spectacle that the slave owners practiced on the enslaved. These actions occurred when “slave owners sent their slaves to the New Orleans police jail on Chartres Street to be tortured in public spectacles.”³⁰

The arrival of substantial numbers of Haitian immigrants after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 increased the black French-speaking population, a community that resisted Americanization. Haitian immigrants helped to influence the practice of Voodoo in New Orleans. Marie Laveau was one of the main practitioners in New Orleans, and her work extended to prisoners, people suffering from yellow fever, and Choctaw Native American women. “She was able to penetrate the boundaries of race, class, color, gender, and religion to establish a profound African spiritual presence in New Orleans.”³⁰ Turner draws connections between New Orleans and Haiti by comparing the Mardi Gras Indians with their elaborate costumes of feathers and sequins with the sequin artists of Haiti, who make banners and flags that share the same African derived aesthetic of display and visual power. He describes the emergence of the first Mardi Gras Indians who appeared in the late 1800s.

Citing Robert Farris Thompson's analysis of elaborate feathered costumes in *Flash of the Spirit*, Turner draws connections among aesthetic traditions in New Orleans, Haiti, and Central Africa. ³¹ Sequins used in Haiti signify the beauty of the spirits and are used to signify vèvè; a religious symbol derived from the traditions of the Kongo people of central Africa. In New Orleans, a scout carries a flag ahead of the Black Indian chief. Turner believes that the Ra Ra bands of Haiti and second line band performances are similar as they both passed through neighborhoods, stopping at important crossroads to gather participants. Drawing upon the occurrences in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, Turner contends that second line culture played a part in the healing during the aftermath. With the dramatic damage of the hurricane, many second line performers left the city for a while, but have slowly returned. The jazz funeral continues to act as a major cultural marker in New Orleans, which displays the "double consciousness" that manifests through other mediums. With the migration and disbursement from New Orleans, members of the city carried with them cultural markers that have maintained over time in New Orleans.

Turner argues that at the beginning of the period of Jim Crow, when the new American regime eliminated the old three-tier racial classification system of Blacks, Creoles of color, and Whites, the city of New Orleans became a two-tier system where "downtown Francophone Catholic Creoles of Color and uptown Protestant African Americans were grouped together, classified as Negroes, and segregated from whites."³⁰ This, he contends, was a major influence in the emergence of jazz. Classically trained African American musicians, mainly from the Creole community, and uptown musicians who had been brought up with the blues and spirituals began to play together more than in earlier periods, and their styles blended. Now mutually sequestered and restricted from entering certain White-controlled spaces, uptown and downtown

musicians created new musical expressions. Musicians like Louis Armstrong came out of the brass band traditions of uptown New Orleans and Mahalia Jackson, also from uptown, rose from the Gospel heritage, while the great jazz saxophonist and clarinetist Sidney Bechet is an example of an influential Creole Musician. As the sequestered demands of Jim Crow forced African Americans to migrate, musicians performed what they had rehearsed and recapitulated in places like New Orleans in new homes such as Detroit, Chicago, and New York.

Music in the Great Migration

At the end of the nineteenth century, when southern states enacted repressive Jim Crow laws and former slaves were not assured of their safety, they began migrating to cities in the North. Later, a second wave of Blacks moved to urban areas in the north for economic gain. By the mid-1920s an insect called the Boll Weevil had invaded the American South and devastated the cotton industry and the livelihood of many southerners. For these and other reasons, the North held the promise of a better life, and Blacks left rural areas en masse, bringing with them their customs and traditions. This wave of migration was the first time that many of the former slaves had lived outside of their formerly sequestered spaces, and the resulting cultural interactions led to the creation of new forms of music. Around the turn of the century, Ragtime, a type of music that incorporated syncopations and bits and pieces of other forms of music like the marches of John Phillip Sousa (1854-1932), had become one of the popular musical forms of the day. At this time, access to printed music became more possible. With his access came standardized music. Music that had been performed in the sequestered spaces was now available to be re-presented by masses of people. Hymnals and written music were published which allowed music to be codified and standardized. As millions of African Americans left the South, they discovered that in the North, many states had adopted Jim Crow laws and they were still

relegated to sequestered spaces. Blacks continued to patronize their own clubs, and African American churchgoers still gathered in segregated churches, encouraging the maintenance of traditions at the same time as new forms were emerging.

The Great Migration of millions of black people from southern states to northern and western states, between 1915 and 1970, marked a third massive movement, what Ira Berlin calls the third migration. The former slaves in the South left to escape the rise of the vicious Jim Crow state where Whites completed lynchings, castrations, amputations, and mutilations and the legal system supported these inhumane practices. When Blacks succeeded in migrating to the North, they often faced harsh conditions, as Whites did not want them in their communities. Many of the black people settled into communities where they knew people from the plantations from where they had migrated. In Isabel Wilkerson's exhaustive study of the migrations, she treats the relocating Blacks as other immigrant groups. She notes:

The participants bore the marks of immigrant behavior. They plotted the course to places in the north and west that had some connection to the homes of origin. They created colonies in the villages they came from, imported the food and folkways of the old country, and built their lives around the people in churches they knew from back home. They took work the people already had considered beneath them. They doubled up and took in roomers to make ends meet. They tried to instill in their children the values of the old country while pressing them to succeed by the standards of the new world they were in.³²

The great African American artist Jacob Lawrence's "Migration Series" paintings vibrantly depict the passion, urgency and single-mindedness of hundreds of thousands of African American migrating to the North and the West to create better lives for themselves and their children. Lawrence used bright colors to show African Americans who carried suitcases filled with hopes and dreams, determined black people who had turned their backs on the violent past of the South. When they reached the North and the West, they learned different forms of un-

belonging which forced them into different versions of the sequestered spaces they had left behind.

In migrating out of the South, migrants took the culture of their homes and recreated within the sequestered spaces of the North what they already knew. Music continued as primary data marking the sequence of migration from Africa to America and helping the migrants recapitulate and rehearse the memes of their ancestors. Resettled into spaces of un-belonging, the music continued to hold the narrative that imagined home. While the music of home moved north and west, migrants intersected the music from other sequestered spaces and created new forms that repeated the primary data.

Mahalia Jackson, one of the first superstars of gospel music migrated north to Chicago in 1927. From New Orleans, she brought with her the mastery of the Negro spiritual that would transform in urban areas into Gospel Music. By the time of her death, she had become known as the “Queen of Gospel” and had become an international sensation. Louis Armstrong, also from New Orleans, had already brought his jazz style to wider audiences at a time when America was on the move. Artists like Mahalia Jackson and Louis Armstrong had formed their styles in New Orleans, where highly rehearsed musical patterns had formed and continued because of the brutal limitations of travel in the rural south. New Orleans, like the Sea Islands of Georgia and South Carolina, had been a fertile location for the creation of music that continues to shape black music in America. Within those early musical forms, rests the data for the “return to Africa” trope that still continues to circulate in African American music today. Within this early music, the remembered rhythms and tones are repeated, reinvented and communicated throughout the Black Atlantic.

In the film *Return to Gorée*, Youssou N'Dour travels to New York City to enroll a young African-American jazz songstress and a biracial European harmonica player.¹ Whereas the other musicians represent the foundational musical regions of the southeastern states and Louisiana, these two young singers represent new intersections that have created new forms of music. In a sense they are musical offspring of the Great Migrations. By 2007, when the film was produced, jazz music had become an American art form that symbolized the very intersections that N'Dour wanted to call back to the Door of No Return, whence, he claimed, the rhythms of Africa had scattered. Just as he had the blessings for the journey from one of the elders from Gorée Island, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye, he also sought the permission of an elder from America, Amiri Baraka, who had helped to galvanize the black arts movement of the 1960s. Amiri Baraka has argued that black music in America has always had to “survive, expand, reorganize, continue, and express itself, as the fragile property of a powerless and oppressed people.”⁴ It was Baraka who had called those who would mediate between the space of sorrow and transcendence, the Blues People.

Black music in America has always vacillated between the contextual worlds of spiritual, political, economic and social. Making music was often communal, inclusive and participatory. Because of the importance of ancestors in African and African American epistemologies, this inclusivity has reached back to those who came before. To choose just one example of a group of musicians who have made this inclusivity a central part of their practice, the Sounds of Blackness's 1991 CD, *Evolution of Gospel*,³³ chronicles black music in America by tracing the history, starting with rhythm and blues and gospel music. Their signifying and telling takes the form of drumming, songs, poetry, and political commentary. They also chronicle the development of early black music with their 1994 *Africa to America* musical compilation,³⁴

which includes African drums, work songs, spirituals, blues, gospel music, and rhythm and blues songs. They have continued in the years since to seek connections between African American music and Africa.

According to Ira Berlin, by the mid-twentieth-century, “the South had gone north.”³ Based on the messages of the songs that the slaves had rehearsed, they believed that one day they would get to the Promised Land. As Wolfgang Muthspiel, the guitarist from *Return to Gorée* stated, “*it’s in the music, it’s in the music.*”¹ In music, the slaves had encoded movements upward and onward, incorporating “references to roads and rivers, chariots and ships, and eventually trains... They crossed rivers, forded streams, and flew ‘all over God’s heab’n.”³ The music affirmed that migration had become a part of their narrative in America, where they would eventually arrive at a place of belonging. William H. Wiggins notes that African American spirituals had been filled with spatial metaphors of “lateral, upward or downward movement.”³⁵ He posits that the spirituals provided a means to respond to racial oppression, using metaphors of movement. The Great Migration, where millions of African Americans responded to the promise of transcendence by moving to the Promised Land, only relocated the suffering into the North, where spirituals turned into gospel music, and the blues turned into rhythm and blues.

By the end of the Jim Crow Era, African American music still contained the contradiction of sorrow and transcendence, but the movement towards belonging had turned inwards. James Cone has written that “unlike the spirituals, the hope of the blues is not located in the concept of Heaven. ‘One cannot continually ride in chariots to God when the impact of slavery is so ever present and real.’ The blues ground black hope firmly in history and do not plead for life after death.”³⁶ The music had transformed into a message of belonging through self-reliance and self-respect. By mid-century, the blues were an evolving message of survival

under extreme oppression. As Cone argues, “home would be the unrestricted affirmation of self and the will to protect itself from those who would destroy self.”³⁶

The Dialectic of Sorrow and Transcendence

Since the beginning, African American culture had contained recapitulated songs, dances, myths, and narratives that carried “double consciousness” tropes of sorrow and simultaneously messages of freedom, peace and home. Often, these tropes required “crossing over.” Songs such as “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” “Take My Hand, Precious Lord,” “Wade in Da Water,” and “Deep River,” all tell of a promised land different from the history of Africans in America that has been marked by slavery, Jim Crow, economic disenfranchisement, voter suppressions, racial profiling, and legal inequities. Within music, the dialectic of un-belonging and belonging has vacillated, and the promise of home, embedded in both sacred and secular spirituals, takes us to the water.

Gorée Island, at the edge of the water, serves as the portal of the return “home,” where the “Door of No Return” has been reversed and pilgrims enter into the liminal space of transcendence that the slaves first encoded in the music. No visual markers or maps exist with directions to “go home.” However, the mnemonic markings imbued in music calls the seeker to look towards Africa, to look upward and to look within. New Orleans and the Sea Islands served as primary sites where elements of African music were refashioned into the foundations of African American musical forms. In sequestered locations, slaves recapitulated these new forms and at the same time, encoded them with multiple layers of meaning that would continue to circulate over time. Fragments of these elements continue to permeate African American music. These shards serve as pieces of memories calling the seeker back home or to sites of memory

such as Gorée Island. Music, religion, and myth have been inextricably linked in Black Atlantic culture.

Many scholars and artists have written about the “double consciousness” that is encoded in African American music. According to James Cone, “most blacks do not acknowledge these dualisms. They believe that reality is one. The spirituals and the blues record black people’s feelings—their hopes and disappointments, the dreams and nightmares.”³⁶ These songs express the reality of black life and what one has to do to survive. Angela Davis said, “blues music performs a magical – or aesthetic – exorcism of the blues, those things that lead to unhappiness and despair.”³⁷ The blues reveal an acknowledgement of the troubles and glimmers of relief. Blues do not function without the dialectic of sorrow and transcendence. Ralph Ellison declared that “the blues speak to us simultaneously of the tragic and the comic aspects of the human condition and express a profound sense of life shared by many Negro Americans precisely because their lives have combined these modes.”³⁸ He reminds us that the blues have helped African Americans to survive and keep courage.

Black bodies could not enter the doors of many public establishments. In the beginning of the 20th Century, blacks created Ragtime music from the bricolage of hand-me-down instruments formulated with scraps of classical music, mixed with the blues that had carried over from Africa and the slave days. In many corners of the South, while most of the blacks had been freed, many were still tied down to servitude through sharecropping. Now, debt owned the former slaves. Other former slaves were strapped to the legacy of the illegality of property ownership by Blacks. Slavery had not ended after the Emancipation Proclamation, only new forms of enslavement such as the prison lease program and Jim Crow had enlivened. Ragtime grew into Jazz and America started catching on. America had closed the door to blacks, but in

the shadows, blacks had created spots for mixing new forms of music. White America would not accept black bodies through the front doors, but only through the back door and onstage. On the streets, black bodies were surveilled and reviled, but through the back stage door entrance, they were worshipped and revered. This appropriation of Jazz pushed new forms of resistance with harder, cooler styles. A new and different hegemony formed. The artist trickster had made his way from the shadows of Jim Crow into the halls of American popular culture. By the 1950s and 60s, the Civil Rights Movement pushed marginalized Blacks out of the shadows and into the streets. Rhythm and Blues, like the spirituals of the slave days and the counter rhythms of jazz called in 1965 for people to get ready, “There’s a train a coming.” In 1965, America was in a war with Vietnam, Blacks had just received the right to vote with the Voting Rights Acts, and the sexual revolution was about to explode. Although not apparent to many consumers, the tactic of the R&B movement mobilized millions to the streets. “Calling out around the world,” and similar anthems activated a message that could not be seen or heard by the overseer. However, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy in 1968 shot a hole into the heart of America. Like the public beatings of the slaves had sent a message to the other slaves who might have considered revolt, America was told to go to sleep, to become alienated from others and themselves.

Off the streets after 1968 but still encoded as less than, watched, owned and not free, the Civil Rights Movement called forth artists like The Last Poets. This group set the stage for early rappers who made way for the Hip-Hop Movement. The tableau of Black America in the late 60s evoked the luminous hope of the dreams that King and Kennedy espoused. At the same time, it also showed the dream deferred. The Last Poets entered the stage with words of rhythm, rhyme, pride and protest. As spirituals and jazz had done before, a new art form was emerging

from the shadows.

By the mid-80s, America had moved into the “colorblind” Reagan Era. The resistance act of spoken-word exploded onto the words stage with artists who had been asked to erase their identity by those who professed to “see no color.” Rap soon moved into the mainstream like the other resistance forms before. Rap became Hip-Hop, used as a tool by the hegemonic order to advance consumerism and maintain power. Spoken-word and rap, which started out as tactics in poor communities to resist the hegemonic order, soon became a mass-mediated arm of that order; Black rappers became encoded as hypersexual and troubled individuals.

Even within the context of increased commercialization, black music in America continues to maintain the melancholic/transcendent code from earlier epochs. For example, sampling within the hip-hop genre often utilizes fragments of musical phrases that bring forth mnemonic markings. These samplings or phrases can derive from any genre of music including spirituals, jazz and R&B music. Another example of the melancholic/transcendence code exists in house music, which commonly incorporates gospel music or spirituals arranged to dance music rhythms. The code of transcendence, in the context of existential existence, forms the essence of black music within the racial formation of the United States.

Through all the manifestations of black music, these codes of transcendence have served as the score for the rehearsal and performance of transformation. In each epoch, music has enlivened the relationship within the context in which African Americans have existed. These animations have existed in rapport with the narrative, the church, and economics. All along, music has commented on and contextualized Black life in America. Beginning with the original elements of performance style, content, and function, grounded in African traditions, and recapitulated on sequestered plantations and then in segregated and closed-off spaces all over

America during Jim Crow, African Americans rehearsed their performances of freedom, triumph, transcendence, equality, and transformation.

Interview: Training

In Richard Schechner's model of the stages of performance, he proposes that "training is where known skills are transmitted... fundamentally a repetition of whatever it is the training is training for."³⁹ Training occurs when performers need skills to carry out the final performance.

This interviewee grew up in a household where her parents demonstrated and created an environment for education and achievement. Since the end of the nineteenth century, her family had received college education. Her mother had traveled to Africa after graduating from college to visit various capital cities well before many African Americans could afford to travel to the continent. The interviewee worked in the documentary film industry. On her first African assignment, she traveled to the humanitarian camps in the Congo after the Rwandan Genocide.

What training and preparation did you receive in your formative years that made you know that you would travel to Africa?

So my training and background as a child I'm very proud of the fact both of my parents very educated, both were college-educated, but the thing that really influenced me was that my father was the valet for Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955) and got his way through college that way. And then she wrote him a letter of recommendation to go to Morehouse College and then he became a student of W. E. B. Dubois, so I have some of his college papers with Dubois's name on them and his grades which were A's. My father was brilliant and my mother the same. I'm very proud of the fact that not only did my mother get a college education but she went on to Columbia University to get a Masters degree from the College of Education there. Both of her parents were college graduates.

So I come from this long line of people who were educated. They saw education as a necessity for being an integral part of society and who were always proud of black people, always proud of our heritage and I felt that I was always personally connected to black people because of my people, I felt connected to Dubois and Mary McLeod Bethune and my mother's father going to Booker T. Washington's school. These figures that we talk about now were always intimately connected to my people so, I have always been very proud of that and always wanted to learn more and always knowing that Africa was a place where there was lots of

mystery, that there was lots of knowledge, that somehow we were convinced as people that we were not worth very much that we were savages, but we have other versions of that story. So there was always a part of me that was very interested in going to Africa and as a matter of fact my mother toured to several African nations. After college with her friends she toured the capitals. Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Mali, Ghana, and Nigeria.

So I knew that one day that I would probably get to the continent but I didn't quite realize how and then I was working as a producer for the general Board of global ministry. They do missionary work around the globe, particularly in Africa. They wanted me to write, produce on the AIDS crisis. My first trip my first trip was Rwanda after the genocide. They wanted me to go to refugee sites in Zaire to see what was needed because the organizations that come in are usually they nongovernmental agencies who stayed behind. So I was paid to go in with. Later I was sent back to go and see how the money was spent. So those were two opportunities where I did get to go to the heart of the continent in Zaire and also to Rwanda and Burundi to see what it was like. So, that was an eye-opening experience. When we first landed it was at night so I didn't see much but I felt, since Africa. Very tired was I so I didn't see much but I did feel Africa and I woke up that morning and my goodness, what a vibrant rich feeling in the air. That was my first trip then.

When did you first go to Gorée Island?

I was invited to go to do a documentary on AIDS. I was invited to go to Senegal because Senegal had a low infection rate I was asked to do a story about Africa and AIDS with a positive twist, not the negative stuff that you hear about. So, we did a piece about a Senegalese family we did a piece about a woman with AIDS, whose husband had died of AIDS and she had not told her family that she had AIDS. We encouraged her to tell her family. And so, that was an opportunity for me to get to Gorée Island.

Of course it was very well known and I so as part of being there I travel to Gorée Island and had a lot of anticipation and expectation. So I went there. The day that I went the whole area was just swarming with a lot of people. It turned me off. Really that let me let me, the door to nowhere, that everyone talked about and I kept waiting for you to hit me it didn't do it but I didn't think that this was a very special place. I think had it been empty I would have connected, I would've had that feeling of being in a historical place, that we give to that place but it doesn't and I was kind of surprised. I thought well, what is it about me that I'm not connecting as much as I thought I would. And I thought about it I'm not sure of any conclusion that I came up with but I do know that I was disappointed in myself for not feeling a connection in that space.

However, walking around Gorée Island and I saw all the art. I was taken to a spot, in a home actually of an artist who lives on Gorée Island, and had a lot of works of art. I thought, I'm not leaving here until I select a piece of art. I'm going

to walk around until I feel one particular piece of art that I can purchase. They are the same puzzled that I was taking so much time. I think a lot of tourists just come there and quickly snatch up something but I walked for quite some time instead in front of his works so I could get a connection and there was a piece and I felt very connected to and that was the one I selected and it's hanging in my dining area. So, I do feel that I connected to Gorée Island, not necessarily to a particular spot that one thinks but it was certainly significant being in that space that time. I was certainly glad that I did it and of course my mother had been there years ago, decades ago.

Did you compare experiences?

We really didn't talk that much about I didn't really talk about it. I didn't really talk about it very much with her but she did remember but she did remember Senegal as the place where women wore beautiful clothes. It was very touching to see people, so proud of their culture and their country and that's what I take back. And, I want to say one of the things that that stands out.. What I think that my pride in being black comes from my father because my father wanted to be a, not a social worker, but his major was sociology and history and so he got me into W. E. B. DuBois. He made me make a connection. And I was very young. So, it's just been with me for a long, long, long time.

Tell me more about the woman who was HIV-positive.

We contacted someone who was HIV-positive, had two daughters. Her husband had already died. We connected her with some Senegalese doctors who were experts. We introduced her to them with the hope that she would learn from them the philosophy that you don't wait to the last moment to share this information but that you prepare your family for it to really deal with it. So, our film called Ngoni's Story, Tale of Orphans, was about meeting this family and introducing this woman, we went away for three months and came back to see if there've been any admission, And any progress. There wasn't. We waited and went back three months later because things happen slowly in Africa. Originally the producer said let's find an African family and live with them a few months to see how this situation goes. I said, you know, after going over and looking very carefully, I said this is not like reality television. Where we put people in the house and everything comes together. An African households things go very slowly and would like 12 CNA dramatic developments of the story for at least several months so we might as well just introduce her to the doctors, go away, let them do their thing, come back and see if she learned anything and she didn't.

She decided over the course of nine months that she wasn't going to tell them so it was, as they say, no dramatic art to the film. It was a reality, with African reality because the mother was thinking I don't want to tell my daughter. I will tell her when the time is right. The film ends with the mothers saying I will tell her someday. Ironically, her oldest daughter, at a young age, was not HIV-positive, passed away because of a heart illness. These kinds of film makes you look at the

reality. It doesn't always address the points you'd like it to make but it's a true story of what happens.

And after training and preparing to go to Africa, what is your overall reflection?

I saw a lot and felt a lot in those refugee camps. That I will never forget, emotionally. I don't really talk about but, when it brought to mind was when I was going to get my shots for Africa and the people in the office were asking, "Where are you going?" And, I said "I'm going to Africa." They said, "Oh my goodness." I said "No, those people in the camps are so full of hope. You can't imagine what they've been through and how much they love life, how much they are looking forward to it, at least the children, orphaned children. They're just kids. They had been through horrendous things. It was a joy for me to be a part of that process of sharing what was going on in the camps." So, to some extent, it was existential in that a connection of joy and life and fulfillment to relive over and over again, even though the narrative changes when people see Africa as one thing. And it's so complex, so huge, but it is, it really is mother Africa because it's so much to it and so encompassing, the birthing of all of who we are about ideas and the problems in our issues, you know, it's almost like a dysfunctional family, everyone's dysfunctional at some point but it's still family and is there and you can't get away from it. So, to some extent I saw some connections, I felt it. I and I don't want to sound cold but when I say I've moved on, I just mean that it's something that's not in the forefront of my consciousness but I take a moment to think back and I know deeply, it's there, absolutely.

MEMOIR: FROM BELONGING TO UN-BELONGING

In her book of essays, *Belonging*, bell hooks examines the concept of interracial

"invisibility" within the process of mediating power and survival. She writes:

In white supremacist society, white people can "safely" imagine that they are invisible to black people since the power they have historically asserted, and even now collectively assert over black people, accorded them the right to control black gaze. As fantastic as it may seem, racist white people find it easy to imagine that black people cannot see them if within their desire they do not want to be seen by the darker other.⁴⁰

hooks asserts that also in that dynamic of oppression, black people "assumed the mantle of invisibility" in order to be less threatening. Blacks could be punished for simply looking and observing the actions of Whites. During slavery, slaves learned how to simply "erase all traces

of their subjectivity.” In other words, they looked down and they obfuscated contact. They concealed any evidence that they knew the vicious deeds of their masters.

In the years of racial apartheid after slavery, the game of obscuring the realities of oppression continued. To acknowledge injustices in the time of Jim Crow could mean facing the possibility of being lynched. Workers could lose their jobs. Becoming invisible insured survival. However, becoming invisible also always means un-belonging and it means becoming hurt. As Ralph Ellison said in *The Invisible Man*:

I have been hurt to the point of abysmal pain, hurt to the point of invisibility
And I defend because in spite of all I find that I love. In order to get some of it
down I have to love. I sell you no phony forgiveness, I'm a desperate man – but
too much of your life will be lost, its meaning lost, unless you approach it through
division. So I denounce and I defend and I hate and I love.⁴¹

Invisibility, living under the cloud of the veil, not only hurts the ones underneath the fog, but it also harms the world because the world never knows the true man and what he came to bear.

African American ancestors gave all that they had. Sometimes, that was not enough. The job of finding the way to bear the gifts of the ancestors lies in each new generation.

My mother had always taken work very seriously. One of my earliest memories of her was the day I went with her to pick cotton. Someone had called and offered her an opportunity to work, so I picked alongside her. Like many other black women in the South, my mother worked as a maid in a white family's home until factory work opened up for blacks in the late sixties. In 1969, my mother began working in a clock factory. While my father was a professional, my mother's work really helped the family to succeed. With her work, we started having nicer clothes. While working at the clock factory, my mother's unionized job provided a scholarship for one of my sisters to attend college in Massachusetts at Mt. Holyoke College. Both my parents never stopped the children from dreaming. Finally, it seemed as if our family could succeed.

By the late 1970s, my father had sold his drugstore in Savannah and had started working as a pharmacist in Middle Georgia. With fewer commitments, he traveled home every Wednesday and Saturday, since he was closer. He loved to come home and work our large vegetable garden. My mother had stopped working at the clock factory and she began working in a chicken poultry. Every morning, she rose before everyone else and started the task of picking up other women from the neighborhood who also worked at the poultry. My mother was the carpool driver.

On the very cold Georgia mornings, she defrosted the car and drove 30 miles with the other women to Athens, Georgia, the next big town. Missing a day of work was never an option for my mother. Since I could remember, my mother always took work very seriously to give to her children.

In high school, my sister and I always had a nice car to drive to school. My junior year of high school, I had noticed an advertisement for a music camp in California. I asked my mother if I could go. She simply said, "Call the airlines and see how much the tickets are." Because a sister and a brother now lived in California, I convinced her that I could easily navigate getting to the university. To this day, I am still amazed that she would say yes to such a big dream. After my first experience in California, I knew I wanted to return. The time at the University of the Pacific that summer made me realize how limited my experiences would be if I had decided to attend school in Georgia. I could hardly contain myself when I returned to Elberton for my senior year. I knew what the outside world had to offer.

My mother always supported every dream we brought to her. My mother's work allowed me to take private trombone lessons from the trombone professor at the University of Georgia. Each week, I drove one of the family's cars to Athens with my best friend, Roosevelt. I know that my mother sacrificed for the expensive lessons, but our parents believed in us. In those years, music had become my life. I played and the top bands at school. I had also discovered theater where I performed in several plays. Between music and theater, I had found a voice that I had not discovered in the real world.

St. Mary's Catholic Church had also become a place where I could express myself. I had started singing in our raggedy four-person choir on Sunday mornings. For midnight mass, the priest asked me to provide special music so I asked my best friend, Roosevelt, to accompany me. We received our first paychecks as musicians. The priest had given me a key to the church. St. Mary's Catholic Church, nestled in a white community next to downtown and I had access to come and go when we needed. Times were different in 1979. I can't imagine two seventeen-year-old black boys entering a white church on the white side of town. Somehow, it seems that America lost its way.

When the time came to apply to college, I only considered the University of the Pacific. My mother's extra income had helped so much as one sister was completing medical school at Duke medical school. She became the first black female doctor in our county in 1979. Two other sisters were studying chemistry at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. So, my parents supported me all the way when I wanted to study in California. At UOP, I had decided that I would hide in the crowds, just as I had always done in my life in that little town in Georgia. However, the university had different plans for me. I know I had hoped to have great experiences in college but I certainly did not know how those experiences would manifest.

At UOP, before I knew it, I was playing trombone in the top musical ensembles and I singing in the top choirs. I toured the West Coast with these ensembles with the university. With private lessons and these performances, trombone consumed me that first year. I also participated in theater productions as an actor and singer. In the theater department, I was musical director for two big musicals during my time at UOP. I sang solo with the jazz band and I was a classical musical announcer for the morning radio program called "Andante After Dawn." I never sought out any particular experiences at the university but it seemed that everywhere I went, the dean of the conservatory, one of the vice-presidents and even the president of the university asked me to do something. Looking back, now I think that perhaps they saw a scared country boy from Georgia and they wanted to give me an opportunity.

Playing music, you're forced to listen without regard to some other factors that divide us in life such as race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or nationality. The most important factor in basic making music is listening and making music. For the first time in my life, I thought I was living the dream of an integrated society where people just got along, where people were interested in each other's path. I learned how to socialize and learned about lots of different kinds of people. We made music together and we discovered wild adventures around the campus.

On most Sunday mornings, I took on singing jobs at several churches. In addition to working in the library, people were paying me to sing. On Sunday evenings I was the cantor at the campus Catholic mass. IN the ivy covered, beautifully stained glass Morris Chapel, I led the congregation in song, accompanied by a violin, guitar, clarinet, flute and cello. In 1980, I noticed a frightening shift in my experiences. The music librarian had asked me to perform in a backup band for a church service somewhere around Stockton. One Sunday afternoon we gathered at the music library and all crammed into a van. Like other church jobs, I thought we would be accompanying at a local church. However, once in the van we rode for a couple of hours. Inside the fundamentalist church, I witnessed something that I had never seen before, an American flag. Jimmy Carter was still president and the country was in the midst of the Iran Hostage Crisis. The message of the sermon was filled with all praise to Ronald Reagan. I was horrified.

From that moment on, I began to notice the marriage of religion right wing politics. For me, this is the moment when I noticed the language of the colorblind society. While Jimmy Carter lost the election that year, my experiences at the university remained very positive. By the last year at UOP, I had become the president of the Conservatory of music and I delivered the commencement speech for our class where I talked about the potential for using music to make a positive difference in the world. I know my mother was very proud of me. For graduation, she drove out to California with a brand new car for me. I felt that I was then ready for something bigger and more exciting than Stockton, California.

In Los Angeles I completed a masters degree in theater at California State University at Los Angeles. I did plays all around town. "Metal of Honor Rag," "Slow Dance on the Killing Ground," and "Sweeney Todd." I had one of the best times of my life performing as Hud in "Hair." During the day I was teaching school and at night I was performing in plays. I ran and completed six marathons around the country. I was determined. I started my second Masters degree in film producing at UCLA. I was making new friends and developing new relationships. I thought I was on fire. I knew that at any moment, my life would take off. I knew that my teaching would only be a passing phase. I felt I was doing well in the world. I had no idea how my life would turn downward.

As I left the convenience store and got into my car, I could feel their eyes following my every move. I got into the car and drove off and immediately noticed the flashing lights behind me. The police officers asked me to get out of the car and then shoved me onto the hood of the car. Placing handcuffs on to my wrist, I did the only thing that I knew how to do. I went numb. I made myself invisible. In my mind, I just knew the police officers were making a mistake. How could they be arresting me? I was a good person. I was working in inner city schools. I was teaching in the theater department at California State University at Dominguez Hills. I was getting ready to succeed. Many days on my off-track time from my elementary teaching work, I had to become one of the first drivers for Project Angel Food, delivering food to homebound people with AIDS. Didn't they know who I was? Didn't they know that my parents had raised me to be a law abiding citizen and that my parents had sacrificed everything so that I could be a gift to the world? Didn't they know that I had overcome a lot to be someone who could make a positive difference in the world?

A year before, I had gotten a speeding ticket for going 65 mph in a 55 mph zone. Driving back from Orange County after performing in the play, "Slow Dance on the Killing Ground," I was trying to get home to get a good night sleep before teaching the next morning. As a struggling actor, I knew that I would eventually pay the ticket but one year later, I have not and I was going to jail. In my naïveté, at the height of the gang problems in Los Angeles, I thought that the LAPD would be looking for murders and drug dealers. The experience would not have been so bad had it not been for the one determined officer. One of the officers talked reasonably to me. He asked me if I had forgotten to pay the ticket. Humiliated and with tears rolling down my face, I explained that I had.

I will never forget his beady eyes of the other officer as he looked into the rearview mirror and declared, "We've been looking for you, boy. You know that?" It was as if he had reached into the deepest part of his being to tell me that he hated me. Growing up in Georgia, I had never been called a "nigger" but in Georgia, "boy was another word for the n-word. The n-word was not a common word in Georgia when I was growing up. Once, while playing in the band at a big even on the town square, I overheard two white men refer to Mr. Rev. Heard, the nice old preacher who lived across the street at Fred Sanford. Mr. Rev. Heard had been selected as an honorary citizen. One of the white men asked,

“Who is that Fred Sanford sitting up on the stage?” Fred Sanford, a 1970s sitcom character was the closest I had come to hearing a white person in Elberton, Georgia refer negatively to a black person. Now, in Los Angeles, California, I was called a boy. The officer’s cackling laugh after his declaration defined his loathing of me. Of the many times we had been stopped in Georgia when I was a little boy, never had a police officer who cackled and loathed me with so much contempt. It felt as if it stripped me of all of my clothing. Growing up in Georgia, you develop a sixth sense to recognize that kind of hatred. With my hands behind my back and handcuffed in the back of the police car, I imagined every person that I knew was peering into the window and wondering what awful thing and I done. Inside the police station they chained me to a bench facing the wall. After a while, they escorted me to my to make my one phone call.

As I waited to call my sister, they had brought two young Latino men. They stripped one of the men naked to probe his cavities. In that moment, I feel grateful that they had not attempted to strip me of my dignity in the same manner. They escorted me into a darkened cell filled with seven other men. The attending officer barked at me that someone had taken my blanket and mattress and I would have to wake him up to get it. I tried to fall asleep on the cold concrete floor of the West LA Station but I couldn't so I shivered through the night until my sister would arrive the next morning. That morning, I was still numb from the original shock of the arrest.

At home, I immediately called my mother in Georgia, seeking some kind of comfort. My mother said to me, “Who do you think you are?” I told her that I would have to go and I quietly hung up the phone. I didn't talk to her for a whole year after that. She had always been understanding of me. Each week, I would call her and feel the reassurance that someone could love me so much, but not after that morning. For the rest of her life, she never looked at me the same way. I know she was disappointed in me. Certainly she loved me but things were different. She had taught me to be observant of the world around me, and I had slipped up. She had trusted me by allowing me to drive Athens and Atlanta. She never restricted me and now I had not paid attention. My mother had given everything so that I would be a gift to the world.

For the next few years, I walked around in a fog. I made poor choices. I ruined my opportunities for university teaching at Dominquez Hills and I quit my elementary teaching. I dropped out of film. For the next several years I struggled. I was always looking over my shoulders for police officers. My heart raced when I drove. My eyes became keenly developed at spotting the black and white LAPD patrol cars. Spotting a police cruise, I would turn off into directions I had never intended to drive. I was lost and I knew I did not belong. For the next several years, I dodged life under the fog of un-belonging.

- 1 Borgeaud, Pierre Y., 'Return to Gorée', (France: Axion Films, 2007).
- 2 Eltis, David, 'Electronic Slave Trade Database', (Emory University).
- 3 Berlin, Ira, *The Making of African America : The Four Great Migrations* (New York: Viking, 2010), p. 304 p.
- 4 Baraka, Imamu Amiri, *Blues People : Negro Music in White America* (New York: Perennial, 2002), pp. xii, 244 p.
- 5 Baptist, Edward E., *The Half Has Never Been Told : Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (2014), pp. xxvii, 498 pages.
- 6 Palmié, Stephan, *Wizards and Scientists : Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition* (Durham, [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2002), pp. xi, 399 p.
- 7 Foner, Eric, *Reconstruction : America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. 1st Perennial Classics edn, *New American Nation Series* (New York: Perennial Classics, 2002), pp. xxv, 690 p., 16 p. of plates.
- 8 Waterman, Christopher Alan, *Jùjú : A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music, Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. xii, 277 p., 14 p. of plates.
- 9 Toepka, Alvaro, 'The Language You Cry In', (United States/Sierre Leone/Spain: 1998), p. 52 minutes.
- 10 Seiglie, Sergio Leyva, 'They Are We', (Vimeo, 2013).
- 11 Holloway, Joseph E., *Africanisms in American Culture, Blacks in the Diaspora* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), pp. ix, 436 p.
- 12 Waterman, Richard, *African Influence on the Music of the Americas* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1952).
- 13 ———, 'On Flogging a Dead Horse: Lessons Learned from the Africanisms Controversy', *Ethnomusicology, Published by University of Illinois Press*, 7 (1963), 83 - 87.

- 14 Chernoff, John Miller, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility : Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms*. Phoenix edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. xv, 261 p., 21 p. of plates.
- 15 Burnim, Mellonee V., and Portia K. Maultsby, *African American Music : An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. xxii, 707 p.
- 16 Ebron, Paulla A., *Performing Africa* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. xviii, 244 p.
- 17 Simmons, Martha J., and Frank A. Thomas, *Preaching with Sacred Fire : An Anthology of African American Sermons, 1750 to the Present*. 1st edn (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), pp. xxviii, 960 p.
- 18 Keyes, Cheryl Lynette, *Rap Music and Street Consciousness, Music in American Life* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), pp. xxv, 302 p.
- 19 Wilson, Olly, 'Black Music as an Art Form', *Black Music Research Journal*, 3 (1983), 1 - 22.
- 20 Du Bois, W. E. B., *The Souls of Black Folk / by W.E.B. Du Bois*. 1st Vintage Books/Library of America edition. edn (New York: Vintage Books/Library of America, 1990).
- 21 Pollitzer, William S., *The Gullah People and Their African Heritage* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), pp. xxiii, 298 p.
- 22 Floyd, Samuel A., Jr., 'Ring Shout! Literary Studies, Historical Studies, and Black Music Inquiry', *Black Music Research Journal*, 22 (2002), 49 - 70.
- 23 Gates, Henry Louis, *The Signifying Monkey : A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. xxvii, 290 p.
- 24 Duranti, Alessandro, *Linguistic Anthropology : A Reader, Blackwell Anthologies in Social and Cultural Anthropology* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), pp. ix, 493 p.

- 25 Floyd, Samuel A., *The Power of Black Music : Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 316 p.
- 26 'Macintosh County Shouters', www.macintoshcountyshouters.com.
- 27 Reagon, Bernice Johnson, *If You Don't Go, Don't Hinder Me : The African American Sacred Song Tradition, The Abraham Lincoln Lecture Series* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), p. 155 p.
- 28 Evans, Freddi Williams, *Congo Square : African Roots in New Orleans* (Lafayette, LA: University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press, 2011), pp. xiv, 209 p.
- 29 Roach, Joseph R., *Cities of the Dead : Circum-Atlantic Performance, The Social Foundations of Aesthetic Forms* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. xvi, 328 p.
- 30 Turner, Richard Brent, *Jazz Religion, the Second Line, and Black New Orleans* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), pp. xi, 182 p.
- 31 Thompson, Robert Farris, *Flash of the Spirit : African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy*. 1st Vintage Books edn (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), pp. xvii, 317 p.
- 32 Wilkerson, Isabel, *The Warmth of Other Suns : The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. 1st edn (New York: Random House, 2010), pp. x, 622 p.
- 33 Blackness, Sounds of, in *Evolution of Gospel* (Perspective Records, 1991).
- 34 Blackness, The Sounds of, in *Africa to America* (Perspective Records, 1994).
- 35 Wiggins, William H., *O Freedom! Afro American Emancipation Celebrations* (University of Tennessee Press, 1987).
- 36 Cone, James H., *The Spirituals and the Blues : An Interpretation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991), pp. ix, 141 p.
- 37 Davis, Angela Y., *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism : Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), pp. xx, 427 p.

- 38 Ellison, Ralph, *Shadow and Act* (New York, New York: Random House, 1964).
- 39 Schechner, Richard, *Between Theater & Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), pp. xiv, 342 p.
- 40 hooks, bell, *Belonging : A Culture of Place* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. viii, 230 p.
- 41 Ellison, Ralph, *Invisible Man* (New York: Random House, 1952), p. 429 p.

**Fourth Movement:
Performing Transformation
The Stage, the Script, the Producers, and the Casts**

This active slave house has been built in 1776 by the Dutch. The last slave house built on Gorée Island because the first one has been built by the Portuguese in 1536. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to set foot on this island in 1444. Gorée was the most important slave transit center in West Africa. The number in this house fluctuated between 150 and 200 human beings, men, women and children. Thirty meters long, eight meters wide. Three hundred to 400 slaves with a death rate of twenty-five to thirty percent. This corridor led towards what we call "the door to the journey of no return." Families were often separated and kept in different cells. The father went to Louisiana. The mother to Brazil or Cuba, the child to Haiti or the Antilles. The separation was absolute.

They never left this island with their African authentic name but only a number and registration. Upon arrival in America, they took the slave owners names, what they have today is what we called the borrowed name, like you...¹

The words of Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye continue to resonate inside the little slave house on Gorée Island as local tour guides recite their beloved griot's words. At the end of colonial rule in West Africa, and in the middle of the American civil rights movement in the United States, Senegal emerged as one of West Africa's leading stages on the global theater of Pan Africanism. In 1960 Senegal gained its independence from France, three years after Ghana had first entered the world of independence in 1957. Unlike Guinea, Cameroon, Togo and Mali, who had also gained independence in 1960, Senegal, situated along the West Coast and with its arms reaching farthest to the West, had experienced a longer and more profound history of global contact through the slave trade and French colonial development of trade. Dakar, with its grand port, had become a major transit center for Francophone West Africa. The capitol city had surpassed St. Louis, the first French administrative capital in Senegal, as the dynamic center of West Africa. By 1960, France had embedded cultural, structural and systemic institutions in Francophone West Africa, with Senegal as one of its main centers. Philosophic and artistic leaders, such as Léopold Sédar Senghor and Cheikh Anta Diop, who had completed academic training in France, fused and mediated French thought with their own philosophies. They created a new approach that emphasized Africanist thinking. With the intersection between

France's long history of memorialization and the emerging African thought, political leaders began writing the script and setting the stage for the slave memorial on Gorée Island. The script that they would manifest accentuated a look back at traditional African values and culture.

Lost heritage, the ruptures of slavery, and colonization have served as foundational themes in emerging Pan-African discourse over the past fifty years throughout former colonial states in Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States. These themes resonated with diasporic descendants of slavery as they simultaneously sought ways to repair their sense of alienation and displacement across various locations around the Black Atlantic. Heritage themes and discourses became a means through which descendants have found a common voice for looking back. Descendants of slavery had long sought to recoup an Africa that had been lost during the long residue of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. From runaway slave narratives to myths of slaves walking across the waters back to Africa, diasporic Africans have kept an idea of Africa. From the beginning, some slaves did return to Africa, while most adapted to conditions in the new world.

Most slaves would remain in the Americas as free labor while a few would become ancillary players to the trade, serving as translators and guides. During the pursuit of acquiring slaves, most Europeans did not travel deep into Africa. They negotiated with Africans and former slaves who could speak indigenous languages, survive the climate and other physical challenges, and penetrate the diverse cultural landscape of Africa. These Africans would penetrate the continent to obtain slaves and then trade them at the factories along the Atlantic Ocean. Contrary to commonly repeated ideas about the slave trade, Africans did not sell their own relatives into slavery. They crossed through ethnic territories to apprehend the strangers. As James T. Campbell notes, “slaves tended to be culturally and ethnically alien to those who

enslaved them.” Campbell traces the life of early slaves who crisscrossed the Atlantic as participants in the slave trade. One such slave, Ayuba, traveled to America but when his masters identified his impressive intellect and linguistic abilities, they sent him to England and then back to West Africa where he served as an interpreter within the trade. Campbell acknowledges that the Africans did not always engage in the slave trade because of money. Most upheld the trade by force; as Campbell phrased it, “the pistol that figured so prominently in Ayuba’s story was not manufactured in Africa, it was one of the nearly twenty million guns exported to Africa by Europeans during the centuries of the slave trade.”² As from the beginning, violence played a vital part of the scramble for Africa’s resources. This violent relationship between greed and human beings would continue to weave a long and harsh relationship that continues today.

Over the course of the triangular slave trade, Africans would seek a means to return to Africa. As the population of African Americans grew in the Nineteenth Century in the United States, the abolition of slavery in the North, the increase of freed slaves and manumission efforts, and the possibility of Africans returning to the continent became more imaginable.

Organizations such as the African Colonization Society, which assisted in sending several thousand African Americans to Liberia, were formed. These freed African American slaves would form a government in Liberia. Their participation in the formation of the government would weave through the troubled history of the country through the present as they created hierarchical systems based on the systems they had learned in the United States. As James Campbell has observed, “the settlers began recruiting indigenous Africans, chiefly children, as domestic laborers.”² Just as the Europeans had inflicted layers of privilege and inequality over Africans in the United States, African Americans placed an oppressive system onto native Liberians once they settled on the continent.

While some freed African American slaves participated in the continuation of oppression, others worked to improve the lots of enslaved people. Reminiscent of the founding of the original North American colonies in the Fifteenth Century, when King James helped to write the blueprint for capitalistic ventures, King Leopold of Belgium also masterminded a scheme of appropriating human labor and natural resources in the late Nineteenth Century in the Congo. Leopold formed the International Association of the Congo with the intention of exploration and exploitation. By giving his organization a name similar to that of a philanthropic organization, the International African Association, he intended to confuse the world into believing that he was inspired by a Christian mission to do good deeds in Africa. King Leopold retained the services of British scholars to provide legal opinions to protect the rights of private companies and to hide behind Belgian law, and hired lobbyists in the United States who would promote his supposedly “Christian” agenda. Leopold raised money for his ventures in Congo by selling bonds, similar to King James’s enterprises. According to Adam Hochschild, Leopold even wrote to the Pope, “urging the Catholic Church to buy Congo bonds to encourage the spread of Christ’s word.”³ At the Berlin Conference of 1885, Leopold convinced France, Germany, England, Portugal, Spain, and the United State to agree to the carving up of Africa, and thereby ensured that he would have rights to the Congo, a massive piece of land in Central Africa. He promised to continue his “good work” in the Congo and assured the members of the conference that he would promote a slave-free Congo. Instead, he laid claim to the Congo as his personal property.

Under his private colonization, people from the various ethnic groups in the Congo were taken captive and enslaved. As rubber had become a needed commodity at the end of the Nineteenth Century, Leopold’s colonial authority, Henry Morton Stanley, sent Congolese into the jungles to bring back the sap from the rubber trees. If the “slaves” did not return to the camp

with enough rubber, their hands were sometimes chopped off. Often, family members were held as hostage to insure that the rubber seekers would return to the camp. The Belgian King had convinced the world of his good deeds, and was even so bold as to hold an anti-slavery conference in Brussels in 1889, where he pontificated about the evils of slavery that the Arabs were perpetrating in East Africa at the same time that he himself pillaged and looted the Congo.

George Washington Williams, black American journalist, traveled to Europe, where he was introduced to King Leopold for an interview. Leopold convinced Williams of his good deeds as acts of his Christian faith in the Congo, so Williams decided to travel to the Congo to see for himself and discovered Leopold's atrocities. In an Open Letter in 1890, Williams reported that Leopold had used tricksters to take land from the people of the Congo. He revealed that Henry M. Stanley was a tyrant who had situated the armies along the rivers filled with death and destruction. Contrary to his personal claims, Leopold was not against slavery. Williams became one of the first to initiate the antislavery movement in the Congo, and others soon followed, including Joseph Conrad, the author of *The Heart of Darkness*. Concerned individuals eventually formed the Congo Reform Association, which finally brought public outcry and punishment for those who had brought about the deaths of millions of people during Leopold's time.

Throughout the 1800s, organizations would form and raise money to return to Africa to bypass the brutal conditions of un-belonging in America. While his personal mission of returning to Africa never materialized, in part because of his many financial troubles and conflicts with leaders like W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey had inspired a "back to Africa" movement in the 1920s.⁴ Through this whole period, many African Americans held onto the notion of returning to Africa. In 1923, twenty-one-year-old Langston Hughes arrived in Africa. On this first journey, Hughes felt a sense of disillusionment that many African Americans after him have expressed,

and translated his alienation into art. “Though Africans’ refusal to accept him ‘hurt me a lot,’ it also suited him, placing him in the same position of loving outsider that he occupied in relation to African American folk he had long celebrated in his poetry.”² Although he did not visit Africa again until 1960, Hughes continued to inspire African writers who would build their styles based on the Harlem Renaissance movement. Other African American writers would follow Hughes and continue to inscribe into the narrative of black people of the return. In the 1950s Richard Wright completed successful pilgrimages to West Africa, preserving the desire to return to Africa in the popular mindset of African Americans.⁵

At the intersection of these desires, when global travel increased in the 1960s and 70s, cultural producers in Senegal had elevated Gorée Island as reparation site or place to repair the long memory of slavery. Diasporic descendants answered the call, and from the days of wanting to return home, to the times of learning of atrocities in Africa during the late nineteenth Century, the writings of diasporic travelers, and the Post-Civil Rights possibilities, African Americans sought a place of belonging in Africa and a means of reconnecting with African sensibilities. They had dreamed of Africa during the Harlem Renaissance when they sought belonging by connecting to Africa and African aesthetics. The desire to return to Africa continued through subsequent artistic movements. After the call of Black Arts Movement that emerged after the civil right advancements of the 1960s, more and more African Americans became a part of the movement to return.

In this chapter, I explore some of the elements of Gorée Island as a metaphoric performative theatrical space for diasporic travelers. From the perspective of Richard Schechner’s framework of rehearsal and performance, Gorée marks the performance period of the ritual cycle, when performers enter “nonordinary” time and space. Schechner argues that

performers in performative activities such as a mass, a football game, a wedding, a funeral, or a commemorative trip, “are changed by the activity of performing.” In these activities, the performers enter the encoded spaces in order to transform. They recapitulate what they have already performed in dress rehearsal but now present their final performance on a grander stage. Schechner states that, “performance behavior isn’t free and easy. Performance behavior is known and/or practiced behavior – or ‘twice-behaved behavior,’ ‘restored behavior.” By performing in a highly scripted special place, governed by rules, performances, “are fundamentally processual: there will always be a certain portion of them in the process of transformation.” These “well-seasoned travelers” make the journey across the Atlantic to enter into the in-between spaces, between the “then and the now,” and the “there and the here” where they mark time and space to connect their memories and dreams in a grand performance of transformation. They already know how their ascendance works because they have rehearsed it in song, dance, stories and music. In the in-between space, the traveler abandons the narrative of ambivalence and creates one of belonging. Performers recapitulate steps that ultimately lead to some form of transformation. Schechner situates his framework with the ritual process such that the performance phase coincides with the Turnerian state of liminality.⁶ Through song after song over the course of African American history, slaves and their descendants sang of the water. They have rehearsed going to the water to be baptized and renewed. At the *Maison des Esclaves*, they arrived at the edge of the water to be born again.

In the betwixt and the between of the United States and Africa, pilgrims stand at the ocean in the ambivalent state, prepared to transcend. At Gorée Island, the dichotomous state of ambivalence joins together un-belonging and belonging. On one side of the pilgrim’s ambivalence, the United States has become their home, the site of their family, their language,

and religion. On the other side of their love-hate relationship with the country of their birth, they remember the pain of un-belonging. Victor Turner theorized that ritualistic journeys, such as pilgrimage tours to sites like Gorée Island, separated individuals from everyday life, “placed them in a limbo” and changed them. These performances, where individuals cross a threshold into sacred territories, he argued, “are performed in privilege spaces and times, set off from the periods and areas reserved for work, and sleep.”⁷ Gorée Island’s location on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean serves as a liminal site as the door into the House of Slaves offers the performer an even deeper threshold into liminality. As with any theatrical production, Gorée Island functions as a space filled with vested interests such as the cultural producers and backers, set designers, costumers, souvenirs vendors, musicians and well-rehearsed actors.

I examine the “betwixt and between” space of Gorée Island as a historical, economic, political, and performative stage for transformation. Even with its long history, some historians have cast doubts as to whether “millions” of slaves literally passed through the door at the little slave house to the Middle Passage, as the original master griot reported since the beginning of Gorée’s tourism popularity. In spite of this empirical uncertainty, multiple factors have contributed to the continuance of the island’s popularity. Like other intersections, Gorée, on the edge of Africa, provides an intersecting space that serves many interests beyond those of diasporic tourists. Next, I explore how Senegalese and international scripts merged with the African American narrative such that many American Blacks have adopted the story on Gorée as an iconic site of memory and reparation. I then acknowledge some of the prime figures who have participated in Gorée’s development as a prominent site of memory and international theater, where tourists converge on the island, and world leaders use the island as a proscenium for pontificating about their own special interests. Then, I illumine the sometimes-incongruent

interests of the actors on the island. When pilgrims make the sojourn to Gorée to perform their transformations, they often find that their objectives diverge from those of local actors. As with the other chapters, I conclude with an interview of an African American pilgrim to the island and with a memoir of my own experiences as a first time and returning visitor to Gorée. I have ordered the sections of this chapter as the theater, the script, the producers and the actors so as if to walk into any grand theater in the world. The theater with all of its set pieces and props serve as the first griot in telling the story. Subsequently, the narrative script exposes the theme and mood. Behind the scenes, the producers have made sure that all the elements and foundations have been properly secured in order to tell the story. Finally, the actors enliven the story and serve as the ultimate griots. On Gorée Island, a contemporary crossroad between America and Africa, grand performers enunciate the story of the long and intricately woven rope of slavery through time and space by illuminating its intricate threads that continue to bind.

The Stage

Off the coast of Dakar, Senegal sits Gorée Island, one of the most popular cultural attractions in West Africa. For forty years, as the conservator of the *La Maison des Esclaves*, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye told the horrifying story of the thousands of slaves who were packed into the little rooms in the slave house, separated from their families and then transported through the *Door of No Return* to different parts of the Americas and Europe, never to see Africa again. Inspired by Léopold Sédar Senghor, the first democratically elected president of Senegal and primary intellectual of the *Négritude* movement, Ndiaye promoted the ideas of rich African cultures, in spite of the brutalities of the slave trade and colonization. While newly elected African leaders, like Senghor and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, sought to deliver new narratives for their recently independent nations, across the Atlantic, at the same time, African Americans

were marching in the streets, celebrating political victories, and writing narratives for themselves. Ndiaye's narrative fit perfectly into the imaginations of African diasporic peoples. Until his death in 2009, Ndiaye, a national treasure, had inspired hundreds of would-be tour guides on Gorée to perpetuate this same story. Ndiaye's apostles delivered his soliloquy of the slave trade with his precise cadence and intonation, rising and falling in pitch, accelerating and slowing down the speech, whispering at times and then building a crescendo to finish off just like their passionate model. Today these tour guides continue to captivate hushed audiences. Long disputed as an actual "site of memory" by scholars who study trading records, Gorée continues to attract countless cultural pilgrims from around the world each year. While many of the African American tourists who return to Gorée cannot precisely claim Senegal or any specific African nation as their "motherland," they continue to make pilgrimages to the island.

Even before decolonization, France had started the process of naming memorial sites in Senegal, designating Gorée Island as a historic site in 1944. The Island of Gorée had long been a part of European/African history. In 1444, the Portuguese were the first Europeans to settle on Gorée Island. Being ideally located, the Portuguese, Dutch, French and British had had fought for control of the island since the beginning. France had controlled the island from 1677 until 1960, and it became an integral part of the nation's colonial history. France placed safeguarding measures into place in 1951 during colonial rule, so by the time of Senegal's independence, the island had already been positioned in the world's imagination as a historic site.

In 1978, Gorée Island became a UNESCO World Heritage Site.⁸ By then, Senegal had already become an established center for black consciousness movements where the narrative promoted from such locations as Gorée Island resonated with the quest of belonging by diasporic citizens to returning Africa. Tourism theorists such as Dean MacCannell have argued that

tourists search for “authenticity.”⁹ Promoted as an authentic site of the slave trade, diasporic tourists accept these claims. While historians have long contested the authenticity of Gorée, tourists continue to visit the island in order to experience the transformation and discovery of their “roots” that they seek. Indeed, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye accentuated the idea of authenticity as he dramatically pulled out the rusty ball and chains from the days of the slave trade. As if hypnotized to silence by a great magician, visitors on the island would all line up to try the chains around their wrists and ankles. More recent theorists, such as the anthropologist Edward Bruner, argue beyond the binary of authentic/inauthentic. Bruner analyzed tourism to include the “historical, economic and political context.” Tourists, interested in experiences travel to sites such as Gorée and must navigate the context of diverging interests that vary from individual to individual. Bruner notes “performances for tourists have local histories, change over time, and are constructed specifically to be marketed and sold to an audience.” As with any theatrical production, actors present variety with each encounter with diverse elements during a performance. Often, tourists come with specific beliefs and intentions only to discover that their wishes do not match the local environment. For example, Bruner highlights the irony of locals around the slave dungeons on Cape Coast in Ghana calling African Americans *obruni*, which means “white man,” and then affording them second-class treatment when Europeans enter the shops.¹⁰ In Senegal, locals might refer to an African American tourist as *Gan*, that is, foreigner or stranger; this is the same term applied to all tourists, even though on the island many locals will welcome the tourists back home as “sister” or “brother.” While diasporic tourists bring their own ideas about Gorée to the island, UNESCO, local tour guides, national politicians, international leaders, religious figures, and corporations, have already shaped the realities of their experiences.

Tourists find other discrepancies once they arrive on the major memorial sites. During the 1970s, historians such as Philip Curtin had begun tracing slave routes and patterns from Africa to the Americas.¹¹ Historians had linked many African-Americans as being descendants of slaves from the region around the present-day nations of Senegal and the Gambia. However, Curtin has also refuted the claims that Gorée Island was an important transit site for American slaves transit. Joseph N'diaye, the curator at the house of slaves, in his popular narrative stated that millions of slaves had been transported through Gorée Island. Up until his death in 2009, he continued to claim that 20 million slaves had left to the “door of no return” from Gorée, stating that 5 million had gone to the United States, even though the museum on the island claims that only about 10 million slaves left Africa overall. Based on evidence from transport records, not more than a few hundred slaves left the Gorée Island each year. Also, because of the rocky and jagged terrain around the island, few believe that any slave ships could have approached the island at the *Door of No Return*. While one side of the island could have served as a docking site because of its sea level terrain, the other side of the tiny island consists of a steep incline that drops dramatically off into the ocean.

Philip Curtin called the narratives about the Slave House of Joseph N'diaye a scam, contending that the slave house, one of the finest houses on the island, would never have been used to house slaves. Curtin documented that slaves did in fact leave Gorée Island. However, he declared that N'diaye inflated the numbers. Curtin noted that the very rocky coast on the other side of the “door of no return” prohibited any ships from coming close. In 1969, Philip D. Curtin published his influential book *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*. Using transport manifests for the time of embarkation and disembarkation, Curtin made the first estimate of slaves transported out of Africa as between the sixteenth century and 1879 as about 9 million.¹¹ Building on

Curtin's work, David Eltis and David Richardson edited *Routes to Slavery: Direction, Ethnicity and Mortality in the Atlantic Slave Trade*¹². Using additional data that was not available to Curtin, they confirmed his findings but increased the estimate to 12 millions slaves who were transported across the Atlantic. More recently, Eltis and Richardson wrote *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*.¹³ Using the data, they have mapped the specific ethno-linguistic groups' embarkation and disembarkation locations. It is worth noting that English-speaking researchers have conducted most of the research.

To more specifically address the historical data from sites in French and Spanish-speaking Louisiana, Gwendolyn Midlo Hall has added additional research from plantation records and other historical documents in Louisiana in *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*¹⁴ and in *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas*.¹⁵ Hall's research adds to the passages of African slaves around the Black Atlantic as they traveled from Africa directly to Louisiana and sometime through circuitous routes from the Caribbean to the United States. These historical markers add to the foundational knowledge of who the early slaves were and how their unique intersections constructed music, dance, memes, myths and narratives that still circulate, today. In the process of the passages around the Black Atlantic, African Americans reconstructed cultural identities, invented new ones and sometimes synthesized with the diverse cultures around them. They rehearsed what they constructed and then passed the traditions on. Locations such as Ibo Landing and Congo Square helped to perpetuate these rehearsals through oral tradition and practice. Using the documented evidence of slave transportation records, it is clear that not many slaves passed through Gorée Island. Instead, they transited from other locations along the Senegambia region in West Africa. However, despite this documented evidence, Gorée Island

continues to attract pilgrims from around the world, who bring to the island all the rehearsed memories that their ancestors passed on to them.

The Script

*The toll of miseries and lives which the Negro slave trade claimed is beyond anything one can imagine. Uprooted from their native land, driven to a foreign land, without common language, without an out right disproportion between males and females, sold-out to masters at random, overburdened with hard labor and without any other education but obedience or flogging, these Blacks reduced to the status of stray individuals could not reconstitute families.*¹⁶

Many Senegalese considered Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye, the masterful curator at *La Maison des Esclaves* on Gorée Island as a national treasure. In his 2007 musical documentary, *Return to Gorée*, Youssou N'Dour, the most celebrated singer on the African continent and secretary of tourism in Macky Sall's new Senegalese cabinet in 2012, sought out Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye, as the wise elder who would anoint his journey to the United States to gather musicians.¹⁷ Over the years, Ndiaye's empowering narrative became the conventional script that would circulate over and over as ambitious tour guides repeated, verbatim, his words. Enterprising young tour guides were not the only ones to appropriate his script word for word, for Senegalese and international politicians and a variety of vested interests also adopted his dramatic monologue. Starting with his appointment as curator in 1962, his recount of the slave trade resonated with the emerging Pan African discourse around the Black Atlantic. Ndiaye had dreamed of a space for the African Diaspora children to return to, so he created a space through his persistent advocacy. While descendants of Africa would not find a means to "go home," until the 1960s, African slaves and many of their descendants had long held fast to the idea of the return. From the earliest days, some Africans did return.

During the turbulent 1960s in the United States, where the shadow of slavery still cast a dark cover over many lives, the hopeful glow from Africa joined voices throughout the Black

Atlantic from the civil rights movement, to artistic movements, to independence movements. In the United States, civil rights leaders pushed the government to enact and enforce more inclusive and fair remedies. By the end of the decade, assassins had taken the lives of such leaders as John and Robert Kennedy, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King. In the early 1970s new leadership emerged in the United States government that included blacks who had begun to make political gains that they had insisted upon during the 1960s. With the independence successes in Africa and the civil rights triumphs in the United States, political and legal remedies began transitioning into marketplace remedies, and businesses began to see the usefulness of inclusive marketing.

In 1974, the dictator of the Republic of Zaire (previously the Congo), Mobutu Sésé Seko, pounced on an idea presented by Don King to host a boxing match in that country between Mohammed Ali and George Foreman. Even though the country was desperately poor, the dictator provided a \$5 million purse for the competition in order to bring a spotlight to his country. The fight was a huge success not only in determining the “heavyweight champion of the world,” but as a major international event that also featured international music performers such as James Brown, Sister Sledge, Bill Withers, Hugh Masekela, and Mariam Makeba. Billed as “The Rumble in the Jungle,” the event brought substantial attention to the African continent and to the potential for cultural and economic exchanges. Through events such as this promotion, African Americans began to connect more with a mass mediated image of Africa.

Building upon the successes of the civil rights movement and the independence movements in Africa, the Anheuser-Busch Corporation began a campaign in 1975 called “The Great Kings and Queens of Africa.”¹⁸ The collection featured thirty works from twenty-three African-American artists. The works were billed as educational works of art that were researched by leading African history scholar, Dr. Henrik Clarke. The collections were featured each month

in such magazines as *Ebony*, the most popular monthly magazine in the Black community at that time. In the process of marketing beer to the African-Americans, the company also instilled ideas of “heritage” that had seen successes in the civic world but continued to struggle in most other environments. The campaign played an important role in writing national myths of African royalty. In addition to creating a national narrative the company also profited from product loyalty by a substantial group in the United States.

In 1977, the miniseries *Roots* became one of the most watched television productions of all time.¹⁹ By the eighth night, the final episode garnered an estimated audience of 36 million viewers. For the first time, Americans were publicly talking about the institution of slavery as a nation. *Roots* changed the national conversation for all Americans. For black Americans, who still struggled with the notion of civic belonging, the series promoted an increased fascination with the continent of Africa, and the “return to Africa” meme provided the imagination with a solution. At the same time, *Roots* played into hegemonic narratives of the homestead, of owning a piece of American land, equity to be passed on from generation to generation.

As Gorée Island grew in popularity with diasporic tourists, world leaders began to take notice. Following the lead of such international cast members as Nelson Mandela and Pope John Paul II, Bill Clinton traveled to Gorée in 1998. Recently impeached by the United States Congress for inappropriate actions with Monica Lewinsky, the former president traveled to the island and continued the narrative of the victimization of Africans who had been enslaved. On this visit, Bill Clinton almost apologized for institution of slavery, angering many with opposing political views. These same opponents of Clinton’s pronouncements praised the visit of George W. Bush when he visited the island in 2003. Local residents of Gorée still recall the half-million people who turned out to witness Bill Clinton. In 2003, unlike the presidential visit of 1998,

George W. Bush expelled all of the residents of the island one week before his visit. Submarines circled the island one week before, to ensure that no terrorist had planned an assault in that Muslim nation of Senegal in the subsequent years after September 11. Local fishermen lost an estimated \$1 million in loss commerce because of the submarine searches in the waters around the tiny island. George W. Bush brought his own chairs to the island and refused to allow the president, Abdoulaye Wade, to speak. The then president gave sweeping statements of contrition about the institution of slavery, clearly aimed at international and American cameras.

On June 27, 2014, President Barack Obama became the third sitting president of the United States to visit Gorée Island. Following the death of master griot, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye, Eloi Coly took over as the curator of the slave house. His booming basso profundo voice echoes through the little slave house as he recirculates the narrative that Ndiaye had presented over the years. During President Obama's visit, he delivered the speech and escorted the president and his family through the tiny rooms. Afterwards, President Obama faced reporters and continued the narrative; further embedding Gorée Island into the archives as an important place of departure for slaves.

Obviously, it's a very powerful moment whenever I can travel with my family, but especially for Michelle and Malia and my mother-in-law to be able to come here and to fully appreciate the magnitude of the slave trade, to get a sense in a very intimate way of the incredible inhumanity and hardship that people faced before they made the Middle Passage and that crossing.²⁰

In recent years, politicians have used great speeches at sites of memory mixed with politics to pursue their political goals. Ana Lucia Araujo probes the relationship between the memorialization of slavery and politics. She examines how pressure from interest groups push governments to pay homage to the horrors of the slave trade, and notes that during the 1990s, as globalization, international travel and the Internet grew, communities throughout the Black

Atlantic joined together to form narratives and communities across borders. Araujo asserts that this coalescing of discussions about slavery, the slave trade, and other crimes against humanity, “were fully incorporated to the memorialization and heritagization phenomena” that promoted historical sites. These cross border narratives helped to build influence within specific borders. In Europe, interest groups forced the former colonial empires to address the “crucial role of Africans in the building of Europe and the Americas.”²¹ Locations such as Bristol and Liverpool in England and Nantes in France recognized their importance in the Triangular Slave Trade.

Political leaders have used memorial sites as a stage for their broader political agendas. With the backdrop of the Atlantic Ocean, with its violent and horrid secrets from the slave trade, Obama said, “obviously, for an African-American, an African-American president, to be able to visit this site, I think gives me even greater motivation in terms of human rights around the world.”²² The president mentioned the growing presence of the Chinese in Africa. As the major world powers scour the earth for resources, they continue to look to Africa. Obama noted: “China’s paying a lot of attention to Africa, Brazil, Turkey, India are heavily invested in trying to expand trade and commerce with Africa.”²³ A member of his national security team, Benjamin J. Rhodes, stated, “we, frankly, have heard a high-demand signal from the U.S. private sector for us to play an active role in deepening our trade and investment partnerships in Africa.”²³

The Producers

The performance of transformation on Gorée Island, like any cultural production, consists of varied parties that insure the successful and expected spectacle. The folklorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett considers heritage as a mode of cultural production.²⁴ She examines how exhibitions and displays actively demonstrate agency in the process of cultural production. On

Gorée Island, the Slave House serves as the display, the main set piece on the stage with essential props such as rusty chains, some attached to old steel balls, whips and old stained maps from the past centuries. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett asserts that while heritage looks old, it actually produces something new. She declares that by displaying the old, economies and dead sites gain a second life by conflating a “sense of the actual.” In the Slave House on Gorée, visitors speak of the pained walls and the horror that they see upon entering the courtyard of the house that help them to reconcile the aftermath of their ancestors’ past with the contemporary agonies that have reverberated from the original rupture of slavery. Tourists tell of the spirits who still cry from the tiny rooms and the stained soil that collected the slaves’ tears, blood and fluids. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett notes “heritage is not lost and found, stolen and reclaimed.” Rather, it “produces something new in the present that has recourse to the past.”²⁴ Despite the language of preserving, restoring, and reclaiming, which suggests that the actualities of slavery lie dormant, waiting for discovery, heritage functions as the vibrant child of the chorus of voices from the past and diverse cast seeking satisfaction in the now.

The dynamic narrative delivered at Gorée Island, the Crossroads, converges not only with the diasporic tourists’ search for belonging, which enables the continuation of the popularity of the island as a heritage site, but also provides opportunities for participation by diverse groups. To redress the psychological, spiritual and legal formations of un-belonging throughout the Black Atlantic, many descendants of slavery have found resonance with the concept of *heritage* as an act of reclamation. I agree with Kirshenblatt-Gimblett in that the past cannot be reclaimed, but at each new moment in history, life offers different intersecting factors that we use mediate between our memories, perceptions, environment, needs, and desires. While Gorée Island provides the space and conditions for diasporic tourists to transform, other interests such as local

economies, international corporate and political interests, for example, also craft the experience. The performances on Gorée Island may present nostalgic themes of the slave trade while the performers also produce “something new.”

Today on Gorée Island, the producers tell the terrible story of the slave trade and at the same time, situate activities within the environment around the island to cater to the visits from the travelers. Robert Hewison asserts that the “heritage industry” has become sanitized and commercialized so that interests are imposed from above that promote nostalgic entertainment and impair history.²⁵ As an example, when McDonalds aligned with local radio stations to select participants for their “homeland” tour to Senegal and the Gambia, the corporation negated the brutality and viciousness of the slave trade. Just as corporations that honor “Dr. King’s Dream” during “Black History Month” fail to promote diversity and fair wages for its workers, commercialized interest groups erase full histories that implicate them. Even though McDonalds sponsored an international tour for eighty-five people to visit West Africa that included a trip to Gorée Island, the corporation barely gave a nod to the full history of the “roots” and “heritage” that it highlighted. It should perhaps be noted that McDonalds has recently refused the call for living wage payment to its workers, including many African Americans, while promoting its products in the Black community. Corporations such as this, profited from nostalgic and selective versions of history that include sites such as Gorée.

Like corporate interests, political leaders also pursue their interests through heritage sites. With the international visibility of the African independence movements and with political leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Emery Lumumba, and Léopold Sédar Senghor, narratives of community and rebirth captivated Africans in the Diaspora. President Kennedy courted African leaders early on in his administration. Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, Sékou Touré of

Guinea, Nkrumah, and Senghor all came to Washington and began developing a dialogue with members of various African-American groups in the United States. In the midst of the civil rights movement, the growing narrative of “community” amongst those groups grew. African American reciprocated leaving the United States to make their homes in Africa. Kwame Ture, formerly known as Stokely Carmichael, had served in the Civil Rights Movement alongside Martin Luther King and Fannie Lou Hamer in Mississippi. Considered a leading activist in the Black Power movement, he eventually embraced a Pan-African consciousness. Leaving the United States at age twenty-seven, he became a follower of Kwame Nkrumah and Sékou Touré. He continued to speak and write internationally, keeping the Pan-Africanist vision alive, until his death in 1998.²⁶

Even before the rise of African independence movements, African-Americans had held the notion that returning to Africa would quell their feelings of un-belonging and displacement. Movements such as “return to Africa” have always held a place in the American imagination. W. E. B. Dubois developed a relationship with Kwame Nkrumah and spent the last days of his life in Ghana developing ideas about how African-Americans and Africans could unite. Dubois died one day before Martin Luther King delivered the “I Have a Dream” speech at the March on Washington in 1963. Like Nkrumah of Ghana, Senegal’s Leopold Senghor also encouraged dialogue between Africa and the Diaspora. Throughout his presidency, he encouraged and participated in cultural exchanges with artists around the world, especially descendants of Africa. Senghor, a celebrated poet, dedicated twenty-five percent of the national budget to arts and culture, making Senegal an international center for artistic expression and education, and a doorway for returning descendants of the slave trade.

Cheikh Anta Diop, a Senegalese philosopher who had been trained at the Sorbonne and the Faculty of Sciences in Paris and studied Egyptian culture, added to the Africanist dialogue and narrative.²⁷ Earning a doctorate, he wanted to reverse the Aryan Model and advocate for political unity through pan African thought. He argued that Egypt in earlier times was a black nation, and emphasized African cultural influence on the Greek and European civilizations across the Mediterranean. Not only did he promote the advances of Egypt, he also professed of many of the advances in Africa that linked the various groups into a common and unified cultural zone. His views influenced the Afrocentric movements of Europe and America, even though many of his views have been debunked. African-Americans of the 1960s often used Diop's philosophies in formulating the Pan African thinking of that time. Today in Dakar, Cheikh Anta Diop University is the most important academic center in Senegal.

Leaders worked in concert with the emergence of these aesthetic and political movements and helped to create institutions that would embrace the newfound energy around the Black Atlantic. These political leaders began creating what Dean MacCannell called "cultural production." MacCannell believed that, unlike traditional ways of thinking about culture, which consists of consensus, culture in modern capitalistic societies produced. For locations like Senegal, where colonization and changing global markets have brought devastation to the economy, tourism has developed as an important sector. MacCannell argues that cultural production on the national level is "linked to the export of cultural products for sale to other countries."⁹ Underdeveloped countries do not require the packaging of commodities, and rely instead on attracting tourists. In modern capitalistic societies these are deeply tied to language, music, dance, and literature; and advertising plays an integral part in the sale of these commodities. MacCannell maintained that a process of sacralisation must occur in the process of

cultural productions. Processes such as naming events, concerts, and the creation of print materials are all a part of making sites sacred. Certainly, these processes occurred before the opening of Gorée Island as a memorial site but the ceremonies on the island have served the country as a site for attracting tourists and international attention.

A cultural spectacle, such as the stage at Gorée Island, draws upon multiple audiences. Not only does the island attract tourists from around the Black Atlantic, it also draws individuals who may not physically visit the island but who appropriate the narrative about the island from encountering it on television, the Internet, and in books. The island also brings international leaders who use the island for political purposes. The local actors on the island also perform for each other in their quest to service the tourists. All of these groups of actors observe each other and act out the roles from what they have rehearsed and what they want to gain. In *The Tourist Gaze*, John Urry took a perspective using Michel Foucault's concept of "the gaze," examining how tourists perceive places by focusing on exotic aspects of the experience. As the local actors view the tourists, the tourists consume the exoticism of being in a far-away place. In response, the local actors, such as the tour guides, reproduce the exotic elements that the tourists seek. In the process of re-performing these constructions, the tour guides reify the performances and make them a part of the accepted narrative. According to Urry, "the development of constructed tourist attraction results from how those who are subject to the tourist gaze respond."²⁸ Producers take advantage of their investments by constructing these events, such as political declarations made by international leaders.

For the unveiling of the Renaissance Monument in Dakar, world leaders like Jesse Jackson came to witness the event. Each attending party used the event to demonstrate to their respective audiences their individual agendas. Promoters of grand international events

coordinate across agencies and cultural bodies in order to legitimize them. The anthropologist Roy Wagner called this process the “invention of culture.”²⁹ These productions, constructions, or inventions consist of highly integrated relationships between myths, economics, politics, and art, to name just a few of the elements. For diverse reasons, leaders at these highly staged events appropriate cultural markers that further promote their agendas. These agendas include economic development, trade deals, cultural exchanges, and personal relationships. To institutionalize these productions, organizers of the events consolidate bodies across the cultural, artistic, governmental, and political worlds. For example, international artists, like Youssou N’Dour, with strong national ties often serve as salesman for the cultural productions and at the same time serve within the political realm.

Using the “return to Africa” meme as a tool for commercialization, many corporations appropriated its use. Paulla Ebron details her experience of traveling to Gorée Island with a group of about one hundred American citizens, mostly black, on a trip that was sponsored by McDonald’s.³⁰ The trip included cultural seminars on African-American history and history of the slave trade as presented by scholars from the United States and Senegal. The pilgrims visited the slave house on Gorée and then traveled on to the country of the Gambia to visit the birthplace of Alex Haley, the author of *Roots*.¹⁹ Sponsored events such as the McDonald’s event became commonplace for corporations when targeting African-American markets, especially during Black History Month (February). These companies exploited narratives, memes, histories, music and images in order to promote commercial enterprises. In a similar way, political leaders began appropriating these cultural ideas in order to promote specific agendas. Additionally, local citizens, such as a residence of Gorée Island, began capitalizing on the “returning” travelers.

The Casts

Guided by recapitulated narratives, derived from historical and mythical beliefs, tourists arrive to create a grand theatrical performance that yields not only transformation and healing but also gives them an opportunity to rewrite their narrative. Unplanned encounters with other cast members on the grand stage give tourists an opportunity for improvisation, which also influences the performance. I have situated my analysis of Gorée Island within a larger consideration of the historical, economic and political contexts. The trip to Gorée represents the performance/liminal stage of the ritual process where diverse groups meet to act out their intended performances based on those unique contexts. The players in those contexts, who include tourists, local entrepreneurs, the tourism industry, governments, and political leaders, drive the dynamics of the performances.

Sandra L. Richards has analyzed heritage tourism at slave-dungeons in Ghana through the lens of theater studies.³¹ By casting herself as an actor, she unpacks her role as a tourist by illuminating the intersections of tourism, memory, and memorialization. I agree with Richards that, “like theater, memory is constructed through processes of selecting, repeating, forgetting – willfully as well as unconsciously – and reassembling narratives.” Diasporic tourists do not know which stories and conditions they will encounter on Gorée Island. They bring all of their fragmented memories, stories and experiences to Gorée to perform their transformation. With splintered memories that intersect with new narratives on the island, the tourists perform their ultimate performance of transformation. I have structured this analysis of heritage-theater at Gorée Island into four sections—the Stage, the Script, the Producers and the Casts—in order to widen the purview of the performances and include some of the motivations of the diverse interests that intersect with the tourists’ expectations of heritage transformation. Sometimes, as on a proscenium stage, actors can look through the wings and rafters to see the work of the

producers, the actors in waiting, the lights, and the work of the stagehands. On stages, such as Gorée, performers cannot always see and realize the actions offstage as they act out their rehearsed roles. Long before the performance, key players have already rehearsed their parts. In this analysis, I have divided the casts into two groups. These two groups have rehearsed their parts in two distinct locations, the sequestered spaces of un-belonging outside of Africa and the space of Gorée itself. As the performance ensemble comes together, the drama of transformation unfolds.

The Diasporic Cast

While the broken bones and cracked spirits of the Middle Passage have left a rupture all throughout the Black Atlantic, simultaneously, the potential for profound healing also exists because of the encoded memes in narratives, religious practices, and music. When human bones are broken, they are stronger at the fracture after healing. Similarly, the human psyche strengthens where they have been broken. The transformation of the rupture into strength does not occur without recognition of the rupture in the first place. By hearing and internalizing authoritative stories such as the one inscribed by the master griot, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye, visitors at the slave house participate in a reprocessing of their memories. In his bold soliloquy of the memory of the institution of slavery, Joseph Ndiaye also gave those making the pilgrimage a means of catharsis. From the popularity of his efforts, today, his apostles have seized the opportunity to profit from the narrative as thousands visit the site throughout the year. In the tiny courtyard, Ndiaye led diasporic travelers back to “belonging” through empowering narrative.

On Gorée Island, the cast members all find their places in order to perform their transformations. Richard Schechner bridges together theatrical concepts with the anthropological analysis of rites-of-passage as a tripartite process of separation, liminality, and return. The cultural repetitions constitute “rehearsals.” The rehearsal process repeats memes of

return and transformation through cultural practices.³² At the moment of entering the liminality of the slave house on Gorée Island, diasporic tourists begin the “performance of transformation” as the memory of the slave trade and their own existential experiences come to mind. Pilgrims begin the process of “restored behavior” in order to heal the rupture of the rehearsed narratives while under the “veil.” On Gorée Island, complete with the baptism of the magnificent backdrop of the water of the Atlantic Ocean, a picturesque set-piece of the slave house, rusty chains as props and a masterful narrator, diasporic tourists release the pent-up agony of the shadow of slavery in a cathartic cry. They lay down the burdens of every act of micro-aggression and injustice that they can fathom from the deeps of memory in order to take up a new narrative that Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye invokes.

Like other tricksters, masters of transformation, Ndiaye stood at the threshold of the liminal space, the Door of No Return, and guided the travelers to a new beginning, a new world. Aristotle described this catharsis in Greek tragedy as a purging, usually at the end of high drama after the gods have arrived to save the hero through the *deus ex machina* and final resolution. On Gorée, after the tourists have brought their sorrow filled memories of un-belonging, they feel relief after their emotional breakdowns.³³ At the Door of No Return, African Americans sometimes fall to their knees and weep, purging the melancholia of the history of slavery. Just as these pilgrims have rehearsed through worship and praise in their churches, where the dichotomous vision of the cross signifies both suffering and redemption, they mourn their past pain and rejoice in the hope of a new future. Through music, they have recapitulated the passage from sorrow to transcendence. Now, the adroit raconteur at the little slave house calls them to look back and to also look forward. Antonio Gramsci used the term catharsis to signify historical purging, the end of oppressive forces.³⁴ Ndiaye called to mind the vicious institution

of slavery and the calamitous consequences that the institution continues to cause for both diasporic citizens as well as for Africa as a whole. He told a different story of the Middle Passage that highlighted the greed of capitalism, the destructions of families and the elimination of cultures because he also reminded of a story of liberation where the ancestors beseech pilgrims to remain strong and to never forget what had happened in the little slave house. As if delivering a benediction in church, Ndiaye told the travelers to go back into the world and tell the story of Gorée and the Middle Passage.

The Senegalese Cast

Before Senegal elected its first democratically elected president, Léopold Sédar Senghor had tapped into the heritage imagination of the Black Atlantic. As one of the leaders of the Négritude Movement, he had led the dialogue of the essential connectivity of Africans in Africa and Africans in the Diaspora. Before the 1930's, no major international movement had established a framework for analyzing African and African diasporic culture. Negritude, formulated by Leopold Senghor, Aimé Césaire and Guianan Léon Damas, attempted to introduce the African voice. These three men, from various places in the Diaspora, had not found the African point of view. They had met in Paris for their studies during the 1930s and it was during that time that they birthed Negritude. With the inclusion of the African voice, they wanted to break through French hegemony over her colonies. While he has been criticized as an essentialist, Senghor's writings do address some of the tenets of African culture that had been excluded by European theorists.

No, Negritude is none of these things. It is neither racialism nor self-negation. Yet it is not just affirmation; it is rooting oneself in oneself, and self-confirmation: confirmation of one's *being*. Negritude is nothing more or less than what some English-speaking Africans have called the *African Personality*.³⁵

Senghor theorized that philosophy in the African world and the European world were diametrically opposed. The European way of thinking, binary and static in nature, consisted of oppositions such as heaven/hell, body/soul, and matter/spirit. He believed that African philosophy was dynamic and fluid, seeking synthesis. Whereas Europeans view the world through a model of separation, Africans see connectivity and relationships, according to Senghor. In *Senghor's Shadow*, Elizabeth Harney notes that “while many praised the profundity of his thought, clarity of his vision, and depth of his commitment to ‘black civilization,’ others regarded his legacy more skeptically, arguing that his approach to black subjectivity was both reactionary and naïve.”³⁶ Critics refused to see the one-dimensional picture that Senghor painted. He received particularly loud criticism from the Anglophone Africans.

Senghor’s paradigm consisted of seeing life from the smallest part expanding until all collective circles reached God. From family to community to nation to all of humanity, Negritude held the promise of unity in Senghor’s view. In his model, the group had priority over the individual. Senghor espoused that Dialogue and Reciprocity would allow for multiple voices at the table without the enforcement of normative communities, “the need to mobilize resources, and the necessity for social control among the members of the group.”³⁵ Senghor helped to create the national story of Senegal that would be told around the world, “creating a small army that will redeploy itself worldwide.”³⁵

With the circulation of the culture and heritage memes, non-dominant citizens pull together to create a sense of power and belonging. Whereas many African Americans had lived in sequestered spaces with fragmented knowledge of their history, the emergence of narratives and cultural practices from spaces like Gorée Island and from discourses across the Black Atlantic gave them common markers that connected them into a more unified community.

Claude Lévi-Strauss proposed that the myth (the script) was the cultural glue that held communities together.³⁷ He postulated that myths function as a means of providing meaning and order within a society. Not just one myth in a society, but the sum of all myths within the society contributes to the cultural foundation. In forming this system of thoughts, myths form in a manner similar to language. Senghor, through his associations throughout Francophone Africa and the Caribbean, built an elaborate language of community that called the descendants of the slave trade to return to Africa.

In the 1980s the World Bank had required Senegal to participate in structural adjustments. Twenty years later, the artists who had thrived living in a country where artists were valued have all gone away. Dakar today continues to be a difficult city to reside, where many locals still try to exist using the same practices that worked twenty years ago. Today, Chinese markets and vendors have undercut fabric makers. Trends for art collectors have changed because of the sagging global economy as well as the new artistic attractions. The words of Joseph N'diaye continue to emerge from the mouths of tour guides who bombard the tourists each day as they attempt to find employment as cultural ambassadors on the island. The curator at the House of Slaves, Eloi Coly, uses the same script as N'diaye and all the other rogue guides.

Recent Performances

When descendants of the Slave Trade travel to Gorée Island for transformation, meeting the supporting actors sometimes quickly alters their imagined performance as the Senegalese cast members extend their participation beyond the apron of the stage of the island. Passing through Immigration and Customs at the airport in Dakar, pilgrims walk into a canvass of diverse languages, clothing, smells, sounds, music, religious worship, and governmental systems. The

intention of the tourists intersects with the locals and the drama begins. Immediately upon exiting the Léopold Sédar Senghor International Airport, tour guides besiege travelers with rehearsed narratives of “welcome home.” These guides implore the weary travelers, exhausted after a long flight from New York or Paris, to choose them to lead them through the complexities and densities of Dakar. Often mixing French and Wolof with broken English, the guides may even grab the arms of the frazzled travelers. On the streets of Dakar, some of the same guides, weighted down with souvenirs, encircle the travelers and again plead to guide them to the island and other local sites of interest. Locals talk of the days in the capital city when tourists could calmly traverse the streets, but after the structural adjustments of the 1980s and increased globalization, guides and street vendors will not easily take “no” for an answer to their sales pitches, as their entire family may depend on this one source of income. Once on Gorée a different set of guides, who have staked out their territory, make appeals to show the way around the tiny island. At the edge of the dock, they have learned their lines and wait in place for their cue to join in the grand performance of transformation. Immediately, travelers can only adapt their well-rehearsed performances to include the counter-subplot unfolding right before their eyes as they step into the unplanned and uncontrollable context of the recent history of Senegal.

After the end of French colonial rule, Léopold Sédar Senghor became Senegal’s first democratically elected president. He served until 1980 when he resigned before the end of his fifth term. Abdou Diouf was then elected president. In the early years of the recently independent nation, Senegal hobbled to stand alone amidst the rapidly turning continental vicissitudes. For the most part, Senghor established a stable foundation for the young country whose stability continues today. However, economically the country has never secured a firm standing in the world. While Senghor inaugurated a profound artistic and cultural foundation for

Senegal, its ability to continue to export culture faltered during Diouf's tenure in office.

Abdoulaye Wade, who ran on a platform of change, defeated Abdou Diouf in 2000. Because both Senghor and Diouf had served for 20 years, one of the key elements of Wade's platform consisted of a term limit. He also promised economic growth but after several years, the same economic problems that the country faced still persisted.

Abdoulaye Wade served two terms until 2012. He believed that he was elected when there were no term limits under the law. At eighty-five years old, and despite his promises, Wade sought a third term. Today, chronic unemployment and poverty continued to linger in the West African country. Young tour guides realized that they could not count on the promises of the government in the fluctuating tourism industry. Much of that dissatisfaction with Wade's presidency had centered on longtime accusations of nepotism and inappropriate relationships with various corporate enterprises. Many believed that Wade was grooming his son, Karim, to take his place. Sparked by the audacious revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011, Senegalese youth took to the streets to protest Wade's very public arrogance. Like many nations around the world, Senegal is in a state of continual flux, reflected in a popular movement of protests with dissatisfied youth called *Y'en a Marre* (Fed Up!) in the streets of Dakar.

Whereas many considered Léopold Senghor the first democratically elected father of postcolonial Senegal, Senegalese ridiculed Wade as the grandfather, *maame yaay*. First thought to be a savior, Wade became "represented as a villain whose appearance conveys deceit and a criminal who is ravaging the people he was elected to serve."³⁸ Wade became a central player in writing the script for the myth and rebirth narrative of Senegal. He left office creating one of the grandest cultural productions in West Africa. In 2010, Wade unveiled a huge bronze statue called the New African Renaissance Monument, overlooking Dakar and the Atlantic Ocean.

Wade made no friends when the Senegalese learned that the statue cost twenty-seven million dollars, paid for by trading forty acres of land in downtown Dakar, and that it was built by a North Korean construction company, even though it was the vision of a Senegalese artist. Many argued that the money could have been used to aid the poor, and thousands of Senegalese joined a protest when the statue was unveiled. Adding insult to the Senegalese people, Wade contends that he deserves thirty-five percent of all tourist profits at the monument because he thought of it. In Senegal, where Muslims make up ninety-four percent of the population, many criticized the monument because it included the figure of a scantily dressed woman. Others argue that the father, mother and son, with Eurocentric features, do not represent modern day Africa.

Wade suffered an embarrassing defeat in 2012 to a much younger coalition politician, Mackey Sall. Wade's son, Karim, was arrested in April 2013 and charged with enhancing his personal fortune when he served as a minister in his father's administration responsible for infrastructure and energy policy. During the 2012 election, Youssou N'Dour, the most popular African musician and nemesis of Abdoulaye Wade, entered the race for president but was disqualified when the legitimacy of his qualifying signatures were called into question. N'Dour continued his activism in the election, joining a coalition that endorsed Mackey Sall. Currently, N'Dour enjoys an active career as a popular singer, actor, owner of a television station, and newly appointed minister of Culture and Tourism. N'Dour has always been active in promoting culture in Senegal and has been a key player in memorializing the Island of Gorée as a "site of memory." With his film, *Return to Gorée*, N'Dour has elevated the island as an international theater.

Residents on Gorée Island and commuters from Dakar, who make the daily trip, step onto the stage to fill the gaps of the emerging economy of Senegal. According to the CIA's

online data website, The World Fact Book, Senegal has an unemployment rate of forty-eight percent, and fifty-four percent of the population lives in poverty.³⁹ Data from the World Bank indicates that the average gross national income equals \$1030 USD.⁴⁰ Forty-nine percent of the population over the age of fifteen demonstrate literacy.³⁹ In general, many of the guides on Gorée Island speak in several of the local languages such as Wolof, Pulaar, Jola, Mandinka, French and English.

The stage, the script, and the cast on Gorée Island include all the elements of theater. This heritage theater, set dramatically against the crashing waves of the Atlantic Ocean, points towards America, and continues to mediate the old with the new.

Sandra L. Richards argues that, like theater directors and designers, the curators of the slave dungeons of Ghana “seek to shape a necessarily multifaceted, complicated history into a comprehensible narrative that is affectively present; like theater practitioners, they seek to transform an abstract absence into a palpable presence.”³¹ On Gorée Island, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye has assisted in the transformations of thousands. Like any great theatrical production, action takes place both on stage and backstage. Some of the most memorable productions have been set on grand and colorful sets, accompanied by a dramatic story line and memorable music.

Interview: Painted Horror

In this interview, I spoke with an African American woman who had traveled to Senegal to visit her daughter, a Peace Corps volunteer. She went to Senegal just days before President Barack Obama and his family’s visit.

Why did you go to Senegal?

Well, I was in Senegal to visit my daughter who was in the Peace Corps and I promised her that I will come down to visit as she promised me that she would take me to as many places in Senegal but she could have so Gorée Island was one of the places on our list of things to do. She was not on vacation so it was work

for her and so she set it up with other volunteers, Peace Corps volunteers throughout the country, so they were having a place for us to stay. And so she was actually on the phone a lot. "Mom you need to go here." And see, so it was the first time for both of us. When you are waiting for people to take you over to the island, people who hit you up for business. It's amazing how they can pick you out and see you as a foreigner.

Did you know anything about Gorée Island before you went?

The only thing I knew was this is where they took the slaves before they took them on the ships to the slaves to America.

When you got on the island what was your first impression?

Well, um, as I was looking at the island from the boat ferry that was going over there, it kind of reminded me of Alcatraz you know and in San Francisco that was my impression, I thought not too far from land come shallow water I saw people and kayaks, kids people just kind of swimming along, you know close to the island people kayaking in between both places and it was like a prison to me it reminded of Alcatraz and so once I landed on the island and I looked at different colored houses, the buildings, and I thought it was very colorful. And so we started walking and the tour guide started explaining all the different places and the history of the island. He was actually from there and found out later on that his grandmother lived on the island in fact in fact we take a picture of her in her house he actually lived there and grew up there. He was 29 years old so; he was a pretty good tour guide. That was my impression when I first saw it.

Did you see the children?

I saw children swimming in children kayaking, I mean they were just having so much fun than I thought, wow, they're so close to the ferryboat. The ferryboat had to move around them they just seem so comfortable and they were having such a good time.

What was the most impactful moment of your visit on the island?

The impact for moment was when I entered the door, you know when they open the doors, the place is open now and they said give me a ticket when we walked and I headed to the left, and that first room when he was explaining about the men and how they were packed in and how day and I looked and I thought this is painted horror. They had it painted this bright pink or whatever the call was on that was my impression, painted horrors hose two words because it was like they had tried to cover up something that was so horrible and so bad in history to a people that you know and get there okay they're gonna show you the tour and you walk into those rooms and you say the original walls and it's like people scratching, the windows a pretty new, and you know I thought this is... And you

know I got worse and worse from there, you know, where the women were, this is where the virgins were, you know young ones, this is where the babies were, I just wanted to cry again. It was just painted horror. They try to paint over something that was so horrible. You could just see the people scratching, trying to get out. They just painted over it. That was my impression.

What were your feelings about the island before you got there? Any expectations?

No, I've seen a couple pictures of you know, this is where slaves were, this is the door of no return, you know I've seen a few pictures, not a lot. Not knowing a lot, my expectations were just to see what happened and where it happened. I think that was my thoughts and my idea. I think though, it's kind of like a spiritual thing when I did, when my feet hit the island itself and we started walking. It's like this spiritual thing that wraps itself around you, I mean it's hard to explain but it was, I didn't feel heavy, you know heavy with sadness until he mentioned the first building you know, we were just walking around and I was looking, like... look it all the colorful buildings and places and they are historical and old and he said this is the house where they did whatever it was and he was explaining and I wanted to cry. I could feel tears coming out of my eyes and I thought why do I feel like this. It was just a sadness that came over me it's hard to explain I just thought, wow! It just made me very, very, very sad it was that first introduction with the house and then I just felt, wow, you know, I'm on precious ground. And, you know, it was just hard to focus after that. I was too busy just looking around trying to feel what people might have felt back then.

Did you get there before Pres. Obama or after Pres. Obama?

We were right there, like two days before he came. Because I told my daughter, I said should I extend my ticket and I said, "Will you be able to go there and see him?" You know she had been there for year and she said well no mom I don't think so.

They have Peace Corps volunteer lottery. They have more than 200 of us around the country. She knows artists; one of our families was going there to presents. That was one of the people I went to see as well. They showed me the pictures they were presented to the president. So I didn't stay. He was coming Tuesday and I left that Monday so I was there right before so I saw Michelle's tweets, pictures and I didn't stay. I did not have a chance to see him. I did go to the hotel where he was staying.

After the interviewee left Senegal, President Obama visited the island and experienced huge fanfares. Boubacar Joseph N'diaye's narrative continues to circulate through Eloi Coly, the current curator on the island. After visiting the island, Michelle Obama blogged about her

feelings and experiences at the island. The contested narrative of the Gorée Island griot, N'diaye, continues to circulate. With the presidential visits, the narrative recirculates into official government documents and becomes archived as history. Michelle Obama wrote:

After our visit to the Martin Luther King School, we boarded a ferry to Gorée Island, a small island off Senegal's coast. For roughly three hundred years until the mid-1840s, countless men, women and children from Africa were kidnapped from their homes and communities and brought to this island to be sold as slaves. On our tour of the island, we saw the dark, cramped cells where dozens of people were packed together for months on end, with heavy chains around their necks and arms. We saw the courtyard where they were forced to stand naked while buyers examined them, negotiated a price, and bought them as if they were nothing but property. And we saw what is known as "The Door of No Return," a small stone doorway through which these men, women and children passed on their way to massive wooden ships that carried them across the ocean to a life of slavery in the United States and elsewhere – a brutal journey known as the "Middle Passage"⁴¹.

MEMOIR: Improvisation and Personal Narrative

In Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*, she reveals her own self-discovery through narratives that she juxtaposes with research methods that further the objective of finding the remains of the slaves.⁴² Like Hartman, I address the existential context surrounding the sites of memory. In calling for a different kind of research writing, Ruth Behar states, "when you write vulnerably, others respond vulnerably."⁴³ She urges the writer to find the right balance of vulnerability and objectivity in academic writing.

Senegal, like many West African countries, persists in having extreme poverty conditions. In this memoir, I interrogate my own encounter with these conditions as a diasporic tourist. On top of the quest to "find roots" by visiting sites of memory, it would be very difficult for one not to see the harsh realities of life in Senegal. These realities become a part of the journey of transformation for me, the diasporic tourist. The anthropologist Michael Jackson addressed the existential realities of travel:

Yet hardly a day passes that one is not overwhelmed by the human capacity for love and joy, by what some people accomplished with limited means in a world of scarcity and inequality, and by the ingenuity with which people reimagine and surpass the situations in which they find themselves.⁴⁴

Traveling to a city like Dakar offers someone who has always lived in the United States a stark contrast. In *Existential Anthropology*, Michael Jackson describes the demonstration of human possibilities in difficult situations where people find a way to move beyond the seeming limitations of their lives.⁴⁴ Up until that first visit, I had never seen a country that we in the United States would categorize as having so little. In the center of Dakar, where globalization has forced many people away from their villages and into the harsh realities of unemployment, lack of housing, no health care, lack of clean water, and hunger, people still find time to love. People find time to smile and to remember you, as they did with me year after year. Indeed, people with limited means find a way to fashion their lives so that they can still express joy. What they don't have, they learn how to create and invent.

In this memoir, I wanted to use similar commentary with personal narratives and research approaches as Hartman by involving cultural contexts in order to demonstrate the importance of heritage journeys. Even as the shadows of the Transatlantic Slave Trade persist, bolts of light do burst forth. Laws sometimes do change. Sometimes people change and transform. Sometimes, they change the narratives that have kept them bound up. For me, the transformation that I thought I would perform never happened so I had to improvise.

As a little boy growing up in Georgia in the 1960s and 1970s, I took in all the "priming" for my transformation in Africa. Some of my greatest memories of growing up included watching Martin Luther King Jr.'s funeral and seeing the sadness in everyone around me. With my family, we watched with excitement when Muhammad Ali went to the Congo. We counted the days when Ebony magazine would come and the "The Great Kings and Queens of African" lined the center pages.¹⁸ When Roots aired in 1977, the schools had integrated for a few years, for the first time, I talked about race with my white classmates. From that moment, I longed to know Africa.

While visiting Paris in the late 1990s, someone asked me if I had come from Senegal. I told him, “no,” knowing that I could not even identify Senegal on a map. I had never really thought about a specific place in Africa of my ancestors’ origins. The man told me about an island on the coast of the country where there was an international UNESCO memorial to the slave trade. I was instantly curious, wondering if I could have some kind of profound experience such as the ones that people report after visiting other important memorials around the world. When I told a friend that I had visited Dachau Concentration Camp in Germany, she told me that she had gone to the gates and heard all those souls crying so she ran back to the bus, without visiting. I imagined I would go to Senegal to visit this memorial island and I would hear “all those souls crying.”

In 2003, I finally made my first trip to Senegal and Gorée Island. Since that first trip to Senegal, I have returned at least thirteen times and I have crossed over to the tiny island at least twenty times. My experience consists of multiple visits and mounds of personal journals and notes from my visits.

In the summer of 2003, my life was at a crossroads. My father had died and my beloved mother had passed away three years before that. I was lost. I had done all the things that I knew to do to live out the “American dream” but nothing seemed to work. That summer, I could not find the language to express my overwhelming feelings of “un-belonging.” On that first trip to Senegal, I boarded a plane in Paris, not knowing where I was going in Dakar. All I knew was that I wanted to discover the Africa in me. I was willing to face whatever I encountered once the plane landed.

As I exited Customs, I suddenly found myself in the middle of a swarm of tall Senegalese men all pulling at me, grabbing my bags and yelling something at me in a language that I had never heard. After yelling, “I do not understand,” I made my way over to an ATM machine and extracted what seemed to me to be in exorbitant amount of money with lots of zeros. Finally, I told two of the men that they could be my guides. They escorted me out of the airport and to a dilapidated yellow taxi. We stood outside the taxi as the two men yelled at the driver for 10 minutes. Finally, they shook hands and we drove off down a long and dusty road. The two guys took me to a home in Dakar and insisted that I stay with the family. I would have a “much more authentic experience,” they pressured. They swore that the only way that I would learn Senegal was to stay with the family. After 30 minutes of arguing, I convinced them that I was much better off in a cheap hotel in the center of town.

Crossing over the choppy Atlantic Ocean on the 20-minute ride from the Port of Dakar to Gorée the first time, I did not know what to expect. I knew that I wanted a transformation in my life but I certainly was not ready for a big public display of emotion. The first time I went into the slave house, an overwhelming feeling of connectedness came over me. Perhaps it was the many islanders who said to me

as I exited the boat, “Hello my brother. Hello my friend. Welcome home.” There was something about the banana and apple colored colonial houses on the island. Many of these old houses had also served as containments for slaves.

On my first visit to Gorée Island, I did not feel the overwhelming feeling of presence of the ancestors, so I returned a few days later, hoping to hear the cry of those who have been dragged through the “Door of No Return.” I did become fascinated with the people on Gorée. Once the ferry docks at Gorée, the tourists are bombarded with vendors and tour guides. Inside La Maison de Esclaves, I listened attentively to the curator, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye. His passionate narrative of how the slaves had been separated from other family members and placed in different room moved people to a sad hush. “The mama sent to Cuba, the papa to Brazil, the brother to Virginia.” He spoke of the “Door of No Return” and how once the slaves went through that door, they were never to see Africa again. We saw the little room for infants where they were fed grease and flour to fatten them up. I watched as the people listened in awe. I seriously waited for the moment when the “ancestors” would swoop me up, sit me down and give me a “talking to.” I waited for the ancestors’ arrival just as they had arrived in Halle Garima’s 1993-acclaimed film, Sankofa.⁴⁵

One of the rogue tour guides grabbed me and took me on a special little tour around the small house. He told me the story of the “Door of No Return,” just as I had heard Boubacar Ndiaye deliver the speech. The tall guide, with long matted hair and clothing with patchwork who I learned was a member of a religious order called the Baye Falls, asked me if I had seen him on CNN. I had not but I did see the special report that CNN had done and the African American reporter broke down and cried. I wanted to have that kind of breakthrough. Perhaps, on that first visit, I was distracted with the vendors and the two guides who had kidnapped me the night before at the airport. In La Maison de Esclaves, I did notice some African Americans who were sobbing. The tall Baye Fall followed up to the top of a big hill on the island. The winding pathway was lined with brilliantly colored tableaux that were painted by locals. At the top of the island, a massive cannon rests. The guides informed me that the cannon had been used in the film, The Guns of Navarone with Gregory Peck and Anthony Quinn. Nowadays, various artists live in the cannon’s belly below. I milled around the hilltop, talked with artists and sat.

Back in the hotel room, I spent an hour arguing with the tour guides who had kidnapped me at the airport. I finally paid them to leave but they warned me that they were only trying to protect me from all the murderous thieves who would snatch me up from the streets. Afraid to go out, I stayed in the hotel room for the evening. Late in the afternoon the next day, I ventured out, only to be cornered by two Baye Falls who tried to convince me that I needed a guide. I gave in and me they found me a guide who would travel to the Gambia, the land of Alex Haley’s roots (Roots.) Since that first year, the Baye Falls from the streets of Dakar become some of my closest acquaintances.

My father, born in 1913 in the country, outside the small town of Elberton, Georgia, had grown up under the harsh confines of Jim Crow. From the efforts of his family and community, he managed to graduate from college and then go on complete pharmacy school at Xavier University in New Orleans where he met Marie Louise, born in 1921 in New Orleans, Louisiana. My mother embodied a unique piece of history of America as a descendant of diverse cultures of New Orleans. After moving around the country, attempting to find work as a pharmacist, Charles brought Marie to Elberton, Georgia, the "Granite Capital of the World," a small town in the foothills of Northeast Georgia. Most black men work in the quarries, the sheds or on farms. Somehow, my father had made it out. Most black men of his age finished the seventh grade. Somehow, he managed to graduate pharmacy school. Growing up in New Orleans, my mother, like all of her family and many other descendants of the former French colony, had grown up attending a Catholic church. In Elberton, Georgia, the only Catholic church in the whole county stood right in the middle of the all white section of town. In the early 1950's, no one crossed racial lines, except to work as domestics. Certainly, people did not socialize across racial lines. Feeling alienated from her deep cultural connection to the church, my mother contacted her parish priest in New Orleans, who contacted the bishop in Atlanta to make a way for my mother to attend the all-white church in Elberton, Georgia. In 1950, my mother walked across town and integrated the Catholic Church. In Georgia, whites killed African Americans for making such an audacious move. Until my mother's death in 1997, Saint Mary's Catholic Church stood alone as an integrated house or worship.

In the summer of 2003, there I sat in a tiny hotel room on a dusty road near the center of town in Dakar, Senegal, searching to find something in me that felt ruptured. My parents have given me everything so that I would be a gift to the world but I had missed the mark. Ten years later, I look back in my journal to discover that I wrote, "Dear God, what have I gotten myself into?" As I boarded the plane to return to Paris, loaded down with woodcarvings, mud cloth, tie-dyed cloths, paintings and dashikis, I did feel like a changed man. I heard the story of Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye and I believed it.

Reflections From My Journal of August 2003 After My First Visit.

There is something inviting about Gorée Island. The old colonial buildings, colored like apples and bananas, the palm trees suggests somewhere tropical. The bright blue ocean with children swimming and playing water games, drums beating, dancers gyrating, artists with bright colors, the orange, yellow and fiery red bougainvillea lined pathways, jewelry makers selling the bracelets, beautiful women calling out "regardez mi shops!" This is so inviting at Gorée Island. In the center of the island sits the apple colored former slave house. There, the spirits still cry for what was to be the last breath of air from Africa. Millions died before

leaving. Millions of others left, never to see Africa again. Systematically, families were brought to the slave house. Rooms were separated to export the human cargo to Cuba, Brazil, Louisiana, the Caribbean, France, and all the other parts of the world that would use these slaves in building a new world. No family members were placed in the same rooms. While the mama may have gone to Jamestown, the son would have gone to Havana, the papa to France, the daughter to Bahia. The baby placed in a tiny room and fed grease and flour so that she was fattened up for a later journey.

Hundreds of men and women from all over Africa replaced in the tiny rooms. No one spoke the same language; a common language would have been power. In the slave house, exists a tiny dungeon for those who caused trouble. In the 1990s, Nelson Mandela crawled into the tiny space and came out sobbing. Upstairs, where the slave traders slept, they dined on juicy pork while the slaves below moaned from the pain of hunger. The faded apple colored stairs led like open arms to the captives above. Below the captured begged for just one minute of fresh air. They scrambled to get to one of the tiny windows in the darkened crowded rooms. Once a day, the captors allowed them time to meet with nature. Only the strong were allowed into the slave house, the weak ones were given a special diet, if they were not fattened up successfully, there left behind in Africa as domestics to the slave traders. The strong ones needed to survive the journey to the New World. The majesty of the Atlantic Ocean beats against the rocky beach at the one exit from the faded apple colored slave house, the Door of No Return. One by one the no-longer-free-human-beings were marched onto the ship and transported around the world.

There is something inviting about Gorée Island. Pope John Paul II came to apologize for the churches participation in slavery. Bill Clinton and his family came. Nelson Mandela came. George W. Bush even came but the people were not happy with his visit. The fishermen still lament how they lost \$1 million because of his visit as sub-mariners trolled the seas around the island the week before, searching for the terrorists' bombs.

When I was there I saw an African-American man sobbing and then his wife. Something was moving inside of me, too. I lifted old shackles and I was able to feel what a ball and chain was like. When I was there, lots of people came, too. People from all over the world came. They took the choppy ferry across the sea to this inviting place. I would like to go back. Without a guide, I want to listen more to the quiet stories from the wind. On Gorée Island, lots of African step forward to tell the story of the old slave house, some for money some for free. At the top of the mountain on Gorée Island, I watched a man dancing a dance likes the capoeira.

He stepped forward to tell me the story of the dance, when the guide offered him money; the dancer said, "Why dis? He needs to know his history."

This dancer was a gift. I hope to watch more miracles unfold before me like that. Mostly I want to go to The Door of No Return and sit by the Majestic Ocean and listen. I hope to hear the silent stories of when my great, great, great, grandmother had a baby snatched from her and sent to a faraway land. I want to hear the cries of when the bonds had not been broken, before the rupture. I want to sit and ask the Majestic Ocean, "Why? How could you let this terrible history happened? Why not suck up those slave ships?"

I want to hear a reply from that source.

I want to really sit and hear.

I want to hear and then awaken the Africa in me.

- 1 Guide, Baye Fall Tour, 'The Atlantic Slave Trade', (Goree Island: 2003).
- 2 Campbell, James T., *Middle Passages : African American Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005, The Penguin History of American Life* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), pp. xxvi, 513 p., 16 p. of plates.
- 3 Hochschild, Adam, *King Leopold's Ghost : A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), p. 366 p.
- 4 Hill, Robert A., Barbara Bair, and Marcus Garvey, 'Marcus Garvey, Life and Lessons a Centennial Companion to the Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers', (Berkeley: University of California Press,, 1987), pp. lxix, 451 p., 1 p. of plates port. 22 cm.
- 5 Wright, Richard, Richard Wright, and Richard Wright, *Black Power : Three Books from Exile : Black Power, the Color Curtain, and White Man, Listen!* 1st edn, *Harper Perennial Modern Classics* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008), pp. xiii, 812, 32 p.
- 6 Schechner, Richard, *Between Theater & Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), pp. xiv, 342 p.
- 7 Turner, Victor W., *The Anthropology of Performance*. 1st pbk. edn (New York: PAJ Publications, 1988), p. 185 p.
- 8 'Unesco World Heritage Convention', <<http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/SN/%3E>.
- 9 MacCannell, Dean, *The Tourist : A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. Rev. edn (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), pp. xxii, 214 p.
- 10 Bruner, Edward M., *Culture on Tour : Ethnographies of Travel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. x, 308 p.
- 11 Curtin, Philip D., *The Atlantic Slave Trade; a Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), pp. xix, 338 p.

- 12 Eltis, David, and David Richardson, *Routes to Slavery : Direction, Ethnicity, and Mortality in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Studies in Slave and Post-Slave Societies and Cultures* (London ; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997), p. 151 p.
- 13 ———, 'Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade', in *The Lewis Walpole series in eighteenth-century culture and history* (New Haven: Yale University Press,, 2010).
- 14 Hall, Gwendolyn Midlo, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana : The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), pp. xx, 434 p.
- 15 ———, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas : Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), pp. xxi, 225 p.
- 16 NDiaye, Boubacar Joseph, 'The Slave House of Goree Island and Its History', ed. by Dakar Port Authority (Dakar, Senegal).
- 17 Borgeaud, Pierre Y., 'Return to Gorée', (France: Axion Films, 2007).
- 18 'Anheuser Busch: The Great Kings and Queens of Africa', <<http://anheuser-busch.com/index.php/anheuser-busch-donates-great-kings-and-queens-of-africa-art-collection/%3E>.
- 19 Wolper, David, 'Roots', (United States: Warner Brothers, 1977).
- 20 Hennessey, Kathleen 'President Obama Calls Slave Site in Senegal "Powerful"', *Los Angeles Times* 2013.
- 21 Araujo, Ana Lucia, *Politics of Memory : Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space, Routledge Studies in Cultural History* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. viii, 296 p.
- 22 Obama, President Barack, 'Remarks by President Obama after Tour of Maison Des Esclaves
- '2013) <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/27/remarks-president-obama-after-tour-maison-des-esclaves%3E>.

- 23 Shear, Michael D, 'Obama Looks to History and Future in Senegal', *New York Times* 2013.
- 24 Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara, *Destination Culture : Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998), pp. xviii, 326 p.
- 25 Hewison, Robert, *The Heritage Industry : Britain in a Climate of Decline, A Methuen Paperback* (London: Methuen London, 1987), p. 160 p.
- 26 Joseph, Peniel E., *Stokely : A Life*, pp. xiv, 399 pages, 8 unnumbered pages of plates.
- 27 Diop, Cheikh Anta, 'The Meaning of Our Work', in *Perspectives on Africa*, ed. by Roy Richard Grinker; Stenier Grinker, Christopher (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishing, 1997).
- 28 Urry, John, *The Tourist Gaze*. 2nd edn, *Theory, Culture & Society* (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2002), p. 183 p.
- 29 Wagner, Roy, *The Invention of Culture*. Rev. and expanded edn, *A Phoenix Book* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. xx, 168 p.
- 30 Ebron, Paulla A., *Performing Africa* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. xviii, 244 p.
- 31 Richards, Sandra L., 'What Is Remembered?: Tourism to Ghana's Slave Castle-Dungeons', *Theater Journal*, 57 (2005), 617-37.
- 32 Holsey, Bayo, *Routes of Remembrance : Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. xiii, 280 p.
- 33 Aristotle, and Gerald Frank Else, *Poetics, Ann Arbor Paperbacks Aa166* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970), p. 124 p.
- 34 Gramsci, Antonio, Quintin Hoare, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London,: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), pp. xcvi, 483 p.

- 35 Senghor, Léopold Sédar, *Négritude: Humanism of the Twentieth Century*. ed. by Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann and Christopher Burghard Steiner. 2nd edn, *Perspectives on Africa : A Reader in Culture, History, and Representation* (Chichester, West Sussex ; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1970).
- 36 Harney, Elizabeth, *In Senghor's Shadow : Art, Politics, and the Avant-Garde in Senegal, 1960-1995, Objects/Histories* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. xxv, 316 p.
- 37 Levi-Strauss, Claude, *The Structural Study of Myth*. ed. by Ed Thomas Sebeok, *Myth: Symposium* (1968).
- 38 Gueye, Maramé, *Modern Media and Culture in Senegal: Speaking Truth to Power*. 3 vols. Vol. 54, *African Studies Review* (Piscataway, New Jersey: African Studies Association; Rutgers University, 2011).
- 39 CIA, 'The World Fact Book, Senegal', CIA, (2014)
<<https://http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sg.html%3E>.
- 40 Bank, World, 'World Development Indicators, Senegal'2014)
<<http://data.worldbank.org/country/senegal%3E>.
- 41 Obama, Michelle, 'Visiting Goree Island', in *The White House Blog* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2013).
- 42 Hartman, Saidiya V., *Lose Your Mother : A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. 1st edn (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), pp. xi, 270 p.
- 43 Behar, Ruth, *The Vulnerable Observer : Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), pp. xii, 195 p.
- 44 Jackson, Michael, *Existential Anthropology : Events, Exigencies and Effects, Methodology and History in Anthropology V. 11* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), pp. xxxii, 216 p.
- 45 Garima, Halle, 'Sankofa', (United States: Mypheduh Films, 1993).

Fifth Movement
Cool Down and Reintegration

On a busy, hot, and dusty street in Dakar, a young Baye Fall man, adorned in a flowing patchwork robe made of magnificent scraps of colorful discarded cloth, moves through the crowded city chanting *zikir*, or “recollections of God.” Described as “urban monks,” Baye Falls, with their long flowing locked hair, are one of the many vibrant examples of Africa’s diversity. These acolytes devote themselves to hard labor in adoration of Allah and as apostles of Sheikh Amadou Bamba, the pacifist founder of the Mouride Sufi movement in Senegal. These young men, who subscribe to the teachings of Islam and Sufi mysticism, follow the direct example of Bamba’s most important disciple, Ibra Fall. Followers often call him “Lampe Fall” because of his illuminating devotion as demonstrated through hard work. On the streets of Dakar, one can easily identify the Baye Fall by their chanting, pleading for alms for Koranic schooling for children, and patchwork (*ndiakhasse*) robes, which resemble zigzag quilts of African American heritage, where quilters assemble bits and pieces of others’ retired valuables. The anthropologist Allen Roberts suggest that this clothing, which expresses the concept of juxtaposing material objects of recyclage, possesses wisdom from the person who owned the cloth before. “Baye Falls would say that such is the stuff of *baraka* - the divine intentionality of love.” Roberts argues that, “like quilts in an earlier America, Baye Fall patchwork is archival, created from memories of gifts, sympathy and support.”¹

The same concept, in various manifestations, exists in the material, spiritual, and psychological domains throughout the Black Atlantic. This concept, what Claude Levi-Strauss called *bricolage*, has not only helped Africans in the Diaspora to survive, but it has also pushed the creation of new myths, narratives, religious practices, and artistic expressions.² Throughout the Black Atlantic, this piecing together of fragments in foods, clothing, music, and religion exemplifies both the brilliance and the struggle of the descendants of slaves.

On swarming Dakar streets, refurbished and overcrowded *car rapides*, retired and ancient cast aside mini-vans shipped back from richer nations, creep along carrying weary and exhausted passengers through the massive metropolis. Besides the millions of people extracted from Africa over the past centuries, First World nations have also taken raw materials, such as diamonds, oil, uranium, coltan, rubber and bauxite to make into cars, appliances, computers, and telephones. When First World nations no longer need finished products that they have produced from Africa's raw materials, they load up barges and return debris, such as used cars and refrigerators, back to former colonized nations. In Senegal's capital city, enterprising men refashion thousands of used cars and buses. These cars and buses, painted in bright colors and mixed with parts from different cars, demonstrate a rebirth as the new creations squeeze onto the bursting streets of Dakar. Locals smelt returned scrap metals and make pots and pans, while street entrepreneurs twist and refashion cooper wires into bracelets and sell them to tourists. On another corner, a young woman with polio, unable to walk, peddles by using a bicycle retrofitted to maneuver by hand. An artist sells small tableaus made with scrap nails and wires. Two little boys avoid being stepped upon as they push along their bird, with flapping wings, made from a wire clothes hanger. Enterprising and innovative individuals make beauty from garbage, building upon the old to create the new. These resourceful examples exemplify a determination to construct a means of subsistence by putting together, by means of bricolage, that which locals find available.

Like African American soul food, language, jazz, and quilts, the Senegalese have remixed, re-fabricated, and refabulated in order to persevere and thrive. Across the Black Atlantic, descendants of slaves have also mastered and recognized the concept of making something from that which others have discarded. For example, in Haiti, one can easily see the

similarities of the *car rapide* from Dakar and the *tap tap* in Port-au-Prince, two locations in the Black Atlantic, separated by thousands of miles, but connected by the practice of bricolage. This practice permeates spiritual, psychological, and artistic worlds where Diasporans transform both their material environment and themselves. Michèle Strobel-Baginski posits that the patchwork cloth of the Baye Falls symbolize *aduna*, “the whole world brought together.”³ In essence, across the Black Atlantic, Africans and the descendants of Africa, commonly join fragments of others’ discarded lives in order to make new creations.

In this chapter, I examine the performance of transformation of diasporic tourists as demonstrated through the restoration stage of Schechner’s framework. In Schechner’s scheme of the seven phases of performance, the cool-down and aftermath occur after the performative/liminal phase and deliver the performer to what he calls restored behavior.⁴ Schechner asserted that behaviors are never performed for the first time but always through the repetition, as people rearrange, remake, and edit their behaviors. I propose that from the elevated performative space on Gorée Island, diasporic tourists create dramatic restorations in their lives in the aftermath of their presence in the ascended space on the island. In this stage of “bringing together,” tourists refashion their lives beyond their everyday performances of being before traveling. These pilgrims have rehearsed their transformations to redress what they lost through the memory of their stolen ancestors, their violated distant relatives, and their own emotional wounds, left by experiences of the racialized blues in a country with racial foundations.

First, I analyze restored behavior using Sigmund Freud’s dichotomy of mourning and melancholia as an entry onto the final stages of the performance of transformation.⁵ While Sigmund Freud, born into a wealthy Austrian Jewish family in 1856, could not possibly have embodied the experiences of slaves or their descendants, his approach to the psychoanalytic

process does offer a mechanism to unravel the process of transformation from wounded state of being to states of healing.

Second, I explore beyond mourning loss with the concept of “remains” as formulated by David L. Eng and David Kazanjian. “We might say that as soon as the question ‘What is lost?’ is posed, it invariably slips into the question ‘What remains?.’” They suggest that “loss is inseparable from what remains.”⁶ Mourning the losses of the brutal legacy of slavery, I suggest that what “remains” consist of repeated narratives of empowerment and determination that have sustained slaves and their descendants since the beginning of the American slave trade. The awareness of what remains replaces the narrative of loss and the “well-seasoned travelers” can then refabulate their narratives to redress the breach of slavery. Through the process of bringing together the fragments of what remains, diasporic tourists return from the liminal stage to reincorporation into the initial rehearsal spaces where rehearsed behaviors occurred. Victor Turner posited that in this stage, individuals demonstrate redressive or remedial behaviors. Travelers return back to the spaces where they experienced their initial ruptures but with new revelations and insights. These travelers return to the original spaces of un-belonging with narratives of belonging. I explore how diasporic tourists return to the original spaces of rupture but with a newly acquired ability to transform fragments to wholeness. I reveal this reintegration through an interview with a young African American male who returned to the United States after visiting Gorée Island, and experienced resistance as he attempted to reintegrate into his community in Oakland, California. Finally, I turn once again to the genre of memoir to disclose my own experiences of reintegration from my first visit to Gorée Island.

Mourning and Melancholia

Ambivalence, a necessary component of melancholia, holds the individual in stasis, an emotionally stuck place of inaction. It keeps the individual paralyzed in an internal conflict where on one side the he or she celebrates the “things could be worse” meme, and on the other side suffers the gravity of their condition. In this ambivalent state, the individual moves from the coercive hand of the master and into total consent. The oppressed or marginalized individual submits to the oppressor as a means of survival, actualizing Carter G. Woodson’s notion that you do not have to physically oppress others to get them to assume subservient positions. The ambivalent mind will create its own limitations, both for itself and for others. This is particularly true in the ambivalent melancholic state, found in sequestered spaces like slave plantations, Jim Crow settlements, and hyper-segregated spaces like Ferguson, Missouri, where the individual turns his inability to act on himself and on those around him. He limits himself and demands that those around him do so as well. In order to thrive in these closed-off environments, slaves and their descendants rehearsed transformation, and through that process, sought to transcend their ambivalent conditions. Slaves rehearsed this transcendence out of ambivalence through heightened performative states of storytelling, music, dance, and religious worship.

In spaces of un-belonging, the descendants of slavery move through ambivalence as they struggle through the tangle of mourning and melancholia. Claudia Tate applied the psychoanalytic process to analyzing race in black novels. She suggested that psychoanalysis could assist in understanding the pathology of racism by centering on the “primary nurturing environment, not the external circumstances that precondition that environment.” Psychoanalysis, she argued, offers a transitional space between times and circumstances that can advance future possibilities. I agree with Tate that by contextualizing individuals through the use of psychoanalysis, we “can advance our understanding of racialized behavior.”⁷ However, I

propose that because of fragmented “primary nurturing environments” through the slaving process, the focus on the external environment can also play a crucial role in unraveling the presence of ambivalence in sequestered spaces such as slave plantations and present day economically depressed areas. As slavers tore families apart, they also fragmented the primary relationships that Freud initially applied in his psychoanalytic processes. Because slave owners extended so much authority over the slaves, any analysis must include the context of their oppression. The use of Freud’s mourning/melancholia frame does offer a means to analyze the process for exiting the ambivalent state. I submit that analyzing racialized structures can shed additional light onto behaviors within society. The potential of psychoanalysis to illumine individual behaviors in the context of the external environment creates more space for understanding individual transformation. In other words, to limit any analysis to familial relations undermines the realities of un-belonging. Slaves on plantations found belonging within the safety of their closed spaces with other slaves but encounters outside of those spaces required transformative actions. In spaces like plantations, slaves could choose simply to survive in ambivalent sequestration or they could confront life outside of those spaces, where they might encounter the dangerous unknown, where transformation occurs. As slaves performed individual confrontations with the external environment, they grounded their choices in the cultural materials that they recapitulated which employed the simultaneous presence of pain and transcendence. From their spaces of un-belonging, they rehearsed cultural markers through music and stories that helped them to move from ambivalence to transformation. They performed the same cycles of transcendence when they encountered external oppression that they did when they mediated between mourning and melancholia. By the time African American tourists reach sites like Gorée, I would argue that they employ the same cycle they rehearsed for survival

against oppressive external forces. On the island, they perform the same duality of pain and transcendence, though neither for survival nor against a threatening external force. Rather, on Gorée, they perform the meme for their transformation from within, and create a space of belonging.

From the “bittersweet” moment, the simultaneous point of pain and transcendence, slaves could mourn and celebrate at the same time. The ability to move beyond ambivalence requires mourning and transcendence. The sorrowful moan of the Negro spiritual delivered the slave to the mournful state and, at the same time, the melodious harmonies created by collective voices held the space for transcendence. As we have seen, this concurrent embrace of sorrow and joy would continue to circulate through all the stages of African American music. This same coexistence of emotions occurs at Gorée Island, as the pilgrim mourns the pain of the past and celebrates the promise of the future.

Freud considered mourning a realistic and healthy response to loss, whereby an individual experiences the pain of a lost object or person but replaces the lost object over time.⁵ On the other hand, melancholy, a pathological response, entails a refusal to substitute the lost object. Melancholic individuals live on the memory of the lost object. According to Freud, this form of consumption does not allow the individual to heal. The ego, unable to experience the pain, becomes psychically stuck. Because of the difficulty of consumption, the libido turns on the ego, causing a repetitive cycle of shame, guilt, and anger. Freud believed that both mourning and melancholia present a “profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, and loss of the capacity to love.”⁵ However, melancholia represents the inability of the libido to withdraw from the lost object, or person. The melancholic demonstrates an enduring devotion to the lost object where an individual cannot resolve the grief or loss. Mourning, on the

other hand, occurs when an individual's libido withdraws, bit by bit, from the lost object and replaces it with new objects. Eng and Kazanjian argue that "indeed, the politics of mourning might be described as that creative process mediating a hopeful or hopeless relationship between loss and history."⁶

For diasporic tourists, Gorée Island represents a replacement of the melancholic story with new narratives of empowerment. The island symbolizes a means of transformation. On the island, the griots and guides bellow refrains of how the slavers only took the strong ones to America and that only the strongest could have possibly endured the long and treacherous middle passage. These storytellers on the island replace a negated narrative, often omitted from textbooks, about the lives and characters of the slaves who the slave trade extracted from Africa. Whereas American textbooks do not often incorporate narratives from the slaves' points of view, the guides illuminate the hidden narratives of the slaves. As hegemonic storytellers negate these hidden narratives, the possibility of identifying toxic remnants of the omissions, such as shame, guilt, anger and grief persists.

Anne Cheng uses Freud's scheme of mourning and melancholia to analyze racial formations. She posits that assimilated individuals in the American culture process "hidden grief," and argues that "the melancholic's relationship to the object is now no longer just love or nostalgia but also profound resentment."⁸ Cheng recalls the Clark Doll Test as an example of the response to melancholia. In 1947, Kenneth and Mamie Clark administered a study of African American children's attitudes and preferences towards black and white dolls. The experiment demonstrated and yielded a clear preference for white dolls by black children, a conclusion that served as one of the foundational pieces of evidence that segregation caused psychological damage to African American children in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Since the

original test, researchers have repeated the test and generated the same conclusions. After the more than sixty years since the Clark experiment, black children still prefer the white dolls. Black and white children see black dolls as inferior, ugly, and bad, and choose white as the pretty, smart, and nice ones. Mattel, the giant toy maker, spent millions, only to discover that black children did not want to play with dolls that looked like them. Cheng urges us to analyze the psychic wounding of racialized minorities by dominant cultures. She theorizes that by identifying the relationships between the racialized other and the melancholic dominants, through the psychoanalytic model, race scholars can begin to inform a new political re-imagining.

Cheng's use of Freud's model can be useful in analyzing the interplay between marginalized "others" within the American Narrative in terms of the psychology of their responses. To what extent do these groups re-inscribe their roles and to what extent do they rehearse and recapitulate old narratives? Throughout American history, African-Americans have been cast as the negative racialized other. Since hegemonic groups have considered African-Americans in a negative light, they could justify their privilege as slave owners, torturers, and the chosen ones. The blues narrative has consistently played counterpoint with the hegemonic narrative of the United States with positive heroic and trickster players. However, negative stereotypes continue to dominate the hegemonic American narrative through negative characterizations, reinforcing racial formations. African Americans, forced to live in sequestered spaces and easily identified by the hues of their skins, have used narratives of hope to navigate the weaving of marginalization and ambivalence.

By situating the "racialized other" within the Freud's framework, cathartic experiences at sites such as Gorée offer an opening for mourning, a healthy response to loss and rupture, so that

travelers can then begin to construct empowering counter-hegemonic narratives. By bringing the “hidden narratives” to light, diasporic tourists can then identify their pain. Sonia Katyal calls one such strategy of re-inscribing new narratives “semiotic disobedience,” where artists counter the proliferating corporate order in public spaces.⁹ Artists expand their activities beyond the legal enclosures that often perpetuate negative characterizations, with counter narratives. She asserts that for every imposition of corporate advertising into public spaces, a counter artistic counter narrative occurs. Katyal builds on John Friske’s framework of “semiotic democracy” where he analyzes how audiences give their own meaning to television programming rather than passively receiving information.¹⁰ Applying the idea of semiotic disobedience to white patriarchal structures shows us how travelers inscribe their own meaning to the institution of slavery and move beyond the ambivalent state.

I propose that African American pilgrims to sites of memory like Gorée Island recuperate the American Narrative and fashion counter-hegemonic narratives. The American Narrative has sustained itself by coercion and consent, the two-step process put forth by Antonio Gramsci, where individuals first submit to oppressive powers by force, and then by subscribing to popular systems like religion and popular media. First the Africans submitted to pistols, whips, and chains along the rivers in Africa. Then, in order to survive, they consented to the ways of their enslavers. These systems of collective phenomena that Gramsci called common sense, “in which the interests of the dominant group prevail,” created the conditions for the subdominant class to participate in their own oppression.¹¹ At times, ambivalent players, such as the preacher in the fields, would spread the master’s message. For his own benefit and to win favor with the master, he would preach the master’s message to the other slaves. This ambivalent player mediated

between the enslaver and the slave, and his mediation served the dominant powers by convincing other slaves to consent.

In submitting to a system of torture and degradation, the slave also inherited the emotion of shame. This shame would surround the slaves and their descendants for generations. Gorée Island offers a means for mourning the past, rewriting the script and thus reconfiguring their relationship with hegemony. Diasporic tourists recognize the psychological bind of melancholia, mourn the pain of the past, and then replace the wound with a new narrative such as the one offered by Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye. His offering brought the pilgrims to the threshold of catharsis, which Gramsci described as a moment when “structure ceases to be an external force which crushes man, assimilates him to itself and makes him passive; and is transformed into a means of freedom, an instrument to create a new ethico-political form and a source of new initiatives.”¹¹ Gramsci described the cathartic moment as a time for new beginnings, a moment which, for the diasporic tourist, expands the realm of possibility and holds the promise of moving outside of the ambivalent state.

In the liminal space of the Slave House on Gorée Island, in the betwixt and between, travelers who had long rehearsed their transformation turned their ears towards the master griot, the supreme trickster, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye, and heard a story of empowerment. These travelers had heard and sung spirituals that told them about “how I got over,” “crossing to the other side,” and “going home,” confidently holding on to the promise of paradise. They knew that in getting to the other side they would find their transcendence and enter paradise. At the little slave house on Gorée Island, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye would stand at the threshold and help them to get over to the other side to change and transformation. His narrative helped them into a different consciousness. Claude Levi-Strauss has noted that “the most successful change-agent

...manages to stay on the threshold.”² In liminal spaces, tricksters stand at the threshold to a different world. They usher in the new. Diasporic tourists who have entered the space of liminality have rehearsed their transformation repeatedly, in every Negro spiritual, traditional story, church sermon, or prayer of deliverance where the code of transformation has been reproduced through performance. Unlike the ambivalent character who guided the slaves to consent to the will of the master, on Gorée Island Boubacar Ndiaye, as the trickster figure, guided the travelers to a different way of thinking. As a trickster, he urged the pilgrims to see their lives differently, disrupting the patterns of their thinking. The philologist Karl Kerényi described the nature of this disruption as a fundamental aspect of social process. Without the disorder created by the trickster, life could not personify its fullness.

Disorder belongs to the totality of life, and the spirit of this disorder is the trickster. His function in an archaic society, or rather the function of his mythology, of the tales told about him, is to add disorder to order and so make a whole, to render possible, within the fixed bounds of what is permitted, an experience of what is not permitted.¹²

With respect to travelers who visit Gorée, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye told a tale that American publishers, politicians, popular entertainment media, and schools have left out of their versions of history. Ndiaye reveals a narrative that uproots the traditional hegemonic narrative causing the travelers to interrogate their own individual fixed stories. He performed the role of the trickster as he disrupted the ordinary and presented a new possibility. By revealing a different perspective on what occurred in the slave factories, Ndiaye initiated a transformation in a way similar to that which Kerényi described. He delivered a new mythology and gave the visitors powerful tales as they reordered the fragmented story of the African slaves in the United States. Ndiaye steered the travelers from a tale of victimhood to one of strength. He told the tale of pain, misery, and suffering under slavery, yet he also told a story of the strength required to

endure the arduous Trans-Atlantic voyage. He reminded the visitors that slavers only took the strong ones and that only the most able survived the journey. Like all great tricksters, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye anointed the travelers as mighty people, made whole again through his dramatic public soliloquy.

Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye shed a new light onto the long and dark history of the triangular African slave trade. From the site of the rupture, he helped make sense of the centuries of avarice that had cast immeasurable suffering onto millions of Africans and their descendants. The skillful and illuminating griot helped the travelers see beyond the darkness of slavery. In *On The Psychology of the Trickster Figure*, Carl Jung theorized that the trickster serves a role in the transformation from shadow to healing:

If, at the end of the trickster myth, the savior is hinted at, this comforting premonition or hope means that some calamity or other has happened and been consciously understood. Only out of disaster can the longing for the savior arise—in other words, the recognition and unavoidable integration of the shadow create such a harrowing situation that nobody but a savior can undo the tangled web of fate.¹³

As the travelers came forward to confront the dogged memories of the legacy of slavery, Ndiaye appeared as the savior, for whom they had searched, who would unravel the twisted narrative of the legacy of slavery. His redemptive words gave the travelers hope as helped them to unshackle the calamitous memory of their wounds. Ndiaye, the grand trickster, gave a perspective of the slave trade unlike the traditional narrative found in American textbooks and re-told during black history month. He recounted a story that turned the traditional narrative on its head and shed light on a new story that the pilgrims could tell. As the trickster led the traveler across the threshold, he led them outside the state of ambivalence. Unlike ambivalence, where the ambivalent player only laments that things could be worse, Ndiaye guided the visitors to imagine the possibilities of a better world. He gave them an elixir that would turn the disastrous shadow

of the past into a future filled with possibilities. The African elder marked the travelers as the chosen ones who would retell the story filled with power and hope.

Baptized by their tears and cleansed by the same great Atlantic Ocean that had taken their ancestors, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye led the pilgrims to mourn the pain of the losses that the legacy of slavery had delivered. As if standing at the altar, Boubacar Ndiaye offered a benediction upon the pilgrims, imploring them to listen for venerated wail of the ancestors. He led the pilgrims to mourn what Wendell Berry, writing about the damage that racism had inflicted on America, called “the hidden wound”.¹⁴ By viewing racism and the legacy of racialized structures in the United States as a wound, a logical prognosis could lead to a healing. As the pilgrims walk through the “Door of No Return,” Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye heals the hidden wound by declaring that the slave traders took only the ones strong enough to endure the Middle Passage. Not only would they survive that first grand passage, they would also have to endure tortuous labor, the Second Middle Passage, the Great Migration, and continued systems of exclusion and sequestration. Ndiaye reminded the travelers that the slave traders had torn families apart so that the slaves had no common language, since a common means of communication could have facilitated revolts. He apprised them that though they had left fragmented, they had returned whole, having withstood a legacy of difficulties. Even though they had returned with cracks and broken pieces, they held the means to repair what had been broken. He gave the visitors a narrative unlike the normative tale of struggle with no victory. With authority, Ndiaye suggested that the ancestors had called the visitors to return to Gorée. As if standing at the threshold of the afterlife and the present, in the in-between space of life, he performed his homily as if he had spoken directly to the ancestors. Standing at the threshold between African slaves and the children of the Black Atlantic, he offered a healing balm for their

ruptures. In the gap between the ancestors and their descendants to come, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye blessed the travelers with hope. His story became the medicine to heal the wound of the slave trade.

Remains

Music is wounded kinship's last resort. Music then is the phantom reminder of what is wounded here, but is playing a positive role, in keeping alive in the mind a utopian possibility, and of course black music has also pointed beyond the present and actual in more-direct historical ways as a response to slavery and oppression, so this reaching or pointing beyond a social and a metaphysical dimension.¹⁵

Music, as one of the cultural markers that holds the simultaneous space of sorrow and transcendence, allows the traveler to rehearse the sorrowful state of her ancestors and the joyous promise that they encoded in the narratives. This remembrance would serve as a mnemonic and a means for surviving the pain that the legacy of slavery had caused. The "remains" of the pained memories would serve the traveler as an entry to the possibilities of perseverance. Throughout the repertoire of African American music, slaves and their descendants have used music as a balm to heal the traumatic events they would encounter. The jazz saxophonist David Murray draws an analogy between the fragmented wounds of slavery and the echoes of Orpheus and the cry of abandonment and loss. He recalls the Negro Spiritual, "Motherless Child," and the longing and desire of belonging that so many black people would experience as slavers snatched them away from their homes during the various middle passages: "Sometimes, I feel like a motherless child... a long way from home."¹⁶ The alienated lament of the child, separated from the mother who would nurture, love, and support him, circulates throughout black music. At the same time, the code of transcendence also creates a bridge from the detachment of unbelonging to a state of belonging.

When slavers abducted the slaves and placed them into the alienated state of unbelonging, the slaves carried and rehearsed a narrative that someday they would return home. As diasporic tourists exit the ferry on Gorée Island, local tour guides shower the visitors with salutations of “Welcome home.” On Gorée Island, the guides present the “utopian possibility” of the elusive “home” for which descendants of slavery have searched. The “return to Gorée” represents the rehearsed transformation that the first slaves encoded. As slave traders scurried slaves into the cramped factories along the Atlantic and then again into the hulls of the slave ships, often times, the slaves found no common language. They communicated through their moans, sighs, and the sounds they made from the sucking of their teeth. The punctuated grunts of their music carried a coded meaning that their enslavers would never understand. The subtle glances of their eyes spoke the hidden language that unified them with the other enslaved ones.

In their music, slaves encoded the sorrow of their pained bodies and simultaneously kept alive the psychological and spiritual state of home/heaven/paradise. From the field hollers to the moans of their songs, the slaves understood this meaning and would recirculate it over time throughout black music. As the poet and scholar Fred Moten argues, the moan represents the existential state of pain and loss.¹⁷ However, I contend that the moan also signifies transcendence, as the slaves held tight to the worldview that the conditions of the world would not enslave them. The moan, an in-between sound of pain and redemption, became coded as a mnemonic for slaves to never surrender, to hold on until they got to the other side of the storms and the illumined state of belonging. In black music, the moan signaled that alienated state, the detachment from the state of belonging and concurrently a recirculating promise that “this world is not my home.” As if calling all listeners to worship, the moan denoted deep pain and profound joy at the same time.

The shared sounds, such as the shout and the moan, and recurring memes of the slaves created a community of belonging that formed the foundation of black musical forms and riffs that followed. While these shared cultural elements did not close the recapitulating breach of shared encounters in sequestered spaces, they did establish belonging. Saidiya V. Hartman contends:

The symbolic actions range from the redemptive “march to heaven,” another way of describing the shout, to mundane activities like exchanging stories, staying up late all night talking with your lover, or singing across the Potomac to slaves on the other side. The incompleteness of redress in the constancy of breach and crisis of primary determinants of the force of repetition and black performance and the ambivalent formation pleasure.

Hartman asks, “how does one survive the common atrocities of slavery yet possess a sensibility, a feeling, an impulse, an inexplicable, yet irrepressible, confidence about the possibilities of freedom?”¹⁸ She contends that the slaves found that space between the fatal incommensurabilities and the possibility of freedom through performances that did not forget the reality of slavery but rather grabbed the moments of fleeting bittersweet. Through music, slaves and their descendants found a means to feel and understand pain and joy simultaneously. In the spiritual, “Take My Hand, Precious Lord,” they sing of getting “through the storm and to the light.”¹⁹ At the little slave house on Gorée, the travelers stand at the water’s edge in search of the all that was lost through the legacy of slavery. Hartman describes this loss and rupture as akin to the neurological phenomenon of the phantom limb. “The recognition of loss is a crucial element in redressing the breach introduced by slavery.” She states that the violated and ravished body remembers the pain of loss and “holds out the possibility of restitution.” The memory of the slave trade “is experienced most significantly in the terms of loss and discontinuity.”¹⁸ The legacy of the slave trade scattered and fragmented stories across the Black Atlantic, and pilgrims return to Gorée to close the breach.

The pilgrims close the breach by bringing their discontinuous and broken dreams to the little slave house in fragments of pained memories, neglected by oppressive structures. They then turn those memories into powerful narratives that counter the structures that oppressed them. They bring their open wounds, inflicted by a history and memory of exclusion and state structured un-belonging. The origins of the United States inscribed a system that favored specific groups of wealthy men who continued their privilege over time through narrative, legal, and economic formations, and few descendants of the slaves have not experienced the brutal ruptures that these systems have exacted. By the time many of the travelers enter the liminal space of Gorée Island, they bring a burdened haul of splintered and fragmented dreams. They stand in the in-between space at Gorée ready to mourn their breached paths and to leave with a new vision of the journey they would take. At Gorée, they arrive to fulfill the promise of much of black music in the United States where sorrows turn into joy and blues into love. The visitors recall the memories of the pained bodies of their ancestors and even their own experiences of systemic violence. At the edge of the Atlantic between Africa and America, between the past and the future, the visitors catch those ancestral memories and turn their trajectory towards a renewed vision for their lives. From within the in-between space of the little slave house on Gorée Island, they bring the shattered pieces of their lives and then create a new narrative. Walter Benjamin asserted that mourning the fragments of the past allows for a creative process of bringing memory alive and thus establishing a different relationship with it. He noted that:

It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain the image of the past which unexpectedly appears to a man singled out by history at a moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it.²⁰

Not only do these flashes of memory arise at the moment of danger, they burst forth in performatively heightened liminal spaces like Gorée Island. As travelers hear the stories of the slave trade, they also recall their own encounters with pained memories. In the *Maison Des Esclaves*, Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye helped the descendants of slaves to awaken the memories of the ancestors and confront the “ruling class” history in order to transform their pained memories into empowered visions for their futures. Rather than recirculating the narratives of hegemonic history books, inscribed by those in power, the master guide reformulated the narrative as one of empowerment. For diasporic tourists, shards of memory from the legacy of slavery flash in every eye.

As Benjamin notes, “The Messiah comes not only as the redeemer, he comes as the subduer of the Antichrist.” Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye quieted the hegemonic historical narrative and enlivened the each individual traveler’s story. As every traveler possessed their own fragment of the story of the slave trade, Ndiaye legitimized each voice and gave it meaning. Ndiaye delivered his speeches as if he knew the personal narrative of each visitor. As he recalled the fragmentation of families sent to diverse locations across the Atlantic, he incorporated each narrative to suit the complete story of slavery. In writing about the process of translation, Walter Benjamin proposed that versions must match, but “instead of [the translation] resembling the meaning of the original, [it] must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification.”²⁰ The original and the translation have significance because they are both recognizable as parts of a larger whole. Every traveler to Gorée Island carries a piece of the whole story of the legacy of slavery. When recounted from the traveler’s point of view, the whole story of the slave trade becomes truer.

By stitching together the remains of others' discards, slaves found that they could survive and thrive. Just as the slaves used fragments to survive, the pieces of the descendants' stories would also function in their healing and wholeness. This piecing together of fragments, whether in quilting, musical production, dance, or storytelling, allowed the descendants of slaves, scattered across the Black Atlantic and living under the existential condition of un-belonging, to creatively construct meaning in their lives. Dorothea Dietrich describes artists like Kurt Schwitters as using art as a positive means to face the political crisis in Germany in the Twentieth Century. "It brought into focus his own artistic energies and led to a tremendous surge in his creativity." Schwitters states that artists "adopted collage in response to the experience of rupture and displacement."²¹ Africans in America used the crisis of enslavement to raise the aesthetics of their lives and created such art forms as jazz. In a similar manner, the artists of Gorée Island, as well as many diasporic communities of the Black Atlantic, have responded with collage as a means of expressing the turmoil of blues in their lives. As a response to rupture, whether because of the legacy of the slave trade or colonization, citizens around the Black Atlantic have found a means to persevere and restore the breaches of oppressions by gathering the fragments and forming new creations that tell the whole story.

As diverse as African American quilts during slavery, individuals have pieced together their broken lives and situated themselves within their diverse cultural affiliations. Through these cultural participations, they repeated and built up accepted practices. Over time, they rehearsed these creations over and over. Rather than recreating established practices, slaves had to create new cultural markers. As commonly stated in African American narratives, they had to "make their way out of no way." They took what they had in their ruptured lives and made cultural practices. Victor Turner theorized that "individual authors" carry out cultural

performances. They “hold the mirror up to nature” and act individually and collectively like “magic mirrors” reflecting consciousness and the products of such consciousness forming vocabularies and rules.”²² In other words, individuals reflect the quotidian practices of the collective group. Over time, these individuals rehearse and repeat metalinguistic grammars that govern their groups. For descendants of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, these recapitulations serve as rehearsals in preparation for transformation. According to Richard Schechner, “Turner grew more and more deeply interested in the preparatory phases of performance – workshops, rehearsals, trainings – how people made ready for performances-to-be.”²² He recognized how rehearsals establish foundations for performances. Diasporic tourists have completed rehearsals for their transformation through their entrance into liminality through song, dance, and storytelling. By traveling to places such as Gorée Island, travelers separate themselves from their every day lives and enter a heightened state in the extraordinary outside of the rehearsal stage and into the performative space.

These travelers seek to remedy the wound created by the rupture of slavery. Victor Turner proposed that social dramas consist of a four-part sequence consisting of a breach, crisis, redressive action, and reintegration. He argued that every drama contains an underlying fault line waiting to break. The *breach* is an “infraction of a rule ordinarily held to be binding.”²² In the case of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the breach occurred over several centuries with the transport of millions of slaves across the Atlantic Ocean. Global slave traders disrupted families, cultures, economies, and languages.

These international infractions produced the second stage of *crisis*, which often brings violence. Certainly, violence and oppression persisted for descendants of the slave trade around the Black Atlantic and delivered legacies of tragic consequences for members of the non-

hegemonic classes. Turner considered this stage as possessing liminal characteristics, “since each is a ‘threshold’ (limen) between more or less stable or harmonic phases of the social process.” Individuals, taboos and events interrupt stable periods by that “thrust from the centers of public life.”²² Much of the violence and oppression of racial formations in the United States have been reinforced by the interaction of business, popular entertainment, formal education, politics, law, and the church. On one hand, these institutions have publicly promoted a sacred regard for life and the pursuit of happiness. On the other hand, they have systematically institutionalized oppression.

In the little slave house on Gorée, descendants come to stand in the same space where their ancestors suffered at the hands of individuals who would value property over human beings. They enter into what Turner called the third stage of *redressive* or *remedial procedures*. He referred to this stage as the most reflective of the social drama, involving a communal redress of pain and rupture. Often, the community creates a religious or legal liminal space to replicate and reconstruct the crisis as a ritual in order to symbolically recount and address the tensions of the disturbed community. Regarding the trans-Atlantic slave trade, national conversations and passages of laws have occurred to address the ruptures. The little slave house on Gorée Island, as a liminal space, allows descendants of the legacy of slavery to reenact and remember their ancestors’ horrific journeys. In this liminal space, pilgrims mourn their losses in order to heal.

Fragments to Whole

After Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye’s benediction gave the travelers a different and unique perspective on empowerment of their broken stories, he helped them to create a new narrative to carry back with them. They learn how to piece their broken lives together again. On their returns, they read history books differently as their memories enliven their new perspectives.

They carry those new world views back into the spaces of un-belonging in the Black Atlantic, but are now able to respond from a place of empowerment. Victor Turner called this fourth phase *reintegration*, a final stage which restores peace and brings together the fragments. Richard Schechner builds upon Turner's concept and renames it "restored behavior."⁴ He proposed that through restored behavior, individuals perform as actors in a film in that they record and rerecord, arrange, and rearrange behaviors that they have rehearsed and recapitulated over and over again.

African-American popular culture has played an important role in this process, preparing diasporic tourists for their reintegration after voyages to sites of memory such as Gorée Island. Upon his return from Africa, the comedian Richard Pryor stated that he would never use the N-word again. In an interview in the October 1980 issue of *Ebony*, Pryor declared, "there are no niggers in Africa." Therefore, he reasoned, none existed in America and he would never utter the word. Glenda R. Carpio noted that "Pryor's performances became not only a vehicle for catharsis – but for the release of racial tensions and for the purging of racist attitudes." Pryor's popularity brought ideas of catharsis and the refabulation of narratives into mainstream African American discourse throughout his career. Prior to his African experiences, he had used his performances to redress racial issues in America but after his journey to Kenya, he became an outspoken critic of the use of the N-word:

Well, I took a trip to Africa – which, by the way, is where I plan to live some day. I went to Kenya, and while I was there something inside of me said, "Look around you, Richard. What do you see? I saw people. African people. I saw people from other countries, too, and they were all kinds of colors, but I didn't see any "niggers." I didn't see any there because there are no "niggers" in Africa. Can you imagine going out into the bush and walking up to a Masai and saying, "Hey nigger. Come here!?" You couldn't do that because Masai are not "niggers." There are no "niggers" in Africa, and there are no "niggers" here in America either. We Black people are not "niggers," and I will forever refuse to be one. I'm free of that; it's out of my head. My mother is not a "nigger." Is yours one? So if

your mama ain't no "nigger," how could you be one? See, when I went to Africa, to my Motherland, I realized that terms like "nigger" and the word "bitch" that so many Black men call our women are tricks, like genocide on the brain.²³

In his memoir, *Pryor Conviction*, he writes of his transformative trip to Kenya:

I had seen and felt things impossible to experience any place else on earth. I left enlightened. I also left regretting ever having uttered the word nigger onstage or off it. It was a wretched word. It's connotations weren't funny, even when people laugh. To this day, I wish I never said that word. I felt its lameness. It was misunderstood by people. They didn't get what I was talking about.²⁴

Richard Pryor could not navigate the continued use of the n-words that the hegemonic powers had employed as part of structured exclusionary systems. Witnessing systems of power by black people in Africa helped him to move towards the realization that the legacy of slavery had systematically excluded African Americans. As he experienced the state of belonging in Africa, he refused to continue perpetuating the state of un-belonging and ambivalence through the use of the n-word. The debate over the increased use of the n-word has filled African American discourse for the past thirty years. Randall Kennedy described the historical and contextual evolution of the word "nigger," including its use by oppressive whites during the slave trade, the Jim Crow Era, and contemporary times. He notes the complex use of the word, as for example by Robert C. Byrd, the long time former senator from West Virginia when he stated that he had seen "a lot of white niggers in his time."²⁵ The senator apologized for the strange use.

However, it could be argued that no stranger use of the word has occurred than that between African Americans as a means of oppression and violence towards each other as they situate themselves within the state of ambivalence. They participate in the ambivalent player's attempt to ascend higher than the man below him in the hierarchical system of belonging and un-belonging. I contend that this use of the derogatory words stems from wounded individual's melancholic inability to mourn, which holds them in a state of ambivalence.

Most American textbooks tell neither the heroic stories from the slave trade or the horrific details. Without the knowledge and revelation of the many stories of slaves and the slave trade, descendants cannot identify the source of their pain. Therefore, they consume themselves and cannot heal. On Gorée Island, the guides tell the negated story and the diasporic pilgrims begin to piece together new narratives.

After visiting Africa, most African Americans recall experiencing a transformation. The reality of what Africa is as opposed to what they imagined it to be sets in. In Africa, they sometimes experience the continued feeling of un-belonging, as Africans see them as foreigners, but they also report feelings of belonging as Americans. Many African Americans diasporic tourists have not experienced firsthand the existential day-to-day deprivations that afflict the majority of people in Africa. Some travelers see the hardships that colonization caused as not dissimilar from the legacy of slavery.

In the cool down and aftermath stages of Schechner's performance framework, individuals reflect and integrate what they have acquired from experiencing the performative liminal space of the slave house. The Gorée Island experience helps travelers reintegrate by collecting the shattered fragments of the legacy of slavery. They discover fragments of hidden stories, and from those shards, rewrite their narratives and repurpose their stories to reconcile their melancholic relationships with the past. The traveler has left home and ventured into the liminal space. In the cool-down and aftermath, she returns to the well-rehearsed space. Using the musical analogy of the 12-bar blues progression, the traveler has wandered from the departure, but like all blues progressions, the music (traveler) must return to the home key, the Tonic. They return to the familiar but with new and different embellishments. They have pieced together new expressions.

On a scorched pathway in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, a broken old man etches a *vèvè* (a Vodou symbol) in the soil, then genuflects and makes the sign of the cross. In the light of dawn on Sapelo Island, Georgia, a slow moving figure builds a man-like sculpture made of sticks, colored bottles, tin cans, and used CD's. In a little strip mall chapel near Congo Square in New Orleans, a Voodoo spiritualist heals a follower using crucifixes, African power objects, statues of Catholic saints, and dolls made of Spanish moss and burning sage. In each scenario, the descendants of Africans demonstrate creative invention through acts of bricolage, syncretism, and hybridity that enable them to create change in their lives and in the lives of those around them. At the intersections of diverse epistemologies, religious practices, materials, and art forms, African diasporic communities in America have not only survived but thrived and created new art forms, spiritual practices, dance, and music. Outside Haiti's capital city of Port-au-Prince, in a community called Croix-Des-Bouquets, local artisans recycle used oil barrels into works of art. Artists like Jacques Eugene, a metal worker from Croix-Des-Bouquets, evoke the spirit of Ogou, the Lwa who presides over fire and iron. The Croix-des-Bouquets metal workers perform the spiritual alchemy of Ogou to create sacred devotions to the pantheon of their Gods.

Like the alchemy that turns stone to metal, descendants of the trans-Atlantic slave transform the discarded to the wanted, the ugly to the beautiful, and the un-belonging to the belonging. Diasporic tourists returning from Gorée tell the empowered story of belonging. From the elevated performative space on that small stony island, travelers refashion their lives to reflect their heightened experience, centered on the dramatic story of the slave trade performed by Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye or the current curator, Eloi Coly. (Since Ndiaye's death in 2009, Coly has ushered travelers through the *Maison Des Esclaves* on Gorée Island.) Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye led Presidents Clinton and Bush and many other world leaders through the little house,

and in 2013 Eloi Coly carried on the tradition as he guided President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama through the hollowed structure. You can hear his booming bass voice throughout the house on most days as he echoes the narrative first delivered by the deft storyteller, Ndiaye. All across the island, enterprising guides rehearse Ndiaye's chronology and narrative as they attempt to master his ability to help travelers transform their stories from victimhood to victory.

Through refashioned personal narratives, the travelers release the melancholia that has bound them to the past and create new syncopated narratives of transformation that counter the hegemonic blues foundation of racial formations. To transcend from the state of ambivalence to freedom, the traveler gathers the gifts of the liminal space and brings them "back home" to America, domesticating that alienated space with a new narrative.

Ndiaye established a theater of transformation on Gorée Island by creating a space for broken travelers to piece their lives together. He gave diasporic citizens a way to write a story of belonging.

Interview: Return from Gorée

Samad traveled to Senegal after traveling to Morocco as a participant in a UCLA Fulbright GPA. In Morocco, he explored diverse manifestations of dance in the North African country. Wanting to further his understanding of dance as an African American in Sub-Saharan Africa, he traveled on to Senegal. I wanted to understand his experiences in Senegal from his point of view given the changing conversations around race in recent years, and to ask about his ideas of "belonging," as well as his experiences upon returning to the United States in August of 2014. Harry J Elam describes the moment "that dramatically ruptures the balance between the real and representational" as a "reality check." He notes that such moments "produce diverse

performative responses and expose the complex possibilities of the politics of blackness.” Not every return from Gorée fits into the ideal model of reintegration, as Samad experienced personally via the complexities of the politics of blackness.

In the 1960s and 1970s Oakland, California became a model city for black self-determination and community with the rise of the Black Power Movement and the Black Panther Party. The economic expansion in San Francisco and Oakland did not include black communities. According to Peniel E. Joseph, “for black Americans, Oakland’s postwar history represented dashed hopes and blighted dreams that could be seen in the city’s housing patterns, employment structure and public schools.”²⁶ Inspired by activists in the South, where the movement had inspired voter registration, equality movements, and civil rights, Oakland manifested a more volatile version, which sought to end police brutality, poor schools, and hunger. By 2014, the black community had made some gains as demonstrated by black elected officials, but the city had still left out certain members of the population. As witnessed by Samad, the community can turn on itself when faced with economic stress and disenfranchisement.

What did you know about Gorée Island before you traveled there?

I had a little information about the island. I knew that it was a French slaving port during the 1800s but I didn't know much else other than I was a little familiar with the ethnic groups that were enslaved and brought through the middle passage, but other than that I didn't know much.

Was this your first trip to sub-Saharan Africa?

It was

Growing up, what were your thoughts about Africa and going to a place like Senegal?

You know I attribute most of my understanding of Africa to my mother. I was adopted when I was three years old. My mother is Mexican American, she identifies as Chicana, but in our house in our house she really made sure that there was an African aesthetic that I could relate to, and so you know there was everything from drums in the house to African fabrics that she put on the

wall, masks, books that I could read. So, I think my understanding of what Africa is and what it represents began in the home and as I got older she took me to a cultural center in Oakland called the... it was formally known as, Alice Arts Center. Then, after one of its drummers and kind of one of most its most celebrated teachers at the center passed away, they changed his name to the Malangolo Casquelourd Center for the Arts and so I would take dance classes there, drumming classes, I begin with the djembe, and that's when I began understanding the specific countries in Africa, particularly West Africa.

My primary interest in wanting to go to Africa was to learn music and dance, more so when I entered high school and then went to the community college. That's what I knew of Africa, was that there is a tremendous wealth of performing arts culture and the home of a lot of the cultural practices that we have today. These countries contributed to the wealth and art and culture. I remember hearing people say Senegal, this drum comes from Senegal or this dance comes from Senegal or this comes from Ghana. So I feel like my understanding of Africa became more expanded when I became involved with the center.

So you have brothers and sisters?

No I don't, my mother adopted me alone.

So do you know of your ethnic background?

I've been to Cuba several times. And my primary form of dance is Afro-Cuban dance. But as far as I know, I don't have ancestry from Africa via Cuba; but who knows I have not met anyone from my biological family. And so, I might be surprised to find out where they come from.

Did your mother tell you anything about the slave trade? Did you hear about anything that made you want to go to Africa in addition from what you heard at the cultural center?

Oh yeah, absolutely I mean, my mom, I think one of the important things that she really wanted me to know was that Africans were in the United States for the most part, of course there are immigrants, but most came during the trans-Atlantic slave trade they were forced and brought, which was a very different story from what I learned in school. You know, what I learned from teachers was that Africans were okay with being loaded on ships and brought to the New World in so she shut that down.

When you got to Gorée Island was that what you expected?

It was kind of beyond what I expected and, you know part of it was because of the circumstances that led up to me going. You know, I was supposed to originally go with two friends of mine from who were white, and one of the

friends who was on the Fulbright trip to Morocco told me that he was really interested in the African Americans experience of going to Gorée Island, particular because African-Americans claim going to the island as a historical landmark even though many more Africans were taken from the Cape Coast and the Bight of Biafra. And so he saw it strange that these African-Americans would see this place as such a historical landmark even though, quote-unquote, few Africans were brought from there. So I was like, "Regardless of who was brought there, we know that this was a slaving port and I think that holds a lot of importance and significance for African-Americans and Africans and allies living in the Diaspora." So I wasn't sure if he was going to respect my desire to be there and kind of answer his questions or anything like that so I decided to go on a different day, which he did not have a problem with. I just simply said, "Hey I decided to go to Gorée Island in couple days. I hope you have an educational time there."

And, then another guy who was going to come with us, too. He had no idea of what Gorée Island was so he voluntarily opted out. He apologized and said I'm really sorry Samad. "I didn't know that this means so much to you and an African-American people and black people so you know I'm gonna going to different day. I think this should be something that you experience on your own or however you please." So, he voluntarily opted out of not going with both of us. I ended up telling Amadou that I really wanted to go to Gorée Island and he said yes, yes so he invited Aita, his girlfriend, and we all went together. I was actually really appreciative that we went as a group instead of with the two other guys.

What do you remember most about Gorée?

Kind of the eerie silence, at the Door of No Return, there was there was this real kind of eerie silence. You know I started crying, like once, I remember standing in front of the doorway and no one was around and I just started crying you know, it was, for me... I was like, what I really remember I was on one side of the Atlantic looking towards the United States, like, wow, this is where many of our ancestors were taken from and I've only seen this place from the United States supposedly and so to be on the other side to be looking in the West was just, it was really incredible you know, sad, and everything. So, I think that that's one of the most memorable things is having that just been different perspective.

Do you remember who did the tour? Was he the main curator of the house?

I don't remember his name. It was the English guided tour. There were a lot of people... English speaking tourists.

Was he an official guide from the slave house or just someone from around the island?

No, I do not think so but he was an official guide.

What do you think sparked most of your emotions you described at the door of no return?

How saddening the history of enslavement is, and that the fact that one group of people, for monetary reasons could slave another group of people, the conditions that they did, and then bring them to an entirely new place. I cried for humanity, you know. I feel like you can look at enslavement from a number of perspectives. I mean as a human practice of one group of people to another place against their will. It was just really sad, you know. I think I've allowed myself to cry about that before but for some reason being in the space, realizing that you know this is from where my ancestors were taken was really sad.

Was a narrative that you heard on Gorée Island what you expected?

You know it was it was a lot of kind of factual information that I wasn't familiar with in terms of dates and you know who first occupied Gorée Island and which particular ethnic groups were brought, you know, why they, quote-unquote, appealed to slave catchers. Like a lot of that stuff I wasn't familiar with, but you know, in terms of, like, the general history, that was not what I expected.

You know actually one thing that this is what surprised me was that the tour guide he was saying maybe size of the slaves appealed to slave catchers. Because of their size and the physical strength and so they were enslaved and he made a joke and said that's why you have so many African-American athletes because there was so big and he began laughing which let other people in the tour group know that it was okay to laugh. So if I start laughing at this joke and I was like the only one who was not laughing and it felt uncomfortable. It didn't feel right. It was then, like right in the Door of No Return he had just explained the kind of the brutality of the slave trade and the conditions in which Africans were captured. It seemed so inappropriate and you know the fact that this was an African talking to a predominately white group. You know it just didn't seem right.

When I was at Gorée Island, the master storyteller, Boubacar, said a little different. He said that the slavers only took the strong ones; they left the weak ones behind to be the domestics for the slave traders. The strong ones were the only one to could survive the arduous journey across the Atlantic. This was an empowering story to me as it made me feel that I came from the people who are very strong. The old man's story made me feel very proud. What did you do after you left the slave house?

For the first five or 10 minutes after we left the slave house, like, no one said anything. Amadou was quiet. His girlfriend was quiet, too. It almost felt like they were giving me space to cope with what I just saw. It felt like support that. I felt like supported and I really appreciated that and I don't think I said anything to Amadou but I definitely felt like I needed that and afterwards we talked about the slave trade. Amadou shared kind of what he knows. Then, we made our way around the island. We met people along the way. One of the things that stood out to me is how the Island represents this historical landmark, you know because of its history. Then, on the other side it's a tourist destination where people are having fun, not that they shouldn't be. It's a beautiful island, really nice beach there but it just seems like a pretty stark contrast of reasons why people visit the island. It was packed with people. There were a lot of tourists there. You know what was also interesting was while all the tourist attractions; all the fun things that people doing that the museum had no people. At one point, Amadou and his girlfriend and I were the only people in the museum making out rounds. I was like, "wow." This can say a lot; maybe everyone is already gone to the museum. And now it was time to relax.

As a black man, how did you feeling being on the island with all that was happening in the United States in places like Ferguson?

You know, I was getting little bits and pieces of information about Michael Brown when I was in Senegal but I didn't have the entire story. But, knowing the relationship between the police and the black community, I imagine that it was a wrongful killing. But yeah, that was one of the most transformative... you know being in Senegal as a black man was, an African-American black man was really, really transformative.

One of the reasons is because I did not experience the same animosity between young black men as I do here. Not that I'm angry at my brothers when I see them, you know. I'm frustrated with some of the decisions they make and how the system has them depressed. You know, for example, I wasn't ever worrying about like how long, for example, I stare at another young black person in fear that they're gonna get upset and say, "what you looking at?" And, even just the relationships between people and the police were a lot more relaxed than here. You know, this kind of fear either being harassed or challenge by other young black man, I didn't have it.

You know, it was crazy coming back. You know the first thing I came back to my neighborhood, because I live in Oakland. You know, I was walking down the street and this brother was coming towards me and, you know he was sagging his pants, had his hat on, his walking towards me and I said, "Hey brother how you doing?" And he was like, "I don't fucking know you, nigger!" And, he turned around as though he was ready to fight, you know and so, I just said, "Have a good day." And I continued on and I didn't... of

course, I wouldn't confront him or anything like that but, that took so much out of me, I remember. And, I still feel it and it immediately made me think of all the positive experiences I had, particularly young black men, in Senegal and how empowering that made me feel and how healing it was to have developed relationships with other young black man. You know, it's always been hard growing up in Oakland and not seeing that reflection.

Was that a common occurrence between people growing up in Oakland?

Oh yeah, I've been confronted on the street. I've had similar situations happen. I've been threatened with guns and it's a really sad situation. It feels like there's no love between young black men in certain communities in Oakland. I've been and I felt that and I've experienced it and so you know being in an environment where there's a culture collectivity was like really, really healing. And I don't think I realize going to Senegal how much I needed that and I wouldn't have known had I not felt the reflected positive positivity and love in Senegal.

Why do you think people respond that way in Oakland?

I think it's internalized hatred. I think we're taught to fear each other. I think because it's the dominant narrative we're taught to fear each other just as much as other groups of people are. And so we carry it around with us and for some reason, you know, there is just a culture of victimization and despair in some African-American communities, black communities that I didn't see in Senegal, although people are dealing with circumstances that are equally or more dire than here perhaps. For some reason, there's a culture of living collectively and kind of... I'm not trying to romanticize it, as Senegalese culture is vastly more diverse. I'm saying for the most part, I saw people living in really poor conditions were able to sustain themselves in the collective way that help make the community survive. And here, it's like people are living in poor condition and they want to fight each other because, you know, we can't live collectively. I can't ask you for help because I know you may not help me and I'm gonna fight you because your reflection of me and I don't like to see that. I don't know, I'm not a sociologist but this is kind of what I observed and, I think the only way to survive under harsh circumstances is to work collectively, like, individualism, it can't work, and we've seen that.

Do you think some of these behaviors are generational, where major media powers have appropriated cultures to represent them for the benefit of the powerful?

Yeah, absolutely, the appropriation of culture by big media corporations... I think all that contributes to some of the problems that we see. I think money is so much a part of it and profits and capitalism. People willing to go lengths

to represent their communities problematically because they are getting paid for it and they're being controlled by these big media corporations.

What were your feelings regarding being a black man in Africa as opposed to being a black man in the United States?

Being in Morocco was interesting. I definitely felt tokenized in many ways and I am still trying to figure out what people's intentions were. When we would go on certain trips on the Morocco trip as a dark skinned black person, I definitely stood out. How I was received by some of these communities was with open arms but then also it was kinda like this fascination with meeting a black man and yet being amongst a prestigious group of people that being a Fulbright and me being American. I think my presence kind of confused people at times, and they will call me things like *Bilola* which is thought to have been the first Muslim in the United States during slavery. As some people will call me Bilola and say things that commented on my blackness and so I didn't feel like I am made to feel like a minority at UCLA. You know like people say things that things that comment on you being black or you coming from a particular area that's how I felt in Morocco but it wasn't as patronizing as when I'm at UCLA. So that was interesting. Like in some instances, I felt like I blended in most instances. Obviously I did in Senegal because who would comment on the color of your skin unless I was a topic of discussion. You know in Senegal, it's a really good to not have to worry about if I walk into the store they gonna look at me because I'm black. You know, like everyone's black. I think coming from Morocco to Senegal within a day was a huge shift in what I experienced.

How do you feel as a black man at UCLA?

I feel tokenized, as well, you know in a number of situations, you know, while in class, I've been asked to comment on my experiences as a black person coming from Oakland. I feel like the black community that I can relate on campus is limited, I mean in terms of population, they are limited, but also in terms of diversity. You know I feel like there's little diversity among black people who are on campus. I think a lot of it has to do with the socio-economic demographic of which black people are going to UCLA and how that contributes to the kind of experiences that people are bringing to campus. You know, I often find myself either alone or kind of really having to make an effort to find folks that are not totally into mainstream culture or people who are not like critically thinking about stuff that's happening in and around the black community and stuff like that. Or, having important conversations with other groups of people of color and white folks who are interested and want to have a conversation as well. And you know, of course, because they're being few of us on campus and being the only person in class, I'd say like 80% of the time I'm the only black person in class, definitely the only black male in class.

Have any of those experiences been on the aggressive side?

Yeah, I was stopped, I was near Covell steps once and this officer on a bicycle stopped me and asked me if I was a student on campus and I said, "Yes, I'm a student, why are you asking?" He said, "well, we got a phone call and that there is a person of your description who is having problems with the student." So I said, "well, I can show my ID if you need but he said, "No, have a good day." Although, his tone was not aggressive, it was deathly a microaggression and it pissed me off. I was like, "Damn, I've been successful and done all I had to do to get here and yet, you know, I'm not seen as a success in the eyes of other people. I'm putting that same thing box of being a potential threat. I still haven't come far." And, so, I had to process that and throw those thoughts away.

MEMOIR: LIFE AS A WORK OF ART

Betye Saar, a Los Angeles artist who creates works from fragments of old pictures and found objects stated, "I am intrigued with combining the remnants of memories, fragments of relics, and ordinary objects with the components of technology. It's a way of delving into the past and reaching into the future simultaneously. The art itself becomes a bridge." Saar famously used art as a means of changing meanings of negative stereotypes. For example, she changed the negative portrayal of the mammy character, Aunt Jemima, into a mammy with guns on her hips. She transformed the negative character into a revolutionary. Saar wanted to use the reimagining of narratives as a means of facing racism.

As I somberly left the little slave house, I meandered through the old colonial buildings and ruins. Not far from the slavery site, I walked into an empty chapel and sat down. Eglise Saint Charles Barromee, built on 1830, served as one of the strong reminders of the colonial presence on the island and also Senegal's acceptance for religions other than Islam. Even though most people practice Islam, they chose Senghor as their first democratically elected president. For me, I sat and reflected on my mother's life. As I had started my quest of finding myself by traveling around the world, I had made a promise to my mother to always find the Catholic Church and to always light a candle for her. When I first left home in 1979, and with each new city that I would visit, my mother always asked me, "Did you find the Catholic church?" On the first visit to Gorée Island, I sat in the church not knowing what to think. I

knew that I had imagined a great transformation in my life but somehow after that first visit to the little slave house, I felt empty. My tour guides told me that people from the entire world who practice Catholicism had come to that little church and prayed to the statue of the Madonna and Child. He told me that if I did the same I would see miracles in my life. I sat quietly and regained my composure from the scorching humid Atlantic air.

As we walked up a long and winding pathway, artists displaying bright colored paintings called out to buy their artwork. At the top of a long and steep hill I found an artist, Khalil, a young Baye Fall artists who made little plaques with scraps found on Gorée. That first day, I had no idea that Khalil will would give me the answer to all my prayers for putting my life back together. Khalil was an artist who made creations with l'art trouvé, found object art. Over the years, I've gone up to see Khalil to buy his pieces or to bring him gifts. When I bought the first piece, I felt I was taking a part of Gorée with me. Since then, when I think about his work, I think about my own life and how there are no scraps. Like quilts, gumbo and jazz, with a little bit of this and a little bit of that, something good can be created. Khalil reminds me that I am the creator. From that first visit, I reflected on all the things that had happened and I decided that I could use all the little pieces of my life for something good. I could turn it all into a work of art.

I recalled all the moments of "un-belonging" and decided I could use them. For example, I thought about one night in Malibu. We sat on the edge of the Pacific Ocean listening to the waves and talking. Other cars were parked all along the coast, probably doing the same as Julia and I. Suddenly red police lights flashed into the truck followed by a bright spot light that blinded my vision. A Los Angeles County Sheriff Deputy tapped on my window and asked why was I there. I explained to him that my friend and I were talking and listening to the waves, just like all the other couples in the cars in front of us and behind us. He demanded that we leave immediately because there was no parking along the coast. Julie, a petite curly haired blonde woman, began wagging her finger and yelling at the deputy that he had no rights to stop us that there were lots of other cars along the beach. She complained that the only reason I was being stopped or harassed was because I was black. All I could say was, "Julie, Julie, Julie, it doesn't matter. Julie, please stop." With my hands firmly gripped at the top of the steering wheel, somehow, I have managed to leave my body and I float above my head noticing the submissive stance I had taken with the deputy. I heard myself say, "Yes sir, no problem, we will leave."

As we drove back towards Santa Monica, I felt violated, betrayed and ashamed of myself. I worried that Julie would look at me in a different light. She could not believe that the officers did not harass any of the other cars along the ocean. I tried to explain to her the difference but I knew she wouldn't understand so I pushed the emotions aside. Over the years, I pushed

lots of emotions to the side with my white friends, knowing that they would never understand the veil, knowing they could not possibly comprehend my fragmented life. On one hand, I was a strong vibrant individual but on the other hand I hid and I prayed that I would never be called out as a second-class citizen, especially in front of a friend like Julie. As the years passed and as I experienced more moments of alienation, I became angry also. While I had no words to describe what was happening, I knew that I was losing my Self, my Self that had been blessed with great parents, my Self who had experienced community and family. I knew that I had to piece my life back together but I didn't know how.

One of the ways of feeling the sense of un-belonging, while living in Hollywood, consisted of renting an apartment. On many occasions, I would call a landlord. On the phone everything sounded positive. However when I would arrive at the site, the landlord would announce that the apartment had "just been rented." Or, he would announce that the deposit had suddenly doubled or tripled. Housing discrimination became a festering point.

So many things have happened in the 1990s but I wanted to comprehend. During the Rodney King uprisings in Los Angeles, I stayed out past the curfew. I drove around the city and watched as people smashed and burned the city. I watched in West Hollywood as white kids rampaged the local Gap. They ran from the store with stylish clothes. On La Brea Avenue, they ran with computers. Before those days, I thought I lived in a Hollywood that was cool, hip, and accepting. An angry white man charged towards my truck with a big piece of wood telling me to get out of his neighborhood, but I lived there. I had lived there for at least 10 years. Even though danger was all around me those nights, parts of me were dying. I knew it was time for me to live again. Around me, I felt that I wanted to feel the history that was happening. When the uprisings finally ended, I went with thousands of people from Los Angeles to some of the destroyed areas and helped as we cleaned the city. Even though all different kinds of people showed up, I still felt like I didn't belong. I tried everything to belong.

In 1990, while teaching at the university I began volunteering for Project angel food, delivering food to homebound people with AIDS. My world opened up into doorways that I never could've imagined. I met so many people from around the city, and befriended so many individuals who did not have a very long to live. From the gym and other social organizations around West Hollywood, I befriended so many people who have since died. It felt like a war zone. By the time I had arrived at Gorée Island, and the deaths had stopped, I still felt the aftershock of losing so many friends. I wanted to heal. By the time I got to Gorée Island, my parents had also died. So many parts of me had died.

When I first graduated from college, my mother suggested that because I love children, I should teach. I had never dreamed of teaching but I tried it and I performed well. In 2000, after having taught school for about 15 years, I decided to go back to school to get my teaching credential. Having served leadership positions in schools and after demonstrating high competencies as a teacher, it only made sense to complete the credential. One of my classes, a hybrid platform between online and in person participation at California State University Northridge, I received perfect scores on all the online assignments. The final two classes required in the class presence. When the final grades were announced, I received a B. When I wrote the professor to inquire about the lower grade after having received perfect scores on all of the assignments, she agreed and she said that I was right. She changed the grade to a B+. Until the class actually met, the professor had no idea what I looked like. I thought about pursuing further investigations into the grade but that would have required more work than I was ready to give. At that point in my teaching career, getting the credential was a technicality. I had presented to other teachers on the very topic of the class across the district. Grading became another example of un-belonging. After that class, I thought about all the other classes I had completed but now doubted the objectivity of the professors. Not only did I feel the boiling of un-belonging for myself, I thought about all the young students who might not fit the dominant class because of the perceptions of the professors.

When I thought about Khalil's art on Gorée, I knew that I wanted to transform my life. I knew that I could not afford to carry around some much sorrow, so much hurt, so much shame and so much anger. I knew that I had to find new meanings for all the little scraps in my life. I had to rename every little broken piece of my life and put it all back together again. I had to make my life a work of art. I had to do it for myself. I had to do it for my ancestors. They had given their all to me and I knew that I could allow the smallness of others stop me.

Frantz Fanon, a psychiatrist from the island of Martinique, became an important voice in Black Atlantic thought. He investigated the relationship between oppressed people and their oppressors. As a revolutionary, he questioned the nature of how colonized people participate in their own oppression. He once noted, "I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects." In his search for finding meaning for his life, he situated himself as an object caught in the middle of competing desires. Having been

trampled into a non-being, he pieces the fragments of his self back together. “Now the fragments have been put together again by another self.”²⁷ From the standpoint of the double consciousness of performing behind “the veil” under oppression, the effort to un-colonize oneself requires taking the fragments and piecing them back together by a different self. In the final stage of Schechner’s paradigm of cool-down and aftermath, restoration requires a putting back together of the fragments.

Over the years, Senegal became a home away from home. While there, I continued my daily routines of having a late breakfast or lunch at the French Cultural Center in the heart of Dakar. I can always count on striking up a conversation with the servers or people sitting near me. After, I would take a walk and count on the engagements with some of the vendors on the streets or conversations or field trips with the Baye Falls, who always wanted to introduce me to their families or to take me to one of the all night ceremonies. At one of the ceremonies, I was placed at the front of the room with all the important men and imams. At the end of the ceremony, I was ushered upstairs to a little room where men sat in a circle. Women brought traditional Senegalese food and we ate. They all spoke in Wolof so I smiled and said nothing. I do not have a clue what I was eating.

Other days, I shopped in the Sandago Market for cloths, black soap, reverse glass paintings and other souvenirs for friends at home. Usually, I travel alone. Once, when I traveled to Dakar with my Jamaican-American friend, she was overwhelmed with the beauty of the women and the colorful cloths that they wore. On the streets, with the Baye Falls, she became Mama Africa. Today, they still ask, “How is Mama Africa?” One summer, I met up with a fellow student from UCLA’s Department of World Arts and Cultures, a Nigerian who was completing fieldwork for his dissertation. He told me that the streets of Dakar are much more intense than Lagos. I cannot imagine that. He found the vendors too aggressive. We traveled together to the city of Touba, where the Mourides celebrate at the Grand Mosque for a special event called the Grand Magal, which commemorates the day when the French sent Amadou Bamba into exile.

On each visit to Senegal, I always make at least one journey to Gorée Island. Over the years of traveling to Gorée, I’ve continued to see the tall Baye Fall man who keeps talking about the days when he was interviewed on CNN. I have heard him telling would be impressed tourists of his days of fame many times. In the latter years, I watched him become more and more disheveled. One of those last visits, I watched out of the corner of my eye as the authorities at the port in Dakar, scolded him and refused to let him board the ferry to Gorée. I think he

could have been drunk. I returned to Dakar again in February 2011 when I traveled to the World Social Forum. I was feeling really proud of myself as I showed the two UCLA administrators around Dakar.

Getting off the boat at Gorée, the tall Baye Fall man approached me and demanded money for the “Gorée Island Heritage Fund.” I refused to give it to him as I had been told the previous summer that it was a scam. He followed me, demanding 500 CFAs. I tried to remain cool in order to impress my friends but he would block my path. Women passed by and said to me, “Tu n’est pas obligé,” (You are not obligated to pay!) I finally surrendered and gave the man 1000 CFAs (\$2 US) and demanded my change. He later brought it to me while I was in the slave house. I wondered if he knew that I wanted to give him so much more, as I love to give to Khalil and some of the other artists and vendors on the island. I would have gladly given him money simply for the warm welcome he gave me on my first visit to Gorée all those years before. I wanted him to tell us the stories but he had become jaded and mistrusting of the process of generosity. Part of me understood his situation so well.

In the 1980s the World Bank had required Senegal to participate in structural adjustments. Twenty years later, the artists who had thrived living in a country where artists were valued, have all gone away. Dakar today continues to be a difficult city to live, where many locals still try to exist using the same practices that worked 20 years ago. Today, Chinese markets and vendors have undercut fabric makers. Trends for art collectors have changed because of the sagging global economy as well as the new artistic attractions.

Finally, I don’t know if the CNN Baye Fall on Gorée only sees me as a customer, someone to whom he can sell a story. What matters to me is the way in which his telling me the story helped me to transform my life. He was one of the reasons I came back to Gorée. His story and the narrative of Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye’s had helped me to reframe the history I had learned in school. In the end, he helped me to break from the hegemonic narratives that I had been told in my previous learning. For the first time, I was able to connect the dots and he helped me to do it. The last time I saw him, he was lost.

While my feelings towards Gorée vacillate between fascination and sometimes frustration, I have always loved the island. The first visit influenced me more than many things in my life, and so I returned time after time. Even though the evidence shows that not many slaves passed through, I still call it home. I still honor the tiny space as a place of belonging.

- 1 Roberts, Allen F., Mary Nooter Roberts, Gassia Armenian, and Ousmane Guèye, *A Saint in the City : Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal* (Los Angeles, Calif.: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, 2003), p. 284 p.
- 2 Levi-Strauss, Claude, *The Structural Study of Myth*. ed. by Ed Thomas Sebeok, *Myth: Symposium* (1968).
- 3 Strobel-Baginski, Michèle *"L'imagerie Religieuse Au Sénégal, Ph D. Dissertation* (Université des Science Humaines de Strasbourg, France, 1982).
- 4 Schechner, Richard, *Between Theater & Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), pp. xiv, 342 p.
- 5 Freud, Sigmund, *On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement Papers on Metapsychology: Mourning and Melancholia*. Vol. 14 (1914 - 1916).
- 6 Eng, David L., and David Kazanjian, *Loss : The Politics of Mourning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. x, 488 p.
- 7 Tate, Claudia, *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels : Desire and the Protocols of Race, Race and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. xvi, 238 p.
- 8 Cheng, Anne Anlin, *The Melancholy of Race : Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief* (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 288 p.
- 9 Katyal, Sonia, 'Semiotic Disobedience', *Washington University Law Review*, 84 (2006).
- 10 Fiske, John, *Television Culture*. 2nd edn (London ; New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. lxi, 358 p.
- 11 Gramsci, Antonio, Quintin Hoare, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London,: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), pp. xcvi, 483 p.
- 12 Radin, Paul, Karl Kerényi, and C. G. Jung, *The Trickster; a Study in American Indian Mythology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), pp. xxv, 211 p.

- 13 Jung, C. G., Herbert, Reed, *On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968).
- 14 Berry, Wendell, *The Hidden Wound* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), p. 145 p.
- 15 Murray, David, *Thriving on a Riff: Jazz & Blues Influences in African American Literature and Film*. ed. by Graham Lock and David Murray (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. xiii, 296 p.
- 16 Adjepong, Kwabena, 'Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child'2010)
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fu1SJU-8PWA%3E>.
- 17 Moten, Fred, 'Black Mo'nin', in *Loss*, ed. by David L. and David Kazanjian Eng (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2003), p. 59.
- 18 Hartman, Saidiya V., *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America, Race and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. viii, 281 p.
- 19 Dorsey, Thomas A., 'Take My Hand, Precious Lord', (1932).
- 20 Benjamin, Walter, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (Schocken, 1969).
- 21 Dietrich, Dorothea, *The Collages of Kurt Schwitters: Tradition and Innovation* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. xvi, 240 p., [8] p. of plates.
- 22 Turner, Victor W., *The Anthropology of Performance*. 1st pbk. edn (New York: PAJ Publications, 1988), p. 185 p.
- 23 Sanders, Charles L., 'Interview with Richard Pryor', *Ebony Magazine* 1980.
- 24 Pryor, Richard, *Pryor Convictions: And Other Life Sentences* (Pantheon Books; 1st edition 1995), p. 257.
- 25 Kennedy, Randall, 'Nigger the Strange Career of a Troublesome Word', (New York: Pantheon Books., 2002), p. 1 online resource (226 p.).

- 26 Joseph, Peniel E., *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour : A Narrative History of Black Power in America*. 1st edn (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2006), pp. xiv, 399 p., 8 p. of plates.
- 27 Fanon, Frantz, *Black Skin, White Masks*. 1st edn (New York, Berkeley, Calif.: Grove Press; Distributed by Publishers Group West, 2008), pp. xviii, 206 p.

Coda

In 1700, or 1800, 1900, or perhaps a lot more recently, in rural Alabama or Georgia or Mississippi – or even, say, within twenty miles of where you live – a black man creates a sculpture next to his front door. The sculpture is made of a wheel, a mirror, a shoe, a tree branch, a rope, a milk bottle, a piece of barbed wire, a broken kerosene lantern, and a skull of a farm animal. A white man comes to the door at midnight with a shotgun and says, "What's that thing you made out there?" The black man answers, "Oh, that's just some junk I put together to bless the bones of my dead mama." The white man responds, "O.K., I don't have a problem with that." And the black man goes back to bed.

But what if the black man says this: "Well, you see, the wheel represents the eternal cycle of the human soul, but it is also a subtle reference to the fact that we are a poor and enslaved population that has had to survive by recycling materials cast off just like *we* have been cast off, by a dominant culture; and the mirror, though some people believe it's a relic of an old superstition having to do with the scaring away of wandering souls -maybe you've heard them referred to in folklore as 'haints' - actually the mirror hearkens to my Kongo ancestry and funerary rituals far too complicated for me to explain to you at this late hour; and the shoe, which is used by many sculptors like me to hint at various concepts of movement and travel, for me it is nothing more than remembering my grandfather's wisdom; he once passed along to me something said to him by his own grandfather, a full-blooded Choctaw Indian, that if you want to understand a man's pain... Oh, by the way that piece of barbed wire stuck in the sculpture is a hidden reference to not only the pain that my ancestors suffered at the hands of your ancestors, but also the pain of our Indian foreparents, but I digress, 'a man's pain can be felt only if you walk a mile in his moccasins...'"

Of course, the black man may not have lived this far into the conversation. Secrecy has always been essential to survival in the black South.¹

**William Arnett
The Road From Emelle
Thornton Dial in the 21st Century**

Chattel slavery began in the United States in the early Seventeenth Century. By the end of the Civil War in 1865, capitalists had transported scores of human beings across the Atlantic Ocean and subjected them to severe oppression in the name of profit. In the early Seventeenth Century, wealthy investors in England, including King James, began the transport of hundreds of thousands of British and Irish citizens, destined to perform free labor for the construction of the original colonies. They became the "hewers of wood and drawers of water" who cleared the

trees from expropriated land and, according to Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, "built the infrastructure of merchant capitalism."² By the early Eighteenth Century, when these capitalists had exploited the free labor from England and needed greater armies of workers to expand agricultural growth in the North American colonies, they looked to West Africa. In both the North and the South, African slaves transformed the colonies into a world economic power. The North, often excused from the discussion of chattel slavery, gradually abolished the practice, but slavery existed in the North just as it had in the South. New Jersey ended the institution only in 1865, at the same time as the Emancipation Proclamation. Even while the North abolished slavery, it profited profoundly because of international trade of such commodities as cotton, indigo, and tobacco. Capitalists in the North had also accumulated substantial wealth through such enterprises as ship making and through companies that insured the transport of the slaves as a commodity. In the beginning, the inextricable relationship between capitalism and racial categorization helped to establish a context of exploitation and un-belonging that would re-emerge throughout American history, thus far. Racial disharmony continues to function in the overall American economic enterprise as diverse groups are situated on different rungs of the hegemonic hierarchy and settle into states of ambivalence.

I began this final chapter, the Coda, with William Arnett's description of the art of Thornton Dial because the ancestral wheel might serve as a memory device to represent the eternal cycle of the human soul and also the recirculation of the original story of the United States, based in memes of entitlement, exploitation, and greed. I wanted this analysis to spin back to the beginning where African enslaved people would survive by piecing together the spiritual beliefs of their ancestors, retelling the wisdom of their foremothers, and re-presenting the hope of their forefathers. Holding a mirror up to the past, watching for the "flashes of spirit"

of the repeating memes, I wanted to catch a glimpse of both the shadow of slavery as well as its transcendence.

In the Overture, I expressed my intention to analyze the process of transformation that many diasporic tourists claimed had occurred on Gorée Island. Using diverse voices from interviews, documented narratives, testimonies, and memoirs, I wanted to document common experiences of transformation from un-belonging to belonging. I wanted to stress my own transformative experiences from visiting that tiny spot on this big planet called Gorée Island. I used the metaphors of music, theater, and art to construct this analysis of transformation. In the first three Movements, I explored how narrative, music, and religion have helped to etch ideas for African Americans that circulate and recirculate into an identity in a process that I—following Performance Studies theorist Richard Schechner—call “rehearsal.” I proposed that the earliest African slaves encoded rehearsals with the idea of transformation and transcendence. The last image for many of the African slaves consisted of the scenes from the rivers that brought them to the slave factories along the coasts all around Africa. Many songs and narratives incorporate the notions of crossing rivers, going home, and returning to paradise. These recapitulations, rehearsed over and over, “prime” African Americans for visits to sites such as Gorée Island. Chapters four and five consist of the performance part of the rehearsal/performance paradigm. In the performance stage, diasporic travelers act out their transformation. On Gorée Island, tourists purge their souls of the pent up sorrow and shame of un-belonging and celebrate “going home.” This performance occurs in the liminal state, in the betwixt and between of here and there, and then and now. In this between-space, they gather the gifts of the ancestors. On the return, travelers bring back their insights and revelations. This coda section ends with the voice of a diasporic tourist who grew up in the city of Saint Louis,

Missouri. As I started this analysis in the context of the death of Trayvon Martin, I end it with the context of Michael Brown and Ferguson, Missouri. This dissertation acknowledges all the George Stinneys, Laura Nelsons, Mary Turners, Emmett Tills, Michael Browns, Trayvon Martins, Ezzell Fords, Sean Bells, Eric Garners, Oscar Grants, Walter Scotts, Freddie Grays and all the Americans citizens since slavery times who have “un-belonged.” In this coda section, I end with my own voice, a mosaic of my experiences of searching and learning to belong.

Music

In regard to music, I first imagined the idea of the musical score that Claude Lévi-Strauss employed for analyzing myth.³ From the musical score, we see the big picture of reoccurring themes. We see how the composer/conductor imagines how to hold the whole composition together. Myths, like musical compositions, hold all the reoccurring themes together and serve as our primary source for relating to the world. The stories we tell ourselves make our world cohesive. Individually, we learn our personal stories and recirculate them to make sense of our world. Over and over, we play out our roles upon the world stage. Sometimes, we take up new stories and let go of old ones but we keep flirting with the ones we first learned. Families, communities, and nations also write myths that circulate and spiral over time, holding the society together so as to validate who we think we are.

Contemplating these stories as the musical score, I imagined a great jazz symphony. I envisioned jazz, the most democratic of the arts, where all voices have a turn to be heard, to give voice to the ones who have un-belonged. I conjured up a complex orchestration with many types of percussive instruments to accommodate the changing tempos, syncopation, polyrhythms, and altering time signatures. Tubas, trombones and trumpets would comprise the brassy, confident and assured, at times, and at other times, the sweet serenaders. A big saxophone family, clarinets

and flutes would also serenade in between the robust chatter of the brass. String bass, cellos, violas and violins, a different clan, would offer different voices in the musical conversation. The conductor of this orchestra would strike the overture, introducing all the musical themes of different movements of the symphony. In the overture, we would sample the joy of the allegro, the contemplation of the andante, the sorrow of the adagio, the hope of the allegretto, and the farewell of the coda. The themes of this symphonic work would transpire across the movements, like in all great symphonies.

As with the original myths that we carry, throughout this symphony, pieces of the story and the motifs would meander in and out of the music. During a somber chorus of the cellos, the clarinets might cry out in a sorrowful agreement followed by an antiphonal reply in counterpoint from the alto saxes, just like a politician giving a stump speech on a street corner accompanied by call and response of “amens” from the crowd. This symphony would follow the same rules of discourse as the African American church and the Amen Corner or barber shop verbal jostling. At times, a trumpet player might stand up to deliver a virtuosic solo, just like an African griot or a hip-hop rapper. The trombones would shout out, “Right-on, Man!” The soprano saxes would screech in with, “Preach!”

I imagined this analysis of un-belonging and belonging like the jazz orchestra, multi-vocal, multi-melodic, many modulations of harmony and poly-rhythmic. Even with many blues chords and grace notes, the harmonies would always come back to the original key signature. I wanted to use many voices, especially those not often heard in the academy. I wanted those voices to serve as the “Amen Corner.” I wanted them to burst forth and give testimony to the truth being spoken. I wanted to hear from both sides of the veil that W. E. B. Dubois conceived.⁴ I wanted to hear the truths that the slave-owners certainly hushed quiet and that are often negated

from the history books. In the dialogic process, I wanted to engage the Nineteenth Century former slave, Fountain Hughes, telling of a time when he wanted to get back to where he “belonged” before someone saw him with the Twenty-First Century student at UCLA, Samad, recalling the time when campus police stopped him to verify that he belonged on campus. Belonging would cost African Americans a premium price. Choked together in metal coffles, millions marched from the North to the South during the “second middle passage.” As they did in the first migrations, they carried their unified hopes of freedom. When cotton was king, their enslavement profited the wealthy and banded their determination. During the Great Migration of the Twentieth Century, millions trampled, stowed-away, drove, crammed into Jim Crow cars on trains, and even ran, to escape the terror of the South. In the Promise Land, they paid inflated prices to rent apartments in sequestered spaces like the South Side of Chicago, Harlem and South Central Los Angeles. They often faced violent resistance in places like Chicago with the Race Riots of 1919 or the Tulsa Riots of 1921. Years later, when these migrants scrapped together enough to purchase properties, white residents often responded violently, such as in 1951 in Cicero, Illinois. The disharmonious wail of un-belonging would interrupt the great American symphony. These un-belonging tropes would recapitulate even through the beginning of the 21st Century in places like Ferguson, Missouri, where American citizens lived in sequestered spaces with poor employment opportunities, lacking schools, violence, aggressive police forces and continuous surveillance. The Department of Justice reported in March of 2015 that the City of Ferguson, Missouri practiced extreme and aggressive arrest practices that targeted African American citizens that, in essence, financed city operations. The city, with a population of 21,000 people, had arrest warrants for 16,000 people. Almost the whole population of the city funded municipal operations through dubious charges.⁵ As the events of Ferguson unfolded, the

world would learn that these hyper-segregated spaces of un-belonging exist all over the United States where the legal system enforced the state of un-belonging.

The African American Overture started in the key of Sorrow for the African slave. Even before the arrival of the masses of slaves, when wealthy property owners and investors delivered a reign of terror on Native Americans, they also terrorized indentured servants in the British Isles as white slaves. From the beginning, their primary motives consisted of the encroachment of land, greed and the acquisition of free labor. The first notes these investors played expressed terror. “In England the expropriations of the peasantry was accompanied by systematic violence and terror, organized with a criminal sanction, public searches, the prisons, martial law, capital punishment, banishment, forced labor, and colonization.”² The early settlers consisted of men who participated in investment groups that preyed upon the appropriation of Native American lands and labor thefts from the British Isles. As “property owners” in the newly acquired lands in the colonies, only they could vote. From the very beginning, property owners established structures that placed the value of property over human lives. By the time of the African slaves arrived, en mass in the early Eighteenth Century, the settlers had already practiced and structured their deeds of entitlement. The motifs of greed would interrupt the symphony over and over again over the course of the country’s history. In the early Eighteenth Century of the American symphony, these settlers would begin using the former white indentured servants as slave patrols to keep slaves on their sequestered spaces. Some became overseers on the plantations and others rode horse around the various plantations seeking runaways, profiting from the misery of poor souls seeking freedom. Others of the poor Whites could scrape together enough money to purchase a slave from the North and then march then down to the South during the cotton boom where the price tag on a slave increased markedly. These “Georgia men” would then return to

the North with more cash and then purchase a larger stock of slaves. The slave patrols would later transition into security forces after slavery and during Reconstruction. At the dawn of the Jim Crow Era, some of these security forces would become police departments while others would enforce in the dark as they banded together to deliver domestic terrorism on African Americans. They became the KKK and later the White Citizen Councils and factions of the Tea Party and NRA. Never ascending to the higher rungs of the hegemonic order, they would seek their power through guns, scripture and outdated legal narratives. While these groups may have operated in the dark, many American legal authorities would close their eyes to the terror they delivered upon fellow citizens.

As the symphony played on, the music would modulate back to the original key of sorrow, then back to hopeful, then reflective. After the long sorrowful period of slavery, African Americans witnessed hope when the Emancipation Proclamation ushered in the Reconstruction Era. The Civil Rights Acts of 1866 extended equal protections of the law to African Americans. Some former slaves enjoyed a short period of freedoms while others became entangled into unfair sharecropping relationships with their former planters. During the time of Reconstruction, many poor whites suffered as much as the former slaves. Resentments swelled and the Reconstruction Era was short-lived. While during slavery, many non-property owning whites served as those who would surveil slaves or they held jobs that depended upon the system of enslavement. To ensure the functioning of slavery, many contracted with wealthy slave-owners to track down runaways and insubordinate slaves. During Reconstruction, these former patrollers begin forming bands that tortured and terrorized the newly freed slaves. With the dawn of the industrial age, industrialists exploited this arrangement, by exacerbating tensions between Blacks and Whites. They promoted messages to poor Whites that Blacks had caused all their woes.

Domestic terrorism such as lynchings rose sharply during this period. Since slave-owners no longer owned black bodies, the value of their flesh and bones decreased. Prisons increased and corporations contracted cheap labor from prisons through the prison lease programs. In slavery times, a master probably would not kill a slave because of the huge loss of capital. During the early industrial period, after Reconstruction and Jim Crow Era, work force guards could kill prisoners easily since the investment was so low. In the Jim Crow Era, industrialists lobbied for severe laws for African Americans, which then provided cheap labor as industrialists rented slave labor at cheap prices. Whereas during slavery, a slave represented huge investments, during Jim Crow Era, companies like steel mills and mining companies, could kill a prisoner for insubordination and rent a new one at prices that satisfied both industry and state governments in the prison lease arrangement. This “slavery by another name,” as Douglas A. Blackmon calls it, provided great income for both governments and corporations. After America’s long history of chattel slavery, African-Americans had experienced a short period of hopefulness.⁶ This period ended and this time delivered conditions sometimes harsher than during slavery. Slave-owners valued their slaves and viewed them as investments with grand returns for the production of their labor. After slavery, black bodies became expendable.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960’s ushered in another period of hope, just as Reconstruction had in the previous century. Acts of domestic terrorism, like the bombing of the little girls at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963, awakened the world’s attention to the problems occurring across the United States. While the United States asked for democratic transitions to governments across Africa, at home, acts of terror persisted through the first half of the Twentieth Century. Finally, by the 1960’s, when the world could serve as witness through the growth of television, terrorist acts had begun to decrease around the

nation. The Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts of the 1960's passed. President Johnson also signed the Affirmative Action and Fair Housing Acts. As with Reconstruction, some national leaders and dissatisfied Whites stoked flames to undermine the successes of the Civil Rights Era. Members of the Republican Party developed the Southern Strategy, which essentially resurrected divisions between poor southern whites and African Americans. Seeing the effectiveness of black churches during the Civil Rights Movement, these republican politicians incorporated white churches as a part of their strategy to wedge black and white voters. Strategists employed the same narratives that had worked in the beginning of the formations of the African slave trade in the early Eighteenth Century. They reignited artificial hierarchies that created the ambivalent state. The Southern Strategy reintroduced the divisive tropes that benefited corporations and harmed poor people.

Like the recapitulation of musical motifs in a symphonic work, the re-emergence of tensions between blacks and whites once again entered the American discourse. As with a musical departure, the symphony modulated back and forth between the original key of sorrow and the hopeful. The American symphony mediated between ambivalence and aspiration. As America developed, the narrative has at times adjusted back to the first narrative of the country where capitalism, religion and narrative twisted together into an inextricable mesh. In the Post-Civil Rights Era, conservative religious leaders incorporated tropes of "personal responsibility," "pro-life," and "conservatism." These narratives served large corporate interests and reduced rights for African Americans, poor Whites, immigrants, and Native Americans. The trope of unbelonging re-emerged, reinforcing the ambivalent state.

Theater

I also used the metaphor of the theater in my analysis of un-belonging and belonging. During slavery, slave-owners relegated slaves to the plantation where they learned the customs, songs, stories and dances of the other slaves. With the selling of slaves across plantations, these traditions moved from location to location and became standard practices. I call the sequestered space on which the slaves lived, rehearsal spaces. On these spaces, slaves sang, danced and told stories that would recirculate as practiced scripts. Slave-owners assisted in crafting the stories of the slaves by enforcing narrowly strict rules and laws, and by restricting movement. From one side of the veil, slaves performed survival and from the other side they acted out coded narratives of freedom with other slaves on the plantation.

During the Great Migration to the North and to the West, former slaves carried traditions and practices with them. Migrants often escaped to places in the North where they knew someone. Over time, these spaces contained large Diasporas from the same places in the South. As many migrants believed that they headed for the Promise Land, they soon discovered that in their new homes, northern whites still subjected them to living on sequestered spaces. They continued rehearsing and recapitulating what they had learned on the plantation as early migrants made ways for family and friends back home creating familiar spaces from the homestead in the South. For former slaves who made sharecropping agreements with former slave-owners, they continued on the old sequestered spaces, rehearsing the same myths through song, storytelling and dance.

During slavery and the decades that followed during the Jim Crow Era, slave patrols and vigilante groups, like the KKK, terrorized black people who simultaneously rehearsed a script of survival and of an imagined freedom. They lived under the terror of the slave-owner and their patrols, and they also envisioned and performed the promise land, and the return home. They

sang of the escape, the trip back to Africa, and the migration to the north. The slaves from Africa had traveled through the liminal space of the Middle Passage. Through their songs, they understood the re-incorporation phase of the ritual, they knew they would some day go home, even if that meant home in paradise/death. They sang, “Before I be a slave, I’ll lay down in my grave.” “I’m going home, to be with my lord.” They had rehearsed un-belonging on earth, but in their hearts, they knew they belonged to the lord. They knew that the world was not their home. They had rehearsed and performed survival their whole lives and lived through whippings, castrations, humiliations, rapes, torture and terror. In the demarcated segregated spaces, they had also rehearsed and performed jubilation. In the campsite church meetings, deep in the woods, in the ring shout, they had already rehearsed euphoria in their hearts and minds under the careful watch of the slaver, so they sang with joy. Like the jazz trumpet player had already rehearsed and mastered the great solo over the blues progression. Africans Americans always rehearsed their transcendence. Like the lady in the nurse’s uniform in the traditional Baptist church had already rehearsed her transformation during her shouting or “getting happy,” when she felt the spirit, so too had the pilgrims on Gorée Island.

Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye, the beloved griot of Gorée Island proclaimed that the slaves left the island, "never to see Africa again." As the years passed, he realized that while the slaves would never return to Gorée, their descendants would. The thousands who came to the island carried the spirits of the slaves who had left. The travelers returned to commune with the spirits of their ancestors. On the island, they return as a part of their self-realization as Edward Bruner explains of diasporic tourism in Ghana, “For many African Americans, the castles are sacred ground not to be desecrated. They do not want the castles to be made beautiful or to be whitewashed. They want the original stench to remain in the dungeons.”⁷ They are not looking

to return to a Disney-esque version of the horrors of the slave trade, the Jim Crow Era or the problems they continue to face in a racialized society. They have return to “see Africa again.” They have returned to make sense of the deep wounds of slavery. They have returned to stand in the center of their pain and their joy. They have come to taste the bittersweet.

On sites like Gorée Island, pilgrims seek to connect their past with their now. Bayo Holsey described one ritual where descendants in the Diaspora want to return the coffins of their ancestors for re-interment⁸. After various ceremonies, pilgrims placed the coffins on canoes and brought them through “the door of no return” but reversed as coming from the side of the ocean. The pilgrims then reinterred these coffins on African soil. This served as a symbolic gesture for the unification of Africans in the Diaspora with Africans. In the introduction of this dissertation, I established the idea of “un-belonging” that has persisted for African Americans since the beginning of the founding of the United States. I applied the ritual process with an overlay of the rehearsal/performance dynamic as a structure for this dissertation. As diasporic tourists traveled to Gorée Island, they had the opportunity to perform their transformation in the liminal space of the island. As some joyously kissed the African soil and sang, “I’m home,” they performed their transformation and transcendence. In the liminal space of the island, they could abort the ambivalent state and imagine their freedom. They could inscribe a new narrative for their lives and reinvent themselves. What they discovered in the liminal space, they brought back home on the re-incorporation phase of the ritual process. In the in-between space, they found meaning to their fragmented lives. They pieced together the ruptures.

Art

As I set out to write this dissertation, another metaphor emerged. As I traveled around the Black Atlantic in recent years, I noticed the visual representation of Africans and descendants

of slaves piecing together their own narratives, dreams, memories and proclamations through art. Like so many other expressions in the Black Atlantic, they demonstrated the art of “making do.” They took recycled materials that honored their ancestors. They coded messages to other travelers on the Underground Railroad or on the Great Migration. They used bottles and wheels, ropes and tree stumps. They used a “little bit of this” and a “little bit of that,” just as the jazz musician pieces together great compositions. Like multi-colored quilts, these artists take the left overs and piece together utilitarian covers and coded maps. As slaves came onto plantations from different lands, and spoke different languages, they came together and stitched together families and communities.

First struck by the art of Khalil on Gorée Island, I went on to discover similar creations around the Black Atlantic. Betye Saar told me of her recycled found objects that helped her to re-frame a story. She turned Aunt Jemima in a revolutionary with “The Liberation of Aunt Jemina.”⁹ She turned the stereotypical mammy into a woman of power. She used found objects to conjure memories of a time long gone. Thornton Dial used “this and that” to honor his ancestry, to remember the wisdom of those who came before him, to keep his secrets, and to comment on the dominant culture. In Croix-Des-Bouquet, Haiti, I saw artists transform metal like the Spirit of Metal, Orun, who had been sent to make the world a good place. Like their Orisha, the alchemist on Hispaniola Island came to transform their world. On Gorée Island, Khalil struck me as a transformer, someone who could turn detritus into beauty. Across the Black Atlantic, diasporic citizens learned to make do and make beauty.

All of these artists took the “bits and pieces,” “this and that” and built sculptures of the old and the new, the bitter and the sweet, the then and the now. In this dissertation, I have drawn from the terror and the hope, the “what was” with the “what is” with the “what will be.” You

cannot tell the story of Gorée without looking back. To look back, we discover the pain, but also the transcendence. Looking back, we find the things we will need for our journeys forward. By using the dialogic approach, I wanted to draw upon a mosaic of voices to shed light on the journey towards transformation. Just as the conditions of un-belonging and belonging lie somewhere within the web of capitalism, religion, hegemonic narratives, and personal fortitude, one might not recognize the art at first glance, but through deeper investigation, we find the meaning of each “found object.”

Narrative

Early on, popular ideas legitimized the exploitation of human beings such as when wealthy Englishmen brought indentured servants to the United States. Cast as criminals, this lot served the ruling class that had the means and wealth to migrate to America. The wealthy elite dangled the dream of coming to the new land before indentured servants. These elites cast the poor as deserving of their miserable lives but through hard work, they could improve their lot in life. Some could climb the economic hierarchy. Others would remain in the ambivalent state for generations. When the elites later brought African slaves to the United States, wealthy property owners cast the slaves in brutal terms that justified terror, torture and exploitation. While non-property owners Whites did not possess full rights of citizenship, property owners gave them a higher status than the slaves. They could patrol and punish the slaves. This toxic dynamic between poor whites and slaves propelled the economic machine forward in the United States and this relationship continues to emerge through memes like the red state/blue state, conservative/liberal divides.

From the early days, the establishment used artificial hierarchies as a tool for the maintenance of the ambivalent state. Positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy, poor Whites

would hold the dream that someday they would achieve the same status of the elites. However, because they did not have the original property to pull them forward, often, they had to abandon their dreams. In the meantime, these whites would serve as the enforcers of the exploitation of the slaves' labor. In "The Half Has Never Been Told," Edward Baptist explicates how slave labor generated the wealth of the United States that propelled the nation into a world power.¹⁰ More interesting than his research was the response from the establishment. Immediately, the Economist panned the book. After an outcry from scholars, the magazine had to withdraw the book review and apologize. The establishment has always supported the maintenance of power and the United States and Europe and has never owned up to the tremendous expansions in power it experienced because of slavery. A common circulated African proverb states: "Until the lion has his or her own storyteller, the hunter will always have the best part of the story." Power establishments have always used their control of the narrative to their benefit. In the United States, ambivalent bodies, such as schools, the entertainment industry and churches have functioned within the apparatus of controlling the narrative that serves hegemony.

In the late Nineteenth Century, wealthy industrialists would incite hostilities between poor whites and former slaves. During the Jim Crow Era, they would fuel enough hostilities that many whites would participate in sadistic practices as public tortures, where, on the most extreme side, they hung, mutilated, cut off limbs, castrated and burned human beings. As they gathered for the spectacle, professional photographers would capture the moments and then create and sell postcards of the memorable events. On the less extreme side, some whites would participate in public humiliation of African Americans and then remain silent to the systems of inequity.

Popular Media Narratives

Over the years, the news media has grown as an important part of the enmeshment of the hegemonic narrative within the ambivalent state. At the very least, the masses of individuals participate in cultural norms, unaware that the hegemonic order has enrolled them into a state of ambivalence. This enrollment occurs through the symbiotic relationship between the small group that control the mass media, corporate interests and governments. Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky propose that this relationship occurs through a subtle process of propaganda. “The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertainment, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society.” As media outlets have consolidated over the past two decades, corporate bodies have delivered more concentrated message that benefit the hegemonic order. “In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfill this role requires systematic propaganda.”¹¹ More and more media outlets use paid consultants as expert witnesses on news programs. These consultants often promote narrow agendas that recreate patriarchal organizations. The media watch group, F. A. I. R., Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, analyzes media presentations and often notes, for example, the dominance of older white male representatives. The group also offers diverse analyses of the relationships between vested the media. Repeatedly, their findings demonstrate a white male dominance in media analysis.¹²

For the past twenty years, the consolidation of the media has influenced the national conversation on diverse issues. As Ben H. Bagdikian notes, much of this concentration of discourse has occurred as a result of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 signed into law by Bill Clinton. He notes how Newt Gingrich’s republican class 1994 swept into office and “asked the

industry what it wanted and almost literally gave them the law they asked for.” Large corporate groups wanted more control of local markets that had been out of their reach before the new act. After 1996, locally run media outlets could not compete with the behemoth companies that consumed local markets and diverse media groups folded. After the new act, national media groups bought locally operated stations. The uniform messages of the conglomerates often contain stereotypical narratives that support ambivalence. The growing influence of large media in government policies also changed previously held practices of objectivity. The Federal Communications Commission had held the *Fairness Doctrine* as a tool to insure that news organizations would present issues in a fair and balanced manner where multiple voices would present diverse points of view. When the FCC abandoned its commitment to the *Fairness Doctrine*, media groups then could present one-sided ideas, often from the direction of corporate interests. One of the top news organizations, FOX News, even appropriated the phrase “fair and balanced” to give the impression of objectivity when they actually promote stereotypical narratives. Bagdikian notes the changing reality of the changing ownership of the media over the past 30 years: “Five men controlled all these medias once run by the fifty corporations of twenty years earlier.”¹³ In the morass of half-told stories, corporately controlled media has drowned out diverse voices from varying perspectives.

Corporate influences also inform the narrative as groups with vested interests influence policymaking. In the post-civil rights era, in response to newly won voting rights, housing rights, civil rights and increased access to a quality, political groups emerged to slow the progress that was gained in the 1960's. Many African-Americans had witnessed the possibility of belonging through structural political, social and economic changes and increased positive

narratives. However, at the same time, focus on the "dysfunction" of the black family fueled increased negative narratives for African-Americans.

Political Narratives

In 1965, Patrick Moynihan, sociologist, professor and Assistant Secretary of Labor, issued a report, *The Negro Family: The Case For National Action*, pathologized black families.¹⁴ The central premise of the report stated that the absence of fathers in black homes caused many of the problems in ghetto life. Politicians picked up these tropes and began repeating narratives that would serve, for example, the Southern strategy. Building on the overemphasis of the black male in African-American families accentuated the focus on patriarchy without regard to the cultural importance of matriarchy and community in many West African cultures. Politicians used these findings to serve the purposes for cutting social programs and public integrated schools. Ronald Reagan used phrases such as "welfare queen," to perpetuate a myth that somehow single black women were bankrupting the national treasury because of their supposed unwillingness to work. Reagan questioned if Americans should pay for "strapping young bucks" to eat steak while using food stamps. These political insinuations frame ideas into targeted voting populations. Ian Haney Lopez calls these codes, "dog whistle politics." Like the dog whistle, the whistle is not meant for everyone as only the dog can hear the whistle.¹⁵ With narrowing media control, the recapitulation of damning narratives props up right-wing politics that enrich the lives of only a few. When news agencies employ paid panelists that repeat talking points consisting of dog whistles, the misinformation captures the imagination of unsophisticated viewers and erodes reasonable public conversations. As these news agencies rely more on paid corporate sponsorship in service to profits, objective journalism wanes.

During the Reagan/Bush Era, the dangerous black male trope re-emerged in the popular discourse. George H. W. Bush scared voters by insinuating that his opponent, Michael Dukakis, had been responsible for the Massachusetts weekend furlough program in which Willie Horton, a convicted murderer, had committed a robbery and rape while out on a pass. Political operatives saw that by repeating the situation, voters would feel less confident in Dukakis. Bush defeated Dukakis. Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush had both taken strong stances against the social programs of the 1960s and 70s. They also increased punitive measures with programs like the War on Drugs. During the Reagan/Bush year, prison populations increased substantially. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 1985 jails and prisons held an estimated 313 inmates per 100,000 residents. Bill Clinton, a centrist, who defeated George H. W. Bush the following election cycle, built upon republicans ideas. Clinton saw that he would have to move his message to the center in order to survive politically. His triangulated positions would continue on the trajectory of the Reagan/Bush Administrations, which would subtly add to the erosion of the structural and legal victories of the 1960s and perpetuate repeated hegemonic narratives. At midyear 1996 prison populations had increased to 615 inmates per 100,000 residents. More than 1.6 million men and women were held in the nation's jails and prisons at the end of June 1996.¹⁶

With Republican majorities in both the senate and the house in 1996, the democratic president, Bill Clinton, continued capitulating to right-winged social policies of the 104th Congress and re-circulated stereotypical narratives about black people with “dog whistle” repetitions. Clinton signed the Crime Bill of 1996 which set the foundational stage for increased incarceration of poor people and people of color. The bill called for an increase of police officers on the streets across the country by one hundred thousand. It also funded an increase in

prison constructions, which the country needed after the birth of the “Three Strikes” laws that Clinton had proposed. With the Three Strikes laws, prison populations skyrocketed as federal guidelines mandated that judges send offenders to prison for victimless crimes such as stealing food. By 2001, “The incarceration rate for people in prison and jail had reached 690 inmates per 100, 000 U. S. residents for a total prison population of 1,965,495.¹⁷ By 2013, the prison population decreased for the first time since 1980 where the U. S. Bureau of Justice estimated that 1,574,700 people resided in prisons.¹⁸ With the need for more prisons in the past thirty years, private companies began filling in the gaps for the construction and maintenance of prisons. “The prison industry complex is one of the fastest-growing industries in the United States and its investors are on Wall Street,” as reported by Vicky Pelaez of Global Research.¹⁹ With so many entities that stand to gain from high incarceration rates, prison populations in the United States remain elevated. Telephone companies profit through exorbitant collect calling schemes. Food service companies supply the bare minimum of poor quality food for which they have charged governments large sums of money. Not only do construction companies, service providers and investors profit from private prisons, so do companies that hire the cheap labor of the prisoners. Poor communities and communities of color have suffered most from these arrangements that harken back to the days of work camps in the early 20th Century when mining and steel companies paid cheap wages for imprisoned poor and black citizens.

In recent years, local municipalities have contracted with private companies to collect traffic fines. When the offenders cannot pay, the companies add unconscionable fees, which incapacitate the lawbreaker’s ability to pay. Local law enforcement agencies then jail the debtors and debtor’s prisons re-emerge. Michelle Alexander’s idea of “the new Jim Crow” recalls of the turn of the Twentieth Century when corporations could profit from cheap labor

from imprisoned men. The opportunistic relationship between poor citizens and profits, ensconced within local law, substantiates the feeling on un-belonging as these citizens are relegated to the most extreme sequestration.

The harsh crime laws of the past thirty years incentivized police forces to “get tough on crime.” For example, in New York City, the “stop and frisk” program generated national outrage as New York police officers targeted men of color. Many of the stops occurred at the ends of daily patrol duty. Police officer would stop men under the pretense of checking for drugs. The operation would extend the officer’s day allowing the officer to receive overtime pay. Precinct leaders pressured officers to fulfill quotas. In the federal case, *Floyd versus City of New York*, Police Officer Andyl Polanco testified that he had to log at least five Stop and Frisks per day.²⁰ The attorney general of New York found that out of 2.4 million “stop and frisks,” only 150, 000 arrests had been made.²¹ Even though so few arrests had occurred, for the men who had experienced the humiliation, they received a confirmation of their status of un-belonging. They were reminded that they had to stay where they “belonged.”

In 1996, Bill Clinton signed the welfare reform bill, called the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, which made it more difficult for families to receive support over a long period of time. With the republican senate and congress, Clinton’s move to the center helped continue the march to efface many of the social programs of the 1960’s. When he signed the law into effect, his operatives staged a few black women looking over his shoulders for the official bill-signing photograph, institutionalizing the idea that black women had not taken personal responsibility and had bankrupted the nation. Images, such as the famous signing of Welfare Reform, etched in the American psyche conventional and unimaginative notions of African Americans. These images do not interrogate the systemic and structural

barriers to access that African American and poor people face because of the legacy of the racialized foundations of the country. Rather, these images become visual talking points, “dog whistles,” in the American imagination. During the presidency of Ronald Reagan, the “welfare queen” joined the cast of characters for the American hegemonic theater. The lazy welfare queen joined the ensemble with players like the mammy, the drug dealer and the oversexed young woman. While politicians signal divisive politics through their dog whistles, Hollywood, also re-presents into the echo chamber these unimaginative characters repeatedly.

Hollywood Narratives

For the past one hundred years, Hollywood has continued to perpetuate and institutionalize stereotypes into the American hegemonic narrative, starting with D. W. Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation*. That film built on recapitulated themes of American popular entertainment. White men wearing black face portrayed hyper-sexualized and imbecilic black men while white men, playing roles in the KKK, symbolized heroism. Not only did this film, set in the Civil War/Reconstruction era, influence the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, it also embedded theatrical ideas into the American popular culture imagination. Hollywood would go on to recycle old narratives that cast African-Americans into two-dimensional cast-asides that promote racialized categorizations. These categorizations have profited economic and political interests. The intertwining recirculated memes support the original American story and belief systems that confirm artificial hierarchies. In the early days, privileged property owners amplified the trope of “hard work” while they labeled non-property owners and slaves as lazy. Often, the repeated ideas of “hard work” and “personal responsibility” for the privilege lot fail to incorporate the realities of structural disadvantages that impeded equal successes for the un-privileged lot.

Ambivalent personalities in the entertainment, political and religious worlds, often take up the message of hegemony by appropriating blackness and then turning what they used towards white audiences. White middle-income audiences possess the largest profit potentials so these personalities re-present the hegemonic narrative to willing consumers. Because these ambivalent personalities use African American cultural qualities, such as dance, music, religious memes, styles and rhetoric, they mask the hegemonic narrative. On the surface, these personalities look as if they are paying homage to the African American community, but below they surface, they mine for consumers. Gramsci warned that the oppressed would participate in its own oppression, ambivalent personalities assist in the process. As media ownership has become more narrowed, so too has the narrative that supports highly concentrated wealthy corporation. In the past three decades, as conglomerates have penetrated local markets and have acquired outlets across platforms, the messages that they support benefited their interests. These messages confirm the ambivalent state. As an example, during the month of February, corporations devote considerable advertising dollars to Black History Month but fail to make structural adjustments such as hiring minorities.

The ambivalent personality has re-emerged throughout American history in the entertainment, political and religious worlds, as the voice of the hegemonic order. These ambivalent personalities repeat messages that maintain the status quo. These often self-appointed spokespeople appropriate blackness and then turn what they have used towards white consumers. Ambivalent personalities re-present the hegemonic narrative to willing white consumers. Ambivalent personalities aid hegemony by masking the hegemonic narrative. Since the beginning of the formation of the country, ambivalent personalities have repeated the memes of “work harder,” “pray harder,” and “It’s not time.” They have participated in the divisive

countering narratives of good slave/bad slave, light skin/dark skin, good hair/bad hair. Popular personalities, such as Bill Cosby, have received critiques because of functioning as the ambivalent player. In the popular series, *The Cosby Show*, the comedian often paid homage to African American jazz players and historical figures. The characters on the show often featured sweatshirts from historically black colleges. Even though Cosby made a career of creating characters that use African American language, on his speaking tours, he pontificated on the subject of Blacks who do not use “standard English.” Cosby became the ambivalent personality to use his status with black audiences to lambast poor Blacks.

Referencing Cosby’s speaking engagements, Eric Michael Dyson coined the phrase, “Blame-The-Poor-Tour.”²² Ambivalent personalities have always functioned in the hegemonic ordering of the American narrative. On a 1996 HBO performance, Chris Rock revealed his love for black people but his hatred of “niggers.”²³ In the skit, like Cosby, Rock separated black people into the good-black-people/bad-black-people dichotomy, blaming poor Blacks without considering the structural and systemic difficulties they might have to overcome. He also served as a function of the repeating hegemonic narrative “lazy problematic black people.” The singer producer, Pharrell Williams, served the function in an Oprah Winfrey interview in 2014 when he stated that he represented “the new black.” “The new black doesn’t blame other races for our issues.”²⁴ These ambivalent personalities re-circulate the notion of “hard work.” At the same time, they ignore structural encumbrances that many African American and poor people might encounter.

Even though Eric Michael Dyson critiqued Bill Cosby and placed him in what I call the ambivalent role, Dyson himself became an ambivalent player in April of 2015. In a 9000-word diatribe in the *New Republic* magazine, the professor criticizes Cornel West who has openly

criticized some of the policies of President Barack Obama.²⁵ West has built a reputation for critiquing uneven structural policies in the United States. In his essay, *The Ghost of Cornel West*, Dyson failed to address any of the systemic analyses that West has offered over the years. Rather, the essay delivers polemical assaults of West's scholarly practices, writings and public persona. As a host on the mainstream news network, MSNBC, Dyson has assumed the role of what W. E. B. DuBois called accommodationist. Reminiscent of the Atlanta Compromise, where two public African American intellectuals, Booker T. Washington and DuBois, debated the how blacks would move forward, Dyson performed the role of the ambivalent player by not analyzing structural problems that impact African American and relying on character pontifications of a former mentor. In 1885, Booker T. Washington agreed with certain African Americans and white leaders that Blacks should take their time for progress and submits to white leadership. Washington did not want to criticize the white establishment. In 2015, Eric Michael Dyson repeated the function of the ambivalent player by requesting the black populace to the failed policies that have drastically impacted marginalized Americans. Dyson, in essence, called for a continuance of the state of ambivalence by attempting to squelch any constructive critiques of the status quo.

School Narratives

Schools also have added to the ambivalent state. For more than one hundred years, the patriarchal school system has used testing as a tool for categorizing in the United States, which have perpetuated structural hierarchies. In the late Nineteenth Century, tests were given to immigrants in order to establish racial categories within the United States. Extending from the eugenics movement, an earlier anthropological classification scheme, and various movements around the world promoted classification of groups in order to push and support political and

economic agendas. In the United States, some of these ideas reach back to the very founding. Thomas Jefferson held beliefs and wrote of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon. These beliefs would influence his ideas as a founding leader. Inscribed into the founding documents, these beliefs have recirculated over the course of American history.

In the Twentieth Century, some of the most egregious manifestations of these practices of categorizations occurred in Germany during the reign of Hitler and during the 1950's and the 1990s conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi between the Hutus and Tutsis. While such dramatic outcomes have not occurred in the United States, in the 20th century, powerful institutions such as schools have used testing as a means of social organization. During the George H. W. Bush presidency, "standards-based" education started to gain importance in the discourse of education in the United States. Bill Clinton continued "standard-based" educational practices. The purpose of the standards intended to offer an equal education to all students across the United States. However, the strenuous testing only exacerbated the fundamental differences within educational organizations across the United States. Wealthier schools outperformed poor schools consistently across the United States. Upon further investigation, these tests often-evaluated middle income and Middle American Heartland practices, experiences, vocabulary and lifestyles. Poor and urban children often do not have access to culturally relevant materials that tell of the context in which they live. These students often disengage from school curriculums that do not relate to their lives. They lack the experiences within the realm and context of the standardized tests. During the George W. Bush era, through a bipartisan legislative agenda, "No Child Left Behind" legislation focused on accountability and data driven test results. Again, these tests demonstrated educational discrepancies that favored wealthier school districts. The Obama administration has continued the focus on testing with the "race to the top" agenda. Corporations sell the notion that

these tests are research based. These high stakes tests often benefit large educational corporations rather than the students they are supposed to assess. These tests support narratives that feed into the complex fabric of corporate interests that often feed on poor people and people of color. Distracted with statements like, “closing the achievement gap” between African Americans and white students, those interested in controlling the narrative play upon the ambivalence of schools. On the one hand, schools serve a positive function in society but because of that fact, the public rarely questions the process of producing American citizens who feel the sting of unbelonging.

Schools have become profit centers for many large businesses. Diane Ravitch, one of the original creators of standards-based learning in the George H. W. Bush Administration, reversed her positions on high stakes testing. She notes:

The new corporate reformers betray their weak comprehension of education by joining false analogies between education and business. They think they can fix education by applying the principles of business, organization, management, law, and marketing and by developing a good data collection system that provides the information necessary to incentivize the workforce— Principals, teachers, and students – with appropriate rewards and sanctions.²⁶

Like from the very beginning, business interests have driven governmental activities, including schools, in the United States. Corporate interests have stressed a reoccurring meme in the Twenty-First Century that “schools should run more like businesses.” Schools have also played an ambivalent role in the repeated hegemonic narrative of, “You only need to work harder,” while ignoring the structures that cause inequities. Like popular entertainment, schools help to re-circulate tropes that support the establishment.

Recapitulations

The United States, established by wealthy investors intent on acquiring more property, created a system that insured a return on their investment. I agree with Derrick Bell, Derrick

Bell, one of the developers of critical race theory, who contextualized race within political, social and economic relationships. He argued that the framers valued property over justice. From “Faces At the Bottom of the Well,” he wrote, “If we are to extract solutions from the lessons of the slaves' survival, and our own, we must first face squarely the bearable landscape and climate of that survival.”²⁷ The idea of “un-belonging” in the United States has evolved and recirculated in many different forms and manifestations. Rich property owners wrote a constitution where only the property owners could vote. Full voting citizens consisted of white property owning free man. Women did not possess full citizenship. All white men, property owning and non-property owning, had the right to full citizenship before women. Many institutions in the United States continue to uphold structures based on patriarchy. Blacks did not fully have the right to vote until the 1960s and still today, many of those rights are erased and threatened. Various bodies of powers continue to re-inscribe the notion of un-belonging through various institutions of power. Derrick Bells promoted the idea of “Racial Realism” in which he urged blacks to think realistically rather than idealistically with regard to the structures of racism in the United States. He stated: “The reality is that blacks still suffer a disproportionately higher rate of poverty, joblessness, and insufficient health care than other ethnic populations in the United States. The ideal is that law, through racial equality, can lift them out of this trap. I suggest we abandon this ideal and move on to a fresh, realistic approach.”²⁸ Cities, such as Ferguson, continue re-inscribe un-belonging through its bandit approach to public safety on the local level. At the nation level, diverse lobbying group push a national legislative agenda that profits a few and supports their structural guarantees.

Interview: Saint Louis Blues

In the summer of 2014, Darren Wilson killed an unarmed black teenager, Michael Brown. Eyewitnesses state that the police officer shot the boy even though the boy had his hands up. “Hands up, don’t shoot” became a trope that would repeat over and over again as people from around the world gathered to protest the killing. During the summer, the world learned that the people of Ferguson lived in a sequestered community where police constantly patrolled their neighborhoods. People struggled to survive with high unemployment conditions, depression and no sense of hope. The African American citizens of Ferguson paid exorbitant penalties for small traffic violations and experienced a whirlwind of indebtedness to the local municipality. Even though African Americans made up the majority in Ferguson, city officials and the police department were mostly white. Fifty of Ferguson’s police were white and three were black. The New York Times reported that many people in communities around the United States lived under similar conditions as Ferguson where the police departments did not reflect the demographic make-up of the populace.²⁹ Like the slave patrols of the slavery days, communities across the United States experience this type of surveillance on sequestered spaces creating the idea of un-belonging. The recapitulation of the idea that citizens of the United States really don’t belong here re-emerges. In 2005, on the Danzinger Bridge, after Hurricane Katrina, in New Orleans, police shot and killed two men and injured others as they tried to find dry grounds after the devastating hurricane. The police wanted to keep the men where they belonged. They surveiled the area and insured that poor citizens did not go into the more affluent areas. For the rest of the citizens left behind in New Orleans, media personalities often referred to these citizens of the United States as refugees. New Orleans, the South Side in Chicago, and Ferguson, sequestered rehearsal spaces of un-belonging sprinkle the United States.

For the final interview, I wanted to ask a diasporic traveler from the Saint Louis, Missouri area her feelings and thoughts on Ferguson and the idea of un-belonging. This interviewee was born in the Saint Louis area and lived in a very sequestered area, not cordoned off like the people of Ferguson but rather cloistered in an experimental multi-racial experiment of the 1960's. She would go on to study in Los Angeles and Washington, D. C., ultimately earning a masters degree in mediation and peace studies. In her search for finding her place in the world, she has traveled to many places in Africa. She initially responds to her perceptions of Ferguson and compares the city to her childhood home. She also responds to the idea of ambivalence, as wealthier Blacks take on the hegemonic narrative of "hard work" while ignoring structural tenants of poverty.

St Louis is in the news a lot these days. Can we start with your impressions of the city?

If you look at Ferguson, what I think is so tragic about Ferguson is that is a structure that I don't know how it got to the level it got to. That's a large population of black people who are basically controlled by a bunch of white people, a minority of whites. Where they live, the majority of the people who live there are black. And, interestingly enough, the Michael Brown issue, when it first came out a couple weeks before that another young man was shot and killed and his body was left lying in the street, too. And, but for me, one of the things that bothers me with Ferguson is that there is in St. Louis a stratification, a dividing line among African-Americans and it's very deep in St. Louis. It goes with that light skin/dark skin situation there's a group of African-Americans in St. Louis to have done very well for themselves, really aligned themselves with white people so you can have a situation in Ferguson where you, it being a majority of black people, you probably have a pretty sizable middle-class group of black people. But, how d people get in? You have a white mayor who's running the city, I mean, it's because those middle-class blacks will vote for a white mayor, or will vote for the white police chief, or will vote for the council structure to be probably all-white. When I was there they were they were having problems with the school district in St. Louis County I don't know if it was Ferguson. I can't remember but there were they were talking about closing down one school and so they were going to have to move these black students, predominately black students to the school which was predominantly white.

Keep in mind; we already have black students there, students whose parents are from the middle class status. Let me tell you something, they were just as many

black folks in that room as white folks talking about they didn't want those people coming up there to that school. So, just like you said about Hollywood, that there are people who say: "They have a right to make their money. Who cares if they denigrate the culture? Who cares if they co-op black culture?" Like what has become the hip-hop culture. That's what happens in St. Louis in many of these communities where you have low-income blacks and you have higher income blacks. They're going to side with the white people because they see something wrong with those black people who are of the lower social economic status. It's like, "Why aren't you taking advantage what's being offered to you? Why isn't you taking advantage of the educational system?" So, the narrative becomes the typical white narrative, which is so prominent and prevalent in America. You hear it all the time with the people who are successful and privileged in America.

When someone is down on his or her hard luck or something has happened to him or her, "Obviously there's something wrong with you. This is America. Why can't you make it here?" Ferguson is very much an example of that. Tonight, they have any grand jury decision in the area of Clayton. That area has very, very, very few blacks. And the blacks that live there, now mind you, it's a very progressive area but that's the area my mothers house is in but it's a small percentage of blacks and more than likely, they will get no support from that small community of black people who live in that area.

You've traveled to many places in Africa. Do you experience a different feeling when you travel?

Yes it's the one time you get to feel normal. You always feel like you're holding your breath. When they did the movie *Waiting to Exhale*, instead of doing it about men, they should've done it just him being a black person in America. You're always holding your breath. If you go for job interviews there's something that's going to be involving white people in you, you just hold your breath. So you ask, when you leave the country, you feel so free. When I used to work in corporate America, I used always find it so daunting about white folks... You get in that upper management sector, you're considered privileged, too. They pretty much consider you a little bit like them unless something happens and then of course they blame you. It's amazing how that they will talk about, make comments about black people, and you're there! I would say, "Excuse me!" And they would say, "But you're not black." The hell I ain't! They would say things like, "No, no, you're not like that." They always assumed that you a part of the club now.

You grew up near Ferguson, correct?

I grew up in St. Louis Missouri, in the 60's. At that time, St. Louis was, I guess you would say, informally segregated not necessarily segregated. There was no signage, "whites only" or anything like that. But, it was informally segregated, whereas a part of St. Louis, which is known as the Southside, which when you crossed over the Jefferson Bridge going south of Grand, then you will be in the

southern part of St. Louis City, was predominantly white in the 60's and for most of the 70's... And that was typically, it was not an area where you would find black people publicly going there, unless they had some particular job or something like that. It was kind of a given that that was the sort of area that you would not like to be stuck in... in the after hours because some things could happen to you. You still had hostilities. I mean there were still hostilities between the black and white populations. Now, my grandmother was a ward captain so she was one of the people, who went around making sure that black people got to the voting polls, ensuring that they were exercising their right to vote. So, from a familial standpoint, I kind of had a family that was very politically active on my mother's side and then on my father's side. I had a family that was quite prominent in the African-American community, the business community.

In which specific area did you grow up?

I grew up in an area called LaClede Town, which was started by a man by the name of Jerry Berger. You can probably look up Jerry Berger and LaClede Town because it was sort of like a social science experiment. You know Chicago you had the projects and in New York. And, you had Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis, which was a horrific housing project... but Jerry Berger really, his idea was to have a diverse community of people living together, from different social economic levels, on different racial levels, and I say that, as racially diverse as it could be in St. Louis at that time. St. Louis, at that time, was primarily composed of African-Americans and white, with small populations of Asians, East Indians, but they were kind of outliers. They didn't constitute large minorities; it was primarily a black and white town. And, LaClede Town was interesting because I moved there probably; I think it must've been like... Six or seven years old or maybe even younger because prior to that, we lived with my grandmother in an upper-middle-class African-American community. LaClede Town was just a wonderful place for me to grow up.

We had our own school that we went to which was, you know, was populated by predominantly black but there were a considerable number of white children who went to school with us as well and there were white children who lived in LaClede Town. The church that existed in LaClede Town was a Presbyterian church, which was run by Pastor Dudley, who was an amazing individual. He was Caucasian but most of the white people who lived in LaClede Town clearly understood what LaClede Town was trying to accomplish, what Mr. Burger was trying to accomplish and they wanted to be a part of that so they were active participants. So the white folks that we grew up around were quite... they were just normal, I mean normal everyday existence. I didn't feel... I mean it was insulated but you kind of didn't know that because we had everything. I mean we had our own playground. We had our own swimming pools. We had our own community center. It was sort of like a gated community but it wasn't gated but there was really no need for me as a child to necessarily feel that I needed to go outside of there... And when I went outside, it was primarily up to Grand Avenue

to go to the Woolworths or to run around St. Louis University's campus because it's right across the street. St. Louis University... and Harris-Stowe Teachers College at that time were also in the neighborhood. It was a teachers college at that time. It was also in the neighborhood. So it was a pretty idyllic childhood until I have to go to high school.

And, my first year of high school, since we were in an area that bordered the southern part of St. Louis we're going to be bussed to a predominately white high school. Our choices were Southwest High School or Northwest High School. Northwest High School was way over in the northern part of St. Louis and I just had no desire to go to Northwest High School. Since Southwest was closer, my older brother had gone there and two of my brothers had gone there, and they, of course had experiences and challenges. My oldest brother, he played basketball so, he didn't really experience too much of a challenge and prior to that he went to school in New York City for a while and so did my other brother. So, when they came back to attend Southwest, they were pretty much graduating so they didn't have to spend much time there. My freshman year there, was not... It was just... I felt really miserable. I felt my whole world being turned upside down because immediately upon going there we were met with hostilities from the white community. They'd lineup and picketed and called names. It was sort of like... I guess probably the closest thing you could put it to was when in the south the students were integrating a white school. It was sort of like that because at this time, a larger number of black populations started attending Southwest High School and so we were seen as very threatening. It was a little bit crazy and overwhelming. I only stayed there for a year, thank God because I got accepted to a college prep school, Metro, which is actually started by an African-American woman.

It was a school without borders and by that, it was a very small population. There were, in the whole school, a hundred students. Our classes literally, to give you an example, my botany class was at the St. Louis Botanical Garden. My zoology class was at the zoo. So, we had the experience of receiving practical education at a very early age and it was fun. And, at the school, I was thrown into another social experiment of having a diverse student body which was primarily African-American and white, with a spattering of other mixed in there. It was a wonderful experience and it was a very vibrant, enriching learning experience for me. I flourished. I enjoyed it. I loved it but when I was 17, when I graduated, I knew that I would not stay in St. Louis.

There was no way, shape or form that I wanted to stay in St. Louis because I felt that St. Louis was very, very... It just wasn't evolving. No matter what, it would always be stuck in that same dynamic of racial stratification and, you know, those old ideas about who is who and what do you do and it was just wasn't creative enough for me. So, when I graduated, I left and came to Los Angeles and enrolled at Pepperdine University, got a scholarship, went there for a while because I really didn't like that. I was always in school. I was always going to be educated.

I come from a family of teachers of educators and for us; even as a child, in the summertime, very rarely did I get to experience just a summer of doing nothing. Most summers involved me getting some form of education. You know there is that whole thought, perspective that during that time that if the child wasn't in school they would lose everything they have learned that year before. So, that was just not going to happen.

A lot of the people who lived in LaCledde Town participated in extra curricular activities. I grew up around a bunch of, pretty much, overachiever, well, I don't want to call them overachievers because they were pretty balanced, always learning, always open to new ideas and freshness and I like to think a very evolutionary environment. And, I think that's because we lived in an evolutionary environment and so I think as a child, knowing that you are part of this experiment, you took advantage of that. You flourished in that, every opportunity was made available to you. You were exposed to whatever. My parents clearly were always leading us, you know, having us learn something new or seeing something new, or taking us somewhere. I was constantly evolving in being exposed to a lot of different things.

You eventually left that area.

Yes. When I got to Pepperdine, I was very, very, disappointed because at that time, it wasn't the Pepperdine that it is now. At that time it was clearly more Christian. It had a more Christian influence. I mean, we had chapel. They had some rigorous rules along the lines of Christianity, on how you should live and blah. You know, I thought it was completely backwards but, I stayed there for about a year and a half and then I left and went to Washington D. C. I went to a school that I previously applied at Georgetown.

When I was in Washington is when I became, met a lot of Africans from the continent. I had a lot of African friends. I spent a lot of time in the African community and it was during that time that I took my first trip to Africa. I have an African boyfriend who was from Senegal. His father was a marabout, a prominent family in Dakar, and that's when I went there. Nothing in my life prepared me for what you're talking about an African experience. I never, growing up as a child... I mean, I took Dunham technique of African dance. I was very familiar with drumming. I grew up with a very prominent African-American poet in St. Louis, Shirley LeFlore. She was like my aunt. I grew up with her perspective towards the continent and, you know, you knew things about it. We had a Nigerian family who lived with us in LaCledde Town so we were aware of Africa. I had to go to cultural festivals as a child. We knew about Africa. We heard about Africa. We understood that our relationship to it but I did not hear people talking about going to Africa, kissing the ground and "Oh I'm home," no, that was not me. That was not the experience I had.

Did you go to Gorée Island on that first trip?

I did. What was that experience like for you? You know, when I think about it, it was like, wonderment. You are in a place where people, you know, are taken and dropped off, who knows? They could've been dropped off in the Caribbean, or in America but... I felt an eeriness... It felt, it did feel sorrowful... I think the sorrow and the sadness just comes from knowing what has taken place there... It's... I thought it was in many ways, somewhat beautiful... What they have done with it now, I'm sure so different from what it was then, I mean...

What year did you go?

I went in 1980... 84. It's been a long time, long, long, long time it was more sad and sorrowful but I didn't have, those... looking out at this vast ocean, I didn't have any moments. I know people have told me that they've gone there and they had a whole experience that felt like being sent back in time. No, I didn't have that. I didn't have that.

When we first met, you mentioned water when you talked about Gorée Island.

The vastness of it... You know, that's a long way. That's a lot of water. Whether you were getting dropped off in the Caribbean or coming to America. Africa is a long way. It is a long way from America, even flying, so you can imagine traveling by boat. I must say that after seeing that, I did... I became much more interested in slave narratives you know, about traveling, the Amistad issue. I really became interested in that. You know I really don't think our voices are heard. That's a history that's really... it has been diminished. It's a huge part of human history and it has been relegated to... As if it didn't happen. When you look up stories of the Holocaust and you think about the time frame of the Holocaust versus the time frame of slavery and you think of the narratives that have been developed and have come out of slavery, it is nothing in comparison. I think a lot of it has to do with the Holocaust and World War II or such... That's still new and they are still in the mindset, the thought process for many people. Probably in about 20 years people might think why we talking about the Holocaust. I think that's why 12 Years A Slave came out and some people totally dismissed it. They'd say, "It didn't happen like that. It was all made up." This is a true story and you still have people dismissing it. I think it's easier to do that with slavery because I think that is something that just is not discussed.

And, then you travel to other places in Africa. What was the next stop and what was that like?

I want to Kenya, Morocco, I want to Côte d'Ivoire, Ivory Coast, Egypt, which I consider Africa, Uganda, and Tanzania. The time frame of those was in the 90s. Actually, Kenya I went several times. I went again just about three years ago. I have like a family there.

Memoir: Personal Connections

I have come to know Gorée Island as a “powerful crossroads” through many visits. I have also come to know Gorée as not just a location. With each visit, it does feel like one of my homes. When the people greet me year after year with, “Welcome home, Brother,” it no longer feels like a commercial attack. While my experiences in different parts of Africa may seem unrelated to Gorée, I assert that these experiences directly relate to the transport of slaves. Through my travels I have met Bambara, Mandinka, Mande, Wolof, Twe, Tuareg, Yoruba, Ibo, Kikuyu, Swahili, Luo, Masai, Hutu, Tutsis, and Congo. During the Transatlantic Slave Trade, traders mixed ethnic groups. The slave trade reached as distant on the east as Mozambique and Kenya. To know all these people is to know Gorée. I have also come to know the island as the monolithic “Africa” that many pilgrims seek out for reclamation in their “homecoming.” I know Gorée as a site of memory, a place for mourning and celebration. Gorée has become an icon for justice, such as the symbol of justice for Troy Davis. Gorée stands as a crossroads of interests, political, commercial and economic. Gorée has open arms for the diverse religions and languages who enter its ports. Gorée has taught me to take the island with me wherever I go. Certainly, history and memory do not always match. However, I agree with Reginald McKnight and what he said about Gorée: “I have to add that some historians have argued that Gorée may have been a relatively minor distribution center during the slave trade, and that the place today has been amped up for purposes of tourism, but for me, that's a minor matter. Symbols can be every bit as powerful as substance.”³⁰

After visiting Gorée the first three years, I wanted to know more of Africa. Just like my grandmother’s quilt, or the art of Thornton Dial, I wanted to piece my life together into a work or

art in my quest to find “belonging.” I have seen many places. The following pages contain my quest.

My Search for Belonging

On my first visit to Gorée Island, I did not feel the overwhelming feeling of presence of the ancestors, so, I returned a few days later, hoping to hear the cry of those who had been dragged through the “Door of No Return.” I did become fascinated with the people on Gorée. Once the ferry docks at Gorée, vendors and tour guides bombarded the tourists with their wares, their art and their trinkets. Inside La Maison de Esclaves, I listened attentively to Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye’s passionate narrative of how the slaves had been separated from other family members and placed in different room. “The mama sent to Cuba, the papa to Brazil, the brother to Virginia.” He spoke of the “Door of No Return” and how once the slaves went through that door, they were never to see Africa again. We saw the little room where slavers fed infants fed grease and flour to fatten them up. I watched as the people listened in awe. I seriously waited for the moment when the “ancestors” would swoop me up, sit me down and give me a “talking to.” I waited for the ancestors’ arrival just as they had arrived in Halle Garima’s 1993-acclaimed film, Sankofa.³¹

One of the rogue tour guides grabbed me and took me on a special little tour around the small house. He told me the story of the “Door of No Return,” just as I had heard Boubacar Ndiaye deliver the speech. Perhaps, on that first visit, I was distracted with the vendors and the two guides who had kidnapped me the night before at the airport. In La Maison de Esclaves, I did notice some African Americans who were sobbing. I certainly wanted to have that same experience. I wanted to be connected to what had happened in that same space a few hundred years before. Through international travel, I learned how to feel “belonging.” I could logically tell myself that I belonged to the culture within the United States. My ancestors have paid a dear price so that I could belong but I did not feel it in my heart until I left the country. In Senegal, I felt what a dancer friend once described to me. Reaching around to back of her neck and she shaped her hand into a ball. She said in the United States, she always felt “this thing” on my neck but traveling to Ghana, it disappeared. I wanted to experience more of that. After traveling to Senegal, I wanted to go to other places in Africa to experience freedom from that “thing” on the back of my neck.

Mount Kilimanjaro

For three years, I traveled to Senegal. The fourth year, I traveled to Tanzania and Kenya to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. When I arrived in Arusha, a group of young men approached the taxi and offered to be my guide. What they said to me, struck me because it was the same phrase that I had heard many times in Senegal: “Welcome home, Brother.” I stood on the edge of a mountain, on the final few hours of my climb to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, trying to decide if I should go on or if I should turn back and surrender the dream of reaching the highest

peak in Africa. An army of British climbers slowly walked past me, stepping in sync, inch-by-inch. I watched them as they grew smaller and smaller and then disappeared up the side of a mountain. The lights on the top of their heads made them look like an army of fireflies or a stream of glittering ants. I breathed in the fresh and brisk air, staring up at the night sky that looked like a black velvet blanket with thousands of shimmering diamonds, so close I could touch them.

Each step I took felt like I had 50 pounds anchored on each foot. My dragging feet made a cacophony inside my head that I could not quiet. I knew the rest of the journey to the top would be one of the most difficult four hours of my life. I looked at my guide, Rayson, and I knew he did not believe I could do it. All along, I never felt that I had his support. He had told me that he could tell by the way people breathed if they had problems. I would hold my breath and breathe softly if he came near me. I knew we had raced up the mountain far too fast over the previous five days, even though they had told us to take it slowly, slowly, or in Swahili, pole-pole. In the cold night air, on the side of that mountain, it felt as if someone had hurled an ax and caused my heart to split in half. In an instant, I made one of the most difficult decisions I had ever made. I decided to turn back.

Back in the dorm-like resting area, I started feeling really sick. I thought I should go outside to the outhouse. As I stepped out into the frigid nighttime temperatures, I looked up at the night sky but now the glittering black velvet blanket in the sky spun violently. I could no longer stand upright. I fell to the ground, held my whirling head and crawled on the dusty ground back inside the dorm. No one was around. I dragged myself back to my bed and I tried to pass out or sleep but I can only hold my spinning head and try to slow down my racing heart. I had not slept in two days and even though the temperature was cold, I was sweating. My Guide came in and checked my pulse and discovered that it was dangerously low. He would have to radio to the next campsite for a stretcher. Hours later, after I had slept for only a few minutes, a stretcher arrived. I had watched all week, with pity, as the porters had rushed the trackers who had gotten sick at the top of the mountain down to the base of Kilimanjaro. My guide walked me out to the stretcher, an antiquated contraption with a motorcycle wheel in the middle. Four men surrounded me and rushed me down the mountain. They heaved and lifted the bouncing motorcycle chariot as they ran down the mountain.

Going in and out of consciousness, I covered my head to block the beaming sun and the scary edges of the mountains. I would open my eyes and see people looking down at me, with pity. In one moment I saw a flash of light and immediately thought of David, out of the blue, because the flash did not seem like the sun. I had called David before I left for Africa. David was one of the happiest people I have ever known. He had become a friend over the years. In any crowd, David would make his way over to me to give me a big hug and to find out how things were. David, charming, vibrant, effervescent and able to attract lots of friends, had gone into a convalescent hospital when I last talked with him. David never told me that he had AIDS. If you thought of David, you thought of fitness.

He never mentioned AIDS when I called him before I left. On Kilimanjaro, something told me that David was in trouble. A few days later, from the hotel in Dar es Salaam, I called David but his sister answered the phone. She told me that David was sleeping but he would call the next day. As I recovered from Kilimanjaro in the hotel room, I thought about David and how he had come to me on that mountain when I thought I was dying.

I thought about all the other lessons of the mountain while I recuperated from altitude sickness. The white hotel and tour company owner had given me a lecture and presentation before the trek and had warned me to take it slowly but I didn't listen as I raced up the mountain along with the two other Dutch hikers who had hijacked my guide through some kind of unsanctioned prior arrangement. I think I could have made it had I slowed down and taken an extra day to acclimate to the high altitude. In the hotel room, I thought about the porters and my guide. I had paid a hefty price for the hike and another \$500 for the entrance fee to the park. I was alarmed to learn that many of the porters received seven dollars of pay for the six-day track to the top of the mountain. Porters ranged in age from between 15 and 60. They ranged from strapping young men, to skinny elderly-looking men, to teenagers. I even saw a couple of young women. The porters would hoist metal boxes and containers onto their shoulders and race to the campsites several hours ahead. Some carried wood and other supplies for building and repairing the cabins along the way.

In the olden days, they had used donkeys to carry the heavy loads but the donkeys would die in the high altitude. My guide would not tell me how much money he was paid. He told me it was a secret of the mountain. I asked him if any of the other companies paid fair wages. He became animated and told me about another company that paid \$20 for the six days so I knew the tour company must have paid him a lot less. After that experience with the porters and the guide, the reality of exploitation seared into my consciousness.

I never heard from David again. Weeks after I had returned to Los Angeles, I looked for David. No one could tell me what had happened to him. A friend told me that he was fairly certain that he saw an obituary for David. Finally, I saw one of David's closest friends who told me that David was gone. I left immediately. I went home and sobbed. David became the last of my close friends who had died of AIDS. Looking back, I see that this trip marked a new era in my life. No more memorials for young friends, children, women and many men. I never saw David again but I certainly think about him and the others who taught deep life lessons. I think about them and the time when the government turned its back on a minority population. After a few days and after my head felt normal, I decided to take a trip to the island of Zanzibar.

Dar Es Salaam, Zanzibar, Mombasa, Nairobi

After the disappointment of Mount Kilimanjaro, I gave the men who had helped me down the mountain, the porters who had helped me on the ascent and Rayson,

my guide, generous tips. Everyone had said that climbers always had a beer in the hotel bar after the climb to the top. I decided to do the same but the libation made me sicker. That night, someone from the restaurant pounded on my door and brought me some food. I couldn't eat it. The next day, I took the first bus I could find to the capital city of Dar Es Salaam. One of my favorite things to do while traveling in Africa is to go without an agenda. I marveled at the local customs of the brightly colored school children lining the streets to cram into tiny raggedy buses. No one in the world knew where I was but I felt safe. On the bus, the young woman across from me with the covered hair offered me some of her lunch. Not speaking her language, we would smile throughout the journey and I wondered what her life was like. Without the scarf, she could have been any young woman from Elberton, Georgia. I am still so amazed that I could witness how different we all are but at the same time see how we are so alike. In Dar, I asked a taxi driver to help me find a moderately priced hotel. I walked the streets, watched people and tried out different foods. In restaurants, I watched people wash their hands when the waiter brought hot water in a bowl. They would then scoop up a ball of dough-like ugali, grabbing cooked greens that tasted like my mother's greens then shove the mixture into their mouths.

When I took a small ferry across the Indian Ocean to visit the Island of Zanzibar, a young man, who also welcomed me home, stalked me until I finally I surrendered in to his persistence and choose him as my guide. Weary from the seasickness of the violently heaving boat in the Indian Ocean, I toured the site of a slave trading post on the island, with a monument of chained slaves and wondered what it was like for the slaves exiting Africa from the East. "Where did they go?" On the tour, I heard the story that the church we entered had been a slave-auctioning platform. The guide told me of how the stage had been turned into an altar above the dungeons below. The vast slave trade penetrated Africa from deep within and then exploiters transported slaves to the Americas and Asia from ports all around the continent.

Taking the long bus journey from Dar Es Salaam to Mombasa, again, I watched people, trying to mediate their world with the worlds I had seen in Africa, Europe and back in the United States. In Mombasa, the second largest Kenyan city, I continued my routine of walking the streets, watching people. One day, I crammed into a tiny internet café. Beside me, a young man searched the website of a big American military contractor who recruited African "workers." I wondered how many world citizens had given their lives during the wars in the Middle East since we only heard about the American casualties, and only when we went looking for such statistics. To get to Nairobi, the capital, I decided to take a night train from Mombasa. The rickety old train rocked me to sleep. I slept nine hours; the first good sleep since before Kilimanjaro. When I woke up the following morning, I looked out onto the Kapiti Plains and saw hundreds of zebras and giraffes. I thought I was in a cartoon.

From the sprawling capital city of Nairobi, I travel to the Masai Mara. In awe, I pinched myself that I could come from a little place like Elberton, Georgia and I could get up close and personal with lions, giraffes, zebras, wildebeests, cheetahs, hippos, and baboons, not like in a zoo but thousands and thousands of animals roaming freely across the giant plains. The Masai people fascinated me. Each night, they came to serenade and dance. We toured their villages and homes.

Uganda

Still looking for connections, in 2007, I traveled to Uganda and Rwanda. As the plane landed in Entebbe near Lake Victoria, I thought about the fear and terror that I watched as a boy in Georgia as Idi Amin dictated the country. People in Kampala walked along the dusty streets, dressed for success, often in suits and ties. One Sunday, I was invited to a large evangelical church. The large gathering, in a converted theater, seemed like a place where young people met for dates or a gathering of young people to hear the latest motivational speaker. Some people stood and talked with amputated limbs. Others had scars. I wondered if they had been the victims of the Idi Amin regime. When the large screens projected video messages from evangelical churches from the middle of America, I understood more the “dress for success” on the streets of Kampala and the abundance of young people. In the middle of an underdeveloped country where people are dealing with existential existences, that get-rich, prosperity consciousness Christian ideology seemed appealing. I wondered about my participation as an American citizen of the relationship between those evangelical ministers and the profound natural resources in the area. Over the years, I would learn of the deep penetration of missionaries and Christian movements in the region that served as fronts for exploiting natural resources in rich region.

Rwanda

In Rwanda, I visited the memorials for the Rwandan Genocide. Again, I thought about being an American and how the Clinton administration has done nothing in the early stages of the genocide and how the president had come to Rwanda to apologize after he was president. One Sunday, some American evangelicals at the hotel, invited me to a different part of the country. We spent the day with a preacher, who in the morning, preached at a church with an orphanage. Hundreds of children sat quietly in the church. You could hear a pin drop. Several of the kindergarten-aged girls carried younger children on their backs. At offering time, some of the people brought vegetables to the altar. It was what they had. I looked into the faces of the adults and wondered where they were during the genocide. That night we accompanied the preacher to a church next to the river in Kigali where bodies had been dumped in the 1994 atrocities. I could not look at that river and not see the images I had seen on many documentaries of the atrocities. Day by day, conversations would eventually turn to the genocide. Sitting in a bar in Hotel Milles Collines, the hotel featured in the film, Hotel Rwanda, a man talked to me. After a time, he told me of the genocide. So many tragic stories crammed into my head. I would learn of the funders of the war, large world powers, interested in resources, would use people as pawns. Often,

the question about Africa is, “Why are Africans always killing themselves?” Over the years, I have learned to ask, “Which countries or corporations are behind this killing?”

Mali

In 2008, I traveled by boat for three days in the Niger River in Mali to the ancient city of Timbuktu. As we approached the city, hippopotamus would pop their heads out of the water and stare at us. In Timbuktu, I rode camels in the Sahara Desert. I ate dinner the traditional way with my guide, Aly, and his family. We sat on the floor around a large bowl of rice with various vegetables and meat. We scooped up a handful of rice and shoved it into our mouths. Aly told me to not be surprised if strange things happened because of the known “mysteries of Timbuktu.” During my afternoon nap, I dreamt of my ancestors, not a normal dream because the people became real. As I climbed a ladder, they all waited as I reached the top and smiled. Timbuktu, a crossroads at the edge of the desert, welcomed people from all over. In 2011, many of the sacred sites would be destroyed as Muslims from the north attacked the Muslims in Timbuktu. When Omar Kaddafi was killed, the whole region spiraled into chaos. My friend Aly and his family survived by everyone suffered for months before the region became stable.

For three of the days in Mali, we walked through Dogon Country. We slept under the stars on the rooftops of houses made of mud. In the small villages, I saw Christian churches right next to Muslim mosques. I saw women pouring libations to their ancestors. I crawled into the cliff-side dwellings where people lived thousands of years ago. Some of the mud houses had bones, animals skins and symbols etched on the sides. I realized that it would take me a lifetime to understand the epistemology of these people. I wanted someone to tell me the story of Ogotemmel that he told to the French anthropologist, Marcel Griaule, in 1946, but no one knew the story.³² At night, on the rooftops, it looked as if you could reach up and touch the stars. I understood that their cosmology would have to include the heavens. As I tossed and turned to sleep, I noticed how the Milky Way slowly danced across the sky when I was not looking. I realized how someone would have figured out that the earth was round. For the first time in my life, I figured it out. That night, in the distance, I heard music, like from a jukebox, late into the night. People laughed. These sounds reminded me that all over the world, people search for the joys of life, no matter what the news will say.

Another day, we traveled to the city of Djenne to see the World Heritage Site Mosque. Aly explained that the wooden slats that jutted out served as ledges for repacking the mud on the mosque each year. We walked from village to village. We would stop and pound millet with the village women. Like people all over the world, they possessed a sense of humor. They snickered and giggled at my awkward attempt to smash the grain.

From Mopti, I left Aly, my guide for 12 days, and traveled alone, headed for Ghana. Over the years, Aly and I have remained friends. We met up once in Paris,

sat across from the Paris Opera House, sipped tea and watched people as they passed by. We laughed as he told me about the time when he first came to Paris. He watched as people would walk down stairs below the street and never return. He had never imagined a metro. When Barack Obama became the first African-American president of the United States, Aly called from Timbuktu to congratulate me. Recently, Aly and I have talked and strategized about ways of helping his town after the violence and destruction it has endured since the Islamists attacks that proliferated after the fall of Omar Kaddafi.

Ghana

On my journey to Ghana, the packed tiny mini-van broke down in the middle of the night. Before I even squeezed into the decades-old van, I felt that someone had stitched the antique back together with paper clips and rubber bands. Before we left Mopti, I had forgotten to get money from the ATM. So, when we stopped along the way to get food, I had no cash. A nice man from the van shoved some kind of meat into my mouth before I could politely refuse. I forced the fatty meat down. The man spoke a language that I did not understand so we smiled and nodded. When the van came to a sudden stop, the people on the van did not skip a beat preparing their spots on the side of the road to sleep. I must have looked lost as I stood not knowing what to do because the man with the mean pulled up a wobbly metal chair and pulled me down to sit. I tied my bags around the legs of the chair and tried to sleep. In the distance, I could hear people drumming. How could this not be a movie, I thought.

We left the roadside very early the next morning after the driver had repaired the van. As we arrived in the city of Ouaga, a giant guinea bird jumped from under the seat. My startled reaction gave the other passengers something to laugh about for the rest of the day. Happy to be in Ouaga, I had planned on exploring the city that had become famous for hosting one of the top African film festivals in the world each year. I was certain I would find some interesting cultural events in the city. I thought I might even look up the Minister of Culture with whom I had had a long conversation years before on a flight. I assumed that Ouaga was the nickname for Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. Shocked, I learned that Ouagadougou was a day's ride away. I had bought the wrong ticket in Mopti. Ouaga did not have ATM machines. I had very little cash. After purchasing the correct ticket, I had very little cash.

I was happy to be in a big strong bus to Ouagadougou and not the little retired bread truck turned into a van but the bus also broke down. Finally arriving in the capital late at night, I slept outside once again outside on a bus station platform. Exhausted, I decided to forget the plan to explore Ouagadougou. A nice man was kind enough to give me a mat to sleep on cement platform. The next morning, an old man woke me to demand payment for sleeping on his mat. After a verbal altercation with the man, I climbed onto a bus overfilled with passengers after giving my last two coins to the man who lifted my bags onto the bus.

On the long journey to Ghana, I had not eaten for two days. Another man next to me wanted to offer me his food but I did not take it. People always offered me food on those buses. The people around me all spoke in a language I could not understand. I felt so honored that the man next to me wanted to offer me his food. It was obvious that I was a stranger but I still felt welcome and I felt that I belonged.

In Ghana, I immediately found a taxi driver who could take me to an ATM machine and a nice hotel. I splurged for two nights at the Golden Tulip in Kumasi. I learned of the royal kingdoms of Ghana and about kente cloth. The people at the museum enlightened me about the matriarchal systems of Ghana and the queen mother. I began to grasp the importance of the matrilineal relationships and thought about the importance of mothers in African American culture. For two days, I walked about the city and did one of the favorite things, haggle with the vendors. After getting a good price, I always leave generous tips. The memories of the game of bartering meant just as much to me as the material objects I bought.

Traveling on to Accra, the capital of Ghana, I learned of the life of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first democratically elected president. I visited the home and grave of W. E. B. DuBois, who became a close friend of Nkrumah. I thought about the intellectual influences that DuBois had made in African American discourse and how he had wanted to build special relationships between African Americans and Africans. DuBois died in Ghana the day before Dr. Martin Luther King's great speech at the March on Washington in 1963. He had given so much but not everyone appreciated his gifts. Isabel Wilkerson details DuBois ouster from Atlanta University by an opportunistic university president who believe in accommodation rather than DuBois' confrontational approach to civil rights.³³ Today, few will know the name of the former Atlanta University president, Rufus Early Clement but scholar continue to cite W. E. B. DuBois.

From Accra, I traveled to Cape Coast and Elmina to visit the slave castles. What struck me most about this visit was the narrative that the guides delivered. The only thing that I missed was the flare in which Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye delivered this speech. The words they said were quite similar to the words I had heard from La Maison des Esclaves in Senegal. I saw the "Door of No Return" that each slave castle possessed. When I entered the grounds of the castle at Elmina, several young boys introduced themselves and wanted to know my name. I was impressed with their hospitality and the fact that they were not peddling souvenirs. When I left the slave castle, those little boys ran over to me and handed me an ugly large shell with my name painted on, "A Souvenir From Elmina." They wanted money for the souvenir that I had not asked for and the souvenir that I left behind somewhere along the way to lighten my load. I knew that if I had not given them the money, they would have tried to extort it until I gave in.

Getting a flight from Ghana to Senegal proved difficult. Cumbersome exchanges for transportation, communication and monetary exchange between Anglophone and Francophone countries did not happen easily. In order to arrive in Senegal on my desired date, I had to travel overland to the country of Togo.

Togo

In the tiny country, I explored the city of Lomé. Eating the local food did not turn out the way I had imagined, so I opted for some of the French restaurants in the hotel. In Lomé, I discovered a fetish market filled with interesting dead animals and metals. Before I was permitted to walk around the market, man who said that he was in charge of the market approached me. He wanted to charge me an exorbitant fee for looking around and taking pictures, so, I went through the awkward performance of haggling. After so many years in Senegal, I have become good at it and I enjoyed, always leaving a little extra for the people who had allowed me the engagement. The most popular way to get around in Lomé in on the back of a small motorcycle but after many rides, something told me to not get on another one and I didn't. On the day of my planned departure, I arrived at the airport only to find out the flight had been canceled. As I stood in the middle of the airport lobby, the ceiling began to spin around. What would I do? After panicking, I decided to find a taxi and a cheap hotel and try again the next day. Even though I took the long route to Senegal, the detour allowed me to experience the famous fetish market in the center and to learn another warm and welcoming ethnic group in West Africa.

Haiti

Since those first years of traveling to Senegal and other places in Africa, I've looked to find commonalities around the Black Atlantic. I saw things in Senegal that looked like things I had seen as a boy in Georgia. On our long drives to Savannah, Georgia on the weekends, people would hang bottles from their trees. They would build sculptures of various scraps. I saw similar constructions in Senegal. During the 1970's in Georgia, I could not have imagined that those sculptures held memory, power, and magic for the people who built them. In Haiti, my destination for the winter of 2009, I saw similar constructions on the Grand Rue in Port-Au-Prince. I saw statues made of tire rims, wire, and bottles. Outside the capital city, I saw the artists in Croix de Bouquet who reminded me of Khalil on Gorée. The Croix de Bouquet artists made pieces of art made from scraps of metal from oil drums.

In the African tradition, people learn to make-do and to make beauty form what they make-do with. What Khalil and other bricoleur artists have mastered is the art of making something out of nothing. Traveling to Haiti, I learned of its tragic histories and how the power of the religion has sustained them through an extremely difficult past and present. Haiti played a very big part in the history of the United States. Toussaint Loverture and the Haitians defeated Napoleon's army and forced France to sell the Louisiana Territory. Many wealthy white Haitians immigrated to New Orleans. After the country freed itself from France

in 1804, Haitians fought against the South at Savannah and helped to defeat the Confederates. Today, the Haitians will speak proudly of the fact of being the first black independent nation. It is said that since its liberation, France and Southern politicians have punished Haiti ever since. I visited Haiti the year before the earthquake. That year, the people that I met stood with pride, creativity, passion and compassion. The art from Croix de Bouquet that hangs on my walls reminds me daily of the possibility of creating art from scraps.

Black Atlantic Connections

Over the past decade, I have looked for places in the Black Atlantic to find connection. In New Orleans, I've seen the bright sparkly connections of the Mardi Gras Indians and the pwen in flags in Haiti. I've gone into Voodoo temples in New Orleans, and in Port-Au-Prince and Jacmel, Haiti. I have witnessed the second line parades in New Orleans and the similar way in which parades manifest in Port-au-Prince. Spending lots of time in Savanna Georgia as a little boy, I marveled at the special people who would come in from the Sea Islands to my father's drugstore. They just sounded different. So many years later, to discover who they are, I can begin to understand them now. On a street corner in the Chateau Rouge section of Paris, I watched as a tall, thin, beautifully coiffed black woman, impeccably dressed in a tight fitting animal skin colored pant suit, "have church." She preached to the passersby, just like the preachers I saw sometimes as a little boy in Georgia. She waved her Bible to punctuate her sing-songy message as people walked past her to sort through the fresh fish in the open-air sidewalk market. She reminded me of the street preacher that I saw preaching Christianity mixed with indigenous African religion in a market in Accra, Ghana. They both possessed the rise and fall of a black preacher from Georgia, same cadence and pauses, the exact glide that moved him from one end of the crowd to the other.

In all these different locations, I saw some common things. Over the history of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Africans came from many places in Africa. They came from different times. They landed at one place and then sent to another place. Some were born in America and transported within America. Through all this travel and over all this time, some things still feel common. Those things still make sense that you cannot easily explain. You just know. In my search for "belonging," I saw some of those things and I don't try to explain because words could never really explain.

Morocco

For three years, I participated in a Fulbright GPA in Morocco, first as a participant and then as the curriculum coordinator for the following two years. The moments that stood out for me occurred when the African-American participants first encountered the Gnaoua, a black ethnic group in Morocco, known for spirit possession and trance through the use of music, song, drumming and dance. Each year, the moment of "opening" within the liminal space of travel occurred at the visit to the southern region where the Gnaoua live. While I

witnessed the rite-of-passage transformations within the whole group, these moments with the African-American participants were most profound. These participants spoke of, "being in Africa." While Morocco is a part of the African continent, the African-American connection is not always clear. Some of the African American participants cried when they met the Gnaoua. I believe that many African-Americans possess a similar "longing to belong" not dissimilar from my own desire and search for belonging. I contend that this search for belonging comes not from seeking some kind of allegiance but rather a contrast to un-belonging. To finally not have the weight on your shoulders that you don't really belong bring relief. For this reason, so many African Americans kiss the ground.

The Fulbright group, made up diverse racial backgrounds gave all of us a chance to participate in rigorous conversations about race, religions, politics, and teaching. For six weeks, we debated, dissected, supported, and illumined diverse topics. We traveled to ancient Roman sites, the coastal cities, the desert towns, the green mountains and the bare ones. We visited oases and rivers. We learned about Islam and we Judaism in Morocco. We heard diverse music from the various regions of the country. On many of the mornings, we began the process of learning Arabic and we also learned of the indigenous languages. Through all these experiences, we could really see Morocco as a crossroads. This helped me to see the dynamic nature of the planet on which we live. With these experiences, I imagined a means for changing my teaching to deliver culturally material and experiences to the students that I might teach.

Teaching

When I graduated from college, my mother suggested that I teach since I liked children. I started as a substitute teacher, traveling all over Los Angeles from day to day. Finding that teaching was something I could do well, I signed a contract to teach at a school in downtown Los Angeles where many of the students had recently emigrated from Central America. The experiences at this school taught me about poverty in schooling, second-language acquisition for poor students the importance of using culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculums. Over time, I would move to teach at different schools in Los Angeles. After a few years of hiatus from teaching, the district called me to teach in a "very special" class. Situated in a nice middle-class neighborhood in Mid-City, I expected an easy experience at the school but when I arrived in the classroom, I found a group of students in crisis. They threw chairs. They spat and used bad language. They fought each other and they ran out of the room onto busy streets. I stayed with those children for two years and I learned how to see the best in them. I learned how to practice loving them into belonging. Over the years, I have gravitated to working with children with learning and behavior difficulties.

With almost 30 years of experience in inner-city classrooms and as a magnet coordinator at a social justice magnet, I see how schools have become ambivalent operations within a larger apparatus that serves powerful interests. Most schools

in the United States are established as grand patriarchies where policies and rules are established by one singular individual, usually a man and usually white. Even when men do not hold these positions, the internal operations and structures operate the same. After these operations fail, many school districts replace the unsuccessful superintendents with another patriarchs who disseminate policies from on high. Historically, schools have attracted individuals who follow rules. In my search for understanding belonging, I contend that the re-creation of patriarchies and rehearsals of alienation continue to contribute to feelings unbelonging and our society does not live out to its fullest potential because so many student have been limited.

Hollywood

Over time, I forgave the Hollywood executive/producer instructor for her inappropriate critiques of my screenplay. I forgave her for speaking to me in a manner that I had not see her use with other students. Almost two decades later, I researched her and found that she no longer works as a high-level executives for one of Hollywood's highest grossing stars. I forgave her because I realized that she was too young to know of the up-and-down nature of Hollywood. I forgave her because she was also too young to see the world outside of the American hegemonic lens. I had grown up in a world where I mostly watched African-American role models overcome huge obstacles. I watched them discover their greatness in spite of many sorrows, horrors, barriers and even violence. These were my heroes and these were the people I wrote about. This young executive could not see a story that was not inextricably tied into capitalism. She could not see beyond box office returns. She was not alone. The primary function of Hollywood is to attract box office revenue. Naïvely, I could not see that when I was younger.

Hollywood has served as means of establishing status quo. While the industry has presented groundbreaking narratives at times, it has also functioned to maintain the hegemonic narrative. For example, the Academy Awards, the industry's top honor, which inscribes and archives the narrative has given awards mostly to stereotypical characters for African Americans. The awards lists includes maids, drug dealers, drug users, men with many children from many women, oversexed young women, gangsters, and buffoons. The Academy has never given an award for a hero. According to UCLA's Bunche Center's Diversity Report, minorities are underrepresented by a factor of more than 3 to 1 in lead roles. Minority screenwriters are underrepresented by a factor of 5 to 1. The study sources the LA Times which states that the Academy's membership is "about 93% white and 76% male and has an average age of 63 years." Minority directors do not win Oscars and more than 90% of directors are male. Similar statistics exist for the Emmy Awards, television industry's top award. Most executives in Hollywood are white men. Because of these statistics, non-stereotypical minorities are kept out of Hollywood.³⁴

For the past decade, I have watched hundreds of films at the Pan African Film Festival. Each February, I view films from all over the Black Atlantic. In these

films, I have watched the unfolding of stories of heroism, sexism, colonialism, racism, and poverty. I have seen historical narratives and documentaries. I have watched dramas and comedies. Since 1992, the festival has presented many films that might not fit into the Hollywood box of success or narrative, but many of the films powerfully demonstrate personal achievements and liberation. The festival helps me to see that stories can be told in many ways.

One of the big moments in my life came in 2006 when two women, who had shared a long and committed relationship, asked me to help them to start a family. After mulling over the idea, I said yes primarily because they had successfully committed themselves to each other for such a long time. During the pregnancy, I worried about how my sisters and the rest of my family would react. In the eighth month, I finally told them about the new family member who was on the way. To my surprise and my relief my sisters were thrilled. When my daughter was born, I held her for four hours that first day in the hospital as she slept in my arms and learned the sounds of the voices around her. Since that day, her mothers have always been very gracious about my participation in her life. When my daughter was three, I took her and her mothers to Georgia to meet my sisters. As we ferried around the state, each sister warmly welcomed us.

Fatherhood

One of the most surprising stops I made was visiting my aunt who at the time would soon turn 100-years-old. As my daughter and I sat, we watched the news and discussed familial and current events. When we decided to leave, my aunt, who had become more fragile and slowed in our movements, walked us to the door, something she had not done in recent years. She waited at the door and watched as I buckled my daughter into the child seat in the back. She watched as I backed out of the driveway and headed on my way. Later that night, when I had returned to Los Angeles, my sister sent an email explaining that my aunt had called her later that day to say about my mother, "I wish Marie could have been here to see him. She would have been so proud." What could I do except sob?

In the town where I grew up, I never witnessed people who hated people were different. Everyone belonged to someone. In the 1980s a friend of the family had died of AIDS. My older brothers and sisters loved him. My mother thought the world of him. He lived down the street from my grandmother who also loved him. He sang at her funeral. I never remember anyone mentioning his sexuality. So, I was not totally surprised with my aunt's wish for my mother.

My aunt's reaction to meeting my daughter reminded me of the small town I experienced. On the side of the railroad track where I lived, everyone belonged to someone. Even across the railroad tracks, people belonged to the small town. Movements since the Southern Strategy have continuously divided people into subgroups under the old mechanism of "divide and rule" that hegemonic powers have always used to exploit less powerful people. People just did not talk about homosexuals in casual conversation.

According to Greg B. Lewis, evidence “is quite limited” that Blacks are more homophobic than Whites. He found that black attitudes towards gay equality were similar to whites. However, in the mainstream narrative, African Americans are often cited as antigay. With the passage of California’s Proposition 8, the popular narrative stated that Blacks overwhelmingly voted for the proposition. Lewis’ research demonstrates that Blacks voted for the proposition in similar percentages as whites.³⁵ Other studies suggest that conservative religion plays an important role in determining how African Americans view homosexuals.³⁶ Since the 1980s politicians and religious leaders have introduced religion more often into popular discourse which has also influenced popular ideas. The repeating of the black church’s non-acceptance of homosexuals by the media has taken root even though the idea had no previous historical context.

Conclusion

In the United States, an inextricably woven tapestry of capitalism, religion, story and tradition have undergirded the individual narratives of Americans. I have used many voices to demonstrate un-belonging and belonging. I used my own voice to demonstrate my transcendence after visiting Gorée Island. From that space, I learned to piece together my life, just like an old African-American quilt, not only as a functioning cover from the bitter cold, but as an act of beauty from the un-belonging/belonging aspect of African-Americans. I contend that the idea of un-belonging has recapitulated throughout the African American narrative since the beginning. At the same time, a narrative of transcendence has supported the slaves and their descendants in the processes of survival and in creating beauty. Since the beginning, on the slave ships, the code of transcendence allowed Africans to persist. This code, embedded deep within music, stories, dance carried them until the end of slavery, through reconstruction, Jim Crow, the Great

Migration. It continues to carry them as they face cultural and societal barriers through excessive police forces, job and housing discrimination, non-acceptance to universities and micro-aggressions in every day life. I propose that by understanding the structures of un-belonging, we can create a different future both individually and collectively.

On November 25, 2014, I arrived in my hometown of Elberton, Georgia. This was a special day. My aunt turned 103 years old. Over the years, since my first grade battle with her, our relationship has softened. My aunt, my dad's sister is the last surviving member of that generation, the generation that started at the turn of the Twentieth-Century. They arrived during World War I and they had survived the stock market crash of 1929. They had live through the bloody years of Jim Crow America. My aunt had lived through the transformation of the South during the Great Migration where millions of African Americans migrated to the North to escape the cruelties of the South and to transform many northern cities. My aunt's sisters and brothers, my aunts and uncles, had settled in Cincinnati, Ohio and Detroit, Michigan. After my parents married, my father had tried to start pharmacy businesses in Detroit but returned to the South. My aunt had witnessed school integration. After Brown versus the Board of Education in 1954, complete school integration would not come to Elberton, Georgia, our hometown, for another twenty years. My aunt had worked in those segregated and desegregated schools as a teacher. She saw the passage of the Voting Rights and Civil Rights Acts in the 1960s.

My aunt and my parents' generation had celebrated their children's successes, the entrance into the middle class, and their acceptance into previously secluded clubs within government, education, politics, media and social organizations. From our community, on the black side of the railroad tracks of Elberton, Georgia, my aunt had seen the transformation of tin can alley, a muddy dirt road with shacks made of tin, turn into the vibrant Elbert Street with slick restaurants and car dealerships. She had witnessed all the firsts, like my sister, the first black student to integrate the white high school. My sister also became the first black female doctor in the county. We all traveled to Duke University to watch my sister take her Hippocratic oath in 1979. We saw my other sisters graduate from Emory University and Moorehouse Medical School. My aunt saw a time when black people could not vote and she saw the time when the town elected my dad as the first black elected official in the county when he became city councilman in the early eighties. My father could never get a job in my hometown, as no one would hire a black pharmacist so we traveled a laborious four hours each week to Savannah so that we could have a family. Finally, in his seventies, one of the local drug stores hired my father as a substitute pharmacist. One of my sisters eventually played a central role in transforming the county jailhouse on the town square into the African American museum.

My parents had celebrated many of joyous events alongside my aunt, but my mother never saw the new millennium. She died in 1997 and my father died in 2000. One of the big moments of my aunt's life was seeing Barack Obama elected as the first black president of the United States. She has intensely watched the news every day since. Each day, my aunt tunes into the news on her favorite national television station. She makes mental notes and comments. At 103 years of age, she recognizes the flaws of American politics. While she has witnessed so much progress, so many things have remained the same or possibly spiraled down even worse.

On that brisk November day when I stopped by, we watched the protest from Ferguson, Missouri. The grand jury had decided just the day before, on November 24, 2015, not to indict a white police officer, Darren Wilson, who had gunned down an unarmed black youth, Michael Brown. The actions of the Ferguson city police department outraged many across the nation. Even though only one bullet is required to kill a human being, Darren Wilson, had shot Michael Brown multiple times from a safe distance away from the boy. The Ferguson city police department then left the dead boy lying in the streets for hours as the terrorize community and his mother watched, wailed, screamed, stood in shock and cried around the dead boy. On November 25, my aunt, who I always called Auntie, watched the news in horror. We both shook our heads and wondered if things have gotten worse. Auntie had seen this before, as family members had been afflicted with the unjust judgment from an uncaring and corrupt legal system.

From the beginning, the American legal system has privileged property over people. Since the increase of African slave labor in the early 1700's, the system has relied on racialized structures that have further encoded the artificial hierarchy of entitlement. In his memoir, *Just Mercy*, Bryan Stevenson, detailed his career as young attorney in Georgia and Alabama, establishing the Equal Justice Initiative, which assisted mostly black men on death row. Unprincipled lawyers and judges had put many of these men away for years, even though the cases lacked evidence or witnesses. Weaving through the lives of the prisoners, Stevenson demonstrates the loose regularities that the southern legal establishments practiced. For the prisoners that Stevenson helped to exonerate, many of the others either rotted on death row or the state executed them without proving culpabilities.³⁰

On December 17, 2014, the State of South Carolina vacated the conviction of George Junius Stinney, the youngest person ever executed in the United States. Killed by electric chair, police had coerced a confession from the 14-year-old, 90-pound, and 5-foot-1-boy for the murder of two young white girls. After his arrest, the white community ran the boy's parents out of town so he spent his final hours scared and all alone. With no evidence, the jury found him guilty after a two-hour deliberation. Seventy years later, long after most of his relatives had died, after the real suspected person had died, George Junius Stinney had his name cleared when his sentence was vacated. How do you un-die seventy years later? Not unlike the stories that Bryan Stevenson reveals, the American legal system and the state sanctioned judgments by vigilante groups, like the KKK, have wrongly tried and judged thousand and thousands of black and poor people, just like Stinney.

On April 3, 2015, Anthony Ray Hinton walked out of an Alabama state prison after serving 30 years on death row. Bryan Stevenson helped prove the man's innocence and gain his freedom. Hinton had been working fifteen miles away in a locked warehouse when he had allegedly murdered two restaurant workers. At the time of the trial, the accused man could not afford a ballistics expert that would have proven his innocence. Like the story of many poor and disenfranchised people of color, the American justice system has maintained and sustained experiences of un-belonging in the United States. Groups, like Bryan Stevenson's Equal Justice Initiative, have helped to unmask the dark history of American justice.

On April 4, 2015, in the state of South Carolina, a young man walking to work one morning heard a commotion with a police officer so he decided to capture the episode on his camera phone. He saw an unarmed black man running away from a white police officer. The officer shot the man as he ran away five times in the back. The officer walked over to the dying

man and handcuffed him. He then walked back several yards to retrieve a tazer. He dropped the stun gun beside the man who lay dying. The local news reported that an unarmed black man had been killed during a struggle with the police officer. The man with the camera phone knew that the events did not happen the way in which the media reported. He shared the video with the family and then the world. Further investigations of the recordings of the events before the shooting reveal that the officer had stopped Walter Scott for a routine traffic stop. The camera from the police car shows Scott suddenly running from his car while the officer was in the squad car. Walter Scott had served jail time for non-payment of child support. In South Carolina, 12% of the prison population consists of people who do not pay child support. Walter Scott, a United States Coast Guard veteran with an honorable discharge ran away from being poor and the police officer killed him, lied about killing him and then laughed at the adrenalin rush afterwards. Someone captured the killing of Walter Scott on video. No one will know how many black, brown and poor people have died at the hands of police.

As a little boy in Elberton, Georgia, at first we didn't fear our local police as we did the ones we saw while traveling around the state to Atlanta and Savannah. In my early days, we trusted them. Elberton had not experienced the severe economic hardships that many small towns had gone through. After the good old days of cotton had ended, Elberton had become known for its granite. Growing up, the granite industry had always had grand displays of tombstones and monuments near the town square. People could find work in the quarries or the sheds that cut and polished the stone. We never really had the kind of conflicts that many economically depressed towns had witnessed. So, for us, we knew the police as the white men who drove through the neighborhood staring at us and us staring back. When I was about 5 years old, someone stole the little red tractor that I had just gotten for Christmas. My older sisters called the police. That afternoon, the police returned my tractor. Most people stayed where they belonged so most black people never involved the police in their lives in Elberton.

Some years later, we witnessed our police become more aggressive even harming some of our family members. Because of their aggression, the city was forced to hire our first black police officers around 1970. When I went away to college years later, the sheriff of Elbert County resigned after a federal court indicted him in one of the largest drug conspiracies in Georgia at that time. The former sheriff later pleaded guilty to tax evasion and after receiving \$41, 500 from the drug

ring. One of the brothers in the case noted that his father had been, “an old bootlegger for many years.” Many of the counties in Georgia were completely “dry” counties while other counties sold alcohol every day except Sunday. While these counties promoted ideas of purity and clean living, enterprising citizens possessed thriving moonshine enterprises, illegal package stores, beer, marijuana, and cocaine businesses, all made possible by local law enforcement agencies who turned their backs. The little town of Elberton, Georgia held no exception to the many illicit practices of police and sheriff departments but as children, we never knew this.

In this analysis, I wanted to unravel the quilt of un-belonging in order to rebuild something more beautiful and some more lasting. Based on the realistic nature of the history and context of the United States for African American, I wanted to look through a realistic gaze rather than an idealistic one. I contend that the idea of going back to the original slave houses helps diasporic citizens to retrace their steps. Bayo Holsey stated that, “the focus on return is designed to position emancipation day as the redemption of all African slaves, to recast the history of the slave trade from one of black wretchedness to want a black Triumph.”⁸ In making the return, African Americans can find themselves. Paulla Ebron has written that “personal transformations are not discovered naturally but need to be seen within a broader context in which a variety of influences help shape one's notion of self.”³⁷ We perform these rituals in order to become our full selves. We have a debt to pay to our ancestors and a promissory note to our children. As Randall Robinson stated, “we must do this in memory of the dark souls whose weary, broken bodies endured the unimaginable. We must do this on behalf of our children whose thirsty spirits clutch for the keys to a future. This is a struggle that we cannot lose, for in the very making of it we will discover, if nothing else, ourselves.”³⁸ In taking the broken pieces that shatter the course of American history, diasporic tourists seek to piece together the fragments to make their own quilts of understanding and healing. They seek to re-write a new narrative and profess a new story to the world.

- 1 Arnett, William, Thornton Dial, Joanne Cubbs, and Museum of Fine Arts Houston., 'The Road from Emelle', in *Thornton Dial in the 21st Century* (Atlanta, Ga.: Tinwood Books : in association with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2005), p. 324 p.
- 2 Linebaugh, Peter, and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra : Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), p. 433 p.
- 3 Levi-Strauss, Claude, *The Structural Study of Myth*. ed. by Ed Thomas Sebeok, *Myth: Symposium* (1968).
- 4 Du Bois, W. E. B., *The Souls of Black Folk / by W.E.B. Du Bois*. 1st Vintage Books/Library of America edition. edn (New York: Vintage Books/Library of America, 1990).
- 5 'Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department', (Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, 2015), p. 102.
- 6 Blackmon, Douglas A., *Slavery by Another Name : The Re-Enslavement of Black People in America from the Civil War to World War II / Douglas A. Blackmon*. 1st edn (New York: Doubleday, 2008), pp. x, 468 p.
- 7 Bruner, Edward M., *Culture on Tour : Ethnographies of Travel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. x, 308 p.
- 8 Holsey, Bayo, *Routes of Remembrance : Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. xiii, 280 p.
- 9 Saar, Betye, James Christen Steward, University of Michigan. Museum of Art., Norton Museum of Art., and Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts., *Betye Saar : Extending the Frozen Moment* (Ann Arbor, Mich. Berkeley: University of Michigan Museum of Art; University of California Press, 2005), p. 176 p.
- 10 Baptist, Edward E., *The Half Has Never Been Told : Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (2014), pp. xxvii, 498 pages.
- 11 Herman, Edward S., and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent : The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002), pp. lxiv, 412 p.

- 12 Various, 'Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting' <<http://fair.org/>>.
- 13 Bagdikian, Ben H., and Ben H. Bagdikian, *The New Media Monopoly* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), pp. xix, 299 p.
- 14 Raboteau, Emily *Searching for Zion* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2013).
- 15 Haney-López, Ian, *Dog Whistle Politics : How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class*, p. 1 online resource (292 pages).
- 16 Beck, Allen J., 'Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 1996', in *Bureau of Justice Statistics* (Washington, D. C. : United States Department of Justice, January 19, 1997).
- 17 ———, 'Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2001', in *Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin* (Washington, D. C. : Department of Justice, May 10, 2001).
- 18 Carson, E. Ann, 'Prisons in 2013', in *Bureau of Justice Statistics* (Washington, D. C. : United States Department of Justice, September 16, 2014).
- 19 Pelaez, Vicky, 'The Prison Industry in the United States: Big Business or a New Form of Slavery', *Global Research* (March 31, 2014).
- 20 'Floyd V. City of New York', (UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, 2013).
- 21 Schneiderman, Eric T., 'A Report on Arrests Arising from the New York City Police Department's Stop-and-Frisk Practices', (New York Attorney General - Civil Rights Bureau, November 2013).
- 22 Dyson, Michael Eric, *Is Bill Cosby Right? : Or Has the Black Middle Class Lost Its Mind?* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2005), pp. xvi, 288 p.
- 23 Rock, Chris, 'Chris Rock, Bring the Pain', (HBO, 1996).
- 24 Winfrey, Oprah, 'Interview with Pharrell', in *Oprah's Prime* (April 13, 2014).
- 25 Dyson, Michael Eric, 'The Ghost of Cornell West', *New Republic* April 19, 2015.

- 26 Ravitch, Diane, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System : How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), pp. x, 283 p.
- 27 Bell, Derrick A., *Faces at the Bottom of the Well : The Permanence of Racism* (New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1992), pp. xiv, 222 p.
- 28 ———, 'Racial Realism', *Connecticut Law Review*, 24 (Winter 1992).
- 29 Ashkenas, Jeremy and Haeyoun Park 'The Race Gap in America's Police Departments', *New York Times* SEPT. 4, 2014.
- 30 Stevenson, Bryan, *Just Mercy : A Story of Justice and Redemption*. First edition. edn (2014), pp. x, 336 pages.
- 31 Garima, Halle, 'Sankofa', (United States: Mypheduh Films, 1993).
- 32 Griaule, Marcel *Conversations with Ogotemmêli: An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas* (Oxford University Press, 1975).
- 33 Wilkerson, Isabel, *The Warmth of Other Suns : The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. 1st edn (New York: Random House, 2010), pp. x, 622 p.
- 34 Hunt, Darnell, 'Hollywood Diversity Report: Making Sense of the Disconnect', (Los Angeles: UCLA Bunche Center for African American Studies, 2014).
- 35 Lewis, Gregory B., 'Black-White Differences in Attitudes toward Homosexuality and Gay Rights', *Public Opinion Quarterly* 67 (2003), 59 - 78.
- 36 Sherkat, Darren, Kylan M. de Vries and Stacia Creek, 'Race, Religion, and Opposition to Same-Sex Marriage', (Carbondale , Illinois: Southern Illinois University 2009).
- 37 Ebron, Paulla A., *Performing Africa* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. xviii, 244 p.
- 38 Robinson, Randall, *The Debt : What America Owes to Blacks* (New York: Dutton, 2000), pp. x, 262 p.

IMAGES



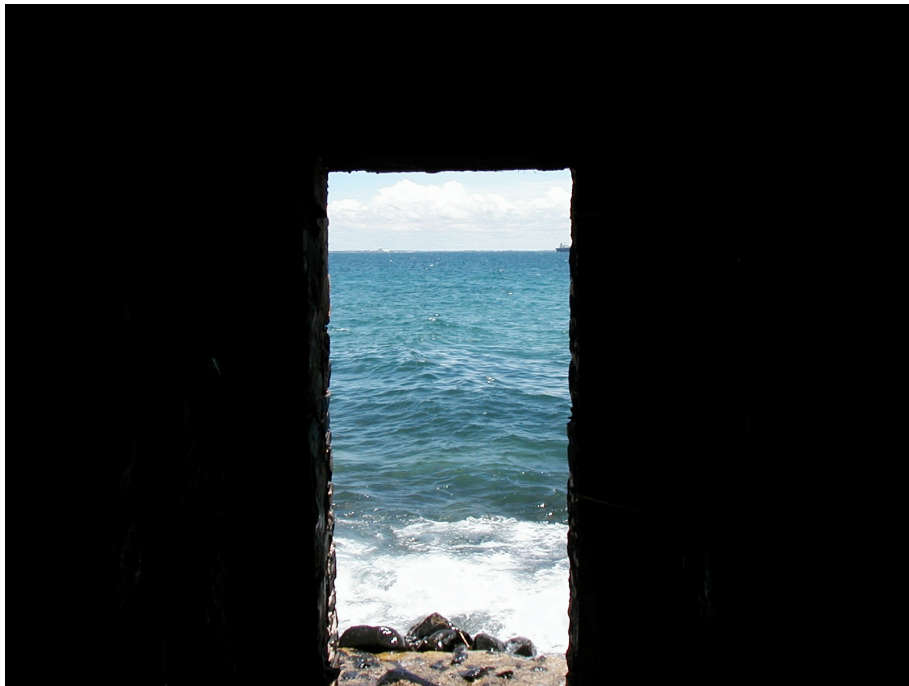
*Gorée Island from the ferry.
Photograph by William (Djelani) Michael Hamm*



*Artifacts from La Maison Des Esclaves with Boubacar Joseph Ndiaye in the background.
Photographer: Unknown*



The Door of No Return
Photograph by William (Djelani) Michael Hamm



The Door of No Return
Photograph by William (Djelani) Michael Hamm



Chains of Control
Photograph by Unknown



Outside the Door of No Return
Photograph by Unknown



The Open Arms of the Little Slave House
Photograph by William (Djelani) Michael Hamm



The Room for Men
Photograph by William (Djelani) Michael Hamm

Over the Years, my meetings with Khalil



*Khalil and His Art
Photograph by Unknown*



*Khalil and His Art, near the canon where the Guns of Navarone was filmed.
Photograph by Unknown*



*Khalil, a Baye Fall artist on Gorée
Photograph by William Michael Hamm*



*Khalil, outside his home on the island
Photograph by William Michael Hamm*



*Khalil, near his place on the island.
Photograph by Unknown*



*Khalil, near the fort on Gorée
Photograph by Unknown*

Khalil's Art







*Renaissance Statue in Dakar
Photograph by Paulette Donald*

*The First Baye Fall that I met in Dakar, Yapsa.
Photograph by Unknown*



*On the beach with Baye Falls
Photograph by Unknown*





*With a little bit of this and a little bit of that: Traditional patchwork cloth, Ndiakhasse, that many Baye Falls wear.
Photograph by Unknown*



*Dakar in the background.
Photograph by William Michael Hamm*



*From the ferry's arrival.
Photograph by William Michael Hamm*



*View from the fort.
Photograph by William Michael Hamm*



*The beach on Gorée where locals from Dakar visit
Photograph by William Michael Hamm*



*Inside the Slave House
Photograph by William Michael Hamm*



*Inside a holding space for human beings who caused trouble.
Photograph by Unknown*



*One of the rooms in the Slave House with small window for ventilation;
Photograph by William Michael Hamm*

COMPLETE BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acker, Kathy, Carol Becker, Ann Wiens, Art Institute of Chicago. School., and Art Institute of Chicago. Dept. of Museum Education. *The Artist in Society : Rights, Roles, and Responsibilities*. Chicago: Chicago New Art Association, New Art Examiner Press, 1995.
- Adjepong, Kwabena. "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child."
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fu1SJU-8PWA>.
- Agawu, V. Kofi. *Representing African Music : Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow : Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York, Jackson, Tenn.: New Press ; Distributed by Perseus Distribution, 2010.
- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London ; New York ;: Verso, 2006.
- Angrand, Jean-Luc. *CéLeste Ou Le Temps Des Signares*. Sarcelles: A. Pépin, 2006.
- Anquandah, James, Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, and Michel Doortmont. *The Transatlantic Slave Trade : Landmarks, Legacies, Expectations : Proceedings of the International Conference on Historic Slave Route Held at Accra, Ghana on 30 August-2 September 2004*. Accra, Ghana: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007.
- Anquandah, Kwesi J. "Castles and Forts of Ghana." Belgium: Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, 1999.
- Appiah, Anthony. *In My Father's House : Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Arac, Jonathan. *Postmodernism and Politics*. Theory and History of Literature. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- Araujo, Ana Lucia. *Politics of Memory : Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*. Routledge Studies in Cultural History. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Arias, Arturo, and David Stoll. *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- Aristotle, and Gerald Frank Else. *Poetics*. Ann Arbor Paperbacks. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970.

- Arnett, William, Thornton Dial, Joanne Cubbs, and Museum of Fine Arts Houston. "The Road from Emelle." In *Thornton Dial in the 21st Century*, 324 p. Atlanta, Ga.: Tinwood Books : in association with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2005.
- Ashkenas, Jeremy and Haeyoun Park "The Race Gap in America's Police Departments." *New York Times*, SEPT. 4, 2014.
- Bagdikian, Ben H., and Ben H. Bagdikian. *The New Media Monopoly*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2004.
- Bailey, Cornelia, and Christena Bledsoe. *God, Dr. Buzzard, and the Bolito Man : A Saltwater Geechee Talks About Life on Sapelo Island*. 1st ed. New York: Doubleday, 2000.
- Baker, Houston A., and Merinda Simmons. *The Trouble with Post-Blackness*.
———. *The Trouble with Post-Blackness*.
- Bakhtin, M. M., and Michael Holquist. *The Dialogic Imagination : Four Essays*. University of Texas Press Slavic Series. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- Bank, World. "World Development Indicators, Senegal." <http://data.worldbank.org/country/senegal>.
- Baptist, Edward E. *The Half Has Never Been Told : Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*. 2014.
- Baraka, Imamu Amiri. *Blues People : Negro Music in White America*. New York: Perennial, 2002.
- Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. New York: Noonday Press, 1972.
- Baum, Robert Martin. *Shrines of the Slave Trade : Diola Religion and Society in Precolonial Senegambia*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Beck, Allen J. "Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 1996." In *Bureau of Justice Statistics*. Washington, D. C. : United States Department of Justice, January 19, 1997.
- . "Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2001." In *Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin*. Washington, D. C. : Department of Justice, May 10, 2001.
- Behar, Ruth. *Translated Woman : Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.
- . *The Vulnerable Observer : Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.
- Bell, Derrick A. *Faces at the Bottom of the Well : The Permanence of Racism*. New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1992.
- . "Racial Realism." *Connecticut Law Review* 24, no. 2 (Winter 1992).

- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Schocken, 1969.
- Berlin, Ira. *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk About Their Personal Experience of Slavery and Emancipation*. New York, New York: The New Press, 1998.
- . *The Making of African America : The Four Great Migrations*. New York: Viking, 2010.
- Berry, Wendell. *The Hidden Wound*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge Classics. London ; New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Blackmon, Douglas A. *Slavery by Another Name : The Re-Enslavement of Black People in America from the Civil War to World War I / Douglas A. Blackmon*. 1st ed. New York: Doubleday, 2008.
- Blackness, Sounds of. In *Evolution of Gospel: Perspective Records*, 1991.
- . In *Africa to America: Perspective Records*, 1994.
- Blier, Suzanne Preston. *African Vodun : Art, Psychology, and Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Borgeaud, Pierre Y. "Return to Gorée." Translated by Youssou N'Dour. France: Axion Films, 2007.
- Bouchareb, Richard. "Little Senegal." Algeria, France, Germany: 3B Productions, 2001.
- Braxton, Joanne M., and Maria Diedrich. *Monuments of the Black Atlantic : Slavery and Memory*. Forecaast. Münster Piscataway, N.J.: LIT ; Distributed in North America by Transaction Publishers, 2004.
- Brown, David H. *Santería Enthroned : Art, Ritual, and Innovation in an Afro-Cuban Religion*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Brown, Karen McCarthy. *Mama Lola : A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn*. Comparative Studies in Religion and Society. Updated and expanded ed. Berkeley ; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001.
- Browne, Katrina. "Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North." United States: Ebb Pod Productions, 2008.
- Bruner, Edward M. "Tourism in Ghana: The Representation of Slavery and the Return of the Black Diaspora ". *American Anthropologist* 98, no. 2 (1996): 290-304.
- . *Culture on Tour : Ethnographies of Travel*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

- Burnim, Mellonee V., and Portia K. Maulsby. *African American Music : An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter : On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- . *Bodies That Matter : On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. Routledge Classics. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.
- Campbell, Joseph. *Myths to Live By*. New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Arkana, 1993.
- Campbell, James T. *Middle Passages : African American Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005*. The Penguin History of American Life. New York: Penguin Press, 2006.
- Capone, Stefania. *Searching for Africa in Brazil : Power and Tradition in Candomblé*. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Carpio, Glenda. *Laughing Fit to Kill : Black Humor in the Fictions of Slavery*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Carson, E. Ann. "Prisons in 2013." In *Bureau of Justice Statistics*. Washington, D. C. : United States Department of Justice, Spetember 16, 2014.
- Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Chang, Heewon. *Autoethnography as Method*. Developing Qualitative Inquiry. Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast Press, 2008.
- Cheng, Anne Anlin. *The Melancholy of Race : Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Chernoff, John Miller. *African Rhythm and African Sensibility : Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms*. Phoenix ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Chisholm, Cheryl. *Julia Dash Interview, the Making of Daughters of the Dust*. 1991.
- Christopher, Emma. "How Cuban Villagers Learned They Descended from Sierra Leone Slaves." *The Atlantic* (2013).
- . <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/04/how-cuban-villagers-learned-they-descended-from-sierra-leone-slaves/275067/>.
- CIA. "The World Fact Book, Senegal." CIA, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sg.html>.
- Clarke, Kamari Maxine. *Mapping Yorùbá Networks : Power and Agency in the Making of Transnational Communities*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

- Cliff, Jimmy. "Many Rivers to Cross."
<http://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/hardertheycome/toomanyriverstocross.htm>.
- Clifford, James. *The Predicament of Culture : Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- . *Routes : Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Congress, Library of. "Voices from the Days of Slavery: Stories, Songs, and Memories - Fountain Head." edited by Hermond Norwood, 1949.
- Cone, James H. *The Spirituals and the Blues : An Interpretation*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991.
- . *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2011.
- Congress, Library of. "Fountain Hughes: Voices from the Days of Slavery: Stories, Songs and Memories." 2009.
- Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember*. Themes in the Social Sciences. Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Cosentino, Donald. *Divine Revolution : The Art of Edouard Duval-Carrié*. 1st ed. Los Angeles, Calif.: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, 2004.
- . *Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou*. Los Angeles, Calif.: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, 1995.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. *Critical Race Theory : The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*. New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton & Co., 1995.
- Curtin, Philip D. *The Atlantic Slave Trade; a Census*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969.
- . *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa; Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade*. [Madison]: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975.
- Dash, Julie. *Daughters of the Dust*. United States: Kino Video, 2000. DVD.
- Davis, Angela Y. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism : Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1998.
- Deren, Maya. *Divine Horsemen : The Living Gods of Haiti*. New Paltz, NY: McPherson, 1983.
- Desmond, Jane. *Meaning in Motion : New Cultural Studies of Dance*. Post-Contemporary Interventions.

- Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997.
- Diedrich, Maria, Henry Louis Gates, and Carl Pedersen. *Black Imagination and the Middle Passage*. W E B Du Bois Institute. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Dietrich, Dorothea. *The Collages of Kurt Schwitters : Tradition and Innovation*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Dill, Bonnie Thornton, and Ruth E. Zambrana. *Emerging Intersections : Race, Class, and Gender in Theory, Policy, and Practice*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2009.
- Diop, Cheikh Anta. "The Meaning of Our Work." In *Perspectives on Africa*, edited by Roy Richard Grinker; Stenier Grinker, Christopher. Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishing, 1997.
- Diouf, Sylviane. *Servants of Allah : African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.
- Dorsey, Thomas A. "Take My Hand, Precious Lord." 1932.
- Douglass, Frederick, and David W. Blight. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. Bedford Series in History and Culture. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 2003.
- Dowman, Charles E. *The Possibilities of the Negro in Symposium*. Black Heritage Library Collection. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.
- . *The Possibilities of the Negro in Symposium*. Black Heritage Library Collection. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.
- Drum, Kevin. "Quote of the Day: Obama Not American Enough for John Sununu." *Mother Jones*, July 12, 2012 2012.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk / by W.E.B. Du Bois*. 1st Vintage Books/Library of America edition. ed. New York: Vintage Books/Library of America, 1990.
- Dubey, Madhu. *Signs and Cities : Black Literary Postmodernism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Dunham, Katherine. *Island Possessed*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Duranti, Alessandro. *Linguistic Anthropology : A Reader*. Blackwell Anthologies in Social and Cultural Anthropology. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.
- Dyson, Michael Eric. *Is Bill Cosby Right? : Or Has the Black Middle Class Lost Its Mind?* New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2005.

- . "The Ghost of Cornell West." *New Republic*, April 19, 2015.
- Ebron, Paulla A. *Performing Africa*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Elam, Harry Justin. *Critical Theory and Performance*. Theater--Theory/Text/Performance. edited by Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach. Rev. and enl. ed. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007.
- Elam, Harry Justin, and Kennell A. Jackson. *Black Cultural Traffic : Crossroads in Global Performance and Popular Culture*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.
- Elie, Lolis Eric, Dawn Logsdon, Lucie Faulknor, Glen David Andrews, John Hope Franklin, Jérôme Ledoux, Keith Weldon Medley, et al. *Faubourg Tremé the Untold Story of Black New Orleans*. San Francisco, Calif.: California Newsreel,, 2008. videorecording, 1 videodisc (68 min.) : sd., col. with b&w sequences ; 4 3/4 in.
- Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. New York: Random House, 1952.
- . *Shadow and Act*. New York, New York: Random House, 1964.
- Eltis, David. "Electronic Slave Trade Database." Emory University.
- Eltis, David, and David Richardson. *Routes to Slavery : Direction, Ethnicity, and Mortality in the Transatlantic Slave Trade*. Studies in Slave and Post-Slave Societies and Cultures. London ; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997.
- . "Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade." In *The Lewis Walpole series in eighteenth-century culture and history*. New Haven: Yale University Press,, 2010.
- Eng, David L., and David Kazanjian. *Loss : The Politics of Mourning*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- . *Loss : The Politics of Mourning*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Eng, David L. and Shinhee Han. *A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia*. Loss. edited by David L. Eng Berkeley California: University of California Press, 2003.
- Epperly, Jessica. "Ucla Find Changing U. S. Demographics Transform School Segregations Landscape 60 Years after Brown V Baord of Education." UCLA, <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/>.
- Equiano, Olaudah, and Robert J. Allison. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*. The Bedford Series in History and Culture. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995.
- Evans, Freddi Williams. *Congo Square : African Roots in New Orleans*. Lafayette, LA: University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press, 2011.

- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press, 1967.
- . *Toward the African Revolution : Political Essays*. New Evergreen ed. New York: Grove Press, 1988.
- . *Black Skin, White Masks*. 1st ed. New York, Berkeley, Calif.: Grove Press ; Distributed by Publishers Group West, 2008.
- Fiske, John. *Television Culture*. 2nd ed. London ; New York: Routledge, 2011.
- Floyd, Samuel A. *The Power of Black Music : Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- . "Ring Shout! Literary Studies, Historical Studies, and Black Music Inquiry." *Black Music Research Journal* 22 (2002): 49 - 70.
- Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction : America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New American Nation Series. 1st Perennial Classics ed. New York: Perennial Classics, 2002.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison*. 2nd Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
- Foulon, Charles-Louis, and Pierre Nora. *André Malraux, Ministre De L'irrationnel*. Paris: Gallimard, 2010.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 30th anniversary ed. New York: Continuum, 2000.
- Freud, Sigmund. *On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement Papers on Metapsychology: Mourning and Melancholia*. Vol. 14, 1914 - 1916.
- Gadson, Laura R. "The Water Brought Us Here, the Water Will Take Us Home." St. Simons Island, Georgia, 2012.
- Gaines, Kevin K. *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era (the John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture)*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Garima, Halle. "Sankofa." United States: Mypheduh Films, 1993.
- Gates, Henry Louis. *The Signifying Monkey : A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Geertz, Clifford. *Local Knowledge : Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.

- Genep, Arnold van. *The Rites of Passage*. [Chicago]: University of Chicago Press, 1960.
- Genep, Arnold van, Monika B. Vizedom, and Gabrielle L. Caffee. *The Rites of Passage* [in Translated from the French.]. Routledge Library Editions Anthropology and Ethnography Religion, Rites & Ceremonies. [1st pbk. ed. London: Routledge, 2010.
- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic : Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Glissant, Edouard, and J. Michael Dash. *Caribbean Discourse : Selected Essays*. Caraf Books. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989.
- Goff, Phillip A, Eberhardt, Jennifer L, Jackson, Jackson, Matthew C, Williams, Melissa J. "Not yet Human Implicit Knowledge, Historical Dehumanization, and Contemporary Consequences." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 94, no. No. 2 (2008): 292 - 306.
- . *Not yet Human: Implicit Knowledge, Historical Dehumanization, and Contemporary Consequences*. University Park, PA 16802-2130, USA: Department of Psychology, The Pennsylvania State University,, 2008.
- Gramsci, Antonio, Quintin Hoare, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. London,: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971.
- Granger, Mary. *Drums and Shadows : Survival Studies among the Georgia Coastal Negroes: Survival Studies among the Georgia Coastal Negroes*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986.
- Griaule, Marcel *Conversations with Ogotemmêli: An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas* Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Grinker, Roy Richard, Stephen C. Lubkemann, and Christopher Burghard Steiner. *Perspectives on Africa : A Reader in Culture, History, and Representation*. Global Perspectives. 2nd ed. Chichester, West Sussex ; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- . *Perspectives on Africa : A Reader in Culture, History, and Representation*. Global Perspectives. 2nd ed. Chichester, West Sussex ; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Guest, Chaz. "Artist Chaz Guest Paints Troy Davis." Amnesty International, 2011.
- Gueye, Maramé. *Modern Media and Culture in Senegal: Speaking Truth to Power*. African Studies Review. 3 vols. Vol. 54, Piscataway, New Jersey: African Studies Association; Rutgers University, 2011.
- Guinier, Lani. *The Tyranny of the Majority : Fundamental Fairness in Representative Democracy*. New York: Free Press, 1994.

- Hadden, Sally E. *Slave Patrols : Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas*. Harvard Historical Studies. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Halbwachs, Maurice, and Lewis A. Coser. *On Collective Memory*. The Heritage of Sociology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Hall, Gwendolyn Midlo. *Africans in Colonial Louisiana : The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.
- . *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas : Restoring the Links*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.
- Hall, Stuart, and Paul Du Gay. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1996.
- Hamm, Aurolyn Melba. *Elbert County, Georgia*. Black America Series. Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2005.
- . *Pinetown Cemetary*. Elberton, Georgia: Jim-Ree African American Museum, 2012.
- Haney-López, Ian. *Dog Whistle Politics : How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class*.
- Hannerz, Ulf. *Transnational Connections : Culture, People, Places*. Comedia. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Harney, Elizabeth. *In Senghor's Shadow : Art, Politics, and the Avant-Garde in Senegal, 1960-1995*. Objects/Histories. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Harris, Cheryl I. *Critical Race Theory : The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*. New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton & Co., 1995.
- Hartman, Saidiya V. *Scenes of Subjection : Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. Race and American Culture. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- . *Lose Your Mother : A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. 1st ed. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.
- Hazard-Donald, Katrina. "Hoodoo Religion and American Dance Traditions: Rethinking the Ring Shout." *Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, no. 6 (2011): 1 - 20.
- Hennessey, Kathleen "President Obama Calls Slave Site in Senegal 'Powerful'." *Los Angeles Times*, 2013.
- Herman, Edward S., and Noam Chomsky. *Manufacturing Consent : The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2002.

- Herskovits, Melville J. *The Myth of the Negro Past*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1990.
- Hewison, Robert. *The Heritage Industry : Britain in a Climate of Decline*. A Methuen Paperback. London: Methuen London, 1987.
- Hill, Robert A., Barbara Bair, and Marcus Garvey. *Marcus Garvey, Life and Lessons a Centennial Companion to the Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*. Berkeley: University of California Press,, 1987. <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft7m3nb4k0/>.
- . *Marcus Garvey, Life and Lessons : A Centennial Companion to the Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- Hinchman, Mark. "African Rococo : House and Portrait in Eighteenth-Century Senegal." Ph D, University of Chicago, 2000.
- Hobsbawm, E. J., and T. O. Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. Past and Present Publications. Cambridge Cambridgeshire ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost : A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1998.
- Holloway, Joseph E. *Africanisms in American Culture*. Blacks in the Diaspora. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.
- Holsey, Bayo. *Routes of Remembrance : Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Hooks, Bell. *Outlaw Culture : Resisting Representations*. Routledge Classics. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- . *Belonging : A Culture of Place*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Hopkins, Dwight N. *Black Faith and Public Talk : Critical Essays on James H. Cone's Black Theology and Black Power*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1999.
- Howell, Wilbur Samuel. *Poetics, Rhetoric, and Logic : Studies in the Basic Disciplines of Criticism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975.
- Hunt, Darnell. "Hollywood Diversity Report: Making Sense of the Disconnect." Los Angeles: UCLA Bunche Center for African American Studies, 2014.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. *Tell My Horse : Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*. 1st Perennial Library ed. New York: Perennial Library, 1990.
- Jackson, Michael. *Existential Anthropology : Events, Exigencies and Effects*. Methodology and History

- in *Anthropology* V. 11. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005.
- Jacobs, Four Arrows AKA Don Trent. *The Authentic Dissertation: Alternative Ways of Knowing, Research and Representation*. London & New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Jefferson, Thomas, and David Waldstreicher. *Notes on the State of Virginia : With Related Documents*. The Bedford Series in History and Culture. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2002.
- Jeffries, Michael P. *Thug Life : Race, Gender, and the Meaning of Hip-Hop*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Jeffries, Rhonda Bayes. "The Trickster Figures in African American Teaching: Pre- and Postdesegregation." *The Urban Review* 26, no. 4 (1994).
- Johnson, David. *Theorizing the Loss of Land*. Loss. edited by David I. Eng and David Kazanjian. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2003.
- Johnson, E. Patrick. *Appropriating Blackness : Performance and the Politics of Authenticity*. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Jordan, Don, and Michael Walsh. *White Cargo : The Forgotten History of Britain's White Slaves in America*. Washington Square, N.Y.: New York University Press, 2008.
- Joseph, Peniel E. *Stokely : A Life*. New York, New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2014.
- . *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour : A Narrative History of Black Power in America*. 1st ed. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2006.
- Jung, C. G., Herbert, Reed. *On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968.
- Katyal, Sonia. "Semiotic Disobedience." *Washington University Law Review* 84, no. 2 (2006).
- Keizer, Arlene R. *Black Subjects : Identity Formation in the Contemporary Narrative of Slavery*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.
- Kennedy, Randall. *Nigger the Strange Career of a Troublesome Word*. New York: Pantheon Books,, 2002. <http://www.aspresolver.com/aspresolver.asp?BLTC;S16332>.
- Keyes, Cheryl Lynette. *Rap Music and Street Consciousness*. Music in American Life. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002.
- Khosravi, Shahram *'Illegal' Traveller: An Auto-Ethnography of Borders*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Kiernan, J. "Saltwater and Ashes: Instruments of Curing among Some Zulu Zionists." [In eng]. *J Relig Afr* 9 (1978): 27-32.

- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. *Destination Culture : Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998.
- Klein, Herbert S. *The Atlantic Slave Trade*. New Approaches to the Americas. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Klein, Norman M. *The History of Forgetting : Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory*. The Haymarket Series. London ; New York: Verso, 1998.
- Kuchler, Susanne, Walter Melion. *Images of Memory: Remembering and Representation*. Washington, D. C., London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991.
- Labadi, Sophia, and Colin Long. *Heritage and Globalisation*. Key Issues in Cultural Heritage. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, England ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2010.
- Le Goff, Jacques, and Pierre Nora. *Faire De L'histoire*. Bibliothèque Des Histoires. 3 vols Paris: Gallimard, 1974.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. *The Structural Study of Myth*. Myth: Symposium. edited by Ed Thomas Sebeok 1968.
- Lewis, Gregory B. "Black-White Differences in Attitudes toward Homosexuality and Gay Rights." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 67 (2003): 59 - 78.
- Linebaugh, Peter, and Marcus Rediker. *The Many-Headed Hydra : Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2000.
- Lionnet, Françoise, and Shumei Shi. *The Creolization of Theory*. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Lock, Graham, and David Murray. *Thriving on a Riff : Jazz & Blues Influences in African American Literature and Film*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Luciano, Dana. *Passing Shadows*. Loss. edited by David L. and David Kazanjian Eng Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2003.
- MacCannell, Dean. *The Tourist : A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. Rev. ed. New York: Schocken Books, 1989.
- Mackey, Nathaniel. *Discrepant Engagement : Dissonance, Cross-Culturality, and Experimental Writing*. Cambridge Studies in American Literature and Culture. Cambridge England ; New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

- Marks, Laura U. *The Skin of the Film : Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
- . *Touch : Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.
- Marshall, Paule. *Praisesong for the Widow*. New York: Plume, 1983.
- Matory, James Lorand. *Black Atlantic Religion : Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- . "Free to Be a Slave: Slavery as Metaphor in the Afro-Atlantic Religions." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 37 (2007).
- McBride, Dwight A. *Impossible Witnesses : Truth, Abolitionism, and Slave Testimony*. New York: New York University Press, 2001.
- McFeely, William S. *Sapelo's People : A Long Walk into Freedom*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1994.
- McKnight, Reginald. *He Sleeps*. New York, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001.
- Mercer, Kobena. *Welcome to the Jungle : New Positions in Black Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Min, Susette. *Remains to Be Seen: Reading the Works of Dean Sameseshima and Khanh Vo*. Loss. edited by David Eng L. Eng and David Kazanjian Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2003.
- Minardi, Margot. *Making Slavery Visible (Again): The Nineteenth-Century Roots of a Revisionist Recovery in New England*. Politics of Memory. edited by Ana Lucia Araujo New York, NY: Routledge, 2012.
- Monson, Ingrid T. *Freedom Sounds : Civil Rights Call out to Jazz and Africa*. Oxford, England ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Moreno, Carlos. "Independent Investigative Report on Acts of Bias and Discrimination Involving Faculty at the University of California, Los Angeles." October 15, 2013.
- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved : A Novel*. 1st ed. New York: Knopf : Distributed by Random House, 1987.
- Moten, Fred. *In the Break : The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- . "Black Mo'nin." In *Loss*, edited by David L. and David Kazanjian Eng, 59. Berkeley,

- California: University of California Press, 2003.
- Moynihan, Patrick. "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action." 1965.
- Murray, David. *Thriving on a Riff: Jazz & Blues Influences in African American Literature and Film*. edited by Graham Lock and David Murray Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- NDiaye, Boubacar Joseph. "The Slave House of Goree Island and Its History." edited by Dakar Port Authority. Dakar, Senegal.
- Nicholas, Xavier. "A Conversation with Reginald Mcknight." *Callaloo* 29, no. 2 (2006): 304-21.
- Nora, Pierre. *Recherches De La France*. Bibliothèque Des Histoires.
- . *Les Lieux De Mémoire*. Bibliothèque Illustrée Des Histoires. Paris: Gallimard, 1984.
- Nora, Pierre, and Pierre Nora. *Présent, Nation, Mémoire*. Bibliothèque Des Histoires. Paris: Gallimard, 2011.
- Obama, Michelle. "Visiting Goree Island." In *The White House Blog*. Washington, DC: The White House, 2013.
- Obama, President Barack. "Remarks by President Obama after Tour of Maison Des Esclaves." <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/27/remarks-president-obama-after-tour-maison-des-esclaves>.
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States : From the 1960s to the 1990s*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Paine, Thomas, Thomas Paine, Thomas Paine, Thomas Paine, and Peter Linebaugh. *Peter Linebaugh Presents Thomas Paine : Common Sense, Rights of Man and Agrarian Justice*. Revolutions. London ; New York: Verso, 2009.
- Painter, Nell Irvin. *Creating Black Americans : African-American History and Its Meanings, 1619 to the Present*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- . *The History of White People*. 1st ed. New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2010.
- Palmié, Stephan. *Wizards and Scientists : Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition*. Durham, [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2002.
- . *Slavery, Historicism and the Poverty of Memorialization in Memory : Histories, Theories, Debates*. 1st ed. New York: Fordham University Press, 2010.
- Pelaez, Vicky. "The Prison Industry in the United States: Big Business or a New Form of Slavery."

Global Research (March 31, 2014).

- Pelton, Robert D. *The Trickster in West Africa : A Study of Mythic Irony and Sacred Delight*. Hermeneutics, Studies in the History of Religions. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.
- Pollitzer, William S. *The Gullah People and Their African Heritage*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999.
- Pryor, Richard. *Pryor Convictions: And Other Life Sentences*. Pantheon Books; 1st edition 1995.
- Pryor, Richard, and Todd Gold. *Pryor Convictions, and Other Life Sentences*. 1st ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1995.
- Raboteau, Albert J. *Slave Religion : The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Raboteau, Emily *Searching for Zion*. Atlantic Monthly Press, 2013.
- Radin, Paul, Karl Kerényi, and C. G. Jung. *The Trickster; a Study in American Indian Mythology*. New York: Schocken Books, 1972.
- Ravitch, Diane. *The Death and Life of the Great American School System : How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*. New York: Basic Books, 2010.
- Reagon, Bernice Johnson. *If You Don't Go, Don't Hinder Me : The African American Sacred Song Tradition*. The Abraham Lincoln Lecture Series. Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2001.
- Reinelt, Janelle G., and Joseph R. Roach. *Critical Theory and Performance*. Theater--Theory/Text/Performance. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.
- . *Critical Theory and Performance*. Theater--Theory/Text/Performance. Rev. and enl. ed. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007.
- Richards, Sandra L. "What Is Remembered?: Tourism to Ghana's Slave Castle-Dungeons." *Theater Journal* 57, no. 4 (2005): 617-37.
- Roach, Joseph R. *Cities of the Dead : Circum-Atlantic Performance*. The Social Foundations of Aesthetic Forms. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
- Roberts, Allen F., Mary Nooter Roberts, Gassia Armenian, and Ousmane Guèye. *A Saint in the City : Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal*. Los Angeles, Calif.: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, 2003.
- Roberts, Mary Nooter, Allen F. Roberts, S. Terry Childs, Museum for African Art (New York N.Y.),

- and National Museum of African Art (U.S.). *Memory : Luba Art and the Making of History*. New York: Museum for African Art, 1996.
- Robinson, Randall. *The Debt : What America Owes to Blacks*. New York: Dutton, 2000.
- Rock, Chris. "Chris Rock, Bring the Pain." HBO, 1996.
- Roussève, David. 2009.
- . "Reaity." <http://www.davidrousseve.com/saudadeoverview.html>.
- Rushdy, Ashraf H. A. *The End of American Lynching*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2012.
- Saar, Betye, James Christen Steward, University of Michigan. Museum of Art., Norton Museum of Art., and Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. *Betye Saar : Extending the Frozen Moment*. Ann Arbor, Mich. Berkeley: University of Michigan Museum of Art ; University of California Press, 2005.
- Sanders, Charles L. "Interview with Richard Pryor." *Ebony Magazine*, 1980.
- Schechner, Richard. *Between Theater & Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.
- Schneiderman, Eric T. "A Report on Arrests Arising from the New York City Police Department's Stop-and-Frisk Practices." New York Attorney General - Civil Rights Bureau, November 2013.
- Schueller, Malini Johar. *Locating Race : Global Sites of Post-Colonial Citizenship*. Suny Series, Explorations in Postcolonial Citizenship. Albany: SUNY Press, 2009.
- Scott, David. *Formations of Ritual : Colonial and Anthropological Discourses on the Sinhala Yaktovil*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.
- . *Conscripts of Modernity : The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Seiglie, Sergio Leyva. "They Are We." Vimeo, 2013.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. *Négritude: Humanism of the Twentieth Century*. Perspectives on Africa : A Reader in Culture, History, and Representation. edited by Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann and Christopher Burghard Steiner. 2nd ed. Chichester, West Sussex ; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1970.
- Sharp, S. Pearl. "The Healing Passage: Voices from the Water." 90 minutes. United States: A Sharp Show, 2005.

- Shaw, Rosalind. *Memories of the Slave Trade : Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Shear, Michael D. "Obama Looks to History and Future in Senegal." *New York Times*, 2013.
- Sherkat, Darren, Kylan M. de Vries and Stacia Creek. "Race, Religion, and Opposition to Same-Sex Marriage." Carbondale , Illinois: Southern Illinois University 2009.
- Simmons, Martha J., and Frank A. Thomas. *Preaching with Sacred Fire : An Anthology of African American Sermons, 1750 to the Present*. 1st ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2010.
- Simon-Aaron, Charles. *The Atlantic Slave Trade : Empire, Enlightenment, and the Cult of the Unthinking Negro*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2008.
- Simone, Nina. "Take Me to the Water." In *High Priestess of Soul*: Phillips, 1967.
- Simons, Jon. *From Agamben to *Zi*Zek : Contemporary Critical Theorists*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.
- Smallwood, Stephanie E. *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Smith, Melanie K., and Mike Robinson. *Cultural Tourism in a Changing World : Politics, Participation and (Re)Presentation*. Tourism and Cultural Change. Clevedon, UK ; Buffalo, NY: Channel View Publications, 2006.
- Snyder, Terri L. . "Suicide, Slavery, and Memory in North America." *The Journal of American History* 97, no. 1 (2010): 39-62.
- Solrzano, Daniel G. *Critical Race Theory, Race and Gender Microaggressions, and the Experience of Chicano and Chocano Scholars*. Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. Vol. II, Los Angeles, California: UCLA, 1998.
- Somé, Malidoma Patrice. *Of Water and the Spirit : Ritual, Magic, and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman*. New York: Putnam, 1994.
- Song, Traditional Slave. "Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel."
- Soss, Joe, Richard C. Fording, and Sanford Schram. *Disciplining the Poor : Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race*. Chicago Studies in American Politics. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Southern, Eileen. *The Music of Black Americans : A History*. 3rd ed. New York: Norton, 1997.
- Stevenson, Bryan. *Just Mercy : A Story of Justice and Redemption*. First edition. ed. 2014.

- Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Dover Thrift Editions. Dover Publications, 2005. videorecording.
- Strobel-Baginski, Michèle *"L'imagerie Religieuse Au Sénégal, Ph D. Dissertation*. Université des Science Humaines de Strasbourg, France, 1982.
- Sue, Derald Wing. *Microaggressions and Marginality : Manifestation, Dynamics, and Impact*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2010.
- Tate, Claudia. *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels : Desire and the Protocols of Race*. Race and American Culture. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Taylor, Jason de Caires. "Underwater Video." <http://www.underwatersculpture.com/pages/gallery/film/film.htm>.
- Teye, Victor B. *Tourism and Africa's Tripartite Cultural Past*. Cultural Heritage and Tourism in the Developing World. edited by Dallen J. and Nyaupane Timothy, Gyan New York, NY: Routledge, 2009.
- Thomas, Brook. *Civic Myths : A Law-and-Literature Approach to Citizenship*. Cultural Studies of the United States. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Thompson, Robert Farris. *Flash of the Spirit : African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy*. 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1984.
- Tillet, Salamishah. *Sites of Slavery : Citizenship and Racial Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Imagination*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.
- Tobin, Jacqueline, and Raymond G. Dobard. *Hidden in Plain View : The Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*. 1st ed. New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1999.
- Toepka, Alvaro. "The Language You Cry In." 52 minutes. United States/Sierre Leone/Spain, 1998.
- Tonkin, Elizabeth. *Narrating Our Pasts : The Social Construction of Oral History*. Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Trotter, Joe William. *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective : New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender*. Blacks in the Diaspora. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the Past : Power and the Production of History*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1995.
- Turner, Patricia A. *Ceramic Uncles & Celluloid Mammies : Black Images and Their Influence on Culture*. 1st University of Virginia Press ed. Charlottesville Va.: University of Virginia Press, 2002.

- Turner, Richard Brent. *Islam in the African-American Experience*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- . *Jazz Religion, the Second Line, and Black New Orleans*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.
- Turner, Victor Witter. *The Ritual Process : Structure and Anti-Structure*. Symbol, Myth, and Ritual Series. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- Turner, Victor W. *The Anthropology of Performance*. 1st pbk. ed. New York: PAJ Publications, 1988.
- UNESCO. *Unesco World Heritage Lists*.
- Urry, John. *The Tourist Gaze*. Theory, Culture & Society. 2nd ed. London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2002.
- Various. "Negro Spirituals." www.negrospirituals.com.
- . "Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting." <http://fair.org/>.
- Wafer, James William. *The Taste of Blood : Spirit Possession in Brazilian Candomblé*. Contemporary Ethnography Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991.
- Wagner, Roy. *The Invention of Culture*. Prentice-Hall Anthropology Series. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975.
- . *The Invention of Culture*. A Phoenix Book. Rev. and expanded ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Wahlman, Maude. *Signs & Symbols : African Images in African American Quilts*. Rev., upd. ed. Atlanta, Ga.: Tinwood, 2001.
- Washington, Margaret. *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*. Vintage Classics. 1st ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.
- Waterman, Christopher Alan. *Jùjú : A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music*. Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Waterman, Richard. *African Influence on the Music of the Americas*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1952.
- . "On Flogging a Dead Horse: Lessons Learned from the Africanisms Controversy." *Ethnomusicology, Published by University of Illinois Press* 7, no. 2 (1963): 83 - 87.
- Webb, Floyd. "Robert Farris Thompson Speaks: Daughters of the Dust (Dvd Extra)." 1991.

- Wiggins, William H. *O Freedom! Afro American Emancipation Celebrations*. University of Tennessee Press, 1987.
- Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns : The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. 1st ed. New York: Random House, 2010.
- Williams, Eric Eustace. *Capitalism & Slavery*. Kingston ; Miami: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005.
- Williams, Linda. *Playing the Race Card : Melodramas of Black and White from Uncle Tom to O.J. Simpson*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Wilson, August. *Gem of the Ocean*. 1st ed. New York, St. Paul, Minn.: Theatre Communications Group ; Distributed to the Book trade by Consortium Book Sales and Distribution, 2006.
- Wilson, Olly. "Black Music as an Art Form." *Black Music Research Journal* 3 (1983): 1 - 22.
- Winant, Howard. *The New Politics of Race : Globalism, Difference, Justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.
- Winfrey, Oprah. "Interview with Pharrell." In *Oprah's Prime*, April 13, 2014.
- Wolper, David. "Roots." United States: Warner Brothers, 1977.
- Wood, Michael. *Proust: The Music of Memory*. Memory: Histories Theories, Debates. edited by Susannah and Schwartz Radstone, Bill New York, New York: Fordham University Press, 2010.
- Woodson, Carter Godwin. *The Miseducation of the Negro*. 1st ed. Hampton, Va.: U.B. & U.S. Communication Systems, 1992.
- . *The Mis-Education of the Negro*. S.l.: Distributed by Amentam L.L.C., 2010. sound recording, 4 compact discs : digital ; 4 3/4 in.
- . *Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the United States in 1830: Together with Absentee Ownership of Slaves in the United States in 1830*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015.
- Wright, Michelle M. *Becoming Black : Creating Identity in the African Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Wright, Richard. *Black Power; a Record of Reactions in a Land of Pathos*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1974.
- Wright, Richard, Richard Wright, and Richard Wright. *Black Power : Three Books from Exile : Black Power, the Color Curtain, and White Man, Listen!* Harper Perennial Modern Classics. 1st ed. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008.

- Yosso, T., Ceja, M., Smith, W. & Solorzano, D. *Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate for Latina/O Undergraduates*. Harvard Educational Review. Vol. 79, 2009.
- Young, Hershini Bhana. *Haunting Capital : Memory, Text and the Black Diasporic Body*. Reencounters with Colonialism--New Perspectives on the Americas. Hanover, N.H. Dartmouth College Press: Published by University Press of New England, 2006.
- Young, Jason R. *Rituals of Resistance : African Atlantic Religion in Kongo and the Lowcountry South in the Era of Slavery*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007.
- "Nina Simone, Official Site." <http://www.ninasimone.com/>.
- "Anheuser Busch: The Great Kings and Queens of Africa." <http://anheuser-busch.com/index.php/anheuser-busch-donates-great-kings-and-queens-of-africa-art-collection/>.
- "Unesco World Heritage Convention." <http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/SN/>.
- "Island of Gorée: Unesco World Heritage Center." UNESCO, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/26>.
- "Underwater Sculpture of Jason De Caires Taylor." <http://www.underwatersculpture.com>.
- "Macintosh County Shouters." <http://mcintoshcountyshouters.com>.
- United States of America V. John David Davis, Robers Lee Anderson, Opry Felton Lowe, Ronnie Berg Mills*, (1986).
- "The Immortal Mahalia Jackson, Dvd." Audio Fedelify, 2006.
- "The Will to Survive: The Story of the Gullah/Geechee Nation." 2006.
- "New York Senate Open Legislation: Mourning the Death of Stan Simmons." <http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/J6359-2009>. *Stanfield Simmons, Jr. Resolution*.
- Kunta Kinteh Island: Coming Home without the Shackles*. 2013.
- Floyd V. City of New York*, (2013).
- "The Year of Hate and Extremism." Southern Poverty Law Center, <http://www.splcenter.org/>.
- "The Holy Bible, King James Version. Cambridge Edition: 1769; King James Bible Online, ." 2015.
- "Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department." 102. Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, 2015.