

Dark Language

Loren L. Qualls

Dark Language

*Post Rebellion Fiction:
The Continued Journey
of African American
Literature*

Loren L. Qualls

University Press of America, Inc.

Copyright page
to be provided by publisher

Dedication

To those who wish to carry my mind.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	
1 IN THE WORD	11
2 BIRTH OF IDENTITY	29
3 SPEAKING IN TONGUES	39
4 AUTONOMY AND CAUSATION	45
5 A FINAL LIBERTY	63
APPENDIX	75
NOTES	77
BIBLIOGRAPHY	80
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	92

PREFACE

N

ot long after sitting down to write this the inquiry,
what is it that should be said, rushed its way to the

front of my mind. What is it about literature that makes this pursuit relevant; so urgent a cry from a soul clothed in black skin? This journey began narcissistically to find a *place*, a place in history, in literature that would embrace a personal style of writing. Examining a host of text and script, but the voice was lacking—nothing mirrored or whispered back from the pages, only ashes of ancestors and sleeping spirits. There is no question of the existence of African American Literature. Nevertheless, the language has failed to connect and engage the mind. Truly, the measure of African American Literature is not measured by my speculation and mediocre expertise. Understanding the former, a logical egoism is even now to follow in the legacy and tradition of

Morrison, Baldwin, Wright, Reed, Baraka, McMillan, Ellison, Ellis and others continuing to bring insight into the Black experience to an ignorant and or more often than not an oblivious America (white) society. Yet and still the experience is wanting, though personal admiration is *staid* the imagery of African American Literature has *stayed* as well. It is now an emphatic necessity, to create a place mirroring the African American born after its rebellion: the era of street fighting for civil rights. Born, when the American constitution lends itself beyond property or considering the dark pigment *a commodity* and adopts a discourse of humanity—the humanity of the African American people. A generation birthed with the entitlements of the constitution. Conflicted by an intrinsic angst and compelled by a latent need for individualism the African American burgeons in an existential era, a turn in the *Other* American's passage. A journey coursed with searching *language* inherent of fiction, African American fiction.

IN THE WORD**T**

here is a rumbling energy in the contemporary African (Black) community, our American community, where

some individuals still wonder how to answer the question, what is one's *ethnicity* on an application. In this thesis we will explore and observe a vibrant aesthetic movement emerging from African American culture; it groans like plate tectonics, shifting and re-forming through the will of nature, straining to *become*, to have *identity*. The straining, which is deeply entrenched in a tradition of *black wordsmithing*, is shaping the ideological psychology of the present generation without its very knowledge. Ironically, those who have come before us could envision this post-civil rights event happening in literature. Nevertheless, to call it by its name has become like

recognizing a long lost friend on the street; you know the face but you cannot remember the name. Moreover, this recognition, which can be found in literature, evades even our mouths, minds and hands because the things, which make us human, are obscured by the rhetoric of tradition and protest.

The language of fiction in African American culture has fashioned and ordered the telling of its *being* in the community of genre writing. The use of the word genre may not entirely reflect the explanation of *type* but it does help us to distinguish this hypothesis of fiction. The general writing style becomes a singular structure in the form of fiction in the African American literature. First, let us define *genre* as a type of popular fiction and common depiction within literature. We can safely assert that African American is popular, at least for the most part to African Americans. However, our aim and the catalyst for this theses is the exploration of a movement in American literature, specifically African American literature, which has propelled itself beyond slavery and prejudice and landed in a place, faceless and without identity. A generation of voices has come recognize that, as descendants of the Civil Rights era, disconnectedness is their legacy. This disconnectedness, or form of *extrication*, became the impetus for *Post-Rebellion Fiction*. *Post*, suggest

after something and *Rebellion*, violent struggles in order to attain human rights and *Fiction* a literary depiction. Thus, *Post-Rebellion Fiction* is the literary depiction of the aftermath of a violent struggle, which attained human rights. We have yet to define literature. Literature includes all writings in prose or verse of imaginative character, all such writings having permanent value, excellence of form, and writings on a particular subject, writings in a particular time and/or country. Compound the definitive nature of literature with African American culture and its meaning embraces shades of cultural bias. *Perrine's Literature* discusses fiction and literature in this manner:

“The experience of humankind through the ages is that literature may furnish such understanding and do so effectively—that the depiction of imagined experiences can provide authentic insights. In addition, the bulk of fiction does not present such insights. Only some does. Initially, therefore, fiction can be classified into two broad categories: literature of escape and literature of interpretation.

Escape literature is that which is written purely for entertainment—to help us pass time agreeably. *Interpretive* literature is written to broaden, deepen and sharpen our awareness of life. Escape (I prefer *diversion*) literature

transports us away from the real world: it enables us to temporarily forget our troubles. Interpretive literature takes us, through the imagination, deeper *into* the real world: it enables us to understand our troubles (the human condition). Escape literature has pleasure as its only object. Interpretive literature has as its object pleasure plus understanding” (Arp). Further one may infer that interpretive literature seeks to give insight and pleasure but a modified definition would assert that not all gained insight, knowledge and understanding of the human condition is pleasurable.

Contemporary African American fiction falls mostly into the category of interpretive although in some cases it also reflects an escapist narrative. Post-rebellion fiction is best identified by the silence of the African American community; better still the *misdirected language* emerging from that community. I wish to be clear, this work before you does not purport to be a political treatise, nor is it about the positive and /or negative effects resulting from the consumption of this new (non-interpreted) style of fiction. The intention here is merely to provide an epilogue to the state of affairs of African American literature. This type of fiction proposes an ideological premise, a *framework of thought* or temporal modernity, which is always situated after a revolution. Black

modernity in the United States—like modernity in general—is articulated through the twin rhetoric of *nostalgia* and *critical memory*. Nostalgia here does not refer to arrested development, distraught sentimentality, ever pining for “ole’ unhappy, far-off things, and battles long ago.” Rather it suggests *heimweh* or homesickness. Nostalgia is purposive construction of a past filled with golden virtues, golden men sterling events. Nostalgia can manifest as play in two acts; first, it articulates the revolution as a quality experience now gone (well-passed), an aberration. Second, it actively substitutes allegory for history. Critical memory, by contrast, is the actual faculty of revolution. Its operation implies a continuous arrival at turning points and decisive change, which is usually attended by considerable risk, peril or suspense, always seems imminent. To be critical is never to be safely housed or allegorically free of the illness, transgression and contamination of the past. One might say that critical memory is always uncanny; it is also always in crisis. Critical memory judges severely, censures righteously, and renders hard ethical evaluations of the past that it never defines as “well-passed”; this essence draws into broad relief the significant instances of time past and the act of being deracinated, has conjured the revolutionary feeling within the Civil Rights Act

of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act, and late the Civil Rights Act of 1968. For the next ten years the world would split open for African Americans through violence, political manipulation and economic necessity. This period represents the fire beneath the bubbling cauldron of African American identity: the soup for a nation, in language and sound but without ever being truly and visibly savored in American society.

Following the Civil Rights movement, despite its being either a success or social tourniquet, the African American is now largely in the vanguard of society. *Vanguard* acknowledges position, place of consideration, and expectation (we are visible). African Americans have crossed the color barrier into every aspect of our American culture. Yet the question of identity remains. Although the slave has been freed, educated and presently, to a certain extent, economically competitive, what did the slave become? The slave became *the middle-class*. Middle-Class-Society is any society that becomes rigidified in predetermined forms, forbidding all evolution, all gains, all progress, and all discoveries. I call middle-class a closed society in which life has no taste, in which the air is tainted, in which ideas and men are corrupt. And I think the man that takes a stand against this death is in

a sense a revolutionary (Fanon). Cotton-fields, lynching and relentless servitude are no longer the daily existence of the African American. The modern African American is born with the liberty their predecessors would not access for 40 to 50 years. They embody the autonomy to speak, write and create; they can conjure ancestral spirits that connect them and their generation to a vast wealth of strength and perseverance. But we nevertheless must ask ourselves, what does this mean for the future of African Americans and how do we want to live now? The answer to this question sometimes resides in text, in complacent prose, seductive adjectives and violent verbs. A literary genre arises from the freedom to choose and freely deliberate one's own life.

This genre has developed from an ideology unhindered by trepidation and the subconscious angst of slavery: forced reproduction and the de-humanizing auction block. However, this genre all the same expresses anxiety, paranoia, struggle for an identity, and a means of expression. A characteristic differentiating the Post-rebellion age from other periods in African American history is its detachment from traditional icons and ideologies (claimed and unclaimed) of Black American culture (the slave). Appropriate examples, are religious doctrines professing long suffering and the idea that

Jesus will one day free us (either him or Moses). Further, the myth of the black body and its durability, fertility and lack of intellectual potential, merely capable of criminal fumbling; this neo-American, the progeny of the civil rights era perpetuates this detachment and exhibits not in religious sacrament or in a common commitment to the ideal of equality. This is not to say the ideology of the group is against equality, but rather they are unsure of its definition. Obviously, African Americans are historically linked to the goals of achieving freedom and equality in the democratic tradition. However, this particular group values artistic freedom and the liberty of individualism, they (we) fail to regard group identification through any other mass movement. The areas of politics: government, church and state, African Americans easily confuse themselves, with their white counter parts in the relentless pursuit of the "American Dream." African (Black) Americans history is the history two opposing identities: what it means to be an American and the significance of being of African descent (being black). The condition therefore, is perpetual: two warring ideals exist in ebony flesh, longing to attain the courage to merge the double self into a truer self, but not to lose the voices of the past. Moreover, the African American would not Africanize America,

(DuBios may have re-phrased this if he had lived to see the effect of *Hip-Hop*) because America has democratic principles and traditions of enormous value to other countries, including Africa. Conversely, African Americans would not bleach their black souls in a flood of white Americanism, because it is understood that African Americans have always raised the standards of excellence for America (through the lives of King, Malcolm X, Marshall, Baldwin, Wright, Morrison, Owens, Joyner, Woods, and infinite number of non-famous people). *The blood* has a message for the world; the blood of the *Black* American has fed the hunger and quenched the thirst of an *America* attempting to establish its own identity away from its colonial heritage. The African American became that identifying element and yet their desire is to make plausible that a person be both Black and American (DuBios).

There is a conscious duality in black culture, and some have attempted to whiten their souls. But the desire still remains for most to bridge the schism of personhood in the African American rather than having to choose the oblivion of whiteness or blackness.

Here in the 21st century that outcry has been silenced politically—*No Fire Next Time*, but rather another anthology,⁵

another book of slave narratives and poetry followed by an ongoing discussion of Baraka's arts movement and Gates' lists and cataloging, as if all Blacks are dead (of course I am just as guilty by writing this) and Baker mimes an article from twenty years prior. Protest language has been limited to narration instead the White House lawn, it too has become fiction rather than art imitating life. That brief *petit mal* is to say that in public sphere, to quote Baker again, and do not be misled, part of the academic process is to regurgitate ideas of great minds, this action perpetuates and sympathizes with an aspect of black culture that for the most part no longer exists outside of texts. The post-rebellion fiction discusses the African American, exploited, self-exploiting and exploiting others, solely based on the concept of race. One example is African Americans (outside of textual references but define the aforementioned type: fiction) who have benefited from affirmative action policies and have now assumed a positional doctrine that prohibits other African Americans from similar opportunities. Prominent figures such as Clarence Thomas, Armstrong Williams, and Condoleezza Rice all attended colleges and universities during a time when affirmative action was active legislation, yet seemingly support its prohibition. Surely, however, blacks will play the principle

role in closing the remaining socioeconomic gaps between whites and blacks, and resolving the interracial tensions that bedevil us still. History records not a single group of people who insisted that they were incapable of progressing without handouts and lowered standards from the ruling class, and history will not be kind to a group that continues to insist on this when more of its families are middle class than poor (McWhorter).

John McWhorter along with the Rice, Thomas and others of the not so silent black majority, support a view that becomes a slippery slope, iced on the premise that opportunity in America can be measured at an equal distance above everyone's head. When did the playing field become level, paraphrasing the last line in the forward: who are we, as Black Americans, since we have embraced the suburbs? Does middle class extinguish the flames of racism? Nonetheless, this digression will not lead us to a definitive ideology or to a resolution of the overall query: to denote a trend in African American culture exemplified by its ideas, which reflect the social needs and aspirations of the individual, group, class, and culture in the form of text.

Post-rebellion fiction critically examines African Americans at the decline of the civil rights era and searches the

canvass of the American landscape for truth through prose. The proposition of an emerging genre is not an uncommon occurrence, Lewis Feuer described this emergence (or birthing) as flowing from a *generational wave*. Houston Baker Jr. notes this paradigm as a *generational shift* each sensing through textual interaction that black culture might possibly have more to offer in *words* to society than the mumbling of the ignorant slave. Further, the *Black Aesthetic*, *Integrationist Poetics*, *Reconstruction of Instruction*, and most currently *The New Black Aesthetic* (Ansa and Baraka), cannot carry the onus alone or even minimally the voice of African American Literature in this post-rebellion age has moved beyond their overall narrative content, it is an echo of this contemporary voice. Leading theorists of the black aesthetics movement include Baker, who has been mentioned at least twice prior to this, Gates, Addison Gayle, and Hoyt W. Fuller, Larry Neal, Haki R. Madhubuti and Nikki Giovanni. Arising from the movement were Alex Haley, Eldridge Cleaver, Angela Davis, Toni Morrison, Ishmael Reed, Ntozake Shange, Sonia Sanchez, Alice Walker and June Jordan (Black Arts Movement).

Further, not merely has the echo of the past lingered behind without commentary of contemporary ideas on

African Literature but even as recent as the 1980's works from Toni Morrison, Ernest Gaines, McMillan, Trey Ellis and Walter Mosley, though all significant voices in African American Literature, their work has fallen short of reflecting or discussing the contemporary African American narrative (This is a frightening place for the reason that it may reflect the stagnation of the culture). Ellis Attempts such reflections in his novel: "Home Repairs," his thematic construct filters through the lives of the affluent African American: *The New Black Aesthetic*, Black American Ivy leaguers moving through a social *milieu* of privilege. Morrison, Gaines, Mosley and others puppet a stammering *effaced narrator* seeking cultural capital in didactic allegoric tales where the pathos is pity. The call for change or even the recognition that it is needed is an admirable endeavor, but the aforementioned remain isolated by the influence of the slave narrative as well as its extreme divergent view (educated, affluent and presumed a liberated citizen) that in sum does not reflect the majority of Black Americans. Capital and power offer privilege that can exceed or foster biased interpretation of the US constitution, where as those of the age of post-rebellion fiction are born without the privilege of wealth or prestige but

merely citizenship. Affording them only the entitlements of the constitution.

The New Black Aesthetic, introduced early in name only is a term coined by Trey Ellis. He believes that all contemporary Black American artists create art where race is not the only source of conflict. We are free, as a new breed to write as we please in part because of our predecessors, and also because of the way life has changed; hence for the first time in our history we are producing a critical mass of college graduates. Like most artistic booms, *NBA* is a post-bourgeois movement, driven by a second generation of the middle class. Having scarped their way to a relative wealth and too often crass materialism, our parents have freed (or compelled) us to bite those hands that fed us and sent us to college (Ellis). Ellis believes, and I support his position, that *new black artists* are no longer shocked by racism as those of the Harlem Renaissance, nor are we preoccupied with it, as were those of the Black Arts Movement. Racism for us is a hard and little-changing constant that neither surprises nor enrages (McMillan). Nevertheless there remains a valuable truth; so much of the middle class has squandered its economic gain that it has neglected to prepare the following generation to handle economic liberation (such is the dilemma of being

slammed into a political illusion of freedom). It is this generation's trial-by-error understanding of civil freedoms that come, not by faith in the constitution but by living by the constitution. The New Black Aesthetic must understand that racism is out there and we live in the belly of the beast and now, must turn instead to the challenge healing and making us whole (Pate).

Considering *Post-rebellion fiction* it is not for the high-minded; it is a common state, for everyone, but more specifically the black man, intuitive to its relationship with its pedigree, the past, and the power of the protagonist to be reflective, to appreciate how they have formed into their present state. It embraces the innate disquiet and suspicion of being African American, which is on many levels the onus middle standard, stature and affluence impedes the ability to discern if specific treatment is customary or is it based on race.

McMillan differs because of her subject matter. She chooses to focus on feminist troupes and the working constructs of men. Though her comments suggest awareness of a literatures folly or salvation she nevertheless also enslaves African Americans to a one-dimensional fictional stereotype. Our Literature has journeyed from black separatism and the

cultural politics of Black Nationalism only to become bogged down in the all-too-common protest, and slave narrative leading to the discourse of repetitious memorial. What we encounter here are images of the gun toting black militant, raping and pillaging white women and white society, and the freed slave ill-equipped to function in a modern world. These writers draw from the extremes of African American culture and have thus created true fiction: a dramatization of reality. But something is very wrong when representation becomes so skewed, so static, so stereotyped, by lending itself to badly-phrased ghetto dialect and self-serving soap opera telling. Furthermore, the extremist writing proclaims to be the definitive African American archetype (a fallacious premise), the singular embodiment of African American literature and culture. Moreover, with the world convinced of this, (the world being in part the black public sphere)⁶, then the integrity of the art has failed. Ralph Ellison in *Shadow and Act* states, “When an artist would no longer conjure with the major moral problem in American life, he was defeated as a manipulator of profound social passions.” He continues, “In the United States, as in Europe, the triumph of industrialism had repelled the artist with the blatant hypocrisy between its ideals and its acts. But while in Europe the writer became the

most profound critic of these matters, in our country he either turned away or was at best half-hearted in his opposition—perhaps because any profound probing of human values, both within himself and within society, would have brought him face to face with the rigidly tabooed subject of the Negro.” This imagery, although ubiquitous, is the early morning fog, which is burned away by a new day sun: post-rebellion fiction.

THE BIRTH OF IDENTITY

I was taught to be this way as an African American man . As a black writer, I had to make my work about the convoluted struggle of black people and this presents the challenge. This is what it means to be a black writer. Further substantiation and maybe the inference of substance is premature but “It is not accidental that the disappearance of the human Negro from our fiction coincides with the disappearance of deep -probing doubt and a sense of evil. Not that doubt in some form was always present, as the works of the lost generation and the muckrakers and the proletarian writers make very clear. But it is a shallow doubt, which he seldom turns inward upon the writer’s own values; almost always it focuses outward, upon some scapegoat with which he is seldom capable to identify himself (Ellison).

African Americans...American collective identity surrounding the civil rights movement...were com-

pletely excluded from the American collective identity up until the 1960s and from the 1970s and onward, a gradual process of inclusion in terms of both written symbols and commemorative symbols can be observed (Kook).

There are two fundamental tenets, Kook states, which can be linked to Ellis's opening words, the first is the identity that bound Americans together (identity is the focus of concern) and that incorporated them as Americans was ideational, grounded in the belief in a set of universal values. This fundamental equality, born out of the fact that America...lacked a feudal social structure: generated a civic identity; generated and associated more with the exercise of civil rights than with a particular history, ethnicity and culture tradition. Second of the two tenets are the instances of exclusion within American society, so unavoidably exemplified by the African American and by the Native American, existed somehow outside of the collectively identity and thus did not seriously alter the essential meaning of it. These two tenets are accepted by most of the so-called canonical theorists of American identity.

The case of African American is undoubtedly a prime example of the discriminatory and non-egalitarian aspect of American democracy and American collective identity.

African Americans were considered to property. As property, they were denied the basic human rights afforded to citizens of liberal democracies, as well as the basic human rights secured for the average citizens of the new federation. They had no protection under law, save the protection accorded to property. The exclusion of African American was seen as existing outside of the value system promoted and defined by the American creed. This type of dichotomous perspective enabled all of the main theorists to maintain the universalistic vision of the American identity of racism and segregation, reservations, and the like.

The post-civil war period and the passing of the reconstruction amendments and emancipation, nonetheless did manage to dictate a clear-cut inclusive covenant between African Americans and American society. The establishment of equal citizenship, the reconstruction amendments allowed Americans to think of their civic nations as inclusive. Their quick reversal, however, exemplified by the establishment of the Jim Crow system in the South, and maintenance of severe informal discrimination in the North, in effect rendered this short lived. Moreover, the essence of inclusion is...the act of official recognition. Recognition of identity—group or individual—is essential to the formation of one's identity.

(Kook) *Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by mis-recognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people of society around them mirror back to them a confirming, demeaning, or contemptible picture of himself or herself* (Taylor).

“When James Baldwin wrote, “Nobody Knows My Name,” he could not have foreseen the violent dispute which would be incited a decade later by those who, rejecting the term, “Negro,” wish to be described as “Black.” The controversy is not trivial. It reflects a troubled, sometimes desperate search for identity by a people who have lived in a society, which consciously stripped their racial identity from them. Originally, we were African, but we were taken from Africa. Voluntarily or involuntarily, we mixed with people of other nations and other races; but, as long as our skin remained dark and our features Negroid, we were identified as Negroes rather than as members of any other ethnic or political group. And despite our three-century existence in America, we have never been recognized fully as Americans. Because of such a history, we have sought to retain or regain our identity with a meaningful name.

Early in the twentieth century, the term “colored” linked the causes of the black American with other dark-skinned peoples of the world and to others, “Afro-American” seemed to lie in a crusade to capitalize ‘Negro’ and thus changing from a sometimes derogatory description to the name of racially proud group. Now, rejecting ‘Negro’ as a term which they identify with slavery and servility, many members of the group insist upon ‘black’” (Tuner).

Observation and the evolution of American culture, the Structural Transformation (Harebmas) has created four identifiers of this movement in fiction: Generational, Psychological, Ideological, and Socio-economic, (the characteristics of the genre reflect the movement and in its reflection is its identity). The explanation of these characteristics shall follow but at this very instance; this existential moment, a notion formulates a canvas of images, painting the dinosaurs and the Native American in their brilliant colors, bleeding into one another, inside the chalk outline of the African American.

The African American is “the Quintessential American.” “The wrongfully enslaved and disparately treated (Black) African American communities. Opps! There it is, a new name, a unique people. I am, we are, African Americans. If we are all humans, we have a common DNA genome, which

comes from “Lucy” (them bones, which I met and talked to, well you know what I am saying) the African Mother of civilization. We have been”miscegenated” (a made up word to define a new people, mulattos, but truly define all humans, mixed people). African Americans by force and for survival mixed with both indigenous people of America and the so-called settlers, which makes us uniquely American. And we are discriminated against in the world, all based on our observable melanin” (Davis).

It is the African American, the former slave created, while creating this America that becomes in the eye of the world, God’s first born, Lucifer and his son of light centered his imagination on himself and became evil, that is the moment of difference, of otherness, held fast against the son who is otherness-within the divine love (Bohme).

Taking from this narrative, African Americans began to center their imaginations on themselves, on being free, this becoming the moment of difference in America’s divine economic structure. Further, the removal of the African American from the American equation would negate the very existence of the United States. African American’s (we) simply need to wake up in morning and know identity is not something we need to seek but acknowledge *I am*. It is the

misnaming by the American construct, which perpetuates the codifiers of cultures within cultures; it is calculated misinterpretation of groups and /or group in order for economic exploitation.

But what does this mean to literature? Under the defining elements of a nation what is my voice saying in text? Not in the most common spaces I love and cherish my oppressors, though in some cases it is I wish to be my oppressor.

Phyllis Wheatley writes of being saved from paganism by her white abductor in her poem "Bought" her texts are often conflicting, revealing her love for her Master and desire to exist as white. Though she was the first African American published, the text chimed of an identity shrouded in a grateful slaves ideology. Wheatley was misnamed, misinterpreted as this oddity: an actual human being with a mind but they are a slave; what a monstrous paradox the public sphere conjured.

Another question, if in fact the construct manufactures the text then where does the true identity dwell? It is all identity but it is the construct that allows only a portion of a produced identity to be viewed by the public sphere. It is the economic power that graduates image but it is the soul of the individual

that propels who one is and it is this truth that breathes on the pages of literature.

Further, sociologically this literary identity first birthing pangs began with the functional analysis of slavery, this suggesting slavery is functional part of society manifesting a latent function via Diaspora leading up to the traditional conflict theory: exploitation of a group leads to conflict that can only be resolved by the revolution and thus language becomes keg and powder.

We can see the generational effects scaled by the evolution from slave to Citizen. The psychological we view through the latent attributes of slavery on the Citizen in a society in which he or she is not recognized. The Citizen's ideology is dramatized in text and socialization supported by the socio-economic state. This condition and conditioning forces a break and the *cry go out*:

“Of course I'm a black writer . . . I'm not *just* a black writer, but categories like *black writer*, *woman writer* and *Latin American writer* aren't marginal anymore. We have to acknowledge that the thing we call “literature” is more pluralistic now, just as society ought to be. The melting pot never worked. We ought to be able to accept on equal terms

everybody from the Hasidim to Walter Lippmann, from the Rastafarians to Ralph Bunche.”⁷

When Toni Morrison was asked whether it was the fate of African Americans to remain locked in somehow ‘crippling’ history, and why they have to carry the burden of the plantation on their shoulders’, as Terry McMillan says, her reply was that you have to move on while reworking that history. It is a process of negotiations and re-negotiations, readjusting and being re-adjusted to that history. She gave three examples: the destructive-redemptive power of love scrutinized through the lens of African American history: love under slavery, love in the swinging years of the 30's, and love again under the impact of the civil rights movement when blacks became too self-policing (Boussedra).

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

L

iterature has always been a significant and essential component in most developing cultures. The act of

writing from the beginning, and the creation of literature, has been one of political necessity to tell the stories of the people to build identity and strength to forge community and fellowship. Yet, perhaps one of the most important qualities of this expression is that the act of writing establishes humanity.

Since I started writing in earnest, I have felt I am a part of a new breed writer. We care about community and culture, but we also try to locate ourselves in this era of the new millennium; a context that is post-rebellion fiction. Connected to, perhaps created by Toomer, Wheatley, Hughes,

Zora, and so many others and yet something is different. Post, post, not necessarily better, but different, an extension (Pate).

When asked whether it was the fate of African Americans to remain locked in somehow ‘crippling’ history, and why they have to carry the burden of antiquity on their shoulders’ at first I considered that one must move on while reworking that history. It is a process of negotiations and re-negotiations, readjusting and being re-adjusted to that history I recall, Toni Morrison saying. She gave three examples: the destructive-redemptive power of love scrutinized through the lens of African American history: love under colonization, and love again under the impact of adverse tradition when African Americans became too self-policing.

This romantic view of the relationship between the African American and history, which somehow manifest love and produce a language that clings to the pen and scroll of African American writers, through the *formal soul of nature*¹ time indicates language exists not from the negotiation or re-negotiation of history but as *Dasien*. If one negotiates or re-negotiates this act produces acquiescence and subjugation and does not seem to be the case of language or expression. Martin Heidegger in contrast to Morrison’s romanticism options that *Dasien*² (Being-in-the-world) [African

Americans] has seized upon its latent possibility not only of making its own existence transparent to itself but also of inquiring into the meaning of existentiality itself (this to say, of previously inquiry into the meaning of *Being*³ in general) and if by such inquiry its eyes have been opened to its Being (the ontological necessity of which we have already indicated) is itself characterized by *historicality* (the condition of history to be a product of history). The meaning of being which belongs to the inquiry into Being as an historical inquiry, gives them the assignments of inquiring into the history of that inquiry itself, that is, of becoming historiological. In working out the question of Being they must heed this assignment, so too positively make the past their own, they may bring themselves into full possession of the possibilities of such inquiry. The question of the meaning of Being must be carried through by explicating Dasien (the African American) before hand in their temporality and historicality, the question thus brings them to the point where they understand themselves as historiological.

Our preparatory interpretation of the fundamental structures of the African American (Dasien) with regard to the average kind of Being which is closest to it (a kind of Being in which it is therefore proximally historical as well). Will

make manifest, however, not only that The African American is inclined to fall back upon their world (the world in which they are) and to interpret themselves in terms of the world by their reflected light, but also that the African American simultaneously falls prey to the tradition of which they have more or less explicitly taken hold. This tradition keeps them from providing their own guidance, whether in inquiring or choosing. This holds true—and by no means exist—for that understanding which is rooted in the African American's own most Being, and for the possibility of developing it—namely for ontological understanding. Thus when tradition becomes master it does so in such a way that what it transmits is made inaccessible, proximally and for the most part, that it rather becomes concealed. Tradition takes what has come down to us and delivers it over to self-evidence; it blocks our access to that primordial source from which the categories and concepts to us have been in part quite genuinely drawn—the African American has had their historicity so thoroughly uprooted by tradition that they confine their interest to the multiformity of possible types, directions, and standpoints of philosophical activity and by this very interest they seek to veil the fact that they have no ground of their own to stand on, consequently, despite all the historical interest and all the

zeal for an interpretation which is philosophically ‘objective’, the African American no longer understands the most elementary condition which would alone enable them to go back to the past in a positive manner and make it productively their own (Heidegger).

Let us look at the path that has lead to this juncture: Identity is the manifestation of psychological construction, which is a manifestation of sociological and ideological construction. Further the expression of this identity is exhibited in forms of communication, hence language and finally literature. This would articulate that the literature of the African American could never truly be said to have originated from its group alone but rather it is merely a symptom of the dominant culture, which negates it being singularly African American but rather American. However, the exclusion, and isolation of African American from mainstream America is the impetus for this distinctive development. Oddly, this reinforces the idea of this separate occurrence as *symptom* but a symptom quarantined to the African American populace. Other groups such as Asians, Native Americans, Irish, Italians, Germans, etc. maintained a cohesiveness of language within their communities without the necessity of the re-invention of language where as the

African American had to find ways of expression, communication because it was necessitated by the very absents of this cohesiveness. They own and possess a form of communication that is exclusive but yet manifest in a latent function, which has become a window into the *American Scandal*.⁴

AUTONOMY AND CAUSATION**P**

ost-rebellion fiction is not elitist; it is *Nietzschean*—for the common man, black-man, cerebral only in the

relationship it has with genealogy, history, and the ability for the protagonist to be introspective, to understand how he or she has come to be. It accepts the inherited anxiety and paranoia of being African American, which is in many cases; the burden of being of the mean prestige and wealth can retard the sensibility of not knowing whether you have received certain kinds of treatment because of your ethnicity.

McMillan's fiction differs because of her subject matter. She chooses to focus on feminist troupes and the working constructs of men. Though her comments suggest awareness of a literatures folly or salvation she nevertheless also

enslaves African Americans to one-dimensional fictional stereotypes. Our Literature has journeyed from black separatism and the cultural politics of Black Nationalism only to become bogged down in the all-too-common protest, and slave narrative leading to the discourse of repetitious memorial. What we encounter here are images of the gun toting black militant, raping and pillaging white women and white society, and the freed slave ill-equipped to function in a modern world. These writers draw from the extremes of African American culture and have thus created true fiction: a dramatization of reality. But something is very wrong when representation becomes so skewed, so static, so stereotyped, by lending itself to badly-phrased ghetto dialect and self-serving soap opera telling. Furthermore, the extremist writing proclaims to be the definitive African American archetype (a fallacious premise), the singular embodiment of African American literature and culture.

Moreover, with the world convinced of this, (the world being in part the black public sphere), then the integrity of the art has failed. Ralph Ellison in *Shadow and Act* states, "When an artist would no longer conjure with the major moral problem in American life, he was defeated as a manipulator of profound social passions." He continues, "In the United

States, as in Europe, the triumph of industrialism had repelled the artist with the blatant hypocrisy between its ideals and its acts. But while in Europe the writer became the most profound critic of these matters, in our country he either turned away or was at best half-hearted in his opposition—perhaps because any profound probing of human values, both within himself and within society, would have brought him face to face with the rigidly tabooed subject of the Negro.” This imagery, although ubiquitous, is the early morning fog, which is burned away by a new day sun: post-rebellion fiction.

Novelist Richard Wright and editor Arthur P. Davis of *The Negro Caravan* (Kook) agree that with accessibility to common privilege, (constitutional entitlement), Afro-American Literature would become increasingly less protest-inspired and more focused on the excesses of American society. Rap and Hip-Hop, the open-mic, Emcee-culture, or its predecessor Be-Bop and the beat-nicks of the early 60s in black garb share an existential angst in their phrasings. Due to Reagan’s economic restructuring of America, many blacks experienced permanent unemployment, dissipating city services, a rise in abandoned buildings, the militarization of inner city streets, the decline of youth parks and programs,

and an altering of creative programs at public schools.

According to Robin D.G. Kelley:

By Reagan's second term, over one-third of black families earned incomes below the poverty line. For black teenagers, the unemployment rate increased from 38.9 to 43.6% under Reagan. Federal and state job programs for inner city youth were also wiped out at an alarming rate.

The underground economy flourished under these conditions and not surprisingly, young blacks were/are among its biggest employees. The invention and marketing of new, cheaper drugs (PCP, crack, and synthetic drugs) combined with a growing fear of crime and violence, and the transformation of policing through the use of new technologies, have had a profound impact on public life. Kelley continues:

When the crack economy made its presence felt in poor black communities in Los Angeles, for instance, street violence intensified as various gangs and groups of peddlers battled for control over markets. Because of its unusually high crime rate, Los Angeles gained the dubious distinction of having the largest urban prison population in the country. Yet, in spite of the violence and financial vulnerability that went along with peddling crack, for many black youngsters it was the most viable economic option."

Ironically, it is the same underground economy that offers economic freedom to young black men that results in militaristic occupation by the police, tougher sentencing laws, and often in murder. Not to mention, crack is cheap. While a gram of cocaine for snorting may cost \$6 or more depending on its purity, the same gram can be transformed into anywhere from five to thirty ‘rocks.’ “For the user, this meant that individual ‘rocks’ could be purchased for as little as \$2, \$5, \$10, or \$20. For the seller, \$60 worth of cocaine hydrochloride (purchased wholesale for \$30) could generate as much as \$100 to \$150 when sold as rocks” (Inciardi 7).

Crack is also easily hidden for safer distribution, and can be smoked for faster absorption into the body. “When cocaine is smoked, it is more rapidly absorbed by the body, crossing the blood - brain barrier within six seconds; hence, an almost instantaneous ‘high’ (Inciardi 7). Left with few alternatives, the few venues for social mobility included a “reliance on the underworld economy of drug dealing, the near infinitesimal chance of playing professional sports, especially basketball, or the pursuit of a career in the music industry, most notably the rap world” (Boyd).

This road to economic freedom, specifically drug dealing, resulted in the highest incarceration rates of black men in the

history of America, and it has not curbed in the G.W. Bush era. There were more young black men going to prison than to college during the 1980s. Harvard University economist Richard Freeman estimates that thirty-five percent of all black men between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five were arrested at some point in 1989 (Lipsitz 19). Black on black crime rates skyrocketed, with many of America's urban centers from the north to the south, east and west being named, "murder capitals." Washington, DC, New York City, Philadelphia, PA, Los Angeles, CA, Newark, NJ, Miami, FL, Oakland, CA, Atlanta, GA, St. Louis, MO, Gary Indiana, Houston, TX, New Orleans, LA and Richmond, VA carried the moniker. According to George Lipsitz:

Unwanted as workers, underfunded as students, and undermined as citizens, minority youth seem wanted only by the criminal justice system . In Los Angeles, more than fifty thousand youths have been arrested in a misguided and counterproductive anti-gang initiative named "Operation Hammer." [...] Black Americans make up only twelve percent of the nation's drug users, but account for forty-three percent of felony offenders convicted for drug offenses. A study for the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives in 1992 reported that seventy percent of black men under the age of thirty-five in Washington, DC had been arrested, and it estimated that as many as eighty-five percent of black males in that city would be arrested some time in their lives. Since the 1970s, a series of moral

panics about gangs, drug use, teenage pregnancy and “wilding” assaults have demonized inner-city minority youths, making them scapegoats for the chaos created in national life by de-industrialization and economic restructuring.

With the loss of so many black men to prison or death, many children were being raised in single-parent homes, headed primarily by black women relegated to low paying jobs. The female-headed household in the black community became a permanent fixture. Thus the evolution of the welfare mother in the media. According to Hill Collins:

Typically portrayed as an unwed mother, she [welfare mother] violates one cardinal tenet of Eurocentric masculinist thought: she is a woman alone. As a result, her treatment reinforces the dominant gender ideology positing that a woman’s true worth and financial security should occur through heterosexual marriage. [...] Creating the controlling image of the welfare mother and stigmatizing her as the cause of her own poverty and that of African - American communities shifts the angle of vision away from structural sources of poverty and blames the victims themselves ... [and] provides ideological justification for the dominant group’s interest in limiting the fertility of Black mothers who are seen as producing too many economically unproductive children .

In the media, young black women were demonized for being poor *and* mothers, which was/is not supposed to happen concurrently. In addition, little media attention was given to

the legislation and re-structuring of the economy that was a major cause of this conditions. The road for “working” mothers was even difficult because of the dismantling of after school and childcare programs. This undoubtedly resulted in many black and brown children being left to fin for him or herself and without proper supervision or stimulation. Between 1979 and 1989, the number of children living in poverty increased by 2.2 million (Lipsitz).

Reaganomics resulted in the systematic use of highways and freeways to literally destroy once thriving communities as indicated by the demolition of the South Bronx; the loss of a solid financial base due to white flight and the demarcation of deteriorating tenements as “affordable” housing, colloquially known as “slums” or “projects.” Crack cocaine, gun violence, AIDS, and poverty became the order of the day. Young, black poor people were officially branded as unruly, unsalvageable, and unimportant. *And then there was Hip-Hop.*

Hip-Hop culture served as a space for exercising the fear, anger and feelings of despair by poor black and brown people who felt powerless. Rejected by dominant white society, they took the shards of their discarded lives and made magic, creating a folk culture of expression (Boyd). Old linoleum

and cardboard boxes became dance floors for break dancing. Spray cans served as paintbrushes for subway trains that served as living canvases that traveled into restricted neighborhoods. Hats were turned backwards; jeans pulled down at the waist, hair displaying designs, and gym shoes worn daily to navigate urban terrain in direct response to corporate America's uniform of conformity. Black tops became clubs with lampposts pulling double duty as light and power source while DJs perfected break beats, sampling, mixing, and scratching, in the development of the science of *turntablism* and the Master/Mistress of Ceremonies, also known as the MC, held court among the masses, delivering verbal poetics about politics, relationships, economics and most of all partying, despite the dire straits of the ghetto.

Hip-Hop culture served as a way of expressing opposition to dominant ideas about young, black and brown people. It was a subculture that used style as a form of refusal, elevated crime into art, and gave mundane objects symbolic dimensionality (Hebdige). Hip-Hop culture clashed against everyday society, challenging the norm, while satisfying prevailing thoughts about the underclass. Hebdige continues:

Style in subculture is, then, pregnant with significance. Its transformations go “against nature,” interrupting the process of ‘normalization.’ As such, they are gestures, movements towards a speech, which offends the ‘silent majority’, which challenges the principle of unity and cohesion, which contradicts the myth of consensus.

This myth of consensus is usurped by this very public representation of counter narratives and style that contradicts that of the silent majority. Hence Hip-Hop’s troublesome beginnings with the media began as a recycling of the images found in the news media. Hip-Hop culture was a fad that black and brown people with too much time on their hands created. Once they found something to do, they would stop killing each other, selling drugs, engaging in promiscuous practices, re-enroll in school, and the fad would disappear. Hip-Hop culture was only worth covering when the images satisfied dominant ideas about blackness like fights and shootings at concert venues.

The rise of Hip-Hop culture did not occur in a vacuum. It is actually in line with the arrival of a variety of expressive cultures by African-Americans that resulted from precarious socio-economic conditions. An example of this is the “Black is Beautiful,” movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. This movement was in direct response to a new assertive

political posturing and “new-style politics” that matched the polemical move from non-violent political ideology to a more aggressive ideology, transforming the social production of black popular and expressive cultures. According to S. Craig Watkins:

Disappointment with nonviolent protest strategies, the slow pace of racial change, and the deterioration of urban communities heavily populated by African Americans, and the re-popularization of Black Nationalism created a “black awakening.” [...] The emergence of a “radical” black protest movement, led by young and energetic blacks resulted in vigilant demands for a more aggressive political agenda and a rejection of integrationist politics of the past.

One of these expressive cultures is film, specifically the black film boom of the late 1960s and early 1970s, commonly known as the Blaxploitation era of filmmaking. The Blaxploitation genre emerged out of the rising political and social consciousness of black people exercising a Black Nationalist impulse at the end of the civil rights movement (Guerrero). Films like *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971), *Shaft* (1971) and *Superfly* (1973), reflected the social conditions of blacks in America at that time. This is important because the politics, style, and ideologies represented in

Blaxploitation texts are often replicated in Hip-Hop culture - a culture created by young, black and brown people in response to deplorable socio-economic and political conditions.

Hip-Hop culture arose from the streets of the ghetto and it is the street that has historically been the domain of patriarchy and men. However, contrary to public opinion, women have always been a part of Hip-Hop culture. Black women did not only inherit the political ideology and social conditions of the late 1960s and early 1970s, but they inherited the marginal status of women in America, and black women in the production of black popular culture. Like their blues counterparts and Black Nationalist sisters, women are given very little credit for contributing to Hip-Hop culture during its infancy in any meaningful way.

There is anger and protest in their prose but no longer does it reflect African American culture as such; instead it represents the individual who feeds on "the American dream." In addition, for the reader literature-fiction has become the experience; if peering through the eyes of the protagonist, one can choose confidently (with authentic motivation) between chitterlings and calamari.

The process of character formulation is symbolic, like the womb that nurtures the fetal genre where the act of memory construction takes place. Psychological impressions, stimulated by symbols cumulatively create mental simulations of a collective history, thus an evolving existential voice. The process of writing the past through the ideology of post-rebellion fiction encompasses the four categories mentioned in previous chapter: psychological, generational, economical, and geographical.

The ideological characteristics discussed primarily in this section again focus on the process. An individual's ideology traditionally reflects the social needs and aspirations of a group. It is a collection of beliefs and doctrines that form a system, which contributes in the development or manifestation of a generation's psychological state. One discernible attribute of the group, based on observation and texts is its narcissism and its perplexing devaluation of self. In *His Insignificant Other*, Karen V. Siplin depicts an African American adjunct professor struggling with the day to day. She writes: He sat next to me. "I'll make it up to you." He kissed the back of my neck, my weak spot. I felt a warm, fuzzy feeling inside of me that only girls in high school should feel. "Dinner..." "...bubble bath..." I added. He

kissed the back of my neck again. "...condoms. You and me." We laughed. I bet a million people, men and women included, are stayed by the words I'll make it up to you every day. I closed my eyes and let him kiss me. Here the protagonist has allowed her self-satisfied inclination to weigh her decision to let her fiancé's ex-girlfriend stay at her home per his request.

Our example illustrates *hyper-sexual* behavior and the imperative to gratify oneself even at the cost of one's own self worth. This action also reveals freedom, but only sexual freedom. Choices that reflect liberation find an aspect of their origin in sexuality, whether as conquest or conqueror. Some might argue that acquiescence in today's society is the trade-off.

This hyper-sexual behavior is further illustrated in works by Omar Tyree and E. Lynn Harris. Harris recites with bravado the "freedom" of bisexual and homosexuality, documenting the African Americans' new role in sexual choice. A quote from Harris's *Invisible Life*:

"What did you think I meant when I asked you if you were open -minded ? "

"I don 't know . I really didn 't think about it."

“You didn ’t?”

“No, I didn ’t. What did you mean ?”

“Well, I’m not sure the good people of Alabama are going to be able to deal with me.”

“Why?” I asked .

“Because I’m bisexual,” Kelvin said .

“You ’re what?” I asked, almost spitting out the beer I had just swallowed .

“Bisexual. I make it with guys and girls. Haven ’t you heard of it?”

“Yeah , sure, we had sissies at my high school.”

“Do I look like a sissy to you ?”

“No, of course not, but... ”

“But what?”

By this time I was getting nervous. Kelvin was standing very close to me , literally blocking my path to the living room and front door . Should I run or should I hit him ? I just stood there and continued to talk, trying to change the conversation . “You want to go grab a pizza? ”

“You ’re avoiding my question .”

“No, I’m not ... it’s just that ... ”

“It’s just what? ”

“Well, Kelvin , you ’re a good -looking guy. You could probably get any girl you want.”

“And I do.”

“Don ’t you like girls? ”

“I love women . Nobody eats trim better than me.”

“Trim ? ”

“Yeah , you know , pussy.”

“Oh . Then tell me, Kelvin , why in the fuck would you want to mess around with a man ?”

“Variety is the spice of life.”

“If you say so.”

“So, Ray, tell me. Have you ever made it with a guy?”

“Hell no!” I protested .

“Don ’t get bent out of shape, Raymond .”

The questions and the conversation were making me agitated . I wanted to appear more sophisticated . Maybe this was an East Coast thing. Did Kelvin guess about the one time I had experimented with my cousin Marcus, when we were both around nine years old ? We had really only compared the size of our growing peters. How could he possibly know that? I looked Kelvin straight in the eyes. “I’m not bent out of shape. That shit’s not my style.”

“Maybe you haven ’t run across the right man .”

Trying to avoid Kelvin 's eyes, I looked down at the gold shag carpet. When I decided to look up, I noticed Kelvin 's erection bulging through his jeans and became even more nervous. What had I gotten myself into? This guy was bigger than me. There was a brief, uncomfortable pause. The silence was as heavy as one of my grandma's home-made quilts.

"Well, man , we better head back toward campus," I said .

"Sure. Come here for a second —there's something in your hair."

Without thinking, I moved closer to Kelvin . With the palm of his hands, he softly rubbed my entire face . I quickly pulled back.

"What the fuck are you doing?" I shouted .

A slight smile flickered over his face and he said , "Your skin looked so smooth that I had to touch it."

I didn 't respond , silenced by his stare. His eyes were deep - set and defiant. Then he touched my nose and moved his fingers down to my lips. I don 't know why, but I didn 't stop him as he cupped my face and suddenly kissed my lips. I couldn 't believe it, but it felt so natural. It was the first time I had ever kissed a man . I had never felt a spasm of sexual attraction toward a man . Honest to God . But his kiss. I had never kissed anyone like this, not even Sela. Before I was conscious of it, I was kissing Kelvin back and putting my arms around his waist. His force left little room for hesitation or resistance. I felt his strong body press toward mine —and an erection in my Jockey underwear, just aching to come out. I finally managed to pull back when I realized my sex was now full and hard , pressing

against my navel. Kelvin looked down at me, gave a halfcocked grin and then pulled me toward him once again. This time there was no resistance.”

Harris further elaborates in his fiction in *Any Way the Wind Blows*, and other titles focusing on this newly commercial premise of sexual liberation of the African American community. Like *Invisible Life*, the protagonist, similar to the primary character from Siplin’s *His Insignificant Other*, trades something of himself to satisfy a desire. The Harris character betrays his commitment to his girlfriend for the sake of sexual experimentation; and Siplin’s character betrays herself in order not to be alone—both narcissistic and devaluating choices.

A FINAL LIBERTY

The analogous evolution of post-rebellion fiction :

...Envisage of parents moaning and cooing while footing around some plantation demeaning them - selves in a step -in -fetch -it slave rendering . The two visions turn to a small black-faced boy and push him out and off the plantation field and he kicks as he screams to stay. As he cries the blackface begins to run and soon it all washes away leaving him featureless. The boy walks blindly for a time; then bumping into the world or as Heidegger might say , "Experiencing Dasien " which means being -in -the-world , a nose pops forward then an eye and so on . The boy is learning , absorbing all that life offers until his face formed . Nevertheless, when he stood in front of the mirror he did not recognize himself.

A

African Americans have crossed the color barrier into every aspect of American culture, our culture. Still the

question remains one of identity though the slave has been freed, educated and in more cases than fewer, now economically competitive; who did the slave become? The Middle-Class. Frantz Fanon, calls the middle-class any society that becomes rigidified in predetermined forms, forbidding all evolution, all gains, all progress, all discovery, a closed society in which life has no taste, in which the air is tainted, in which ideas and men are corrupt. And a man who takes a stand against this death is in a sense a revolutionary. Cotton fields, lynching and an existence of servitude no longer prove to be the common life of the African American. This neo-African American is born with liberties that their predecessors were not afforded. The autonomy to speak, write and to create; realizing the past that connects our generation to a wealth of strength and perseverance but what of the future; what of the presence?

This genre comes from a psychology that is unhindered by the fear that one at any moment without due process may be beaten, sold or even murdered. However, this genre expresses the consistent anxiety, paranoia and struggle for an identity and way of expression.

A characteristic that differentiates this genre from other periods in African American history would be its detachment

from traditional icons and ideologies of African American culture. The progeny that perpetuates this characteristic does not exhibit the same rudiment in religious sacrament or a common commitment to ideals of equality. But our we chasing a ghost? The freedoms our predecessors fought, marched and struggled for are in reality non-existent only appearing to exist because of the selected few which are held up by society as examples of this achievement, while others continue to be excluded.

Further, a link between genre and group solidifies the expressive voice and its frame of reference. Technological interaction is fodder for the emerging group. A generation inundated with cable broadcasts computer generated imagery, commercials, and music videos permeating into the separateness of the individual; while at the same time defining not the individual but the group as a whole. Seeing ones presupposed self or commercially constructed image, through marketing and entertainment venues not only in the public sphere but also in ones home, interacting as center, a beacon for the family identification and socialization, television has coddled the voice and set up microphones to wire the cry for independence across the nation.

The American Scandal is not only a place of literary fiction swell in its magnificent emptiness it is by commercial necessity fonder for the masses and an economic dream for capitalist invested in entertainment. Causation: We seek to escape our reality because much like are white counter parts we are now bored with our existence, wavering without a grasp on history and no interest in the future because it is too far away. It is the present that we must contend with and its existential promise and it is narrative truth is overwhelming; we escape as we did before (slavery, prejudice etc...) but this time there is no moral resolve, just escape. We have come to a state in our journey that has been generally mentioned but shown as a discovery nonetheless, a question of identity. African Americans have become, if not always in this country a paradoxical species, an amalgamation, a substantive fabric of American culture from music to the type of clothing one wears. African American culture leads the proclamation most bellowed by popular culture with its entire multi-facade world within worlds. It, being a subculture and yet popular culture thus making it a mainstream culture, establishes the paradox, something being less than and greater than all at once.

The last act of an autonomous subculture, embedded within a political, socioeconomic construct is to choose to

subordinate its very being to the empowered construct or remain as a rock which erodes with time, consequently ending in extinction. However, African American culture is devouring the construct from the inside out. Though Black is defined as such in the list below the definition itself is the definitiveness of Being Black's liberty, it is flux, it is variation moving beyond category or list.

blackAer, blackAest (American heritage Dictionary)

- 1 . *Color*. Being of the color black, producing or reflecting comparatively little light and having no predominant hue.
- 2 . Having little or no light: *a black, moonless night*.
- 3 . Often Black (blàk). a. Of, relating to, or belonging to a racial group having brown to black skin , especially one of African origin : *the Black population of South Africa* . b . Of, relating to, or belonging to an American ethnic group descended from African peoples having dark skin ; African American ; Afro -American : “*When the history books are written in future generations, the historians will ... say, ‘There lived a great people—a black people—who injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization ’*” (Martin Luther King, Jr.). “*Despite the exposure, being young , gifted and Black in the corridors of power has its trying moments.*” (Ebony).
- 4 . Very dark in color: *rich black soil; black, wavy hair*.

- 5 . Soiled , as from soot; dirty: *feet black from playing outdoors.*
- 6 . Evil; wicked : *the pirates' black deeds.*
- 7 . Cheerless and depressing; gloomy: *black thoughts.*
- 8 . Marked by anger or sullenness: *gave me a black look.*
- 9 . Often Black (blàk). Attended with disaster; calamitous: *the stock market crash on Black Friday.*
- 10 . Deserving of, indicating, or incurring censure or dishonor: "*Man . . . has written one of his blackest records as a destroyer on the oceanic islands*" (Rachel Carson).
- 11 . Wearing clothing of the darkest visual hue: *the black knight.*
- 12 . Served without milk or cream : *black coffee.*
- 13 . Appearing to emanate from a source other than the actual point of origin . Used chiefly of intelligence operations: *black propaganda ; black radio transmissions.*
- 14 . Disclosed , for reasons of security, only to an extremely limited number of authorized persons; very highly classified : *black programs in the Defense Department; the Pentagon 's black budget.*
- 15 . *Chiefly British* . Boycotted as part of a labor union action .

—*noun*

1. *Color*. a. The achromatic color value of minimum lightness or maximum darkness; the color of objects that absorb nearly all light of all visible wavelengths; one extreme of the neutral gray series, the opposite being white. Although strictly a response to zero stimulation of the retina, the perception of black appears to depend on contrast with surrounding color stimuli. b. A pigment or dye having this color value.
2. Complete or almost complete absence of light; darkness.
3. Clothing of the darkest hue, especially such clothing worn for mourning.
4. Often Black (blàk). a. A member of a racial group having brown to black skin, especially one of African origin. b. An American descended from peoples of African origin having brown to black skin; an African American; an Afro-American: "*Many blacks and Hispanics cannot borrow money from banks on subjective grounds*" (Jesse Jackson).
5. Something that is colored black.
6. *Games*. a. The black-colored pieces, as in chess or checkers. b. The player using these pieces.

verb, transitive

blackened, blackening, blacks

1. To make black: *blackened their faces with charcoal*.
2. To apply blacking to: *blackened the stove*.

- 3 . *Chiefly British* . To boycott as part of a labor union action .

verb , intransitive

To become black.

— *phrasal verb* .

black out

- 1 . a . To lose consciousness or memory temporarily: *blacked out at the podium* . b . To suppress (a fact or memory, for example) from conscious recognition : *blacked out many of my wartime experiences* .
- 2 . To prohibit the dissemination of, especially by censorship : *blacked out the news issuing from the rebel provinces* .
- 3 . To extinguish or conceal all lights that might help enemy aircraft find a target during an air raid .
- 4 . To extinguish all the lights on (a stage) .
- 5 . To cause a failure of electrical power in : *Storm damage blacked out much of the region* .
- 6 . a . To withhold (a televised event or program) from a broadcast area: *blacked out the football game on local stations* . b . To withhold a televised event or program from : *will black out the entire state to increase ticket sales for the game* .

— *idiom* .

in the black

On the credit side of a ledger; prosperous.

[Middle English *blak*, from Old English *blæc*.]

— black'ish *adjective*

— black'ly *adverb*

— black'ness *noun*

Black is often capitalized in its use to denote persons, though the lowercased form *black* is still widely used by authors of all races: “*Together, blacks and whites can move our country beyond racism*” (Whitney Moore Young, Jr.). Use of the capitalized form has the advantage of acknowledging the parallel with other ethnic groups and nationalities, such as *Italian* and *Sioux*. It can be argued that *black* is different from these other terms because it was derived from an adjective rather than from a proper name. However, a precedent exists for the capitalization of adjectives used to denote specific groups, as in the *Reds* and the *Whites* (of the Russian Civil War) or the *Greens* (the European political party). The capitalization of *Black* does raise ancillary problems for the treatment of the term *white*. Orthographic evenhandedness would seem to require the use of the upper-case form *White*, but this form might be taken to imply that

whites constitute a single ethnic group, an issue that is certainly debatable. On the other hand, the use of the lowercase form *white* in the same context as the uppercase form *Black* will obviously raise questions as to how and why the writer has distinguished between the two groups. There is no entirely happy solution to this problem. In all likelihood, uncertainty as to the mode of styling of *white* has dissuaded many publications from adopting the capitalized form *Black*.

Black Power represented both a conclusion to the decade's civil rights movement and a reaction against persistent racism. To some, Black Power represented blacks' insistence on racial dignity and self-reliance. These themes had been advanced by black Muslim leader Malcolm X, who argued that blacks should focus on improving their own communities, rather than striving for integration. Other interpreters of Black Power emphasized black cultural heritage, especially the African roots of black identity.

This view encouraged study and celebration of black history and culture, and was often expressed by the wearing of African dress. Still another view of Black Power called for a revolutionary political struggle to reject racism and imperialism throughout the world. Revolutionary nationalists such as Stokely Carmichael first advocated a worldwide Marxist

revolution, but later emphasized Pan-Africanism, the unity of all people of African origins.

Black Power as a political idea originated in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) during the mid-1960s, when many SNCC workers came to believe that further progress depended on independent black political power. Widespread use of the term *Black Power* began in 1966 during a march through Mississippi, when SNCC activists asked marchers, "What do you want?" and led the response, "Black Power!" The national media began to report on Black Power, and the movement drew condemnation from many whites. Leaders of several black organizations also denounced Black Power. Opposition became stronger in 1968, when the Black Panther Party became the most prominent organization advocating Black Power. Although the Black Power movement largely disappeared after 1970, the idea remained a powerful one in the consciousness of black Americans. White and black Americans have a dichotomous relationship yet they are bound historical genealogy. America is likened to a man tearing at his own flesh, where in the presence of the world he speaks of liberty and in the quiet of his home he weeps and sings a negro spiritual.

Now language and its fledgling literature—now, rhetorical lyrics coughed up by the analogous man, America speaking with symbolic gesture and in his black speak or best ghettoease he whispers sweet nothings in his own ear.

It was not long after sitting down to write this before the query, what is it that should be said, rushed its way to the front of my mind. I am black: I am the incarnation of a complete fusion with the world, an intuitive understanding of the earth, an abandonment of my ego in the heart of the cosmos, and no white man, no matter how intelligent he may be, can ever understand Louis Armstrong and the music of the Congo. Further, I ascribe a basic importance to the phenomenon of language... To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization.

APPENDIX

- Chapter 1: Post Rebellion Fiction: Literature/Fiction after the African American civil rights era.
- Writing in the aftermath of the struggle for freedom.
- Chapter 2: African Americans the product and progeny of the American construct becoming the only true indigenous American.
- Identity and text cannot be separate.
- Chapter 3: The (Black) African American is the shame of America though the country uses their intellect and strength as a vehicle to its own sovereignty.
- Chapter 4: Defining speaking before writing, how isolation creates communication of necessity.
- Chapter 5: We are free but yet are definitive nature still must rely on social definitions.

NOTES

- 1 . Literature. Prentice-Hall p . 2 5 1
- 2 . Free Will. Blackburn . *Think* p. 1 1 7
- 3 . Heimweh. A poem by D .H . Lawrence (1 8 8 5 -1 9 3 0) New Poems. London , Martin Secker 1 9 1 9 . “Far-off the lily-statues stand white-ranked garden at home. Would God they were shattered quickly, the cattle would tread them out in the loam . I wish the elder trees in flower could suddenly heave, and burst. The walls of the house, and nettles puff out from the hearth at which I was nursed . It stands so still in the hush composed of the trees and inviolate peace, the home of my fathers, the place that is mine, my fate and my old increase. And now that the skies are falling, the world is spouting in fountains of dirt, I would give my soul for the homestead to fall with me, go with me, both in one hurt.”
- 4 . While traveling in Europe and in the South Pacific I identified myself as African American, until I was asked what tribe in Africa do I find my origins?
- 5 . *The Fire Nest Time*, by James Baldwin , a book length commentary on racial discrimination in the early 1 9 6 0 's.
- 6 . *The black public sphere*: a public culture book, edited by the black public sphere collective for black literature and

culture. The book is seen as both a question and an answer; it questions because it is unclear whether critical public spheres—and none are more critical than the black public sphere—can survive the contemporary political onslaught on compassion and public criticism in the United States. But it is also an answer, insofar as it occurs in a transnational context, in which violent birth and diasporic conditions of life provide a counter-narrative to the exclusionary national narrative of Europe, the US, the Caribbean, and Africa. Thus the black public sphere is one critical space where new democratic forms and emergent diasporic movements can enrich and question each other.

Chapter 3

1. Isaac Newton, “Time is the purely formal soul of nature,” from Hegel’s *Introduction of the Philosophy of Nature*.
2. *Dasien*, Being-in-the-world, a term from Martin Heidegger’s *Being in Time*.
3. To exist, existant.
4. American Scandal, the over dramatization, melodrama of American life; not stating the truth regarding American culture by exaggerating and distorting its minority or subculture ideologies.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrews, William, Francis Smith Foster, and Trudien Harris. *The Oxford Companion to African American Literature*. Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Arieli, Y. *Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.

Arthur, J., and A. Shapiro. *Campus Wars: Multiculturalism and the Politics of Difference*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1995.

Baginski, M.E., L.C. Hale, and J.J. Olivero. "Lightning-Related Fields in the Ionosphere." *Geophysical Research Letters* 15.8 (1988): 764.

Baker, Jr., Houston A. *Blues, Ideology and Afro-American Literature. A Vernacular Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

———. "Generational Shifts and the Recent Criticism of Afro-American Literature." *Journal of Black Studies* (1998): 20.

Baker, V.R. "Geological Fluvial Geomorphology." *Geological Society of America Bulletin* 100.8 (1988): 1157.

Bakish, David, and Edward Margolies. *Afro-American Fiction 1853-1976. A Guide to Information Sources*. Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1976.

Baraka, Amiri. *The LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka*. New York: Thunder Mouth Press, 1991.

Baughman, Judith S., and Mathew J. Bruccoli. *Modern African American Writers*. Ed. Kenneth Kinnamon. New York: Manly, Inc. and Facts On File, Inc., 1994.

Bell, Derek. *Faces at Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*. New York: Basic Books, 1992.

Serie Ii Mecanique Physique Chimie Sciences De L Univers Sciences De La Terre. Paris, 1998. 124-40. Vol. 89.

Blackburn, Simon. *Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy*. Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Bodnar, J. *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the 20th Century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Bone, Robert. *The Negro Novel in America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971.

Boyd, Todd. *The New H.N.I.C.: Death of Civil Rights and the Rise of Hip Hop*. New York: New York University Press, 2004.

Boussedra, Raja. *Interview with Toni Morrison*. Tunis: American Center For Women's Studies, 2004.

Brown, Davis, and Lee. "The American Negro Writer and His Roots, Selected Papers from the First Conference of Negro Writers." *American Society of African Culture* (1960): 39-40.

Buchanan, James, "Post-Rebellion Fiction." Akron, OH, 2001.

Burstein, P. "Public Opinion, Demonstrations, and the Passage of Anti-Discrimination Legislation." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 43 (1979): 157-73.

Butcher, Philip. *The Ethnic Image in Modern American Literature*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Washington DC: Howard University Press, 1984.

Button, J.W. *Blacks and Social Change: Impact of Civil Rights Movement in Southern Communities*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Carr, E. H. *What Is History?* England: Penguin, 1961.

Cartwright, W. H., and R.L. Watson, Jr. *Interpreting and Teaching American History*. 1961.

Cleaver, Eldridge. *Soul on Ice*. New York: Dell, 1999.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist: Thought, Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Combs, M.W. "The Supreme Court and African Americans: Personnel and Policy Transformations." *Howard Law Journal* 36 (1993): 139-84.

Cooke, Michael. *Afro-American Literature in the 20th Century*. London: Yale University Press, 1984.

Coombs, Ordes. *What We Must See*. Young Black Storytellers. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1971.

Cooper, California J. *Homemade Love*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1986.

Camus, Albert. *The Stranger*. New York: Vintage Books, 1954.

Dexter Fisher, and Robert B. Stepto. *Afro-American Literature: The Reconstruction of Instruction*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1979.

Ellis, Trey. *Home Repairs*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1993.

Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. New York: Vintage Books, 1972.

———. *Shadow and Act*. New York: Random House, 1964.

———. *Juneteenth*. New York: Random House, 1999.

Feuer, Lewis S. *Ideology and Ideologists*. Oxford: Basil and Blackwell, 1975.

Fitch, Guy. "The Negro Soul." *Crisis* (1925): 84.

Foner, E. "The Blacks and the Constitution." *New Left Review* 183 (1990): 63-75.

Frazier, E. Franklin. "The Black Middle Class." *Ebony* 1973.

Fuchs, L.H. *The American Kaleidoscope: Race, Ethnicity, and Civic Culture*. London: Wesleyan University Press, 1990.

Gaines, Ernest J. *A Lesson Before Dying*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Gaines, Kevin. *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

Gayle, Addison. *The Black Aesthetic*. New York: Doubleday, 1971.

Grofman, B., C. Grofman, and D. Grofman. *Quiet Revolution in the South: The Impact of the Voting Rights Act 1965-1990*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.

The Harlem Renaissance: A Historical Dictionary for the Era. Ed. Bruce Kellner. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984.

Hebdige, Dick. *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things*. New York: Routledge, 1989.

Henderson, Stephen. "Saturation: Progress Report on a Theory of Black." *Black World* 24 (1975): 14.

Hogue, W. Lawrence. *Race, Modernity, Postmodernity. A Look at the History and the Literatures of the People of Color since the 1960's*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1996.

Hornsby, A. Jr. *Chronology of African American History*. Detroit: Gale Research, Inc., 1991.

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1990.

Jaynes, G., Williams, R.M. *A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society*. Washington, DC.: National Academy Press, 1989.

Johnson, Charles Bertram. *Negro Poets*. The Book of American Negro Poetry. New York: Harcourt, 1992.

Kelley, Robin. *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional*. New York: Beacon Press, 1997.

Kennedy, Ellen Conroy. *The Negritude Poets*. Ed. Kennedy, E. C. New York: Thunder Mouth Press, 1975.

Kook, Rebecca. "The Shifting Status of African American in the American Collective Identity." *Journal of Black Studies* (1998): 154-70.

Landy, Bart. *The New Black Middle Class*. Berkeley: University California Press, 1987.

Lipsitz, George. *Whitewashing Race: The Myth of a Color Blind Society*. New York: Zone Books, 2003.

Martin, B. L. "From Negro to Black to African American: The Power of Names and Naming." *Political Quarterly* 106 (1991): 83-107.

Mayer, J. P. *Prophet of the Mass Age: A Study of Alexis De Tocqueville*. New York: Arno Press, 1979.

McMillan, Terry. *Breaking Ice. An Anthology of Contemporary Africa American Fiction*. Ed. Terry McMillan. New York: Viking, Penguin Group, 1990.

McWhorter, John. *Authentically Black: Essays from the Black Silent Majority*. New York: Gotham Books, 2003.

Myrdal, G. *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and American Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row, 1994.

The New Negro: An Interpretation. Ed. Alain Locke. New York: Athenaeum, 1968.

The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction. Ed. R.V. Cassill. New York: W. W. Norton, 1990.

Pate, Alexs. *Africa-American Literary Criticism 1773-2000. Making Home in the New Millennium, Reflections*. Ed. Arnett Hazel Ervin. New York: Twanye Publishing, 1999.

Qualls, Loren L. *Numbers in Ink*. 2000. 1 ed. Boston: Author Choice iUniverse, 2000.

Rachel, James. *Moral Problems*. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

- Rico, Roche Barbara, and Sandra Mano. *American Mosaic: Multicultural Readings in Context*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.
- Russel, D. A. *The Enigma of the Extinction of the Dinosaurs*. Berkeley, CA. 1979
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Nausea*. New York: New Direction Books, 1959.
- Singleton, Gregory Holmes. "Birth, Rebirth, and the 'New Negro' of the 1920's". *Phylon*.43 (1982): 29-45.
- Stavney, Anne. "Mother's of Tomorrow": The New Negro Renaissance and the Politics of Maternal Representation." *African American Review* 32.4 (1998): 533-60.
- Stern, M. *Calculating Visions: Kennedy, Johnson and Civil Rights*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992.
- Taylor, C. *The Politics of Recognition*. Campus Wars: Multiculturalism and the Politics of Difference. Eds. J. Arthur and A. Shapiro. Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1995.
- Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. New York: Vanguard Press, 1928.

Voltaire. *Candide*. New York: Dover Publications, 1991.

Watkins, Craig. *Representing: Hip Hop Culture and the Production of Black Cinema*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1995.

Wilson, William Julius. *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1978.

Wright, Richard. "The Man Who Was Almost A Man". *Eight Men*. New York: World Publishing, 1961.

About the Author

Loren L. Qualls is the recipient of the Case Western Reserve Writing Award, the Editor's Choice Award, a Knight Mellon Fellow, Salzburg Seminar Fellow, New York University Scholar-in-Residence, a recipient of University of Paris Pantheon-I, Sorbonne Philosophy Program scholar and University of Amsterdam, Theory Seminar Fellow.

He has lectured at the University of Akron, University of North Carolina, National University of Samoa and University of Carthage, Tunis, Tunisia, North Africa and is the author of *Numbers in Ink*, *Immolation*, *Chasing Magdalene* and *Fallen Trees*. He resides in Merced California where he teaches at the University of California.