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A FEMINIST STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ART IN NEW ORLEANS: 
CONSIDERATIONS OF 
AESTHETICS, ART HISTORY AND ART CRITICISM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the 
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by

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ABSTRACT

How students are taught to think about what is considered "art" and who are "artists" contributes to their sense of self within the world. It can confine them to accept a system that devalues and excludes or it can inspire them to explore the political dimensions of art, to recognize social contradictions, and to contribute to cultural dialogue. The purpose of this study is to provide content for an art curriculum that develops the intellectual capabilities and broadens the critical consciousness of students.

The study of aesthetics, art history, and art criticism offer possibilities for understanding the multiple social, historical, and cultural meanings of art. This dissertation adopts feminist approaches to the study of art as a means of exploring how the social reality of racial designation influences African American artistic production and meaning. Consideration is given to the cultural values that have influenced the meaning of African American art, a regional history of African American cultural production in New Orleans, Louisiana, and the experiences and artistic production of several regional African American artists.

Throughout history, African American aesthetic values have been inseparable from ideological struggles for assimilation and self-determination. In 19th-century New Orleans, the work of slave and free Black artisans and free artists of color met the needs of a society that had developed a distinct Creole identity. Racial barriers limited the artistic productivity of all African Americans including the fine artists who were considered a third racial caste, had white patrons, and sometimes were trained in
Paris. Following Reconstruction, legal restrictions and racial violence severely limited artistic opportunities for African Americans in New Orleans. Contemporary artists still face barriers as race relations change in the city. Interviews with five Black artists revealed the importance they attribute to transmitting African American cultural values to young people and the function of art as a means of responding to the social stereotypes that devalue African American people and culture. Conclusions of this study indicate that issues of racial identity and African American cultural values should be included in the art curriculum.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

Multicultural issues have been of great concern in education since the Civil Rights Movement when African Americans struggled to gain equal social and political rights. An important element of equal educational opportunity has been the restructuring of school knowledge (McCarthy, 1990) to include African Americans in the total picture of American history. Not only has the American master narrative been premised mainly on White male accomplishments; but the very structure of knowledge privileges White, middle class, and male ways of thinking based on dominant social positions. The study of art, too, has meant the study of European and European American cultural traditions and high art, while other art and artists have largely been ignored.

Social Structure

Parallel social positions of gender and race. The patriarchal structure of the dominant American ideology ensures that both women and nonwhite Americans are relegated to inferior positions in society, and that their ways of life, cultural heritage, and even lives have less value. Racist beliefs have affected the experiences and life chances of African Americans in ways that are similar to, yet qualitatively different from, women's experiences with gender oppression. For example, the subordinate positions of women and African Americans has been considered natural with reference to biological differences that infer their inferior intelligence (Brittan & Maynard,
The unequal power distribution that results from this "natural" perspective means that these groups of people are exploited for the benefit of others. Men benefit from women's sexual availability, unpaid domestic labor and poor pay in traditional female jobs; Whites benefit from the poorly paid unskilled labor of Blacks. The sexual and racial divisions of labor contribute to social class differences that limit material and educational opportunities.

In further parallel positions in society, Blacks and women have both been restricted spatially—women relegated to the home, the bedroom, or the kitchen; African Americans restricted by segregated housing. Oppression against women often takes place in the intimacy of the home, while racism can be present in the most mundane and personal social circumstances (Brittan & Maynard, 1984). Due to their subordinate positions in society, violence and hate crimes are an ever-present threat for both women and African Americans. Women are at a disadvantage with men, often in their own families, who can use violence or intimidation to demonstrate domination. Crimes against Blacks may be perpetuated by extreme hate groups and even by society's assumed protectors, the police. Just as the lives of women and of Black Americans are circumscribed by spatial boundaries and the threat of violence, so too, their ways of knowing the world and artistic production are devalued.

**Feminist studies of gender oppression.** Feminist studies grew out of the Women's Movement and the methods of examining women's experiences to develop theories about the political nature of social institutions. It is at this personal level that domination has its deepest ideological and material consequences (Brittan & Maynard,
This is not to say that social analysis is not necessary, since it is within a social context that the opposition of genders is constructed (Hein, 1995). However, just as there is no universal White male perspective, there is no universal woman's perspective and no universal African American perspective. Feminist analyses of society are therefore relative to the situations where lives are lived and where people respond to various forms of oppression.

African American women, for example, are the subject of simultaneous but not parallel oppressions of gender, race, and class (McCarthy, 1990). They are often confined to the most menial jobs and are more likely to be considered sexually available (Whatley, 1993). Ideology is played out in personal experiences and interactions between people so that a Black woman who works as a domestic servant in a White household may not only be subject to the exploitation of her employer, but also subject to discrimination in housing, the necessity of leaving her children uncared for, and to the sexism of both White and Black males (Brittan & Maynard, 1984). The strength of feminist theory is that it makes these experiences of oppression visible. Personal experiences then become ways of understanding the structural nature of gender and racial oppression in society.

Similar to the ways that gender assumptions and myths shape the experiences of women, confrontations with racism shape the fabric of everyday existence for African Americans. Therefore, feminist methods of understanding structural inequalities through personal experience can also form the basis for a study of African American art.
Structure of Curriculum

Because of the conservative nature of elementary and secondary education, the subject matter of curricula has its roots in the American myth of European and European American superiority. As a result, most of what African American students are required to learn is exclusive, based on White middle-class cultural values, not related to their lives and experiences, and even demeaning. The study of art can also seem distant from the lives of African American students because of the perception that it is a study of White artists. Even when African American artists are included in the curriculum they are usually taught in the current structure which accords primacy to "great" fine artists. For example, Romare Bearden and Jean-Michel Basquiat are included in Hoffman's (1991) contemporary art text, yet there are many African American visionaries who have contributed to American culture who are not included in the history of art. Until recent work by feminist scholars, women have also generally been ignored in the study of art.

Feminism and art. With the Women's Movement, feminist artists, art historians and critics began to challenge the very structure of the academic art disciplines that exclude women. Feminist art historians began their study of women and art by locating missing women artists. This led to questioning the hierarchical structure of "great artists," "fine art" and male standards of greatness. Historically women have produced art that was attributed to male artists. Women were also not allowed similar training in fine arts as men, although a few of them were well known in their time. Most of the accomplishments of these women were not acknowledged in 20th century
art history texts until the feminist movement in the 1970s. In the second phase of scholarship feminists realized that it was necessary to restructure the study of art history to include social contexts that explain women's lives and the kinds of art they made (Gouma-Peterson & Mathews, 1987). Traditionally women are expected to remain in the home taking care of husband and children or to pose for and do the housework for "great" male artists. Domestic forms of art have been considered women's work and have been unappreciated as art.

In a third phase of scholarship feminists began to consider ways in which art contributes to the social construction of feminine gender. Taken-for-granted ideas about women are imbedded in the historic images of women as sexually available objects in works of art. Social assumptions that women are not capable of being artists contribute to the perception that art made by women cannot be great art. Awareness of what seems like natural gender relations, through the study of women's art and women's images in art, has contributed to ways of understanding power relationships in society and in the art world. Feminists have argued that all art and ways of thinking about art reflect a gendered position (Wolff, 1990). Men are expected to be the makers, the viewers and the patrons of art. This means that the forms that artistic expression takes, what is expressed in works of art, what is included in art history, and the standards applied to works of art reflect men's experiences.

The study of women and art by feminists provides a basis for restructuring the art world processes that limit the inclusion of African Americans in the study of art history, art criticism, and aesthetics. Because of similar, yet qualitatively different
experiences with oppression, the inclusion of African American art in the curriculum presents many of the same difficulties feminist art historians have faced in trying to reconstruct women’s roles in art production. Just as much women’s art was anonymous, slave art was also unsigned and considered the expected labor of artisans i.e. blacksmiths, seamstresses, or carpenters. Like women’s traditional arts, African American crafts and folk art traditions have been categorized as lesser arts. Artistic training was available to few African Americans prior to the 20th century, yet some produced fine art, and were well known. During the 1920s Black artists were part of a movement known as the Negro Renaissance that expressed racial self-consciousness. These artists are usually not included in the mainstream study of art history.

Gender bias limits women’s artistic opportunities and dominant racial ideologies determine the social perception that African Americans are incapable of great art. Black art is often expected to be exotic, or primitive (Jacobs, 1985), or is relegated to the lesser categories of craft or folk art (Metcalf, 1985). In addition, African American people have often been depicted as servile, exotic or primitive by White artists (McElroy, 1990).

Feminists argue that all art reflects a gendered political position. It may also be argued that all American art also reflects a racial social structure. Makers, viewers, and patrons of art are expected to be White as well as male. Male-female and White-Black are constructed social roles reflecting institutional power relationships that are played out in personal experiences; and these social positions influence art production
and scholarship. Therefore, feminist approaches to the study of art through women’s experiences with oppression are appropriate for the study of African American art.

**Feminist possibilities for art curriculum.** Zimmerman (1990) has called for a curriculum approach, based on a feminist point of view, that incorporates the meaning of artworks within a specific culture and time. A feminist approach to curriculum would then consist of content that is regional in order to understand ways of knowing the world and producing art that is socially, historically, and geographically relative. It would no longer be based on a canon of artists and forms of art that imply a hierarchy of people and cultures; instead, it would encourage a more democratic perspective of artistic production. A curriculum specific to a particular group, such as the African American community in New Orleans, allows for the inclusion of personal experiences and regional viewpoints and values. The many voices within the community provide opportunities for shared connections to groups of students in different communities who may have similar experiences.

A regional study can provide insights that have broad connotations for many students. African Americans are one of many groups of people who have struggled for just laws, self-determination, and equal educational opportunities. Historian Darlene Clark Hime (1992) calls for the successes, failures, and inspiration of the African American experience to be a focal point for viewing the human experience. Currently there is no art curriculum that is specific to the social-historical context, experiences, and values of an African American community and its various artists and artworks. Researchers have studied art in New Orleans (Holditch, 1982; Thompson,
and African American art in Louisiana (Proctor, 1989), but little has been written about African American art in New Orleans.

**Need**

Black students have a particular need to see the world view, struggles, achievements, and insights of African American people in the curriculum. Today's educational problems intensify this need for a more relevant curriculum. The African American dropout rate is close to 50% nationally in urban schools (Lomotey, 1990). In addition, the social problems of poverty and unemployment are escalating. Sleeter and Grant (1988) report that in 1987, 45% of Black children were living below the poverty level. In daily experiences such as overcrowded living conditions, commercialism based on standards of White beauty, and neglected neighborhoods and school buildings, many African American students know the American racial system (Nightingale, 1993). Education has been perceived as the way out of poverty by many Black parents. Yet education that is premised on middle-class White values, that reinforces social perceptions of Black inferiority, and that presupposes subordinate roles in society is failing. African American values and experiences need to be incorporated into the curriculum in order to facilitate learning for African American students because "students do better academically when they see themselves in the curriculum" (Lomotey, 1990, p.6).

The study of African American art can present an occasion for students to recognize their experiences and culture in the curriculum. Additionally, often much of the curricula for inner-city schools stress learning facts and basic skills while
excluding cognitive development. An art curriculum grounded in the disciplines of aesthetics, art history, art criticism, and art production, or discipline-based art education (DBAE), can help meet the intellectual needs of African American students. Then, "as students develop confidence and succeed academically, they are better able to recognize their ability to influence economic, political, and social institutions" (Stuhr, Petrovich-Mwaniki, & Wasson, 1992, p. 17).

DBAE is premised on improving higher order thinking through language, as well as through visual and art-making activities (Eisner, 1981). The development of knowledge about art in the disciplines presents students with choices that require taking risks and developing interests through research, visual imagination, visual approaches to problem solving, and the manipulation of ideas and materials (Hamblen, 1993). The ideas, values, and artistic conventions of societies that produced art objects can be examined in the study of art history (Hamblen, 1993). The meaning of specific works of art as personal expressions influenced by social ideologies and interpreted from viewers’ places in history can be considered in art criticism. Students may learn to respect various opinions as they debate the nature of art and how it is interpreted and evaluated depending on social and cultural values. The production of, response to, and analysis of art all require active student involvement in the learning process (Hamblen, 1993). The approach to learning provided by the study of art that requires students to choose, to make mistakes, and to think for themselves about their concerns and those of society fosters a level of self-discipline, interest in learning, and
academic skills that may transfer to learning in other subject areas and provide an
intellectual basis for critical thinking about social issues.

Although DBAE provides important possibilities for improved student
achievement, it is often not relevant to experiences and needs of African American
students because of its emphasis on the canon of fine art and great artists and
Eurocentric and masculine values. African American students should see something of
themselves through the work of African American artists and art critics in these
disciplines. Merely including African American artists within the Western fine art
structure, however, leaves out many factors influencing the lives of African Americans
and how these factors have shaped their art making. A relevant study of African
American art must honor the subjectivity and intellectual concerns of African
American people who make and think about art. African American concerns with
systems of social exclusion and domination based on racial status, and their actions as
agents of change should be part of the art curriculum.

Feminist scholars have "not only challenged the canon of each of the academic
areas of art individually, but also the picture they collectively paint of
accomplishment, scholarship, and knowledge in the visual arts" (Hagaman, 1990, p.
28). These patterns of inquiry into the disciplines form a way of thinking about art
that can be applied to groups of people whose art work has been traditionally excluded
from serious scholarship--such as Black artists, whose art has been perceived as
inferior to the study of European and European American art. It is proposed that an
art curriculum based on a regional study of African American art and artists premised

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on feminist approaches to the disciplines of art history, art criticism, and aesthetics, can facilitate learning for African American students. Therefore, feminist studies of African American art need to be conducted to develop curriculum content.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to provide content in the areas of art history, art criticism, and aesthetics for a DBAE curriculum that will accommodate the needs of African American students. Feminist theories about the political nature of art form the foundation for this study of how race affects the production of art. Rather than placing African American art within the present structure of the art disciplines which are based on universal ways of understanding art that are presumed race neutral, this study considers African American art from a racial social position relative to value systems that give meaning to art, to the socio-historic development of art in a geographic region, and to the experiences of artists in that region.

In order to develop curriculum content around issues of the way nonwhite social position affects artistic production, this study examines how feminist art scholars have theorized about the way gendered power relations influence women as makers of art. A feminist perspective on artistic production is achieved by (a) a study of African American values and beliefs that have influenced how art is understood, (b) a regional socio-historical study of the way race has influenced African American artistic production in New Orleans, Louisiana, and (c) social and artistic experiences and values that have influenced the lives and the meaning of art of several contemporary artists in New Orleans. The curriculum content from this study is
relative to the racial issues that African American students face in their daily lives and can meet their need for an art education curriculum that provides opportunities to develop their intellectual abilities and critical consciousness.

**Limitations**

This study is based on my concern for the achievement of African American students; however, the study of African American art and artists should not be limited to Black students. White students also need to examine the socially contrived position of race and how it has structured African American lives, ways of understanding the world, and artistic production. The ways patriarchy structures social institutions, however, does not mean that African Americans should be understood as victims of racism. The African American heritage of values and beliefs as well as taste and cultural production can be understood by all students as a means of resisting the dominant racial ideology and refashioning social position. The study of art can then provide a way to break down racial barriers.

This study is also limited to developing content on the subject of African American art for a DBAE curriculum specifically for African American students. However, these students should not be denied exposure to all forms of art. My concerns are that (a) when art is presently taught European and European American art is stressed to the exclusion of African American art; and (b) when some African American artists are included they are added to the present hierarchy of great artists. By focusing on race as an issue that defines social position and that influences the way art is understood, the social context circumscribing the production of art, and the
meaning artists attempt to communicate, African American students may be able to understand something of themselves in the art curriculum.

**Significance**

This work contributes to an understanding of the plural nature of attributing meaning to works of art based on the social position and cultural values of African American makers and viewers of art. This broader investigation of art focuses on: (a) African American social and aesthetic values as indicated in the writings of political and cultural leaders, (b) the historic relationship between social ideology and economic and political institutions in New Orleans and the production of African American art, and (c) the interpretation of the art of five contemporary African American artists in New Orleans.

This study is intended to provide the content for a DBAE curriculum based on aesthetic issues that are relevant to the lived worlds of African American students. A DBAE curriculum model is important for minority students in several ways. First, the emphasis on academic learning can be the reason for including art in the curriculum of schools where it has usually been cut as a "frill." Second, the focus on the subjects of art history, aesthetics, art criticism, and art production provides possibilities for accessing the varied meanings of art in various cultural and social settings as opposed to curriculum based solely on studio production. Third, DBAE offers possibilities for the cognitive development of students who are usually considered less than intellectually capable. Fourth, students can recognize social contradictions through the exploration of the political dimensions of art and can be inspired to contribute to the
cultural dialogue that often excludes them. An art curriculum that is based on issues and problems that are relevant to students' lives can help them become active decision makers who critically confront social inequality.

Definitions

**Discipline-based Art Education:**

The study of art in the curricular format of the disciplines of art history, art criticism, aesthetics, and art production. DBAE involves reading, talking, writing about and making art and is premised on higher order thinking and student academic success.

**Higher Order Thinking:**

According to Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive skills (Bloom, 1956), knowledge, comprehension, and application are lower levels of thinking which are a necessary base for the higher levels of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

**Aesthetics:**

The study of the nature of art. Group perceptions of the world are integral to the meanings and values ascribed to art. Cultural values are embedded in the notion of "art," the forms art takes, aesthetic codes by which art is understood, and the conventions and styles that are considered criteria for good art.

**Art History:**

The study of the art of the past and the historic development of styles and conventions. The social context in which art is produced determines the circumstances that either promote or circumscribe the development of artists. Artistic production
depends on the education of artists, the needs of patrons, and social, economic and political institutions.

**Art Criticism:**

The analysis and interpretation of the meaning and value of specific, often contemporary, works of art. Perceptions of reality influence both the production of art and its interpretation. Views of a group are expressed by the artist who mediates values through socially understood aesthetic codes, and are interpreted by the viewer who is influenced by the ideology of another time or place.

**Social Reconstructionist Education:**

Social reconstructionist curriculum, as a category of multicultural education, is premised on critical theory and focuses on issues and themes in order to challenge students to critically consider and confront social issues, and work to change society (Sleeter & Grant, 1988).

**Feminist Theory:**

Social and psychological theories motivated by the women's movement that locate the roots of gender oppression in the social system of patriarchy, develop political theories from the way oppression is experienced in the daily lives of women, and present ways in which women may become the liberated agents of their own lives.

**Race:**

"White" and "Black" are socially constructed racial positions in American society that were originally invented to classify people as free or slave. According to scientists, genetic facts do not support the belief that there is, ever has been, or ever
will be a pure race. All human beings are members of the same species (Kuper, 1965).

Biologists and anthropologists have determined that all human beings have descended from Africans, and that people adapted to their environments over thousands of years by developing darker or lighter complexions. For example, those humans who lived in Asia developed lighter skins, but when some of them migrated southward to Australia their complexions darkened over several thousand years just like their ancestors in Africa. Australians, who have Asian ancestors, were classified as belonging to the Negroid race. Southern Europeans were classified as belonging to the Caucasoid race, but they are from an area that was populated by descendants of Africans thousands of years earlier than Australian aboriginals, and are more closely related to Africans (O’Bryne, 1993). Africans have also been absorbed into European populations since at least the 8th century when the Moors invaded Spain and France; and African slaves were brought into Portugal beginning in 1440 resulting in further miscegenation (Ransaw, 1990).

The modern concept of race has its roots in the European colonial expansions into what is now considered the “Third World” as a justification for exploiting the natural resources, labor, and material wealth of the people who lived in these areas. What Europeans considered the cultural inferiority of Africans, Asians, Australians, and Americans was linked to nonwhite racial designations. This thinking underlies the concept of race formed in the United States that rationalized the exploitation of African labor.
Early English colonists in America attempted to enslave Native peoples and other Europeans, in particular the Irish, but found it difficult to control people who could escape. Africans were not able to blend into the White population, and therefore, Black became synonymous with slave. Within a few years after introducing African indentured servants, laws were passed making slavery a lifetime status inherited through African and African American women and forbidding marriage between people of European and African descent. When slave women were sexually exploited by White men these children were also slaves. This history of the sexual exploitation of Black women during both the eras of slavery and legal segregation, as well as the loving, yet illegal, relationships between Black and White people has contributed to the fact that approximately 80% of all designated Black Americans have some degree of White ancestry (Zack, 1990).

Inheritance of property and wealth were impossible for the mixed offspring of Black slave women and White men, and since children followed the status of their mother they were also condemned to a lifetime of bondage. Under French Napoleonic Code in Louisiana, however, children who were legally acknowledged by their White fathers took the free status of their fathers (Zack, 1990). As part of the United States in 1832, Louisiana courts ruled that the children of slave mothers were to be slaves, however, many French and Spanish men freed their mistresses so their children would also be free, and provided them with education and property. In early New Orleans, people were designated as free, free people of color, or slave; and cultural differences between Creole and Anglo were more apparent than racial differences. From the end
of the Civil War until 1900 when the Creole population became "White" several hundred people of color passed into the White community every year (Blassingame, 1973), as they did in other parts of the United States (Zack, 1990). This also makes it possible for many White Americans to have African American ancestors.

Racial differences are constructed in the United States today so that anyone with African ancestry is considered "Black," although that person might have more ancestors from Europe than Africa; and a person who has no African ancestors is considered "White" although all humans have African ancestors and African genes are in both European and White American gene pools (Zack, 1993). Additionally, the African ancestors of African Americans came from many different ethnic groups with various facial structures and skin tones. Racial identity blurs when African Americans have light skin, light eyes, or straight or blonde hair and White persons have olive complexions, dark eyes, or tightly curled or dark hair. However, a person who is categorized as "Black" is considered inferior by "White" people who hold the vast majority of wealth and power in society and deny large numbers of African Americans equal access to the education, employment and earning power that would create an equal society (O'Bryne, 1993).

Black, therefore, denotes a position in society outside mainstream economic, social and cultural privilege. In England, for example, people who have African or Indian ancestors are considered Black. In Russia people with Jewish ancestors are considered Black. In Brazil anyone with known White ancestors is recognized as "not-Black" and has the opportunity for upward social mobility. In the Louisiana
public schools as late as the 1970s, students were classified as either White or Black. This meant that my students who had European, Chinese, Japanese, and Jewish ancestors were considered "White," as well as those from Latin American countries and Cuba who had European, African, and Native American ancestors.

It is these issues of racial identity that are both personal and political. Double consciousness, or conflicting notions of racial identity, (DuBois, 1903/1989) concerns the knowledge a Black person has of self and other Blacks as they are, versus that person's experience of self and other Blacks as Whites perceive them (Zack, 1990). The internal struggle to fit into a society that devalues and dehumanizes the lives of those persons who are designated Black in society is integral to the political agendas of African American leaders, African American cultural values, and the meaning of art. These struggles can not be separated from the dominant liberal American discourse of free and self-determining individualism and the conflicting ideology of White supremacy which depends on the social meaning given to designated racial differences. In this dissertation "Black" and "African American" refer to social designations that marginalize people because they have at least one African ancestor, and "White" refers to a social position of privilege based on the assumption that people have no African ancestors.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The organization of the literature provides the conceptual framework for this study. First, the various practices of multicultural education are discussed in relation to African American education. Next, curriculum changes that are necessary for the success of African American students are considered. Third, a discussion of the development of discipline-based art education (DBAE) and its relation to cognitive theory is presented. Fourth, feminist theories and African American paradigms of thought are discussed as ways of understanding oppression. Finally, feminist art scholarship is discussed as it relates to the study of African American art in the disciplines of aesthetics, art criticism, and art history.

Approaches to Multicultural Education

The Brown Supreme Court decision on education in 1954 provided the means to end legal segregation and sparked a wave of activism in the 1960s known as the Civil Rights Movement (Morgan, 1991). Schools were some of the primary sites where racial inequality was challenged. The courts were concerned not only with the unequal educational facilities that were provided for Black students, they were also concerned about the message these students were receiving about their self-worth. Multicultural education began with this concern for the education of African American children. The mass movement for the end of demeaning social practices, the right to political and economic opportunities, and the restructuring of school knowledge to
include African American culture raised the awareness of other groups, i.e. Native Americans, Chicanos, and feminists who also actively sought social changes.

Today new waves of immigrants who are racially, culturally, and linguistically different from White Americans are becoming part of a society historically constructed on racial caste. African Americans are not the sole concern of multicultural educators who are struggling with ways to meet the needs of diverse students. I propose that racial issues rather than culture should be the basis of multicultural education. Racism is a pattern that affects how African Americans, American Indians, and nonwhite people from "Third World" countries are viewed and treated in American society and intensifies their experiences with gender and class discrimination. Teaching in the South I have come to understand racism in Black and White terms; therefore, my focus is on African American students.

Educational scholars have formed various theories as school officials struggle with the increased deterioration of inner-city schools. Sleeter and Grant (1988) describe five approaches to multicultural education: (a) teaching the exceptional and the culturally different, (b) human relations, (c) single-group studies, (d) multicultural education, and (e) education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist. Each approach has merit on the basis of seemingly obvious questions such as, (a) Should culturally different students be taught dominant Anglo American middle-class culture? (b) Should students be taught to be tolerant of racially different people? (c) Should diverse cultures and experiences be included in the curriculum, and if so, which cultures and experiences? (d) Should these cultures and experiences be included as
These approaches also raise concerns for African American students based on other questions such as, (a) If Black students are taught the information and values of the dominant White culture, will their own culture, and thus their identity, be devalued? (b) In a society with social, economic, and political structures premised on racial hierarchy, will changes in attitude affect equal access to social and economic opportunities? (c) If the curriculum includes multiple groups of people will African American culture be excluded? And will the study of the heritage of these groups be considered merely interesting or exotic? (d) Will the study of African American cultural heritage be separate from the "real" curriculum or become part of the "master narrative"? Or will the curriculum be restructured so that a genuine connection is made to students' lives? (e) Should experiences with racism and other types of oppression be part of curricula? Should we teach students to challenge the status quo?

This section of the review of literature will consist of a discussion of each of the approaches to multicultural education described by Sleeter and Grant (1988). An analysis of both the limitations and possibilities of each approach based on my own understanding of the issues will be presented.

**Teaching the Culturally Different**

The purpose of this approach to multicultural education is to help students assimilate dominant cultural norms (Sleeter & Grant, 1988). The social goal is White American cultural homogeneity; however, the reality for African American students is
that acculturation is not necessarily correlated with success in society. In addition, White cultural beliefs devalue African American heritage and ways of being, thus contributing to an identity crisis among Black students. Many African American parents are concerned that their children learn the dominant cultural knowledge, but they also understand their children’s education is incomplete without understanding their own history.

Much of the current curriculum, however, is exclusive and based on the superior political position of Whites in American society. The culture and art of European Americans is assumed to be better than the art and culture of other groups of people; therefore it is given priority in the curriculum. However, the value of many forms of visual artistic expression that have developed in response to various life styles and beliefs could be acknowledged in an egalitarian curriculum.¹

**Human Relations**

The human relations approach to multicultural education attempts to foster racial and social harmony (Sleeter & Grant, 1988). It is used to resolve conflicts among students. However, resolving individual differences does not necessarily mean confronting social ideologies that perpetuate the notion of unequal racial difference in political, economic and cultural institutions. Many African American leaders have worked actively to change White opinion throughout American history. While it is

¹ Many African American artists have been greatly influenced by European and European American art styles, and European modern artists were greatly influenced by African art. Students should not be limited—rather all forms of art are part of the store of human knowledge and vision that can be made available to them.
important that White Americans recognize that ending racism is also their responsibility, most of us have assimilated White cultural beliefs and are not conscious of our privileged position, simply accepting it as normal.

Images that students receive from the popular media and in contemporary art often perpetuate these notions of racial inequality. The portrayal of African American people has been a major concern of Black artists and critics, and is an important aspect of the study of African American art. Human relations education might be tied to the way images contribute to notions of race that dehumanize people and perpetuate their sexual and economic exploitation.

**Single-group Studies**

This approach contributes to developing academic traditions of knowledge for groups of people previously overlooked in the general curriculum (Sleeter & Grant, 1988). Groups that promote single-group studies curricula such as feminists and Afro-centrists have sometimes been considered separatist groups. In reality, however, African Americans are still segregated in many ways and their history and culture are not valued by the dominant society. Additionally many academic disciplines are premised on the modernist notion of universal knowledge, which is usually White and male and excludes the world views and cultural expression of women and African Americans.

Early feminist scholars developed gender theory from women’s experiences with oppression in everyday situations. Feminist art historians sought to reinstate women artists in the history of art and to recognize the domestic traditions of art that
women developed. The study of the art of marginalized groups, such as women and African Americans, contributes to knowledge in areas that have been previously ignored by the academic focus on European traditions and the art of men. Single-group studies provide a means of nurturing these newly developing scholarly traditions (Pinar, 1995). Curriculum content in women's studies and African American studies also crosses disciplines of literature, art, history, etc. and provides possibilities for thematic connections (Kaplan, 1992) and the equitable restructuring of knowledge.

**Multicultural Education**

The multicultural approach is inclusive, celebrates differences, and promotes cultural pluralism (Sleeter & Grant, 1988). Students need to see themselves in the curriculum and they need to learn about other groups of people. Minorities who have been disenfranchised since Europeans colonized this country have a particular need to be included in the curriculum because their contributions to the history and development of America have not been acknowledged. This approach has been criticized for its broad scope, but it need not be totally relative. Issues of difference from the specific experiences of one group can cut across disciplines and contribute to the opportunity to talk about shared circumstances and struggles (Kaplan, 1992). African American artists have struggled with conditions in American society in ways that may connect with the lives of students and teachers of color who make up the various other ethnic minorities in America (e.g., Wong, 1993).²

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² Wong's felt connection between Faith Ringgold's *Tar Beach* and her own experiences as a daughter of Chinese immigrants inspired her to develop a lesson in which her students created pictures of their dreams for the solution to global problems.
Social Reconstructionist Education.

This approach to multicultural education, grounded in critical theory, focuses on issues in order to help students critically consider and even confront social inequality. Students learn to analyze social situations and work toward full participation in society by becoming active decision makers (Sleeter & Grant, 1988). In my opinion, this approach has the most potential for helping students understand the oppressions they face and to perceive and act on possible changes. The goal is that "young people, particularly those who are members of oppressed groups, should understand the nature of oppression in modern society and develop the power and skills to articulate their own goals and vision and to work constructively toward that" (Sleeter and Grant, 1980, p.176).

Multicultural educators (Banks, 1993; Sleeter & Grant, 1988) and art educators (Blandy, 1987; Blandy & Congdon, 1987; Chalmers, 1987; Delacruz, 1995; Hamblen, 1986a, 1991; Lanier, 1969) argue for a curriculum that is social reconstructionist and inclusive. Their concerns parallel those of Feminists and African American scholars and activists who have been speaking and writing about gender and racial discrimination and who have been active agents in bringing about social change.

Feminist art scholars have recognized the political nature of what is considered art. They have attempted to place art in its social context in order to understand the structural and ideological obstacles to women’s success in the arts and the social position from which women produce art (Wolff, 1990). The study of African American art also needs to be understood within the social context in which it was
produced. Rather than including some African American "geniuses" in the present structure of the study of art, curriculum can allow students to study the social systems and ideologies that sustain the domination of White over Black and devalue the work of African American artists. The study of African American art as the production of artists who are influenced by the racial differences that determine their experiences and ways of understanding the world may allow students to see themselves in the bigger picture of art and become involved in questions of multiple connotations and social contradictions through the study of art.

Can students who live with racism be successful academically as they inquire into the historical and contemporary power struggles in society by means of art? In a society where certain knowledge, art, and ways of being are considered acceptable and worthwhile, what is left out often negates the identity of African American people. Learning about African American art can mean that art is for African American students—not just African American art but all art. Learning about art in addition to learning to produce art not only enriches students’ cognitive abilities but, through art’s inherent connection to all areas of human intellectual activity, opens up worlds for human understanding, empathy, and liberation. African American artists are then not only models for future artists but for a future filled with possibility.

**Academic Success of African American Students**

The basic educational problem this study addresses, that African American students are not succeeding in this nation’s public schools, can be met with curricular solutions. African American students are often limited by courses of study and career
possibilities that do not challenge or develop their intellectual and creative potentials. Solomon's (1992) study of West Indian students in Toronto schools points out that expectations held by school personnel are that Blacks will excel in sports but not in intellectual spheres. Fine (1991) describes the "minority" drop-outs in a South Bronx public high school as those students who knew the importance of education, had the ability to succeed, and were critical of the processes of schooling. In contrast, "those who stayed in school were markedly more depressed, conformist, self-blaming, and unwilling to confront a teacher about an educational injustice than those who left" (Fine, 1991, p. 137). Both studies indicate that, among other factors, intellectually challenging curriculum was not provided for those students. The social notion that African American students are not academically capable be overcome with a curriculum that contains African American art and thought. In this way, students can also see themselves and the worth of their ideas in concert with the dominant culture and the problems they face as a racial group, and may create possibilities for changing these situations.

Art education theory which focuses on art produced as self-expression for building self-esteem has been the core of art education since World War II. A low opinion of self has often been considered the cause of the failure of African American students. Many educational programs, and in particular art programs, focused on positive self-perception to the exclusion of academic learning. However, the success of African American students requires more than programs based on self-esteem since positive feelings of ability often follow, rather than precede, success (Frisby & Tucker,
Schools must also restructure curriculum content to provide these students with the knowledge they need. The study of art, too, should provide avenues for African American students to develop their intellectual and creative abilities. It is important that they see the success of African American artists and know that African American scholars can be successful in researching historical developments in art production, in developing aesthetic theories, and in writing critical statements about the work of artists or art exhibits.

More recent developments in art education have focused on professionals as models for inquiry into the role of art in history, analysis of works of art, and speculation about the nature of art (Efland, 1988). Research indicates that the study of art "can promote creative behaviors, critical thinking skills, and academic achievement" (Hamblen, 1993, p. 196). Art education for Black students, once based mainly on curricula to foster self-esteem, needs to focus on subject matter that is relevant to the lives of African American students in order to extend their intellectual potential. Grigsby (1976) also sees a need for "a cadre of well-trained writers and critics who are capable of discussing the works of Black artists . . . [since those who write] will control the flow of art information available" (Grigsby, 1976, p. 62).

**Discipline-based Art Education**

In the social climate of America following World War II artistic freedom was equated with the democratic way of life and emphasis was placed on individual creativity and expression. Art educators were interested in understanding children through their artistic expression and in developing children's creativity. During this
period the writings of Viktor Lowenfeld (1947), whose main thesis was the use of art as a means for the self-development of the child, meshed with the concept of allowing the child freedom to develop through art (Eisner, 1972). However, an undercurrent of criticism marked art education in the 1950s, and it was felt that classroom practices promoting studio art did little to develop understanding or appreciation of art. Additional concerns were that art lessons were reduced to a series of random experiences (Geahigan, 1992).

The Russian launch of Sputnik in 1957 provoked reform in science and math education in America. Congress responded by passing the National Defense Education Act in 1958; and the Woods Hole Conference in 1959, directed by Jerome Bruner, was a milestone in the movement toward educational reform (Efland, 1988). Two aspects of Bruner's (1963) report on that conference have had an impact on current developments in art education. Consideration of the humanities-basis of art was built on Bruner's idea that all knowledge is related within a discipline, and Bruner’s theories in the field of cognitive psychology foreshadowed future emphasis on cognitive approaches to art education. Sharing the same orientation as Bruner, philosophers such as Phenix, Hirst, and Broudy formulated synoptic curriculum theories, agreeing that "the aesthetic constituted a unique domain of knowledge, and that some mastery of this domain should be required of all students" (Geahigan, 1992, p. 11).

In the 1960s the President's Science Advisory Committee suggested that curriculum reform should be applied to art education in the manner it was developed
in science education, and a series of seminars was funded. A seminar held at Pennsylvania State University in 1965 was to have a major effect on the field of art education. Manuel Barkan, influenced by Bruner's ideas, stated that artistic inquiry is a discipline, although built on analogy and metaphor rather than the tested hypotheses of science (Efland, 1984). Barkan felt that art education needed to employ both discipline-structured and problem-centered curricula and that the methods used by professional artists, art historians, and critics should give art education its structure. Those methods would enable students to confront problems related to their lives, because "problem-centered human-meaning questions were the very ones confronted by artists, critics, and historians as they engaged in their professional work" (Efland, 1984, p. 209).

A series of curriculum development projects based on the notion of the disciplines of art was developed, although there was no consensus among the projects about the organization of art as a discipline. There was, however, a lack of financial resources to implement these projects, and many of the curricula that were developed never made their way into the schools (Geahigan, 1992).

The idea of art as an academic discipline began to take definite form when the Getty Trust began its first California Institute for Educators in the Visual Arts for the training of teachers in Los Angeles in 1983. This institute, headed by Dwaine Greer, was set up to help classroom teachers teach art to elementary school children by means of discipline-based art education. Greer, who had been involved with two previous curriculum development projects, introduced DBAE as four disciplines based
on the professional role models of aesthetician, studio artist, art historian, and art critic, which were to be taught "by means of a formal, continuous, sequential, written curriculum across grade levels in the same way as other academic subjects" (Greer, 1984, p. 212).

In 1985 the Getty Center published Beyond Creating: The Place for Art in America's Schools, describing case studies of seven school districts with DBAE programs. Since then the Getty Center has sponsored numerous institutes, publications, and conferences promoting DBAE. As a product of the 1980s, early DBAE may be seen in concert with contemporaneous concerns for accountability and excellence. These Getty-sponsored programs emphasized tightly sequenced simplistic information about art and focused on the formal qualities of art and the technical aspects of art production (Hamblen, 1989). Current materials, such as A Curriculum Sampler (1991), contain a wider variety of approaches to teaching in the disciplines. Today DBAE is open to broader interpretations, relies on interactions between art educators, teachers and art professionals, and has been building theory from its practical application at teacher institutes and in classrooms across the country.

Art education theory that stresses self-esteem, emphasizes art making, and promotes self-expression is child-centered. DBAE stresses the four art disciplines and is subject-centered. Art education since the 1950s has been criticized for its lack of subject matter and random format and when budgets are cut, art has been perceived as a nonessential element of the curriculum. This has meant that impoverished school districts are often forced to eliminate art, and minority students are the first to lose the
opportunity to learn about art. Although art production continues to be an important aspect of art education, approaching art as a subject based on art knowledge has been an attempt to reestablish the importance of art in the curriculum for all students.

The inclusion of the disciplines of aesthetics, art criticism, and art history in addition to studio production in the art curriculum offer possibilities for critical and creative thinking and academic achievement (Clark, Day, & Greer, 1987; Eisner, 1987; Greer, 1984). The study of art develops multiple cognitive abilities—linguistic, intuitive, visual, spatial, and kinesthetic (Hamblen, 1983). Art criticism instruction may use various theoretical approaches in the analysis and evaluation of specific art objects (Hamblen, 1993). Art history "offers occasions for the inquiry skills of inductive and deductive reasoning and the exploration of alternative hypotheses" (Hamblen, 1993, p. 193). Aesthetic inquiry "forces students to examine hypotheses, statements of value, and the ambiguities of artistic meanings and designations" (Hamblen, 1993, p. 193).

DBAE has roots in modernist-formalist theories of art that propose that the emotional response to significant visual form constitutes the aesthetic experience (Bell, 1914/1977). Aesthetic scanning (Broudy, 1987) as a form of analysis based on the formal qualities of line, shape, color, and compositional elements of rhythm, symmetry, etc., has been popular as a simple way for classroom teachers who are not art specialists to understand art criticism. Art teachers have been influenced by the many university-level art programs that train fine artists to be concerned with formal properties rather than the personal and social meaning that artists are communicating.
In addition, the Western canon is still the norm for much of art history. Most
discipline-based art curricula also have tended either to use Eurocentric art examples
or to look at non-European art within the limited scope of the "fine art" and "great

Nonetheless, because of its emphasis on the content of art, DBAE has the
potential for the inclusion of culturally diverse art in ways that extend the present
definitions of the disciplines. For example, the study of quilts made by African
American slave women (a) broadens critical analysis to include issues such as the
work of slave women and the historical perceptions of the ideal woman, (b) challenges
aesthetic inquiry to include discussions of textiles valued for their usefulness as well
as their beauty, and (c) provides a view of art as part of the social history of a people
who were considered property and incapable of culture. Art historical inquiry into the
images of African American people can provoke students to question myths and
misperceptions which define the lives of contemporary African Americans (Grant,
1992), and to understand the struggle of Black artists to validate ways of being that
are denigrated by the dominant culture (Collins, 1991).

DBAE is well-suited as a program that encourages the intellectual capabilities
of African American students because it involves reading, thinking, talking, and

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1 Kagan discusses the use of European art in a classroom that has a 70 percent
Hispanic population. However, the seminar and proceedings, Discipline-based Art
Education and Cultural Diversity (1993), provide provocative and diverse ideas on this
subject. In addition, the Multicultural Art Print Series (1991, 1992, 1994) offers teachers
specific ideas for using art from various cultural groups within the format of the art
disciplines.
writing about art as well as making art. Academic subjects are mainly language-based; however, the fact that we learn visually from shapes, colors, symbols, etc., transcends language as a form of communication and may promote holistic and creative thought (Gardner, 1982). Learning about what artists are communicating, how societies and cultural values influence and structure ideas about art and the meaning of works of art involves a variety of cognitive abilities. It can challenge students to form their own opinions and express them visually and linguistically.

DBAE has important potential for helping students achieve academically and for the study of culturally diverse art, but DBAE curriculum has often been premised on the canon of fine art. Feminist studies provide a model for restructuring the study of the art of marginalized groups within the art disciplines. By researching the art and lives of women, feminist art scholars have recognized artists, works of art, and ways of knowing and defining art that have gone unnoticed because standards of importance have devalued them.

**Feminist Theory**

Feminist studies in the art disciplines are theoretically grounded in a political movement for the liberation of women. Feminism is a political stance regarding the unequal power and influence of women in society. A review of feminist theory (Jaggar and Struhl, 1978; Weedon, 1987) reveals a variety of opinions about the roots of women’s oppression and theories that have influenced the restructuring of academic art knowledge. These theories shed light on how their gendered social position influences women as makers and viewers of art.
Liberal feminists believe that women are equal to men but receive inferior education. In their perfect society each individual would be able to rise in class as far as their talents permitted. Since liberal feminists take the basic structure of the nuclear family for granted, their solution for women would be to obtain professional, paid domestic labor in order that they might work outside the home. This is basically a White middle-class theory rejected by nonwhite women who have traditionally been given the role of servant while middle-class White women have better job opportunities. However, this theory does reveal the seemingly "natural" notion that domestic labor is women’s work and that inequalities in women’s education and employment have limited women’s role in the production of art and in critical dialogues about art.

Marxist feminists also reject the idea of an essential, biologically determined female nature; but, in addition, they reject the liberal belief that it is possible for people to have genuine equality of opportunity to develop their potential while they remain in a class society. In a capitalist society the masses produce the wealth, but wealth and power end up in the hands of a few—a male elite. For Marxists the key to social change is the overthrow of the elite class. However, class differences in the United States are often masked by gender and racial differences that are constructed for the benefit of more powerful groups. For example, historically labor unions often excluded African American workers who were then brought in as strike breakers or as more poorly paid workers creating racial tension. Additionally, the intersection of class, race, and gender oppressions means that White women are more likely to attain
material privilege than Black women. Class, as it is reinforced by both gender and race oppression, determines the roles women play in society and the limited access to education, material goods, space, and time that restrict women's artistic output as well as their contribution to cultural dialogue.

Radical feminists believe that the roots of women's oppression are in biology—childbearing and male aggression. Since gender oppression is the most widespread and the hardest to eradicate, it forms the conceptual model for understanding all other forms of oppression. For radical feminists the family is the key instrument in women's oppression because of its role in sexual slavery and forced motherhood. The radical feminist solution is separation from men.

The authoritarian nature of the Western family reinforces violence and domination in society rather than democratic practices of shared responsibility. A man as head of the household has both greater physical strength and the approval of society to control a woman, and both adults may use physical strength to control children. The domination in families also sets the pattern for race relations in society that are paternalistic, depriving people who are considered "childlike" of their right to self-determination. Domination reinforces social perceptions that some people are more capable, more intelligent, and more talented. Victims of domination are then ridiculed for their lack of ability as a means of explaining their absence in the art world processes of museums, art history books, etc.

For socialist feminists sexism is as fundamental as economic exploitation, and they reinforce each other. Socialist feminists emphasize the role of the capitalist
family in women's oppression. The private sphere buttresses the capitalist system by providing unpaid domestic labor of women, sexual division of labor, and dual labor roles for women who work outside the home. The family is the key site of gender oppression, but it also happens within the broader social areas of work and public life. Capitalism also provided the impetus for the American slave labor system and continues to contribute to the economic exploitation of people of color around the world. The rationalization of Black inferiority has masked the conscience of capitalism and insures White social privilege.

Socialist feminist theory acknowledges the particular problems of poor, working-class, and third-world women and the intersection of capitalism, White supremacy, and patriarchy as forms of oppression and privilege. It provides a means of understanding how these relationships to power define social place and limit the possibility people have of controlling their own destinies and developing their potential. Socialist feminist theory forms the basis for critical art historical research into the social contexts which limit women's production of art and contribution to cultural dialogue.

Poststructuralist feminist theory focuses on the relationship among social structures and individual experiences, the ways power is exercised, and the reproduction of social inequality. This theoretical position begins with the actual experience of women. "As we acquire language, we learn to give voice—meaning—to our experience and to understand it according to particular ways of thinking, particular discourses, which pre-date our entry into language" (Weedon, 1987, p. 33). Both
language and visual images, rather than reflecting an already given social reality, constitute reality for us. We position ourselves within these meanings, but "through education or politics . . . we may be exposed to alternative ways of constituting the meaning of our experience which seem to address our interests more directly" (Weedon, 1987, p. 33). It is through cultural representation that poststructuralism helps us understand the fluidity of our subjectivity, how to see personal experiences in terms of social causes, and thereby the possibility for social change.

Feminist poststructuralists take the position that all knowledge is partial and historically situated, therefore, understanding social relations begins in the study of personal experiences and the individual voices of women (Weedon, 1987). The focus of feminist poststructural theory on the central issue of social inequality provides a basis for also understanding racial oppression. This theoretical approach examines the underlying assumptions regarding the exercise of power in society from the perspective of lived experiences. Because it "addresses the question of how social power is exercised and how social relations of gender, class, and race might be transformed" (Weedon, 1987, p. 20), feminist poststructuralism offers a framework for restructuring art knowledge as relative and situational. It opens up questions of difference, voice, and representation which are central to a political understanding of the influence of race on artistic production.

African American Paradigms

African American theories are concerned with social change from the perspective of racial oppression. Hime (1992) has outlined contemporary paradigms of
academic thought in the various contributions to the Black Studies Movement. Afrocentricity is a philosophy that centers on the African and African American perspective rather than the Eurocentric worldview. Traditionalists are academicians in sociology, history, and literary theory who critically interrogate the reigning intellectual systems which have "diminished, distorted, and dismissed the meaning and essence of African American thought, culture, and history" (Hime, 1992, p. 13). Authenticists have a political commitment to Black liberation from White categories of thought and analysis.

Black scholars are questioning the validity of taken-for-granted academic knowledge. Even the teaching of the history of Western Civilization traditionally began with the attribution of the art and civilization of ancient Egypt to Mediterranean cultures as distinct from African culture (Spruill-Fleming, 1990). The error of this was not evident because it was socially accepted. African art and Black music and dance has often been appropriated by Whites, so it is natural not to see Black accomplishments. For example, at the same time that Picasso and other European modern painters and sculptures were adopting African styles of art, anthropologists were denying the African origin of the Yoruba bronzes (Bascom, 1969). Additionally, scientific discoveries, such as the evaporation method of sugar production developed by Norbert Rilleux, are usually written out of history textbooks. Historically, African Americans have had less opportunity for academic education so it seems normal to see physical rather than intellectual accomplishments. Furthermore, African Americans
have been taught the American ideology of White superiority that devalues them simply because of racial designation.

Throughout American history Black leaders have written and spoken about racial exploitation and have sought the promised ideals of democracy for African American people. Integrationists have agitated for the basic rights of citizenship and against segregationists laws that enforced the inferior and powerless social position of Black people. Black nationalists have rejected White culture and suggested solutions for racial oppression based on self-definition. Although nationalists have been accused of preaching segregation, they recognize the social reality of exclusion and, while some have advocated leaving American society, others have tried to bring African American people together to form a strong force for full inclusion. Forms that nationalism has taken are: (a) support for Black businesses or cooperatives so that money and jobs can strengthen the community, (b) support for African American political movements and candidates, and (c) pride in African American culture and knowledge of African American history.

Black feminists call attention to the interlocking systems of sexual, racial, and class domination. Hooks (1984) has critiqued the feminist movement as the struggle of middle-class White women to gain the same power as White men, reinforcing White supremacy and classism and undermining the appeal for a collective struggle toward a more democratic world order. For nonwhite women, the feminist movement can appear to conflict with the struggle of women and men who face racism together by creating gender divisions.
Rather than considering racism and gender oppression different agendas, Hooks (1984) sees a need to acknowledge the connection between racism and sexism. That is, they are both rooted in economic exploitation and based on an ideology of duality, i.e. that one is better or more powerful than the "other" who is relegated from the privileged mainstream of society to the margins. Collins (1991) writes that minimizing the extent of racial oppression in society could still leave Black women oppressed in another, equally dehumanizing way. Black feminists make the patriarchal nature of race and gender oppression visible as well as the economic and sexual exploitation of African American women.

Patriarchy as a means of control over people who are perceived as unable to define their own lives is at the root of gender and racial oppression, and is motivated by the sexual and/or economic exploitation of powerless groups in society. Visual images and language reinforce the stereotypes and prejudices that then keep these groups of people in their social "place." All oppressed groups need to understand the source of social domination in order to work toward change that fosters self-reliance.

It is important, therefore, that curricula present ways of questioning the ideologies of patriarchy and White supremacy. Feminist theories, as ways of understanding social power relations, can shape the kinds of knowledge that becomes part of the curricula. Feminist restructuring of the disciplines of art history, aesthetics, and art criticism have brought women as producers and viewers of art into perspective where they were formerly ignored. This restructuring of the disciplines can also allow other marginalized groups to be included in the study of art. A curriculum based on

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American ways of knowing the world and understanding art, the social context in which African American art has been produced, and the voices of African American artists.

**Feminist Art Theory**

Feminist theory has influenced the academic disciplines of art history, art criticism, and aesthetics. In many ways the gendered relationship to power in society and in art that feminists have written about parallels and intersects racial relationships to power in society and in art. Gender has been the central focus of feminist studies, but feminist theories can also be helpful in understanding how race influences artistic production. This section of the literature review consists of a summary of the work of feminist art historians and art critics.

In Nochlin's 1971 article, "Why are there no GREAT women artists?", she stressed the idea that art "occurs in a social situation, is an integral element of social structure, and is mediated and determined by specific and definable social institutions" (p. 485). Not only are women artists left out of art history, but art history is not neutral; it is based on masculine ideology which structures our consciousness by the way certain artistic production is considered important (Parker and Pollock, 1981). Omissions reinforce the values and beliefs of the powerful while suppressing the experience of marginalized groups. For example, decorative art is thought of as "women's work," and utilitarian art is relegated to the category of "craft."

Contemporary feminist postmodern artists and writers focus on questions of representation and gender difference. Not only are relationships to power in society
forged in language-based discourse, they are also based on visual representation. Images in works of art legitimize the culture's dominant ideology, thereby constructing male and female difference in society. This "definitive assignment of sex roles in history has created fundamental differences between the sexes in their perception, experience, and expectations of the world" (Broude & Garrard, 1982). It is this experience, presumed gender-free, which results in double-consciousness and distorts the way women see themselves in society (Harding & Hintikka, 1983).

Gender is therefore a factor in both how women produce art and how they interpret images, "because their experiences of the world are different from those of men" (Gouma-Peterson & Mathews, 1987, p. 337). These issues have influenced feminist art historians to look at women's art in the context of women's lives in order to understand how gender influences the production of art. Rather than struggling to gain entry into the male-dominated field of art, feminists are attempting to restructure art history by giving attention to how social ideologies and institutions influence women's lives, and structure their art.

Feminist art critics, too, have revised the structure of art criticism to validate women's art and to interpret it from the perspective of women's lives. Garber (1990) found that feminist art critics use three approaches: (a) woman-centered, based on self-knowledge which holds subjective experience as valid, important for individual self-worth, and for creating social and political awareness, (b) social analysis which focuses "on social systems and their effects on valuation and discrimination in the art
world" (Garber, 1990, p. 19), and (c) writing about the work of politically active feminist artists.

Aesthetic theories have also been influenced by feminist scholars. Current shifts in the understanding of reality have changed perceptions of the nature of art. The modernist emphasis on universal objective truth is reflected in the emphasis on formal qualities of art (Hamblen, 1988). Feminist scholars, however, reject the notion that knowledge is universal or gender-neutral in favor of postmodern theories that the true nature of things is not in the object itself, but in the relationships we construct and perceive in objects (Hagaman, 1990). Knowledge is therefore always partial, depending on social situations and power relationships. Gender is a factor in how women understand the world that influences how women make and view art. Art is therefore an expression that comes from women's experiences— their biological makeup, their culture, their traditions, and their awareness of the restrictions they live with (Garber, 1992). The consideration of what makes something "art," what it means, and how it is appreciated, then, comes from a gender-relative value system.

Although individual women belong to various ethnic groups wherein roles are defined, women's gendered position as subordinate to men reflects their unequal access to privilege in social structures. These unequal power relations in society are reflected in women's personal experiences and in the art world. At the same time, the "common experience of being women binds them together in ways that may bring a common understanding to certain types of expression to which a man may not be as readily responsive" (Congdon, 1991). Feminist art scholars have restructured the study
of art to bring into focus the location of women in relation to power in society, the context of women’s art production, and women’s ways of knowing and understanding art. The work of feminist scholars provides a model for the study of the art of other marginalized groups in society.

The work of feminist art scholars suggests the following directions for understanding how race influences artistic production: (a) an examination of the value systems and ways of knowing the world that affect how African American people understand art, (b) an examination of the social contexts in which African American art has been produced to understand how race has influenced artistic production historically, and (c) an examination of the subjective experiences of African American artists as a means to understand how race influences their lives and roles as transmitters of cultural values.
CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURE

This study is framed within the disciplines of art history, art criticism, and aesthetics as these disciplines have been critiqued and shaped by feminist artists and scholars as a way to understand how the power relations that shape personal experiences within social structures influence the production of art. Feminist intentions have been to question the canon and the art world process which posits male genius. Although I am not interested in questioning male genius, I am interested in making visible the social structures and art world processes that support differential access to artistic production based on race. This process has excluded the majority of African American artists from the dominant art-historical and contemporary gallery/museum system and has structured art knowledge to reflect the culture, experiences, and standards of White Americans who have maintained a superior position in society. In concert with the work of feminist art scholars, it is my belief that art should be considered from the perspective of power relations, the different value systems that affect the evaluations of works of art, and the social contexts in which art is produced; and that people whose voices are often silenced in the world of fine art should speak for themselves about the meaning of art.

Feminist approaches to the study of art provide the means of understanding how the politics of race affects artistic production. To gain a feminist perspective on the political nature of art this research consists of (a) a survey of African American cultural and aesthetic values that have been expressed in the work of African American artists; and (b) a review of the works of art that have been produced by African American artists.
American leaders and artists, (b) a regional study of the social context in which historical African American artists worked, and (c) an ethnographic study of the experiences that have influenced the art of some contemporary artists in the same regional setting.

This study is premised on the theory that race is a social construct, a historic marker, and a political reality affecting African American artists as well as African American students and that cultural values and identity based on notions of place within society influence both artistic production and interpretation. Therefore, insights from the study of African American art can help African American students see their lives as part of a larger tradition of knowledge, values, and visual expressions.

Three areas in the study of art offer possibilities for understanding values and questioning the structures that influence artistic activity. First, group social position and world view influence the type of art that is produced and the standards by which it is evaluated. Dominated groups are also influenced by the ideology of dominant groups (Wolff, 1990) which they may resist, assimilate, or change. Second, the social context in which art is produced determines the circumstances that either promote or circumscribe the development of artists and artistic production and the ways images in art reflect and construct the myths and assumptions that shape identity. Third, artists, situated historically and regionally, express their perspectives of reality as formed by the views and beliefs of the group (Wolff, 1981).

This study, based on a feminist approach to restructuring the art disciplines, includes: (a) an analysis of national African American cultural and aesthetic values,
(b) the social context for historic artistic production in New Orleans, Louisiana including regional cultural, political and economic factors, and artistic practices, and (c) the analysis of values and beliefs expressed by contemporary African American artists in New Orleans.

Aesthetics

Aesthetics, or ways of understanding the meaning of art, determines the criteria by which its content, form, and function are assessed. Modernist inquiry into the meanings given to art have been based on assumptions of universal and objective norms. However, the value of art as cultural production has various interpretations reflecting the many ways people understand the world and their place in it.

Feminist theory challenges aesthetic objectivity and illuminates the political nature of the art world process that limits both women’s production of art and their critical interpretations of art. Fine art is perceived by feminist scholars to reflect men’s experiences and views of the world as its expected producers, viewers, and patrons. Women experience the world differently and the meaning art has for them arises from their experiences, cultural traditions, awareness of the world, and social, political, and economic restrictions.

The meaning art has for African Americans also comes from a different value system based on social position and cultural values and beliefs. It is the purpose of chapter four to acknowledge these differences and to gain insight into how the social construction of race and its political implications in society affects what art means. African American cultural values, the political climate of various periods, the agendas
of African American leaders, and the response of artists to these ideas are considered as a means of understanding how social position affects what art has meant to African Americans.

The struggle to affirm the value of African American life and culture within American society has produced two types of Black political response. One is the struggle for the rights and opportunities of American citizens. Acculturation into mainstream society with its cultural beliefs that dehumanize and devalue African American life and ways of being, however, often cause conflicts of identity and self-worth. The other is a struggle for self-determination as expressed in nationalist beliefs based on the status of being a separate group within larger society. Nationalist theory has its roots in large groups of less acculturated African Americans who sought pride in group identity and political and economic self-determination. Changing aesthetic perspectives can be attributed to the historical ideological shifts between racial and cultural group consciousness and American assimilation. African American art is inseparable from these ideological and political agendas as artists struggle to balance the need for distinct group cultural and aesthetic boundaries against mainstream inclusion and valuation.

**Art and Ideology**

A culturally-defined ideology is articulated in a people's ethical principles or values and influences their social institutions, economic systems, and political action (Geertz, 1973). These values are also expressed in works of art through cultural symbols, the forms art takes, its style and content, and the roles and functions of art in
society. Aesthetic choices of medium, style, subject matter, meanings, and the social, political, spiritual, domestic, personal or economic functions of art are therefore relative, grounded in the context of cultural values and social organization. Because artistic production reflects the values of the society that produced it, the concept of art and its interpretation and evaluation depend on the ideology of that society.

"Western" culture and aesthetic standards, dominant in the United States, mirror the power structure of society. Beginning with the colonization of America, people of color, who were considered uncivilized, and later "scientifically proven" (Gould, 1981) to be less intelligent, were relegated to a class of slaves, servants, and laborers. European artistic traditions and heritage were presumed to be superior to those of native Americans, Africans, Asians, etc. Artistic traditions from these "non-Western" cultures continue to be seen as outside the mainstream of fine arts. In many ways, the identity of peoples who were colonized by Europeans is tied to their "non-Western" cultural heritage. This heritage is proof of the creativity of the human mind, proof that cultures developed in various ways as people adapted to their surroundings and that civilization is not solely a European phenomenon. Yet European culture and Western artistic traditions have been considered better and thus desirable—although not attainable—for everyone (Hamblen, 1990). Western ideas have also dominated the understanding of what art means and what is valued as artistic production.

The influences of other cultures remain an invisible contribution to American society. Among various cultural legacies, Africans, as laborers and cultural producers, have contributed substantially to what we consider to be uniquely American.
However, African American music and dance have often been appropriated by the mainstream; and African American material culture, architecture, and fine art are usually not recognized because of the nature of slave labor and marginalized social position. For example, it is not commonly recognized that a Black architect planned and oversaw the building of Destrahan Plantation in Louisiana or that African slaves working as blacksmiths in New Orleans forged most of the iron grillwork in the French Quarter (Christian, 1972). These artisans were heirs to African cultural values, yet they were also Americans working within European American aesthetic parameters. Their world view sprang from African traditions, from European cultures, and from their own social position as a group outside mainstream American society; and their artistic production reflects those realities.

Rather than trying to find an underlying aesthetic quality that allows African American art to be identified through style (i.e. primitive or figurative), subject matter (i.e. Black people), or function (i.e. propaganda), chapter four examines the experiences, values and ideologies that have influenced the work of African American artists. Theories of art originating in feminist research have proposed that (a) "art is inevitably related to its social context . . . as a means of constructing its nature as art" (Lauter, 1993, p. 28); (b) art represents a subjective point of view; and (c) art can reveal ways of viewing the world because "it is a vital means of discovering and exploring one's subjectivity, one's difference, one's distinctive place in a culture or in the physical world" (Lauter, 1993, p. 28). My intention in chapter four is to shed light
on the interconnection of realities that have resulted in the way art has been defined by African American people.

**Method**

The aesthetics section of this study consists of an analysis of African American value systems in order to understand how they have shaped the work of African American artists. Books and articles by African American art historians, cultural critics, and historians were consulted for this section of the study. The philosophies of selected historical leaders and artists were analyzed to determine the influence of political and social ideologies on the meaning and value of artistic production. Acculturation and nationalism provide the framework for analyzing the world view of African American leaders and artists and its influence on the meaning and value of artistic production.

Questions guiding the aesthetics research related to both social and aesthetic concerns: Historically, what cultural values and social ideologies have influenced African American people? How were these values expressed in African American art? What has been the function or role of art in the African American community? How has the work of African American artists been influenced by the dominant culture? Did these artists see themselves as part of the mainstream art scene or as a separate African American art movement? The analysis of African American values and ways of understanding art provide a foundation for the art history and art criticism sections of this study.
Feminist art history is more than adding women to art history, it is a political restructuring of the discipline. Feminist scholars have questioned taken-for-granted notions of masculine creative genius and its counterpoint, the passive feminine object, muse, or model. Gender assumptions that are tacit to a study of art history which has omitted women's history and art production reflect and contribute to the perpetuation of gender hierarchy in the social order. The study of women and art is not just about women, "but is about the social systems and ideological schemata which sustain the domination of men over women within other mutually inflecting regimes of power in the world, namely those of class and those of race" (Pollock, 1988, p. 10).

Beginning with Nochlin's 1971 article, feminists art scholars have questioned the notion of a beautiful object expressing the genius of an individual artist and through him the highest aspirations of human culture. Feminists rewriting of the history of art have instead focused on art as the production of meanings and positions from which meanings are constructed within historical and social contexts, and on gender relations as a determining factor in cultural production and meaning (Pollock, 1988). Nochlin (1971) theorized that because art occurs in social situations, standards of greatness are not universal, rather, they reflect men's experiences, and women's art grows out of women's experiences. These experiences are related to how women have learned to act, react, and value from a subordinate gendered position in society. Women's ideological and historical position in relation to society, and therefore to art, is different from men's position (Parker and Pollock, 1981). Women have been
conditioned by social institutions, i.e. the family, education, art galleries and magazines, to accept a feminine role in society (Pollock, 1988). Yet women have also contested the position of dominated and exploited gender within their relative social situations. To study women as artists is to ask how these women negotiated their particular social position from beautiful spectacle, passive object of the male gaze, or inspiration for male artists to that of active producers of art. And women have been producers of culture and meaning; but as long as this is overlooked or written out of art history, as well as all other disciplines, the values and beliefs of the powerful continue unchallenged within society and the experiences and beliefs of the exploited are suppressed.

Feminist readings of art history have produced new understandings from the perspective of women's experiences. They have located neglected women artists and retrieved knowledge of women's artistic activity. They have validated traditional female creative output that conveys a female experience. They have explored the notion of sexual differences in artistic production, proposing that a social relationship to power different from male experiences has contributed to the way women perceive reality, and that this perception influences women's artistic practice. They have critically analyzed the way art functions as ideology, influencing social practices as, for example, Duncan (1982) has, by exploring its contribution to changing notions of family and motherhood. Pollock and Parker (1981) have analyzed how women's exclusion from professional status has signified their exclusion from the power to participate in or change the production of meanings, ideologies, and dominant views of
the world. Pollock (1988) has also argued that art history itself contributes to the reproduction of a patriarchal social system through the images and interpretations of the world it presents as "art" to gendered viewers. She has called for a reworking of art history with close attention to the history of cultural production. Although gender has been a central issue for feminist art scholars, Pollock (1988) has also called for further study from a perspective of race.

The position of black artists, men and women, past and present, in all cultural and class diversity of their communities and countries needs to be documented and analyzed. Race must be equally acknowledged as a central focus of our analyses of societies which were and are not only bourgeois but imperialist colonizing nations. (Pollock, 1988 p. 15)

The purpose of chapter five is to reformulate feminist interventions in the history of art as a way to focus on race rather than gender. Feminist art history is not about the study of women artists within the canon of male artists, but a political challenge to the existing discipline of art history. I have proposed that the study of African American art must also be restructured so that it is not merely the inclusion of some African American "geniuses" in the history of art, but a study of the social systems and ideologies that sustain domination of White over Black. This chapter focuses on African American art within the social context of New Orleans in order to understand, from a subjective perspective, the complexity of social and political issues and historical events that have influenced the production of art by African American people.

In the systematic ordering of a hierarchy of meanings in dominant American culture Black has been represented by the image of the "barbarism" of "pagan"
Africans, the socially contrived position of African American servitude, and the physicality of the working class—not the intellectual creativity of the Black artist. It became common throughout my research to be told not to expect to find any early African American artists. The production of slaves who worked as craftsmen and women has been identified with the slave owner who ran the shop or plantation in which they worked. Few African Americans were accepted as fine artists in early New Orleans, and those that were once accepted have been forgotten today. How did these artists and craftspersons, then, negotiate their particular social positions to take an active role in cultural production? Chapter five is meant to restore awareness of these neglected Black artists and to provide the history and social context of African American life in New Orleans in order to illuminate how the politics of race influences artistic production.

**Method**

Secondary sources from the 19th and early 20th century were consulted for this research. Books and articles were located in Louisiana libraries and museums in order to identify African American artists in New Orleans and to understand the society in which they lived and worked. Questions guiding the art history research emphasized the historical development of New Orleans from an African American perspective in order to understand how race was a factor in cultural production: Who were the African Americans in New Orleans? Where did they come from and how did their culture develop? How did laws, economic policy, and dominant cultural beliefs influence and restrict African American life in New Orleans? How did the lifestyle of
African Americans influence their cultural production? Who were artisans and craftsmen? Who had opportunities to become artists? What limitations were placed on African American people in various social positions? What social circumstances encouraged or limited artistic production? Was the art made by African Americans in 19th century New Orleans accepted by White patrons? How did African American artists in New Orleans, in spite of the limitations placed on them, work within the social system to produce art?

Art Criticism

Whereas aestheticians focus on the nature of art in general and debate such issues as whether formal qualities or meaning and the artist's intent should be the criteria for determining whether an object of cultural production should be considered "art," art critics attempt to explain, interpret and assess the formal qualities or artist's intent in particular works of art or bodies of artistic production, usually by contemporary artists. Art critics may draw upon art historical information but their analysis is more subjective and comes from their own personal experiences (Frueh, 1988) and philosophical points of view (Hamblen, 1986). Where art history is considered a science (Roskill, 1976) and art historians base their analysis of works of art on records, try to determine cause and effect relationships, and answer who, when, where, and how questions, art critics use more subjective analyses to examine meaning and value, and answer the question of why.

Ideology and taste not only inform why specific works of art, styles and mediums are valued (Garber, 1990) but they also determine why aesthetic priorities are
given to certain types of cultural production (Hamblen, 1991). Modernist social values have influenced theories of art that focus on the object itself, its style and formal qualities, and on the psychology and career of the artist (Hamblen, 1991). Modern aesthetic dialogue attempts to assign "greatness" to artistic production with theories that deal with the aesthetic response to form (Bell, 1914/1977) and the universal truth of the meaning the artist intended to convey (Hirsch, 1967). Postmodern theories instead tend to focus on the reception of art and the variable meanings ascribed by both the makers and viewers. It has been theorized that the artist's intention is not fully accessible even to the artist (Derrida, 1972) due to the intuitive and social nature of the process which draws on personal experiences and social ideologies that are usually taken for granted. Furthermore, viewers bring their own experiences to their interpretations of works of art, which are also informed by cultural beliefs and values and formed within a social context (Wolff, 1981).

The artist's intent as a means of defining "great" art is an irrelevant issue for feminist art critics who have recognized that the art world is not an ideologically neutral system of artistic production and history. What has been considered universal truth is understood by feminists as premised on male perspectives and men's experiences of the world. Men are expected to be the creators, the patrons, and the viewers of art (Hein, 1995). The separate culture of artistic production that women have developed from their gendered position in society, such as needlework and crafts, has been considered outside the aesthetic definition of "art" and, when women have been prominent within the art world, their work does not usually qualify as "great" art.
Representations of women by male artists often portray stereotypes of sexual availability or visual symbols of human values such as freedom. Therefore, rather than focusing aesthetic issues on the qualities that determine whether an object of cultural production is "art," feminists have looked at the interdependence of aesthetics and societal power relations.

Feminist art criticism is grounded in the women's political movement for equitable power relations within all social institutions, including art. The critical analysis of art as it is related to social ideologies and the power struggles of gender, race, and class is considered an approach for implementing change in the status quo. It is a means to confront ideas, such as the inferior intelligence and artistic ability of certain socially designated groups, that are imbedded in culture and seen as natural (Garber, 1990). Feminist art criticism has been about women's art as a means of understanding women's perspectives, what women value, and how they have been inspired (Congdon, 1991). Instead of focusing on the object of art and its universal formal qualities as isolated from all personal, associational and extrinsic purposes, feminists begin with the artist as a person whose reactions, associations, likes and dislikes are connected to who the person is and how they work out their conflicts and opinions in the production of art (Congdon, 1991).

In their reinterpretation of works of art, feminist have been concerned with the social, economic, and ideological situations of women. This wider sociological perspective has brought into clearer focus the circumstances that have produced gender imbalances, institutional obstacles to equal expression of men's and women's
experiences, and the organization of knowledge that gives priority to men's interests and experiences (Wolff, 1990).

The purposes of feminist art criticism, according to Congdon (1991), are (a) to increase the discussion of women's art and women artists, (b) to recognize the existence of gender differentiated approaches to the artistic processes, and (c) to recognize the greater difficulty in expanding the roles of women as artists. My purpose in chapter six is first, to increase the discussion of African American art and artists. Due to the social notions of difference and expectations of limited intellectual capabilities of African Americans, few Black artists have been accepted as part of the history of art in America. Feminist art criticism provides a way to acknowledge African American participation in the creation of American visual cultural heritage.

The second purpose is to recognize that the experience of being African American brings common elements to artistic expression. Just as women approach the artistic process differently from men because their experiences are different, and therefore their knowledge is different, the art of African American people depends on the knowledge they have gained from experiences in a White supremacist culture. The history in America of economic exploitation and inferior social and political status, the assimilation of European American culture that devalues African American humanity, along with the cultural retentions of African and African American values and beliefs have shaped African American experiences. As a marginalized group African Americans are socialized within this dominant White culture, yet set apart from it as Black. The way human experiences are ordered in terms of different priorities is
mediated by these social relationships to power (Gouma-Peterson & Mathews, 1987). It is from the social position of being somehow "different" that African American people perceive the world and make millions of everyday decisions. Being Black in America is a critical link among people of different complexion, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, region, and historical periods that has shaped their common perceptions and expectations of the world. This view of reality, different from a White view of reality, influences the creative process and the common themes of African American cultural production (Collins, 1991). In chapter six, feminist art criticism provides a means to understand how artistic production reflects the visions of artists within the context of a specific African American community.

The third purpose of chapter six is to recognize the greater social obstacles for African Americans who wish to assume a role in art production. Structural and ideological obstacles to African American success in the arts are imbedded in the art world. The history of art, for example, is generally the history of White men. Stereotypical representations of African Americans abound in both visual arts and popular media. Viewers of art, museum goers and patrons of the arts are assumed to be White. An approach to feminist art criticism is employed in this chapter as a way to understand how African American artists work within social structures to define their roles as artists.

**Approaches to Art Criticism**

Feminists and critical theorists (Congdon, 1991; Frueh, 1988; and Hamblen, 1991) have called for the development of new models of critical discourse and ways
of writing about art that will explore the overlooked meanings of art from the perspective of makers and viewers of art who are from powerless groups in society. Congdon (1991) has identified various aspects of approaching art criticism from feminist perspectives as (a) the recognition and appreciation of women's art and the traditional forms, symbols, and materials women have used, (b) the connection of art to women's experiences, ways of knowing and world views, and (c) the incorporation of oral history in art criticism as a means of gaining the wisdom of many groups of people.

Garber (1990) has researched the work of feminist art critics and categorized their strategies as those of (a) the analytic critic, whose focus is on undermining and exposing the social and cultural forces that oppress women, (b) the activist critic, who reports on the political content of feminist artists and champions their causes, and (c) the woman-centered critic, who celebrates women through a subjective and personal engagement with women's art. The approach may be different, but the goals of women's self-determination and self-knowledge, by validating women's subjective experiences, are the same for each of these feminist art critics (Garber, 1990).

Frueh (1988) also stresses a deep responsiveness to art—being at one with the work of art and through it the maker, creating a connection between the viewer, the object and the artist. She feels that biographical information as the source of the artist's inspiration and stylistic innovations are important in forming this connection. Hagaman (1990) has also discussed this connection between artist and viewer as a
conversation, an interchange of ideas, of human beings coming together to talk, listen, and learn from one another.

Feminist Methodology

Although there is no specific methodology that is considered feminist, researchers use those techniques by which the silenced voices of women and other powerless groups can be articulated within the context of the dominant culture. Critical theorists have attempted to destabilize ideologies, systems of representation, and assumed notions of the natural order of things. Feminists methods have focused on women's experiences. In contrast to the impartial, detached modernist perspective, they have recognized that women's knowledge is grounded in their experiences as persons who have a gendered and asymmetrical relationship to power in society. They have also celebrated women's lives as the spaces in which women have been able to articulate their views of the world (Wolff, 1990). "There is no doubt that femininity is an oppressive condition, yet women live it to different purposes and feminist analyses are currently concerned to explore not only its limits but the concrete ways women negotiate and refashion that position" (Pollock, 1988, p. 12). By focusing on women's experiences, feminists look at women as actors in creating their own destinies.

The anthropological method of ethnography as qualitative research has been more acceptable to feminist researchers than the quantitative methods of the hard sciences because ethnography reduces the distance between the researcher and the researched, bringing experiences into focus from a personal rather than a universal perspective. Instead of the search for an objective, absolute truth, the purpose of
qualitative research is to understand the meaning of experience from the perspective of the person involved (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Ethnographic methods of discovering meaning through dialogue fit a feminist style of research because they encourage relationships and caring which are major components in how women view the world, and because the respondent has a more active role in the research process (Fonrow & Cook, 1991). Qualitative methods of research recognize the subjectivity of the researched, and their ability to act, define, and value themselves as fully human. This is compatible with feminist methods of building theory to confront social issues and of learning to perceive political, economic, and social contradictions. "People who view themselves as fully human, as subjects, become activists, no matter how limited the sphere of their activism may be" (Collins, 1991).

**Interviewing as qualitative research.** Interviewing was selected as the primary strategy to collect information for the chapter on art criticism. This decision was based on my belief that the voices of African American artists are integral to understanding the social and cultural perspective from which they produce art. The intersection of feminist approaches to art criticism as a dialogue, a means of connection between viewers, the artist, and the works of art, and ethnography as a means of understanding the experiences of another person (in this case the artist) from that person's perspective was the rationale for using qualitative methodology. In much the same way that a viewer approaches a work of art that has been made by a specific individual with all of the experiences that person has had, and is able to be touched by the artist's worries, problems, joys and dreams, it is anticipated that the reader of these

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interviews may be able to identify with the experiences of these artists and gain new insights and perspectives. This research project was not set up, however, as a means for readers to merely respect differences and accept a plural world view. Grounded in feminist thought, my goal is to focus on the political nature of art and to learn how race influences artistic production among African American artists who have grown up, live, and work in the specific region of New Orleans, Louisiana.

The stories of individual lives can be a means to understand larger social issues and how these dynamics get played out in the everyday lives of these individuals (Spradley 1979). Since the persons I interviewed are members of a marginalized group whose words and perspectives of the world have been denied and kept outside of mainstream knowledge, these interviews can generate new perspectives on how their life circumstances and artistic development and production is viewed. It is through this process of taking the perspective of the other that political consciousness can be raised.

Semi-structured interviewing was chosen for this research project as a qualitative data-gathering technique that begins with a set of questions, but also allows for free interaction between the researcher and the interviewee (Spradley, 1979). Some questions were structured while other open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide answers based on their own experiences and in their own words. Ideas that guided the questions were: What kind of encouragement and cultural influences had they received? Were any limitations placed on their opportunities to learn about, produce or exhibit art? What did the artists want to express in their art? What values

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did these artists talk about in their lives and express through their art? (Refer to Appendix).

Research design

During the year in which this research was conducted several artists were selected as possible participants in the project. With the help of an anthropology professor and an artist I was able to set up interviews with two artists in May, 1996. The husband of one of the artists, who is also an artist, also contributed to the conversation. The artists I interviewed suggested other artists to talk to. Two more artists were contacted and interviewed in the spring of 1997. During the fall, 1996, and spring, 1997, I attempted to contact a folk artist and a quilter because I wanted to add that dimension to the research. However, the folk artist was not willing to be interviewed at that time, and I was never able to contact the person who knew some quilters in New Orleans. It was not until July, 1997, that I had the opportunity to meet some African American women who did quilting and by that time I had finished collecting data for this chapter.

The two photographers that I interviewed, Chandra McCormick Calhoun and Keith Calhoun, are basically self-taught artists but the other three have master's degrees in fine art. Sculptor and printmaker John T. Scott has received national recognition. Sheleen Jones is a sculptor as well as a painter who has just begun to do work in New Orleans. I also interviewed Louise Mouton Johnson, an artist who does printmaking and works with textiles. All of the artists I interviewed grew up in New
Orleans and are professionals who have achieved success with their art in the local New Orleans area.

Using internet resources I located some information on each of the artists before the interviews. John Scott and Chandra McCormick Calhoun were also featured in *Cultural Vistas*, a Louisiana NEA publication, which they both shared with me. Between the time that I interviewed John Scott and Chandra McCormick Calhoun and Keith Calhoun in the spring of 1996 and when I interviewed Sheleen Jones and Louise Mouton Johnson in the spring of 1997 and went back to Keith Calhoun in the summer of 1997, I had gained both a broader and deeper view of the issues I was dealing with. Not only did I have a greater understanding from the interviews themselves, I had learned more about African American art from my research for the aesthetics chapter of this dissertation. I had also finished the chapter on the history of African American art in New Orleans which gave me a much more personal connection to the artists in this region. Additionally, my research included books and articles on contemporary race relations in New Orleans as background for this chapter.

A tape recorder was borrowed from the Harry T. Williams Center at Louisiana State University (L.S.U.) for each interview session with the understanding that the center would have the original copy of the tapes and a copy of my transcripts of the tapes for the L.S.U. library. Each artist signed an interviewee release form. As I finished transcribing each interview I sent a copy to the artist for any changes they might wish to make.
Prior to the first interview, I composed questions that I hoped would give me the information that was needed. I wanted to know something about the artists’ lives and experiences as well as about their art. I divided my questions into the areas of experiences and influences on the artist, and the meaning and value they attribute to their art. Additionally I wanted information that would help me understand how their social position as Black Americans had influenced their art. This was a delicate area, and one that was difficult for myself, as a White person, to ask about. However, I felt that all of the artists were very sincere in trying to help me understand what I needed to know. After each interview I reformulated my questions trying to make them the kinds of questions that would help me get the information I needed.

Analyzing and interpreting interviews. The purpose of the analysis/interpretation is to tease out what is considered to be meaningful in the interview data and to reorganize it so that the reader shares those insights. Analysis calls for separating the whole into parts for study, and interpretation clarifies the meaning by explaining or restating information. Two types of analysis were used on the interviews. Basic information was compiled for each artist. The data was then categorized by information that was relevant to each question. Questions were divided into natural categories of experiences, influences, interpretation, and valuation. Working from the premise that personal and social experiences influence artistic production, I further divided the information into the categories of (a) experiences and influences on the artist, and (b) meanings and value ascribed to their art.
Next the interview data was put through a coding process whereby it was grouped on the basis of interpretive similarities in meaning. This process generates patterns and themes within the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Key words and phrases were color blocked and then grouped into categories to see how the individual parts of the data presented patterns. Once relationships between units of data were created it was possible to see themes or patterns emerging from the data. The discovery of themes is based on three essential characteristics: (a) they recur frequently, (b) they link the data together, and (c) they explain much of the variety of the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

In comparing information and examining themes I have looked particularly at how race has been a factor in structuring the lives and work of these artists. I tried to find the expectations they came to have about themselves as they developed into practicing artists, the values that they want to communicate through art, and the value they ascribe to their work. The artists’ words guided my search for further information, such as the experience of segregation that John Scott described as "walking through a field of land mines," the history of the New Orleans schools and colleges that influenced the lives of all of the artists, the changing New Orleans economy and the movement of African American people from the plantation to the inner city described by Keith Calhoun, and the effects of integration of the lower ninth ward community that Keith and Chandra Calhoun discussed. In the process of writing about these artists, their lives and art, I have tried to stay true to their perceptions of the world and to weave themes together to present a picture of how race has
influenced the artistic production of five contemporary African American artists in
New Orleans, Louisiana.
CHAPTER 4

AFRICAN AMERICAN AESTHETIC VALUES

The position of African American people as a unique cultural group in society has contributed to values and beliefs that have influenced artistic production. The world view of Black Americans has been influenced by White American attitudes toward race as a biological construct signifying inferiority and suitability for roles of servitude. As a result, African Americans have been relegated to a separate class in society. Segregation in social situations such as housing, education, employment, and transportation have forced African Americans to create alternate life styles (Jackson, 1995) Cultural values that are distinctly African American have developed within these circumstances. African American people, however, have also assimilated American culture, its masculine dominance, White supremacist ideology, and consumerism (Nightingale, 1993) as well as its Christian and democratic ideals of political, social, legal, and economic justice and equality.

The devaluation of nonwhite people is embedded in Western culture. While European civilization and the form of its artistic production is considered the standard of excellence for both White and Black Americans, the acceptance of Western ideology produces a double consciousness in African Americans. To assimilate is to accept a kind of psychological violence to self-identity by accepting White superiority and Black inferiority. Furthermore, the acceptance of European American culture does not mean that African Americans are accepted in mainstream White society. Fine artists, for example, have been trained in Western art traditions but have seldom been
accepted into the gallery, museum, and art history institutions. While African Americans have continued to hold out hope that they will be afforded the benefits of democracy on the basis of their humanity, changing circumstances and racial attitudes have meant that Black experiences and ways of viewing the world have also changed. Artists, as products of African American culture, have been influenced by the same circumstances and reflect the same ideologies that have been voiced by African American leaders throughout history.

African American experiences are affected by the hope for participation in American democracy—equal treatment, self-definition, economic opportunity, and recognition of cultural achievement—and the challenges that the ideology of White supremacy poses to that hope. This subjective relationship to the White power structure has framed African American ideologies in terms of acculturation throughout history. In response to the hope or despair of their people, African American leaders have recommended either assimilation or the rejection of American culture and social structures. Some African American artists have adopted dominant artistic discourses, while others have subconsciously or self-consciously reached back to African American or African traditions. Regardless of styles or techniques, their artistic production is influenced and inspired by the experiences of being African American.

African American philosophy comes from African American experiences and how African American people think about their world and the ways they have adapted to it is reflected in their art as a visual expression of culture. Therefore an African American aesthetic does not simply reflect African cultural retentions, American
cultural assimilation, or African American cultural adaptations to social circumstances; rather it is a socio-historical blend of all these factors.

Although all African American people experience racism, they are not a monolithic group and there is not one African American experience. Diverse circumstances prior to emancipation led to differences in African cultural retentions and assimilation of European cultural beliefs as well as different political agendas. African cultural retentions were the strongest in large communities of plantation slaves. Webber (1978) estimates that approximately 50% of the slave population were members of large quarter communities throughout the South. Most slave quarters were located at a distance from the main house so that slaves seldom interacted with Whites outside of labor activities. When they did have contact, their experiences gave slaves little reason to expect equal treatment from Whites. These large separate communities provided for the transmission and blending of African values and the development of a unique African American cultural identity (Mintz & Price, 1976). That African American people had an awareness of their cultural uniqueness and separate identity as a group desiring self-determination apart from Whites is exemplified by maroon colonies of runaway slaves in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina. Many of the slave values identified by Webber (1978) correspond with recurring ideas in the writings of Black nationalists, i.e. emphasis on the African past, pride in unique African standards of beauty, and interest in and support for the education of African American people (Carlisle, 1975).
Free Blacks in both the North and South and those slaves who worked in close proximity to Whites were more exposed to European American values. They did not have the same opportunities to retain contact with their African cultural heritage and were more likely to acculturate "notions of a possessive individualism" (Henry, 1990, p. 10). These more acculturated African Americans also suffered the economic, political and social oppression of racism but did not have the spiritual resources and cultural retentions found in larger Black communities.

The historical circumstances that accounted for various Black experiences resulted in socio-political ideologies ranging from assimilation—the development of an African American society within the American mainstream—to nationalism—the creation of an independent African American society and culture. African American assimilationists stress integration in American society and the adoption of European American cultural values as a way to obtain the same rights and opportunities as all citizens. Black nationalists believe that African Americans can overcome powerlessness and achieve self-determination by establishing political and economic solidarity and cultural pride. This may be seen as a measure to gain power in order to achieve the rights of American citizenship denied by the dominant White society. Separatists believe that there is no hope of achieving equal treatment in the United States and that Black liberation and control of the destiny of African Americans must take place outside of White-dominated society (Carlisle, 1975). At various historical periods assimilationist and nationalist ideas have fused to form African American ideologies. For example, in the late 19th century, African American leaders stressed
both economic solidarity in the support of Black businesses and the cultural assimilation of Victorian values as a means of gaining full citizenship (Meier, 1988). Black nationalism has also been closely associated with religion which provides a forum and a model for separate identity and collective self-determination (Tate, 1991).

Historically African American leaders have recognized this sense of a "nation within a nation" and the struggle for economic self-determination, cultural pride, and political power as well as the struggle for inclusion in American democratic political processes and economic opportunities. The desire for self-determination did not imply that African Americans did not desire to participate in mainstream society, rather that they were acknowledging the political realities of racism (Tate, 1991). Some leaders who felt they were Americans first favored the adoption of European culture, Christian principles, laissez-faire capitalism, and the political and legal practices of American democracy; while others favored group solidarity, economic independence, and political solidarity. Still others rejected Christianity and a White God, capitalism, and the superiority of European American culture. Those who felt there was no hope for equitable treatment from Whites recommended emigration to separate Black states or countries. Additionally tactics for African American liberation have included moral suasion, accommodation, litigation, nonviolent direct action, petitions to other nations, rebellion, revolution, and war. Political agendas have also adapted to historical events and White racial attitudes. Some leaders who favored integrationist or nationalist ideas later developed their thinking to include ideas from the other camp since the two ideas are not mutually exclusive (Meier, 1988).
Integrationist and Nationalist Periods

Integrationist ideas flowered during periods of hope that American democracy and Christian treatment would be extended to African Americans. Black nationalist periods occurred when African Americans experienced intense disappointment (Bracey, Meier, & Rudwick, 1970). The first nationalist period, 1790-1820, followed the War for American Independence from England in 1776 when African Americans hoped that freedom and human rights would be extended to them. Disillusionment set in after the Constitutional Convention of 1787 recognized slavery and when the first fugitive slave law was passed in 1793. The second period during the 1840s followed the anticipation that the anti-slavery movements would effect national changes. However, the tough fugitive slave law of 1850 convinced many free Blacks in the North to flee, and the 1857 Dred Scott decision only confirmed the daily experiences of most African Americans—that they had no rights which White Americans were bound to respect (Bracey, Meier, & Rudwick, 1970). The third nationalist period, from 1880 to 1920, followed a time of hope generated by emancipation and the first civil rights and voting rights bills. However, those rights eroded with the end of Reconstruction and the construction of a legal system to disenfranchise and segregate African Americans in 1896. The 1920s marked a high point in nationalism due to the influence of Marcus Garvey on the disillusioned urban masses and the first flowering of pride in Africa and African American cultural heritage. Integrationist ideology was dominant during the Great Depression and World War II. The hope generated by government intervention in job and welfare programs influenced the Civil Rights Movement of the
early 1960s. Nationalism emerged again in 1955 in urban areas where there was justified skepticism in the promise of American life. The Black Power National Conference in 1966 indicated disillusion with continuing White hostility and economic deprivation (Bracey, Meier, & Rudwick, 1970).

**Ideological Foundations in Slavery**

Various African cultures fused on American soil among a people who were bonded by slavery. Even the situation of the early free people of color fell outside of the democratic ideals that White Americans perceived as their sole heritage in the New World. Distinctions among African Americans arose due to their social circumstances, but regardless of individual experiences, an indigenous group of Americans with an African heritage and influenced by dominant European American traditions and values was formed (Mintz & Price, 1992).

Africans in the New World turned to resources from the cultural memory of their various African ethnic groups to adapt to new and varied social situations. Conscious of the masters' overarching cultural, economic, and political power, African American people had to generate social forms that would be adaptive. They were able to develop a unique culture and to meet power with subtle resistance, escape, and sometimes physical force in their demand to be recognized as human and to control their own destiny. The ability to fuse traditions and values from various African cultures and to creatively adapt what was essential from both African and European cultures played an enormous role in the survival of African Americans (Mintz & Price, 1992).
The values of African Americans who lived in large slave quarter communities have been described as deep undercurrents of African heritage which "both adapted to the contours of the American landscape and reshaped each bank it touched" (Webber, 1978, p. 60). Slaves (a) shared a sense of community, identification, and solidarity tied by their common struggle; (b) believed in a God who intended all men to be free as part of what they considered true Christianity and that God would punish those who professed Christianity and yet owned slaves; (c) thought of themselves as morally superior to Whites; (d) recognized the superior political power Whites held and their potential for harming Blacks, although they did not acknowledge this power as legitimate; (e) gave paramount importance to family ties and considered the separation of family members as one of the greatest hardships of life in bondage; (f) believed in the spiritual nature of the universe and its connection to the physical world; (g) had a great longing for literacy; and (h) desired freedom, not simply escape from slavery, but freedom from abuse, hunger, poverty, and the freedom to participate in family life, religious worship, and self-employment. Whites tried to inculcate servility in their slaves, however, those values were rejected by African Americans who struggled "with considerable success to create and maintain their own separate system of values and ways of understanding and dealing with the world" (Webber, 1978, p. 153).

Religion played an essential role in the slave community and insured the survival of African culture in America. During the eighteenth century slave owners felt they were justified in enslaving a pagan people and resisted the efforts of missionaries to Christianize the slaves. Later, however, racist thought changed and
slaves were given Christian instruction with the hope that they would internalize obedience to their masters. Slaves, however, conducted their own worship, much of which was infused with African religious influences (Stuckey, 1987).

Bishop Daniel Payne of the African Methodist Episcopal Church attended a bush meeting of Black Christians in Philadelphia in 1878 and was disturbed at seeing them do a dance in a circle known as the ring shout. He did not realize that the shout was a means of contact and respect for ancestral spirits based on religious rituals in Africa that are often accompanied by sacred dance. Circular dances accompany ritual in Dahomey, and the Kongo people place a cross in a circle to indicate the four moments of the sun in order to perform a counterclockwise dance in an ancestor ritual (Stuckey, 1987). The ring shout is an example of how the religious rituals of many African cultures fused and helped to bond the African American community. The resistance of slaves to the White Christian value of servility and their tenacity in retaining African customs and values indicate a sense of group identity, pride, and self-determination.

**Aesthetic values.** Spirituals sung by slaves in their secret worship meetings, secular songs that were part of daily living conditions such as work and special events such as birth and death, folk tales related to traditional African religion, and secular tales of the trickster all reinforced African American social values (Stuckey, 1987). Franklin (1984) posits that the essential values of slaves as indicated by their music and literature were survival with dignity, resistance against oppression, religious self-determination, and freedom.
Much of the art and material culture slaves made for themselves has not survived, although their traditions have been passed on (Vlach, 1978). Artistic production for slave owners, i.e. architecture, furniture, iron work, pottery, and quilts, was usually in European styles. Some quilts have survived that were made for the sole use of the African American community and can be seen as an example of the visual expression of social values.

The quilts of Harriet Powers, born a slave in Georgia in 1837, display some of the symbols, style, and functions that may indicate the value of artistic production to enslaved African Americans. Similar to the squared patterns of fabric and depiction of characters on Fon wall hangings in Dahomey, Powers' Bible quilts have three rows of scenes with each scene placed within a square outlined by narrow strips. Powers used abstracted humans and animals similar to those seen in Fon applique. Dahomey tapestries illustrate stories from oral tradition and history and Powers' quilts are a record of Bible stories and historical events that are also documented in scientific records of the time. Unable to read, Powers would not have had access to these records. It is possible that she was a preacher or teacher (griot), using her quilts to pass down historic and religious knowledge through oral tradition.

In addition to their use as bed covering and pallets for young children, African American quilts had functions similar to African textiles. In Africa, textiles are more than mere clothing and often contain cultural symbolism which can be "read." One of Powers' quilts depicts crosses in the upper left corner in which the four moments of the sun are patterned exactly as they are by the Bakongo (Stuckey, 1987). The
symbolism indicates that quilts were used in religious ceremonies such as baptisms and burials, as they would have been in Africa. Powers’ description of the crosses as a Biblical reference to Job indicates a syncretism of Christian and African religious ideas based on African American experiences.

Few quilts survived slavery, but quilting traditions did. The very fact that women who were worked as field hands in addition to doing domestic chores for their families and who had limited access to materials, time or space, were able to engage in artistic production and to pass on the skills to their children indicates the value of art in their lives. Quilts were meant to be functional as bed clothing for families and as texts for the transmission of historical and religious information. They were a means of maintaining pride in African cultural traditions. Most importantly, the Powers’ quilts are an expression of the cultural values of group survival and self-definition.

1780-1820

Following the American Revolution, at a time when it seemed as though democracy would not be extended to African Americans, Paul Cuffe (1759-1817) initiated the idea of emigration to Liberia. Cuffe, a shipping merchant, was originally interested in emigration for the "Christian redemption" of Africa. He set up shipping trade with Africa and hoped to help African Americans escape the difficulties they faced in the United States. When the White American Colonization Society proclaimed that the purpose of their organization was not to interfere with slavery, but, rather, that the deportation of free Blacks would help secure slave property, most
African American leaders voiced opposition to colonization. However, throughout the 18th and 19th centuries African American people continued to seek refuge in areas where they would be allowed to determine their own destiny. Between 1824 and 1828, 13,000 free Blacks emigrated to Haiti. Some also settled in planned communities such as Nashoba, Tennessee and Wilberforce in Canada (Carlisle, 1975).

The goal of at least four of the 65 slave conspiracies in the United States was to create an independent Black state (Carlisle, 1975). Two uprisings occurred during this period: the revolts of Gabriel Prosser in Virginia in 1800 and Denmark Vesey in South Carolina in 1822. Prosser was a religious leader in the slave community, and Vesey was a free Black carpenter who had purchased his freedom and was not content that others were in bondage (Stuckey, 1987). This tie between free Blacks and slaves, religion and the value African Americans accorded freedom and equality, and the concept of Black autonomy were also expressed by David Walker, a spokesman and organizer who called on his people throughout the world to resist oppression.

In 1785, in Wilmington, North Carolina, David Walker's mother had to register herself and her son as free Negroes. They were required to wear a badges with the word FREE, were circumscribed by certain laws or Black Codes, and were subject to a great deal of White hostility (Stuckey, 1987). Having experienced the fragmentation and powerlessness of slaves and free Blacks in the South, Walker advocated the formation of an association which would work for the best interests of all African Americans. Walker's *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World, But in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America*, published in 1829,
established much of the substance of Black nationalist theory in the United States (Stuckey, 1987). A central theme in the Appeal is that of a unified struggle by Blacks themselves for their freedom. Walker thought that, if necessary, force should be used as a means for African Americans to gain the rights guaranteed by the constitution. He discussed educational opportunities for Black children, referred to the need for land, promoted self-confidence, and established the rationale for Pan-Africanism. "Walker's pride in blackness, his respect for the achievements of Blacks in the ancient world, and his belief in African moral character and the need for African autonomy provided elements of cultural nationalism" (Stuckey, 1987, p. 135). A devout African Methodist, Walker recognized the distinctiveness of Black Christianity; but, characteristic of the time, he felt that African peoples would become "civilized" when they accepted Christianity (Stuckey, 1987). Walker assessed the essence of European character to be a desire for power and a willingness to use people of color for financial gain and identified greed as a major force in human oppression, thereby indicting capitalism as well as racism (Stuckey, 1987). Reaction to the Appeal caused a storm, particularly in slave states, and Walker died of mysterious circumstances in 1830.

**Aesthetic values.** Joshua Johnston, whom historians believe was a free Black, worked as a painter in the early 19th century in Baltimore. Although information about Johnston's identity is incomplete and his work is in the accepted limner mode of the period, two African American portraits have been identified as being in his style. The portraits are believed to be of the Reverend Daniel Coker of the AME church and
Abner Coker, a lay preacher and co-founder of the AME church (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). Daniel Coker established the African Institution of Baltimore with Paul Cuffe and emigrated to Liberia in 1820 with 90 African Americans, establishing a colony at Freetown (Carlisle, 1975). Johnston’s portraits of these prominent African Americans indicate that he probably was Black, and that he was aware of the nationalist ideology of the time.

1820-1860

The 1831 revolt instigated by slave preacher Nat Turner in Virginia sent out shock waves among southern Whites, who closed ranks around the slavery issue so that anyone who disagreed had to remain silent or leave. A reign of terror followed, with restricted mobility of slaves and efforts to reduce the interaction between slaves and free Blacks (Stuckey, 1987). Underground methods of bringing slaves North were filled with danger; however, it has been estimated that between 1810 and 1850 the South lost 100,000 slaves on the underground railroad (Franklin & Moss, 1994). In the North, segregation laws and mob attacks on African American communities led thousands of former slaves to take up residence in Canada (Carlisle, 1975). With the formation of antislavery movements in the 1830s, there was renewed hope for the improvement of African American social status; however, it was not until the 1840s that White Northern public opinion turned against slavery (Stuckey, 1987). The South counterattacked with new arguments that slavery was a positive good for slaves and for society as a whole. Tough fugitive slave laws were proposed for the return of human property from free states (Carlisle, 1975).
The Negro Convention Movement advocated by David Walker began in 1830 as a forum for African American protest. The movement was dominated by advocates for moral suasion as a means of social advancement and liberation (Stuckey, 1994). Frederick Douglass (1817-1895), a former slave and Black abolitionist, belonged to the tradition of David Walker in that he felt that Blacks should be accorded their rights as American citizens. However, unlike Walker, he advocated moral suasion rather than force. A rift developed between African American separatists who despaired of gaining the rights of citizenship, and abolitionists who thought that concentration on emigration would distract from the work in the United States. Physician and journalist Martin Delany (1812-1885) opposed the American Colonization Society but believed that African Americans should have a self-governing territory outside the United States because they would never achieve their rights in the United States.

At the 1843 Negro Convention, former slave and clergyman, Henry Highland Garnet (1815-1882) failed to win majority support for his proposal of slave insurrection due largely to Douglass' opposition—although they both opposed emigration. Garnet felt rebellion was more likely and possible than emigration. Fundamental to Garnet’s position was his feeling that even when freed, the masses of African Americans would continue to endure racial prejudice without a revolution in land ownership (Stuckey, 1985). However, on the eve of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law and with the gaining of nation status by Liberia, Garnet changed his mind about emigration and Douglass joined Garnet in his belief that emancipation was not likely without a resort to violence. While Douglass recognized the need for group solidarity,
he opposed colonization and the doctrine that the races should be perpetually separate (Moses, 1978). The Cincinnati Negro Convention in 1850 voted four to one against emigration while fear generated by the fugitive slave laws caused a flood of African Americans to leave the United States for Canada (Carlisle, 1975).

In 1855, Garnet organized the African Civilization Society with the idea that African Americans would bring Western civilization and Christianity to Africa, in accordance with the belief of many African American leaders of this period that Africans were uncivilized and heathen (Moses, 1978). Garnet proposed planting cotton in Africa as a means of destroying the Southern slave-based economy, and he hoped that Blacks could establish an independently-owned international shipping line (Carlisle, 1975).

In 1859 abolitionist John Brown led an assault on Harper’s Ferry to further instigate slave insurrection; James Redpath, an associate of Brown, worked to send Blacks to Haiti; and Martin Delany sailed for Africa with the idea of establishing a colony. Although the ideas of nationalism were strengthened by Delany, Garnet, and Redpath, the Civil War vindicated Douglass’s position of alliance with antislavery Whites and remaining in the United States.

Aesthetic values. Few African Americans were fine artists during the period before emancipation. The unrelenting toil and material deprivations of slavery made the time for artistic endeavors other than utilitarian objects almost impossible. The conditions of many free Blacks were equally impoverished. Additionally, it was believed that African American people were not capable of fine art. A few African
Americans, however, were able to become fine artists. One of them, Robert Duncanson (1823-1872), was a free Black who grew up and was educated in Canada with his Scottish father and later moved to Cincinnati to be with his African American mother. Living in Wilberforce, Ontario, and in Cincinnati, Ohio, Duncanson had probably personally witnessed the arrival of fugitive slaves and knew first-hand the precarious position of escaped slaves who sought sanctuary in emigration. In 1841 when he arrived there, Cincinnati erupted in the worst racial violence in America prior to the Civil War, which resulted in death, destruction and the flight of many Black Americans (Bearden & Henderson, 1993).

Largely a self-taught artist, Duncanson was influenced by the Hudson River School painters, Thomas Cole and Asher B. Durand, as well as the genre works of William Sidney Mount and George Caleb Bingham (Lubin, 1994). While Duncanson’s work is stylistically identical to contemporary artists, Lubin (1994) contends that there are thematic consistencies within his oeuvre that suggest a different personal and social significance. Just as the fugitive slaves sang about crossing over Jordan to reach Canaan, Duncanson’s landscapes all contain a body of water to be crossed in order to enter the freedom of "pristine utopian worlds unblemished by human suffering" (Lubin, 1994, p. 119). Moreover, his paradises are places of peace and idleness. His painting, "The Land of the Lotos-Eaters" takes its subject from Tennyson’s poem, The Lotos-Eaters, which describes Ulysses’ sailors encounter with peaceful, idle people. Duncanson paints the meeting of Africans and Europeans, which might be interpreted as a group of African Americans going back to Africa.
His use of idleness may be read as a way to mock White stereotypes of Black laziness and to question the Western work ethic by "construing idleness as a blessed state" (Lubin, 1994, p.141). In his "criticism of the nature-defying, time-constricting, money-and-real-estate-focused world of capitalism," Duncanson was influenced by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Tennyson, and Karl Marx (Lubin, 1994, p.141), as well as by David Walker, Henry Garnet, and Martin Delany. Duncanson's depictions of shimmering land and peaceful, idle people can be seen as subtle attacks on the monopolization of public land which the majority of people, Black and White, worked but did not own (Lubin, 1994). The meaning of land would have been understood by Duncanson as necessary for the self-determination of the African American people just as it was for Henry Highland Garnet.

1860-1920

Although President Lincoln considered slavery wrong, he believed that the White and Black races could never live comfortably together and tried to win the support of African American leaders for deportation in 1862. Douglass and the abolitionists, however, wanted to see African Americans incorporated into the body politic and receive the full rights of citizenship. Although integration into American society was the expressed ideology of African Americans during the Civil War and Reconstruction, the hostility of White society forced them to think of themselves as a group apart (Carlisle, 1975). Following the war, masses of freedmen focused their attention on becoming full-fledged citizens; but, without the kinds of experiences with White Americans that would encourage them to expect full citizenship, they also
supported separatist plans. In 1865 the primary concerns of the newly freed slaves were the desires for education, to participate in the political process, and to work their own land (Meier, 1988).

The optimism generated by what African American leaders considered "the war to free the slaves" inspired the 1864 Negro Convention to demand abolition and political equality (Meier, 1988). In 1866, with the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment, Black leaders argued for land grants and a specific amendment guaranteeing the right to vote, indicating their concerns for economic opportunity and political rights. With the Fifteenth Amendment in place in 1869, they turned their attention to economic concerns—the right of working-class African Americans to organize, to learn trades, and to become capitalist entrepreneurs. Reconstruction was a period of African American political participation. Due to rising White violence, the withdrawal of Union troops in 1877, and state laws disenfranchising Black voters, however, leaders began to realize they had lost the war for political equality and concentrated on economic and educational opportunities (Meier, 1988).

While African American leaders considered political and civil rights the most important goals, the masses of newly freed slaves equated freedom first with land ownership, then education, and lastly with political rights (Meier, 1988). Without political power, however, African Americans were subject to violence and economic exploitation as the plantation system assumed the new forms of sharecropping and peonage. In the Georgia and South Carolina Sea Islands there were cooperative efforts...
to buy land, but in the rest of the South Whites still owned most of the land and there was little industry to provide employment for Blacks (Franklin & Moss, 1994).

Several grass-roots mass movements sprung up under popular leadership, proposing idealistic utopian hopes that were crushed. Disillusioned after the collapse of Reconstruction and the Freedmen's Bureau, Benjamin Singleton and Henry Adams led a mass exodus to Kansas in 1878. Later segregation laws in Kansas led Singleton to argue for Canadian and Liberian migration, and he organized the United Transatlantic Society for African Emigration (Carlisle, 1975). In another effort, Edwin McCabe and A.T. Hall petitioned congress for land in Oklahoma to establish a Black state. Twenty-five Black towns were set up in 1890; but by 1910 African Americans in Oklahoma were disenfranchised, segregation was in place, and, in spite of economic achievement, White settlers were physically attacking, lynching and terrorizing Black Oklahomans (Carlisle, 1975).

The Reconstruction values of political and civil rights, land ownership, thrift and industry shifted in 1877 to racial solidarity, self-help, and race pride. In 1890, the peak of lynching and violence until World War I, most Black leaders felt that acquiring land, middle-class virtues, and wealth would prove African Americans were worthy of the franchise (Meier, 1988). Frederick Douglass, until his death in 1895, stressed integration and continued to protest against disenfranchisement, educational and legal discrimination, and economic exploitation. He considered race a gift from God, not something to be either proud of or ashamed of, and said that "a nation within a nation is an anomaly. There can be but one American nation . . . and we are
Americans" (Meier, 1988, p. 77). Douglass also disagreed with Black leaders who believed that African American people needed to prove their worth when he asserted that human freedom and dignity were natural rights, not privileges to be earned (Moses, 1978).

In 1874 Alexander Crummell (1819-1898) returned to the United States from Liberia, where he had served as an Episcopal minister. Typical of the influences of Victorian culture on Black nationalist ideology, Crummell believed that Africans were lacking in civilization. He thought that Christianity had been an important cause of the intellectual and material development in Europe and that it could also lift Africans from their "barbaric state" (Moses, 1978). In America he continued to promote the idea that African Americans should be Christianized and civilized and that elite Blacks should uplift the masses by helping them adopt the middle-class White cultural values of economic competition and proper education in European American language and history. Crummell did not believe emigration would solve American problems; but he did promote racial unity and promoted an international Black-owned shipping line. In 1897 he founded the American Negro Academy for the education of an elite who would be responsible for the moral uplift of the masses of Black Americans (Moses, 1978).

Another minister to Liberia from the Danish West Indies, Edward Blyden, promoted a different version of nationalism. He was interested in the value of African culture, particularly communal property and cooperative effort, questioned the utility of Christianity, and was interested in Islam as a way to unite Africans (Carlisle, 1975).
Blyden visited the United States briefly in 1889 to promote interest in emigration and met with AME Bishop Henry McNeil Turner. Turner, who saw no worthwhile future for African Americans in the United States, felt that "God had brought them to America to enable them to absorb the Christianity and the mechanical skills of the White race, which they were to use in the religious and cultural redemption of the ancestral continent" (Meier, 1988, p. 66). The ambivalent feelings of Black leaders toward "pagan" Africans may be understood as the assimilation of the White attitudes which had served to justify slavery.

Cultural assimilation ideology also dominated the National Association of Colored Women. Established in 1896, these activists did not question the superiority of White middle-class values or way of life, although they were concerned with gender oppression among different classes of African American women (Giddings, 1984).

The theory of class oppression of people of all races also began to form during this period. As interest in the economic development of African Americans took precedence over political and civil rights, T. Thomas Fortune, Black editor of the New York Age, pressed for economic solidarity among the Black and White races. Fortune maintained that the working classes, which produced the wealth of the world, were exploited by the wealthy, and that the basis of economic exploitation was land monopoly (Meier, 1988).

In addition to this range of assimilationist and nationalist ideas among Black leaders at the end of the 19th century, there was also a range of thought on the methods of achieving civil and political rights in the United States. Some, such as
newspaper writers, Fortune and Ida Wells Barnett, argued that African Americans should arm themselves for protection, while others thought that meekness and docility would make them more deserving of their constitutional rights. The person who would assume the leadership of this period, Booker T. Washington, harbored no hope that Whites would ever change their racist attitudes and therefore adopted a conciliatory approach in order to gain favors for Black Americans (Howard-Pitney, 1990).

In the 1895 address by Washington to the Atlanta Industrial Exposition, he spoke of the economic and moral progress of a backward race that would lead to the attainment of constitutional rights. His expressed philosophy of accommodation was meant to garner the good will of Southern Whites who agreed that industrial education would ensure a docile and stable labor force. Washington's power in White philanthropic and political circles enhanced his prestige and power in the African American community (Meier, 1976). His ideas of economic nationalism included industrial training in the South, support for Black towns such as Boley, Oklahoma and Mound Bayou, Mississippi, economic support for the Afro-American Reality Company that developed Harlem, and a National Business League (Carlisle, 1975). He supported laissez-faire economics and promoted the patronage of Black-owned business. Washington's overt method was one of docility, but he also covertly attacked racial discrimination in legal fights against railroad segregation and disenfranchisement (Meier, 1988).
A year after Washington's address, the U.S. Supreme Court decision of Plessy vs. Ferguson upheld the doctrine of separate but equal; and by 1901 state laws required poll taxes and educational requirements that disenfranchised most Black voters. Between 1895 and 1915, African American status deteriorated as White opinion became more extreme and mob violence escalated. Faced with increasing prejudice and discrimination Black Americans turned to self-help and solidarity; as they were disenfranchised, they turned to economic progress; and as integrated opportunities closed, they turned to segregated institutions (Meier, 1988).

By 1905, as the situation deteriorated for African Americans, it became increasing clear that Washington's program was failing. As a result of her investigative reporting, Barnett found that lynching was a direct result of any economic gains Blacks made in the South (Giddings, 1984). This meant that the values of hard work and thrift espoused by Washington as a means of gaining citizenship rights in reality contributed to racial hatred and ritualized violence. In 1908 Ghanaian Alfred Sam took a group of emigrants to Liberia from Boley, Oklahoma, where hopes for self-determination had been shattered by increasing segregation and lynching (Carlisle, 1975). W.E.B. DuBois, who initially supported Washington, became increasingly alarmed that he was using his political leverage to inhibit free expression (DuBois, 1940). Publication of Souls of Black Folk in 1903 helped to crystallize growing anti-Washington sentiment. DuBois articulated concern that the masses of African Americans, whom he felt could benefit from higher forms
of education, were receiving education that only perpetuated the current social order (Stuckey, 1987).

Both Washington and DuBois promoted racial solidarity; however, DuBois' philosophy of basic economic rights for everyone differed from Washington's belief in trained laborers and individual entrepreneurship. DuBois began to believe that not only African Americans, but Africans and other colonized people of color, as well as White workers, were exploited by White capitalism (Meier, 1988). He also thought that, without political rights, African Americans, who were primarily working-class people, could not secure economic opportunities (Meier, 1988). With the Niagara Movement, organized by DuBois and William Monroe Trotter in 1905, African American thinking took a turn toward attaining civil and political rights by means of legal action. Following the 1908 Springfield, Illinois, riot, members of the all-Black Niagara Movement joined White progressives to form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Primarily a legal organization, the NAACP achieved its first important victory in 1915 when the Supreme Court declared the Oklahoma grandfather clause unconstitutional (Meier, 1988).

Washington, who attained popularity among the masses of African Americans, represented ideals of economic advancement within the American system; but DuBois articulated the ambivalent loyalties toward race and nation—"an American, A Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body" (DuBois, 1903, p. 3). DuBois viewed African Americans as a nation: Americans in birth, language, political ideals, and religion, yet rejected by the White
majority; and Negro in spiritual ideas, culture, and intellectual endowments (Stuckey, 1994). DuBois originally accepted Crummell's ideas that a college-educated elite would raise African Americans to a civilized state but later shifted his faith from the "talented tenth" to the Black working class. In his work as editor of the NAACP journal, Crisis, DuBois used his editorials to develop an identifiable Black culture and pride in that culture and in Black standards of personal beauty (Moses, 1978).

DuBois' cultural nationalism sprang partially from the literary-religious tradition of "Ethiopianism," that had developed among English-speaking Africans and found expression among slave preachers, folklore, and song, as well as in the sermons of the urban elite (Moses, 1978). Ethiopianism refers to a biblical prophecy from Psalms 68:31, that Africa would rise as the West declined and that Black men would one day rule the world: "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God" (Moses, 1978, p. 157). Bishop Daniel Payne delivered a sermon in 1862 in which he predicted that slavery would sink like Pharaoh. Francis Ellen Watkins Harper, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, and W.E.B. DuBois wrote poetry predicting Ethiopia's glory (Moses, 1978). DuBois respected European culture, but he had a special reverence for the spiritual quality of African American people who expressed their despair and faith in spirituals and folklore. Much of his writing in education, economics, politics, and culture refers to his "belief that people of African ancestry have spiritual, artistic, and psychological qualities that distinguish them from Europeans" (Stuckey, 1987, p. 273). DuBois respected these differences but encouraged equality in opportunities.
DuBois also recognized the connection between Black oppression in America and Africa. While pre-Civil War leaders such as David Walker expressed insight into the group-status of free Blacks in relation to slavery, DuBois saw European colonization of Africa in relation to the racial status of Black Americans. DuBois was influenced by Crummell's belief that when Africans were Christianized, Africa would be a source of pride for African Americans; but DuBois' ideas about Africa were based on romantic and mystical conceptions of an African race. As economic opportunity motivated the migration of Black Southerners, few Black leaders, except DuBois, recognized the repository of strength in the rural masses of African Americans who were about to meet in Northern city ghettos (Moses, 1978).

After World War I there was a general sense of disbelief in old values. The information that secret treaties for markets in Asia and Africa had been the primary motives for this willful destruction alienated millions. For African American leaders who had believed in the greatness of European civilization, the war exposed Christianity and "civilization" at its ugliest. World War I signalled the end to programs of moral uplift as Black race-conscious artists and literati began to discover the virtues of the masses (Meier, 1988).

**Aesthetic values.** Factors influencing the cultural development of slaves had been both the common values among the many African ethnic groups and the master's overarching power--both physical and psychological--over their lives. Songs, folk tales, and material culture indicated subtle resistance to domination and the struggle to define their own lives (Franklin, 1984). With Emancipation the legal status of African
Americans changed while their material conditions remained much the same. The importance of the African-Christian religious experience provided cultural continuity. Freedom, however, presented new options and alternatives, and the European American values of individualism, material acquisition, and upward mobility also became theoretical possibilities (Henry, 1990).

Changing life styles, resulting in the assimilation of these American secular values, became manifest in the rise of gospel music. In the slave quarter spirituals and work songs could be traced to an African world view that the world of the ancestors, the unborn, the gods, and the living are connected so that the spiritual is integral to everyday experiences. Slaves used the call and response techniques of African communal music in which a leader defines and improvises words and melody that the group repeats (Roberts, 1972). The blues continued to emphasize these African elements of improvisation, call and response patterns, and polyrhythms. Blues themes represented everyday experiences and often invoked voodoo or conjure, reflecting the African world view of the connection between everyday material reality and the spiritual world. Gospel music, according to Henry (1990), symbolized a move toward assimilation because its other-worldly content was adopted from European American Christian music. Gospel music, in contrast to the spirituals, was written down and included the style of voices singing in harmony. African musical retentions, however, continued to influence worship, especially in small urban storefront churches where the melody was usually improvised upon and singing in unison resulted in heterophony (Jackson, 1995). In the attempt to put slavery behind them, many urban African
American church-goers refused to sing the old spirituals and considered the blues "devil music" (Henry, 1990). The rise of gospel music reflected the hope for inclusion in American society. On the other hand, the blues indicated that the masses of African Americans also questioned the Christian concept of God and the other-worldly focus of the churches (Henry, 1990).

Four fine artists also represent the cultural values of this period: Edward Bannister (1828-1901), Edmonia Lewis (1845-1909), Henry Osawa Tanner (1859-1937), and Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller (1877-1968). Edward Bannister was born in a New Brunswick village in Canada across the St. Croix River from Maine. His father was a Black man from Barbados and his mother was of Scottish descent. Bannister's parents died when he was young, and he lived for a time with a wealthy White lawyer. In his struggle to become an artist, Bannister was largely self-taught although he had some anatomy lessons with William Rimmer in 1863. He was influenced by the style of the French Barbizon School because it allowed him to express his compassion for working people and his spiritual connection to nature (Bearden & Henderson, 1993).

Bannister married Christiana Carteaux, a businesswoman of Narragansett Indian and African American heritage who owned hairstyling shops in both Boston and Providence. While the Bannisters lived in Boston, it was the center of antislavery sentiment. In the 1850s Bannister work was known in the African American community. His first commission was an oil painting, The Ship Outward Bound (1854), for Dr. John DeGrasse, a leading citizen of Boston's Black community. This
painting would have provided a powerful symbol to African Americans in Boston who watched as escaped slaves sailed from Boston harbor back to their Southern owners (Holland, 1993). During this period he also painted a straightforward portrayal of a young Black newspaper vendor. During the Civil War the Bannisters raised funds for the equal pay of Black soldiers. Bannister also painted portraits of abolitionist leader William Lloyd Garrison and Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, who died leading Massachusetts' Black Fifty-fourth Army Regiment.

Following the war, the racial climate in Boston changed with the influx of newly freed immigrants from the South. Working-class Whites openly vented their hostility toward African Americans who were perceived as competitors for jobs and housing (Holland, 1993). In 1869 the Bannisters moved to Providence where the artist focused more and more on landscapes. As a Black artist in Rhode Island, Bannister depended for his survival on a White aristocracy that had become wealthy through the Atlantic slave trade and as a result participated in American industrialization. Thus his subject matter became more restrained.

Bannister's landscapes do not have the polished romantic views of the Hudson River School; rather, he used bold and sketchy brushwork to suggest mood and emotion (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). Working during a time of deteriorating race relations in America, Bannister's art has been interpreted as implicit protest against economic and social injustice. For example, Jennings (1993) suggests that Hay Gatherers was painted in the area of Rhode Island's largest plantations and that some of the African American laborers are children. In Approaching Storm the small figure
of a man hurries to find shelter as dark clouds gather overhead and the wind blows.

Although this is a painting of the natural beauty of his New England environment, it may indicate violence in the form of lynchings and race riots, legal disenfranchisement and segregation that were gathering to limit the lives of African Americans once again.

That Bannister continued to be conscious of racial conditions can be seen from two of his friendships. George Downing, a wealthy Black Boston businessman who worked tirelessly for civil rights, "looking forward to a time when Negroes would be fully accepted" (Meier, 1988, p. 35), was a lifelong friend of Bannister. John Hope, active in the religious and political life of Providence and later president of Atlanta Baptist College and founding member of the Niagara Movement, was also a friend of Bannister.

Edmonia Lewis was born to a mother of Mississauga Indian and African American descent and an African American father. Her parents died when she was young, and Lewis spent her childhood with her mother's family near Niagara Falls, a major crossing point into Canada for fugitives from slavery. When her brother became relatively wealthy in the California gold rush, he sent Lewis to Oberlin College in 1859. It was at Oberlin that Lewis took drawing classes and became interested in sculpture. Oberlin was a major abolitionist center at the time, and the town was involved in John Brown's attack on Harper's Ferry. "Brown's image as a kind of avenging angel, formed at Oberlin, was to be important in Lewis's artistic development" (Bearden & Henderson, 1993, p. 57). In her third year at Oberlin College, Lewis was accused, although later vindicated, of poisoning two of her White
classmates. She was beaten into unconsciousness and left for dead in the snow by unknown attackers. This incident caused Lewis to be dropped from her classes at Oberlin, and her mental anguish persisted for years. Leaving Oberlin Lewis worked as a sculptor in Boston where she was befriended by the abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and Lydia Maria Child. Lewis maintained a studio two doors from Bannister (Holland, 1993); and on May 28, 1863, she also watched the Fifty-fourth Black Massachusetts Regiment, under the leadership of Robert Gould Shaw, leave Boston for battle. Just as Bannister painted Shaw’s portrait, Lewis sculpted a bust of the hero which she presented to his family. She also sold reproductions to raise money for the equal pay of Black Union soldiers.

At the close of the Civil War in 1865, Lewis sailed for Italy, determined to learn to sculpt in marble. In Europe she departed from her former realist style and joined the dominant Neoclassical art movement. Except for several visits to the United States to sell her work, Lewis remained in Europe. The major themes of her work include references to the African American struggle for freedom—The Morning of Liberty (1867) and busts of John Brown, Lincoln, and Charles Sumner; references to her Native-American heritage—The Old Indian Arrowmaker and his Daughter (1872), a bust of Longfellow, and the Hiawatha series; references to the suffering of women—Hagar (1869), and The Death of Cleopatra (1875); and statues for Catholic churches that reflect her religious faith.

Henry Osawa Tanner was born near Pittsburgh. His mother had been born in slavery but was sent North through the underground railroad. His father was a
minister, editor of the *Christian Recorder*, and later a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (Perry, 1992). Rev. Tanner had been selected for his leadership training by A.M.E. Bishop Daniel Payne who, along with many African American clergymen of the period, exemplified the belief in the value of organized effort to civilize and Christianize the race (Meier, 1988). Tanner grew up in a family that was religious, intellectually active, and socially conscious.

Tanner often heard the biblical stories of Jewish oppression and triumph that are part of the African American Christian heritage. Many of the slave songs and stories about the Israelites contained coded messages of hope. In many ways the slaves considered themselves the "chosen people" whom God required to endure suffering for a greater good. Denmark Vesey, who led a slave conspiracy in 1822, compared African Americans to the Israelites (Stuckey, 1994). Black leaders David Walker, Frederick Douglass, and Booker T. Washington discussed African Americans in terms of Jewish analogies (Moses, 1978). Tanner's friend James Weldon Johnson prefaced his collection of spirituals by saying that "it is not possible to estimate the sustaining influence that the story of the trials and tribulations of Jews as related in the Old Testament exerted upon the Negro" (Bearden & Henderson, 1993, p.80).

In 1880, when Tanner was 21, he enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, where he studied with Thomas Eakins. It was at the Academy that some racist students, feeling that it was too much that a Black person dared to paint, put Tanner's easel out in the middle of the street and crucified him by tying him to it. This incident filled Tanner with so much pain that he eventually left the Academy.
However, he continued to study with Eakins and with Thomas Hovenden who painted John Brown Going to His Hanging. Tanner tried to earn a living by selling illustrations; but in 1889 he set up a photography studio in Atlanta and traveled to North Carolina and Georgia where "he experienced firsthand the devoted faith with which impoverished Black people faced their troubles" (Bearden & Henderson, 1993, p.85). With the support of two White patrons, Tanner left the United States to study abroad. He enrolled at the Academie Julian in Paris, and soon painted The Banjo Lesson (1893) and The Thankful Poor (1894) which depict African American subjects, and The Bagpipe Lesson (1894) and The Young Sabot Maker (1895) which depict French peasants—all paintings about transmission of cultural values.

The Thankful Poor was shown at the Cotton States Exposition, the site of Booker T. Washington’s speech in 1895. The Banjo Lesson was well received in the United States but ignored by the French who considered genre a lesser form of art. Tanner turned to his religious upbringing, biblical stories, and the expression of faith for inspiration for his artwork. His painting, Daniel in the Lion's Den suggests faith in the face of danger. In the 1895 version of this painting Daniel's head is slightly tilted upward. However, a later version, painted in 1917, shows Daniel’s head tilted downward, conveying a sense of resignation, a change that may have been due to Tanner's depression about World War I (Bearden & Henderson, 1993).

In some ways Tanner's work was misunderstood by African American leaders. Booker T. Washington, concerned about the Jim Crow caricatures of Black Americans
who were now segregated from White society, hoped Tanner would create more paintings depicting African American inner strength and dignity. Black philosopher Alain Locke, although recognizing that Tanner had established that African Americans were capable of great art, was disappointed that he did not develop racial themes (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). James Porter's 1943 history of African American art, Modern Negro Art, did not make connections in Tanner's work to the expected themes for African American art.

Tanner's artistic thought was developed by African American middle-class Christian cultural-assimilationist philosophy of the late 19th century. He drew many of his themes from Jewish experiences as interpreted by African American ministers, such as Daniel in the Lion's Den and the Raising of Lazarus. African American spirituals, folklore, sermons, quilts, and fine art have expressed similar spiritual and religious concerns about the human relationship to the universe.

While most 19th-century church-going African Americans believed in the superiority of European civilization and Christianity, they considered hypocritical the morality of people who professed Christianity yet owned slaves or set up laws to segregate and disenfranchise people because of their race. Such sinfulness was sure to cause destruction. The basis of the Christian faith of many African Americans was their special role in demonstrating to White Americans the spirit of true Christianity. Harriet Powers described the fate of slave holders one of her quilt squares:

Rich people who were taught nothing of God. Bob Johnson and Kate Bell of Virginia. They told their parents to stop the clock at one and tomorrow it would strike one and so it did. This was the signal that they entered everlasting punishment. (Vlach, 1990, p. 47)
When Frederick Douglass saw the ruins of Pompeii, he noted that the Pompeiians had been wealthy slave holders (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). In 1871 Robert Duncanson painted a romantic scene of natural beauty, peace and idleness around the ruins of Pompeii, as though paradise had returned with its destruction.

Following World War I, Tanner painted The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (1928) expressing "the Lord's wrathful raining of fire and brimstone on the wicked city" (Bearden & Henderson, 1983). Surely these ideas, and perhaps also Tanner's painting, may have influenced James Baldwin, a young African American writer in Paris during the 1950s, to say, "If we do not now dare everything, the fulfillment of that prophecy, recreated from the Bible in song by a slave, is upon us: God gave Noah the rainbow sign, no more water, the fire next time!" (Baldwin, 1963).

Tanner's last paintings continued to be "religious in context, mystic in character, and sensitive in color, portray characters searching in a dominating, mysterious, beautiful yet barren landscape" (Bearden & Henderson, 1993, p.107). They, too, may be symbolic of African American spirituality, alienation, and searching for lost faith in European civilization.

Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, developing as an artist in the early 20th century, ushered in changing directions in African American art. Fuller was born in 1877 in Philadelphia to a middle-class African American family. She attended the Pennsylvania Museum School and then went to Paris in 1899 to study sculpture. Fuller met Tanner and DuBois in Paris and studied with Rodin. Much of her work has expressionist qualities. Two of her sculptures have particular significance for the
change in African American thinking taking place during World War I. *Ethiopia Awakening* (1914) portrays an African woman wrapped in the cloth of a mummy from the waist down, while her upper torso is regaining life. She is Ethiopia, the mythical notion of an African race which would "soon stretch out her hands unto God." She symbolizes Africa awakening in rebellion against European colonialism and exploitation, a new spirit of nationhood among African Americans, and the unity of all African peoples (Driskell, 1987). European artists such as Gauguin, Picasso, Braque, Brancusi, and Matisse were influenced by the great works of African art in European museums, and were attempting to capture the essence of African style. Fuller reclaimed African themes for African American artists (Gaither, 1989). Instead of capitulating to the old Western propaganda that Africans were barbarians in need of civilization, *Ethiopia Awakening* reminded African Americans of their proud identity as an African people.

In 1919 Fuller again portrayed a woman struggling to free herself. *Mary Turner* (*A Silent Protest Against Mob Violence*) shows the slightly twisted figure of a woman enclosed in shapes suggesting leaves, twigs, and rags used for lighting a fire. Her head is bent and arms folded as if holding the unborn child slashed from her womb (Chappell, 1993). Ritualized torture and murder of African Americans were common events in the United States during this period. Black leaders such as Ida B. Wells agitated for, but were unable to obtain, laws making lynching a crime. At the turn of the century in the South racist books appeared with the titles *The Negro a Beast* (1900) and *The Negro: A Menace to American Civilization* (1907). Thomas
Dixon's novel *The Clansmen* was made into the movie "Birth of a Nation" in 1915, causing an increase in mob violence against African Americans (Meier, 1988). In July, 1917, thousands of African Americans marched down Fifth Avenue in New York in a silent parade commemorating the lynching of Mary Turner, a Black woman from Georgia. Fuller's sculpture suggests a new spirit of defiance among African Americans because it depicts what the art of her predecessors could only suggest.

**1920-1930**

World War I contributed to the new attitude that defined African Americans during the 1920s. First, the war created a shortage of labor in Northern industry, thus providing opportunity for economic advancement. Thousands of Black Americans migrated from the South to large Northern urban areas. Hope turned to disillusion as they found segregation, poor living conditions, and job discrimination in the North. Second, thousands of African Americans participated in the fighting in Europe. These soldiers experienced a freedom from prejudice in Europe that they had never known in the country of their birth. They were also able to experience first-hand the European interest in African culture, the influence of African sculpture on European artists and the wide appeal of African American jazz. These soldiers had fought for democratic ideals but returned to an America where they were not safe: 70 African Americans were lynched during the "Red Summer" of 1919, 10 of them soldiers still in uniform, and 25 race riots occurred. Rather than the familiar racial violence against helpless people, these riots were aggravated by a new group awareness in urban areas that led African American people to fight back (Meier, 1988).
Two movements, located mainly in Harlem, established the nationalist ideology of the 1920s: the Garvey Movement, which appealed to the masses of African Americans, and the Harlem Renaissance, which occurred mainly among the literate middle-class (Cruse, 1967). Marcus Garvey (1887-1940) came to New York from Jamaica in 1916, where he founded the first true mass movement among African Americans, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) (Carlisle, 1975). Garvey’s ideas of race pride, African identification, and plans for a Liberian settlement came from the theories of Bishop Henry McNeil Turner. His ideas for economic nationalism were based on Washington’s plan for a Black business class that would provide racial self-reliance and on Crummell’s proposal for a Black-owned shipping line. Garvey provided the lower classes with the psychological support of race pride and history (Carlisle, 1975). His Black Star Shipping Line had instant appeal for people who wanted company stock or tickets to Africa. Garvey, however, was not a businessman; and as his ships lost money, he continued to raise funds. In 1923 he was sentenced to prison for mail fraud and was deported to Jamaica in 1927.

Living conditions for most African Americans in Harlem during the Renaissance were not easy. Knowing they could not find housing in other areas of the city, absentee landlords overcharged Blacks for inferior apartments. More than 80 percent of the wealth was controlled by Whites and many of the business establishments refused to hire African American workers (Lewis, 1987). When Garvey was deported several religious groups drew his former supporters: Father Divine, who provided soup kitchens, hotels, and sermons; Sufi Abdul Hamid, who
began the "don't buy where you can't work" campaign; Daddy Grace; the Falasha Jews; and Noble Drew Ali. These groups did not have the power of Garvey, but they all developed programs that came to grips with the nationless feeling of the Black masses (Carlisle, 1975).

It was also in New York that race-conscious artists and literate African Americans produced the race-proud, but often White-sponsored, Harlem Renaissance movement based on values of group solidarity and cultural integrity (Meier, 1976). Although leaders clashed, both the Garvey movement and the Harlem Renaissance movement were interested in the history of the race and identification with Africa. Garvey assured African Americans of the greatness of the Black race and that "Africa was for Africans." DuBois growing awareness of the global nature of racism and economic exploitation led to his support of Pan-African Conferences to promote group solidarity as a means to fight both colonial oppression in Africa and White racism in the United States (Meier, 1988).

The masses of African Americans never lost identity with Africa in their move from the plantation to the ghetto (Meier & Rudwick, 1976). However, the young authors who set the tone for the Harlem Renaissance came from acculturated middle-class backgrounds. They were alienated by the events surrounding World War I, just as many White Americans were, and sought inspiration from Africa and Black folk culture. Whereas Garvey theorized that African Americans were a distinct group with a separate culture and history that should have a separate territory away from Whites, the leaders of the Harlem Renaissance were more apt to consider the dual nature of
African Americans as a distinct group within the United States. This influenced artists to create a distinctive culture while striving to assimilate into mainstream society.

The ideas from the age of Booker T. Washington that African Americans would be accepted as Americans and extended political rights and full citizenship when they gained economic prosperity and Victorian morality gave way to culture and artistic merit as the standards of acceptance. Cultural nationalism was taking its place alongside economic nationalism, but these ideologies did not necessarily question the values of mainstream American society (Moses, 1978). In addition, African American artists had little control over their cultural production because museums, theaters, publishing companies, and record companies were mainly owned by Whites, and Whites were influential patrons of the visual arts (Cruse, 1967).

Beginning in 1915, the NAACP won three important Supreme Court decisions outlawing the grandfather clause and segregated housing, and requiring trial by a jury of peers. With these victories against Jim Crow and the deportation of Garvey, the African American political pendulum shifted toward integration and gaining civil rights within American society. The Wall Street crash in 1929 led to severe economic instability for all Americans, and White patronage of Harlem culture withdrew. Five years after the beginning of the Great Depression, on March 19, 1935, inspired by police brutality, a riot swept down Lenox Avenue destroying thousands of dollars in mostly White-owned commercial property and signalling the economic desperation of many urban African American people (Lewis, 1987).
Aesthetic values. Cultural development was of primary consideration during the 1920s, raising serious questions about the social role of African American art. Scholars and artists tried to determine the best standards, whether or not African American artists should produce European fine art or a racially distinct art, and whether protest was a legitimate artistic theme or merely propaganda (Huggins, 1976). Three African American schools of thought, that of Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. DuBois, and Alain Locke, as well as the White philanthropists Albert Barnes and the Harmon Foundation, influenced the aesthetic values of the period.

Garvey was a literary as well as a political figure in Harlem, where he appeared as a dynamic speaker, wrote poetry, and published the Negro World newspaper. Garvey’s newspaper was highly political, yet it also encouraged aspiring unknown writers (Martin, 1988). In Garvey’s view, art was a weapon in the struggle for Black advancement, and he wrote that

We must encourage our own black authors who have character, who are loyal to their race, who feel proud to be black, and in every way let them feel that we appreciate their efforts to advance our race through healthy and decent literature. (Martin, 1983, p.8)

Critical debate also took place on the pages of the Negro World over the idea of propaganda in art, real or romantic portrayal of African American people, and the importance of artists identifying themselves as Black or as artists. Garvey’s own aesthetic values were influential in the critical analysis of all forms of art:

Did the piece of work contribute positively to the race’s knowledge of itself?— to the way in which it was perceived by other races? Or alternatively, did the work at least not demean the race, not hold it up to ridicule? Was it technically proficient? Or, if not, then did it at least represent a creditable
tentative effort worthy of encouragement? Was its plot or theme consistent with the notions of race-first, self-reliance, and nationhood? (Martin, 1988, p. 163)

Previously many Black writers and artists had to distance themselves from the African American community and Black images to achieve acceptance, but Negro World did not depend on mainstream acceptance to address the needs of the masses of African Americans.

DuBois was also a political and literary figure in Harlem. He considered all art to be propaganda. Such propaganda could be seen in the depiction of African Americans in the roles of "Uncle Toms, Topsies, good 'darkies' and clowns" which are distortions of truth and justice. "Since beauty is truth and goodness, then to create a thing of beauty the artist must use justice, honor, and right" (DuBois, 1936, p. 296). Therefore, the art of Black artists should be a tool for gaining the rights of African Americans. DuBois believed that when a work of art was judged as true art, it could be said, "He did that because he was an American, not because he was a Negro . . . He is just human" (DuBois, 1936, p. 297).

The distortions DuBois spoke about were often the caricatures of Black-face minstrels and early "Coon Songs" of White performers imitating slaves. Around 1890, however, African Americans began to take greater control of their musical production. Black actors, musicians, and dancers worked as entertainers and performances were more authentic to African American music and dance. Three distinct, yet overlapping genres of African American popular music blossomed—ragtime, blues, and jazz (Morgan & Barlow, 1992). Eventually ragtime was absorbed by jazz which became
the rage during the 1920s. Although a musical renaissance had been taking place in urban centers throughout the South and Midwest since the 1890s, it was Fletcher Henderson's band in New York, showcasing the top jazz soloists of the era such as Louis Armstrong and Coleman Hawkins, that pushed jazz into mainstream American culture. Additionally, gospel groups such as the Fisk Jubilee Singers were gaining widespread acceptance by White audiences. The mainstream acceptance of African American music helped to create the idea that racism could be alleviated by art (Meier, 1988).

DuBois promoted the idea that acceptance of African Americans as artists would change the racial attitudes of White Americans. He also felt that the unique qualities of African American culture would bring about changes in American society. Cultural nationalism, including the role of popular images and art in developing Black identity and the importance of African and African American history in the education of Black Americans, contributed to DuBois' thinking during the 1920s. Artists, he felt, should nourish racial pride and be true to the spiritual vision of African American people (Meier & Rudwick, 1976). As editor of the NAACP newspaper The Crisis, DuBois gave African American artists visibility by publishing their work. The Crisis included the work of African American authors and critical dialogues on issues, such as whether African American artists were obligated to portray Black people in a positive way. DuBois also promoted personal standards of African American beauty by publishing photographs in each issue.
In 1925 Alain Locke, professor of philosophy at Howard University, published *The New Negro*, a collection of essays defining the Harlem Renaissance. Locke's article, "The Legacy of the Ancestral Arts," articulated his aesthetic theory that African American artists should acknowledge their African heritage. European artists had already acknowledged the power of African art, and since African sculpture was an influence on modern European art, it would "add a new dimension to Black America's cultural identity" (Campbell, 1987, p. 39). Locke exhibited African art to stimulate awareness of the Black heritage. He hoped that African American artists would develop a distinct racial style, a "school of Negro art, a local and racially representative tradition" (Locke, 1925, p. 262). Locke also realized that the disciplined, abstract, conventionalized character of African art was not the emotional, exotic style that was expected of African American artists. "What we have thought primitive in the American Negro—his naivete, his sentimentalism, his exuberance and his improvising spontaneity are neither characteristically African nor to be explained by his ancestral heritage" (Locke, 1925, p. 254).

A strong supporter of young Black artists, White philanthropist Albert Barnes wrote in *The New Negro*, "That there should have developed a distinctively Negro art in America was natural and inevitable. A primitive race, transported into an Anglo-Saxon environment and held in subjection to that fundamentally alien influence, was bound to undergo the soul-stirring experiences which always find their expression in great art" (Locke, 1925, p. 21). Although Barnes was well-meaning, his racial ideas were formed by the current American romantic ideology that African Americans were
less likely to be affected by industrialization and modern society. It was this Black American "primitivism" that Whites, disillusioned by World War I and Puritan morality, were seeking when they turned to Harlem for escape from civilized life (Meier, 1988).

During this period the Harmon Foundation was set up by a wealthy White real estate developer to provide awards for African American achievement in the visual arts. Between 1928 and 1935, the foundation gained recognition for the work of many African American artists; however, critics have questioned its aesthetic ideas. The catalogues argued that there were inherent Negro traits, which included natural rhythm, optimism, humor, and simplicity; and that the African personality gave evidence of a natural primitivism (Campbell, 1987). Metcalf (1985) proposes that these White patrons believed they were working for a more egalitarian future by promoting Black artists; but, by insisting that Black artists conform to the potentially pejorative myth of primitivism, they were insuring that the White "cultured" social position would remain unchallenged. As proof that these stereotypes limited African American art,

the most daring and innovative works of many Harlem artists were done outside Harmon patronage: Meta Fuller's "Ethiopia Awakening," "Mary Turner," and her 1939 "Talking Skull;" Aaron Douglas's "Aspects of Negro Life," completed as a project of the WPA; Palmer Hayden's John Henry series of the 1950s; and William H. Johnson's paintings from the 1940s. (Campbell, 1987, p.49)

The artists of the Renaissance sought to develop a distinctive African American culture. The war produced a loss of faith in the ideals of European civilization and Christianity that had inspired earlier artists and opened up the possibility of a Black
counterculture (Moses, 1978). As African American artists of the 1920s searched for values within their own heritage, they were restrained by Black intellectuals who felt art should only portray the best of Black experience and by White patrons who thought African American art should be exotic and primitive.

A group of young artists including Aaron Douglas, Langston Hughes, Wallace Thurman, and Zora Neale Hurston protested against the limitations placed on art by political ideas. In the 1926 publication Fire, they proclaimed that art should be about authenticity in the portrayals of African American experience (Lewis, 1987). These young artists were struggling with dependency on White and Black audiences. Langston Hughes explained,

> We young Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not, it doesn’t matter. If colored people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn’t matter either. (Bearden & Henderson, 1993, p. 121)

Regardless of the competing value systems that African American artists worked in, they achieved what previous Black artists could not. These artists were portraying Black experiences and feelings, they were reaching deep into their heritage, and they were taking control of the images of Black Americans.

Several visual artists provide examples of the artistic values of the Harlem Renaissance: Aaron Douglas, Palmer Hayden, and William H. Johnson. Aaron Douglas (1899-1979) was born in Topeka, Kansas. He studied fine art at the University of Nebraska before arriving in New York in 1924. There, Douglas became acquainted with German artist Winold Reiss, who suggested "he look to African art
for design elements that would express racial commitment in his art" (Driskell, 1987, p. 110). Douglas' career began with six pages of drawings in Locke's book, *The New Negro*, that were done with a stylized angularity similar to Art Deco, reducing objects and figures to their basic shapes as in Cubism. Douglas became well-known as an illustrator for *Crisis, Opportunity, Vanity Fair,* and *Theater Arts Monthly* magazines. In 1927 he created a series of images inspired by stories from the Bible, African American spirituals, and Black history for James Weldon Johnson's book of poems, *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse.* In his illustration of "The Crucifixion," Douglas focused on "the legendary Simon, a Black man who took upon himself the yoke of Jesus' cross in order to relieve him of one last earthly misery" (Driskell, 1987, p.112).

Albert Barnes offered Douglas a scholarship to his Pennsylvania school in 1928. From there Douglas did murals at Fisk University in Nashville and at the College Inn in Chicago, then studied in Paris for a time, returning to New York in 1933. In 1934 Douglas completed the mural series *Aspects of Negro Life* for the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library. Drawing from African American history, Douglas' final panel presents a jazz musician atop the cog of a wheel. Rather than celebrating industrial efficiency, Douglas' "vision of an American machine age concentrates on the intrinsic tension between individual freedom [symbolized by the jazz musician] and the grinding routine of the machine" (Campbell, 1987, p.29). Douglas chose themes from Black history, religion, and myth as the sources of his...
work and attempted to combine modernist aesthetics and African style in an African American context.

Palmer Hayden (1890-1973) was born in Wide Water, Virginia, and came to Harlem after World War I. A working man, Hayden at one time joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and worked at jobs such as hauling bricks, oyster trawling, and street cleaning. In 1911 he joined the army and went to the Philippines, later working at West Point until 1920. On coming to New York, he worked at the Post Office while taking a six-week art course at Columbia University. It was at Columbia that Hayden became friends with Clyde Boykin, an artist who worked as a janitor. As a result of gaining an understanding of how hard it was for Black artists to establish themselves, Hayden painted *The Janitor Paints a Picture* as a protest piece (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). Hayden won the first Harmon Foundation Award in 1926. "Although there was criticism that his work was inferior to that of more highly trained painters, the critics said it symbolized the arrival in the city of talented black artists from the South who had overcome monumental hardships" (Bearden & Henderson, 1993, p. 161).

With the help of a benefactor, Hayden studied art in Paris, where he met Henry Tanner and Alain Locke. His painting of this period, *Fetiche et Fleurs*, depicting an African weaving and a wooden sculpture, has been considered symbolic of Locke's aesthetic theory. Returning to New York in 1932, Hayden worked for the Harmon Foundation and later for the WPA art projects. His work, such as *Midsummer Night in Harlem* has been criticized because he borrows from the popular images of Blacks by White artists (Driskell, 1987). Some of Hayden's best work, such as the John
Henry series, was done in the 1950s after leaving the Harmon Foundation. Like Douglas, Hayden portrayed African American experiences. However, Hayden liked to tell stories and he based his work on folklore and the lives of ordinary Black Americans rather than monumental events. He empathized with the plight of rural Blacks trying to make a living in the industrial North; and many of his paintings symbolize the dependence of industrial America on the hands of African American workers (Driskell, 1987).

William H. Johnson (1901-1970) was born in Florence, South Carolina, came to New York in 1918 and worked as a stevedore for three years before studying at the National Academy of Design. His teacher Charles Hawthorne and artist George Luks helped to finance Johnson’s study in Paris in 1926. Influenced by the work of Gauguin, whom he felt portrayed people of color with simplicity and reverence, Johnson declared himself a primitive, by which he meant a "sensitive man whose inner life lay outside a culture that imposed on him strict requirements on how he should behave and even paint" (Bearden & Henderson, 1993, p. 187). Johnson was drawn to the work of Chaim Soutine and began working in Soutine’s expressionist style. In 1929 Johnson returned to New York, entered his paintings in the Harmon exhibition, and won a gold medal. He then returned to see his mother in South Carolina, where he was arrested for painting the Jacobia Hotel. Bitter, Johnson returned to Europe, where he remained until the Nazis occupied the Rineland in 1938.

Coming back to New York, Johnson was impressed by the work of two younger African American painters, Horace Pippin and Jacob Lawrence, to further
develop a distinctive primitive style. His new work was often based on biblical stories and spirituals and heavily outlined with brilliant color contrasts. In his identity crisis, just as Tanner had done, Johnson summoned his childhood memories of biblical tales and church going. He "began to recognize the calmness and acceptance with which his people approached problems—theirs and the world's" (Bearden & Henderson, 1993, p. 199). However, Johnson’s work signaled changes in traditional aesthetic views. In their paintings of the crucifixion of Christ, Tanner used Jewish subjects and Douglas focused on Simon as a Black man who helped Christ; but Johnson used all Black subjects for his interpretations of the Christian experience, as in his painting *Jesus and the Three Marys*. Johnson also chose to focus on the lives of ordinary people. In his later works, such as *Chain Gang*, he attempted to develop an awareness of the social plight of African American people and to enlighten the Black community about its heritage (Driskell, 1987).

1930-1955

The Stock Market Crash in October, 1929 ushered in the Great Depression, a time of change in the way Americans viewed their government. Many White Americans also began to question the probability of individual economic success, and all Americans became more willing to accept government intervention in their lives (Meier, 1988). The New Deal of the Roosevelt administration marked a turning point in American race relations because, for the first time, due to large numbers of African Americans in segregated Northern ghettos, the Black vote had some impact on the federal government (Meier & Rudwick, 1976). Roosevelt appointed Black educator,
Mary McLeod Bethune to an advisory post, and the New Deal supplied material benefits to the unemployed and created a climate of optimism in the North. However, patterns of race relations in the South remained basically unchanged (Meier & Rudwick, 1976). Blacks encountered discrimination in federal programs, and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration aided planters who then needed fewer workers, forcing sharecroppers off the land and into urban ghettos. Bethune emphasized interracial economic reform (Howard-Pitney, 1990), and integrationist ideology dominated the period.

The NAACP had won some impressive cases, but as the depression brought job discrimination into sharp focus debate arose over the significance of legal action rather than economic reform. DuBois resigned from The Crisis in 1934 in a clash over his advocacy of a separate Black cooperative economy as a solution to the problems posed by the depression (Meier and Rudwick, 1976). Increasingly DuBois felt that the struggle for the liberation of the working class and of African Americans was the same struggle. However, he disagreed with Marxists who pressed for interracial solidarity among the working class since he felt that in the U.S. both White capitalists and White laborers exploited Black workers (Howard-Pitney, 1990). Gradually, DuBois began to theorize that powerful selfish economic motives based on exploitation and rationalized by racism constituted a colonial imperialism that oppressed people of color in America and around the world. By the 1940s DuBois increasingly understood the relationship of racial and class oppression in both the struggle of African colonies and of African Americans. From 1944-48 DuBois

The National Negro Congress, formed in 1936 with A. Philip Randolph as president, was also critical of the NAACP and felt they were unconcerned with the economically depressed African American masses. Randolph took a Marxist position that Black and White workers should unite against capitalists who exploit both groups by appealing to racism. He successfully challenged discrimination in defense plants by threatening a march on Washington in 1941, which resulted in the Fair Employment Practices Committee (Allen, 1990).

Because the majority of African Americans were working class and because of racial discrimination, the Communist Party attempted to appeal to African Americans as the means for their social revolution. The Communists did make some strides with the defense of the Scottsboro boys in 1931 and the formation of the integrated Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in 1935. However, the Communist Party won the support of less than 10% of African Americans because it did not take ethnic group solidarity or Black self-determination into consideration (Cruse, 1967).

Although the first mass nationalist movement ended with the deportation of Garvey, the feelings of alienation and disappointment that Garvey touched in the masses of urban African Americans did not end. Economic deprivation intensified by the Depression influenced religious, and sometimes mystical, escape from oppression. The Christian church remained the center of urban ghettos, offering a sense of self-
esteem and a brief escape from reality (Meier & Rudwick, 1976). Nationalist religious
groups which rejected the Christian religion of White Americans also began to take
root. The Ethiopian Jews founded a group in Harlem known as the Commandment
Keepers in 1919, and Noble Drew Ali founded the Moorish American Science Temple
in 1913. The Moors established temples in Chicago and other large cities, and later
joined the Black Muslims (Carlisle, 1975). The Muslims, or Lost-Found Nation of
Islam, founded in Detroit in 1930 by W.D. Fard, was taken over by Elijah Muhammad
in 1934 when Fard disappeared. Muslim membership increased during the Depression,
and by 1946 there were temples in Detroit, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and
Milwaukee. The Nation of Islam developed a following among African Americans
who felt alienated in urban ghettos by emphasizing the nationalist principles of
economic self-help, a separately governed nation within alien territory, and Black
pride. Not only did the Muslims reject White religion, they also rejected slave-owners
names and White standards of beauty (Carlisle, 1975).

Aesthetic values. Although the glamour and White patronage of the Harlem
Renaissance ended with the stock market crash in 1929, the sense of identity which
had defined it remained strong. In many ways the Renaissance prepared African
American artists to participate in the government-sponsored flowering of American
artistic freedom (Huggins, 1976). During the 1920s, African Americans in all areas of
the arts had been affected by White interest in the "primitive" quality of their work.
Black writers attempted to address issues relevant to the group such as the tensions
arising from color line or class differences and the reality of the masses, but Whites

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expected to see stereotypes such as the "tragic mulatto" and lower-class sexuality—and White interest controlled what was published (Meier & Rudwick, 1976). African American visual artists had been encouraged to produce a unique racial expression by the Harmon Foundation, the Barnes Foundation, and Alain Locke.

With the hardships faced by most Americans during the depression, both Black and White artists exhibited a spirit of protest toward social and economic conditions. Black artists closely identified with the economic hardships and racial discrimination of the masses of African Americans from their personal experiences. Whereas artists were interested in exploring the African past and the life of African American folk during the 1920s, a sense of racial history and social concern dominated African American art in the 1930s (Bearden & Henderson, 1993).

The WPA provided greater freedom and opportunity than had ever been possible for African American artists. Under the Public Works of Art Project, Aaron Douglas executed his murals for the New York City Public Library. Most African American artists, however, were turned down for the PWAP because they could not prove they were artists, since most had no formal training and were not recognized by galleries or museums. In 1935 the Federal Arts Project (FAP) hired artists at various stages of development, thereby providing for the first time the opportunity for African Americans to work on their art full-time so they could learn new techniques and develop their skills. Many artists found work as teachers in the art centers that were established in communities around the country to provide free art lessons to interested
persons. Some African American artists decorated buildings for the Mural Project, and some worked as easel artists (Bearden & Henderson, 1993).

The American public developed new attitudes toward art because of the federal projects which Hubbard (1987) describes as the democratization of art. A spirit of regional pride grew because artists were able to gain art experiences in their own communities instead of leaving for Paris, New York or Chicago. Interest in regional expression and work on the Index of American Design in 1936 also inspired a new appreciation for American crafts. Art became part of the lives of people through education and recreation, and it was a topic of public discourse (Hubbard, 1987). Most important for African American artists was that they were no longer outsiders but participants in the discussion of aesthetic concerns of American artists (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). The federal programs provided integrated sponsorship and shows and did not restrict imagery to artificial ideas of what African American art should be. Black artists were influenced by American artists who drew on American life as part of regionalist and social realist movements, as well as by the Mexican muralists who were working and lecturing in the United States. This freedom of expression allowed African American artists to portray the reality of the life they understood from their unique experiences (Hubbard, 1987).

The aesthetic values of American artists during the Depression related to the social and economic concerns of the period. Artists of the Social Realist movement were particularly concerned with social justice and economic security, with working-class people and labor unions, and with Nazi aggression and the growing threat of
African American artists were also concerned with discrimination in jobs, housing, education, labor relations, and even federal relief. Aaron Douglas described the sense of community experienced by African American artists who are "essentially a product of the masses and can never take a position above or beyond their level" (Bearden & Henderson, 1993, p. 235). Those masses of Harlem residents were boycotting stores, buses, and utilities; and the NAACP was organizing against discrimination and lynching. The 1935 Harlem riot showed the resentment African Americans felt against housing and job discrimination and police brutality.

The aesthetic values of African American artists were also being influenced by other discourses. White American artists of the Regionalist movement, such as Grant Wood, felt that artists should develop an indigenous American art that would have meaning to all Americans. White and Black artists were inspiring each other, e.g. Stuart Davis, whose abstract art was influenced by European cubism and used jazz for inspiration, while Harry Gottlieb taught the silk screening process to Black artists in Harlem (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). Black art historian James Porter criticized Alain Locke's theory of racial art as segregated, rather than allowing African American artists to participate in mainstream American art (Bearden & Henderson, 1993).

A fundamental question of the time was whether art should have political and social meaning and purpose or whether artists should be free to express what they considered important (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). Many American artists felt that art should contribute to changing social attitudes. Mexican muralists also used art and
cultural heritage to aid in social revolution. Communists viewed art as a weapon for propaganda depicting the worker as a hero. In Nazi Germany and the USSR artists who did not support the approved doctrine of propaganda and realist styles were being silenced. Hitler was not pleased that European artists were influenced by African sculpture and labeled their art "degenerate" (Cruse, 1967).

Whereas previously opportunities for African American exhibitions had been limited, the Museum of Modern Art held an integrated show of American art for the FAP artists in 1936. The discovery that painter Joshua Johnston had been a free man of color also prompted the Baltimore Museum of Art to hold a group show for Black artists in 1939 (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). African American artists gained some recognition, and two New York galleries accepted work by Black artists. Additionally, by the mid-1930s several African American universities—Fisk, Atlanta, and Howard—were developing art departments and museums for preserving the artistic heritage of Black Americans.

In 1938 the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) began attacking the WPA art projects as centers of Communism, although anyone had the right to join the Communist party. It was this attack on art which helped destroy the WPA, a major employer of African Americans (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). Militaristic fascism had been spreading over Europe and by December, 1941, America, too, was in the war. It seemed unpatriotic to paint pictures of social criticism during this time; besides, employment possibilities and social conditions did improve for
American workers. Many artists joined the war effort by designing posters or serving in the armed forces (Hill, 1983).

After World War II artistic styles changed, partly due to the arrival of European abstract artists. The irony is that these artists fled Europe because Hitler considered abstract art the work of "degenerates," while, with the coming Cold War, the control of ideas and cultural production in the United States reflected fear of Communism and socialism (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). "During the late 1940s and 1950s—the McCarthy era—many works of social content were singled out as containing possible subversive elements" (Hill, 1983, p. 22). Social realism and American regionalist movements gave way to Abstract Expressionism.

Jacob Lawrence and Hale Woodruff are examples of the direction taken by African American artists during the Great Depression. The parents of Jacob Lawrence were among the migrants moving North during World War I. They met and were married in Atlantic City, where Jacob was born in 1917. Jacob Sr.'s difficulty finding steady work led to family problems, and Mrs. Lawrence moved with her three children to Philadelphia and then to Harlem in 1930 (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). The Harlem experienced by the young Jacob Lawrence was deeply affected by the economic hardships of the Depression. The once upper-middle-class apartments were now worn and tattered tenements for the waves of Southern migrants. Yet the physical migration symbolized a new racial pride. It exemplified the agency of Black people who had seized an opportunity to better their lives.
Feeling uprooted by his family’s moves and unsettled by the hazards of his new urban environment, Lawrence withdrew. Fearing he might be drawn into a street gang, his mother enrolled him in an after-school arts and crafts program taught by Charles Alston in the basement of the Harlem Public library (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). Alston, whose apartment was the intellectual center of Harlem, recognized Lawrence’s artistic ability and several years later recommended him for Augusta Savage’s classes at the Harlem Community Art Center. During this time, Lawrence was also influenced by Professor Charles Seifert who inspired him to see the 1935 exhibit of West African sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art. It made a great impression on Lawrence to realize that Black people were capable artists.

In 1937 Lawrence researched Toussaint L’Ouverture, the Haitian military leader who had defeated Napoleon’s army, and presented his story in a series of forty-one pictures. Augusta Savage helped Lawrence get a job with the FAP as an Easel Project artist where he painted the Frederick Douglass series (1938-39) and the Harriet Tubman series (1939-40), developing his strong expressive style (Hubbard, 1987). Lawrence’s Toussaint L’Ouverture series was displayed at the show of African American art at Baltimore Museum of Art, gaining him praise as well as a fellowship from the Rosenwald Fund to work on the Migration of the Negro series in 1941.

Edith Halpert of the Downtown Gallery in New York asked to represent Lawrence and was instrumental in having twenty-six pictures from the Migration series published in Fortune magazine in November, 1941. It was later purchased by the Museum of Modern Art and the Phillips Memorial Gallery (Turner, 1993).
Lawrence's Migration series appeared on the national scene at a time when African Americans were again leaving the South for cities in the North and West as the demands of war opened new job opportunities (Stewart, 1993). Lawrence addressed the tension between the migrants' expectations and disappointments. He portrayed people who had decided to seek better opportunity and the reasons they left the South, i.e. "It was found that where there had been a lynching, the people who were reluctant to leave at first left immediately after this"; as well as the harsh realities in the North, i.e. "Many of these riots occurred because the Negro was used as a strike breaker in many of the Northern industries" (Turner, 1993). These pictures represent not only the story of African-American migration, but the experiences of Jacob Lawrence.

I was part of the migration, as was my family: my mother, my sister, and my brother . . . I grew up hearing tales about people 'coming up,' another family arriving. People who'd been . . . in the North for a few years, they would say another family 'came up' and they would help them to get established . . . by giving them clothes and fuel and things of that sort . . . . I was only about 10, 11, or 12. It was the '20s . . . . And of course there was a great deal of tension throughout the country--the ethnic tension and so on--I guess you have a similar situation today. But this was all new to me. I was a youngster and I heard these stories over and over again . . . . I didn't realize that we were even a part of that . . . . I didn't realize what was happening until about the middle of the 1930s, and that's when the Migration series began to take form in my mind. (Gates, 1993, p.20)

Lawrence painted his Harlem series in 1942, then, following World War II, he created a pictorial record of his experiences in the Coast Guard. The end of the war brought about a new situation for artists. The political atmosphere of the New Deal and the sense of artistic community provided by Alston's apartment were gone.
Artists and intellectuals who had been active in the movement to end discrimination and promote unionization were being harassed as Communists (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). The Abstract Expressionist movement promoted subjective feelings instead of social content, refuting Lawrence's ideals as an artist. However, he struggled to remain true to his artistic vision.

Hale Woodruff (1900-1980) was born in Cairo, Illinois. Shortly after his birth, his father died, and his mother moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where she worked as a domestic. Woodruff studied art at the Herron Art Institute in Indianapolis (Perry, 1992). In 1926 he won a medal in the Harmon Foundation competition and left to study in Paris in 1927. While there, Woodruff met Tanner, who encouraged him to use the human figure in painting the concerns of humanity. He was also influenced by Locke, who encouraged him to consider African art as a source of inspiration (Bearden & Henderson, 1993).

Upon his return to the United States in 1931, Woodruff was offered an art instructorship at the newly formed Atlanta University. Woodruff attempted to make art accessible to students there by setting up exhibits of art by Black and White American artists, and of African art. He organized his students into a Painter's Guild and encouraged them to paint their surroundings and social conditions, a style later known as the Outhouse School. As Woodruff stated in Time, September 21, 1942, "We are interested in expressing the South as a field, as a territory; its peculiar rundown landscapes, its social and economic problems, and Negro people" (Perry, 1992, p. 184).
When Grant Wood lectured at the High Museum in Atlanta Woodruff was
denied admission; when Wood learned of this rebuff, however, he met with him at
Spelman College. This incident helped to break down racial barriers, and Woodruff
gained permission to bring his students to the museum (Bearden & Henderson, 1993).
When the Harmon Foundation exhibits were discontinued in 1935 African American
artists did not have a consistent place to exhibit and establish themselves as artists, so
Woodruff arranged to hold an annual exhibition at Atlanta University (Bearden &
Henderson, 1993).

In 1934 Woodruff obtained a grant to study with the Mexican muralist Diego
Rivera in Mexico City. Many American artists of the Depression period felt that art
should contribute to changing social attitudes. The Mexican artists Rivera, Orozco,
and Siqueiros had a more comprehensive Marxist view that art should aid the
impoverished. They used murals to contribute to the revolutionary spirit of the masses
of poor Mexicans by reminding them of the great pre-Hispanic American cultures.
African Americans felt a kinship with the revolution against oppression in Mexico;
and, in addition to Woodruff, the artists Sargent Johnson, Charles White, and Elizabeth
Catlett studied with the Mexican muralists (Hubbard, 1987).

Returning to Atlanta, Woodruff did two murals for the FAP. In 1939 he
painted a series of murals depicting the Amistad mutiny for the Talladega College
library "to show students that their people were not willingly made slaves" (Bearden &
Henderson, 1993, p. 208). In 1948 Woodruff and fellow artist Charles Alston painted
two large murals of African American history in Los Angeles. Woodruff also
completed six panels for *The Art of the Negro* at Atlanta University in 1951 (Bearden & Henderson, 1993).

**1955-1973**

In 1945 DuBois predicted that the world could not have peace while White racist imperialism exploited colonial labor and resources for a profit, envisioning the future conflicts in Korea and Vietnam (Howard-Pitney, 1990). DuBois was not silent in the face of the powerful post-war resurgence of capitalist imperialism and anti-Communist hysteria. His fearlessness in voicing the unpopular view that preparation for combatting Communism threatened world peace and obstructed social progress, his critique of capitalism, and his belief in a socially equitable economic system led to sanctions by the House Un-American Activities Commission (HUAC).

When DuBois was about to be deprived of his international travel rights in 1961, he left America for Ghana. Knowing that he was too famous to be ignored, DuBois decided to make a public announcement that he was joining the Communist party "to set an example of nonintimidation and to protest the reigning political terrorism of McCarthyism" (Howard-Pitney, 1990, p. 130). When DuBois died in Ghana in 1963 his expectations for democratic change in America were low and he denounced "its unconstitutional stifling of dissent, its military belligerence, and its selfish exploitation of most of the world's population" (Howard-Pitney, 1990, p. 132).

As DuBois was grappling with the intractable nature of White racism, the stage was being set for a second reconstruction in the Southern states. White supremacy became a global issue in 1945 when the world was shocked by the extent of the moral
depravity of the "civilized and Christian" German nation. During the Cold War, Communist countries held U.S. pretensions to democracy up to ridicule, and international pressure influenced public policy. Young African Americans were inspired by the democratic revolutions of non-White people in Asia and Africa, and all young Americans began to demand that their country live up to the values they had been taught (Morgan, 1991).

The NAACP had been using the tactic of litigation to obtain constitutional rights for African Americans since 1915; however, Supreme Court decisions often did not provide incentives for changes to take place. In 1950 the NAACP focused on an all-out attack on segregated education in the South (Morgan, 1991). A string of successful cases culminated in the 1954 Brown ruling that overturned the separate but equal doctrine that had been established in 1896. Although the Brown decision generated hope for African Americans, the court did not set firm deadlines for compliance. The violent reaction of White Southerners created a division of national opinion that resembled debates over Reconstruction. The conflict between African American expectations and the slow pace of actual change gave rise to a new militancy in demands for civil rights (Howard-Pitney, 1991).

The arrest of Rosa Parks for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus to a White passenger in 1955 provided the spark for a direct-action program for change. Leaders quickly organized a one-day boycott of the city buses that was to last over a year and Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. was chosen to lead the boycott. This charismatic leader with links to the Southern Black church network and Northern civil
rights sympathizers was to play a crucial role in appealing to Black racial pride and reaching the conscience of White Americans (Howard-Pitney, 1991).

King's focus on love and forgiveness and his belief in nonviolence appealed to White liberals. However, pacifism was more than a tactic toward an end for King; it was part of his spiritual vision of a peaceful community based on justice, equality, and love. The idea of the American dream—the country's true destiny of democracy for all—dominated his speeches and writing. Raised in a middle-class family in a segregated Atlanta community and well-educated in Western Christian culture, King himself seemed to embody the realization of that dream for Black Americans. His personal achievements made it possible for him to be optimistic about the social and educational development of other African Americans once they were given the same opportunities (Cone, 1993). Integration became the major theme of his political philosophy because he felt that racial fear and hatred were generated when races of people were separated and could not communicate with each other. King believed, as had Douglas and DuBois, that African Americans were a chosen people who were to play a special role in bringing about America's redemption. "In King's view, the civil rights demonstrators who were beaten and jailed by hostile Whites educated and transformed their oppressors through the redemptive character of their unmerited suffering" (Meier & Rudwick, 1976, p. 275).

It became clear in Little Rock in 1957 that litigation was a limited technique for obtaining civil rights as school desegregation met with violent White resistance. The Eisenhower administration stood by, allowing the escalation of violence and
virtually closing the door to further desegregation. Furthermore, housing and job
discrimination continued in the North in spite of model civil rights laws; and in the
South Supreme Court decisions regarding desegregated transportation were ignored,
Black voter registration was forcibly curtailed, and White Citizens' Councils were
growing in numbers (Meier & Rudwick, 1976).

Nonviolent direct action offered radical tactics, such as boycotts, sit-ins,
marches, and filling jails for disobeying laws that were considered unfair. The body
then became a political weapon empowering Black Americans to actively work for
justice and in this way speed up legislative progress (Morgan, 1991). Meetings held
in Black churches allowed the clergy as well as all classes of African Americans to
become involved in the movement and inspired racial solidarity. The music of the old
spirituals helped form close bonds and gave ordinary people the strength to meet
violence and possible death (Morgan, 1991).

In February, 1960, students began to take the pace of change into their own
hands with a sit-in campaign that began in Greensboro, North Carolina, and quickly
spread throughout the South. Although many of their attempts to integrate restaurants
failed, these young people, risking violence and arrest, captured the imagination of the
nation.

The newly elected John Kennedy had actively sought the African American
vote and was susceptible to pressures from the Black community (Morgan, 1991).
Kennedy inspired young people by unlocking their spirit of fairness, national and
global responsibility, and sacrifice. For a brief period of time, young Americans
believed that they could succeed in transforming America into the democratic ideal they had been taught to value (Meier & Rudwick, 1976).

The media played an important role in raising White consciousness to the brutality of racial segregation in the South. A freedom ride, by members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), from Washington, D.C. to New Orleans was staged in 1961, and when buses were bombed and riders beaten, President Kennedy sent federal marshals to give them support. After dramatic scenes of brutality in Birmingham, Kennedy announced his commitment to national Civil Rights legislation in June, 1963. A March on Washington was organized to build support for the bill before it went to congress. This march, in August, 1963, "symbolized a new national moral-political consensus against racism and for the banishment of racial discrimination from all areas of American life" (Howard-Pitney, 1990, p. 151). It was the finest hour for Martin Luther King; the nation was receptive to his message—the dream that American democracy would live up to its promise for all people regardless of race (Cone, 1993). Two weeks later, White racists in Birmingham bombed a Baptist church, killing four girls. The tragedy stunned the nation, and King began to grasp the fierce tenacity of racism in American society.

Most African American leaders applauded the Civil Rights Bill but felt it did not contain effective provisions for voter rights. Civil Rights workers had been conducting voter registration drives and citizenship schools in Mississippi since 1961. The 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project, however, left a bitter legacy among Black activists leading to greater distrust of the government and of Whites in general,
and a growing discontent with nonviolence (Howard-Pitney, 1990). Volunteers met with virulent White violence in Mississippi—six Blacks were murdered and 1,000 arrested, 30 buildings were bombed, and three dozen Black churches were gutted by fire (Marable, 1991)—and appeals for protection from the federal government were ignored.

At the 1964 National Democratic Convention, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFP) challenged the all-White Mississippi delegation. President Johnson ruled out seating the MFDP but offered a compromise that would bar future delegations that refused non-White participation. King, believing that democratic liberalism was the best course to follow, advised accepting the compromise; but younger members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) refused. King lost their respect for his part in accepting this compromise, and many of them turned to Black Muslim minister, Malcolm X for guidance.

Deeply rooted in nationalist ideology, the Black Muslims set up separately-owned enterprises, urged followers to buy from Black-owned businesses, emphasized Black history and Black pride, and vaguely referred to territorial nationalism and emigration. Elijah Muhammad had developed the principles of Islamic religion for Blacks who were disillusioned with Christianity and with the conditions of poverty and unemployment in Northern urban ghettos. He was imprisoned for resisting the draft during World War II; during that time the Nation of Islam had only four temples and membership declined to fewer than 1,000. From 1955 to 1960, when Malcolm X
began preaching, membership expanded to about 100,000 with over 69 temples (Carlisle, 1975).

Malcolm X came from a family that knew poverty and violence. After his father was murdered and his family separated, he lived with a White family and attended school with White children. Although a leader among his classmates and an excellent student, he was discouraged by his foster parents and one of his teachers from striving for further achievement (Cone, 1993). As a teenager Malcolm gained a reputation as a hustler and burgler and, from 1946-1952, was sent to prison where he experienced a spiritual awakening. In 1954 Malcolm was appointed minister of a Muslim mosque in New York City obtaining a vast national audience through televised interviews and articles.

After his break with the Nation of Islam in 1964, Malcolm set up the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) to disseminate his changing political ideas (Carlisle, 1975). He now rejected emigration and a separate Black territory, urged African Americans to consider themselves Africans in America, and no longer condemned all Whites, instead attacking those who were racists. Malcolm was moving toward a pluralist ideology of learning how to live together with respect (Cone, 1993), but he continued to believe that the philosophy of separation and self-protection was a better method of achieving Black self-determination than the integrationist, nonviolent philosophy of King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Following his pilgrimage to Mecca, Malcolm came to realize that the Black freedom movement in the United States could not be separated from
African liberation struggles, and he concentrated on human rights through the OAAU (Marable, 1991). Shortly before his death in February, 1965, Malcolm was invited by SNCC to speak at a Selma voting rights rally, where he criticized the use of children to meet the violence of police hoses and dogs and continued to advocate self-defense (Cone, 1993).

By 1965 civil rights groups grew divided over liberal ideals of integration, working within the Democratic Party, and the tactic of nonviolence, in contrast to nationalist ideals of separation, self-determination, the creation of Black political parties, and the tactic of self-defense (Meier & Rudwick, 1976). All agreed, however, that in spite of the progress toward equal social treatment, African Americans were faced with deteriorating economic opportunities and that federal support was needed for Black voter registration. Many leaders felt that if African Americans had a voice in the government, they could use the political process to bring about economic change.

In March, 1965, Civil Rights workers staged a march for voter registration in Selma, Alabama that was met with extreme brutality. Images of men, women, and children being run over by horses and beaten by police were broadcast to the nation. The strategy of exposing White violence toward nonviolent marchers again moved the nation, and President Johnson supported the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Bill. As a result, the growing number of African American voters and office holders brought significant changes to the South (Meier & Rudwick, 1976).
SNCC workers, however, came to believe that the price for appealing to the national conscience required unacceptable levels of physical and psychological suffering (Morgan, 1991). SNCC had begun moving in a more radical direction—critiquing corporate capitalism, working for totally independent political action outside the established political parties, and advocating self-defense. The most articulate voice for nationalism was Stokely Carmichael, who had registered Black voters in Mississippi. Carmichael organized the all-Black Lowndes County, Alabama, Freedom Organization to oppose the election of George Wallace, the voice of prejudice, bigotry, and modern American fascism (Marable, 1991).

By 1965 the Civil Rights movement had eradicated disenfranchisement and segregation in public facilities in the South, but housing, job discrimination, and poverty remained untouched by legislation (Morgan, 1991). Riots in Black ghettos in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and other cities across the country were fueled by shattered hopes. King launched a major direct-action campaign in Chicago in 1966 to increase spending for low-income public housing and to end residential racial segregation. Meeting some of the worst hatred he experienced during the Civil Rights Movement, King called off the campaign with only modest gains towards the goal of nondiscriminatory housing practices, yet he still hoped to move the federal government toward an economic bill of rights. In order to demand legislative action, including a federal guaranteed job and income policy, King and SCLC planned a campaign against poverty, the Poor People's March, which would bring thousands of unemployed and oppressed of all races to Washington, D.C. in April 1968 (Marable, 1991).
King's experience in Chicago helped him to understand how deeply ingrained racism is in both the North and South. Just as DuBois and Malcolm had perceived the global connections, King also began to realize racism was built on the international economic exploitation of people of color. By 1966 King began his vocal opposition to American military involvement in Vietnam (Howard-Pitney, 1990). In spite of decreased White support and the anger of President Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover, who orchestrated a campaign to discredit and silence him, King continued to speak out against U.S. aggression toward people of color who were fighting for their liberation (Marable, 1991). King's thinking changed in other ways, too. He began to talk about pride in Blackness and the temporary use of separation as a means of overcoming the powerlessness of the African American community. The ideology that King preached during the early Civil Rights Movement was merely to reform institutional racism in the South; after 1965 he began to talk about a revolution in values and the reconstruction of society. However, he continued to preach nonviolence as a way of living with dignity, in contrast to the use of violence which, he believed, multiplies evil and violence in the world (Cone, 1993). King's assassination in 1968, while he was building the national Poor People's March and organizing Black urban workers, was only one more indication to Black people that White capitalist America had no intention of resolving racial conflicts nonviolently (Marable, 1991).

The Civil Rights movement had already begun to splinter in 1966 when Stokley Carmichael called for Black Power. The slogan in Mississippi, like the riots by city slum dwellers, indicated African American frustration with poverty and White
violence. It symbolized a hope for self-determination and cultural pride. But it sounded like anti-White power and contributed to a growing White attitude toward tough law and order measures against African American social disturbances (Howard-Pitney, 1990). At the first Black Power National Conference held in Washington, D.C., in 1966, Carmichael attempted to define Black power as

a call for the black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support those organizations. It is a call to reject the racist institutions and values of society. (Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967, p. 43)

As civil rights workers became disenchanted with the liberal integrationist movement, several groups were influenced by the words of Malcolm X, Black nationalism, and the expression of Black Power. Probably the best-known, the Black Panther Party, founded in Oakland, California in 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, demanded radical social reform. In their ten-point program the Panthers stated their demands for self-determination, employment, education, and housing—issues that related to both race and class. They quoted the Declaration of Independence in stating their right to armed self-defense and to trials by a jury of peers. The Panthers were interested in changing social conditions; they started a free breakfast program for poor children and patrolled Black neighborhoods to protect citizens from the police. However, the press concentrated on the use of guns and weapons, and they were targeted for elimination by the Nixon administration. By 1974 most of their leaders were either killed, in prison, or had to flee the country (Marable, 1991).
Social and political changes occurred as a result of the Civil Rights Movement. African Americans were guaranteed the right to vote, segregation in public institutions was no longer acceptable, and the federal government funded a program of free breakfasts for poor children. The increasing number of African American voters and politicians had the potential to make significant changes in American race relations. By the late 1960s, the legacy of the movement had inspired further student, antiwar, and feminist movements. The movement, however, failed to make structurally significant economic changes for African Americans.

Aesthetic values. During the Cold War ideas and cultural production in the United States were limited by Communist hysteria (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). Realistic artistic styles depicting the economic and racial hardships of the masses were censored by suspicion of socialist of Communist sympathy. Following the McCarthy hearings and loyalty oaths, hundreds of artists were driven into seclusion (Lewis, 1993). Social realism and American regionalist movements gave way to Abstract Expressionism. Some Black artists, e.g. Norman Lewis and Hale Woodruff, abandoned their earlier representational style to create works that were abstract yet understood by their African American public (Patton, 1989). During the 1960s Jacob Lawrence painted The Ordeal of Alice, a response to the difficulty Black children endured when entering Little Rock High School. By 1968 the Black power movement began to inspire an outpouring of literary criticism, poetry, music and art (Marable, 1991). Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, and the group of Black artists known as AfriCobra are examples of the art of this period.
Elizabeth Catlett was born in Washington, D.C., in 1915 to parents who were both college graduates. Her father, who taught math at Tuskegee, died soon after Catlett was born, and her mother worked as a seamstress. When she graduated from high school, Catlett was awarded a scholarship from the Carnegie Institute of Technology but rejected when her race became known (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). In 1932 Catlett attended Howard University and was encouraged by some of the country’s leading Black art historians, philosophers, and artists: Alain Locke, Lois Mailou Jones, James Porter, James Herring, and James Wells. Although from a middle-class background, Catlett identified with the struggles of the African American masses. During her years as a student at Howard University, she was arrested for demonstrating in front of the Supreme Court building with a hangman’s noose around her neck to protest lynching (Lewis, 1993).

As a master’s student at the University of Iowa, Catlett was encouraged by Grant Wood to look to her experiences and her people for inspiration. For her thesis she carved a mother and child with undeniable Black physical features which won first prize in sculpture in the 1940 American Negro Exposition in Chicago (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). It was also in Chicago that Catlett met and married Charles White, an artist who focused on social themes and humanistic values. When Catlett was appointed head of the art department at Dillard University in New Orleans and White received a Rosenwald Foundation fellowship, the couple experienced Southern segregation first-hand. As African Americans they were not allowed to visit the New Orleans art museum, and White was severely beaten for trying to enter a restaurant.
(Bearden & Henderson, 1993). The indifference of the university toward developing a full art program prompted Catlett to resign, and the couple left in 1942.

White was commissioned to work on a mural depicting historic Black leaders at Hampton University in Virginia, and both he and Catlett received teaching assignments there. It was at Hampton that the couple was influenced by Viktor Lowenfeld, an Austrian Jewish refugee, psychologist, and artist. Lowenfeld linked creativity to self-expression and self-esteem, and he encouraged Black artists to identify with their heritage. Catlett was also influenced by Hale Woodruff, who visited Hampton from Atlanta University. Their discussions helped prepare Catlett for her role of leadership among African American artists (Bearden & Henderson, 1993). The couple returned to New York in 1943, when White was drafted into the army where he later contracted tuberculosis. Catlett taught at Carver School, the successor of the WPA-sponsored Harlem Community Art Center. HUAC was attacking artists connected with the WPA programs and Carver School was brutally attacked, but it had the support of many Harlem leaders. Catlett became active in seeking funds and speaking for the school. This brought her into contact with working people, and for the first time she began to understand "the great hunger for art and culture of ordinary Black people" (Bearden & Henderson, 1993, p. 422).

Catlett received a Rosenwald fellowship to study in Mexico in 1946, where she worked at the graphic workshop Taller de Grafica Popular. At the Taller she learned how to put art to the service of the struggle of the people (Lewis, 1993). During this period Catlett's marriage ended, and she later moved to Mexico and married painter...
and printmaker Francisco Mora. After continued harassment by HUAC, Catlett finally became a Mexican citizen. During the 1960s Catlett was a leader in helping African American artists define their identity and set their goals. In a keynote address to the National Conference of Artists in 1961 she said that African American artists should cast aside the goal of being "accepted artists" and be proud to be identified with Black people, and that Black artists could create an essentially American art through their interpretation of the lives of African Americans (Bearden & Henderson, 1993, p. 425).

Black women have been the primary subjects of Catlett's art. In her Negro Woman Series (1947), Catlett foreshadowed the 1970s women's movement with images of ordinary, heroic Black working class women (Tesfagiorgis, 1987). Her print of Sojourner Truth portrays a Black woman who was unwilling to be a powerless victim. I Have Special Reservations, eight years before the arrest of Rosa Parks, highlights the outrage Black women felt at segregation and social stigma. This series is considered a landmark in the pictorial representation of Black women, for it liberated them from their objectified status in the backgrounds and shadows of White subjects in the works of White artists, and from the roles of mother, wife, sister, other in the works of Black male artists. (Tesfagiorgis, 1987, p. 28)

Catlett's 1968 work, Homage to My Young Black Sisters communicates political activism while portraying strength and beauty in femaleness. It addresses the participation of Black women in the global struggle against racism and imperialism during the sixties (Tesfagiorgis, 1987).
Writing in 1975, Catlett said that art "does not need revolution as its subject in order to be revolutionary . . . but it can provoke thought and prepare us for change, even helping in its achievement" (Powell, 1993, p. 52). For example, in Malcolm X Speaks for Us, Catlett sets a tone of reverence for the slain leader: women and children listen while he expresses their concerns, telling them to be proud of their blackness.

Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1911, Romare Bearden enjoyed a happy childhood surrounded by three generations of ancestors. Later in life, some of the memories of his Southern childhood were to influence the way he thought about art, e.g. watching the trains going North, and taking long walks with his paternal great-grandmother, who was part Cherokee, to the reservations where the Indians maintained their own way of life (Schwartzman, 1990). The Beardens moved to Harlem in 1920, where Romare’s father worked as a sanitation inspector and his mother became the New York editor of the Chicago Defender and a noted community leader (Perry, 1992). During this period of Black cultural achievement, Bessye Bearden made her family’s apartment a meeting place for the leaders of Harlem’s artistic, social, and political worlds. She later became an inspector with the Internal Revenue Service and helped found the National Council of Negro Women with her close friend, educator Mary McLeod Bethune (Schwartzman, 1990). Bearden also lived part of the time with his maternal grandmother in Pittsburgh where he attended high school. Later, he remembered the steel mills, clapboard houses, brothels, and a special friend who taught him to draw.
During the 1930s, when African Americans were hit hard by the financial collapse of the nation, Bessye Bearden's connections and abilities allowed her to hold onto her jobs and even to send Romare to college (Schwartzman, 1990). After graduating from New York University with a degree in mathematics in 1935, Bearden joined the Harlem Artists' Guild, which had been formed by Augusta Savage for the purpose of gaining grants and funding for Black artists from the Federal Arts Project. He also became part of the group of artists and writers who met at the Harlem apartment of his cousin, Charles Alston. In 1936 Bearden enrolled in the Art Students League, where he studied under German expressionist George Grosz. Grosz, whose politically charged work had forced him to flee Hitler's Nazi Germany, was the first to encourage Bearden to paint (Schwartzman, 1990). In 1938 Bearden became friends with painter Stuart Davis, whose discussions about the aesthetic links between jazz and art altered Bearden's thinking about harmony and rhythm in painting (Schwartzman, 1990). Bearden also began working for the New York City Department of Social Services, a job he would hold until 1967 when it became financially possible for him to devote more time to his art.

Bearden enlisted in the army during World War II, but received only stateside posts. After his discharge, the Passion of Christ series was exhibited at the Kootz Gallery in 1945. These paintings, done in the early 1940s, showed the influence of Grosz (social realism) and the Cubists on Bearden as well as his grounding in Christianity (Schwartzman, 1990). In 1946 Bearden, along with Byron Browne, Baziotes, Motherwell, Gottlieb, and Carl Holty, produced work for Kootz Gallery until
it closed in 1948. During this period Bearden developed a student-teacher relationship with German abstract painter Holty that would help him articulate his analysis of Matisse, Mondrian, and the Cubists. The Kootz Gallery reopened in 1949 without Bearden, Holty, or Browne, artists who had a lingering dependence on Cubist structure and who were unwilling to omit humanistic aspects from their work. The catalog for the "Intrasubjectives" exhibit featuring Baziotes, DeKooning, Gorky, Gottlieb, Graves, Hoffman, Motherwell, Pollock, Reinhardt, Rothko, Tobey, and Tomlin set the agenda for Abstract Expressionism. According to critic Harold Rosenberg,

The intrasubjective artist invents from personal experience, creates from an internal world rather than an external one. He makes no attempt to chronicle the American scene, exploit momentary political struggles or stimulate nostalgia through familiar objects. He deals, instead, with inward emotions and experiences. (Guilbaut, 1983, p. 178)

Bearden therefore found himself without a dealer and with a style of art that was suddenly out of fashion. "I felt [Abstract Expressionism] was not the way that I would want to go about painting. Nor do I feel that one should put up a predetermined set of rules about what to do or not do in painting" (Schwartzman, 1990, p. 173).

Bearden left for a year to study in Paris, then returned to Harlem and began writing music with the hope of getting rich enough to return to Paris or to devote all of his time to painting. Bearden published a number of songs with Larry Douglas but also continued to draw. He became deeply unhappy, however, finally suffering from a nervous collapse in 1953. After meeting and marrying Nanette Rohan in 1954, Bearden was able to begin painting again. Around this period, he was given a social
services assignment to work among the New York gypsy population, which allowed him more time for his art. He saw that the gypsies' unique culture was threatened by "modern technology and the resultant homogenization of life" (Schwartzman, 1990, p. 179). Bearden was able to draw parallels between their fading unique identity and the Cherokee and rural African American identities he had known in his childhood in the South. Bearden began working to renew his creative life. He copied paintings from Giotto to Cezanne, and tried painting in a more abstract manner. However, he was never satisfied with Abstract Expressionism because he felt it lacked philosophy (Perry, 1992). Bearden returned to a Cubist style in the 1960s as he sought a way to articulate his attitudes toward the political and social upheaval of the Civil Rights Movement.

A small group of Black artists met in Bearden's studio on July 5, 1963, "for the purpose of discussing the commitment of the Negro artist in the present struggle for civil liberties, and as a discussion group to consider common aesthetic problems" (Bearden & Henderson, 1993, p. 400). Spiral, a group that included Norman Lewis, Hale Woodruff, Charles Alston, Emma Amos, and others, provided a forum for aesthetic and philosophical problems unique to African American artists, e.g. how African Americans should be portrayed, and whether Black artists should be concerned with universal or subjective standards of excellence. Many of the artists felt that a unique Black art was attained by expressing a special vision of the world rather than by portraying Black subjects or using a certain style such as social realism or primitivism (Bearden & Henderson, 1993).
Spiral held one exhibit in May, 1964, as a symbolic recognition of the civil rights struggle. Bearden proposed that the group make collaborative black-and-white collages using cut-out photographic shapes from magazines and newspapers for this exhibit, but there was little interest from the other Spiral members. However, Bearden continued to experiment with his idea, later called "projections" because of their strong documentary quality. The use of collage and photomontage marked Bearden's return to his experiences as a way to create an "art in which the human image is defined in terms of the African American experience, presenting African Americans in a believable reality rather than as abstract, unknown quantities" (Lewis, 1990, p. 123).

The projections were shown at Crodier & Ekstrom Gallery in New York in 1964 and at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C. in 1965.

By portraying the reality he knew, Bearden created art about the social reality of African American people, the hope, despair, and the protest to bring about social change. Bearden's collages during this period not only returned to the use of the figure as a way to articulate social concerns but were limited to black and white as a symbol of racial conflict (Douglas, 1988). Figures appear sorrowful or confused, angry, determined, or suspicious, expressing their protest against conditions of segregation and poverty, racial hatred and violence (Douglas, 1988). Through Mysteries (1964), a collage composed entirely of female faces in an over-crowded space, Bearden portrays the emotions of surprise, sorrow, defeat, resolution, and suspense. Is Bearden responding to the Birmingham massacre?

Could the child's face be representative of those little girls who died in the bombing, or other children who might wonder why would anyone bomb a
church? Does the wide-eyed child who is peeking from behind the first figure represent those who may be wondering if they might be next? Might the distorted face of the older woman be a mother who is confused, sad and angry? (Douglas, 1988, p. 40)

In The Dove (1964), the crowded composition of men and women indicates urban slum-dwellers who seem pent-up, caught, and imprisoned. Bearden chooses the metaphor of a dove, as a symbol of peace, but he makes it impossible to interpret the symbol in relation to social reality (Schwartzman, 1990).

In the late 1960s Bearden began incorporating color into collages based on his memories of Charlotte, Harlem, and Pittsburgh, as well as jazz, blues, and classical literature. In this way his experiences became a way to preserve African American culture. As he explains the theme of ritual in his art, Bearden says that his works contain layers of meaning in African American spiritual traditions:

People in a Baptism in a Virginia stream are linked to John the Baptist, to ancient purification rites, and to their African heritage . . . . this continuation of ritual gives a dimension to the works so they are something other than mere designs. (Campbell, 1985, p. 48)

Bearden helped to define African American aesthetics by proposing that the art of African Americans be evaluated on its own terms, as part of the experiences and culture of African American people. He agreed with Locke, who called for "African American artists to find their own artistic philosophy, in part by looking to the art of Africa for inspiration" (Sims, 1995, p. 106). Bearden’s own work combines content from his experiences with an innovative style from African, European, and African American cultural traditions to express his special vision of the world.
In 1968 sustained White violence against civil rights workers and the murder of Martin Luther King, as well as America's military buildup in Vietnam, the disproportionate enlistment and death of Black men, and dwindling federal support for poverty programs led many African Americans to look toward Black nationalist ideology for answers. Black Power and Black Consciousness inspired an outpouring of literary criticism, poetry, music and art known as the Black Arts Movement. Many visual artists rejected integration as a denial of African American culture. They also felt that following mainstream art styles meant creating art that did not speak to their people. They rejected "art for art's sake," instead advocating "art for the people" (Campbell, 1985). For some artists, art was seen wholly in revolutionary terms. As Ron Karenga put it,

.... the battle we are waging now is the battle for the minds of black people, and if we lose this battle we cannot win the violent one. It becomes very important then, that art plays the role it should play in black survival and not bog itself down in the meaningless madness of the Western world wasted. In order to avoid this madness, black artists . . . must accept the fact that what is needed is an aesthetic, a black aesthetic, that is a criteria [sic] for judging the validity and/or the beauty of a work of art. (Karenga, 1971, p. 32)

Black artists rejected the notion of a universal aesthetic; rather, they felt that art is the product of unique cultural experiences and should be evaluated by unique criteria. Universal criteria were always going to reject African American cultural production because, as Hoyt Fuller claims,

Negro life, which is characterized by suffering imposed by the maintenance of white privilege in America, must be denied validity and banished beyond the pale. The facts of Negro life accuse white people. In order to look at Negro life unflinchingly, the white viewer either must relegate it to the realm of the sub-human, thereby justifying an attitude of indifference, or else the white
viewer must confront the imputation of guilt against him. And no man who considers himself humane wishes to admit complicity in crimes against the human spirit. (Fuller, 1971, p. 6)

Instead, the primary concern of a Black aesthetic was its relevance to the Black community. Rather than judging art by Western criteria of beauty or universal quality (which excluded the African American experience), it was to be evaluated "in terms of the transformation from ugliness to beauty that the work demands from its audience" (Gayle, 1971, p. xxiii). Art critics should not ask how beautiful is the work, but how beautiful has the work made the life of a single Black person (Gayle, 1971). Artists were to remain aware of the dual nature of their heritage, of the reality of their outsideness, of their political and economic powerlessness, and of the desperate need for racial unity. Black art and culture could lead to solidarity and strength in the African American community (Fuller, 1991).

In 1967 the visual arts workshop of the Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC), with William Walker, Jeff Donaldson and several other artists, chose an abandoned building in Chicago on which to paint a mural depicting Black heroes and affirmations of African cultural identity called "The Wall of Respect" (Campbell, 1985). The group was to become known as the African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists (AfriCobra). Instead of looking toward Western philosophy and aesthetic principles, these artists attempted to restructure the framework in which art was made, thought about, and viewed from a Black perspective. Inspired by African art, AfriCobra developed a philosophy that (a) African American art is trans-African in that African American artists are not different from other artists of African descent; (b)
African American art should be technically excellent just as professional training in Africa consists of apprenticeship to a master craftsman; (c) African American art should be socially responsible, relevant, and convey a message to people; and (d) it should be accessible to the community (Cox, 1993). The function of art was to develop a national Black consciousness based on family unity, celebration of heroes, and Black heritage (Campbell, 1985).

The artists of AfriCobra strove to invest their work with the distinctive styles, rhythms, and colors of the ghetto. They established criteria that they felt would speak directly to their audience: (a) awesome expression—movement, spiritual awareness, and political consciousness; (b) free symmetry—multilevel imagery and rhythms; (c) shine—gloss and luminosity that indicate spirituality; (d) high intensity kool-aid colors; and (e) jam-packed and jelly-tight compositions—filled with form and surface design (Cox, 1993). Music, especially jazz, was essential in how these artists thought about their work. They looked for a restrengthening of the visual arts’ bond that had been broken during slavery through the African connections musicians had maintained (Thomson, 1990).

Between 1966 and 1973, there were 30 major exhibits of African American art, the Studio Museum in Harlem and the National Center of Afro-American artists in Boston were established, and murals were painted in major cities depicting Black heroes and history (Patton, 1989). Two of those exhibits, the Metropolitan Museum’s "Harlem on My Mind" in 1969 and the Whitney Museum’s "Contemporary Black Artists in America" in 1971, were targets of protests because they excluded the voices
of African American curators and scholars. By the mid 1970s, when the political pressure of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements ended, exhibitions of work by Black artists virtually disappeared (Campbell, 1985).

Summary

Aesthetics, as a system or philosophy by which art is valued and produced, is usually approached from a Western perspective. The meanings and interpretations African American people have given to artistic production, however, are shaped in a different social context. Isolation of an essential Black aesthetic is difficult since aesthetic issues are often connected to the political and social currents of the age. The worldview of African American people has been shaped by their place as Black in American society and by the political tug between assimilation into a culture where they are not accepted, and their rejection of American culture and society. Influenced by conflicting political ideologies, African American artists have often struggled to balance a search for a distinctive African American culture against mainstream Western cultural standards. A chronology of the events, ideas, and significant political and artistic personalities has been presented in this chapter in order to understand how the ideologies of particular times have influenced the production and appreciation of African American art. Experiences were examined as a means of exploring subjectivity, difference, and how race affects the meaning of art.

An African American aesthetic existed in the creative endeavors of slaves that blended the cultural retentions of various African ethnic groups and was shaped by their recognition of the power of the slave master along with resistance to beliefs that
devalued their humanity. Although there is little record of slave material culture, Harriet Powers' quilts are examples of the blending of African and European American ideas into a unique African American cultural form. The quilt, a European art form, was made using the abstract figurative style and symbolic function of textiles from Dahomey, Christian stories from the Bible, Kongo religious symbolism, the oral traditions of transmitting historic events, and a social commentary on the lives and suffering of slaves as well as the expected fate of White slave owners.

For most of American history, Black fine artists have worked in contemporary Western European traditions adopting European American styles and standards. Early African American artists, although rare, were part of the American art scene. Those who became artists had access to education and sometimes to European study. They rarely used African American subjects. Yet there are some indications that these artists were influenced by African American cultural values and political agendas. Of the dozen portraits that are attributed to Joshua Johnston, only the portraits of Abner and Daniel Coker, prominent in the founding of a separate African American Christian religious organization and in the founding of a colony for African American emigrants in Freetown, Liberia, indicate he was familiar with nationalist ideology of the period. Although Robert Duncanson worked in the Hudson River and genre styles of the period, the theme of crossing over a body of water and of idle, peaceful people may indicate his ideological relationship to Henry Highland Garnet's criticism of land monopoly and slave labor. Artists working in Boston during the Civil War, Edward Bannister and Edmonia Lewis did portraits of abolitionist leaders. After the war,
Bannister focused on landscapes, some of them subtly indicating the political climate of the times. Lewis, living in Europe, developed work around themes of religion, her African American and Indian heritage, and her status as a woman and an outsider. Henry Osawa Tanner, the son of a minister in the separatist African Methodist Episcopal Church, grew up hearing the biblical stories of Jewish oppression that are part of African American cultural heritage. Working in Europe, Tanner was influenced by the styles of Rembrandt and the Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and Symbolists while drawing on his religious beliefs and the biblical stories that contain coded messages about the African American experience.

During the late 19th century the political agenda of Booker T. Washington had great appeal to the masses of African Americans. Washington's stress on industrial education did not inspire artistic production. Conflict arose between Washington and W.E.B. DuBois, who promoted scholarship and saw the need for aesthetic training. DuBois’ Ethiopianism may have influenced Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, a young artist he met in Europe. Her work prefigures the changes in African American thought that were to flower during the Harlem Renaissance, i.e. pride in Africa and protest against conditions in America.

The Harlem Renaissance was the first movement of Black artists, and the first attempt to formulate an African American aesthetic. Cultural leaders debated issues such as whether art should embody European fine art standards or whether artists should develop a racially distinct art; whether or not artists should identify themselves as Black; how African Americans should be portrayed; whether or not art could
function as protest; and whether art was propaganda. DuBois and Marcus Garvey generally agreed that art should show the positive attributes of African American people, although DuBois preferred assimilation and Garvey preached nationalism. DuBois promoted the idea that racism could be alleviated by proof that African Americans were capable of great art, just as jazz music was changing White attitudes toward Black people. However, even well-meaning Whites believed that the inherited traits of African Americans resulted in a primitive, untutored style of art. Black philosopher Alain Locke, while proposing that African American artists should draw on their African heritage, recognized that African art was disciplined, abstract, and conventionalized rather than primitive.

Langston Hughes, as the spokesperson for a group of young artists, expressed their intention to portray the experiences of African American life unintimidated by White or Black expectations. Fine artists reached back to the African past and to the life of African American folk. Artist Aaron Douglas, influenced by the philosophy of Locke, synthesized Art Deco and Cubism with African art styles. Douglas’ themes came from African American history, religion, myth, and jazz. Palmer Hayden, a laborer who was able to develop his artistic skills, was criticized for portraying stereotypical images of African American people; however, his later work under the WPA depicts the heroic lives of working people. William H. Johnson worked in Europe until 1938 where he was influenced by European primitive artists. When he returned to the United States, Johnson painted biblical stories, spirituals, ordinary people, and everyday events from his childhood.
During the Great Depression coherent expression of African American nationalist ideology declined as social agendas focused on economic issues. The African American art movement continued through a group that met at Charles Alston’s Harlem apartment. However, these artists identified with the economic and racial hardships of the masses of Black Americans. They were also participants in the larger federal art programs that introduced art to common people and were influenced by the social realism and regionalist movements of the period. Artists during this period drew from their unique experiences and history as Black Americans and exhibited a spirit of protest. Hale Woodruff painted the Southern landscape and his murals were realistic depictions of historic events. Jacob Lawrence used a strong expressive style for his historical series. His story of the migration is both a people’s history and the story of his own experience.

From World War II to the Civil Rights Movement, integration became the prevailing social concern, although separatist thought re-emerged in the late 1950s. Cultural leaders were affected by the House Un-American Activities Committee. DuBois, who by this time recognized the global connection between racism and economic exploitation, questioned the system into which African Americans were seeking integration, advocated socialism, was censored by HUAC, and left for Ghana. Elizabeth Catlett, also censored by HUAC for her work at Carver School in Harlem, left the U.S. for Mexico. Catlett continued working in the social realist style, considering it a way to identify with the struggles of the masses. Her work depicts Black pride, protest, and the self-determination of African American women. In the
United States, art works with political content were also censored due to HUAC investigations of artists and the art establishment promoted an abstract expressionist style. The Cubist work of Romare Bearden was rejected by New York galleries. In 1963, Bearden formed the group Spiral to give artistic support to the Civil Rights Movement. As part of the discussion, he developed a unique style of black and white collages based on polyrhythms and Cubism, and portraying the spirit of protest among African American people.

After 1963 the Civil Rights Movement began to move away from integration. The young people in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Congress of Racial Equality were disillusioned and turned to the nationalist philosophy of Malcolm X. Martin Luther King also began to recognize the global implications of racism, opposed the war in Vietnam, and began advocating separation as a means of gaining strength. In the late 1960s the Black Power movement emerged with a range of ideologies from racial solidarity to restructuring society. Part of the Black Arts Movement, the group AfriCobra attempted to restructure the meaning, function, and style of art outside of Western culture, basing it instead on criteria that reflect the African American experience and the needs of the African American community.

African American art is inseparable from prevailing cultural ideologies. Just as African American political agendas have shifted between emphasis on acculturation and nationalism, African American artists have struggled to balance American mainstream acceptability and African American aesthetic boundaries. African American fine artists, except for AfriCobra, have always worked in European and
European American styles. The forms art took, of painting and sculpture outside of the everyday experiences of most people, are European, not African. Although some early patrons of the arts may have been free middle-class African Americans, probably most art works were intended for White audiences and purchasers. The first African American art movement took place in 1920 when Whites hoped to find escape from the modern world in the natural, "primitive" qualities of African American music and art. Black artists were, however, able to gain a measure of control over the images of their people. These artists wanted to portray their experiences as they saw them, but this did not happen until the Depression, when African American artists became part of the national art scene. The second African American art movement took place in the late 1960s when artists set their own aesthetic criteria arising from the African American experience. These artists were not interested in the White public, but wanted to speak to the Black community about the common feeling of outsidersness and the need for racial unity.

In the decades since 1970 African American leaders have continued to advocate assimilationist and nationalist ideologies. Reverend Jesse Jackson has continued to promote the Civil Rights ideology of integration, while Minister Louis Farrakkan of the Nation of Islam endorses a separatist philosophy. During the past decade many of the previously unpublished lectures of Malcolm X have also become available to the public. It appears that some African Americans have benefited from affirmative action programs in education and jobs, creating a larger middle class than previously. However, the dire economic predicament of so many inner-city African
Americans has also created a climate of mass depression. Although it is difficult to
discern without the hindsight of history, it seems that African Americans in the late
1990s are committed to being American citizens while also advocating separate
economic, political, and cultural institutions as a means of gaining strength.

There is no single aesthetic of contemporary African American art in the
1990s, and race is not always an issue with artists. Today, African American artists
work in many modern and postmodern styles, they use a wide range of media and
draw upon varied sources which are not always racial issues. Racial subjects can
provide significant content in work that is narrative and race can stimulate great
abstract art. On the other hand, race can be incidental to the work and the race of the
artist may have little to do with the work (Preudenheim, 1990). John Scott, whose
work will be discussed in chapter six, conveys racial issues without direct narrative
using a modern, abstract style. He has extended the political meaning of art pertaining
to Christianity in the tradition of Tanner who painted Jewish subjects in reference to
the African American sense of being a chosen people who are suffering for the
redemption of humanity, Douglas who painted Simon as a Black man who helped
Christ carry his cross, and Johnson whose crucifixion portrays Christ as a Black man.
Scott’s sculpture of the crucifixion is taken from a picture of the ritual torture and
murder of a Black man, an event that was real to him as a young person growing up
in the South in the 1940s and 1950s. African American artists have also continued to
deal with class issues, and since the women’s movement during the 1970s gender
issues have also inspired some of them. However, African American artists have been
generally overlooked outside of racially motivated shows. According to Preudenheim (1990) this has been because the art world is a tight network of people who have attended the right schools or met the right people.

African American aesthetic values are composed of this struggle for acceptance and valuation in the national art world that are met with the devaluation of African American cultural production within an American cultural belief system that marginalizes the culture and people who are designated as Black. For many European Americans the acceptance of American culture has meant the loss of their traditional cultures, so that terms such as "ethnic" and "multicultural" do not seem to apply to White Americans. For Black Americans, however, the tension between the struggle for acceptance as American citizens and resistance to the dehumanizing effects of racism also causes a rejection of American culture and inspires pride in African and African American cultural values. The meaning of art for African American people can be found in this dual nature of African American heritage that is both American and Black, and the social currents that inspire assimilation and nationalist ideology.
CHAPTER 5

A HISTORY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ART IN NEW ORLEANS

In order to present a relative perspective of 19th-century African American art, I now turn to the history and artistic production of the region of New Orleans, Louisiana. The purpose of art history is to present a more objective view of how art has developed over periods of time (Roskill, 1976), however, the definition of art and the designation of artists as well as the study of history itself are subject to interpretation. My intention is to present an interpretation of the history of New Orleans from an African American perspective and to include cultural production as the work of people who were not considered artists as well as those who were considered artists in 19th-century New Orleans, but have not been included in the study of art history. This chapter is organized into the following sections. First, the political, social, and cultural development of New Orleans from its founding and the importation of the first Africans until the end of the 19th century is presented as the context which shaped the lives and cultural productivity of African Americans. Next, the artistic production of African Americans who were slave and free, plantation and urban, men and women, artisan or mechanic and artist is discussed. Third, a summary of the influence of racial designation on the artistic production of African Americans in 19th-century New Orleans is presented along with information about African American art in New Orleans between Reconstruction and the artistic flowering of the post Civil Rights period.
History and Social Context

Colonial New Orleans

A French Colony. When the brothers Pierre LeMoyné (Sieur d'Iberville) and Jean Baptiste LeMoyné (Sieur de Bienville) claimed the Mississippi Valley and the coast of the Gulf of Mexico for France and established a beachhead at Biloxi in 1699 there were no African slaves in their homeland of Canada. However, African slavery had been profitable for the sugar industry in the Caribbean since the 1500s. Iberville and Bienville were acting under the orders of French King Louis XIV to establish a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River for France as a means to protect its commercial interests—fur trade in the upper Mississippi Valley and valuable sugar colonies in the West Indies (Hall, 1992a). France also wanted a colony that would be both a source of raw materials and a market for goods manufactured by the mother nation. However, for 20 years after its founding the Louisiana colony regularly faced the threat of starvation and it remained unprofitable because of a shortage of labor (Johnson, 1995).

The Canadian courriers du bois that settled early Louisiana were fur traders who often lived in the Indian villages and married native women. Although these men contributed to good relationships between the French and the Indians they were not considered reliable laborers. It was also hard to find voluntary colonists in France because of the extremely high mortality rate among White immigrants to Louisiana. Prisoners, soldiers who had deserted, vagabonds, and persons without means were deported to Louisiana to meet the colony’s need for laborers. There were also
attempts to enslave Indian men and women, but the scarcity of labor was a profound economic problem (Hall, 1992a).

In 1699 Bienville requested that African slaves be brought from Guinea to work the land. He also proposed an exchange of two Indian slaves for each African slave brought from the French Caribbean. However, such requests were denied because of the great need for slaves in the prosperous sugar plantations (Hall, 1992a). A 1708 census reveals that the population of Louisiana consisted mainly of 110 male military personnel, 80 Indian slaves, and 25 male settlers, 28 women, and 25 children (Hall, 1992a).

The Louisiana colony had not shown a profit by 1712 and this led the king to give wealthy French merchant, Anthony Crozat, commercial control of the colony. Crozat attempted to ship slaves from Africa to Louisiana, but French slavers instead delivered them to the wealthy sugar plantations in St. Domingue. Iberville and Bienville were involved in profiteering and, during the War of the Spanish Succession, Iberville sold contraband iron and various merchandise in Havana and St. Domingue, carried out piratical raids and seized booty including 1,309 slaves who were sold in St. Domingue (Hall, 1992a). It is therefore not surprising that Dart (1931) and Cummins (1984) report that the colony had at least ten African slaves by 1712.

When Crozat’s venture also failed, the French government awarded the Louisiana proprietorship to John Law’s Company of the Indies in 1718. Bienville was named commandant of the province and he sent plans to France for a town he wished to establish on a broad crescent of the Mississippi River at the end of a well-worn trail
by which the natives had transported their canoes from the headwaters of Bayou St. John to the river. By 1718 fifty men, some of them Bienville's African slaves, were sent to clear the site of trees and undergrowth, and in 1720 French engineer Adrien de Pauger arrived to oversee the completion of Nouvelle Orleans (Cummins, 1984).

As soon as the Company of the Indies took control of Louisiana in 1718 it devoted serious attention to supplying the colony with slaves. The first ships, the Aurore and the Le Duc du Maine, set sail for Africa in 1718 with directions to purchase three or four barrels of rice for seeding and several Africans who knew how to cultivate it. They picked up their "cargo" in Juda, Dahomey and arrived in Pensacola in August, 1719, with 500 Africans (Dart, 1931). Some of these slaves were sent to New Orleans to open up the plantations opposite the city and the remainder were sold to the settlers of the lower Mississippi (Kendall, 1940).

Between June, 1719, and January, 1731, sixteen slave ships arrived in Louisiana from Senegal, where the French Company of the Indies controlled the slaving concession, six came from Juda and one from Angola. Only one African slave ship came to the French colony after 1731, and it came from Senegal in 1743 (Hall, 1992a). After 1743 direct importation from Africa decreased and slaves were more likely to come from the West Indies. Of the 5,951 African slaves brought to Louisiana by French slave traders, 3,909 came from the Senegal trade concession held by the Company of the Indies. Those Africans from the interior regions surrounding Senegal brought with them the highly cohesive Bambara culture and its established tradition of trade and city marketing (Johnson, 1995). Therefore, the early colony of
Louisiana, which included Pensacola, Mobile, and Biloxi on the Gulf Coast, Balize at the mouth of the Mississippi river, New Orleans, Natchez to the northeast, Natchitoches to the northwest, Point Coupee to the north, and St. Louis to the far north, was a mixture of French, African (mainly Bambara as well as Fon and Angolan), and Native American (Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Natchez) cultures.

The introduction of rice seeds and of slaves who knew how to cultivate rice assured a reliable food crop that could be grown in the swamps around New Orleans (Hall, 1992a). Early rice and indigo plantations worked their slaves from daybreak until sundown, after which slaves had to grind rice and corn for their own meals. Often slaves were allowed a plot of ground to grow crops to supplement their diets. On Sundays slaves were allowed to work for extra pay, and could sell part of the crops they had grown, as well as wood, ashes or fruit in the city. Slave entrepreneurs, setting up their markets at Place des Negres, provided supplies to a city frequently near starvation.

The early French colony of New Orleans depended on slave labor for survival. African slaves cleared land, built and restored the levees, dug drainage ditches and canals, and constructed docks and public buildings. Many of the Africans brought to Louisiana also worked as artisans in metalworking, shipbuilding and various other necessary trades. Some of these slaves who worked in the city were able to hire out their time, and thus had a measure of freedom not available on the plantations. Because French Louisiana depended on the knowledge and skills of slaves for survival it came to be recognized that they had the right to use their free time on Sundays as
they saw fit with little or no supervision (Johnson, 1995). Slaves and free Blacks were also used for military defense—practices that were unusual for the American South.

French Louisiana was not a stable society controlled by a culturally and socially cohesive white elite ruling a dominated, immobilized, fractionalized, and culturally obliterated slave population. The chaotic conditions prevailing in the colony, the knowledge and skills of the African population, the size and importance of the Indian population throughout the eighteenth century, and the geography of lower Louisiana, which allowed for easy mobility along its waterways as well as escape and survival in nearby, pervasive swamps, all contributed to an unusually cohesive and heavily Africanized culture in lower Louisiana; clearly the most Africanized slave culture in the United States. (Hall, 1992a, p. 160)

Because only 300 slaves were brought into Louisiana between 1731 and 1763, the slave population underwent an unusual solidification process in the 1730s and 1740s. By the 1750s the city had stabilized and an identifiable New Orleans culture had developed that would be adopted by later Spanish and American inhabitants (Johnson, 1995).

French Louisiana also had a much more racially open society than the British American colonies on the East coast. Assimilation of the Native American populations had been a policy of the French monarchy and, as a result, many of the early French Canadians intermarried and adopted Indian life styles (Johnson, 1992). Because most of the African slaves brought to Louisiana during this early period were males, many of them also intermarried with the Indian women whom the French had enslaved. Runaway African slaves also moved into Indian communities or formed mixed Indian-African maroon settlements (Hall, 1992b). There developed an
unusually high degree of intermixing that, by the end of the 19th century, resulted in the absorption of the local Indian population into the New Orleans Black community (Johnson, 1995). The children of Indian-African unions were usually referred to in Louisiana records as griffe and were both slave and free.

Racial mixing also took place between the French and Africans. Their children were referred to as people of color or mulattoes; some remained slaves, but often they were freed. African slaves were also freed and were usually referred to as free Blacks. In 1721 Louisiana had a population of 514 African slaves, 51 Indian slaves, 155 French servants, and 529 Whites. A case heard before the Louisiana Superior Council in 1722 is the first mention of a free person of color in the colony. Raphael Bernard, a free man in France, migrated to the colony as an employee of a M. Dumanoir. It is known that Bernard was wealthy enough to lend money to one of the White settlers because he had to sue this person in court for the recovery of his loan (Everett, 1966). There is also a record of the marriage of two gens de couleur libres in 1725 at St. Louis Church in New Orleans. That same year, the slave Louis Congo was freed by the King’s orders and became the executioner for the colony. Jean Congo, a free man of color, was listed in the 1726 census as keeper of the High Road along Bayou St. John. He and his wife owned a home along the bayou where he collected tolls from boats that passed into the city. These records indicate that freed slaves were able to own property, hold civil positions, and had access to the colonial court system (Gehman, 1994).
The presence of free people of color became possible in Louisiana colony because of provisions for manumission in the *Code Noir* created by an edict of Louis XV in 1724 as a way to govern persons of African descent. Although the *Code Noir* in Louisiana was not as oppressive as the English Black Codes in the eastern colonies, it established the superior status of Europeans and their descendants and the inferior status of those persons with any African ancestors. Marriage was forbidden between Whites and Blacks. Slaves were not allowed to own property and they could not testify in court. However, the torture of slaves and the separation of children less than 14 years old from their mothers through sale was forbidden. Religious instruction for slaves in the Catholic faith was required and Sunday was observed as a day of rest for all persons, free and slave, in the colony.

The code also stipulated qualifications for freedom that contributed to the creation of a significant number of free persons of color, a caste that was permitted some rights that distinguished them from slaves, such as the right to own property, to testify in court, and to learn to read and write. Slaves could be manumitted through a will, for service as tutor to the master's children, for charitable or humanitarian reasons, for public service to the community, or by legislation. Frenchmen sometimes freed the mother of their children so their children would be free. Slaves were also allowed to petition the courts for their freedom at the price they were appraised. Service as a soldier could also be reason for manumission. However, free Blacks were required to give special respect to their former masters and could be reduced to slavery for certain offenses (Everett, 1966). The earliest record of a manumission
procedure is in 1733 when Bienville freed his slaves, Jorge and Marie, after they had served him for 26 years. This couple was probably among the first group of Africans coming into the Louisiana colony at Mobile in 1707 (Gehman, 1994).

Although the Code Noir provided for the legal manumission of slaves, this was a possibility for only a small percentage of the population. Slaves also escaped to obtain their freedom. Some runaways were able to escape from plantations to New Orleans with the hope of blending into the free population, others escaped by sea to Havana. From the earliest years, Africans and Indians escaped together, seeking refuge among the Indian villages. Slave maroon settlements grew up in the swamps around New Orleans into tightly knit families of fugitives from plantations as far north as Pointe Coupee (Hall, 1992b).

Slaves also attempted to gain their freedom by revolting against White authority. In 1729, when the Company of the Indies set out to take land from the Natchez for tobacco growing, the Indians rose up against the French and destroyed their settlement. The French and their Choctaw allies then attacked the village of the Natchez Indians in 1730. Many African slaves had joined the Natchez, and when French Governor Perier sent a contingent of soldiers against the Natchez, these Africans were decisive in preventing the total defeat of the Indians. Fifteen Blacks also accompanied the French soldiers in the expedition against the Natchez, and these slaves were given their freedom. Fifty Black slaves were taken from the Natchez by the Choctaw and eventually returned to the Company of the Indies in New Orleans. These returned slaves plotted with the Choctaw to overthrow the French in 1731, but
their plans were discovered and several of the conspirators were executed (Hall, 1992a).

**Spanish Rule.** When Spain took over Louisiana after the collapse of the French colonial empire in North America at the close of the Seven Year War in 1763, New Orleans was a French colonial city. "It never became Spanish in a cultural sense, and it would still be a colonial French city when the United States took over in 1803" (Hall, 1992b, p. 45). The Spanish presence was mainly military, and few of the military personnel were actually from Spain. French remained the language of the colony and was adopted by the Spanish who often intermarried with local French Creoles. The boundaries of the Louisiana territory had changed, however, to the land west of the Mississippi plus the Isle d’Orleans, while the Britain claimed Canada and the land east of the river.

Gradually French Louisianians were also cut off from trade and communication with family and friends in the French West Indies colony of St. Domingue. Spanish Louisiana was administered from Cuba and trade agreements were set up with Vera Cruz and other Spanish Caribbean ports. Additionally, Blacks from St. Domingue were feared by Whites for their knowledge of poisons, and in 1763 a total ban on slaves from that area was imposed until 1777 (Gehman, 1994).

During Spanish rule Louisiana became more prosperous. Large slave plantations around New Orleans produced rice, tobacco, and indigo, the chief commercial crops of the Louisiana colony until the 1790s. Cotton was cultivated only in a small way until the textile industry in England created a large market in 1795.
Thousands of acres were then planted in cotton, and it became very popular with many of the Anglo American planters who were migrating into north Louisiana (Cummins, 1990).

Sugar had been introduced to Hispaniola as early as 1506 and it soon became a source of great wealth for Spanish and French colonists on that island. Labor on the hundreds of sugar plantations in French St. Domingue was so terrible that slaves were literally worked to death in a period of seven years or less. In 1786, on the eve of the French Revolution, the island had the densest concentration of Blacks in the New World and produced the most wealth (Meltzer, 1993). French planter Dubreuil had begun large-scale experiments in sugar production in Louisiana in 1758. It was not until 1795, when planter and later mayor of New Orleans Etienne de Bore perfected a dry cutting process, however, that the cultivation of sugar cane rapidly expanded (Cummins, 1990).

The revolution in St. Domingue from 1791 to 1804 established the first independent Black nation in America, but it also ended the island’s wealthy sugar plantations. Many White sugar planters fled the slave uprising, seeking refuge first in Cuba until war broke out between France and Spain, after which as many as 10,000 came to New Orleans bringing their slaves with them. Many of these emigrants brought their skills in sugar production to Louisiana, increasing the number of large sugar plantations and the demand for slave labor. Louisiana and Cuba inherited the status of major sugar producers from St. Domingue. With this shift to large sugar and
cotton plantations in Louisiana, absentee landlordism increased and slaves were more likely to be treated with greater cruelty.

The transfer of Louisiana to Spain (1763-1767) as well as the revolution of the British colonies against England in 1776 cut communication between the French colonists and France, and for a time French planters became dependent on the British in West Florida for new slave labor shipments (Fiehrer, 1979). When the war with England drew to a close in 1782, Spain allowed any nation to import slaves into Louisiana duty-free, and African slaves began to pour into the colony in large numbers. The slave population increased from 10,000 in 1760 to 16,000 in 1785 to 28,000 in 1800 (Fiehrer, 1979). Those Africans who were brought to Louisiana under Spanish rule came mainly from Senegal (Bambara, Mandinga, and Wolof), the Bight of Benin (Fon, Ewe, and Yoruba), and Central Africa (Kongo and Angola). Spanish laws did not protect the slave family as had the former French laws that prohibited the separate sale of mother, father, and children under 14 years of age. Fathers were not recognized under Spanish law and small children could be separated from their mothers by sale. Therefore, many children lived on plantations without either parent and were accepted as kin by adults who were mainly African. Outside the city of New Orleans slaves were more likely to live on large plantations and to have little contact with Whites. As a result African culture in Louisiana was reinforced, manifesting itself in folktales and proverbs, language, music, dance, and religion (Hall, 1992a).
The shortage of manpower in New Orleans required the use of slaves in positions of skill and responsibility for businesses such as foremen, squad leaders, carpenters, metalworkers, smiths, masons, cooks, and butlers. Often slaves were owned by someone who had invested in their labor and would then hire them out and collect their wages. Skilled slaves were particularly useful in the port city where squads of slaves hired themselves out for manufacturing and shipping. The city itself purchased the use of slave gangs who worked alongside free people of color for public works projects, building construction, levee maintenance, iron work, and the construction of roads and wharves. The autonomy of hired-out slaves and their economic and social significance to the city contributed to a social position and cultural assimilation among White Louisianians quite unlike the distant relations of White and Black in other areas of the South. Additionally, the existence of a large free population made the total identification of blackness with slavery impossible (Fiehrer, 1979).

During French rule most freed slaves were African-born and listed as free Blacks; however, when Louisiana passed to the King of Spain miscegenation increased and mulattoes gradually assumed a more dominant role. A 1732 census of New Orleans lists only six mulattoes, but by 1777, 273 free mulattoes and 545 mulatto slaves were recorded (Everett, 1966). The 165 free persons of African descent at the end of French rule expanded to 1,500 by the end of Spanish rule. This was partly due to Spanish laws that furthered the possibility of slave manumission. These laws provided slaves virtually automatic rights of emancipation by self-purchase and no
longer required, as French law had, approval by the courts (Johnson, 1992). Some
slaves were able to purchase themselves and some free people of color also purchased
relatives in order to free them. White men could free their concubines and, when they
were acknowledged, illegitimate children were able to inherit some of their father's
estate, thereby allowing some free Black women and their children to become property
owners (Schafer, 1989). A social system known as placage grew up in Louisiana
whereby free women of color were "placed" with White men. Although not legally
recognized, these women were considered "wives" of the White men in the Black
community, acquired real estate in their own names, had houses built, and passed
estates on to their children. Later in life the White men might legally marry White
women, but often liaisons with women of color would last a lifetime (Gehman, 1994).

Slaves also ran away from the Spanish colony to gain their freedom. With the
outbreak of the war for independence in the British colonies, some Louisiana slaves
escaped into British territory and the Spanish western territories of Texas and Mexico.
However, because of close family ties people who escaped often remained nearby.
The departure of Spanish troops from Louisiana to engage the British on the Gulf
Coast in 1776 contributed to the growth of organized maroonage communities. Some
maroon camps had developed around New Orleans as early as the 1750s and these
maroons worked for local sawmills, cutting and hauling logs. They also contributed
produce and crafts to the city markets. Tied to both the slave and free Black
population through kinship networks, the maroons were able to elude capture.
However, they were a threat to the slave system. "Acting through the Cabildo, the big
slave owners manipulated the fears of the White population, trying to create hysteria about a mythical 'revolt' of the maroons to take over the colony" (Hall, 1992a, p. 226). Troops returning from British Florida were sent to attack and destroy many of their settlements and execute the leaders. Slaves continued to run away, however, and the system of maroonage also continued until the 1850s.

Slaves also revolted to gain freedom. The French Revolution in 1789 precipitated a period of unrest in both St. Domingue and Louisiana. For although Louisiana belonged to Spain, it had a French-speaking population and a merchant class with close ties to France. Spanish authorities were cautious toward the Creole planters who had organized a resistance to Spanish rule in 1768. They were also anxious concerning possible slave revolts because of the harsh treatment Creole planters accorded their slaves—who were the majority of the population (Johnson, 1992).

In 1791 Louis XVI acknowledged the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which stated that all citizens have the right to take part in the making of laws. In St. Domingue the Rights of Man were extended to mulattoes and free Blacks, but not to slaves who numbered 500,000 in a population of 570,000. Slaves revolted, destroying that which had caused their suffering for centuries; free Blacks and mulattoes joining the revolutionary forces. Black revolutionaries won control of the colony and renamed it Haiti. White planters who escaped sailed for Cuba or the United States, many coming to French Louisiana with their slaves. Hoping to gain control of the wealthy colony, Spain and England went to war with France, sending large expeditions to Haiti. When the French National Convention declared that slavery was abolished in
all colonies in 1794, Toussaint L'Overture, leader of the revolution, joined the French to drive out Spanish and British forces and restored order to the island (Meltzer, 1993). Louisiana received many "foreign French" due to the upheavals in France as well as massive numbers of migrants from Haiti. White Jacobins, mainly laborers and soldiers who allied themselves with slaves and free people of color and supported full equality for peoples of all races and the abolition of slavery, also arrived in Louisiana (Hall, 1992a).

The outbreak of war between Spain and France was a devastating blow to the security and prosperity of Louisiana. "By early 1795, disorder reigned in New Orleans. Houses were ignited, and dangerous mobs were attracted to the fires" (Hall, 1992a, p. 317). By this time the port city had become essential to the economic prosperity of the American settlers in the Mississippi Valley who sent their goods downriver. French ambassador Edmond Genet conspired with United States general George Rogers Clark to seize the colony for France, promising free navigation of the Mississippi River to the Americans (Hall, 1992a). Word began spreading among the slaves of the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

A month before the slave uprising in St. Domingue a conspiracy was revealed in Pointe Coupée. After a lengthy trial the accused slaves remained in prison until they were sent back to their masters. Spanish authorities tried to project an image of themselves as protectors of the slaves because of the fragile nature of their control of Louisiana and their reliance on people of African descent for loyalty and defense. Creole planters, who recognized that if France took back the colony they would lose
their slaves, condemned the Spanish governor’s leniency. In 1795 plans were again uncovered for a sizable slave revolt. Slaves throughout Pointe Coupee and False River and several Whites, inspired by the French and Haitian revolutions, had been plotting to rise up and kill the planters in order to abolish slavery.

It was part of a multiracial abolitionist movement supported by a large segment of the dispossessed of all races in Louisiana and throughout the Caribbean: a manifestation of the most radical phase of the French Revolution, which had spilled over from Europe to the Americas . . . directed not against whites, but against slavery. (Hall, 1992a, p. 345)

Spanish Governor Carondelet sought to absolve the slaves on the grounds that they had been influenced by White Jacobins, but in the end 23 slave conspirators were hanged, 35 were deported, and rigid control and discipline was reinstated (Johnson, 1992).

By 1799 Napoleon had overthrown the republican French government and established a military dictatorship. Napoleon dreamed of a new French empire in the Americas and he forced Spain to return Louisiana to France in 1800, although Spanish officials continued to govern the colony. This transaction troubled the new United States because the economic survival of Americans in the Ohio Valley depended on being able to ship their products down the interior river systems to New Orleans for shipment to world ports. President Jefferson dispatched ambassadors to France to secure free navigation rights on the Mississippi River for the United States and to purchase New Orleans. In 1802 Napoleon sent a force of 20,000 troops to take back Haiti and restore slavery. Napoleon’s forces were decimated by the ex-slaves and, in 1803, Haiti formally proclaimed its independence (Meltzer, 1993). Napoleon did not
have sufficient replacements for his army, and seeing the futility of trying to establish an empire in America he turned his military plans toward Europe. To raise money for troops he offered to sell all of Louisiana to the United States. The formal transfer from France to the United States took place in New Orleans on November 30, 1803 (Cummins, 1990).

American Rule

Antebellum Period. When the United States took possession of Louisiana it was divided into Indiana territory and the Territory of Orleans (present-day Louisiana minus Spanish West Florida). Both Black and White Americans migrating into the Territory of Orleans were from colonies that had their origins in Anglo-Saxon culture, spoke English, and were Protestant; whereas Louisiana Creoles had their roots in Latin culture, spoke French, and were Catholic. Cultures clashed in New Orleans where Creoles were able to retain their powerful political position until 1830, mainly because they were the majority in a population that was being reinforced by French-speaking immigrants (Tregle, 1992).

Americans were coming into the territory at the same time that immigrants were arriving from both France and Haiti. Some of the European French were exiles from the revolution in 1789, some came with the coup d'état of Napoleon, others came in the aftermath of the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. "Throughout the antebellum period New Orleans served as a haven for political exiles from France" (Lachance, 1992, p. 114).
The largest wave of Haitian refugees came from Cuba, in 1809, where they had sought refuge until expelled by the Spanish when Napoleon invaded Spain. This group included 2,731 Whites, 3,102 free persons of color, and 3,226 slaves (Lachance, 1992). These people of African descent brought their Caribbean Franco-African culture with them revitalizing the Creole French language, African dance in Congo Square, and Catholic-African (voodoo) religious practices. The large number of immigrants from France and the French-speaking West Indies also nurtured the French culture and language and the fluid racial order that had always existed between Black and White Creoles. Many of the recent immigrants from the Caribbean and immigrants from Europe who had formed placages moved into the subdivisions of Faubourgs Marigny and Treme along with free persons of color born in Louisiana (Toledano & Christovich, 1980).

English-speaking free Blacks, migrating from the old South due to an increase in repressive legislation, also began to move into New Orleans in large numbers after the Louisiana Purchase (Sullivan, 1988). In spite of the state laws and city ordinances designed to exclude them, many free Blacks came into the city to work on the coastal vessels and river steamers. These American free Blacks as well as the slaves sold into Louisiana from the old South brought an Anglo-American culture with them, and central to that culture was the Protestant church and the role of the Black preacher. The First African Baptist Church in New Orleans was founded in 1826, and although it was forced to close in 1830, three other African Baptist Churches were established in New Orleans before the Civil War. St. Mark Baptist Church was attended by
slaves who had to obtain permits to leave the plantation for services, and an officer of the law remained in the church to make sure nothing was taught contrary to White wishes (Christian, n.d.). Most free Black Americans turned to the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) church which was founded in 1848. In establishing racially separate institutions, Black Anglo-Americans expressed their desire to create a separate identity within the confines of the American racial order (Logsdon & Bell, 1992). Black Creoles, however, lived in racially mixed communities and attended church with White Creoles.

By 1810 New Orleans was predominantly a Black city with a population of 10,824 slaves, 5,727 free people of color, and 8,000 Whites (Kendall, 1940). It had the largest free Black population in North America, and the wealthiest. Free Creoles of color were more prosperous and powerful than American free Blacks. They belonged to the class of artisans, grocers, real estate speculators, and financiers. Many owned slaves themselves, some as servants, but most often for the purpose of protecting enslaved relatives and friends until they could be legally freed (Sullivan, 1988).

Following the Haitian revolution sugar emerged as a major Louisiana staple. The sugar industry had declined in Haiti and many of the planters who had relocated to Louisiana brought slaves who were skilled in sugar production. With the coming of the Americans, trade burgeoned and sugar plantations spread throughout the lower Louisiana parishes. Sugar plantations required sizable holdings, very large investments, and extra slaves who could work by rotation during the cutting season to
make sure the crop would be harvested before frost spoiled it (Fiehrer, 1979). The large cotton plantations in north Louisiana also required many slaves. Between 1803 and 1807, 39,075 slaves left Charleston harbor for proposed sale in lower Louisiana. During the Antebellum period there were more large plantations in Louisiana than anywhere else in the South. More than 1,000 planters owned more than 70 Africans each (Fiehrer, 1979). As slave gangs grew in size, paternalistic attachments decreased, cruelty and harsh conditions in Louisiana became legendary, and slave discontent mounted.

Because of the growing need for labor on cotton and sugar plantations, Louisiana planters were outraged when congress prohibited the territory from importing Africans in 1804. Slaves, however, were allowed to be brought in as the property of White persons proposing to settle in Louisiana (Taylor, 1990). Down to the Civil War Africans also continued to be smuggled into Louisiana. Contraband slave trading sprang up near the Gulf of Mexico where privateers intercepted Spanish slaving vessels bound for Cuba from Africa. Jean Lafitte, operating out of Barataria Bay and later Galveston, brought slaves into New Orleans until 1821. He fenced this stolen human property at his blacksmith shop on St. Philip Street (Kendall, 1941).

Legitimate slave traders adjusted to the need for slaves in the deep South by selling African Americans from the old Southern states. As the importance of the slave trade grew, the border states began to breed slaves for the market (Meltzer, 1993). In Virginia the breeding and export of slaves was a recognized industry. Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, and the District
of Columbia were the principal suppliers of Black labor to Louisiana (Kendall, 1940). "At certain seasons of the year all the roads, steamboats, and packets were crowded with troops of negroes on their way to the slave-markets of the South" (Kendall, 1939, p. 12). By 1827 New Orleans was the center of that slave trade, and it was dotted with slave pens where slaves were kept until they were sold. Between 1804 and 1862, more than 135,000 African and African American slaves were sold in New Orleans. Along with sugar and cotton trade, the slave trade was big business, with a demand constantly in excess of the supply.

Slave auctions were regularly held in the rotundas of the St. Louis and the St. Charles hotels. In the fashionable streets of the business quarter there were slave barracks, slave show-rooms, slave auction-houses. In some of these establishments negroes attractively attired were exhibited in show windows or on verandahs, precisely as one might offer any other kind of merchandise for public inspection. In 1842 there were 185 persons listed in the city directory as engaged in the slave business, not counting 349 brokers and 25 auctioneers, who probably also sold slaves whenever the opportunity offered. This was in a city the white population of which did not exceed 60,000 souls. (Kendall, 1939, p. 13)

Under American government there was little respect for the slave family and young children were often separated from their mothers on the auction block. In the auction rooms slaves were stripped and buyers were allowed to inspect their hands, arms, legs, teeth, and the women's bust. However, a potential buyer might escort the slave to a private room and inspect further for physical defects. The most important detail for women was their ability to bear children. Handsome women were also sold as fancy girls. Beautiful "mixed-blood" women represented a "peculiarly attractive form of luxury" and sold for good prices (Kendall, 1939, p. 11). A visitor to New
Orleans in 1847 noted, "When a woman is sold, the auctioneer usually puts his audience in a good humor by a few indecent jokes" (Kendall, 1939, p. 11).

Solomon Northup, born a free Black, was kidnapped and enslaved for 12 years in Louisiana. He wrote about being herded into pens in New Orleans until slaves were dressed and driven out into a yard for sale where they had to dance, jump or sing in order to appear cheerful for prospective buyers. He also described what life was like on a cotton plantation where slaves worked from the time there was light in the sky until the middle of the night. Northup related that each night the slaves brought in their cotton with fear of being whipped for not having picked their prescribed weight. Following the weighing-in and their whippings, each then had to do their personal chores and prepare food for the next day. He also described the woman, Patsy, who worked as a field hand and was subject to further physical and sexual abuse when her master was drunk (Northup, 1968).

On sugar plantations slaves were also taken out to work before sunrise and kept in the field until late in the evening. Work was difficult and dangerous. A survey in 1829 figured that the death rate on a sugar plantation was 2.5% greater than the birth rate. One interviewed planter said that when the cane was cut in the fall, "the fatigue is so great that nothing but the severest application of the lash can stimulate the human frame to endure it, and the sugar season is uniformly followed by a great increase of mortality among the slaves" (Kendall, 1940, p.14).

In the city slaves did the household drudgery, logged trees, smithed iron, sawed wood, laid brick, ran errands, worked loading barrels of sugar and cotton bails on the
levee and as waiters, laundresses, and maids for hotels. Most domestic work was done by women who did the cleaning and washing, made the clothes, took care of children, tended the sick, cooked and served the meals and bought food at the market. Sometimes men served as valets, butlers, coachmen, stablemen, and gardeners. Children were also put to domestic work at an early age (Meltzer, 1993). Public service industries, e.g. the Pontchartrain & New Orleans Railroad, the New Orleans Gas Company, and the Red Brick & Tile Company, used slaves. The state Engineering Department bought slaves to build levees and dig canals. Convents and hospitals also used many slaves. People often bought slaves as an investment, making a profit by hiring them out to short-handed employers as waiters for local hotels, longshoremen, or carpenters. In 1860 a slave blacksmith could earn for an owner as much as $450 per year; field hands, $360; a competent woman worker, $336 (Kendall, 1940).

Although the life of slaves in the city was better than on the plantation, the whip was also an essential part of the discipline of city slaves. "Almost universally some form of painful and humiliating sanction was essential to successful operation of the system. Otherwise, the slave, who had no hope of improving his own condition and that of his children, had no compelling reason to work" (Taylor, 1979). Occasionally slaves were motivated to work when they were allowed to keep a portion of what they earned to purchase their freedom. These people, who began with no material possessions, had to work extra—often day and night—to purchase themselves and their family members, before they could work to support themselves and their
children. In New Orleans these wage-earning free African Americans often worked alongside hired out slaves. People who purchased themselves were usually slaves who had been trained in a skill or trade, rather than domestic workers or field hands, however, planter John McDonogh allowed his slaves to purchase their freedom with extra hours of labor. While benefiting from the slave’s labor for 15 years, McDonogh was also able to purchase two more slaves with the money each slave paid for their liberation. McDonogh also instructed his slaves in trades and provided a school for the children in order to prepare them for the colonization of Liberia (Kendall, 1933).

Americans moving into Louisiana were not prepared for the assertive free people of color, some of whom were prosperous, claimed French parentage and were well-educated. They were shocked by Blacks who wore military uniforms and were armed; the ease with which Whites, free Blacks and slaves associated; and the independence of slaves (Gehman, 1994). In time, Anglo-American culture and the increasing need for slave labor contributed to the growth of a less tolerant and even vindictive attitude toward the free people of color in Louisiana who, by their very presence, called into question the assumption of Black servitude and White superiority-the dominant feature of racist ideology in the old South (Logsdon & Bell, 1992).

Soon after the accession of Louisiana to the United States in 1803, land-owning free people of color petitioned the government for the right to vote on tax issues. The Americans, however, held to strict divisions between White and Black, and instead of the rights of citizenship, further restrictions were placed on free Blacks. In 1806 the Louisiana legislature prohibited admission of free Blacks into the territory, and those
already there had to post a security bond for three months. The Black Code of 1807 required free people of color to carry proof of their free status, and in public records the letters h.c.l. or f.c.l. had to follow their names to identify them as homme or femme de couleur libre. They were to "never insult or strike whites nor presume to conceive themselves equal, [and] they must submit on every occasion and answer with respect" (Logsdon & Bell, 1992, p. 207) or face imprisonment. A nine o'clock nightly curfew was imposed on both slaves and free people of color, and permission was required for them to leave the city and visit family members or travel on business in other parts of the state (Gehman, 1994).

The Black Code of 1807 also attempted to make manumission more difficult. To qualify for freedom slaves had to be 30 years old. This restriction prevented a master from freeing a family with children. It also prevented a White man from freeing his mistress and a free Black man from freeing his wife until she reached 30, and children born before their mother's emancipation were destined to be slaves for at least 30 years.

The Haitian rebellion created a climate of fear among Whites in Louisiana who believed that their slaves would be inspired by Haitian independence or that rebellious leaders might be among the migrants to Louisiana. In 1805 a White refugee from Haiti named Grandjean actually organized slaves and free people of color in New Orleans in a failed attempt to revolt against the Americans (Gehman, 1994). In addition, the number of free people of color from Haiti swelled the population in New Orleans to what seemed dangerous levels. Race relations were not as fluid in Anglo
culture as in Latin culture. Throughout the South the fact that some people of African
descent were free challenged the American slave system, and there was fear that free
Blacks would inspire slave insurrection. An armed and trained free colored militia
was particularly troublesome to the American governor of the territory of Orleans who
thinned their ranks, imposed White officers, and finally allowed the legislature to
disband it. A slave revolt in 1811, however, persuaded Governor Claiborne to
recommission Black militia units in order to gain their assistance in protecting the city
(Logsdon & Bell, 1992).

The largest slave revolt in the United States took place in St. John Parish, 35
miles northwest of New Orleans, when perhaps 500 slaves, armed mainly with farm
implements, led by men on horseback, started marching downriver toward New
Orleans. Very little is known of the plan for this revolt because the leaders were
either killed in the fighting or executed soon afterward (Taylor, 1990). It was believed
that perhaps the leaders had participated in the Haitian revolution, or that some of the
slaves smuggled in by the Baratarian Pirates had inspired the rebellion. This incident
added to the fear and paranoia of Whites in the territory by exposing their
vulnerability to slave uprising. For one thing, Whites were a minority, and they were
needed to patrol the plantations, making it difficult for the governor to form a military
defense for the city. For another, the White militia was divided by Creole and
American allegiances (Rodriguez, 1992). Louisiana gained statehood status in 1812,
but the federal government recognized its potential for violence.
When the United States went to war with Great Britain in 1812 Louisiana was its most vulnerable point. British forces in the Gulf attempted to gain the assistance of slaves in exchange for their freedom. Facing the danger of both internal revolt and foreign attack with a poorly trained state militia, White Louisianians turned to Andrew Jackson as their protector. General Jackson sent for volunteers from Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Mississippi Territory. He also called for the services of Louisiana's well-trained militia of free men of color by promising them land and citizenship rights. The pirates of Barataria also joined in the defense of New Orleans. As slave traffickers they would have had a great deal to lose by either slave insurrection or emancipation of slaves by the British. Although the anticipated insurrection among the slaves never materialized, the fear of slave rebellion continued to plague White Louisianians long after the defeat of the British at the Battle of New Orleans (Rodriguez, 1992). Yet slavery grew with alarming proportions so that, by 1860, there were 331,726 slaves in Louisiana (Christian, n.d.).

Few free men of color who had served in the Battle of New Orleans received property, and none received citizenship. From 1815 until 1830, however, state officials did not further reduce the rights of free people of color, and the economic boom in New Orleans enabled skilled Black workers and merchants to gain occupational status. Some of the free people of color born during this period were able to distinguish themselves as artists, writers, musicians, and inventors.

Louisiana White Creoles were less likely than the newly arriving Americans to restrict the free people of color. Culturally they did not have the strict divisions
between Black and White that were part of Anglo-American culture. Additionally, they lived in the same neighborhoods, spoke French, attended the same Catholic churches, and often were related. Ethnic conflicts between English and French speakers, however, racked New Orleans for decades, coming close to armed violence in the 1820s. Creoles were able to dominate the city politically for 30 years because the majority of the population was French-speaking in all sections of the city. The Americans gradually began to dominate the commercial district. By 1836 they were able to win legislative approval to divide the city into three municipalities, guaranteeing each control over its own internal financial affairs. No longer encumbered by the political maneuvers of the Latin majority, the American municipality prospered (Tregle, 1992).

Between 1830 and 1860 great waves of Irish and German immigrants poured into the city. These people identified with American values, enthusiastically setting out to become Americans themselves (Tregle, 1992). Free people of color had to compete against ever increasing cheap immigrant labor, although more of them were skilled, and some even held jobs as architects, bookbinders, brokers, engineers, doctors, jewelers, merchants, and musicians (Blassingame, 1973). Most of the large master contractors, however, made a specialty of buying slave mechanics. Competition between White workmen and hired-out slaves who worked for little wages led to a near riot in August 1835, when mechanics were invited to assemble to protest the employment of slaves in mechanical arts (Christian, n.d.).
These newly arriving immigrants were enfranchised when a state constitution was drawn up in 1845 abolishing all property and taxpaying qualifications for voting. In 1852 American leaders, bolstered by the added strength of their new Irish and German cohorts, fused the three municipalities into a reunited, American-dominated city (Tregle, 1992). At that point the state legislature began an assault on the rights of manumission and began transferring enforcement of existing restrictions on the free people of color from local to state authorities (Logsdon & Bell, 1992).

After 1830 proslavery attitudes in the South and antislavery attitudes in the North began to solidify. In the deep South opposition to slavery was almost completely silenced by 1830. David Walker's Appeal appeared in New Orleans in 1829.

The next year it became a capital crime in Louisiana not only to distribute printed matter that might incite insurrection, but also even to say anything from pulpit, bar, stage, bench, or anywhere else that might breed discontent or encourage rebellion. (Taylor, 1990, p. 130)

Because the economy was dependent on slavery, planters as well as those who owned no slaves grew hostile to Northern attacks and began to think of the South as a separate section with different interests from the rest of the United States (Taylor, 1990). Nat Turner's rebellion and the Abolitionist Movement escalated White fear and contributed to further repression of African American people.

A Louisiana law in 1830 prohibited free Blacks from entering the state. Those who had come after 1812 were required to register with a parish judge. Newly freed slaves were required to leave the state within 30 days of their emancipation, and
former owners had to post $1,000 bond to insure their departure. In 1846 the Louisiana legislature passed a law that no slave could claim freedom on the grounds of being in a state or country that prohibited slavery, with or without the consent of his or her master. In 1852 the legislature declared that freed slaves were to be sent to Liberia and their masters were required to pay the passage of $150. Slaves that did not depart within 12 months of their emancipation were to be re-enslaved. An 1855 law required a slave to sue the state for freedom, and if it was granted, the former master had to post $1,000 bond against the freed person becoming a public charge. In New Orleans judges made emancipation possible anyway, allowing the newly freed slaves to remain in the state. In 1857 the Louisiana legislature eliminated all loopholes and totally prohibited emancipations in the state (Schafer, 1989). In 1859 free persons with any African heritage were instructed to choose their masters and become slaves for life (Taylor, 1990).

Most of the Black Creoles of New Orleans, both free and slave, escaped much of the severity of the new laws by living in the virtually autonomous Creole municipal districts that had been created in 1836. In these areas free and slave Black Creoles continued to socialize and cohabit in spite of the state laws. However, when the repression became unbearable in the 1850s, large numbers fled to France and Latin America, and especially to Haiti and Mexico. The free population in New Orleans had steadily grown until it reached 19,000 in 1840; by 1850 it had diminished to 10,000 (Gehman, 1994). Those who remained through this period resisted Americanization and looked to France, which had not only ended slavery in the French
West Indies, but also given full political rights to all Black inhabitants (Logsdon & Bell, 1992).

Very few Louisiana slaves attempted to reach Canada because there were three states to traverse and many rivers to cross. Prior to the Mexican War, slaves would sometimes escape into Spanish West Florida or Texas (Christian, n.d.). Sometimes slaves escaped into the cypress swamps to live with the maroon colonies, but in many instances slaves used running away as a form of strike, returning for the promise of better treatment. The best hope for escape was to stow away on a boat going North or to Europe, but this required assistance (Taylor, 1990). Many fugitive slaves from the neighboring plantations, however, fled into New Orleans. Some of these slaves were able to take advantage of the manumission laws and job opportunities in New Orleans to earn their freedom. Slaves residing in the city also attempted to escape bondage, some by fleeing the state, but most probably tried to disappear into the ranks of the free Black community. Because of the need for labor, state laws were often overlooked in New Orleans. During the 1850s, however, New Orleans police arrested more than 8,500 fugitive slaves (Logsdon & Bell, 1992).

As racial conditions worsened some manumitted slaves emigrated to Liberia. In 1835, 45 emigrants set sail and were provided with money for a teacher by New Orleans women interested in promoting education in Liberia. New Orleans planter Stephen Henderson freed his slaves in his will and provided passage for them to Africa. Six hundred left in 1838. John McDonogh sent 43 persons to Liberia in 1859.
Considerable numbers of manumitted slaves also went to Canada and many Black Creoles went to Haiti because of the common language and culture (Christian, n.d.).

Fueled by the fugitive slave law, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, and the growing apprehension that enslaved Blacks would rise up and slay their White masters, sectional conflict passed beyond the control of reason. As Southern sectionalist sympathy strengthened, a virulent negrophobia surfaced in New Orleans. Dr. Josia Nott, who lectured at Louisiana University, and physician Dr. S. Cartwright sought to prove by Baconian philosophy, the Bible and medical science that Blacks were different and an inferior species doomed to eternal servitude (Christian, n.d.). Henri Vignaud, literary editor of *La Renaissance Louisianaise*, instructed White Creoles that "slavery is the normal state of the black man . . . . White and Black do not belong to the same species" (Tregle, 1992, p. 169). By 1860 neither American nor Creole Black leaders could resist the relentless pressure placed on the African American community in New Orleans. Fear and discouragement ran deep as the fragile rights of all Blacks—free and slave, Creole and American—vanished. Free people of color reacted to the growing racist climate in various ways. Many fled the city. Some found what protection they could in paternalistic relationships with White New Orleanians. Others secretly organized for self-defense (Logsdon & Bell, 1992).

**Civil War and Reconstruction.** In November, 1860, when Abraham Lincoln won the presidential election, he pledged to end the extension of slavery into new territories although he did not wish to interfere in states where slavery already existed. Two months later Louisiana's legislature voted for secession and began making
preparations for war. In New Orleans patrols were tightened and greater restrictions were placed on the slaves' freedom of movement. Slave labor, punishment, and even their sale continued (Blassingame, 1973). Within a year after the fall of Fort Sumter federal forces sailed upriver and demanded the surrender of New Orleans on April 26, 1862. Believing the Union army had come to free them, slaves from the city and surrounding plantations sought sanctuary in the Union camps surrounding the city. More than 10,000 refugees were in New Orleans by the summer of 1862. A new attitude prevailed among these slaves, and incidents of "insubordination" solidified in the White mind the always-present fear of slave rebellion. Skirmishes between police and Black refugees attempting to reach Union lines occurred on the outskirts of the city, and refugees were regularly jailed for "impudent" and violent behavior (Messner, 1975).

Fearing that freed Blacks would commit violent acts against Whites in Louisiana, Union commander General Benjamin Butler instituted two systems for their control. During a period when national sentiment shifted toward the abolition of slavery and White Northern workers were rioting against conscription into a war that they felt would increase job competition, Butler was faced with a dire need for soldiers. He began by enlisting into Union service the Native Guard, a brigade of free men of color that had originally been pressed into service by the Confederates. By the end of 1862 the majority of the men enlisted into the Black fighting units were former slaves, and 66 Black men, mostly free men of color, were commissioned as officers. In an effort to stabilize the Black population and the Louisiana economy Butler also
established a wage-labor system on the plantations. A labor contract and monthly wages along with a prohibition against cruel corporal punishment were provided for Black workers who returned to plantations to labor 10 hours a day, 26 days a month. However, many of the former slaves were cheated, and some of the military guards who were sent to prevent abuse acted as overseers for the planters (Messner, 1975).

Butler's replacement, General Nathaniel Banks, continued the programs of Black wage-labor and military enlistment for the freedmen from 1863 to 1865. Banks, however, eliminated the Black officer corps of the Native Guards, revived the pass system by which any Blacks without passes were placed on plantations, gave the police jury the authority to employ any idle Black person in public works projects, and imposed a 7:30 curfew. The goal of these programs was to promote a more obedient Black work force and to reimpose White control over the freedmen. These plantation work programs were to become the wage and share-crop systems by which the freed slaves were tied to the land in an endless system of indebtedness following Reconstruction (Messner, 1975).

Some of the free men of color formed a Confederate regiment to guard New Orleans in 1861. Some, who were large slave-holding planters, were anxious to protect their property and may have sincerely supported the Confederacy. Many free people of color felt they were protecting their native land just as they had when they fought for the French and Spanish. Threats of bodily harm and confiscation of property also caused many to join the rebel army. When the rebels evacuated the city to the advancing federal troops, however, the free Black troops refused to accompany
them (Vincent, 1979). Many were also ambivalent about joining the Union. As Creoles they had experienced the prejudices and legal restrictions of Anglo-American government. Furthermore, the Americans had not extended citizenship to the free people of color in 1803, or to the men who had fought in the War of 1812. The free people of color were also aware that free Black Americans were segregated in the North and treated as second-class citizens. But, they also recognized that the servile status of the descendants of Africans in America affected their own status, i.e. that even though free they were not citizens. So, when Butler decided to recruit Black troops for the Louisiana Native Guards in August, 1862, the former free men of color responded with alacrity (Blassingame, 1976).

In 1863 Banks also began allowing slaves who had escaped from plantations to enlist, and by August all Black males without visible means of support in the city were to be arrested and conscripted. Well over 10,000 Black men, both slave and free, fought for months under General Banks during the Battle of Port Hudson. This decisive battle was one of the most important factors in changing sentiment in the country toward the ability of Black men to fight with bravery. Since Blacks in Louisiana had contributed to the Union victory, they felt their right to equal treatment under the law could not be ignored (Blassingame, 1976).

The end of the war signaled a new racial division in New Orleans that overshadowed the previous contention between Creole and Anglo cultural divisions. As anti-black fanaticism grew, racial purity assumed so much importance that White Creoles rejected Black Creoles as well as the miscegenation that was part of Creole
identity. This fixation on color so possessed New Orleans White society that a 20th-century Louisiana State Court of Appeals actually ruled that "when a person is called a creole this evidences an absence of any negro blood" (Tregle, 1992, p. 183). To the extent French Creole culture survived, however, it did so in the Black community. Black Creoles continued to retain their ethnic boundaries, not wanting to be assimilated into American culture nor to be part of a separate Black political and economic entity. They were fully aware of their past achievements and strove to retain their history and Creole culture. Following the war, Creole leaders, who had formal learning in French intellectual traditions, continued to believe in the egalitarian ideals of the French Revolution, demanded equal citizenship and suffrage, and worked toward an interracial society (Logsdon & Bell, 1992).

By 1865 almost 15,000 slaves had fled into New Orleans, mostly illiterate English-speaking Protestants of American heritage. The Black population of New Orleans reached 50,455 in 1870 making it the largest African American population of any city in the United States (Logsdon & Bell, 1992). Conflicts between Black Americans and Black Creoles developed over religious differences. There was also a fundamental difference in perceptions of race relations between the groups. Creoles, many of whom were mixed race, resented racial separation, even in private institutions, while Protestant leaders had responded to racial discrimination in Anglo-America by forming their own all-Black institutions. The Creole reluctance to accept the norms of the American color line struck some Black American leaders as a denial of racial solidarity (Logsdon & Bell, 1992). However, a Creole-American cultural
exchange took place as Protestants copied the Creole customs of music, dancing and feasting in their own neighborhoods. The two groups also joined forces in a common political agenda.

The struggle to become voting citizens began during Union occupation of New Orleans. With General Butler's encouragement Creole leaders began L'Union in 1862, a French-language newspaper that promoted the emancipation of slaves and universal male suffrage. In 1864, disappointed that Lincoln's guidelines for Reconstruction excluded all Black voters, and that General Banks had set up an all-White constitutional convention, Black leaders in New Orleans raised funds to send two delegates, Arnold Bertonneau and Jean Baptiste Roudanez, to bring a petition to the president and Republican leaders in congress (Logsdon & Bell, 1992). At this time almost all Northern states also limited suffrage to White males, and even William Lloyd Garrison considered the issue impractical even though Frederick Douglass had also begun to call for suffrage for the newly freed slaves. Although Lincoln remained cautious about allowing Blacks to vote, Bertonneau and Roudanez did gain support from some important northern Republicans. Banks resented the Black leaders' success and cut off the subsidy L'Union had received for printing notices. Without funds the paper was shut down, but Dr. Louis Roudanez stepped forward to finance The Tribune, printed in both English and French, to continue the struggle for universal male suffrage (Logsdon & Bell, 1992).

The Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863 legally freed slaves held in enemy territory, but not in places such as New Orleans that were occupied by federal
troops. Meanwhile, General Butler planned to set up a provisional government by White males. Not until the legislature adopted the Thirteenth Amendment on February 17, 1865 was slavery outlawed in the state. By that summer the Confederate army had been defeated, Lincoln had been assassinated, and President Johnson was granting amnesty to the former rebels. In Louisiana a democratic legislature, made up almost entirely of former Confederate soldiers, enacted labor laws requiring passes for Black workers leaving the plantations and curfew and vagrancy laws subjecting freedmen to conditions that closely resembled slavery (Vincent, 1992). Congress perceived this as a return to the slave system and refused to grant statehood to Louisiana. Anticipating the national mood, Democratic Governor Wells issued a call to reconvene the state constitutional convention. Then local police attacked and killed dozens of Blacks and White radicals attending a pro-Black suffrage convention in July 1866, gunning down unarmed men waving White flags (Blassingame, 1976). During the height of the violence The Tribune continued to broadcast news about it, helping turn the national political tide in favor of the Fourteenth Amendment and Black suffrage (Logsdon & Bell, 1992).

Following the massacre, radicals in congress devised a harsher plan of Reconstruction, dividing the South into military districts, disqualifying Confederate supporters from voting, and enfranchising African American males. By the September, 1867 voting day, 84,436 Black Louisianians voted for delegates to the state constitutional convention. Of the 98 delegates elected half were Black. The 1868 constitution written by the "Black and Tan" delegation recognized the citizenship of
African Americans, extended the franchise to Black males while removing it from many who had fought against the federal government, required equal and integrated educational opportunity for all, forbade intimidation of voters, and required equality of the races on conveyances and in public places (Kunkel, 1959). Republican Henry Warmoth was elected governor, although he did not have the support of the Black Creoles.

Whites were outraged that Blacks were voting and holding political office, that they wanted to go to school and eat alongside Whites, and that Confederates were not allowed to vote. Many prominent citizens joined White supremacist organizations, the Knights of the White Camellia and the White League. Violence broke out in New Orleans as Whites fired into a Black political club parade in October, 1868. To restore peace Governor Warmoth created the Metropolitan Police, an armed force under the control of the governor. The police, who were one-third Black, received no support from the White community. Violence continued as groups of White gangs robbed and threatened Blacks and ransacked their homes. As a result, the overwhelming majority of New Orleans Republicans failed to vote, resulting in a state Democratic victory in November (Hennessey, 1979). The Knights of the White Camellia also used intimidation and even murder to prevent Black voting in the northern parishes. The national Republican candidate, General Grant, was nonetheless elected president of the United States.

Warmoth was criticized by both Black and White Republicans for his corrupt deals, his veto of the Civil Rights Act of 1870, and his refusal to enforce the public
education law (Vincent, 1979). He was impeached in 1872 and African American P.B.S. Pinchback served until the end of the term when White Republican William Kellogg was elected governor. Kellogg was less corrupt and had better relations with Blacks, but he had very little control outside of New Orleans.

In 1874 the White Leagues began organizing and violence engulfed the northern part of the state as a means to intimidate Republican officials and Black voters. Twenty-five Black prisoners were executed during an election in Colfax that resulted in a race riot. In Coushatta five White Republicans were lynched. In New Orleans mobs of Whites clashed with African Americans over attempts to integrate schools and threatened to lynch the White superintendent of education. A pitched battle was fought between the Metropolitan Police and the White League at the foot of Canal Street in September, 1874. Thirty men, mostly police, died, and Governor Kellogg was forced to take refuge in the Custom House under the shelter of the United States flag (Taylor, 1990).

The election of President Rutherford Hayes in 1876 resulted in the withdrawal of federal troops from Louisiana. There was no way a Louisiana administration that depended on Black votes could remain in power without federal intervention, so the Democrats took control. Wealthy planters regained their land. Most rural Blacks continued to work the land, but few could afford to buy land. Black laborers on sugar plantations worked under the wage system and continued to live in the old slave quarters. On cotton plantations they worked a separate plot of land and lived in a cabin on the land. As compensation sharecroppers were to receive a portion of the
crop, but at the end of the year it was often not worth enough to cover their indebtedness to the landowner. The Louisiana legislature then passed laws that bound workers to the land until their debts were paid (Taylor, 1992).

Blacks were pessimistic about the epidemic of violence in north Louisiana and the return of the plantation system, although they continued to hope that the federal government would come to their rescue. When the federal troops left in 1877, however, there was a sense of desperation about their economic and political future. Henry Adams organized an exodus movement to Kansas that captured the Black imagination in 1879. Mary Garrett Nelson and the Committee of Five Hundred Women in New Orleans assisted with emigration. Approximately 60,000 people left for Kansas, but many were forced to return to Louisiana (Peoples, 1970).

Some Black leaders, such as P.B.S. Pinchback, felt that African Americans had to accept segregation. Creole leaders Aristide Mary and Rodolphe Desdunes, however, refused to accommodate to the new color line in Louisiana. Although abandoned by the national Republican party, they undertook various forms of resistance to Jim Crow laws. Convinced that the courts offered the best opportunity for obtaining equal rights, they sued when Democrats resegregated the New Orleans schools and public accommodations in 1879 (Logsdon & Bell, 1992).

In 1887 Desdunes helped form the organization L’Union Louisianaise and called for the publication of a newspaper, the Crusader, to encourage the assertive spirit of Black New Orleanians. This group then helped to form a national interracial group, the American Citizens Equal Rights Association. Desdunes continued to
promote universal suffrage in his editorials for the Crusader as Southern legislators imposed literacy and property requirements that disenfranchised most Black voters (Logsdon & Bell, 1992).

In 1890 when Louisiana legislation required railroads to provide separate but equal accommodations for White and Colored, Louis Martinet and the Citizen’s Committee tested the law. In 1896, however, the Supreme Court ruled against Homer Plessy, a Black Creole who had been arrested for sitting in the White section of a train. The decision in the Plessy case established a legal precedent by which all the Southern states could defend their segregation statutes (Logsdon & Bell, 1992).

An alliance between poor White and Black farmers nearly succeeded in electing a White Republican governor in 1896. This prompted legislators to rewrite the state constitution in 1898 to include the grandfather clause, thereby allowing poor illiterate Whites to vote and disenfranchising most African Americans. Where there had been 126,849 Black voters in Louisiana in 1896, by 1904 there were only 1,718. The constitution also established a system of segregated public schools and once again outlawed marriages between Whites and Blacks (Logsdon & Bell, 1992).

After 1900 Louisiana segregation legislation increased, requiring Blacks and Whites to drink in separate saloons, live in separate neighborhoods, and recover from mental disorders in separate institutions (Reed, 1965). In 1906 Louisiana established the White primary, and in 1921 the understanding clause, to circumvent supreme court rulings that upheld the right of African Americans to vote. Racial violence became commonplace in Louisiana between 1880 and 1940. A powerless Black community
turned inward to develop its own institutions. However, in spite of the growing number of Jim Crow laws, many Black New Orleanians were members of a militant interracial labor organization, hundreds boycotted segregated streetcars, and before the end of the 1920s, they had returned to the federal courts to continue their struggles against segregationist state laws (Logsdon & Bell, 1992).

Art in New Orleans

Slave Artisans

Slaves were brought to America to be agricultural workers, but it was soon realized that there were not enough artisans to meet the needs of the colonies and that to hire paid labor meant a prohibitive cost on manufactured goods. Those Europeans who came as indentured servants eventually bought some of the available land and often gave up their trades. Since Africans were bound in servitude for life, it was decided to train them to meet the new demands (Newton, 1978). Often slaves coming from Africa had skills for working with wood, iron, and textiles, but as agricultural workers they were not allowed to develop these skills or to pass them on to their children. When masters saw the aptitude of a slave to learn a craft such as blacksmithing or carpentry (often referred to as mechanical arts) they had them learn these trades by apprenticeship to a master mechanic. Once trained, a Black mechanic or seamstress was more valuable to an owner who would be able to sell the slave for two or three times as much as a regular field hand (Porter, 1978). By the eve of the Civil War there were 100,000 Black artisans in the South compared to 20,000 Whites with these skills (Newton, 1978).
Mechanics were sometimes hired out and allowed to earn extra wages for themselves. In this way slave mechanics could own property and purchase their freedom and that of their families. Noted Black leaders Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, Richard Allen, and Absalom Jones were mechanics who had purchased their freedom (Newton, 1978). In a city such as New Orleans, slaves were often purchased as an investment. These slaves found their own work and living arrangements and paid their masters a set yearly income.

**Skilled labor on plantations.** Louisiana planters used slaves to grow and sell indigo, tobacco, and rice until 1790 when sugar and cotton provided a new source of wealth. The majority of slaves were needed as field hands, but they were also responsible for the stately columns of plantation homes, their curving stairways, wrought iron balconies, carved woodwork, furniture, coverlets, sheets, quilts, handwoven blankets, embroidered underwear, wedding dresses, and baby clothes (Chase, 1978).

Slave artisans working on plantations often found themselves responsible for the production of a single item from planning to constructing and ornamenting the product. A blacksmith had to know every phase in the production of iron and how to fashion his own tools. A carpenter had to be an architect, contractor, and builder. Seamstresses spun thread, wove cloth, sewed clothing and quilts, and were able to dye, clean, and patch clothing as well as knit, crochet and embroider (Newton, 1978).

Every plantation was a self-sufficient economy that required slaves with numerous skills necessary to maintain the community. It had its own carpenters,
blacksmiths, stone masons, plasterers, bricklayers, wheelwrights, painters, harnessmakers, tanners, millers, weavers, barrelmakers, basketmakers, shoemakers, chairmakers, coachmen, spinners, seamstresses, housekeepers, gardeners, cooks, laundresses, embroiderers, and maids. Since there was little use of machinery in the South, every slave was made as skillful as possible (DuBois, 1978). Edmund Morgan of Charlottesville, Virginia says that among his father's slaves were carpenters and sawyers who built and kept in repair all the dwellings, barns, stables, ploughs, barrows, gates and outhouses; blacksmiths who did all the ironwork, making and repairing farm implements; and spinners, weavers, and knitters who made all the coarse cloths used by slaves and some of the finer textured clothing worn by the master's family (Morgan, 1963). The sugar plantation of Etienne de Bore near New Orleans had "masons, carpenters, blacksmiths, cartwrights, and every other mechanic that might be wanted and even an excellent shoemaker. So we were perfectly independent of the outward world" (Moody, 1924, p. 54).

Black carpenters not only made panel doors, moldings, windows and sills, they also made cabinets, coffins and most wooden things. Slave and free Black builders, carpenters, and wood workers constructed many rural mansions of the old South, churches for both Black and White congregation, as well as their own small cabins (Chase, 1978).

The blacksmith was the machine smith, horseshoer, carriage and wagon ironer and trimmer, gunsmith, wheelwright, and often made the plows and other farm tools. These smiths also made the finer utensils, kettles, pots, bowls, and essential
furnishings of the kitchen and dining room (Porter, 1978). It was so normal to see a
slave in this profession that "when one said blacksmith, it was usually assumed that
one meant a black man" (Newton, 1978, p. 238). The "industrial school" of the
plantation consisted of apprentices working under a master blacksmith. When those
trained in ironwork were not needed on the plantation they were hired out to
businesses in New Orleans and became a further source of revenue for the planter

Although women were as capable of doing carpentry and blacksmithing as
men, and were worked as hard as men in the fields, they were not taught trades
because men were usually hired out during the winter and women were needed for
domestic responsibilities (Jones, 1982). Female slaves who were field laborers and
domestics also doubled as spinners, weavers, seamstresses, dressmakers, knitters, and
makers of soap and starch. Weaving houses were set up on the plantations with at
least one weaving loom and a spinning wheel for slaves to make cloth. Old and
disabled slaves worked at spinning and weaving in the loom house, and even children
did sewing and embroidery (Stavinsky, 1978).

Many women were described as capable of doing all sorts of household work,
which during this period, was apt to include soap and candle-making, washing,
cooking, shearing, spinning, weaving, knitting, tailoring, preserving, ale
brewing and a host of different tasks. (Stavisky, 1978, p. 188)

Hannah Davidson, who had been a slave in Kentucky, described her life in
bondage as work which consumed all her days from dawn until midnight, and all of
her years. She was only eight when she began minding her master's children and
helping the women with their spinning (Jones, 1982). "Young girls tended babies and waited on tables until they were sent outside—'mos soon's they could work—and returned to the house years later, too frail to hoe weeds, but still able to cook and sew" (Jones, 1982, p. 246).

Most slaves were able to spend some of their hours away from the field making things for their own survival. Slaves built their own quarters, produced their own furniture, clothing, cooking utensils, quilts, and other necessities of life, and sometimes earned extra money from the sale of produce or handicrafts (Otto, 1979). Tools were often improvised from materials at hand: rakes from branched tree limbs, baskets from pine needles and grasses, rice scoops, mortars, and dugout canoes from hollow logs (Chase, 1978). Many women worked in the fields all day, then also had a quota of spinning and weaving to produce by candlelight. Many slave women spent the night sewing and knitting for their own children or making warm quilts for their families.

Skilled labor in New Orleans. Many of the early French settlers came from cities where they were not familiar with agriculture or skilled at a trade. The colonists therefore relied on the skills of African slaves. When a French or Spanish gentleman wanted clothes he consulted a Black tailor, and for shoes a Black shoemaker. Sketching was a pleasing accomplishment for a gentleman of the 18th century, but when he wanted a house built he consulted a Black mechanic about the plan and actual building of it. According to the New York Times Magazine (August, 1926),
much of the Vieux Carre architecture could have been sketched from similar buildings in Provence or Palma.

Because of the great need for laborers in New Orleans many skilled slaves worked alongside free Blacks. Squads of slaves hired themselves out and returned their income to their owners, sometimes keeping a small percentage. Some of these men were able to purchase their freedom by working as artisans in the city. They were then able to work for themselves and train their sons as apprentices in the building trades (Christian, 1972).

In 1734 the first convent for the Ursuline nuns of New Orleans, including the forged metal staircase and balcony, was constructed entirely by slaves (Christian, 1972). Don Almonaster constructed the Cabildo using his own slave masons, joiners, carpenters, blacksmiths, sawyers, locksmiths, and brickmakers (King, 1921). The wrought-iron gate in front of the Cabildo and the altar rails and doors of St. Louis Cathedral were made by slave iron workers (Rousseve, 1937).

When the city of New Orleans burned down in 1788 and again in 1795 it was rebuilt with the labor of slaves and free men of color (Dover, 1978). The need to rebuild the city produced plenty of work and an opportunity to develop artistic talent in carpentry and iron work. The gentlemen with mansions to build wanted them in the French and Spanish tradition with iron balconies and railings and walled-in courtyards protected from the street by iron grilles and gateways (New York Times Magazine, 1926/1978). The increased use of wrought iron for the rebuilding of the city in 1795 corresponds with the sharply accelerated output of the iron industries around the area.
of Pittsburgh, indicating that iron was shipped downriver for blacksmiths who worked in New Orleans (Christian, 1972).

**Ironwork.** African American blacksmiths had technical achievements in wrought iron that differed from European traditions. In the 13th century European armorers and locksmiths cut ornaments out of sheet metal and worked on it by file and saw, and blacksmiths mainly shoed horses. In Africa an ancient tradition of pure smithing survived during the period of European slaving and conquest. Blacksmiths in New Orleans were working with French and Spanish designs, yet were able to give them an essence of simplicity, slenderness, and grace unlike anything being done in Europe (New York Times Magazine, 1926/1978).

Most slave blacksmiths forged iron in shops owned by a master who either owned them or hired them for his business. Because the smith had to work quickly before the white heat of the iron had faded to red, and without mechanical aids, to beat out freehand every curve by eye, they were "trained meticulously and uncompromisingly from childhood in a virile trade that requires skill, dexterity, speed, and brute strength" (New York Times Magazine, 1926/1978, p. B12). "Word of [the sale of] these black ironsmiths brought scores of wealthy whites to the slave markets of . . . New Orleans in search of black talent to be used in forging grillwork and making wrought iron balconies to adorn homes, offices, and public buildings" (Driskell, 1976, p. 27). Prices for blackssmiths were the highest paid for skilled slaves, although "fancy girls" cost more. In 1788 an expert blacksmith was valued at 800 pesos. By the 19th century ironworkers were also integral to the sugar industry.
When Noel Destrehan died in 1848 the highest price placed on his more than 60 slaves was for a 45-year-old blacksmith named Bartley, who was appraised at $1,200 (Christian, 1972).

Much of the best wrought iron in New Orleans came from the blacksmith shop of the pirates Jean and Pierre Lafitte, who used Black slave labor in the iron trade until 1814 when Governor Claiborne forced them to leave Barataria Bay for Galveston. Some of their blacksmiths are thought to have come from St. Domingue where they were trained (Christian, 1972). It is also possible that some of Lafitte's blacksmiths were pirated from Spanish ships coming from Africa to Cuba. A pair of chickens, a cock and a hen, were carved by a slave of the Lafittes between 1810 and 1814 (Christensen, 1950). The chicken is a familiar motif in African sculpture and is an important symbol to the Yoruba representing the creation story that links the children of Odua (Bascom, 1969). These wood carvings are not done in the realistic style of European American art of the time, but rather are simple and abstract representations of chickens resembling African sculpture.

By the 1830s the Americans were gaining political dominance over the Creoles in New Orleans. One of the foremost developers of the American Section of New Orleans was given a charter for the New Orleans Gaslight and Banking Company in 1835 to provide lights for the city. By 1858 this city industry employed 61 slaves to make wrought iron gas lanterns. Around this time, however, small blacksmith shops in New Orleans were losing ground to large-scale foundries because they were not able to build or repair the huge and sophisticated machinery that sugar mills required.
By the 1840s German and Irish immigrants began to replace Black ironworkers when many of the free men of color emigrated due to legislative pressures. Large foundries that hired cheap labor from the heavy influx of immigrants contributed to the decline in wrought iron. Before the Civil War, however, slaves were also used to work in the foundries casting iron and carving the wooden patterns from which the molds were made for casting (Christian, 1972). As late as 1854 the Louisiana Register of Laborers of New Orleans reported that of the 3,085 skilled laborers in the city, 2,668 were of African ancestry, 470 were Black and 2,198 mulatto (Stahl, 1942).

**Textiles.** Just as men skilled as blacksmiths brought a high price at the slave mart, so did women skilled as seamstresses. Hewlet and Bright offered the sale of 10 valuable slaves in New Orleans on May 13, 1835, among whom were three seamstresses (Campbell, 1991). In the city female slaves often served as domestic workers where they were responsible for making and caring for much of the clothing and bedding. Some of these women also worked for larger enterprises such as hospitals and churches. Women in the city as well as on plantations contributed to the wealth of their owners by making valuable quilts. They also provided for the well-being and warmth of their own families with personal quilts.

Often the quilts slaves made for their owners were done in European American styles, and because they contributed to the wealth of the owner they have been preserved. Few quilts that were made by slave women for their own families have survived so it is difficult to assess their African roots. However, African styles have been discerned in quilt-making techniques that have been passed down from
mothers to daughters. African textile traditions may have influenced some of the quilts done by African Americans. West African peoples have ancient traditions of textiles which are woven in strips on vertical looms by men, and when sewn together they are noted for their off-beat patterns. Strip quilts made by African American women often display this rhythmic quality. Chase (1978) also mentions an African American method of making coverlets from two woven pieces that are seamed down the center with no attempt to match the patterns. This is similar to the traditional techniques of African women who weave on horizontal looms. The applique technique of the Fon of Dahomey is another African tradition which seems to have influenced some African American quilt makers. Vlach (1978) describes a 19th-century Fon wall-hanging representing the history of Judah, Dahomey, which is made of 16 squares of appliqued events, and compares it to the Bible quilts made by Harriet Powers who was born a slave in Georgia in 1835.

European and African traditions seem to converge in two wall hangings from New Orleans dated 1776. Quilting was used for intricate ecclesiastical garments and wall-hangings in southern Europe; and, in Dahomey applique tapestries and wall-hangings were used to depict historical events. Petro (1939) describes two patchwork wall-hangings, each with 36 applique blocks that tell the story of the Old and New Testaments.

They are said to derive from New Orleans, where they quite possibly adorned the walls of a convent or private chapel. The technique employed in applying the patches differs markedly from that used generally by American colonial and pioneer needleworkers; they suggest the fingers of a Creole woman. No edges have been turned under; patches have been applied flat and then outlined with
a thin, round, black-and-white braid or cord held in place with couching stitches . . . . (Petro, 1939, p. 26)

There is no way to determine if they are related to the Ursuline nuns who arrived from France in 1726 to care for the education of young women in the colony, but it is possible that the Catholic education of the nuns influenced these wall-hangings. Although the nuns themselves were French, they had 20 boarding students, seven of whom were slaves, whom they prepared for baptism and first communion and to be the potential wives of the settlers. They also had a large number of day pupils including both Indians and Blacks, and orphaned girls, as well as several Black servants (Heaney, 1993).

Fry (1990) also uncovered an applique quilt made on the William Dean plantation in New Orleans by a slave known as "Yellow Bill," dated March 19, 1852. "Bill sewed every inch by hand using four floral cutouts that scholars believe were intended to be snake symbols" (Fry, 1990, p. 53). Yellow may refer to Bill's mixed heritage, and the date of March 19 is St. Joseph's feast day, still celebrated by contemporary African Americans in New Orleans. The symbolism in this quilt is related to the mythology of the Fon of Dahomey, who believed that the snake, Damballa accompanied Mawu when she created the world (Herskovits, 1938).

Kongo influence is seen in Louisiana through the translation of two charms called N'Kisi. The first is a red cloth with feathers. In Haiti red cloth charms (pacquet kongo) are used to represent spirits (Wahlman, 1987). The second is the wooden N'Kisi made in a human shape with a hollow center for magical substances.
Nails are used to activate the spirit in the wooden N’Kisi, just as pins are used to activate cloth voodoo dolls in New Orleans. Creole women in old New Orleans were typically seamstresses, and it was considered perfectly proper for Catholic Creole women to make and sell voodoo charms.

**Carpenters.** The 1822 edition of the *New Orleans City Directory* lists Dutrevil Barjon as a free man of color having the profession of furniture-maker. During that year he advertised furniture made in the city in the latest style. A bed made by Barjon is owned by Destrehan Plantation. This plantation house itself was designed by a master builder named Charles, a free man of color (Levatino, 1991). Another Antebellum Black architect, Joseph Abeilard, designed the bazaar section of the old French Market and the Sugar Sheds on the riverfront (Desdunes, 1973).

**Fine Art in New Orleans**

It is not known if fine art was produced in the once crude French settlement of New Orleans. Two large fires destroyed much of the city in 1788 and 1795 so that any paintings from the earliest days probably did not survive. By the time New Orleans became a Spanish colony rice and indigo planters and city merchants began to develop into an elite society that could patronize the arts. Additionally wealthy French immigrants, escaping the French Revolution and the later downfall of Napoleon, brought their art treasures with them (Looney, 1935). Portraits and the immortality they granted were highly prized during these early times. The most well-known artist during the Spanish period, Jose de Salazar, using the Baroque style popular in the Spanish colonies, painted many portraits, among them the portrait of Don Andres...
Almonester Roxas, the builder of St. Louis Cathedral, the Cabildo, and the Presbytere (Pennington, 1991).

With the Louisiana Purchase, the myth of prosperity and opportunity in the new state brought artists from Kentucky and the Northeastern states to paint portraits of the wealthy Creoles and newly arriving American planters and merchants. These American artists worked in the sparse, sophisticated style of Thomas Sully referred to as American Neoclassical. The close ties between Paris and the French community in New Orleans also created a desire for portraits in the French high style. French as well as German painters immigrated to New Orleans to fill this need. Many of these early portrait painters were itinerants, supplementing their income by appearing in Louisiana during the warm winter months (Collier, 1968; Pennington, 1991).

When photography was introduced to New Orleans in 1840, it was to change forever the nature of portrait painting as the demand increased for a more truthful likeness. Some artists turned to photography as a way to earn a living, some painted portraits from photographs, and others colored photographs to resemble oil paintings. Portrait styles also changed. By the 1840s the enormous wealth of Louisiana’s cotton and sugar cane plantations brought about a demand for grand manner portraiture, referred to as Plantation Baroque. These large portraits were placed in enormous wooden gilded frames, and “were meant to impress the viewer with wealth and authority (Pennington, 1991, p. 58).

Opera was the most popular of the arts in New Orleans. The city had its own self-supporting resident company in the 19th century which offered the best opera to
be found in America (Kmen, 1966). This nourished New Orleans musical traditions and contributed to the employment of artists as scene painters. Scene painting was emphasized by the large French and American opera houses as a way to draw crowds. These paintings were not considered mere background for operas, but items of wonder for the audience (Brady, 1991). Although scene painting was imaginary and emphasized the exotic and strange, some of these artists also painted natural scenery. Artists who were explorers and naturalists also painted Louisiana’s plants, animals, and Native people.

Death seems to have been an intimate part of life in early New Orleans with epidemics of yellow fever, malaria, and cholera devastating the population. Those with the means often left the city during the summer months when the danger was greatest. This closeness to death influenced cultural production in several forms. The popularity of the painted likeness among early French and Spanish Catholic population was motivated by the desire for immortality among the living, as well as the need for families of the deceased to capture a final image of a lost loved one (Bonner, 1982). Portraits were painted from death masks and, after the introduction of the daguerreotype, photographs of the dead were taken as a remembrance or to be used for a painted portrait. Funerary customs of above-ground family tombs were also established in New Orleans where land was valuable and families were often large and close. Family vaults provided emotional comfort and they also reflected taste and status (McDowell, 1982). When St. Louis Cemetery I was established in 1789 the
area around it became the largest center for the marble cutting and tomb building crafts in America.

During the 19th century it became possible to study art in New Orleans without having to go to Europe, and some artists were able to earn a living by teaching. Eugene Brisset was listed in the 1822 city directory as a lithographer and drawing teacher at a school for children of color, perhaps the earliest school in the South for Black children (Mahe & McCaffrey, 1987). When the city's first public school, the Old Convent on Conde Street, was formed in 1836, Toussaint Bigot was its first teacher of the primary and drawing schools. Bigot had studied with Jacques-Louis David in France before coming to New Orleans in 1816 (Bonner, 1982). There were also frequent advertisements in local papers for schools of art, many of them taught by women. Woodall's Bookstore on Camp Street offered an assortment of drawing books for sale. Many booksellers also sold copperplate and steel engravings of European and American works of art that must have influenced the artistic awareness of New Orleanians (Thompson, 1970).

From the turn of the century until the 1860s New Orleans was a thriving center of commerce. Riverboats were bringing produce from the Mississippi Valley to be shipped from the bustling wharfs. Cotton and sugar cane planters, slave traders, merchants and bankers were prosperous. By the 1830s German and Irish immigrants were also coming into a city politically divided into three sections—American, Creole, and immigrant. Free people of color were about 20% of the population until the 1850s. Theater, opera, concerts, and balls were favorite pastimes in New Orleans.
The free people of color contributed significantly to the cultural life of the city, not only as patrons of the visual and performing arts, but also as writers, journalists, painters, composers, musicians, sculptors and skilled artisans. Many of them were highly educated, some studying in France. Culturally the free people of color were aligned with White Creoles and the foreign French, and often they were related. Americans coming into Louisiana showed little tolerance for White or Black Creoles, but they were in a minority until the 1840s. When the Americans dominated the political scene, legislation was enacted to further restrict the free people of color, and Whites became less civil toward them. During this time of increasing racial animosity a few accomplished free men of color were able to have successful artistic careers in New Orleans.

**Julien Hudson.** Hudson was the son of John Hudson, a ship chandler and ironmonger from London, and Suzanne Desiree Marcos, a free quadroon of New Orleans. Hudson advertised himself as a miniature painter and drawing teacher in 1831 and 1832 who had lately returned from Paris. In 1837 and 1838 he is listed in the New Orleans City Directory as a portrait painter at his Bienville St. studio. George Coulon, a French artist who immigrated to New Orleans as a child, identified Hudson as his teacher in 1840. He also related that Hudson studied in Paris with Abel de Pujol who had been a student of David. Four paintings are known to exist by Hudson: a portrait of a very young girl from 1834; a portrait of a Black man wearing a red turban; a portrait of Michel Jean Fortier III, the son of the colonel who commanded the free Black troops at the Battle of New Orleans from 1839; and a
portrait of a young man with a Latin appearance which has been considered a self-portrait of Hudson from 1839. Hudson died in 1844, when he would have been only 33. (Brady, 1991; Brady, 1996; Mahe & McCaffrey, 1986; O’Neil, 1979).

**Alexander Pickhil.** A short comment from Rudolph Desdunes’s *Our People and Our History* (1973) is all that is known about this artist. Desdune describes Pickhil as the "Titian" of New Orleans, a man who produced magnificent paintings. However, he died between 1840 and 1850, unknown and in want, because of the racism and criticism which blighted his life (Brady, 1991; Christian, n.d.).

**Felix Deville.** Deville, a very light mulatto, was born in Florida in the 1820s. He painted in New Orleans from 1850 until his death in 1866. His wife and son are listed in the city directory as mulatto (Brady, 1991).

**Louis Pepite.** Pepite was a free man of color born around 1805. In 1826 he was listed as a painter. He studied with Jean Baptiste Fogliardi, an Italian immigrant who was the proprietor of the Louisiana Drawing Academy and scene painter with the Orleans Theater. Fogliardi was responsible for the major refurbishing of the theater in 1824 while Pepite was his student. Fogliardi also designed and executed the paintings on the triumphal arch in the Place d’Armes in honor of General Lafayette’s visit to New Orleans. It is possible that Pepite assisted with these projects as he later succeeded his teacher at the Orleans Theater where he was commissioned to paint the new third act scenery for the opera, "La Villageoise Somnambule." Pepite worked as a scene painter through 1834 and probably died as a young man in the mid-1830s (Brady, 1991).
Jules Lion. Lion was a mulatto born in France in 1809 who immigrated to New Orleans in 1836. He was a fine lithographer who had exhibited at the Paris salons before coming to New Orleans. In 1833 his lithograph, *Affut aux Canards* was given honorable mention. He appears in the New Orleans city directory in 1837 as a painter and lithographer working at 56 Canal Street. Although he was identified as a free man of color in the directory, the local newspapers did not mention his race, simply identifying him as a Frenchman. He left no self-portrait, but a lithographic portrait done by him and identified as his brother, Achille Lion, suggests that he had a light-complexion and may easily have been mistaken for White.

Not long after his arrival in New Orleans Lion was employed as a lithographer for the *New Orleans Bee*, the least racist of the local newspapers. Some of the lithographs that may have been done for the *Bee* included well-known New Orleans churchmen, Father Moni, rector of St. Louis Cathedral, Father Mullen, pastor of the Irish immigrants at St. Patrick’s church, and Rev. Clapp, founder of the First Congregational Unitarian Church in New Orleans. In August, 1837 Lion was in Baton Rouge working for the *Gazette de Baton Rouge*.

Lion was in France in the summer of 1839 when Daguerre unveiled the techniques of his daguerreotype process. Upon returning to New Orleans Lion made daguerreotypes of New Orleans landmarks. By March, 1840 he held an exhibition at the St. Charles Museum showing views of the St. Louis Hotel, the Cathedral, the Levee, and some of the public buildings. He charged admission and made a daguerreotype of the scene so the audience could see the process. It was the first
daguerreotype show in New Orleans, and Lion became somewhat of a celebrity. The original process required bright sunlight, but later, in 1842, Lion was able to offer photo-portraits in his studio. He advertised that he would also take pictures of "sick or deceased persons if required."

Although Lion was one of America's earliest photographers he continued to advertise as a portrait artist. Photography meant that his subjects could sit for him for a much shorter time and he could paint them or draw them from the daguerreotype likeness after they had left the gallery. But photography eventually supplanted the demand for his lithographed portraits, and by 1844 he was unable to pay his debts and was forced to sell two lots in the suburbs at a series of sheriff's sales. In 1848 he opened the Academy of Drawing and Painting in partnership with Italian-born Dominique Canova, a well-known muralist who had come to New Orleans to decorate the French Opera House. He also gave numerous lectures on the daguerreotype process.

Between 1837 and 1847 Lion produced a series of lithographic portraits of leading Louisianians and New Orleans city scenes. His portraits of John J. Audubon and Zachary Taylor were highly praised by the Louisiana Courrier. He had hoped to publish a volume of portraits and biographical sketches of men who had been prominent in the history of Louisiana, but, lacking financial backing, nothing ever came of the project. This work was later bound and was displayed at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904. In the late 1840s St. Louis Cathedral was being rebuilt and Lion proposed to the construction committee that he do the ceiling,
the altar picture, and the pendentives. It is not known if he did the paintings. Lion worked as a professor of drawing at the College of Louisiana on Dauphine Street from 1852 to 1865.

Lion married a native of New Orleans, Maria Ana Munoz, and in 1857 they had a son, Emilien Jules, whose descendants still live in the city. At the outbreak of the Civil War Lion began to lithograph sheet music covers for several New Orleans music publishers, all dealing with Confederate subjects. After Federal occupation of the city in 1862 Lion returned to portraiture. In 1865 he became professor of drawing at the Louisiana Academy. Lion died on January 9, 1866 (Brady, 1991; Brady, 1996; Driskell, 1976; East, 1986; Groves, 1971; Mahe & McCaffrey, 1986; O’Neill, 1979).

Louis Lucien Pessou. Pessou was born in New Orleans around 1825. He is not listed in the city directory as a lithographer until 1853, and probably had been an apprentice and later an assistant to an experienced lithographer in his early twenties. In 1854 Pessou joined German immigrant Benedict Simon, and together they pioneered color lithography in New Orleans. Pessou and Simon was the leading lithographic firm in the city, producing maps, plans, book illustrations, city views, and business papers until 1866. In 1868 Pessou formed a partnership with lithographer William Krauss, also a German immigrant. However, after a short period Pessou left lithography and became an Orleans Parish bureaucrat. From 1868 until 1872 he was appointed the recorder of births, deaths and marriages. He also served as ward superintendent of streets for the third district. When the Republicans lost control of
New Orleans in 1876 Pessou returned to lithography, operating out of his home in Faubourg Marigny. He died on December 18, 1886 (Brady, 1991).

**Alexander Nelder.** Nelder was a free man of color who may have been born in St. Domingue in 1823. In New Orleans he lived on St. Bernard Avenue, an area where many Black writers, artists, and musicians made their homes. He worked in one of the ateliers surrounding the cemeteries as early as 1845. The imposing tomb of Gabriel Toutant Beauregard, brother of the Civil War general, in St. Bernard Cemetery, was signed by Nelder in 1854. Apparently Nelder did not gain financial success because at his death in 1868 his widow became a washerwoman (Brady, 1991).

**Florville Foy.** The son of a French marble cutter, Florville Foy was born in New Orleans in 1820. Foy’s father, Rene Prosper Foy was a native of Orleans, France, and a soldier in Napoleon’s ill-fated expedition against St. Domingue. Prosper Foy immigrated to New Orleans and opened a studio on Bourbon Street in 1807. He advertised that he had a large quantity of Italian marble on hand with which to sculpt tombstones with inscriptions and engraved emblems as well as architectural and ornamental pieces. In 1814 he purchased a tile yard in Faubourg Treme with a tile and brick kiln and 17 slaves to work in the yard.

Florville Foy’s mother was a free woman of color, Azelie Aubry. Aubry had three children who were legally recognized by Prosper Foy in 1816 as his natural children. Foy put his property on the market in 1820 and returned to France. Florville was born during his father’s absence in June, 1820.
The elder Foy returned to New Orleans by 1825. He opened a workshop near St. Louis Cemetery I in November, 1825. In addition to marble and stone work Prosper Foy did engraving and offered instruction in architecture, physics, mathematics, geography, history, astronomy, writing, bookkeeping, navigation, fortifications, and languages. He also wrote poetry and submitted articles to the Bee. Foy eventually acquired a plantation in St. James Parish although he continued to share a house on Rampart Street with Aubry. Foy and Aubry had several more children who were all given a good education. Among Foy’s many friends was the architect Henry B. Latrobe, who stood as godfather to one of Prosper and Aubry’s children.

Florville was sent to France to study, and in 1836 returned to work with his father in his atelier on Basin Street. Prosper Foy remained in the marble cutting trade only long enough to train his son adequately, and by 1838 he had retired and 18-year-old Florville opened his own marble yard. Florville Foy became one of the most successful marble cutters in New Orleans. From September, 1836 through May, 1837, Foy was employed by the church wardens of St. Louis Cathedral. During that time he built 84 wall vaults in St. Louis I and II cemeteries. During the 1840s modest tombs began to give way to more elegant and expensive monuments as expressions of family prestige and status. Jacques Bussiere de Pouilly, a French trained architect, immigrated to Louisiana in 1833. De Pouilly designed much of the New Orleans funerary architecture, and many of these designs were executed by Foy. Later in his career Foy himself designed and built even grander tombs.
As a marble cutter and sculptor, Foy carved plaques, bas-reliefs, and decorative ornaments. He later sculpted the marble enclosure tablet for the vault in which de Pouilly and his family are buried. Foy expanded his business several times, and by 1859 he lived in a large apartment over his marble yards which employed eight artisans. He owned at least two slave house servants and lived in considerable style.

In the 1850s a White woman from Natchez, Louisa Frances Whittaker, moved in with Foy and they had one child who died young. Both Foy and Whittaker invested wisely and had a surplus of money during the 1850s and the Civil War. Foy’s friends included writers and artists, both free men of color and White. When Archille Perelli, an Italian-born sculptor, came to New Orleans he and Foy became close friends. Foy’s bust, sculpted by Perelli, was one of his cherished possessions. Painter Paul Poincy, a New Orleans Creole, was also a friend of Foy.

By the 1870s the tomb business had changed drastically. Large monument companies could provide better service at lower prices. Many independent artisans were forced to give up their workshops. Foy succeeded in staying in business largely because he owned considerable rental property throughout the city which he frequently mortgaged. During Reconstruction the law against interracial marriages was repealed and Foy and Whittaker finally married in 1885, when the couple was in their sixties. But the birth of a goddaughter, Florvilla Louisa, in 1890 caused Foy and his wife to became estranged. Foy was attended by Jules, the son of his mulatto house slave, who remained with him for 50 years until his death in 1903 (Brady, 1993; Brady, 1991; Christian, n.d.; Mahe & McCaffrey, 1986; McDowell, 1982; Wilson, 1971).
Eugene and Daniel Warburg. Eugene and Daniel Warburg were the sons of Daniel Warburg, a wealthy German Jewish immigrant, who had come to New Orleans from Hamburg, Germany in 1821. Daniel Warburg was in the commission business, he bought and sold real estate, speculated and subdivided property, and served in important civic positions. He also devised scientific and mathematical theories which he published and attempted to market. Warburg lost most of his money in the aftermath of the Panic of 1837, but was able to retain enough property to support himself and his children.

Their mother was Marie Rose Blondeau, a mulatto and native of Santiago, Cuba (perhaps from a family that had immigrated from St. Domingue). Venus, the mother of Marie Rose was a slave of Daniel’s, and Marie Rose was also a slave until she was freed after the birth of her first son. She had five children. Joseph Eugene, the eldest, was born in 1825 and Daniel, the youngest, was born in 1836. Marie Rose died in 1837 at the age of 33.

Eugene Warburg studied sculpture with Philippe Garbeille, a French sculptor noted for his portrait busts of prominent citizens and visitors to New Orleans. While in his early twenties Eugene set up shop as a marble cutter, living with his father and his brother, Daniel whom he trained in marble cutting and sculpture. In 1850 he opened an atelier on St. Louis Street across from St. Louis Cemetery I, in an area thick with marble workshops. In 1851 the reconstruction of St. Louis Cathedral was in progress and Warburg submitted a sketch of a black and white checkerboard marble
pattern for the marble flooring. "It is likely, though undocumented, that the present
central aisle of the cathedral is Warburg's work" (Brady, 1991, p. 21).

Eugene Warburg executed funerary sculpture and tombs as well as allegorical
pieces and portrait busts, but he was dissatisfied with the lack of artistic opportunity in
New Orleans and decided to go to Europe. This decision may have also been made
because of the jealousy his competitors displayed toward him. To help finance the
trip, Warburg exhibited a marble statue of Ganymede estimated to be worth $500, and
chances on the statue were sold in a raffle. Three slaves belonging to his mother's
estate, who had probably been hired out since her death, were also sold. When
Eugene sailed for France in November, 1852, 17-year-old Daniel took over the
workshop on St. Louis Street and began a distinguished career as a marble cutter and
sculptor.

Eugene Warburg studied and worked in France from 1852 to 1856. Pierre
Soule, the United States minister to Spain, an old acquaintance of his father, was in
Paris during 1854. Although a strong proponent of slavery, Soule had worked with
Alexander Dumas on a Republican publication and was able to recognize the
accomplishments of talented Blacks. It was probably Soule who brought Warburg's
work to the attention of the United States minister to France, John Young Mason,
when the diplomats met to draw up the Ostend Manifesto. Warburg did a classical
bust of Mason in 1855.

In 1856 Warburg traveled to Belgium and then to England. In London he
became acquainted with the philanthropic abolitionist group centered at the residence
of the Duchess of Sutherland, a friend of Harriet Beecher Stowe. The Duchess commissioned him to do a series of bas-reliefs representing scenes from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. With letters from Soule, Stowe and Sutherland, Warburg, accompanied by his wife Louise Ernestine, set out for Florence, Italy in 1857. His impressive recommendations were enough for the move to be picked up by American newspapers.

In New Orleans the climate of intense hatred for free Blacks was evident in the *Crescent*'s article, "A Colored Artist," in which it sarcastically wondered about Soule's being mentioned in "such company." Warburg left Florence for Rome where he found 30 or more American artists in residence. He was only there for a short time when he fell ill and died on January 12, 1859.

Eugene's younger brother, Daniel Warburg continued to work as an independent marble cutter and sculptor in New Orleans. Daniel's skill included the ability to carve both in granite and marble. Many of his well-cut tombs were adorned with morning glory vines. His father lived with him until his death in 1860. The family was well-off enough at that time to employ an Irish maidservant. Following the Civil War, however, the monument business changed and it became difficult for independent artisans to make a living. In 1870 Warburg gave up his studio and worked for several larger marble yards such as those of Florville Foy, Joseph Llulla, and Albert Weiblen, where he worked until his death in 1911 (Brady, 1991; Christian, n.d.; Dover, 1978; Fine, 1971; O'Neill, 1979).
Summary

A history of race relations in New Orleans contributes to a more complete picture of the milieu of 19th century African American cultural production. In that picture we can observe that racial classification as "Black" or "free person of color" were devalued social positions that limited the artistic production of people of African descent in Antebellum New Orleans, and that both class and gender oppressions were intensified due to racial designations.

Some slaves were able to work in the mechanical arts, but most were needed as field hands and domestic workers. Slaves usually had no inheritance or material possessions, and the labor of slavery from sun rise to sun set allowed little time to fulfill artistic longings. Additionally, women in bondage labored for the master and performed domestic chores for their families. When these women were able to obtain the material for quilts (sometimes from the left over thread and bits of cotton they managed to keep after long hours of work), they had to spend their precious nights quilting. We can never know the creative yearnings that were never fulfilled by people held in bondage.

Did you have a genius of a great-great grandmother who died under some ignorant and depraved white overseer’s lash? Or was she required to bake biscuits for a lazy backwater tramp when she cried out in her soul to paint watercolors of sunsets, or the rain falling on the green and peaceful pasturelands? Or was her body broken and forced to bear children (who were more often than not sold away from her)—eight, ten, fifteen, twenty children—when her one joy was the thought of modeling heroic figures of rebellion, in stone or clay? (Walker, 1983, p. 33)
Free Blacks were often artisans who had earned their freedom with their trades. These people had the economic disadvantage of having to purchase themselves before they could begin to support themselves.

I visited this week about 30 black families, and found that some members of more than half these families were still in bondage, and the father, mother and children were struggling to lay up money enought to purchase their freedom. . . . A man and wife had bought themselves some years ago, and have been working night and day to purchase their children; they had just redeemed the last and had paid for themselves and children $1,4000! Another woman had recently paid the last installment of the purchase money for her husband. She had purchased him by taking in washing, and working late at night, after going out and performing as help at hard labor. (Foner & Lewis, 1978, p. 41)

Women were bought as "fancy girls" or for their ability to bear children. They were needed for domestic chores and were usually not hired out and, thus, usually were confined to the plantation or home in which they worked. These factors limited the possibility for women to purchase themselves and further restricted any possibility for them to support themselves as artisans.

A few free men of color, but no known free women of color were fine artists. Race limited the personal lives of these artists. For example, Eugene Warburg moved to Europe due to racial tensions in New Orleans and Florville Foy was only able to marry his White mistress during a short period when miscegenation laws were repealed.

The cultural development of New Orleans and the popularity of French art styles contributed to the achievement of the artists of color, some of whom studied in Paris. Although well-respected as artists, few of these men were economically successful. During a period when White American artists visited New Orleans on a
seasonal basis and traveled to other parts of the country painting portraits and landscapes, these artists were limited to working in New Orleans due to the increasing racial animosity toward free Blacks during the Antebellum period.

Most patrons of the arts were probably White or free people of color in Antebellum New Orleans. Rather than expressing African American interests (as we have seen in some of the work of Bannister and Lewis during the period of the Civil War), the art of these free men of color reflected the culture, the needs, and the concerns of people of mixed Black and White race who were part of the Creole culture of New Orleans.

Following the Civil War unemployment was endemic and the property values of holdings of the former free people of color in general declined. Some Black artisans were able to maintain their positions as shoemakers and carpenters because they learned the trades as apprentices with family members (Blassingame, 1973). Iron foundries turned to making weapons during the war, but after that the number of foundries decreased along with the number of Black ironworkers. By the turn of the century some blacksmiths in the city were working as horseshoers and wheelwrights. In small towns and plantations many former slave blacksmiths and their helpers continued working, often training their sons or male relatives in their skills until World War I (Christian, 1972).

The former free people of color lost much of their wealth as well as their special status because the Civil War and Americanization created a new two-tiered racial division between Black and White. White supremacy, virulent racial hatred, and
a social movement toward legal segregation following Reconstruction meant that artistic opportunities for all African Americans in New Orleans were scarce. Resources were now needed for political struggles and many of the former free people of color are remembered today for their literary contribution to Black newspapers rather than visual art. As Creole and American Blacks began to socialize and play music together around the turn of the century, jazz, a particularly New Orleans type of music, began to blossom in the honky tonks of Storyville.

Quilting and textile skills continued to be passed down from mother to daughter, particularly in the countryside where there was no such thing as buying a blanket. Alice Neal, an African American quilter from Marion, Louisiana said that her mother, Mary Bright started her with a nine-patch quilt when she was 12 years old (Ertel, 1978). Pecolia Warner was 10 when her mother was taking in sewing and gave her the scraps. She pieced them together in a straight line as long as the bed, and her mother showed her how to put a plain strip between each of the pieced strips and sew it up (Ferris, 1978).

There was a final flowering of the funerary arts in New Orleans between 1880 and 1920 as the generation of the wealthy who grew to financial success after the Civil War demanded extremes of grandeur. However, by 1930 the great age of funerary architecture was over (McDowell, 1982). Photography had already begun to displace painting and lithography in portraiture in 1840.

Artists organized into art unions to promote artistic activity in the city in 1840 and 1880. No mention is made of any Black members. The Southern Art League was
organized in 1885, and by 1905 became the Art Association of New Orleans (Looney, 1935). The Delgado Museum of Art was opened in 1911, but since African Americans were not allowed in City Park they probably could not attend the museum either. In 1928 Miss Fannie C. Williams, an African American public school teacher, encouraged a group of young Black artists to form an Arts and Crafts club in order to receive instruction through the mail. The club held three exhibitions, two at the Negro YMCA and one at the Dryades Street Library (Christian, n.d.)

Two Black artists who were nationally recognized during the Harlem Renaissance came from New Orleans, but both left the city to receive their artistic education. Archibald Motley was born in October, 1891 in New Orleans where his father operated a general merchandise store. In 1893, however, threats from White competitors forced him to abandon his store and move his family. Motley grew up in Chicago and was formally trained at the Art Institute of Chicago. Motley was the first artist to paint the social life of African Americans in the city. His subjects were often mulatto women. Although Motley was criticized by some African American leaders for his scenes of nightlife, he considered such subjects to be celebrations of African American culture (Bearden & Henderson, 1993).

Richmond Barthe was born in January, 1901, in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, a summer retreat for wealthy New Orleans families. His parents were of French, African, and Native American descent. His mother was a descendant of the free people of color in St. Martinsville, Louisiana. As a child Barthe went to live in New Orleans where Father Kane, a Catholic priest at Blessed Sacrament Church, assisted
him in entering the Art Institute of Chicago. Barthe was a gifted sculptor who worked in clay and cast metal. His work sometimes portrayed racial conflict, but he was fascinated with dance movement and the emotional and spiritual character of portraits (Bearden & Henderson, 1993).

Numa Rousseve won the Louisiana Weekly state art contest in 1935. He was trained as a classical painter at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and refused to work in the pseudo-primative style that was expected of Black artists of the time. Rousseve taught art in Chicago and later founded the art program at Xavier University of New Orleans where he taught for many years (John Scott, personal communication, February 29, 1996).

Painter, Vernon Winslow could not find work as an artist in New Orleans and instead was a radio disc jockey programing gospel music for many years (John Scott, personal communication, February 29, 1996).

Painter Ed Clark was born in New Orleans in 1926, but his family also moved to Chicago during his early childhood. Clark, who works in the Abstract Expressionist style, studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, later studying and working in Paris and then New York (Mercer, 1996).

During the 1940s Elizabeth Catlett taught at Dillard University in New Orleans. She resigned in 1942 because of the indifference of the administration toward developing an art program. Her pupil, Samella Lewis, joined Catlett at Hampton University and has become a painter and well- respected historian of African American art (Berlind, 1991).
CHAPTER 6

ART CRITICISM: CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS IN NEW ORLEANS

This section of the dissertation presents a subjective interpretation of interviews which were conducted with five contemporary African American artists in New Orleans, Louisiana. My purpose has been to lend the voices of the artists to the dialogue that students, who bring their own experiences to the interpretation process, may have with their art. Although this is my interpretation of the words of these artists, the readers' understanding also depends on knowing something about the social context in which they live as this context has developed over time. This chapter, then, begins with the background of race relations that have affected African American lives since Reconstruction. Next, selections from the interviews are presented as means for understanding the artists' personal development and inspirations and how they have interpreted their work. Third, themes are presented that link the interviews together as a way of uncovering the values and beliefs that structure contemporary African American society in New Orleans and influence the understanding of art. And fourth, a summary of the role racial designation has played in the artistic production of these African American artists in New Orleans is presented.

Background

The artists that I interviewed were born between the years of 1940 and 1967. John Scott was a child during the period of legal segregation and entered high school the year of the historic supreme court decision that signalled the dismantling of that system. Louise Mouton Johnson, Keith Calhoun, and Chandra McCormick Calhoun
were all born around the time of that landmark decision and were in high school
toward the end of the Civil Rights Movement during the late 1960s and early 1970s.
Sheleen Jones was born the year before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated
and was in high school in the early 1980s. As members of the Black community they
were affected by changes in the political, economic and cultural landscape of New
Orleans that began when federal troops left in 1877.

Race Relations Following Reconstruction

The Louisiana constitution was rewritten in 1879 to delete the language of the
1868 Reconstruction constitution that had banned segregation in schools and public
transportation. Black state representative P.B.S. Pinchback, recognizing the political
climate of the country, backed those changes to the constitution in exchange for the
creation of Southern University for African Americans, who were excluded from
attending Louisiana State University. During Reconstruction, between 1871 and 1874,
approximately 1,000 African American children had been enrolled in 19 racially-mixed
public schools in New Orleans that were once again segregated after 1877. Former
free men of color, Paul Trevigne and Arnold Bartonneau attempted to challenge this
disregard for the civil rights guaranteed African Americans by the federal constitution.
However, the courts noted that school segregation had already been permitted in the
North, thus rejecting the argument that it violated the Fourteenth Amendment (DeVore
& Logsdon, 1991). By 1883 the United States Supreme Court had also invalidated the
Civil Rights Act of 1875 (Fischer, 1974). Without flood gates, segregation was free to
grow more systematic.
Blacks and Whites had always lived in close proximity in New Orleans due to the necessity for Black domestic workers, whether slave or free, to be near their employers. An informal intimacy in which the races remained in their social places contributed to relative harmony following the Civil War and throughout Reconstruction (Woodward, 1974). In the 1890s, however, race relations began to deteriorate due to the influence of extreme bigots who wrote for local newspapers and lectured on racial differences and of local politicians and businessmen who inflamed White fears in order to generate differences between working class people (Somers, 1974).

In 1890 the Supreme Court sanctioned a Mississippi law requiring separate railroad cars and Louisiana adopted a similar law. In New Orleans the Comite des Citoyens attempted to test the constitutionality of the separate car act and Homer Plessy, a person who looked White, was set up to be arrested for sitting in a Whites-only car, resulting in the 1896 decision that established Jim Crow throughout the South (Fischer, 1972).

An 1894 Louisiana law that a person with any African blood was considered Black revised racial classification as a two-caste system in which both freed slaves and the former free people of color had the same social status. Enforcing a system of White superiority in New Orleans was difficult, however, because of the local racial mixture of people with Mediterranean backgrounds—French, Spanish, Creoles, Latin Americans, West Indians, and the post-Civil War Italian immigrants. Light-skinned African Americans could and did pass into the White community (Blassingame, 1973).
During this period when Creoles of European descent were attempting to distance themselves from their mixed heritage or family connections, people of mixed European, African, and Indian heritage often decided whether they wanted to be considered Black or White based on family ties. Furthermore, Blacks and Whites had a history of mixing reaching back to the founding of New Orleans, and they continued to mingle freely at taverns, balls, sporting events, and religious activities during Reconstruction (Woodward, 1974). Miscegenation laws were passed in 1894, once again making interracial marriages illegal. And while prostitution was legal, Storyville was divided into separate areas for White and Black prostitutes.

Even after the withdrawal of federal troops, African Americans in New Orleans remained a powerful voting block throughout the 1880s and 1890s (Somers, 1974). In 1896 there were still 154,000 registered Black voters in Louisiana. However, the literacy and property requirements of the 1898 Louisiana State Constitution effectively disenfranchised most of them while allowing poor Whites to qualify under a "grandfather clause." The number of registered Black voters dropped to 1,342 in 1904 and by 1940 it had dwindled to 886 (Fairclough, 1995). The state was able to circumvent legal attempts to reinstate voting rights. In 1906 the White Democratic primary supplanted the poll tax and literacy restrictions, and the "understanding clause" was adopted in 1921 to replace the outlawed grandfather clause.

The 1898 constitution expressly required segregated schools. Additionally, schooling for African Americans was limited to the first five grades as the school board considered it a waste of taxpayers’ money to educate Black people beyond "the
sphere of labor and social position to which they were suited" (DeVore & Logsdon, 1991, p. 118). Because of the lack of students receiving public high school education, Southern University was moved to Baton Rouge in 1913. Although without political power, Black leaders continued to petition the school board and worked through community and civic organization to press for improved educational opportunities. In 1910 Orleans Parish had 68 White elementary schools and three high schools. Of the 16 Black elementary schools, most were run-down and so overcrowded that many African American students attended school on a part-time basis. When the School Board did vote to provide buildings for Blacks, these efforts were often met with violent White opposition (DeVore & Logsdon, 1991).

By 1917 the school board realized that to insure a segregated system Black teachers and doctors were needed, and the first Black high school in New Orleans, McDonogh 35, was founded for college preparation. Black leaders also petitioned the school board for a vocational school, but the opposition from working-class Whites who felt their jobs would be threatened delayed the building of Booker T. Washington High School until 1942. According to a 1943 school board report, of the 25 Black schools in Orleans Parish just four buildings were in passable shape. Additionally, most students were performing below national norms, many were over age for the grade, and few graduated (DeVore & Logsdon, 1991).

Even the churches did not speak out against the rising tide of injustice. During the reconstruction effort to integrate public schools in 1871, the number of all-White Catholic schools had increased from 2 to 34. In 1895 the Catholic Archbishop of New
Orleans created segregated parishes, and in 1916 the Black parish of Corpus Christi was established in the Creole seventh ward. Most churches in New Orleans were completely segregated, but in a few Catholic churches African Americans sat in segregated pews or in the rear. No Black priests served in New Orleans until 1950 and, except for the Sisters of the Holy Family, the Catholic hierarchy was White. The Catholic church, however, did provide schools when there was little support from the public school system. In 1941 the Catholic church had 63 Black elementary and eight Black high schools in Louisiana. Xavier University, founded in 1925 by Mother Katherine Drexel, was the only Catholic institution of higher learning for African Americans in the United States (Fairclough, 1995).

With the loss of suffrage and little possibility of redress through the courts, African American people became virtually powerless while the color line became increasingly rigid. A majority of Whites throughout the South were committed to White supremacy which they identified with the "southern way of life" and they were willing to resort to social rebuke and even brutality to demonstrate the superiority of the White race. Blacks received constant reminders of their lower station in life and were aware of the ever-present threat of violence. As racial tension escalated in New Orleans the stage was set for some of the worst racial brutality in the country. In 1887 dozens of striking sugar plantation workers were slaughtered in the town of Thibodaux, south of New Orleans (Fairclough, 1995). In July, 1900, Black Mississippian Robert Charles, resisting harassment, killed two policemen, unleashing White mobs who roamed the streets for weeks, killing and beating African American
people, destroying property, and setting fire to the city's largest Black elementary school (Hair, 1976). Lynching attained staggering proportions in Louisiana, and between 1890 and the late 1940s over 400 were recorded as well as many that were not reported (Woodward, 1975).

The failure of Reconstruction dashed the hopes of the former free people of color who had viewed it as an opportunity to destroy the American caste system and achieve full equality. However, even as African American communities in New Orleans turned inward, the spirit of resistance and protest was kept alive. The many social clubs that were part of Black society were also active in political affairs. They worked to improve schools and other public facilities, and provided the resources and leadership for Black civic leagues (Hirsch, 1992). Established in 1915, the New Orleans branch of the NAACP became a focal point for political activity. When the New Orleans city council passed a residential segregation ordinance in 1924 the NAACP was successful in having it declared unconstitutional. However, the first housing projects completed in 1938 forecast a growing trend toward residential segregation (Fairclough, 1995).

**Race Relations in the 1940s and 1950s**

America experienced changes in racial attitudes during the 1940s that presented an opening for litigation and protest by Black leaders. During the Great Depression many Americans looked to the government for social and economic interventions. African American soldiers returning from World War II in the 1940s had a renewed understanding that they had fought for freedom in Europe while they were still living...
under a system of apartheid at home. Additionally, all Americans were aware that the ideology of White racial superiority had played out its ultimate end in the methodological extermination of millions of people.

In 1940 roughly one-third of the New Orleans’ population of 570,445 was African American, and 40% of the Black population was Catholic. Although some of the Creole population had turned away from the church for its support of segregation, the Creole cultural group was still distinguished by its close family ties, French language, and Catholicism. There were no large Black ghettos; instead, New Orleans had continued its salt and pepper housing patterns with pockets of African Americans living in uptown neighborhoods such as Carrollton and the Irish Channel, downtown in the Creole areas of Treme and the seventh ward between Esplanade and Elysian Fields, and in the ninth ward between Franklin Avenue and St. Bernard Parish (Lewis, 1976). The poverty rate for African Americans was double that of Whites, and perhaps 10% of the Black population were considered middle class (Rogers, 1993).

Although some held good jobs on the docks or with the railroad, 60% of the African Americans who could find work held service jobs and worked in private households as domestics.

We always had servants and even the poor [white] people in the community had people of the black race that would do services for them, whether cleaning up their houses or their yards or what not. The black community at that time were domestics, repairmen, they were cleanup type of people. . . . They were babysitters that took care of the white people in our family, white babies. (Eagan, in Warner, 1963, July 15, p. A 18)
Fire fighters, bus drivers, and policemen were White. Apprentice programs for trades such as plumbers and electricians were White only. Those African American who were college graduates were either teachers or preachers (Warner, 1963, July 15, p. A 18).

A caste system based on race had been enforced in New Orleans since the turn of the century and by 1940 Black and White people lived segregated lives. Laws dictated which water fountains, restaurants, parks and playgrounds Blacks were not allowed to use. African Americans were barred from City Park and Audubon Park, although Audubon Zoo was open to both races. Whites went to Pontchartrain Beach and Blacks to Lincoln Beach. Blacks and Whites sat in separate areas for games at Tulane Stadium. Buses and streetcars had a moving wooden block that Blacks were expected to sit behind. Most hospitals were White-only except Charity which had separate wings for Black and White patients. Whites lived in the St. Thomas, Florida, and Iberville housing projects, and Blacks lived in the St. Bernard, Calliope, Magnolia and Lafitte. Blacks preferred to shop on Dryades Street rather than on Canal Street where they were not allowed to sit at lunch counters and water fountains and washrooms were hard to find. Eight public libraries were provided for Whites, while Blacks were allowed to use two. Churches and schools were completely segregated. The teacher-pupil ratio in Black public schools was 45 compared to 32 in White schools. Additionally, some Black schools in New Orleans were without electric lights and modern plumbing or heating. Textbooks were years old, having been discarded by White students. White college students attended Tulane and Loyola
Universities and Blacks attended Xavier and Dillard (Warner, 1963, July 15, p. A 18). When Elizabeth Catlett took her art students from Dillard University to the Delgado Museum of Art in City Park in 1940, she had to make special arrangements to bring them in on a Monday. It was an overwhelming experience for most of the students who had never been inside a museum (Berlind, 1991).

The Black community, barred from using White banks and insurance companies, turned to their own social and benevolent societies for social security. Following Reconstruction, when the mortality rates for Black men had been very high, brass bands were hired by benevolent societies to follow horse-drawn hearse to the cemeteries. This parade of mourners came to be known as the second line that would follow the body, usually carrying umbrellas, for sun or rain. Once the body was interred, it was time to celebrate according to the African belief that the spirit had found its resting place (Flake, 1994).

African culture had survived in New Orleans throughout the colonial and Antebellum periods with the continuing infusion of slaves from the Caribbean, Africa, and the Southern states. African burial practices, the ring shout, and African drumming and dancing had taken place in Congo Square. African religious traditions and Caribbean practices had melded with Catholic rituals to produce an African American version of Christianity known as New Orleans Voodoo (Rogers, 1993). The brass-band parades and the bordellos of Storyville and the strip joints on Bourbon Street had been the training ground for many New Orleans musicians who produced the syncopated sounds of jazz.
Black New Orleanians continued to celebrate those traditions that had developed over the centuries. In the 1940s and 1950s many African Americans celebrated Mardi Gras on tree-lined Claiborne Avenue. Indian Krewes, descendants of African, Indian, and Caribbean traditions, masqueraded in Black neighborhoods for Mardi Gras and St. Joseph’s Day (Salaam, 1997). African Americans continued the tradition of second-lining after jazz bands that played for a funeral or during a parade through the streets. Rampart Street with its businesses and clubs was the center of African American night life and music as well as a commercial center for working-class Black people (Rogers, 1993).

New Orleans During the Civil Rights Movement

In 1942 NAACP lawyer, A.P. Tureaud won a case making the White primary illegal, so that, whereas only 400 Black New Orleanians had been able to vote in 1940, 28,000 were registered in 1952 (Hirsch, 1992). The NAACP had also begun to make changes in the 1940s by focusing on inferior facilities in segregated colleges and universities. In 1951 Black New Orleanian Ernest Morial enrolled in L.S.U. law school, and in 1952 Loyola University in New Orleans admitted two Black graduate students. NAACP lawyers then began to concentrate on the inequities in public schools. In 1942 Tureaud won equal pay for Black teachers in Orleans Parish. In 1948 the NAACP filed a suit to equalize school facilities in Orleans Parish. Tureaud presented a petition to the board in 1951 detailing the substantial inequalities in educational opportunities available to Black students, and when this was turned down, he filed suit for the desegregation of schools in 1952. This case was consolidated with
four other cases which became known as Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (DeVore & Logsdon, 1991).

The Brown decision in 1954 triggered hope in the Black community that segregation would end, but it also provoked massive White resistance across the South. In Louisiana the state legislature created the Joint Committee to Maintain Segregation which instituted a pupil placement law prohibiting cross-race school assignments. The committee resurrected White Citizens' Councils and passed legislation to limit Black voter registration (DeVore & Logsdon, 1991).

Every year the public school students of New Orleans would attend a ceremony for John McDonogh, the philanthropist who had left his money for the education of Black and White children. Every year Black school children would wait in the hot sun while the White children brought their flowers to the tomb, until 1954, when the African American community organized a boycott. Schools, however, continued to be segregated for six more years in spite of the suits for compliance to federal law brought by Black leaders (DeVore & Logsdon, 1991).

Progress was being made in other areas, however. In 1954 the municipal auditorium was desegregated, and by 1955 African Americans were allowed to use the public libraries. The Catholic Archbishop of New Orleans called for school desegregation in 1956, although Catholic schools did not desegregate until 1962. Then in 1958 the city street cars and buses, undergraduate programs in state colleges and universities, and New Orleans City Park including the Delgado Museum of Art were desegregated (Rogers, 1993). More than 200 African American students entered
Louisiana State University New Orleans, making it the first fully integrated public university in the South (Rousseve, 1937).

In 1959 the African American community organized a boycott of the business area on Dryades Street that sold mainly to Blacks but only employed a few of them in menial positions. The success of that boycott by the Consumer's League grew into a CORE group that united with high school students in the NAACP youth group. It was these young people who conducted sit-ins at lunch counters and picketed for jobs on Canal Street from 1960 until 1965. The economic leverage from these protests brought about negotiations with White business leaders (Rogers, 1993).

New Orleans suffered economically not only from the Canal Street protests, but also from loss of tourist business due to publicity that resulted from school desegregation. In November, 1960 the school board chose to initiate desegregation at Frantz and McDonogh 19 Schools in the lower ninth ward, a working-class White neighborhood where resistance to integration was the fiercest. Scenes of screaming White women threatening four prim little first grade girls were spread across national newspapers and television. White children who attempted to continue going to those schools were subject to the same harassment. Parents were threatened and even lost their jobs. Mayor Morrison refused police protection. After several months of embarrassing publicity business leaders took steps to calm the White community, and gradually the schools became integrated. Judge Wright ordered the first six grades of all public schools to be integrated by the fall of 1962. By 1964 there were 364 Black students in White schools. At the same time, however, the state issued tuition grants
to parents who withdrew their children from the public schools by the thousands, the number of White students attending private schools doubled, and the White Citizens’ Council organized the Ninth Ward Cooperative School for over 1,000 White students. By 1972 public schools were becoming segregated again as African Americans made up 70% of the student population of the Orleans Parish Public Schools, and by 1993 they were 92% of that population (Mullener, 1993; Rogers, 1992).

Other vestiges of segregation began to crumble in New Orleans following the desegregation of public schools. In 1963 all "white only" and "colored only" signs were removed from around the city and Black firemen, bus drivers, and sanitation workers were hired. Tulane University began accepting African American students after a law suit in 1963. Places of public accommodations such as hospitals, amusement parks, and swimming pools were open to African Americans by 1965. In 1972, the Louisiana Legislature removed the laws forbidding miscegenation (Mullener, 1993, Rogers, 1992).

Political changes also began to take place. Moon Landrieu openly courted the Black vote during his campaign for mayor. A.P. Tureaud was appointed assistant city attorney, Ernest Morial was the first African American elected to the state legislature since Reconstruction, and Albert Dent became the first African American on the city planning commission (Mullener, 1993).

New Orleans Since the Civil Rights Movement

The events of the 1960s unified the historically divided African American community of New Orleans. African Americans are no longer excluded from public
accommodations and they have gained voting rights. There has been an increase in African American politicians. The first of three Black mayors, Ernest Morial, was elected in 1978. New Orleans has also had an African American school superintendent, and police and fire chiefs. There has been an increase in educational and employment opportunities and a growing Black middle class.

On the other hand, by mid-1970 New Orleans residential areas and public schools were more segregated than they were in the 1950s. By 1993 the Orleans Parish school system was 92% Black and the third most segregated school system in the nation. Former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives in 1989. When Duke ran for governor in 1991 on a platform of opposition to affirmative action and welfare abuse, he received 55% of the White vote in Louisiana. A fierce debate over a City Council ordinance that would have made discrimination in Mardi Gras krewes illegal divided the city in 1992. And again, in 1993 a monument to the White Citizens' Council which had terrorized newly freed slaves in rural Louisiana to keep them from voting and massacred many of the New Orleans police force in 1875, provoked racial divisions (Adams, 1993; Rogers, 1992).

Racist laws were taken off the books, but attitudes that sank roots and had grown for over 250 years have been slower to change. Today it may be more difficult for attitudes to change because people live in separate realms with little interracial contact. New Orleans has always had one of the largest African American populations in the United States, but until recently it has also been one of the most integrated.
Since early colonial times Black and White people have lived together in the same New Orleans neighborhoods and have played together as children although they went to separate schools (Lewis, 1976). Social norms and legal divisions, rather than residential segregation, determined how people defined caste status. Following World War II, however, neighborhoods grew up that were segregated.

Starting in the 1950s pumps drained the swampy areas around Lake Pontchartrain and highways were built. Developments in the Gentilly and Lakefront areas were reserved for Whites through racial covenants. Jefferson Parish also began to be developed for middle-class Whites who wanted to get out of the city, and working-class Whites were attracted to less expensive developments in St. Bernard Parish (Hill, 1993).

In the 1960s the lower ninth ward between the Industrial Canal and the St. Bernard Parish border was 70% White. By 1962 the controversy over desegregating the schools had calmed down, but not without many Whites putting their children in private schools. The problem was worsened by real estate agents who persuaded Whites to leave the area. African Americans began moving in 1970 and by 1980 the population shifted to 95% Black. Often those African Americans were renters, not owners, and landlords began to neglect their property. When Blacks moved in many of the neighborhood resources, such as corner stores, also left the area, city services were neglected, and police were more apt to crack down on young Black men. Today, the income of the Black residents of the lower ninth ward is about half that of their White neighbors in St. Bernard Parish, and one-third live below poverty level.
Landlords have allowed drug users to move in. The result has been that these African American people are isolated in a poor neighborhood and crime is increasing. Black children rarely play with White children in the neighborhood or in the Black public schools (Hill, 1993).

The exodus of Whites to the suburbs has also resulted in a more segregated city with a majority African American population. In 1970 the city itself had a 70% White population which had diminished to 34% by 1992. In the 1990s poor Black New Orleanians are more likely to be isolated in housing projects in much the same manner as in large cities in the North. When the first projects were completed in 1938 four of them were reserved for Whites. With desegregation and rising rents in the 1970s those projects became refuges for African Americans who had formerly lived in the Vieux Carre and the lower Garden District. The White Florida project took in the overflow from the neighboring Desire, built in the 1950s and regarded as the worst in the city (Lewis, 1976). Segregation has resulted in growing fear and distrust between White and Black New Orleanians and in increasing depression among Blacks in isolated, poverty-stricken neighborhoods.

Economic conditions also play a primary role in the situation that people in New Orleans find themselves in today. Following the Louisiana Purchase New Orleans quickly became the fifth largest city in the nation, and the second largest port. The attraction of New Orleans for President Jefferson had been its position at the mouth of the Mississippi River as a port for shipping the agricultural and industrial products from the newly settled Midwest. Antebellum New Orleans gained its wealth
as a port city and from the sugar plantations that lined the riverbanks both upstream and downstream.

During the Union occupation newly freed slaves poured into the city from the outlying parishes and were put to work as wage earners. This system took hold on sugar plantations because of the need for cooperative work during the caning season. Cotton plantations were more likely to have been divided among Black share croppers who lived away from Whites on rented land. Much of rural Louisiana returned to its agricultural economic base during Reconstruction, but the coming of railroads slowed the growth of the port city. Steamboats were no longer coming down the Mississippi, and New Orleans' industrial base was limited to ship building, handling cargo, and marine commerce. By 1901, however, the Dock Board had built cotton warehouses, coal and bulk storage facilities, one of the largest grain elevators in the world, and railroad tracks and stations. Markets were expanded to include Latin American countries, and the economy boomed until the Great Depression. In the 1960s, with the new interstate highway system, trucks and airplanes began to challenge the railroad domination of long distance freight hauling. Once again, because it had a small industrial base, New Orleans depended heavily on income from overseas maritime commerce, but its docks were no longer efficient. Shipping technology had moved toward container vessels that require costly special equipment, fewer workers, and a huge dockside area. Additionally, a new intercostal waterway had been completed connecting Florida to the Rio Grande, which now allows shippers to bypass the Gulf of Mexico completely. A new port was built to accommodate container ships east of
the city shutting down the docks and cutting off a means of income for many Black workers (Lewis, 1976).

Without the port or industry the city has been struggling to regain an economic base at the same time that Whites have fled to the suburbs. Additionally, tax support for the public school system has declined. During the 1980s New Orleans was the third poorest large city in the nation. In 1985, 27% of the population of New Orleans lived in poverty, 50% of the Black population of New Orleans lived in poverty, and 25% of the African American population was unemployed (Rogers, 1993).

Interviews

Woven through the experiences of each of the artists that I interviewed are the social, economic, political, and cultural influences of New Orleans. Family, community and personal struggles have influenced the values that define the commitment of these people to art and to community. All of the artists are more than cultural producers, they also participate in passing on cultural traditions and artistic development to young people. John Scott has been teaching at Xavier University for the past 30 years. Louise Mouton Johnson was an artist-in-residence in the public schools, and for the past 10 years has taught at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts. Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick Calhoun teach in the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, and at Covenant House. Sheleen Jones teaches in the Talented-in-the-arts program in the public schools, and at Southern University in New Orleans.
All of the artists have also received local recognition for their artwork. John Scott received a commission to design the African American pavilion, "I've Known Rivers," for the New Orleans World's Fair in 1984. He received a MacArthur Foundation Genius Award, and his work has been exhibited around the country. Recently Scott completed a commission, "Ocean Song," for New Orleans' Woldenberg park. Louise Mouton Johnson did the 1990 New Orleans Jazz Fest Poster. She was commissioned to do work for the Aquarium of the Americas and the new Martin Luther King Elementary School of Science and Technology. She produced work on the life of Louis Armstrong for the Milne Boys Home, and has prints of the flora of New Orleans at the Amtrak Station and in City Hall. Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick Calhoun have had their photography published in Cultural Vistas and Essence magazines. They produced photographs for the exhibition Raising Cane, 200 Years of Louisiana Sugar Production and photographs and a film for the exhibit at the New Orleans Museum of Art "He's the Prettiest" A Tribute to Big Chief Allison "Tootie" Montana's 50 Years of Mardi Gras Indian Suiting. Sheleen Jones produced a seven foot sculpture, A.P. Tureaud at the Gates that became part of the A.P. Tureaud Park in the seventh ward.

**John Scott**

**Development.** John Scott's parents had moved to New Orleans from the small south Louisiana towns of Houma and Vacherie and were living and working on Cobb's Farm, an area between Gentilly and Lake Pontchartrain near the Industrial Canal, shortly before he was born in 1940. His father was employed as a chauffeur
and general handyman there. His mother was a housewife. The family moved
t uptown for a few years, and then in 1947 they moved to the area known as Desire in
the ninth ward, before the Desire projects were built. Scott's father worked as a chef
at some of the major restaurants in the city. Scott relates that his family was
economically on a lower rung and so they made things.

I never knew what art was, in fact we made things since my earliest
recollections. My sisters and brothers drew, it wasn't a big deal to make a
drawing. I learned to embroider as a young child, and I watched my mother
do incredible things with a sewing machine and with her hands. My father
repaired things and built things so that the idea of building was not foreign, it
was just a part of the whole deal . . . Making things was part of the culture,
and the things we made serviced us. But if we needed something made,
whether it was embroidering a shirt or fixing the steps, all those things had to
be done well. (John Scott, personal communication, February 29, 1996)

Being part of a family within a traditional community was also important in
Scott's cultural development. He remembers the music from the churches and joints
in his neighborhood in New Orleans. "As a kid, walking through the streets where I
grew up, you'd run onto one of these places and we couldn't go inside, so if some
really cool music was coming out, we'd sit on the sidewalk and listen to it" (Startisky,
1994, p. 15).

Growing up in the South in the 1940s and 1950s Scott remembers life under
Jim Crow as a time "when one's humanity, one's value as a human being was
questioned every day." His family lived "right up the street from St. Francis DeSales
Church, where I couldn't go" (Startisky, 1994, p. 14). He was also aware of the
exclusion of Marian Anderson by the Daughters of the American Revolution, and he
considers the murder of Emmett Till a major event in the developing Civil Rights struggle.

Scott attended public elementary, junior high, and high schools, and then entered Xavier University in 1958. He remembers that his elementary teachers gave him confidence. He learned "an awful lot about visualization and how the language worked" from his industrial arts teacher at Lockett. At Booker T. Washington High School he had a serious art teacher who "made strong demands and made us take ourselves seriously" (Startisky, 1994, p. 15). Mr. Jean encouraged Scott to go to Xavier University where he studied under Numa Rousseve. Rousseve was the founder of the art program at Xavier. Trained at the Boston Academy and the Chicago Art Institute, he was a classical painter but "couldn't get work and refused to sell himself short, [to work in the expected pseudo-naive style] to be in books as a Negro artist."

While at Xavier Scott worked in an artists' guild, a program founded by Sister Lurana. He received apprentice training and worked with practicing artists Frank Hayden, Ernest Ross, and others in producing major architectural sculptures for the Naples Community Civic Center in Florida. Rousseve and Sister Lurana "changed my life in that they gave me the confidence to believe that I could compete with anybody without apology" (Startisky, 1994, p. 16). Scott feels that Xavier also shaped his ideas about art as a means of communication, and a means to better the human condition.

I think I also have a responsibility, and maybe that came from my time at Xavier. I was always told that if great things were given to you great things were expected. If you had the privilege of developing the ability to sing when there were a lot of people that didn't even have a voice, then you were obligated to sing for that community. (Startisky, 1994, p.37)
However, Scott was not seeing the work of African American artists in galleries or museums or books. In the 1960s he recognized that African American people were considered culturally deprived. "I came from a very strong culture, and learned to do an awful lot of things out of that culture. Those two people [my parents] are responsible for that." When he was thinking about going to college to study art, people in the community told him that he would be better off getting a job at the post office or becoming a teacher so he could earn a living.

It was my mother that said that there are really two things you don't control, that's being born and dying, and only a fool doesn't control what's in the middle. To have somebody else tell you what your life has to be means you're poor. You have to decide to do it, and once you decide to do it you have to take the consequences and the responsibility for it. So I did. (Startisky, 1994, p.36)

And when it came time for graduate school, Scott found that schools in New Orleans did not want to deal with him.

People that had known my work for four years, whom I considered friends . . . in major institutions here, who admired the work, the minute I started talking about graduate school, had all kinds of recommendations for me to go elsewhere, but nobody would recommend me to their institution. (John Scott, personal communication, February 29, 1996)

Scott went to Michigan State for graduate school in 1962 because he felt it was about getting information, not about fighting political systems. Although it is possible for African American art students to go to graduate school in New Orleans today, Scott feels that there are still some serious problems in terms of what students are getting from these programs.
The kinds of thing that a lot of young people bring, and even brought back then, is that they wanted to speak their own voice, they wanted the skills to do it, and that's what the schools should provide. The song they wanted to sing was their own, they didn't want to mimic someone else. (John Scott, personal communication, February 29, 1996)

When Scott returned to New Orleans in 1965 a lot of people knew of his architectural sculpture and liturgical images and he was asked to join the Orleans Gallery. He has never taken slides to a gallery because "it was never about trying to get into places where I never felt welcome." However, the director of the Stern Gallery and others have seen his work and asked him to join. He has never designed work to sell.

To me it's a personal thing. I think the integrity of the artist is more important than selling out to be in a gallery. That's what I do, but a lot of young people figure "I got to make a living." If that's the case I'll drive a truck... This has never been a job nor a vocation. To me it is a way of life, and how I live is extremely important. (John Scott, personal communication, February 29, 1996)

Scott feels, however, that the galleries in New Orleans do not welcome African American artists. "Even today you can count the African Americans in the galleries in this state probably on one hand." This is also true on a national basis, although the work is being sold. "We don't buy cars on the basis of nationality, but on the basis of the quality of the car, and I think art's the same way. Eventually we will learn that in this country."

Interpretation of art. Probably the strongest ethnic influence on Scott's art is the spirituality of African American people "because that's what allowed them to survive this system," and it comes across in all their artistic production, "sometimes in
color, form, whatever, but I think that is there." The color that influences his work comes directly out of the African American community, in particular the bead work of the Mardi Gras Indians and their use of strong primary and complementary color combinations. Music has been an important element in Scott’s art. As he matured, Scott was inspired by the sounds of Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Louis Armstrong and Bunk Johnson to use "layers of color, layers of form, layers of pattern" to create a visual polyrhythmic structure. Dance also inspired his work. "The notion of dance, wanting to establish movement in sculpture, but movement that is as natural as the wind rather than mechanical." Scott’s sculptures may look like they come out of the modernist movement with its emphasis on formal qualities, but his use of form is a language that deals with issues of "civil rights struggles, human struggles, and struggles for humanity."

If you’ve heard Billy Holiday sing "Strange Fruit" this is obviously a political statement about what was happening in the United States. At the same time it’s an incredible piece of music, so you cannot separate content and form. I want to make sure my work is seamless in terms of the idea, the language, the content, and the form. (John Scott, personal communication, February 29, 1996)

Scott’s early prints, Jackson State and Separate but Equal were political statements that included human figures. An early sculpture of the crucifixion of Christ was conceived from a photograph of the lynching of a Black man. "I did not want to do a plastic Jesus. I wanted to do work that was hard, that people were going to think about . . . [so] you see another human being that made a tremendous sacrifice" (Startisky, 1994, p. 16).
Later his sculpture evolved toward a nonfigurative style. "I wanted the work to be more about the spirit of the human form than about the actual appearance of the human form." He began using space to give the illusion of volume and mass, and color to contradict form to deliberately make viewers make a decision that was wrong, to make them conscious of making judgements. "Artists have been using trompe l'oeil for centuries. I'm just doing it in a more politically active environment." He would like those elements of surprise to bring about an awareness that "maybe the people we make stereotypical judgments about are not what we think either."

Some of Scott's contemporary pieces are again becoming more figurative. Off the Edge and After deal with issues of children out of control and the irony of kids planning their deaths instead of their lives. A contemporary body of work, Urban Ibegi confronts "the notion that women live in an environment that constantly questions their worth as human beings and their rightful place in the human experience" (Scott, 1996, p. 13).

Music often provides the inspiration for Scott's art. Because he was educated as an artist in Western traditions, Scott feels that his personal philosophy is closer to jazz musicians than to visual artists. The technology of his Western training and his musical connection to Africa led Scott to develop a form of kinetic sculpture based on weight physics. While doing research for the "I've Known Rivers" project he read that African hunters would turn over their bowed instruments and play a libation of sound to the soul of an animal they had killed. It was this instrument, known as the
diddley bow, that came to the Mississippi Delta and developed into the bottleneck blues guitar. His piece *Diddley Bow* traces these ancestral connections.

Other works by Scott also deal with African American history. "All of us look for who we are by where we come from and by what we’re part of. For African Americans the fact that our history was erased . . . it is up to us to establish a continuum ourselves, and in art, that’s where I found the continuum." *Middle Passage* deals with the trauma of getting on a ship in chains. A piece he called *Knots* symbolizes the connection of the Black community in New Orleans to Storyville as a place that provided jobs for musicians, seamstresses, carpenters, and cooks.

Scott feels that by providing an environment where people can spend time "just contemplating something" he is also providing an opportunity for people to improve themselves. He changed an uninviting space on Poydras Street and the river with the color and movement of *Uptown Second Line*, which captures the spirit of a New Orleans walking group. "Now people see this as a very human space, a very warm space, a space where they want to be" (Startisky, 1994, p. 35). A recent outdoor sculpture, *Ocean Song* is a piece Scott considers meditative, "and if people take the time to look at it and get involved in it, as abstract as it is, it would change how they feel" (Startisky, 1994, p. 35). *Ocean Song* expresses the history of African people who were taken across the ocean from the land of the pyramids. "The top element is like the wave of our spirit. Wherever African people have gone in the diaspora they have brought their spirit with them."
Louise Mouton Johnson

Development. Louise Mouton Johnson was born in 1954 and grew up in the seventh ward. She attended Jones public school until fourth grade. When her brother graduated they both went to Corpus Christi Catholic School and then he went to St. Augustine and she went to St. Joseph Academy.

Mouton’s father was in the merchant marine and his travels influenced a great deal of her cultural development. He brought back objects that were "probably touristy things that people would buy, but precious things to us that we kept and I liked, and foreign, and things that I started to read about in history books and appreciated much more as I got older." Some of the things were textiles from China and Africa, furniture, and music. Her father also sent postcards, letters, and photographs to the family while he was away. As a child she listened to him play jazz and African music. "So my dad never sat down with me and said, 'listen to this music' or 'look at this fabric' or 'watch me use a camera' but he was teaching me all the while in a very indirect way." The family also traveled up and down the Gulf Coast when Mouton’s mother would take her two children to see their father when his ship docked outside of New Orleans.

Mouton remembers her mother going back to school to get her degree in teaching, and that she was about 5 years old when she went to her mother’s graduation. Mouton’s mother was a graduate of McDonogh 35 High School but her family could not afford to send her to college, so she worked for a White family in Metairie for awhile, cooking, cleaning and helping the children with school work. She
also worked in a sewing factory and took in sewing. Mouton's mother had been a union organizer at the factory and was also an influential member of the teachers' union in Orleans Parish where she taught for 20 years. When she went back to school it was just part of knowing she had to take care of the family.

So it was normal to see my mother do these things. Not that my father didn't, it was just that his work kept him away from home and things had to be taken care of. Merchant seamen were gone for months and you couldn't put something on hold until he came back, so mom took care of all that. So in that way I got a good education about really not a man's job or a woman's job, but the job had to be done, and you did it if you were there. (Louise Mouton, personal communication, June 3, 1997)

Mouton learned to sew and do embroidery at an early age. She made puppets and dolls with a needle and thread before learning how to use a sewing machine. "Learning how to construct garments was something that I knew how to do before I went to school and took classes in drawing or anything like that." Mouton's parents gave her a little brownie camera for her eighth birthday, so she also started taking pictures at an early age. Then when she graduated from high school her brother further encouraged her with a graduation gift of a 35mm camera.

Her brother was serious about photography and taught Mouton about quality control. "When you work in the dark room you just have to have everything under control . . . your technique just has to be perfect in order for your product to come out well crafted." It was the same thing Mouton had learned from her mother with her sewing. "She would inspect every seam, every hem, and if it wasn't right you had to rip it out. Because she just wasn't going to let me walk around with anything that looked bad as far as the craftsmanship was concerned."
Textiles were an important part of Mouton's cultural environment. She treasured the fabric her father had brought home from foreign countries. She had been taught how to sew and later taught herself to dye fabric. "Being a child of the seventies . . . I learned how to tie dye, did it in my backyard. My little Rit Dye and my little plastic trash can . . . then I did a lot more reading about stitch dyeing, and experimented with that." As an adult Mouton read about slave quilts, and when I looked at some of those quilts I said that looks like the same quilts my mother made. It had the same feel to it . . . I'm not talking about my grandmother but my mother. It's just amazing, the quality of the stitching, the way the patterns were put together. (Louise Mouton, personal communication, June 3, 1997)

Family celebrations in the traditional community were important to Mouton's cultural development. Growing up in New Orleans Mouton remembers Mardi Gras on Claiborne Avenue "before the trees were torn down, or you could say slaughtered almost, because they were beautiful trees, Oak trees just lined up, up and down Claiborne, and all of that was just stripped to build the highway." She also saw walking groups, "where just a little neighborhood club might have a second line on a Sunday in their neighborhood, just walk through the neighborhood with a band and the walking group behind them." Another impression of growing up in New Orleans was the ritual of two women braiding another woman's hair at a festival. "It could just be braiding and combing hair, or you could get into something more elaborate with the braiding of the hair . . . just putting it into smaller plaits all over or twists."

I look at pictures of my mother and her sisters when they were little, with the thick hair and the braids, and look now at the things that the young African American women are doing with their daughters' hair, and except for the additions of the hair, it's the same hair style. So its something that's passed on
from mother to daughter, just with a little more embellishment maybe as time goes on, and hair is really important. (Louise Mouton, personal communication, June 3, 1997)

It was her maternal grandfather who first recognized Mouton's artistic talent. When she was about 3 years old and her mother was still in college, Mouton drew a cartoon of Popeye on the back of one of her mother's papers and, although her mother had to explain it to her instructor, her grandfather was very proud of her. "I remember seeing that thing on our wall for the longest when I was growing up."

There was very little in the way of art education in Mouton's elementary and high school programs and so her mother started bringing her to the Delgado Museum of Art for Saturday classes in 1967. This was the first time Mouton was in a situation where she was the only Black person there, because before that she had been in schools where there were Black students and teachers, except for the Catholic nuns. She basically integrated that program and remembers feeling isolated and sometimes mistreated, and somewhat like an attraction for the White visitors to the museum.

We were dealing with children who had come from families that had their opinions about Black people, so there were some people who I was able to work with, side by side without any problems, and there were others who I know, didn't want to be anywhere near me. Maybe a teacher or two thought I shouldn't have been there in the first place. But I stayed there and noticed that as the years went by there were more and more Black students coming in, doing that little Saturday art program. (Louise Mouton, personal communication, June 3, 1997)

Mouton recently found out her mother had always waited in the car for her to finish instead of going home and coming back for her.

Protective still, because she had things to do at home. There was the cooking and cleaning to do and all that--it was a Saturday and she was a working
woman. So this was a sacrifice that she made to get me involved with visual art because she saw the talent . . . and that's what she did to help me to get some formal education. (Louise Mouton, personal communication, June 3, 1997)

When Mouton got ready to go to college her mother again encouraged her to do art but advised her to go into education so that if the art did not work out she could teach. "For her it was . . .not the idea of the starving artist with no idea of how you were going to get income . . . but art with a backup." During Mouton's freshman year at Tulane in 1972 she was the only Black person in the visual arts and she felt isolated in several ways, first because art was not considered serious enough to make a living at. "Not too many Black people understood going into the arts. It wasn't a way to make money. It was considered a frill." This is a problem that Mouton still sees in the high school students she teaches, "the idea that the arts are not serious enough to make a living off of." The other problem was wanting to be involved socially. Studio classes were three hours long, and often she would be in class all day so that "a lot of time that I had to spend of my college time without being around other Black people."

She really enjoyed the academics at Tulane and had some excellent teachers, but felt she was not getting serious instruction in printmaking. "You have so many ideas, you're frustrated about having these ideas and just not knowing how to handle the materials, to put them down." So when a friend invited her to a show at Xavier she was impressed with the work the students were producing and realized this was the training she needed. After a year and a half at Tulane Mouton transferred to
Xavier where she studied with John Scott and Sister Lurana. "I remember John Scott saying a lot of times that he’d never met a dumb artist. He never met an artist who just knew how to draw and didn’t know how to think." This idea, "that you have to be more than technically skilled, otherwise people are going to look at it and know this person knows how to draw but they don’t really know much about what they have to say," is something Mouton tries to instill in her students today.

Mouton went to Cranbrook Academy in Michigan for graduate school in 1976, then took time off to work and have a baby, and went back in 1978 to finish. At Cranbrook she was one of two African American students in a class of 150, so again it was isolating. Additionally, she found that "there were a lot of people who really had poorly conceived notions of what a Black person from the South could do."

I spent a lot of time in the woodshop and before I went in there I did a lot of reading about how to do things right. One day [the woodshop teacher] saw me just carefully laying out wood . . . and he said, "Where did you learn to do that? I didn’t show you how to do it, how could you possibly know that you’re supposed to do that?" I said, "I read about it." And he went, "Oh, you can read?" (Louise Mouton, personal communication, June 3, 1997)

While she was in graduate school Mouton learned more in the fabric department than in printmaking. A Japanese American student helped her learn how to dye fabric to get different shades, and how not to lose those gradations. A Japanese woman who was the wife of one of her professors helped her learn how to knit, something Mouton had been teaching herself. Part of Mouton’s MFA thesis had to do with garment construction, and this brought out her concern "about art that was not necessarily something that always hung on the wall, but something that I thought was part of your everyday life."
The ideas of Japanese sculptor Isamu Noguchi and African American printmaker and sculptor Elizabeth Catlett also influenced Mouton's artistic development. Over the years Mouton has read about Elizabeth Catlett, done presentations to her students on Catlett's work, and met her when she has been in New Orleans. In 1996, when Catlett, Jacob Lawrence and John Scott had the show "Terms of Endurance" at the Amistad Research Center, Mouton worked as Catlett's assistant for a print workshop. Mouton is connected to the down-to-earth, practical qualities of Catlett's work and her positive, uplifting images of women.

She said one time... that she does what a lot of male artists cannot do simply because they don't have the experience. [They do] "women with babies," but she does "mothers and children." So there's just a difference in the relationship. You have the romanticized view by some male artists of the relationship between the mother and child, but hers are a lot more down-to-earth. Just in reading about her life, she said she didn't really learn how to sculpt wood until she was about 43, after her last child had gone into kindergarten. So you have the practicalities of an artist, a female with children who has to deal with the family and with raising her children. And it's something I've had to come to grips with. (Louise Mouton, personal communication, June 3, 1997)

Mouton feels that being primarily responsible for children is usually not something male artists have to worry about. "The wife takes care of the kids at home and they're in the studio day and night doing work." Mouton was a single parent for 14 years and has found the challenge of "being a mother, a working mother and a single parent, and still doing the artwork" difficult.

Just like other artists, Mouton has seen her work rejected at times. She feels that this may be due to the fact that she works with very traditional media. "Being basically a printmaker, it's almost as if prints are not that exciting or not as
competitive as paintings are." She has also noticed a struggle between ideologies in art making. She tries to prepare students by teaching them how to handle the materials so they have the tools to communicate their ideas, but she has seen teachers "just let them paint however they want as long as they are putting their gut feelings down on the canvas." Mouton finds it discouraging that "that's what I see glorified.”

Her own work is carefully crafted and very traditional.

I’m not printing on people’s backs or I'm not using wrecked cars to make my prints... but the images that I have are going to speak for themselves. If [they] do it’s well done, well crafted, and I can take pride in the fact that I put out a good product. (Louise Mouton, personal communication, June 3, 1997)

Mouton thinks that Black artists in the city sometimes have problems with their work being accepted in galleries when they deal with African American subject matter that is positive. White artists use African and African American images "simply because that might be trendy, but it really doesn't have the meaning." If a paneled jury does not want to see positive images of Black people then a Black artist will be rejected whereas, "when White artists do the little pickaninny thing it’s out there and it’s bought, and it’s insulting." She compared this to one of Henry Tanner’s paintings, The Banjo Lesson which

dignified something that was in European and White American art at the time. The very same subject was used to ridicule black people. The banjo player with thick lips, the big eyes. But here was a very dignified image of the older man teaching a grandson or nephew how to play the banjo. A strong male image and a young boy. (Louise Mouton, personal communication, June 3, 1997)

Mouton knows some Black artists who are doing well in the galleries in New Orleans and she feels "its about time these people are getting the respect they
deserve," but she does not feel the commercial gallery scene is for her. "If I were to be with a gallery it would have to be more community-based, something that wasn't as commercial and something that had lots of children in on a regular basis, like a teaching gallery . . . where you didn't feel that you were in a stable with other artists." Mouton prefers to show her work in group exhibits, such as with the Women's Caucus. She also has work in community spaces and public buildings.

An important part of the process of making art for Mouton is doing print workshops with children so they will know the history of printmaking and feel that it's something they could do. Presently Mouton is working on a series of prints that will be her way of informing the community about breast cancer. She was drawn to printmaking as a means of making art available to masses of people who would not otherwise see it, and as a way of disseminating information.

You see, that's the type of thing that I like to do. Something that's going to have a message to it. Something that a lot of people will see, not necessarily in a gallery. I don't have to be in a museum or anybody's art book. I just remember reading a lot of things that folk artists say, it's like paint or die! I feel like I have to do this art work. You have to do it. That's my philosophy right now. (Louise Mouton, personal communication, June 3, 1997)

Interpretation of art. Mouton's art is about "the importance of and the preciousness of life . . . the importance of the children in our lives, whether they are your own or nieces, nephews, or your students." Being a female and having a child, Mouton gives special importance to the mother and child theme. A print of her son in a tree house with trees in the background once elicited comments from an art critic about "the turbulence of the trees with . . . the intense focus of the eyes, and how it
dealt with the mother raising a child and not knowing what it's going to come up with" that Mouton felt was very insightful.

Mouton considers the statements her art makes to be more personal and more of community than political. The political issues Mouton has dealt with she has kept to herself. She did a series she called "Archival Quality" after having served on the jury in a child abuse case. Her son was three at the time, and the jury had to look at pictures of the bruises and death of a three-year-old. She expressed her grief through drawings on brown paper, but they were something she has kept to herself. She wanted to communicate the fact that artists "want all our work to last forever, but here's this three-year-old child who was just beaten, beaten, beaten over her three years and the last blow just killed her. What's more important, a human life or a painting in a gallery?"

Mouton also draws on her cultural heritage to makes her art accessible to the community. Her photographs of women braiding hair and walking groups in New Orleans are images she used for her prints. The silk-screen images she did for Milne School were taken from photographs of "young Louis Armstrong, as opposed to when he left New Orleans and became famous." Her banners at the Amtrak Station are of the plants that are typical of New Orleans—Palmetto, Elephant Ears, Banana trees, Magnolia, and Oleander.

Mythology and the meaning of cultural symbols provide inspiration for much of Mouton's work. She is interested in the different meanings the same symbols have in various cultures and in making cross-cultural and spiritual connections. "There is
something about worshipping an Other-greater-than-ourselves that certainly is cross-cultural, from the earliest organized religions to the newest cult." The seven quilted banners she produced for King School were done with applique and piece work and have Adinkra symbols and lettering stating African proverbs. She has also done a series of prints of very graphic, geometric animals surrounded by symbols. The surrounding background is a deep blue, while the central square is black. Mouton borrowed the background images from Adire cloth, a west African textile made with a resist process and indigo dye.

Some of the things I try to get across are the fact that people universally have the same basic needs, we're all the same in that way. When we learn how to understand the differences, and there are differences that we should appreciate—it sounds idealistic—but when you understand you're a lot less prone to want to destroy, and that could be a life, it could be a tree. I remember getting really upset when I see kids beating up on hedges, bushes for whatever reason and saying, "Why are you breaking this thing? It's a tree, it has life, and it's just there to be pretty, so learn how to understand and respect it. (Louise Mouton, personal communication, June 3, 1997)

Recently Mouton has returned to an early interest in indigo. She found out it is used for workers' kimonos in Japan, by African women who make Adire cloth for traditional clothing, and was grown on plantations in Louisiana. She has always liked its deep blue color, and now feels that a real spiritual connection is drawing her toward learning how to grow and cultivate the indigo plant and use it to dye cloth. She is also doing more textile work, actually making quilts that could be bed covers, table coverings, or jackets. And she is also drawn to African American quilt patterns. "It might look haphazard, but these women knew what they were doing." She took a course in African philosophy and it helped her to understand that patterns in African
art are purposely never geometrically precise in order to "distract evil spirits, so that they don’t get into understanding a pattern absolutely the same way all the time; something has to throw them off, especially for something you’re going to wear."

Although she is getting more appreciative of African culture, Mouton’s ideas are mostly from the culture of her immediate family and community.

I can’t say that I think [my work] is African because I’m African American. I can’t just say that I am African. I have to give credit to and acknowledge my American ancestry because I was born here, my grandparents were born here, and I haven’t done my genealogy, but I’m obviously of African heritage. To deny my American heritage is like saying my ancestors never went through slavery. I’m proud to say that I’m a descendant of the survivors. I’m proud to say that. (Louise Mouton, personal communication, June 3, 1997)

A lot of Mouton’s work deals with spirituality. The print, *Lift Me Out of Darkness, Set My Spirit Free* is named after a gospel song, and the imagery suggests two recurring dreams she has--one has to do with running and being held back, and the other is a dream of flying. A female figure is tied to a kite that flies in the air, but is still tethered to the ground by whoever is holding it.

Wanting to fly, being held to the ground, or wanting to run and being held to the ground. Sort of like a kite in a sense . . . For me what is more personal is the fact that my father taught me how to make kites, my brother and I . . . and he made kites for my son. Some of the fun in flying a kite is letting it go and running to see where it will land—with my brother and I, a lot of our kites landed in the bayou. (Louise Mouton, personal communication, June 3, 1997)

**Keith Calhoun**

*Development.* Keith Calhoun was born in 1955 and grew up in the lower ninth ward, where he lives today with his wife Chandra McCormick Calhoun and their son. His father worked on the docks and his mother was a custodian for the Orleans Parish...
Public Schools. "My father said when he came here he went straight to the river and hired up. He came to town with seven dollars and fifty cents. But he raised four kids, and some of them went to college." Calhoun remembers his father coming home from work many days covered with dust and sweat, because "the work was hard but the money was good."

Growing up close to the river I was always fascinated by the river. I remember going uptown, riding along the docks. I remember the pay table on Friday. I knew a lot of the old dock workers. I would ride in the truck with Mr. Butler and Joe Davis, up to the French Market. . . . Back then men spent time with kids, even if it wasn't their kids. Joe Davis was a story teller and the men would play cards and checkers . . . Where the Riverwalk is now was once full of life, men throwing sacks, sweat. (Keith Calhoun, personal communication, July 20, 1997)

Calhoun remembers a community that was very close before integration. "You had more neighborhoods, and people cared a little bit more. If someone in the neighborhood was sick all the women would visit. If I went fishing the whole block had fish." "Coming up around elderly folk and seeing grandmas," children had more respect for their elders. African Americans owned their neighborhood corner grocery stores and people struggled together to make ends meet. "Before Church's Chicken you had to go buy suppers from Miss so-and-so. Popeye's eliminated that." A lot has changed because it is difficult to find jobs.

There isn't a need for labor, especially Black labor. At one time you needed a work force, like a lot of guys would leave the plantation to come to the river front . . . . Now all that's gone . . . so now you have people coming from the back country to the inner city and there's no work here. (Keith Calhoun, personal communication, March 8, 1996)
Calhoun went to Lawless and Harden public schools in New Orleans, then he went to High School in Los Angeles where his sister was living. His sister shaped a lot of Calhoun's development. She was part of the Civil Rights Movement in California, and she exposed him to films and to the museums there. Calhoun was involved with a writer's workshop and inner city cultural theater. He also worked on a T.V. lot and with a documentary film maker. This helped Calhoun see the need for African American people to document their own culture.

When Calhoun returned to New Orleans he set up his own lab and McCormick began working in the dark room, doing prints. Calhoun could see that she was developing an artistic sensitivity and encouraged McCormick to start taking photographs.

It's hard to find a companion you can work with. So we were friends first. Chandra prints so well. We know what we want and constantly push each other. We are both self-taught artist. We've been self-supporting with our art. We've been friends for a long time. That's what's so good about it. There is so much subject matter, but we have different styles. (Keith Calhoun, personal communication, July 20, 1997)

Calhoun feels that pursuing art is difficult even though people like the photography they do. "Chandra and I have a commitment. We buy film before anything else. We have to provide for our son, but we have to photograph."

It's important for them to show the ability of African American people and to provide an African American vision of their culture. But galleries and museums are not that accepting. According to Calhoun, there are a lot of talented artists who are not connected to galleries and the museum. "We always have to keep ourselves
visible, to push our way.” Calhoun had to fight to show the Black community’s perspective of the Mardi Gras Indians in the recent show at the New Orleans Museum of Art featuring Chief Toody Montana. "They wanted to put their people in. Business as usual." Calhoun and McCormick, however, did a film on the Chief and photographs for the catalogue. "I wanted to show him as a family man who worked hard and is committed to his art. I do it out of love, not just somebody who has seen him at a second line."

Calhoun feels that if African Americans do not document their own culture there will be a big gap. White photographers may have the equipment, but it’s "your style, your eye, your vision." Calhoun once brought a White photographer around the docks so he could photograph the men while they were relaxing, but Calhoun also got to take the photographs he considered important. White photographers also take pictures at African American celebrations, but they do not have the same vision. They will give people 30 x 40 prints, "but they don’t think about giving them a horn. They are good about being at the place, but what about helping to preserve the culture?"

Calhoun and McCormick also see a need in the community because unemployment and drugs are devastating young African American people. And it is difficult for mothers who are working every day to be with their children.

Two ways you can lose your kids to the streets. If you’re not in sync with your kids you can lose them because they got so much money these young kids can make. Say you have a family. You’re struggling, your wife struggling, and here come this guy down the street telling your son, "Come on let me buy you some Air-Jordans" and fix him up. It’s going to be hard for you to tell your son, "Hey son, that ain’t the way to go." And he telling you, "What [are] you doing for me?" I’ve talked to kids who’ll say, "This is my family now." I know kids I’ve seen lost to the street, and I’ve seen the consequences of how...
they’re laying in the coffin after they got lost to the streets. But in the meantime that kid don’t see that. You’re trying to tell him, "Hey man, you don’t want to fall this way." Once he falls that way and he gets caught up out there it’s hard for him to come back. They don’t see the consequences. So this is what’s the problem in the community now where these guys are in big business with this drug thing. It’s economics. (Keith Calhoun, personal communication, March 8, 1996)

Calhoun and McCormick are working with community organizations to build a park near the river so there will be activities for children. They are trying to get churches to open their doors to young people. They are also converting an old building into a community art center where they can build an archive of photographs and have exhibits. They want to use the space to teach photography to children and to have other artists and writers come in to teach. "We want to be open to the community, and help in doing whatever we can do to enhance it."

**Interpretation of art.** Calhoun is documenting the culture of African American workers from the inside. He and McCormick began working on a photographic essay on the sugar cane workers in 1985. Today the homes of these people are being torn down and even cemeteries have been plowed under to make way for more acres of cane. "For some it was sweet, but for us it was bitter-sweet because it was a whole lot of struggling in them fields and now they’re wiping all this out and it’s like we never even been on the fields." It is important for Calhoun that people know how hard African Americans work, and that Black people are connected to this part of their history.

Sometimes to go forward you need to know where you come from, and when we go to the cane fields, and we’re traveling those back roads we know. I can hear the cane knives jumping. I know what took place . . . I talk to old
women [who] told us they had to be on the row at sun up so they went to the fields in the dark and they had to be ready to work, and if the moon was bright that night you just rolled on. (Keith Calhoun, personal communication, March 8, 1996)

Looking at the pictures of Louisiana sugar plantations today, it could be 1800. Now people who have been working on these plantations for generations are being replaced by machines and some of them are coming to New Orleans hoping to find work.

That's why documentation is so important—to let people know what it's like. It's hard now for people with degrees to make it in the mainstream, so you know if you come from the backwoods of Louisiana coming to New Orleans, trying to get in this rhythm here, with no education, no work experience, it's not that easy. So these people are just pushed out, like fish out of water. (Keith Calhoun, personal communication, March 8, 1996)

Calhoun sees a connection between the exploitation of sugar cane workers, the new technology that is causing them to lose the jobs they had, and the economics of inner-city African American communities. He also documents people in public housing and is aware of the changing values in both rural and urban African American communities. The demands of children are higher and are putting more pressure on parents who may be barely able to survive. Young Black people do not see job opportunities. "It's not that easy to come up in the hood and get into mainstream America. You have to work at Burger King and work your way up the ladder, and in corporate America it's not that easy." Additionally, there is a loss of control to outside groups who now own corner stores and fast-food chains so there is less opportunity for small businesses in Black neighborhoods.

Calhoun and McCormick find that drugs are becoming rampant not only in the inner city, but also in the country. "People don't have nothing to survive off. For
some folk drugs might be the only way out for employment . . . and a lot of people who are not strong, or who have depression already are falling into the trap." Even though drugs are in the community, "it's still a lot of quality of life that some folk in the community are doing." Yet the news media portrays very negative images about the Black community. Additionally, Calhoun feels that rap music disrespects young womanhood. Calhoun and McCormick work to promote positive images of African American people, "human dignity and the spirit of a person." What sells now is "the whole social hoodlum image," so this is why Calhoun feels it is so important to focus on the workers. As Calhoun interprets one of his photographs:

Here's a picture of a dock worker named "Foots." I remember seeing my father coming home many days with this dust and sweat. Sometime I'll make the nose big because I like to see the African-looking nose. These are the images that are very important for our future because we are workers. The image now that is being projected is that all we want to do is just hook and crook. These men, this was the backbone of the city. The dock workers whose sweat and tears made this city what it was, one of the number one ports one time in the country . . . cause this was what fueled the city, this work. So that's why it was important for me to get out there on the docks and document. Now these guys are out of work because of containers. Then they want to go tourism, then they want to go casino. But if they would just try to maintain just a regular port here, we might still have work. (Keith Calhoun, personal communication, March 8, 1996)

An important part of the process of making art for Calhoun and McCormick is working with children, teaching them photography and taking them to the museum. They feel that learning how to take pictures and how to approach people helps build confidence in these young people and exposes them to something positive. They also show children their own photographs to
let them know about some of the past history, where they came from, [and to] see other people’s life style. Kids are very concerned when they see these images [of the sugar cane workers]. They see these folks and they know that’s part of them, but they don’t believe that’s just 80 miles away from here . . . and they think they’re old pictures. (Keith Calhoun, personal communication, March 8, 1996)

They also show children photographs from the inner city in hopes that they might shed a light, because "sometimes when you’re caught up in a situation you can’t see out of it."

Calhoun sees his work as very personal, "from the heart." It is also spiritual in the connection he makes with the spirit of the elderly. He explains a photograph of 98-year old Rev. Brown sitting in a rocking chair:

That’s my precious moment of Rev. Brown. He was very inspirational to me. Me and Chandra go to the old folks to keep the spirit going because it’s their spirit that we try to instill in us. They lived it. We try to document as much as we can on the elderly folk because the ones coming behind us, they need to see the strength and the dignity of the old folk. (Keith Calhoun, personal communication, March 8, 1996)

For Calhoun and McCormick photography is not about making a lot of money, it’s about "shining a light." Others might tell them they are wasting their time shooting all those pictures of old people and the back country. "They don’t see the market for it . . . We enjoy the moment. Some of the best moments we have had together is out documenting. We’re not worrying if so-and-so like it, because we enjoy the moment."
Chandra McCormick Calhoun

Development. The youngest of four children, Chandra McCormick Calhoun was born in 1957 and grew up in the lower ninth ward. Her father was in the Coast Guard for 23 years and this gave the family the opportunity to travel a little when she was young. McCormick's mother worked as a seamstress for a quilting company that made curtains, canopies, and bed quilts. Her grandmother was a domestic worker, and her grandfather was a farmer. She remembers a community where people looked after and cared about each other, and where neighbors helped to raise children.

Growing up in the Baptist faith McCormick recalled her own baptism while doing a series of photographs.

I remember getting baptized myself. How scary it was to be dunked under water with the pastor holding his hand over your mouth and nose. When the children come back up they look dazed. But there's definitely a strong spiritual mood at these occasions. For these young people, it's a big decision. They're committing to a Christian life. (McCormick, 1995, p. 47)

When she was a teenager McCormick felt as though she had a special purpose in life, "like I was put here to do something . . . I had to take a stand, to do something that people would know about." At one time she thought it might be in the medical field. She did not have any serious art training in school and it was not until she met Keith Calhoun that McCormick became interested in photography. After they became friends McCormick learned how to work in the dark room, and later Calhoun encouraged her to start shooting pictures herself.

A lot of things that you see when you're making a print. It helps you focus better on exactly what you want to take a picture of . . . I used to go out with Keith to shoot [and] would tell him, "Look that's a good picture" and he
[would say] "Why don’t you just start doing it." And so I did. (Chandra McCormick, personal communication, March 8, 1996)

When she started doing photography McCormick realized that this was her calling. People had really good responses to her work when she began to exhibit. "That boosted me and I knew then that’s what I was supposed to be doing."

**Interpretation of art.** McCormick documents African American people because "it’s my way of life and it’s something that I understand, and I think I can capture that on film and portray it for other people to learn something from it." She likes to photograph people, especially children, and things that are back in time. "I photograph things we see everyday and some of us might take for granted . . . an old lady cooking in the kitchen, a mother combing hair, just everyday life." She also photographs African American workers and culture in New Orleans.

McCormick has been influenced by the way of life of African American people in the South, that they are "workers, servants, subservient, waiters, domestic workers."

I want people to look at my work and see the strength, see the dignity, see the courage in some of the people that I photograph, see the importance of some of the activities that I photograph, the culture. (Chandra McCormick, personal communication, March 8, 1996)

She was influenced by Calhoun’s essay on the dock workers and worked with him to photograph sugar cane workers. It is a way to make a "statement about African Americans being laborers and building the foundation." She wants her photographs of the cane workers to be a learning experience, helping people see the conditions these people still live in today.
A photograph she took of a young man holding sugar cane is an example not only of her ability to frame a really good picture, but of how she captures an idea.

I was impressed by him. He's the oldest of a family of 10 children and he worked in the fields with his mother and father. I had to wonder if that is what he is going to be doing, because the people have very little education and few other skills. (Chandra McCormick, personal communication, March 8, 1996)

McCormick wants her work to communicate the importance of life and the importance of African American culture. "The culture is real spiritual . . . [because] there's always some ceremonial thing that's going on." It could be the music and movement of a funeral procession, or it could be the signs and signals of the Mardi Gras Indians. As an insider she photographs what others may not understand or consider important. McCormick describes her picture of the Sudan Social and Pleasure Club:

The men kind of dress like the old style. They have suspenders and wear hats. They just look good. I like that moment with the children doing the slow dirge. That's what they do before they cut the body loose, before the body goes to the cemetery. (Chandra McCormick, personal communication, March 8, 1996)

Working with children is an important aspect of the process of making art for McCormick. She wants children to know that photography is a tool that they can use, and that it can help them communicate.

Because sometimes people don't talk, or they're afraid to meet somebody new, and so it's a way of opening them up and developing them to just be able to approach people in life, and not be afraid to open their mouth and talk. (Chandra McCormick, personal communication, March 8, 1996)

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McCormick and Calhoun work with children who are homeless and they are trying to promote positive things and to reach young people in their own neighborhood, "because today [drug traffickers] are putting drugs in the hands of young kids," often resulting in the death of children in the community. McCormick described a photograph of Allen Jafey's funeral, that she calls, The Three Tubas. Allen Jafey was the White owner of Preservation Hall, and several bands got together for his funeral. The photograph is of three tuba players who are brothers; one plays with the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, the second plays with Rebirth and the third plays with the Allstar Brass Band. In the center is a child about 10 years old playing the trombone. "This is Darnell Andrew. He's now deceased. He's one of the statistics that we talked about. But he was a very good player. He comes from a family of musicians."

McCormick hopes that people will learn from the pictures she has taken, "the importance of the culture and the music, the importance of the people, the integrity in their faces. When you look at a picture it's like the window to the soul."

Sheleen Jones

Development. Sheleen Jones was born in 1967, the youngest of three children. Her mother worked at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in the housekeeping and later the convention departments. Her father drives a bus for the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority and sells Afrocentric artifacts. Jones was born in the seventh ward, but the family moved quite a bit and she has also lived in the eighth, lower ninth and upper ninth wards.
Her parents separated when Jones was six years old so she grew up in a single-parent home, "which changed the foundation that I had as far as school because then my mother had to put in more time with work." Although Jones thinks she did not have the academic background and had more of a struggle getting through school, she feels that this made her stronger because she has more of a drive to finish things. Also, being the youngest child, Jones was given a little more freedom and so she was always involved with sports activities in school and in the park. The openness that her mother gave her to do the things that interested her was an important element in her development. The biggest influence was her mother's attitude toward raising us. It was a hard job, it was very hard. Sometimes you would see her, just the struggle that she had to go through to do that, but she was always kind to everyone. You would never see her disrespect anyone . . . . She wasn't perfect, but that's part of the beauty also. (Sheleen Jones, personal communication, May 21, 1997)

Jones enjoyed drawing as a child, and she was the fix-it person around the house, the one who was aware of color schemes and materials. She had an aunt who had visited Africa and she helped her sell African artifacts and textiles.

Her family attended Mardi Gras parades, but not second lines. Later, when Jones did go to neighborhood parades, she did not participate and felt like more of an outsider. "But it was always interesting, as a visual person, just to watch the bodies . . . even the people standing against the wall, the gesture of their bodies."

Jones attended Shaw and Capdo public schools where she was involved in sports and did a lot of in-school drawings and entered school art competitions. At Kennedy High School Jones was able to take art courses. From there she went to
Xavier on a basketball scholarship, where she originally intended to major in art, but listening to people talk, "they said, 'What are you going to do with it?' 'Can you make money at it?'", she decided to go into sociology. Then someone in the dorm was making a sculpture, and they invited Jones to go to a bronze casting. It was there she met John Scott and told him she was interested in art but really did not have a direction. Scott persuaded her to try an art course. She was already a semester behind the rest of the class when she began, so she needed more individual assistance, but once she started to learn, "They had to put me out of the building at that point! My dormitory was right across the street. I was the first one there in the morning and the last one to leave in the morning of the next day."

The importance of Xavier University for Jones is that it gives African American students "a sense of self . . . . You're seeing educated Black people just like yourself. You're seeing all those positive things around you, and it kind of empowers you." Having grown up in all-Black neighborhoods and attended schools that were majority Black, Jones decided to go to an integrated university for graduate school. At Florida State in Tallahassee she was the middle person between her White friends from F.S.U. and her Black friends from Florida A & M. Jones did not feel as though there was a problem, because she "went there to do a certain job, and people who have problems with my being there, it would have to be their problem for them to work out."

Scott had recommended that Jones study with Ed Love at Florida State. She found Love a "really political person, racially aware of everything."
I realized there had been a big gap between us, and experience makes a big difference. He knew about all of these other things that had happened [during segregation and the Civil Rights period]. He had gone through a lot of things I didn’t have to. So I went searching for these things, I went back to James Baldwin, but it was still not internally part of me. I can sympathize and hear it, but it was still something that was missing. So what I did with my work, I thought about what it is about me that I can be sensitive about, that I can bring to my work, and that started with my life, the people that I knew hands on.

(Sheleen Jones, personal communication, May 21, 1997)

Jones found her influence in the strong people she knew—her mother, her grandmother, and her sister, her brother and later her father. She also found inspiration in the wife of Ed Love, Monifa Love, a poet and writer, and "such a strong woman, backing him up and being her own woman."

Although Jones was selected to work on the A.P. Tureaud statue, it was because someone else had recommended her. "I think I am behind what I could become because I am not a big promoter of myself." Jones feels that as a woman, people do not take her seriously as a sculptor until she can prove that she works with metal. She is also a single mother with an infant son, teaching, and trying to find time for her art. Jones thinks that more men who have graduated in art are really involved with their art because the women are at home usually taking care of the home. Another problem Jones sees for herself as well as for other artists is finding studio space, and she plans to buy a building for her own work that she can rent out to other artists.

Interpretation of art. Jones feels that her work is "more about me, it’s internal rather than external . . . I think that I’m mostly influenced by family-type issues." She looks for strengths rather than negativity. In her pieces Sister-Sister, Community, and
For My Brother, she has given them "what I consider to be the posture of dignity—heads raised and their stature is tall."

Although Jones does not consider her work political in the sense that it could be considered a straightforward reaction to someone like David Duke, it is political in an indirect way by "showing a positive attitude to what is not always a positive situation." Jones feels that she has learned not to take things at face value, racially; to look at things closer because the other person themself may not realize what they are doing because it is normal for them.

To look between the lines. What else could be the reason that this is happening? That's how I use race to empower and then turn back, so that you can learn from what I see and vice versa. (Sheleen Jones, personal communication, May 21, 1997)

Jones feels that her work is mainly spiritual. "One thing I know I don't want is too much figure, too much feminine." Another thing she does not use is movement. "I don’t want all that because it is about a spiritual thing. The body is a holder, a protector, a shield . . . I'm trying to show the Black person and the spirit." "I use a lot of texture and my words are in body gestures." The piece she calls For My Brother doesn’t resemble her brother at all, "but it reminds me of his strengths." On the back of it she has used a lot of marks, thinking about scarification, and scarification usually would happen when a child was growing up and they would give them different marks showing their maturity. So these would be for my brother, his development within a short period of time, the things he had to go through. He was the man of the house basically, he had to watch out for his little sisters. (Sheleen Jones, personal communication, May 21, 1997)
Her statue of A.P. Tureaud is more realistic than Jones' more totemic-looking sculptures. In her research on Tureaud’s life Jones found that he was very light, yet he embraced his African descent, and that he fought court cases for equal rights, but was also very humble. Jones listened to Tureaud’s daughter talk about his gentleness. She wanted to portray him as a family person, not as "a masked dandy." "So I got the business side of him and the gentle homebody side of him also . . . I put the suit on him, but at the same time I had to make the suit sag a bit."

Relationships are an important aspect of Jones’ work. "I just think it’s important for everyone to know themselves, understand themselves, and to understand that everyone is not exactly like you.” None of her pieces are self-portraits, although the profiles may resemble her, but she has always thought of other people in her life when she made them.

Teaching is also an important aspect of the process of making art for Jones. She connects to students who have problems and tries to give them confidence and artistic guidance.

I think right now as a young person, it’s important for young Black kids to see me because I am young and right now I still understand the words that they use. Our worlds are still locked together and they can see that achievement. (Sheleen Jones, personal communication, May 21, 1997)

Themes

This section has been organized around common themes in the words and art works of the African American artists who were interviewed, in order to understand how race influences artistic production.
Transition

The artists I interviewed witnessed changing race relations in New Orleans since the 1940s. All of them grew up mainly in Black neighborhoods in the seventh, eighth, and ninth wards in the downtown section of the city, and attended Black schools. Scott compared Jim Crow segregation to "walking through a field of land mines," a time when social interaction between the races was determined by laws that reinforced Black inferiority. Mouton remembers the isolation of being the only Black person in newly integrated programs at the museum and at Tulane University. Jones attended integrated, although mainly Black, public schools during a period when Whites were either going to private schools or leaving Orleans Parish for the suburbs. Calhoun and McCormick discussed the effect of integration on their neighborhood and their concern about the loss of jobs; economic exploitation by drug traffickers, food stamp merchants and fast food chains; and the media portrayal of African American people. From these artists' stories I was able to understand how much their lives and the lives of their families and communities had been influenced by Black and White racial designations. Changing neighborhood patterns that are resulting in more rigid de facto Black-White segregation and the economic separation of Blacks along class lines has meant that the African American community has been in transition since the 1960s. Although the segregation laws have been taken off the books, the community continues to be economically exploited, and neighborhoods are struggling to retain traditional values.
The artists all spoke of their concern for the disruption they see in the lives of contemporary children. When McCormick discussed her photograph of a 17-year-old sugar cane worker she wondered what his life would be like. A child of divorce, Jones is very sensitive to her students who have similar problems and tries to give them confidence. Her piece, For My Brother expresses his struggle to grow up quickly, to become the man of the house. Archival Quality was a piece Mouton did in response to child abuse as a statement about the value of the children in our lives, "whether they are your own, or nieces, nephews, or your students." Calhoun and McCormick talked about the changes in the traditional community where, when they were growing up, it was proper for everyone in the community to speak to children about their behavior and to report it to their parents. They discussed how children become lost to the streets. Scott's sculpture, On the Edge refers to a child who was killed from a stray bullet while he was sitting in his bedroom. A lightning bolt as the symbol of the gods in It Ain’t Olympus, is a comment on children taking lives.

Responsibility

The artists I interviewed received artistic influences and encouragement from their families, but more importantly they learned about the values of defining their own lives, commitment, and responsibility to family and community. Calhoun remembers that his father came to New Orleans with very little money, but was able to work hard and support his family. Calhoun and McCormick document their way of life, the cultural activities they grew up knowing, and the African American workers whose labor built the city.
Both Mouton and Jones saw their mothers take charge of the family. Even though Jones' mother had to work long hours and could not help her daughter as much as she would have liked, Jones recognized that her own will to finish whatever she starts comes from seeing her mother struggle. Mouton was influenced by the standard of good craftsmanship set by her mother and later by her brother. She watched her mother graduate from college in order to help the family succeed, and then saw her do the things that were "neither man's work nor women's work, but had to be done." Mouton also recognized the sacrifice her mother made to obtain art training for her. Family relationships and the strength of women are themes in the art of both Mouton and Jones.

Scott was influenced by standards of good craftsmanship in a family that made the things they needed. When Scott wanted to study art in college and felt discouraged by comments people were making, his mother urged him to make his own decisions in life and then to take responsibility for them. Political themes and art as a way to change the human condition are essential elements in Scott's art.

Helping children to be self-sufficient was evident in the artists' backgrounds and in their art. Mouton expressed in a picture of her son the uncertainty a mother feels not knowing what will happen to her child. Jones was grateful that her mother was open in allowing her to participate in sports and art activities. Scott compared art to children, "You can put everything you can put into it, [but] at some point you have to turn them loose. There's no guarantee."
The artists are also concerned about making a difference in the lives of young people. Although all of the artists teach, it was clear that teaching was important to them rather than just a way to earn a living until their art was recognized. John Scott’s work can be seen not only in New Orleans, but in New York, San Diego, and other cities across the country. Additionally, he has won a prestigious award that would probably allow him to concentrate on his art, but he continues to work at Xavier. Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick often volunteer their time to work with homeless children. According to Calhoun, they are not in it for the money, but to help shine a light. Calhoun and McCormick are also working with neighborhood organizations to provide positive activities for children in their neighborhood, and they are renovating an old building to use as an art center. They want their photography to help children see the kinds of conditions people face. Louise Mouton also volunteers to do print-making workshops for children in addition to her regular teaching job, her family, and her art. She felt that if she were to become connected with a gallery it would have to be more community-based, such as a teaching gallery that had children come in. Mouton described teaching as the most significant thing about her art. Jones also felt that it was significant for students to see her as a young Black woman who has achieved.

These artists also perceive themselves as role models for the young people they teach. Mouton is aware that "I’m working with people who I’m influencing, and I always have to be on my toes and make sure that the influence is positive." While the generation gap is getting bigger, by being a practicing artist Mouton feels she has
earned the respect of her students. Jones thinks it is important for Black children to see her "because I am young and right now I still understand the words that they use. Our worlds are still locked together, and they can see the achievement." Scott feels that young people need to understand that art involves a great deal of work and that education in the arts should be about giving students the technical means to speak in their own voice. For Mouton, it is important that she give her students the knowledge they are craving. Since photographers must approach people, McCormick and Calhoun feel that it is important to teach young people how to communicate and not to be afraid to meet and talk to people. They want to make children aware of their history and to inspire them.

Religion and Spirituality

For all of these artists spirituality seemed to mean something that gave their lives meaning, was part of their culture and connected them to the people in their environment and to the past. Scott came from a Catholic background. As a young person he was discouraged that the church accepted segregation. However, he credits his education at Xavier University with teaching the spirit of community rather than competition between art students, and with instilling in him a sense of responsibility. Early in his work Scott used religious iconography. His sculpture of the crucifixion, however, is not a beautiful rendition of an abstract idea, but is taken from the very real image of the torture and death of a Black man.

McCormick's Baptist faith helped give her a sense of purpose early in life. Today she and Calhoun are working to get the churches in their community to open
their doors to young people, and to provide activities for them. "These churches should be doing much more. All this talking about going to heaven when you got to deal with this hell on earth."

Mouton went to Catholic elementary school, high school, and college. She projects a global view of religion in her art. Mythology and symbolism are important as cross-cultural indications of the spiritual nature of people and the "worshipping an Other-greater-than-ourselves." Her work is about the preciousness of life, whether a child or a tree. Mouton's print *Lift Me Out of Darkness and Set My Spirit Free* speaks about the inner turmoil of a spirit that wants to soar.

Mouton also talked about the spiritual connection between her and her African and African American ancestors--"like something in them is just being repeated." She was amazed to see the same visual qualities in quilts made by slave women that she grew up seeing in her mother's quilts. She has always been drawn to the deep blue of indigo, even as a child, and now wants to work with the process of making indigo dye as a way to get in touch with her heritage--both African and American.

Jones wants her art to make a spiritual connection with viewers. "You're happy when people get the feeling . . . and how it affects them." She uses the abstracted human form to project the spirit of the person. Jones finds the process of working near a flame meditative, and this helps her to think of the spiritual qualities of that person, "how I see her as opposed to how others see her or how she might see herself."
McCormick wants to communicate the importance of African American culture in New Orleans which she feels is very spiritual. The ceremonies, such as the jazz funerals, are often rituals, and the music and dance have spiritual meanings.

The process of photography itself is spiritual for Calhoun. He feels that it is possible to get really good pictures "when the spirit touch you," and that his work is "testimony, from the heart, personal." Calhoun finds spiritual strength in the elderly whom he talks to and photographs.

The strongest influence on Scott's work is the spirituality that has enabled African American people to survive. His early sculpture was figurative but later he developed nonfigurative forms in order to "keep the soul, but get rid of the body." Scott relates this to the spiritual nature of music, especially jazz. "If I can raise the hair on your neck, the way they do with a note, in a visual experience, that's what I want to happen."

Culture

The culture of the African American community in New Orleans has influenced each of the artists. Scott related that the experience of sitting outside churches and joints in his neighborhood influenced Window for the Blues. Knots was a series that came out of reading about the economic connections of the Black community to Storyville. In Uptown Second Line Scott evokes the playful spirit of a walking parade. Scott is also inspired by the beadwork and the colors of the Mardi Gras Indians and the polyrhythmic structure of New Orleans jazz musicians. And when Scott developed his kinetic sculptures he learned from Alexander Calder, whose
work is based on a swivel, and George Rickey, whose work is based on the pendulum—but developed his own work based on weight physics in order to portray the natural movement of dance.

Calhoun and McCormick photograph their way of life, and their images come from the community they are part of. Growing up close to the river, Calhoun has been inspired to document the men who worked on the docks, who made the city a thriving port. His photographs also document the sugar cane workers in Louisiana as well as life in the inner city. McCormick remembered her own baptism when she took photographs near the river in Phoenix, Louisiana. She likes to photograph children playing, everyday life, people working, and local Black celebrations and musicians.

Mouton did a series of prints on New Orleans walking groups and on the ritual of women braiding hair. Her prints on Louis Armstrong for Milne Boys Home are images of him in New Orleans as a young person and when he came back for a visit and bought the uniforms for the school’s baseball team. She has also done printed images of plants local to New Orleans.

Although Jones felt more like an outsider at second lines, she was inspired by the gestures of the bodies and the notion of the closeness within the group to create her sculpture, Community. Jones’ sculpture, A.P. Tureaud at the Gates depicts the NAACP attorney between New Orleans style wrought-iron gates that he is pushing open to give African Americans equal protection under the law.
Community

In addition to the influence of community on their art, the artists are also concerned about the community and committed to local needs. The artists spoke about the social meaning of their art and about art in community spaces where people will see it and think about their messages. Scott wants to refocus humanity and communicate respect for "ideas, for people, for places, for the environment . . . for sound." The purpose of his environmental sculptures is to create spaces that change how people think—to be aware of conditions, to recognize the spiritual nature of people, and to make people conscious of making judgments about other people.

Mouton is interested in having her work in public spaces rather than in galleries. She has always been interested in printmaking as a medium for getting messages to the public and exposing more people to art. Mouton’s art is about the preciousness of life. She wants to get across the idea that people have the same basic needs, and that it is important to appreciate differences in people and cultures and respect all living things.

McCormick also stresses the importance of life, and she wants to show the courage of the people she photographs as well as the importance of their culture and activities. She wants to open people’s eyes to the conditions that African Americans still have to face, and to see the beauty and spirituality in these people and their culture.

Calhoun documents disappearing ways of life in his photographs of dock workers and sugar cane laborers. He wants to portray the African American
perspective of life in Louisiana so that the younger generation will know their history as a people whose labor built the foundation. Calhoun and McCormick are involved in trying to provide community spaces for young people and are renovating a building that will make art available to people in the neighborhood.

Jones wants her art to communicate the importance of relationships and to help people understand that "everybody is not exactly like you." She tries to convey the spiritual essence of the people in her life that she sees as strong. Jones hopes to get a building that she can convert into studio space for herself and other struggling artists.

Connections

The connection to the past that has been denied to African Americans is important to all of the artists. John Scott related that he was taught basically European culture in schools where he did not see African Americans in textbooks. Scott feels this "erased" history needs to be told, and some of his work has been his way to reestablish that continuity. Mouton is drawn to her American ancestral connections in the use of indigo in her prints, and in her series on braiding hair and walking groups in New Orleans.

As the burial grounds, shacks and churches in the rural areas around New Orleans are plowed under, Calhoun and McCormick feel that African American history is again being erased. "It's like we've never been there." They have documented the sugar cane workers who are "living history," as a way of seeing what generations before had to endure. They are also documenting ways of life in the inner city and
with the elderly so that, as traditional life changes, the record of the work, the
courage, and spirit of African American people will be recorded for future generations.

Self-Definition

How African Americans are defined and represented were recurring themes in
all of the artists' interviews. In all of their stories were examples of struggle,
sacrifice, and maintaining traditional values and ways of dealing with the world. All
recounted the strength of African American people. Jones and Mouton talked about
the sacrifices their mothers had to make as working women. Calhoun described the
struggle of "cane workers who were in the fields from can't see in the morning until
can't see at night." Scott portrayed the sacrifice made by a Black man who had been
lynched. Mouton said she is proud to be the descendant of the survivors of slavery.
McCormick related that she tries to show the courage in the faces of African
American people. Jones tries to show the positive even when the situation may not be
positive.

It is also important for these artists that people, especially young Black people,
see that they have been able to achieve. Calhoun said that it is important to represent
the African American vision, and African American ability. Mouton and Jones felt it
was important that their students see their achievement. Jones related that she felt
empowered by seeing educated Black people when she attended Xavier University.
Scott said that he hoped people would see his achievement and realize they could also
make their dreams come true.
The artists discussed the messages that their art has for "other" people and the images of common humanity that they try to present. Scott wants his work to be food for thought. He would like people to learn that civil rights struggles are human struggles, that women are besieged by images that devalue their humanity, and that children are not always safe in their own homes. He wants his Crucifixion to let people know about tremendous sacrifice. Scott uses trompe l'oeil in the hope that he will create a way of thinking in viewers that will cause them to stop and think about the way they prejudge people.

Mouton would like viewers to understand the preciousness of life whether it is a child or a tree, so that they will not destroy that life. She feels that it is important for people to see that we all have the same basic needs, that all people have expressed a need to worship a being greater than ourselves. She has used images of herself and her son to show the relationship of mothers and children. Mouton hopes that her work will help people to accept the humanity of all people. She also feels that it is important for people to see positive images of Black people, in much the same way that Henry Tanner dignified the image of Black musicians. It was important for her to portray Louis Armstrong, as a very real person, not as a someone who had become famous, but as a child at the Colored Waifs' Home.

Jones stated that her art is about relationships, and that it is particularly important to communicate in relationships and to recognize that everybody is not exactly like you. Her sculptures have a posture of dignity and she tries to show "a positive attitude toward what may not always be a positive situation." It was
important for Jones to show the humble, family side of A.P. Tureaud along with his business side.

McCormick and Calhoun want to document and preserve the African American way of life so that people can learn about what it was like, and to recognize the strength and dignity of African American people. They feel that there is a need for African Americans to document their own culture because they have an insider’s perspective that someone else may not understand. Much of their art is a statement about labor. Calhoun feels that the media today has a certain image it is portraying to the public, and that the record of the labor of African Americans, even their homes and burial grounds, are being destroyed as big business moves forward. He thinks it is up to the community to provide positive images for its young people. In his essay on Chief Toody Montana, it was important for Calhoun to portray him as "a family man who worked hard and is committed to his art."

**Struggles**

Race has affected the lives and artistic productivity of all of these artists. Scott recalled that in the 1950s and 1960s African American culture, history, and lives were not valued. Most of what he learned in school was European culture, and he did not see African American people in art books, galleries, or the museum. In 1962 he went to Michigan to graduate school rather than fight the system in New Orleans. Scott feels that there are still obstacles for young Black art students in New Orleans because they are not learning what they need to know as African American people from most universities. Although Scott has never had a problem with his art work
being accepted, he recognizes that few African American artists are in the galleries in Louisiana.

As a young person struggling to receive training in the arts Mouton found that being the only African American in those situations was very isolating. Mouton feels there are still problems for African Americans in having their art accepted, but she does have some friends who have their work in the New Orleans galleries. When Jones went to Florida State University in 1990 she felt she had a good sense of her capabilities from Xavier University, and if "people [at Florida State] had problems with my being there, it was their problem to work out." Jones feels that she must promote herself more in order to succeed.

Calhoun, too, feels that he and McCormick must push their way and keep themselves visible in order to present the African American vision and to show the ability of African American artists. White photographers sometimes take pictures of the second lines, but they are not interested in preserving the culture. Calhoun related that there are lots of talented Black artists who are not connected to the galleries. Although New Orleans has a thriving art scene, few Black artists are represented outside the one or two galleries that promote African American art. Only one of these five well-respected artists exhibits with the New Orleans galleries. Calhoun and McCormick were part of the recent show at the museum, but only because of the Black New Orleans subject matter, and because they pushed, otherwise it would have been "business as usual."
Scott discussed the social perception that all African American art is pseudo-naive when he spoke of Numa Rousseve. Mouton also mentioned that the gut-feeling kind of art is what is glamorized rather than well-thought-out and well-crafted work.

Some perceptions about art in the African American community were also discouraging to the artists. The White community tends to have longer traditions of higher education and more economic resources than the Black community so that African Americans tend to perceive fine art as a White career, or one that requires that someone else pay the bills. Additionally, since art history is mainly the history of White male artists, few African Americans know about Black artists. People told Scott it would be better for him to work in the post office or to teach. Mouton related that people felt art was "too high and mighty" and that it was not a way to make a living. Jones changed her major to sociology for a semester because she felt so unsure due to what she was hearing. McCormick stated that she feels tremendous pressure from some people regarding her subject matter. "They may think I am showing the worst side of the Black community . . . I want to show the strength and dignity of all our people, of a workhand or a grand marshal in a parade" (McCormick, 1995, p. 52). Calhoun related that other photographers think he is wasting his time taking pictures of the backwoods and the elderly because these subjects do not have commercial value, but he continues to photograph what he considers living history.

All of the artists also recognized the obstacles that women face. Black women have been exploited both sexually and economically in the American system. They have been raped and bred, and they have had their children taken from them. They
have worked alongside men and performed domestic chores. American cultural images continue to portray sexually available, or non-sexual domineering Black women. Many Black women are among the poorest people in the United States, taking jobs as housekeepers, cooks, or nannies for White families. All of the artists recognized the strength of their mothers who struggled against economic difficulties and who encouraged them to develop their talents. The women artists also related difficulties as artists due to their gender. Mouton and Jones discussed the difficulties of raising children, working, and still being committed to making art. Jones also stated that people do not always take her seriously as a metal sculptor because she is a woman. Calhoun discussed the disrespect for young women that he hears in rap music, and about how hard it is for mothers who have to work every day to be with their children magnifying the possibility that children will be lost to drugs and crime. Scott wrote about the social messages women receive about themselves in connection to his series, Urban Ibeji. Mouton is drawn to artist, Elizabeth Catlett because of her positive, uplifting images of women. Jones was influenced by Monifa Love whom she saw as a person who was her own woman.

Commitment to Art

All of the artists described a commitment to their art. Mouton felt like "paint or die" was her philosophy. Jones related that once she started taking art courses, she was the first one there and the last one out of the building the next morning. McCormick said that as a teenager she knew she had a purpose in life, even when she saw her friends go different ways, and that she found that purpose in photography.
Scott felt that art was not about celebrity status, it was a way of life for him. Calhoun said that he and McCormick are not worrying whether someone likes their work or whether they make money from it, they have to photograph.

When discussing the galleries, Scott said he'd rather drive a truck than make something just because it sells. Mouton considers the galleries too commercial. She exhibits with groups and has work in public spaces. Mouton is also discouraged by the kind of work that sells that is just putting down gut feelings. Calhoun talked about pushing to keep themselves visible so that their work would be shown. Jones finds it difficult to promote herself and her work.

Aesthetics

Mouton described art as "something that does not necessarily hang on a wall, but is part of everyday life." She feels that art should be well-crafted and make a statement. McCormick considered it "important to have something to leave so people can look back." For her photography is a tool, and she uses it to show the spiritual nature of African American culture and the dignity of African American people. Scott described art as a visual language, a way to communicate. His language, however, is not realistic but implicit. Yet the statement is always there. Jones said art is a visual way to express feelings, a means for spiritual connection between people. Calhoun described art as capturing the moment, conveying life as it is, and preserving African American culture because "the ones who are coming behind need to see."

These artists described struggle, achievement, and the importance of conveying that kind of determination to others as the most significant aspect of their work.
McCormick said that it is important that she has the "vision to capture those things on film . . . the dignity, the courage in some of the people that I photograph" and the spiritual quality of the culture. Scott felt that the most significant thing about his work is "That it exists. Despite all the obstacles. . . that attempted not to let this work happen, it exists. The fact that my work exists should tell young people, old people, anyone that they can make their dreams as real as mine." Mouton said, "The fact that my work is also my teaching, the fact that I work with people who I'm influencing and I always have to be on my toes and make sure that the influence is positive," is most significant to her. Jones felt that the most significant thing about her work is that "I was fortunate enough to be able to create a tangible feeling," and that her students see that achievement. For Calhoun, the most significant thing about his work is that "It talks. It's testimony. It's real. To be a storyteller from the inside. Despite all that's been against us, we are able to capture these special moments, and the strength of people."

**Summary**

It has been the purpose of this chapter to develop an approach to art criticism that explores African American perspectives from the voices of artists who are often silenced. Qualitative research methods were selected as a means by which the larger social issues that are played out in the experience of these artists could be made visible. Premised on feminist understanding of the political nature of the art world, the purpose of this method of art criticism has been (a) to acknowledge the work of African American artists; (b) to recognize that African American values and view of
reality, which are different from White values and view of reality, influence the
creative process and common themes of African American cultural production; and (c)
to recognize the greater difficulty and limitations placed on African American artists.

Race has been an influence on both the lives and the work of all the artists that
were interviewed. The period of their artistic development spanned a time of great
change in race relations in New Orleans. Previous racial interactions were determined
by the system of slavery, and then by social, economic, and political exclusion through
Jim Crow laws. In each case, ways were devised to devalue and dehumanize African
American lives in order to exploit their labor. Today the traditional African American
community in New Orleans is facing upheavals due to the resegregation of schools,
loss of jobs, and the growth of large segregated communities.

Although "blackness" is an oppressive condition for African American people,
these artists, their families, teachers, and communities demonstrate how people explore
the limits of their social position and refashion that position. All of the artists grew
up and were socialized mainly in African American environments. They received
messages about their worth and capabilities, the importance of life, the spiritual nature
of the universe, and their responsibility to the community that are ingrained in the
messages their art conveys. All of the artists responded to the customs of White
society, to dehumanize and stereotype African Americans, by working to instill those
positive messages they themselves had received in African American young people
and in the community in general.
All of the artists felt their art is not a way to be a star, to earn a lot of money or to be in art books; rather, it is important that African American people see them as people who have achieved so they will be able to see that they, too, are capable. They hold up a mirror to the Black community so people take note of the values, the struggles, the survival and recognize their own strength, beauty and spirituality. Additionally, the work of these artists speaks to viewers about the sacrifices, the dignity and courage of African American people whose labor has built the foundation of this country, with a hope that they will learn to think and act morally and with respect toward all people.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter returns to the focus of the study and presents final conclusions, implications for art education, and recommendations for future research. The primary purpose of this study has been to develop content on African American art for a discipline-based art education (DBAE) curriculum. This content is based on feminist studies regarding aesthetics, art history, and art criticism; but race, rather than gender, forms the central issue for understanding how social position influences artistic production and the meaning of art. The intention of this research has been to meet the needs of African American students for an art curriculum that is relevant to their lives and experiences and presents challenging issues that can develop intellectual capabilities and raise critical social consciousness.

The literature review provided the conceptual basis of this study in the areas of multicultural education, African American education, discipline-based art education, feminist theory, African American theory, and feminist art scholarship. The literature in these areas provides multiple perspectives for confronting inequalities in the structure of art knowledge that becomes part of the curriculum. The works of feminist scholars have illuminated the political nature of art and indicate the issues and directions that have guided this study.

Summary and Conclusions

The work of feminists in the areas of aesthetics, art history, and art criticism provides possibilities for restructuring the study of African American art. Modernist
theory of aesthetic objectivity has been challenged by feminist and other post modern scholars who recognize that knowledge is constructed in and through relationships among individuals and social structures. The art of women is an expression of, and receives its meaning from, women's experiences, cultural traditions, and social restrictions. A social relationship to power different from White experiences has contributed to the way African American people perceive reality and this perception also influences how art is defined and produced.

As a position based on power relationship in society, race affects the meaning art has to African Americans people, the history of African American cultural production, and the development of artists who act as transmitters of cultural values. The meanings given to art by African Americans is therefore integral to a value system based on racial social position. The history of the artistic production of African Americans is woven into the context of social systems and ideological schemata that sustain the domination of White over Black. Specific works of art are created by artists who negotiate within particular racial social positions to define and affirm the humanity of African American people through cultural production.

Chapter 4 presented the foundation for understanding how the social construction of race and its political implications in society affect the meaning and value given to art. Premised on feminist aesthetic theory, African American art was discussed in relation to the social context of events, ideas, and significant political and artistic personalities that have contributed to constructing its meaning as art. African American political ideology was adopted as a framework within which to examine the
values and assumptions that have contributed to a culturally-shared African American aesthetic.

The struggle to affirm the value of African American life and culture within larger societal institutions has produced the ideologies of assimilation and nationalism. Assimilation into mainstream society, with its cultural belief in Black inferiority, conflicts with African American identity and self-worth. Nationalist ideology rejects White values and advocates political, economic and cultural separation and self-determination. In this chapter, the meaning of African American art was considered in relation to the ideological struggles of dual identity within which artists seek to balance mainstream acceptance against the need for distinct cultural and aesthetic boundaries. Periods of dominant assimilationist and nationalist political ideology were presented along with examples of artists, art, and aesthetic dialogue during those periods.

The analysis of the writings and philosophies of political and cultural leaders has presented a particular view of African American social and aesthetic values that, while it represents a relative culture, is a more academic interpretation of that culture. Nationalism and assimilation are related to political agendas, but they also depend on individual identity, and both are influenced by White attitudes of racial tolerance or bigotry. This worldview, historically constructed, has meant that art means different things to African Americans during different historic periods. The forms art takes and the styles may be Western, but the way art should function in society has been
interpreted by African American artists to be connected to the needs of the African American community, particularly during cultural nationalist periods.

The purpose of chapter 5 was to determine how race has been a factor in defining the territory that was available to African American artists in a particular region and at a particular time and how such a reality is not just reflected in their work, but actually helped structure the work itself. African American artists in 19th century New Orleans worked in a cultural milieu that was racially open due to its Latin origins, while at the same time a part of the American South that depended on investments in slave labor. By mid-century, slave rebellions as well as Abolitionist agitation contributed to an increasingly oppressive climate as White Southerners felt their way of life threatened.

Both the particular cultural development of New Orleans and its history of racial amalgamation played a role in constructing this ambivalent racial climate. Many social positions are evident in the multilayered identity of African Americans as Creole or Anglo, mulatto or Black, free or slave, and male or female in 19th-century New Orleans. The many ways African Americans sought control over their own lives are also evident in the story of New Orleans. Some free people of color were able to purchase themselves and family members, some gained freedom through military service, some women formed liaisons with White men, some slaves escaped from New Orleans or formed maroon colonies with Native peoples, some Northern slaves escaped to New Orleans, some slaves revolted, and when their rights were threatened, some free people of color emigrated to Mexico or Haiti.
The third racial class in New Orleans of people of color—neither slave nor White—had some legal rights, owned property, and were educated prior to the Civil War. Black Creoles, both slave and free, identified with French culture and the ideology of the French Revolution, and have always agitated for their rights as citizens of the United States. The Black Anglo ideology of separation of the races and the White ideology of segregation were unacceptable to them. So it is not surprising that the Creoles of New Orleans led the fight against segregation in education and public transportation during Reconstruction.

The racial structure of 19th-century New Orleans society limited African American artistic productivity. Although slaves made utilitarian objects for their families and architecture, textiles, and furniture for slave owners, much of this work has not been acknowledged. Both slaves and free people of color, however, were builders, artisans, and craftspersons in New Orleans.

The cultural needs of New Orleans contributed to the distinct development of fine art traditions in funerary sculpture, lithography, portraiture, including early photography, and scene painting. A few free men of color were accepted fine artists. Accepted by White patrons in New Orleans, they lived and worked in the racially mixed Creole downtown area of the city. Although these artists were both French and African, were educated in Paris, worked in the accepted French styles in producing art that reflected the needs of the Creole culture of New Orleans, and may have been able to pass for White, race influenced their lives in various ways. Only one achieved a degree of economic prosperity. The option open to most 19th-century American
artists, to travel around the country to find work, was not open to them. Racial
animosity is reported to have affected the life of Alexander Pickhil and prompted
Eugene Warburg to move to Europe. Florville Foy was not able to marry his White
mistress until Reconstruction when, for a brief period of history, miscegenation laws
were changed. Although they experienced racial barriers, these artists were patronized
by Whites, and probably by wealthy people of color, in New Orleans and their work
does not appear to indicate racial concerns but rather reflects a connection to Creole
New Orleans—as an amalgamation of racially mixed people and a particular culture.

This chapter indicates that, although limited by the racial structure of society, a
few free men of color were successful artists in Antebellum New Orleans. Compared
to the rest of the nation, New Orleans seems like the only area where several African
American artists were able to achieve some success, although no free women of color
are known to have been artists. However, the virulent racial violence and legal
restrictions in Louisiana that followed Reconstruction severely narrowed opportunities
for any African Americans to participate in artistic production.

Chapter 6 presented interviews with five contemporary African American
artists in New Orleans as a feminist approach to art criticism that validates their
experiences and the ways race has structured the meaning of their work and their roles
as artists. An analysis of the interviews and the work of these artists revealed several
recurring themes: (a) transition: changing race relations in New Orleans continue to
affect the African American community and particularly the lives of children; (b)
responsibility: artists play a role in the transmission of traditional cultural values; (c)
spirituality: these artists considered spirituality an essential element of their work and integral to the survival of African American people and their way of life; (d) culture: artists draw on their family and community traditions for inspiration; (e) community: a shared sense of community is evident both in the content of art and in the commitment to local needs; art is communication with the community and is placed in community spaces so that it is part of life; (f) connection: art is a means of transmitting African American values and reconstructing and retaining a connection to the past; (g) self-definition: it is important that people see images of African American sacrifice, achievement, and humanity; (h) struggle: race and gender present obstacles in pursuing an art career; (i) commitment: art is more about responsibility than commercial success.

There is no one particular style that characterizes the art of these New Orleans African American artists. Their work is both abstract and figurative and they continue to experiment with style. The contours of the New Orleans cultural imagination were evident regardless of styles. The content of the art of these contemporary artists reflects their identity as African Americans whose way of life created the cultural heritage of New Orleans. The themes of family, children, music and parades, nostalgia, history, work, the spiritual quality and dignity of African American people, and pride in African American strength and achievements are evident in their work. All of these artists described art, not in terms of form or content, but according to the way it functions within the African American community. Art, to these artists, is a visual language that makes a statement, a way of conveying life as it is and of
preserving the culture and passing it on to future generations; it is a part of everyday life and a means for spiritual connection between people; art is an affirmation of African American culture and strength, and it is a response to the notions that devalue African American people.

These interviews indicate that the social construct of race is a factor in both the lives and work of these African American artists. The way people refashion social position and push the limits of social structures can be seen in their commitment to art in spite of the obstacles. The artists do not work within a separate African American artists' movement in New Orleans. John Scott is the only nationally recognized African American artist. All the artists, however, are clearly recognized in the New Orleans community but it is on their terms so that they can use their art to communicate with people and to work with young people. The values these artists expressed indicate both the continuity of African American values and traditions and the importance of defining the humanity of African American people.

Racial identity is an issue that is both personal and political. The individual conflicts between being accepted within a society that devalues people with African ancestors and rejecting dominant White cultural values mirror the political struggles for assimilation and nationalism and the aesthetic struggles for mainstream acceptance or a separate Black art movement. This is a particularly relevant issue in New Orleans where racial identity is often ambiguous and where the 19th-century political agenda was different from that of Black Anglo Americans in the Northeast. Adjacent to the issue of identity is the representation of African Americans and the concern of artists.
and political leaders for both images that portray the humanity of African American people and the presentation of African American artistic achievement.

The areas of aesthetics, art history and art criticism have been developed in this study from a perspective outside the universal norm for the study of art. Although each discipline was considered as a separate subject of study, there were many intersections. For example, history was important in all areas, not just the art historical section, as were artists' experiences. Values were essential elements both in understanding African American aesthetics and in the personal meaning artists' ascribed to their work. While aesthetic values were considered in relationship to significant ideologies and personalities in the aesthetics study, they also developed from the interviews. The sections are distinguishable, however, by their focus on political, social, or personal issues. Additionally, the ideologies that influence aesthetics were studied from the philosophies of recognized national leaders, the history of the art of a particular community was researched, and art criticism provided a subjective look at artists and their personal visions.

It was not the intent of this study to determine whether or not an African American style of art exists, but rather to determine the ways in which artistic production and the meanings of art are structured by racial positions in society. Race has historically limited African American access to opportunities for artistic development. Race has also structured the meanings of art. The very production of art has been a story of struggle and achievement for African Americans. Because the economic struggle has been so great for so many African American people, art has
often seemed unnecessary and only for White Americans. Artists, connected to the masses of African American people, have expressed economic concerns, such as land ownership and labor, as well as religious beliefs and spirituality, political protest, connection to the African and American past, and the achievements and humanity of African American people.

Culture, identity, and notions of place within society play a conscious and unconscious role in both artistic production and interpretation (Powell, 1994). Hoard (1990) found that the cultural cues of a particular visual aesthetic in African American abstract art were evident to the Black participants in her study, implying a continuum of cultural values expressed in artistic form. The aesthetic, art historical, and art criticism information in this study indicate that racial designation of the artist may not be apparent by either style or subject matter, but that it often structures the way art functions as a means of affirming Black intellectual and artistic ability, defining the beauty and strength of African American people, and valuing African American history, culture, and artistic production in spite of the social limitations imposed on African Americans. An analysis of the personal, social, and aesthetic issues raised by the study of African American art can be a way for students to understand the contradictions in social institutions that are based on racial identity.

**Implications**

The purpose of this study has been to provide content for an art curriculum that would be both relevant to the lives and experiences of African American students and would provide possibilities for intellectual development and raising critical social
consciousness. Aesthetic issues related to the subjective meaning of art may be addressed in curriculum based on this study. Aesthetic discussions can include questions about who are artists and whether objects that visually express cultural values, whether quilts, paintings, or tatoos, for example, are considered art. Students can discuss how what is considered art also determines what is studied as art history. Art history curriculum can address the social context and cultural milieu in which artisans, both slave and free, and artists who were free men of color, worked. Insights gained from the experiences of artists and the interpretation of their art can be a way to address social contradictions based on racial status. Issues of identity, representation, the transmission of cultural values, spirituality, struggle, achievement, etc. can provide themes that reach across grade levels and subject areas. This study provides the content for an art curriculum that seeks to explore social inequality as a means of affecting social change.

It is my hope that teachers will become familiar with the material I have presented and will relate it to their students' lives. Teachers may, for example, ask students to relate the information in this study to contemporary ideologies, current social and racial attitudes, the writings of contemporary African American political and cultural leaders and the work of contemporary artists that are working in their regions. I would like to believe that teachers who pick up this dissertation will involve their students in the decisions of what to include in the curriculum, will help them understand that they are participating in the creation and sharing of art knowledge, and will become involved in the learning process themselves along with their students.
Recommendations

There are several possibilities for the additional development of curriculum content that present themselves with this dissertation. The work of feminist scholars has provided a means to understand how race has influenced the production of art and the meanings attributed to it. This feminist perspective might guide several further research projects. This dissertation has provided an approach for future regional studies in African American art in the areas of aesthetics, art history, and art criticism that are subjective, social, and political. It could also guide the study of art from other racial groups. A study of 20th-century African American art in New Orleans also needs to be conducted from primary sources such as interviews and a search for possible art programs in schools and at Black universities in New Orleans.
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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Could you begin by talking a little bit about when and where you were born, where you were raised, in what section of New Orleans?

2. What did your parents do for a living?

3. Where did you go to school?

4. Could you talk about some of the kinds of experiences you had growing up in New Orleans? I'm particularly interested in the kinds of experiences you had as an African American in New Orleans?

5. Did you have any particular cultural or ethnic experiences growing up in New Orleans?

6. Could you say there were any particular racial experiences that influenced your ideas later in life?

7. What do you think influenced your life the most?

8. How did you decide to become an artist? Who encouraged you?

9. Did any artists and their styles influence you?

10. Did any social or political events have an impact on you?

11. Were there any difficulties that you encountered in becoming an artist?

12. Did you have any problems being accepted as an artist? Have you have any problems being accepted by galleries in New Orleans?

13. What inspires you to produce your work?

14. Could you talk about some of the cultural or ethnic influences that you see as part of your work?

15. Could you talk about how your art reflects your concerns or your political views?

16. Are there particular values you are expressing in your art?

17. What is your vision? What do you want your art to communicate?
18. If I were to use your work as part of an art curriculum, what would you hope students would understand about your work? What would you like them to get from your work?

19. Could you describe your artwork itself, the style you’ve developed and how you’ve evolved in thinking about your work and what it is all about?

20. Do you have any particular criteria for your work?

21. Would you consider your work African or African American in any way?

22. What do you think is the most significant thing about your work?

23. Are there any thoughts you’d like to add that I have not asked about?
VITA

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Ms. Walker has taught in the New Orleans Public Schools for twenty-one years where she worked as a fourth and fifth grade teacher for nine years, a Title I reading resource teacher for eight years, and a teacher of gifted and talented for four years. She received her gifted and talented teaching certification at the University of New Orleans in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1987 where she taught art in the gifted program.

While Ms. Walker was working on her doctorate she served as editorial assistant for the national research journal, Studies in Art Education, supervised student teachers, and taught an art education course. She was selected as an intern for the National Museum of African Art in Washington, District of Columbia in 1990 and for the Getty Center for Education in the Arts in Santa Monica, California in 1993. While in California, Ms. Walker also taught art education courses at California State University Northridge. She is a member of several associations in the areas of art and education, has presented at local and national levels, and has published in nationally recognized journals.
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Title of Dissertation: A Feminist Study of African American Art in New Orleans: Considerations of Aesthetics, Art History and Art Criticism

Approved:

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Date of Examination: October 1, 1997