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EDUCATING BLACK YOUTH MORAL PRINCIPLES THROUGH
BLACK ART

by

MARIAH S. BUCHANAN

(Under the Direction of Ming Fang He)

ABSTRACT

This study examined the connection between Black youth moral behavior and the aesthetic value of Black art. Today's Black youth are impressed with elements in the media, their schools, and other social surroundings that have been a little less than upstanding. This exploration of moral relevance of self evaluation is important in order to empower the Black youth of today. With this self-empowerment, Black youth can have the ability to access and exhibit behaviors of moral integrity.

This study examined interpretative narratives regarding Black art through group discussions, one on one interaction, a questionnaire, and participant observations by Black youth in the community in Jonesboro, Georgia. The interpretive stories were collected from a group of five eighth grade Black youth. This selected group represented less than 1% of the population of 30 % of under age 18 year old Black youth in a community of 51.6% Black. Participants were encouraged to relate the visual experience to their own childhood. In addition to this, stories from my own childhood experiences were incorporated as an important aspect of this research. The goal is to share my research and strategies with educators, parents, and community leaders who can

direct this process of increasing self awareness regarding morals among Black youth through specific exercises in schools and community venues.

Critical race theory provides the theoretical framework for this study with an emphasis on aesthetics. This framework contains information gathered from historical narratives of Black works of art as well as written and verbal texts of Black students and theorists of Black studies. I have included a number of poems which are reflective of the Black experience. This research drew upon developments of democracy, relating to Black culture, education of Blacks in the South, and the relationship of moral principles among Blacks relating to art, schools, and social events in America. These theoretical insights span from the beginning of the educational history of Blacks in the United States until the present.

A visual narrative methodology was used to interpret the semiotics for Black culture which creates an aesthetic pedagogy necessary for introducing change to curricula in schools and programs in the community. Through these controlled discussions and written responses the implications of moral understanding resulted in evidence for understanding oneself as Black youth.

INDEX WORDS: Moral Principles, Art Education, Aesthetics, Critical Race Theory, Black Art, Visual Narrative Inquiry, Democracy, Popular Culture.

EDUCATING BLACK YOUTH MORAL PRINCIPLES THROUGH BLACK ART

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

2008

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Electronic Version Approved:
May 2008

DEDICATION

To my mother Rosie who taught me how to work hard and stay focus, because I learned that from watching you raise 11 children on your own and never complained. Momma, you instilled in me to dare to dream big things and to believe that I can with a little help from the people around me. My moral principles have brought me to this point in my life where I am urged to find ways to help others.

To my husband William who thought I was losing my mind when I began pursuing this degree and who had to rub my shoulders when I couldn't bear to sit at the computer another second. The love of my life and truly my soul mate, whom I can still say that about, after 36 years. Thanks for hanging in there when I took our last dime to pay for school and even when I started to doubt myself. Without you knowing it, you were there fussing but helping me move on, but then, maybe you did know.

To my daughter Johna Catrell who encouraged me all the way, even when you knew I was pushing myself to the limit. You worried about me, fussed at me, and helped me so much to do my very best, even though you wanted me to succeed and stop at the same time. Thank you for your support.

To my son David, although you had your own concerns and pressures to go through, I know you wished me well and could feel that I was getting stretched to my limit. I know that some day after all of the leg work, you will too get to your rightful place. There are no easy routes to achieving the good out of life, so continue to believe in God and yourself.

Reuben, my youngest son, you have taken me on a journey that I did not travel with the other two children. I have experienced new and exciting things relating to your

life. I have met many people as a result of helping you develop into the person that you are. I know that I have been preoccupied in my studies, but I know that you supported me when you eased in the room and slowly asked questions or picked something up and began to read. I know that you were trying not to interrupt when you finished and went to your room. I tried not to forget that you are also traveling on a journey to some wonderful and challenging experiences. The first to obtain a full scholarship to Boston University and will be graduating from high school the same month I will. Thank you, Reuben, for choosing me as your mother and taking the whole family to places unknown to us.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Ming Fang He for her tireless efforts to encourage and produce quality candidates for the doctoral program. Without your help and support it would not have been possible to achieve what I have been able to do. Thank you for standing by me and pushing me to do what I needed to do.

I thank my committee members, Dr. Sandra Murray Nettles, Dr. Onyile Onyile, and Dr. Ronald Bailey. Dr. Nettles, the first time I met you somehow I knew that I could use your expertise in understanding the Black experience. Your guidance has been impeccable in my completion of my dissertation. Dr. Onyile, what do I say about you? I knew that the first day that I talked to you about getting in your class, that you were a person of great standing. I have enjoyed learning from you and knowing more about the mother land. Dr. Bailey, it has been a great pleasure knowing someone who knows so much about Black studies. I have always wanted to learn more about my culture, so I hope to continue the journey of learning.

Finally, I will always be grateful to the professors of Georgia Southern University, the Fine Arts Department and the Curriculum Studies program for leading me to a world of inquiry and wonderment.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
Research Purpose.....	2
Research Questions.....	3
Values and Character Education Implementation Guide.....	5
Blacks' Advancement in White America.....	7
Advancements of American Democracy.....	8
Auto/Biographical Roots of My Inquiry.....	19
Understanding Art and Aesthetics.....	23
Potential Significance.....	37
2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	39
The Rise To Black Awareness.....	39
Theoretical Framework.....	41
Critical Race Theory.....	41
Philosophical Views of Theorists.....	50
Understanding the Connection of Black Culture.....	52
Educating Blacks in the South in Art.....	54
The Historical Development of Black Art in the United States.....	64
Blacks' Moral Principles.....	72

Continue Table of Contents

Black Moral Principles in Black Art	77
Black Moral Principles, Black Art, and Developing Cultural Relevant Curriculum For the Black Youth	83
What is Art Education ?.....	93
3 METHODOLOGY.....	105
The Right Shoes.....	105
Visual Narrative Inquiry.....	107
Procedures... ..	112
Art Mimics Life	119
4 SEEKING MORAL UNDERSTANDING.....	120
Momma Said.....	120
Participants Profile.....	121
Student Perspectives.....	123
Responses to the Questionnaire	167
Questions to Ask.....	170
Summary.....	172
5 RECLAIMING THE FOUNDATION.....	173
Remembering the Connection.....	173
Limitations of Study.....	196
Implications.....	199
Conclusion	200
REFERENCES.....	203

APPENDICES.....	216
A PARENT INFORMED CONSENT.....	218
MINOR'S ASSENT.....	221
B MORAL ART PLAN.....	224
C LIST OF CONCEPTS.....	228
D STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE.....	230

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Keeping His Dream.....	17
Figure 1.2: Slave Lynching.....	18
Figure 1.3: Delusions	22
Figure 1.4: The Andrew family Tree.....	36
Figure 2.5: The Bigger Family Portrait.....	45
Figure 2.6: The Soup Kitchen.....	48
Figure 2.7: Nous Quatre a Paris.....	48
Figure 2.8: Harriet Tubman Series.....	58
Figure 2.9: Aspirations.....	60
Figure 2.10: The Factory Worker.....	61
Figure 2.11: Baptism.....	62
Figure 2.12: The Traveler.....	64
Figure 2.13: Ironers	65
Figure 2.14: Equals	68
Figure 2.15: Tar Beach.....	69
Figure 2.16: Wrapped in Pride.....	70
Figure 2.17: The Secrets of Nature	72
Figure 2.18: White Power	76
Figure 2.19: Jazz Singers	78
Figure 2.20: Wanted Poster Series	81
Figure 2.21: The Last Bar-B-Q.....	83
Figure 2.22: Prevalence of Ritual	85

Figure 2.23: The Black Woman Series.....	99
Figure 3.24: Feeling His Oats	111
Figure 3.25: Day One, Creation of Man	114
Figure 3.26 Delusions	129
Figure 4.27: Let’s Shoot some Hoops.....	131
Figure 4.28: White Tee	134
Figure 4.29: Direction	136
Figure 4.30: The Banjo Lesson	139
Figure 4.31: The Preacher	143
Figure 4.32: First Sunday	144
Figure 4.33: Church Mothers	145
Figure 4.34: First Sunday II	147
Figure 4.35: Funeral Precession	148
Figure 4.36: Baptismal	149
Figure 4.37: Crucifixion	151
Figure 4.38: Come’ Worship the Lord	153
Figure 4.39: Day One, Creation of Man.....	154
Figure 4.40: Echo of a Scream	157
Figure 4.41: Family Grace.....	159
Figure 4.42: Nous Quatre a Paris	160
Figure 4.43: Liberation of Aunt Jemima	164

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

According to theorists such as J. Kunjufu (2003) and N. Akbar (1996), many obstacles that caused the implications of underdeveloped moral principles with Black youth lie among elements of American government, education, and culture. The overall advancement of Blacks in this country has an important connection to what is happening to Black youth. The exploration of how Black youth interpret Black art and relate it to their experiences is addressed. The present state of educational practices of Black youth in this country is also brought out in this Dissertation. My idea of morality will reflect more on the behavioral aspects of these youth regarding social relations rather than their philosophical connection. It is a community based investigation centered on Black youth from a population of majority Black residents in the city of Jonesboro, Georgia.

The implication of irregular moral conduct may be contributed to the mis-education of Blacks as a whole in this country. Woodson (1933), Akbar (1996), and Kunjufu (2003) contributes this mis-education to the lose of self-knowledge and being overwhelmed by the knowledge of other dominating groups. Akbar tells us that to correct mis-education; a basic understanding must be gained about what constitutes a good education for Blacks. I learned that during the Harlem Renaissance artists first began to address Black moral problems in their work. In the painting “Slave Lynching” by Claude Clark, depicts the punishment of an enslaved Black person, which drew strong attention to moral issues regarding slavery.

In order to combat the implications of low moral principles, I think it is important to introduce this study, which will prove to help significantly in directing the morals of

Black youth. Social and political events such as the development of democracy, the education of Blacks in the South, the development of education of Blacks in art in the South, moral principles among Blacks, moral principles in Black art, and creating a relevant curriculum in moral principles and Black art, are major concerns to this study.

In order to accomplish this study, a critical race theory method was used to capture the understanding of where the interests and moral principles of Black youth lie. Thoughts, feelings, and understandings from the interpretations of students relating their experiences to Black art was generated and evaluated. Several bodies of literature were reviewed to support my framework as well as, several works of art were assembled to create an aesthetic connection to the moral principles of these youth.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study explored how I can use Black art to educate Black youth and how they interpret and relate these works to their own experiences. The eventual purpose for doing this provides me with recommendations or suggestions for educators to understand Black youth, and to teach moral principles through art. The objective of this study is to prove that through knowledge of Black art, America's Black youth can grow in self understanding and can be capable of greater moral achievements. After speaking with Black artists who are also educators, I find that they too believe that emphasis on aesthetic values in Black art can be used as a teaching mechanism in moral principles for Black youth. If there is an expression of ideas and emotions in visual form, it is proven that even in the medical field, art as well as Black art can promote positive emotions and behaviors in Black youth.

My limited education about Black artists in schools here in America spanned from such names as Henry O. Tanner, William Bannister, Ednorcia Lewis, and Jacob Lawrence. A hand full of Black men and even fewer Black women artists, primarily because Black artists are not considered mainstream. Few have gained the recognition to be considered fine artists, such as Tanner. Perhaps that term is suspect anyway, because what really matters is that these artists had something to say and they said it well. That term deals with taste and the sense of beauty a person has for a work of art. Fine art simply deals with elements determined by the White point of view. This narrow way of thinking can be changed with the implementation of Black art in the academic curriculum, especially for the benefit of Black youth in schools and community programs.

In the area of personal experiences, Black youth learned skills and techniques through direction taught by mentors, teachers, and parents (Delpit, 1995). Much of these skills taught from lesson plans designed exclusively for learning about works of art along with visual aids used to introduce this concept.

Research Questions

This research shows the importance of engaging the participants, but at the same time helping Black youth to connect their experience by interpreting moral values by critiquing Black art. Using critical race theory as a theoretical framework, explores perspectives of Black youth regarding their gender roles, political, social attitudes, and religious aspects. The majority of my research focuses on analyzing how students react to Black art. The central research questions are: (1) How can Black art be used to educate Black youth moral principles? (2) How can Black art assist Black youth in

making a connection between moral principles in Black art and their own experiences?

(3) Why is it important to implement ways for Black youth to learn moral principles?

Just imagine that you are a young Black boy or girl and your teacher told you there was no hope for you. Your teacher makes you feel that you should not show up for school anymore because your behavior is so bad that your parents will no longer answer the phone. She feels that your parents do not know what to do with you either. Can you imagine how that may make you feel? Oh, you may act tough and say that does not bother you, but deep down inside, it is just one more thing added to the baggage that suppresses your self-concept. This is the plight of many Black students in our schools today. Disruptive behavior has reached an all time high and threatens the academic success of the students involved. In this study, I explored the use of Black art as a foundation for moral principles to educate Black youth.

Although we believe these youth are emotionally strong and nothing seems to bother them, teachers' expectations can be a factor in their moral achievements. Many Black students may perform a certain way in the classroom that is different from the way they act outside as a direct response to a teacher's expectations for them. According to Hammond, (2000) "a growing body of research suggests that schools can make a difference and a substantial portion of the difference is attributable to teachers" (p. 2). Influencing the Black youth to foster not only self-esteem, but also understand their ability to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, and caring for others is a must in their surroundings. They have the boldness to walk around with their under shorts showing, hair uncombed, and music blasting, knowing ultimately that this will get them noticed, but on the other hand they appear not to have self-respect because the way

they portray their self-value. The guys would not disrespect the girls or each other, if something was not wrong with their value system. My intent is not to single out the boys; the girls are experiencing the same issues of self respect and caring for others. Kunjufu (1996) states that the problem is that these youth are lacking the resources to overcome obstacles, such as consistent parental guidance, knowledge of self, and low teen employment, that prevent change. He points out that parents have lost their maps and that they must have direction in order to rear children. The task can be accomplished by providing teachers and school administrators with techniques to help mold Black youth into better citizens.

In the attempt to address the development of better citizens, the Georgia Department of Education has set up guidelines of expectations for teachers and students. A program booklet was designed which outlines experiences that involve both students and teachers in obtaining good character. This booklet and a calendar along with buzz words for each month is distributed annually to teachers without necessary training nor the mandatory requirement for implementation. In addition, on the website for the Georgia Department of Education, there is a link to a section pertaining to character education in the schools of Georgia which quotes:

Values and Character Education Implementation Guide

During its 1997 session the Georgia Legislature amended Part 2 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia annotated by adding at the end of said part a new code section 20-2-145 to read as follows:

The State Board of Education shall develop by the summer of the 1997-1998 school year a comprehensive character education program for levels K-12. This comprehensive character education program shall be known as the 'character curriculum' and shall focus on the students' development of the following character traits: courage, patriotism, citizenship, honesty, fairness, respect for others, kindness, cooperation, self-respect self-control, courtesy, compassion,

tolerance, diligence, generosity, punctuality, cleanliness, cheerfulness, school pride, respect for the environment, respect for the creator, patience, creativity, sportsmanship, loyalty, perseverance, and virtue. Local boards may implement such a program at any time and for any grade levels, and the state board shall encourage the implementation of such plan. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed. Retrieved from the www at <http://teach.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/affsys/valuesga.html>

This particular information has not been updated on the Web site since that date; however the booklets were given out to each teacher yet again for the school year of 2007-2008.

So what do we as educators do with this? The local Board of Education has made sure that each school in the county knows about this requirement. Finding an effective way to enforce this is important for students; to me this means that since I am a teacher, I must do all that I can to devise ways to enhance this program. In the mean time parents and their communities, who are the first teachers for these students, must be assisted in finding ways to help to improve moral values.

Much of the lack of empathy which is seen in Black youth can be attributed to the break down of the family. In turn that break down is compounded by the events in this country, therefore creating a domino effect. Looking back into the educational history of Blacks will give insight into how education affects Black youth. Learning both the negative and positive consequences of American education will lead to a deeper understanding of why the Black youth culture is the way it is today. Many of those outcomes depend on the democratic system in this county. That system feeds my concern for Blacks in America. For this reason I chose to base my study on critical race theory as a foundation, while pointing out how Blacks have fared through the years in this country. The reason why this is so important to my research is to show a connection between the past, present, and perhaps the future of Blacks in general to Black youth

moral conscious in America. With this in mind I want to start with some major developments pertaining to the advancement of Blacks in America.

Blacks' Advancement in White America

After the Emancipation, Blacks in the South were left with unshaken poverty. This condition held them down for an entire generation allowing very little progress. The difficulties faced here ultimately proved that they were ill prepared for the growth in industrial development. At this point, Blacks needed to find ways to advance and they knew that schools would be the main factor in doing so. They needed schools to teach skills in growing technology, to educate their young for readiness for coming years, and to maintain a sense of self-worth through their struggles. However, during the reconstruction, many were able to band with poor Whites to bring about the first democratic form of education, through which they were able to provide public schools for their children (Woodson, 1933). With little or no help from their former owners or the government, Blacks were now faced with finding ways to support these schools. Blacks were continually losing ground in the South. Therefore, migration to the North was attempted and accomplished by many; some even began to encourage the idea of leaving the country.

Unfortunately, a debate ensued questioning what type of education was appropriate for Blacks in America. The focus became a decision between a classical or a practical education. In the end this debate led to the provision of a different education from Whites. Even the schools where it was agreed that Blacks would be taught, were less than upright with their teaching. Blacks were rushed through, given their diplomas, and sent on. Black families, according to, Du Bois (1903), Woodson (1933), Akbar

(1998), and Thompson (2004), ultimately have been mis-educated for years here in the United States. Akbar (1998) points out several historical concerns that have created obstacles and left the Black families broken and split, such as a good education and shared vision. Akbar suggests that education is imperative to providing identity, for it lays the foundation for what can be done or learned. However, the transmission of competency, which creates a legacy to advance knowledge for generations to build on, has been broken down due to mis-education. As a culmination, these things have produced the product of what we see in Black youth in today's society, a sense of mistrust, moral lack, and inattentiveness.

In addition, there must be the development of shared visions among a group or community in order to acquire common goals. Accomplishing this aim in turn will lift up the highest possible goals of each individual within the group. This essential component has been left out of the education of Blacks. The only way to insure this shared vision is through the self-determination of the Black man to become self sufficient thereby gaining control of necessary resources (Akbar, 1998).

Advancements in American Democracy

Can we honestly say that the vast numbers of Blacks have failed to benefit from American democracy? To answer this, it is essential to look at the history of Blacks in America. Initially, Africans were enslaved and forcefully brought to America to be used as free labor. As a result of this act, many were separated from families and stripped of their language and customs. In addition, they were refused education and forbidden to practice their own religion. While serving as slaves, their only compensation or payment was that they were allowed access to whatever was left over after the needs of the

master's family were sufficiently met. Some were allowed to keep a small portion of the crops which they had tended for their masters. The Emancipation left them with little more than the clothes on their backs, Blacks had to find the best way they could to live. Some stayed on the plantations and continued to work for small wages and others were able to band together and create townships and produce a way of meager life. In 1840s and 1850s free Blacks migrated for better job opportunities to those communities, the North, and to Canada (Patton, 1998). At the end of the 1850s there were still four million Blacks in slavery compared to a half million free. Deliberate acts and laws also prevented Blacks from advancing in just about all areas. Legal segregation, inadequate schooling, and inadequate housing have existed among Blacks throughout the stint of American life. In addition, ideologies of racism, lynching, and other forms of accepted terrorism prevented equal opportunity for this group.

Acquiring the right to vote, however, it represented a significant step in the history of Blacks in America. This process began in 1870, with the 15th Amendment, which gave Black men the right to vote. Progress continued as the year 1914 brought about the establishment of the Universal Negro Improvement Association by Marcus Garvey, with the intent to promote "the spirit of race pride." In 1920 the NAACP was established. With this came the provision for the right to vote for women, which included Black women (Thompson, 2004). Martin Luther King helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957, which proved to be a fighting force in keeping the voting rights act possible in the lives of Blacks. In 1965, Blacks were finally given the right to vote when congress enacted the Voting Rights Act (Smiley, 2006). There were, however provisions referred in Section 5. This act simply provided "that in

places with a long history of institutionalized racial discrimination in voting, no change in any voting law or procedure could be enforced until the change had been “pre-approved” as nondiscriminatory by the federal government” (p. 126, 2006). This act became 40 years old in 2005.

Following the Civil Rights movement, the Black Panther Party movement, and the rise of Black Nationalism under Malcolm X, in the 60s and early 70s more and more Black males entered college. During this time some American Universities established African American or Black studies to their program. Black studies were created to allow Blacks the opportunity to learn about their own culture. However, in recent years that number has dropped regardless of historical factors proven, stated Akbar (1996) that education should be high priority for obtaining those things. Popular culture, along with its values, media, and music such as Hip Hop, Rap, and factors such as lack of jobs has curbed the tide of Black males who would choose college to expand their career choices (Kunjufu, 2005). Many of them believe that they can make it in the entertainment business without an education or without preparation of the craft. We can now link high Black youth unemployment, increased young male prison population, the low self respect of Black girls in today’s popular culture, lack of respect to adults, the use of drugs, and the lack of spiritual guidance in the over all population to the make up of this country’s ties to racism. In recent years, (Akbar, 1998) these concerns which have generated a displacement of the family unit, have been addressed by civic and political Black leaders, but little progress has been made due to social and political factors that stagnated family unity and growth. This stagnation has resulted in an overall depressed race. Akbar also suggests that the condition might be overcome by establishing a shared vision.

Ultimately, this shared vision could offer an environment of moral and spiritual refinement, consistent to the highest values of African people.

Kunjufu (1996) pairs elevating moral principles with directing Black Americans' relationship with the virtues of African Maat and the Nguzo Saba, which is the equivalent of the Ten Commandments. The Maat emphasizes important values for the interested person; truth, justice, order, harmony, balance, righteousness/ propriety, and reciprocity. The Nguzo Saba is drawn from the Maat; Umoja – unity, Kujichagulia – self-determination, Ujima – collective work and responsibility, Ujamaa – cooperative economics, Nia – purpose, Kuumaba – creativity, and Imani – faith. For the most part, Black Americans have only begun to recognize these values in the recent decade or so and only during Kwanza, a celebration starting the day after Christmas. Maulana Karenga in 1966 composed the Nguzo Saba to be incorporated in everyday life, and not just for seven days (Kunjufu, 1996).

Additionally, relating what occurs in the lives of Black youth today, I can understand through the ties among social and political factors in American democracy. Through all the ups and down of the Black family, coupled with the varied education of the Black race, Black youth influenced by American society, including direct connection with Black culture, and multi-cultural influences of society, few things have stayed constant. However, Black art has remained the same as mostly vernacular art. It continues to represent the culture of the people, considered as folk art, it will remain a separate entity from White art. According to Doy (2000), “black art” has been constant in representing history, memory, belonging and identity. Doy also uses the lower ‘b’ in black to represent ethnic which is all inclusive. I use the upper ‘B’ to represent chosen

identity, culture, and associated with African roots. I believe that Black art has a significant part in shaping and molding the development of Black youth if used as a tool for teaching.

After obtaining some status in the American dream, many middle class families have begun to drop in economic gains, due to developments in society, such as few jobs or less skills. I understand that the majority of things mentioned are negative, so let's look at the positive examples. Blacks began to read, and successfully moved to the North and got good jobs and homes. Many Blacks escaped through the Underground Railroad. They lived through a transition from being called *nigger*, *nigress*, and *colored*, to names they chose for themselves *Black* and *African-Americans*. Now, young Blacks have backtracked, without even realizing it, according to West and Kujufu, calling each other *homey*, *blood*, *dog*, and even the name *nigger*, using the phrase, (*my nigger*). Some Blacks were able to save some of their culture and costumes; they helped build this country to become important productive citizens with businesses. Many Blacks produced much needed inventions, composed music; jazz, gospel, blues, soul, rap, and produced works of art that could stand up against any master artist. Blacks have worked to create a way to educate their children through social, political, and spiritual issues, but have seemingly faltered on some or all of these elements, according to many theorists, such as, Cornel West (2001), Na'Im Akbar (1998), Jawanza Kunjufu (1996), bell hooks (1994), Tavis Smiley (2005), and many others. However, one positive thing Blacks have been able to maintain is the ability to stay "*tragicomic*," which is defined in this way. "The tragicomic is the ability to laugh and retain a sense of life's joy – to preserve hope even while staring in the face of hate and hypocrisy - is against falling into the nihilism of

paralyzing despair (West, 2004, p. 16).” This statement is very fitting to the struggles of Blacks in a society that has consumed the very beingness of this race of people. I do not want to insinuate that democracy has been detrimental to Blacks in every case; on the contrary democracy is why the idea of a better life is possible. Being able to discern that there are differences in the way one lives and is educated verses the way others live and are educated is a principle of democracy. Having a democratic society is to know justice and caring. The United States’ Constitution reflects those values, but society and academic institutions still have a long ways to go.

True democracy should challenge the very heart of one’s moral convictions, one’s citizenship as well as one’s ideals of justice. Parker (2003) suggests that democracy should promote cultural pluralism and equality to support the multi-cultural society that encompasses America. He believes that having a multi-cultural education would only enhance each individual’s awareness of others. Parker states that diversity in education motivates individuals and groups regarding policies. It can give justification for appeals of moral principles like empathy, respect, courtesy, and justice. Multi-cultural education contributes to social knowledge. Finally, it advances individual enlightenment. My focus in this notation is to bring attention to the workings of democracy in regards to education, and the arts for Black youth in the United States.

Throughout my life, I never knew how important the word democracy was until I seriously began to study and think about my own culture. I am sure I took the word for granted as many of us did, as children and now as many adults do also. I learned years ago that we are all connected as human beings and all things are parts of the whole. We all benefit from a society that allows everyone and everything to have its on place. When

any one part of a democratic society is misused or excluded, eventually the whole will suffer, such is the case with Black youth. It is so vital that everyone receive a quality education, however, my interest in this paper is moral education for Black youth, and how should that responsibility be directed? Should the government have sole control, the church, parents, or should there somehow be a joint venture to this cause? These and many others are some of the questions I plan to address.

Social unrest, rapid cultural change, economic crises around the world, and cultural confusion is what is troubling our democratic process right now. Let me go further by relating these things to the Black youth of America. They have few dominating spokespersons to identify within the communities, almost every one of the leaders have been made to look less than credible because of scandals or improprieties. They look up to rap singers as the new wave of leaders, such as, 'Fifty Cent,' 'TI,' and 'Sean (Puffy) Combs.' The youth seems to believe that getting what you want regardless to how you get it is the way to go. Any thought of what might happen as a result is not on the forefront of their minds, like AIDS, STDs, or teen birth rates. They also have no idea of what it takes to have integrity when it comes to their own bodies, as well as the opposite sex. I realize that I have lumped all Black youth in one bag, which is a disservice to the ones who are not conforming to these rituals. I simply lump them in order to make a point. All these things and more are things we must work towards correcting, as educators. The education of Black youth cannot be put solely in their hands. Teachers can find teachable moments to introduce a moral curriculum, which in itself makes an appeal for democracy. I believe this can be done through the introduction of Black art in schools and other institutions. Very few studies have been done regarding

moral principles of Black youth through Black art. I have mentioned some leading theorists on critical race theory up to this point and I want to combine this with renowned theorists on critiquing the education of Blacks regarding Black works of art. Bell Hooks (1995) considers in great length about Black art and its relationship to society. She talks about her sister relating to art. Hooks tells her sister that she loves art and is thinking about it and wonders if she and most Black folk think about art.

Sister G.

“Art is just too far away from our lives that “art is something – in order to enjoy and know it, it takes work.”

Hooks

“But art is on my mind. It has always been on my mind.”

Sister G.

“Girl, you are different, you always were into this stuff. It’s like you just learned it somehow. If you are not taught how to know art, it’s something you learn on your own.”

Hooks points out that Blacks have taken their cues from White America, they see art as completely unimportant in the Black struggles for survival. Art used for propaganda became acceptable in the eyes of Blacks and Whites. Many Black folk believe that the only problem with identifying with Black art has to do with underexposure, not enough images, not enough visible Black artists, and not enough galleries showing their work. Representation is crucial, if all Black children were growing up learning about the importance of art and relating it to Black artists, the Black experience of art would be collectively transformed (1995).

The art work that follows depicts the diversity of cultures in this country and how we can work together to promote understanding, according to the dreams of Martin L. King, as well as, Walter Parker, and many others alike. The work depicts different cultures reaching and unifying the surrounding energy of the children at play, work, and coming together with a common cause, equal rights. This is a drawing which content is based on the moral ideals of Martin Luther King Jr., his wishes and dreams for America. His wish that Black, White, Asian, Native American, and all children could play together without someone fearing that this would lead to them getting together later in life or that one group was better than the other, so therefore they couldn't associate. The drawing also represents the aspect of getting an education that suits each person. Looking at the sign that says "equal rights" also lets us know that he wanted this for everyone, having a sense of self with the inclusion of colors representative of Africa. A connection to others, looking at the hands clasping together, we can see an attempt to bond. Hard work, seeing King preparing his speeches and the young boy clinging to his studies, we also know that is part of the dream. King's dream for the betterment of Blacks developed into the seeking for the improvement of conditions for every poor person in the world. Looking at this piece you see that his ideals encompass many areas. A reality of play, as we look to the right and see the little White girl and Black girl at play, we get a sense of freeness. Then last, looking back to the left and noticing that the sign is in front of a group of children of various nationalities looking for the same thing, human rights.



Figure 1, “Keeping His Dream”
Mariah Spann

This work also signifies many of the qualities we want to instill in Black youth. This makes me understand the importance of quilts in my life. Learning about the quilters of Gee's Bend excited me because it brought my thoughts back to when I was a child watching my mother and other ladies in the neighborhood sitting around this big multicolored thing called a quilt. As they leaned forward to put one stitch after another, with one hand on top and another hand underneath guiding what the upper hand does, history was being made. They seemed to enjoy having good conversation and creating a work of art. I did not know that then, but later realized that it was out of necessity that these quilts were being made. Little did I know that we were poor and the only way we could keep warm in the winter was to have these quilts. Yes this was a cultural thing, but it was also a way of life brought about because of who we were, where we were, and what was dealt to us by the society we lived in. Those quilts not only represented warmth, they also represented a community, a community of women who managed to teach a host of things in that one room. I learned cooperation, respect, sharing, patience,

cheerfulness, family values, aesthetics, commitment, self-control, trust, tolerance, diligence, equality and democracy all rolled into one.

Many schools have some type of character education program for their students. Even so, many of these programs fail to accomplish the goals of inspiring appropriate moral principles in Black youth. Look at the following painting by Claude Clark; we get this image that hits you right in the face with reality of the early beginnings of Blacks in this country. Talking with the students on moral issues regarding this painting will lead into a host of discussions, such as, how does one human being have dominion over another? It appears that the darker skin person is being beaten by the lighter skinned Black; so what is the difference if they are both Black? How could you as a human being feel at peace with your self if you beat another person at the point of seeing the skin tear? What is the difference in what is happening in this next painting and what is happening in society today? These questions and more could be developed regarding moral principles today and what happened years ago.



Figure 2, "Slave Lynching"
Claude Clark

The work shows some deep feelings regarding the conditions of Blacks that played out for centuries. Many people want to ignore the inhuman and Black suffering caused by slavery in this country. Showing this painting to Black youth and discussing where and how life began for Blacks and comparing it to how things are now can show them how important events are regarding the recent democratic primary elections between Senator Hillary Clinton and Senator Barack Obama. If we look at the painting we can hardly see hope there, but it is important to discuss how hope changed this condition to better things today.

Taking an aesthetic approach to life and investigating it through a critical lens will prove to be an important challenge to promote good morals. The expectations teachers have for students may affect achieving this goal. Middle school Black youth who receive high expectations for moral values from their teachers may exhibit better performance in class than students with low or no teacher expectations. Research developed by theorists such as Kunjufu (1996) and Perry (2003), has established that teachers play an important role in determining how students will develop confidence in self control and moral standing. My research will add to this body of knowledge by providing educators with other avenues to help students achieve respect for themselves and others.

Auto/biographical Roots of My Inquiry

Growing up as a Black girl in the South I have always used art to express my interests in my community by displaying elements that placed emphasis on human characteristics. My home town of Helena, which is located in Middle Eastern Arkansas, allowed me the small town experience. Located on the shore of the Mississippi River, it was known as the heart of the Delta, where the blues was sung, checkers was played, and

everybody knew everybody; where I had a connection to my surroundings. In Helena, I grew up with my six brothers Charles, Levi, Cornelius, Robert, Freddie and Eddie, and my four sisters Charity, Annie, Henrine, and Christine. Eventually, each one, as people do, got older and ventured off to find their own. My father, though he passed away when I was five, left me with a beginning that will never leave or forsake me. Memories of his strong decisiveness, and stick to itness, as well as his ability to be kind hearted to others, and his instincts to be a father, a caregiver, are strong with me.

Along with the memories of my father, growing up with a mother who has always been there for me, quietly and sometimes energetically encouraging me to push forward and never letting me believe that I could not do something, has given me the will to dream and work toward those dreams. It was this foundation that brought me to where I am today. Moving towards art was a natural thing to do, because art connected me to who I was and allowed me to have the independence which was very much encouraged in my family. It became a vital part of my life as I was growing up. Art helped me become to know myself better, so perhaps it can help others. Teaching through the images of art to Black youth can possibly do the same for them.

I have used art as an educator to help enrich the lives of others by showing how art connects to everyday life. This has inspired me to share the art world with my students and others. I wanted to do this study because I know how important the arts are to human spiritual and social development. This desire began early in my life. My relationship to art started as a result of watching my eldest sister create beautiful drawings from looking in school books and comic books. I knew at the age of five that I wanted to draw like her, because I knew that when she drew, she was relaxed, engaged,

and quiet. She seemed to know something I did not. There was something important about her connection with the work she was producing and everyone around her was amazed and wanted to be a part of her creations, so much so, that they wanted to keep each art piece she created.

As I began to create my own drawings, I came to understand how art could engage others and bring them into my world. As I grew up, there were no art classes in any of my grade levels. The training I had was through my own practice and encouragement of teachers who wanted me to create bulletin boards or to draw portraits of them. Many times I was pulled out of class, after my work was done, to work on these things. There were no pictures of colored folk in the books I had, regardless, I did have a sense of knowing who I was. Therefore, I began to use color to make my drawings relate to my family and friends.

I never studied about artists or their works. This was not an important part of the curriculum in the South, especially in the Black schools. What I learned about artists was in college, however I learned about Black artists primarily through my own research. I learned about the different periods in art in my Art Appreciation class, a class which focused on a range of artistic productions including music and architecture. I learned how to appreciate music of all kinds from that produced in the Renaissance to the 1970s. I examined works of architecture created by many famous non-Black architects and artists from all over the world. Only through my own desires and efforts to study the works of Black artists did I find personal connections.

The painting on the next page was inspired from my childhood as I grew up not having a doll with features like me, a Black doll to hold. This critique of the painting

which follows stemmed from the premise that we all have needs of being connected. I look at her image with her eyes of contemplation as she seems to look back; her arms lovingly clutch the blond haired doll. It is evident that the little girl holds the doll like a mother holds a baby and is very close to it. Studying this, I have several thoughts wondering through my mind about the outcome of this connection between the girl and the doll. One is that she sees no color, which is common for children and she simply wants to play with a toy. Another is that this symbol of a person is what she is relating to and may someday wish to become. I can only wonder if any permanent damage has been done to alter her spiritual connection to her culture that proceeds.



Figure 3, "Delusions" Mariah Spann

I speak about this painting which features a young Black girl between the ages of seven and ten, whose reflection is mirrored as a blond person. This painting has the

potential to become the focus of many aesthetic discussions relating personal beliefs with cultural history. The moral aspects of this painting edge on self image. What kind of image does the young girl have for herself? Is it morally right for her to associate with the image of the white doll rather than with people her own color? These are some of the questions I want to get at with the Black youth. This painting is discussed in greater detail in the last chapter. This is a sample of many works of art which can be used to promote not only aesthetic discussions among Black youth and educators but also discussions of self and moral values.

In order to help parents and educators encourage Black youth to become more aware of what is going on around them, the first step may be learning what tools are assessable, to them. One such tool is found in the arts. Establishing the meaning of works of art can help bring into perspective how art itself relates to oneself as well as other human beings. In addition, the understanding of how art and aesthetics are intertwined can be developed, in my research. As I continue my research I used both art and aesthetics as I discussed their meaning and function.

Understanding Art and Aesthetics

Centuries ago “art was considered as a species of imitation” (Eaton, 1988, p. 5). Eaton points out that a statue was considered to be an imitator of human beings, a drama imitating human actions, and music was the universe in harmony. Eaton (1988) also states that there are ways to distinguish the aesthetic from the non-aesthetic by stipulating the conditions or properties of the aesthetic situation. These include the following: the maker (at least when the object of attention is an artifact), the viewer or audience, the object or event, and the circumstances or context in which the object, event, or

performance is experienced. Eaton states that aesthetic theories usually concentrate on at least one of these four elements or the way they interact with other things (p. 6). We must make note that philosophers are very skeptical about defining key aesthetic terms such as “beauty,” “art,” or “aesthetic” or even theorizing what is special or unique about them. According to Weitz, stated Eaton (1988) just as defining similarities to different board games like, checkers or chess – true, they are all games, but what else do they have in common – art must be viewed both broadly and specifically. Because art is so vast, Weitz (1988) is skeptical of pinpointing a specific definition to works of art. Many types of work fall under the umbrella of art, such as, the painting, ‘Mona Lisa’, the play, ‘Hamlet’, or the sculpture, ‘The Thinker.’ How can one define what they have in common?

Secondly, knowing the meaning of art can suggest to educators, parents, and others how art can help each person express and investigate aesthetically ones own feelings and give intelligence theorists a base to classify human growth and behavior. We learn this through the teachings of Gardner, who believed that we go through stages in our developmental process. Thorndike and Barnhart dictionary (1957) states that art is “form of human activity appealing to the imagination, especially drawing, painting, sculpture, also architecture, poetry, music, dancing, etc.” (p. 44). According to Bowman (1991), “the arts enrich the lives of young children, and can assist children in their intellectual, social, and emotional development” (p. 3), not just the young, but also a person of any age. She also states that “the arts foster cognitive competence, deepen social interaction, and contribute to the personal well-being of individuals” (p. 3).

Cheney (2000) suggests that art “expresses thought in material form, also that it is “habit of thought as a human-spirit unity” (Tougas, 2000, p. 43).

Broudy (1972) suggests that art, or yet, “every artistic form” is so dynamic that it is constantly building up feelings (p. 27). Art allows the viewer to get a sense about it, a feeling. Broudy also states that every work of art inhales and exhales energy, conflicts and resolutions, seeding and budding, endless variations of species characteristics, which are the building blocks of aesthetic images and the life process.

Dissanayake (1995) points out that modern sociobiologist believe that individuals have evolved to pursue their best interests. Art falls under this umbrella; however, in western cultures conflicts arise regarding its importance says Dissanayake. Some believe that art is mysterious, superficial, or relative. She also states that ethnologists believe that art is a universal human behavior which is associated with things such as; play, display, exploration, amusement and pleasure, creativity and innovation, transformation, the joy of recognition and discovery, the satisfaction of a need for order and unity, the resolution of tension, the emotion of wonder, the urge to explain, and the instinct for workmanship, which are all apart of human living. According to the modernist theory, art has one significant purpose, which is to engage the mind and enrich the spirit. Dissanayake also mentions the postmodernist thought as anything but positive. She states that the postmodernists consider art as irrelevant and in bad form. This is seen as “evidence of one’s unexamined cultural prejudices made public” (p. 26). Contrary to what ethnologists, modernists, and postmodernist believe, Dissanayake’s belief is that art is more than that. It is universal, normal, and obvious in human behavior as sex or parenting, and is also essential. Art is somehow considered something separate from us.

Art reflects life and allows us to have another way to reflect spiritually. The aesthetic background of art connects individuals to self. Every culture can weave its own history through the connection with the aesthetic reaction to art.

Greene (2001), who is one of my favorite theorists, proclaims that ‘aesthetic education’ is different from ‘art education’ and ‘art appreciation.’ She points out that the term ‘aesthetics’ singles out a particular field in philosophy, which may focus on one or the other emphasis areas. One is that it may focus on “perception, sensation, imagination, and how they relate to knowing, understanding, and feeling about the world” (p. 5). Two, it “primarily focuses on the kinds of experiences associated with reflective and conscious encounters with the arts.” Three, it may “focus on the way a work of art becomes an object of experience and the effect it then has is an altering perspective on nature, human beings, and moment-to-moment existence” (p. 5). This last area will allow the aesthetic value from the work to describe or single out the mode of experience that has been brought into being from this encounter with the work.

The educational part of Greene’s theory centers on getting this information to others. Greene (2001) states that ‘education’ is a process of enabling persons to become different, to enter the multiple provinces of meaning that create perspectives on the works” (p.5). Social sciences fall under these provinces that deal with the arts. She makes note that individuals should develop to the point of knowing, seeing, and feeling in various ways and this should be a conscious act which imposes different orders upon experiences. Greene also states that the producers of these concepts and precepts are the result of years of funded meanings or ways of knowing by artists, teachers, and philosophers. ‘Aesthetic education’ is an intentional concept, which is “designed to

nurture appreciative, reflective, cultural, participatory engagements with the arts” (p.6). When individuals begin to notice and intertwine their lives with the art, a connection is made in experiences. Greene states that individuals see differently and may be able to apply change to that difference. When all this is done, ‘art appreciation’ enters the hearts of those who accept it. Becoming a lover of the arts can be anyone who has made that connection, and who has allowed him or her self to be free with imagination and love of beauty. In the appreciation of art, each person begins to learn and understand more about what the artists are trying to convey, by allowing this connection to happen.

Art education, according to Greene (2001) “focuses upon exploration of the different media” (p. 6). This experience lends itself to the perception of the paint, clay, movement, and sound. This mode of expression allows learning a craft and connects the person with his/her own education, which aesthetic education can begin. This aesthetic education is a crucial component to helping Black youth become ready to understand who they are and how they connect to their culture’s past and future. Making an aesthetic connection with Black art to raise this awareness and to think critically about their lives will be one component in critical race aesthetics.

Critical Race Aesthetics has three parts of importance I want to discuss. The first part is aesthetics which I have already talked a little bit about, but I also want to give a little background about the subject and connect it to Black youth. Aesthetics is derived from the Greek word “aesthetikos,” which refers to perception of the senses. The expression is credited to the German philosopher, Alexander Baumgartner, during the 1750s, who “sought to establish a science related to sense perception and the perception of beauty” (Lankford, 1992, p. 25). Lankford believes that aesthetics is designated to the

artistic principles and styles of an artist or a particular culture. Lankford also believes that an aesthetic experience has cumulative benefits for an individual and society when nurtured in an atmosphere of artistic freedom and responsibility.

Eaton (1988) believes that aesthetic value can be explained by the properties of things that are valued like goodness or truth. Eaton also believes that aesthetic value comes from a positive response of a person or group of persons towards something.

John Dewey gives reaction to aesthetic text by expressing what the primary task should be:

This task is to restore continuity between these refined and intensified forms of experiences that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experiences (Dewey, 1934, p. 3).

Dewey (1934) was very clear when he made mention that art was not just simply copying of objects, but it reflects the emotions and ideas that are associated with the institutions of social life; however, Dewey did point out that the rise of museums made it appear that art should be separated from ordinary things and placed away from common life. This possibly was the onset of art being looked at as something apart from daily life, which undoubtedly disconnected the aesthetic interest.

My final definition of aesthetics is a combination of thoughts by two theorists, G. Willis and W. Schubert (2000), who both proclaim that, “The ordering of daily life requires the aesthetic process of symbolization, reinterpretation, the incorporation of alien cultures, objects, meaning, the blending of crossing of boundaries, the choosing of sacred objects, sacred spaces, secret names and jokes, curses and songs” (p. 76).

The origin of aesthetics for Blacks is connected with African culture, according to Dissanayake (1995) and others alike. The desire to express aesthetically through dress and costumes has always been a part of Black culture. Not as a way to “show off,” but as a belief that one should “make oneself special” (p. xi). Historically, Black people have always created objects for a functional use, but they have always created those same objects to represent an aesthetic value, such as the ceremonial pieces, like the masks and sculpture pieces used to represent every part of their life, although, it was much later in African culture that they began to treat their functional or utilitarian pieces as works of art. After they became invaded by other countries, they began to realize a different value for what they created, while still keeping the aesthetic value of each piece for them. Each piece or object they created held a story of importance behind it. This is contrary to some other cultures around the world, such as a group of people who live in the hills of North Carolina, says Eisner (1985). Eisner speaks about the people of Swain County in the Appalachian Mountains in his book, “The Educational Imagination.” He points out that “the aesthetic character of their work was clearly subordinate to its functional nature” (p. 276). He states that the people are utilitarian when it comes to any artistic tendencies; they are not impressed to show this side of them. Eisner did point out, however, that their desire to create from nature every object they needed to sustain them. The objects became works of art to others outside the community, ultimately having aesthetic meaning to others. This tradition to have aesthetic meaning, for the most part, continued with Blacks in this country as well. This is where I want to discuss the second part of my topic, which is critical race theory.

Educating parents and teachers to develop a more active role in directing Black youth to find ways of knowing who they are can be done through engaging in an aesthetic education, according to Greene (2001). Why is it important to know who you are? I believe once you know yourself, then everything else falls in place. As West (2001) points out, empathy for others is a key to unlocking the mysteries of self, and Reed, (2000) believes that one develops empathy through knowing oneself. Greens (2001), states that we should create situations in which new experiences can foster new meanings and these meanings can be transformed to the lives of the youth.

As I work through the maze of creating avenues for young Black males and females to grasp new meaning in their lives, I continue to look beyond the norm and look through the critical race theory aspect of this society to find new meaning. This theory addresses the notion that racism is alive and active in America, and furthermore, throughout regions of this world. Let us relate the development of new experiences to the arts for instance. Learning about Black artists and their works can bring new exposure to Black youth, but that exposure can't happen if the works of Black artists are not shown. You can almost count the number of Black American artists in major museums on one hand in this country. Does this mean that Blacks are not very good artists? Or could this mean that this is a society of Whites and the arts is a forbidden arena for Blacks? What does this mean to the Black youth? Only a hand full is allowed in, just to say that everyone is welcomed, is an understatement. You might find folk art represented in the well known museums as a permanent collection first and foremost before the fine arts of Blacks. So with this in mind, we continue to dig through the overcoats of racism and find cracks that will allow some light, the light that flashes among the aesthetics of Black art.

This beacon that carries the cultural history of Black life is imperative to continuing the legacy of a race of people and remembering the struggles, not just for memory sake, but in order to teach and direct.

Blacks according to the Constitution when it was written were considered sixty percent of a person, a formula devised in order to determine taxes and representation (King, 1986). During the era of the Vietnam War, Blacks were declared fifty percent of a person. In the writings of Martin Luther King he asked the question, 'Where do we go from here?' He states that out of every good thing that Whites have, Blacks have one half of that, half the income and half the advantages. Coincidentally, the Blacks have twice the bad things, such as, substandard housing, unemployment, and even the rate of infant mortality is greater. During these times, King's mission was to focus on 'racial justice' rather than 'critical race theory,' however, 'racial justice' is a part of 'critical race theory.' King points out that Blacks must first massively assert their dignity and worth (p.41). He also states that Blacks should stand up against the system that oppressors develop a strong majestic sense of values, and no longer be ashamed of being Black. He realized it would not be easy because of the hundreds of years of being trained that you are inferior to Whites, however, it is the only way of changing what has been laid before us. Even with all of the obstacles placed before Blacks, I truly believe that just beginning with an aesthetic foundation could prove to tear some barriers down.

The disadvantage of having this kind of education in the school systems may be contributed to teachers not feeling confident in teaching aesthetically. This problem could be overcome if they consider that fact that they probably do this anyway in their normal teaching, they are just not doing it with art. No one will consider this style of

teaching worthwhile in pursuing, if there are no guidelines. During the discussion, the youth may want to focus on the negative aspects of the works. Trying to contend with the inattentive and unconcern behavior many youth exhibit in today's classrooms is a great concern. Last, Black youth may have a problem with opening up to their teachers or even with other students around.

The advantages of incorporating this kind of program in the classroom are: (1), students relating the aesthetic values of the works of art to their present and future lives. (2), students are able to discuss the negative or positive aspects of the works and hopefully choose the positive aspects and apply them to their lives. (3), teachers may want to incorporate this type of teaching to their curriculum in order to promote elevated moral standings among Black youth. (4), this kind of program will grow in every aspect of teaching Black youth around the country or even around the world. (5), people in the education field and other institutions will begin to see that art is important in connecting human beings to their spiritual selves, as well as, a tool that can be used in all aspects of education. (6), educators and administrators will begin to have a greater understanding about aesthetic education in the schools and other agencies.

Today I don't have to wonder whether Black youth have had the privilege of learning about art, about artists, and relating art to their experiences. As a result of talking with other art teachers, I have learned that Black youth get to study about artists, but few Black artists. This is mainly because many Black works are not included in the art text books. I know that if Black youth are taught more about their culture and how it relates to them, they will begin to think deeper about whom they are. Learning about these works may have a positive result on the behaviors of these youth. I want to

continue to work towards the possibility of Black youth expressing in a positive way, how Black art can relate aesthetically to their life.

To bring out those good expressions, critical race theory can be used in positive ways to help give Black youth a sense of direction. To understand how, let's look at the meaning and beginnings of critical race theory. Angela Harris (2001), a critic of racism, expresses that critical race theory has become an indispensable tool for making sense of it all (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Delgado and Stefancic points out that although critical race theory began in the legal arena, it has spread in different segments of our society. It began as a movement developed by activists and scholars who were interested in the relationship between race, racism, and power. Critical race theory became an issue in the mid-1970s, when these lawyers, activists, and legal scholars across the country became aware that the advances of the civil rights era of the 1960s began to loose ground. They realized that this new form of racism was more subtle than in the past and a new more progressive way of fighting it needed to be found. According to Delgado and Stefancic, critical race theory was a spin off from critical legal studies and radical feminist movements, as well as, ideals from such figures as, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, Cesar Chavez, Martin Luther King, Jr., the Black Power movement, and the Chicano movements of the sixties and early seventies.

Today many individuals in education have become interested in critical race theory in order to understand issues in schools, such as discipline, hierarchy, tracking, curriculum and history of curriculums, IQ and achievement testing (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Other subgroups have spun off from critical race theory, such as; Asian American, Latino-critical, Queer-crit interest group, and Native American groups who

have focused their movement on priorities that concern them. Those interests have a wide range, such as, the Latino and Asian scholars focus on immigration theory and policies, along with language rights and discrimination laws. The Native Americans address indigenous people's rights, sovereignty, and land claims.

Critical race theorists believe in common ideas; however, they are not completely identical to each other (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). They do believe that racism is ordinary, not aberrational – ‘normal science,’ common everyday experience of most people of color in this country. This is because racism is difficult to cure or address. For the most part, many White people believe that there is no racism mainly because they are not the receiver of this treatment. Only the cases that are the most blatant forms of racism can be addressed and dealt with, such as, refusal to hire because of race and turning down a mortgage loan because of race. Another fact critical race theorists agree on is that our society exists on the notion that white is always right and color is the other. In other words, when you are white you are somehow better than any other race. This has a definite psychological affect on anybody whether you are on the receiving side or not. This feature is called ‘interest convergence’ or ‘material determinism,’ because it advances the interests of the elite Whites and the working class segment of society (p. 7). I am under the assumption that the authors are talking about all working class people because they never pinpointed the specific group in that segment of the population. I can however, only assume that this segment is represented by mainly Whites. Delgado and Stefancic, also stress that this particular feature only occurs for the benefit of Whites rather than Blacks. A third idea of the critical race theorists is ‘social construction,’ which consists of the fact that race and races are the products of social thought and

relations. What does this mean? This simply means that the society we live in invents race and races; it manipulates the term and can decide to retire it at will. In other words, it is convenient to have different races for the purpose of dominance. The critical race theorists make a significant point about genetic endowment, such as hair and skin color and hair texture, which plays a small part in the difference in human beings. They simply want society to realize that we have more in common than differences, which are the 'higher-order traits:' personality, intelligence, and moral behavior (p. 8). The problem is that our society chooses to ignore those 'higher-order traits that could bring us together by simply changing the focus. The critical race theorists have noticed that the dominant society from time to time, depending on the interest of the day, show difference to a particular race as the need for the labor market shifts. Right now the need is Hispanics since they have become the largest minority work force group in this country today. The Japanese have also become very important because of their advancements in technology. Each minority group has from time to time been on the value scale in the history of our society.

The final concern of the critical race theorists I want to mention is the notion of 'unique voice of color' as pointed out by Delgado and Stefancic (2001, p. 9). This means that because of someone's background, history and experiences, he/she maybe able to relate to someone who has not had that same background, more effectively, so that a person can relate better. For example, a Black person being able to speak on race and racism with a sense of unique perspective to help a White person have that sense of the topic. There are so many areas that can be researched under the idea of critical race theory; however my focus is on Black culture. If we take a look at the painting on the

next page, we can see how understanding where you came from is important to knowing who you are. Many Black youth only have television and radio to teach them about life. If we take a moment and look at the painting we can learn many things about one family, which might relate to the Black youth we come in contact with. Hopefully, this will give them a critical eye in looking at his or her family in order to relate experiences. I must note that regardless of the period of the painting, there is something to relate to.

The painting below depicts a historical element on Black culture, which has to do with a generational connection. George Andrews the father of Benny Andrews became a folk artist who in this piece focused on historical and family elements in his own family. I chose this work because it showed family connections which he was proud of. It showed his work ethics and a sense of kinship which was his moral obligation to his family. He wanted to show his pride in his family and also his possessions, such as his horse, and home, and land.



Figure 4, "The Andrew Family Tree"
George Andrews

Potential Significance

It is important that Black youth be given positive methods for dealing with life and each other. Teachers are at a loss for identifying ways to produce self reliance, care for others, and respect of authority among this group – Mainly because Black youth have no fear of authority or they appear to have a concept of distrust for adults. This study is important for society as a whole because as small numbers of youth have been conditioned to think a certain way, the concept may spread to other groups and that downwards shift of seemingly unawareness could develop across the board. The result of this study can change the make-up of curriculums all over the nation, by introducing the use of art in every subject. I have noticed that this has already begun to happen in small numbers. Fine arts county coordinators in Atlanta, Clayton, and Fulton have sent e-mails stating that workshops have sprung up around the metro Atlanta area to show academic teachers how to connect the arts to their subject area. The greater attention to this process of teaching Black youth in schools may give them a sense of self and develop an awareness of values.

After teaching in the same middle school for 16 years, I have noticed a great change in the climate. Although students are generally the same, I have witnessed a change in the respect students have, not only for adults but for each other. Akbar (1998) points out that we must get to the root of the social make up of how we view ourselves. He states that our experiences have shaped who we are and it is up to each one of us to learn what that means. Dewey (2001) also believed that we learn from our experiences - he stated that children are social beings - they learn from watching and reacting to others.

Helping teachers and parents become aware of the aesthetic benefits that our Black youth can obtain from Black art with the focus of teaching moral education is an important feature in this study. According to Caron Caswell Lazar, the Greeks used fables involving animals to teach the aspects of character education (back cover). If using fables of animals in ancient Greece can encourage higher conscious thinking, the possibility for the same to occur through the use of Black art has just cause to be tried.

After many years of teaching art, and observing Black youth, I needed to understand what caused the differences in moral values. This research project has allowed me to come to some conclusions regarding the Black youth and the relationship between *what or who* these works of art created by Black artists can produce. This study will best benefit teachers, parents, and mentors because this will give a deeper meaning to introducing the arts and relating it to the needs of the Black youth.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Rise To Black Awareness

The Right Shoes

You think you know how sure you are,
placing one step, another.
Each choice you make to place your feet
may cost you going further.
Your mom and dad have told you why,
but you insist you can't comply,
because your buds are doing this,
your impatient heart says, you must insist.

So choose your shoes with open mind,
letting no one point and tease.
The right pair may be the one you find,
to set your heart at ease.
Look here, look there, and everywhere,
to find that special pair.
Keep knowing that there is a hand,
to keep you from despair.

Search down and high and oh so deep,
look over the ones with flash and heap.
Your hand may hold that perfect one,
give cause for friends to pry.
Strive on to walk with head held high,
regardless of the weather.
Your world of friends, you can't deny,
are clueless, altogether.

Don't let your choice hold you back,
from standing on that step.
The right shoes have a special knack,
of giving you that extra needed pep.
No matter where you are in life,
remember to find the good.
Even a pair of shoes with a stripe,
can help you to become the one that stood.

Mariah Spann

Making good choices is imperative to becoming morally whole. This poem was written to metaphorically connect choosing the right shoes to everyday choices Black youth make.

Momma said; "Treat others as you have them to treat you," "Don't say anything if you can't say something nice," "Never Lie, cheat or steal," "Say yes ma'am and no ma'am," "Say yes sir and no sir," "Keep your dress down," and "Keep your pants zipped." These were quotes from my mother to live by as we grew into adulthood in the South.

In this section I will introduce several bodies of literature: (1) critical race theory my theoretical framework; (2) art education and Blacks in the South; (3) the historical development of Black art in the United States; (4) Black moral principles, Black art, and culturally relevant curriculum for Black youth.

The possibility exists to create a curriculum using Black art to teach moral education to Black youth. There is a potential need to enhance moral education for this group and by using art as a major component for teaching in schools, this can be achieved. In doing this, we must first understand the cultural make-up of Black youth. Reviewing the history of Blacks in the United States will help discover what unravels the moral fiber of Black youth.

Many literary or critical sources would have me believe the idea of moral character is a loose concept when dealing with Black youth as a whole because of what is perceived. Exploration of Black youth's connection to spirituality and how their spiritual development is affected by the political and social aspects of society here in the United States can be a great additive. When talking about Black youth, it is important to dig

deeper into the background, social makeup, and vast perspective of the group, including gender, socio-economics, and age range.

Theoretical Framework

My theoretical framework is critical race theory (Bell, 2004) with an emphasis on Black art and aesthetics. The interpretive aesthetic values of moral principles by Black youth in critiquing Black art encouraged stories from their life. This data also connect the relationship of moral principles to the *mis-education* of the Black race which ultimately affects the Black youth, according to theorists such as DuBois (1906), Farrakhan (2003 & 2006), Ladson-Billing (2003, 1998 & 1995), Anderson (1988), Stefancic (2001), and others. My theoretical perspectives of related works will span across gender roles of this group, political, social attitudes, and religious concepts outlining the culture of Black experience.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory was developed as a result of several movements began by a group of Frankfurt school philosophers from Germany, which ultimately migrated to the United States. These theorist began to study the vast number of social injustices, critical legal studies, radical feminist movement, and a radical wave of Blacks who believed in the freedom of Black Americans, soon followed, such as Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, Cesar Chavez, Martin Luther King, Jr., the Black Power movement, and the Chicano movements of the 60s and early 70s. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), “critical race theory movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power” (p. 2). These theorists discussed the whole notion of how race shaped the hopes

and pitfalls of American minorities. Delgado and Stefancic also suggested that this theory can be used in schools in order to “understand disciplinary problems and hierarchy, tracking, controversies over curriculum and history, and IQ and achievement testing” (p. 3). The beginnings of critical race theory in the mid 20th century specifically, in the 70s, sprang up as a means to address the relationship between Blacks and what was happening to their civil rights in the United States. This group of lawyers, activists, and legal scholars noticed that the efforts of the Civil Rights movement during the 60s, was beginning to slip backwards. They noticed that instead of racism being overt and outright, it had become a subtle and growing force. Critical race theory was chosen as my framework because it allows me to look at underlying causes for Black youth moral behavior and design a way to bring about balance using art. My goal is to link particular problems related of this inquiry based on research developed by theorists that support these phenomena. Critical race theory can bring social awareness and lead to the implementation of Black art curriculums that will incorporate real life lessons. Black youth can make critical analysis through viewing positive and negative works of Black art.

This study is based on many of the ideals of theorists like West (2001 & 2004), King (1986), Hooks (1994, 1995, & 2003), Akbar (1998, 1996, &1985), Reese (2000), and others who discuss the relationship between democracy in American society and Black culture. Each theorist makes particular analogies about influences that have cased what is happening with Blacks. Na’Im Akbar (1998) expresses the importance of knowing one’s self. To dig deep down in one’s soul and correct the ills of the past that has been created by others, but has been continued because of self misunderstanding.

West (2001) explains that religious culture is a major force in Black traditions and directs the lives of the young and old. He also informs us that democracy may have influences of inequality and racism on Blacks in the United States. Reese (2000) contributes other results of the lack of appropriate moral reasoning that may exist among Black youth such as, mistreatment of young females by Black males. He also locates the origin of this seemingly rebellious attitude exhibited by Black youth. Each of these ideas has a bearing on the reaction of Black youth, which is why education is imperative for the awakening of this group. Educational pedagogies in the past have been focused on text which has been mainly for the developing subjects in the mainstream schools (public schools) in the United States. In this inquiry I would like to establish a pedagogy that will direct educators on how to encourage positive character of Black youth in the United States through the use of Black art.

It is an enhancement to this research by introducing an excerpt from *Know Thy Self* as quoted by (Chinweizu, 1987, as cited in Akbar, 1998).

... it's most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized, the control through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. (p. ii)

Akbar discusses knowledge and how it allows a person to know self. He also mentions the presence of outside forces can alter one's genetic code. By altering one's habits those forces are sustained over a certain period of time and in turn diminish the ability to develop good patterns and the possibility of leaving records. Patterns and record keeping

allows a race of people to pass down customs and beliefs. I am taking the position that Black youth have somehow lost many of the qualities of genetic coding, but through careful planning, this can be changed with the infusion of Black art. Meaning works of art created by artists who happens to be Black.

Keeping records through art is one of the ways Black people can make sure that their beliefs and customs are preserved. Many Black artists have recorded everyday life for centuries. Using these works to promote moral education may, in fact, elevate the mental picture Black youth may or may not have of themselves.

According to Akbar, each civilized group has struggled to preserve their collaborative information. He states that each generation has the role to preserve and maintain the consciousness of the previous generations (1998). *See picture no. 5.* This photograph of a Black family in the 1920s shows a complete unit of an immediate family. Before this time, Blacks were not featured as a family; they were mainly shown as products and figures of manual labor. Being able to see families of color as a unit gave Blacks a sense of pride and hope. I chose this photograph, first to show that Blacks cared about family units, as well as the next group. The criticism of many Black men for leaving wives and children to find their way or to provide a way to send money back, deals with strong moral issues. Many Black men today are under the same moral scrutiny to prove that they are the men of the house and providers of the family. When the father is present, the Black youth has a better chance to develop moral principles; however this is not always the case because the man in the house must be the man. So choosing this photograph identifies that the man is an important element in the home.



Figure 5, The Bigger Family Portrait

It is the responsibility of a generation to equip its successor with an awareness of their “*true*” nature. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each generation to develop self-knowledge in order to know who and what they are. This process is done through education.

Education, according to Akbar, has the responsibility to mold *identity*. In today’s society, Black youth are faced with the ills of the past, as well as the codes of the present. These codes function within a system that is post-structuralistic (*copies of copies*) in nature. According to Weaver (2004) in a class discussion, post-structuralism reflects the possibility that we as humans are by products of each other and as a result create by products as we go through the journey of life. Akbar (1998) states that in order to become really human, which is what we all are striving for; *one must be educed, brought forth or brought out*. Identifying that Black youth may or may not be lacking identity is not the issue in this paper; however, the issue deals with what or whom they are identifying. Akbar’s (1998) idea on identity is to help each person to know who they are

in order to become accepted in the human community. Another key point he mentions is that in education, one must identify with a name that becomes the symbol of identity, such as Black youth or gangs, which as he points out is the language of the name range from the nationality, native tongue, culture, history, and social function laid out by the teacher of the group or family. Akbar states that with this name, a person carries the codes and history that they bring into the world. These codes can be identified through works of art created by Black artists regarding identity in the Black community as well as schools. View the painting below, it displays moral values through a helping hand. “The Soup Kitchen” shows us the kindness extended to those in need. When you look at the work you see on the left that the cook is expecting many people from the three large pots displayed on the counter. You look around more, you also see that one man already has his plate, which led you to wonder if there is another station that the artist is not showing that he could have gone to. If you take a look at the woman at the bottom, you can even

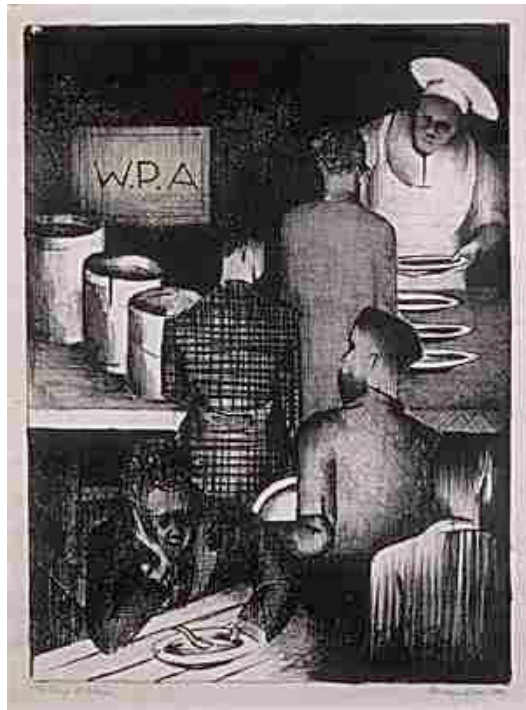


Figure 6, “The Soup Kitchen”
Norman Wilfred

assume that the place will allow the people to relax for a moment after they are finished with their meal. There is no rush to go to the next place or perhaps she will return for seconds.

Helping one's fellowman is a good example of moral character shown in Black culture, although there are exceptions to any rule. In order to have this quality, one must have those human aspects that encompass basic moral codes - one aspect is to have empathy for others. Another aspect of the code is the ability to self inspect. Akbar states that as Black Americans, as well as any human being, we must learn to appreciate the individual roles we all play in directing our own path (Akbar, 1998). He points out that we must prevent "*mis-education*" from occurring. One way to do this is to become familiar with the *personal self* and know what unique qualities and peculiarities we possess and realize that it is only a small part of the bigger self. According to Akbar, many people fail to develop their gifts and accomplish their potential. Many Black Americans have been *mis-educated* to reject their uniqueness by believing that they are 'ugly,' 'too fat,' 'too skinny,' 'too tall,' and 'too short,' (1998, p. 26).

Cook (2004), author of *The Real Deal: A Spiritual Guide for Black Teen Girls*, tells us that it is important to encourage our young people to see themselves differently. She points out Blacks have been misdirected through magazines and television; they are plagued with big lips, wide noses, extremely dark skin, big butts, or nappy hair. This is viewed as not beautiful. Even some Black artists have fallen in the trap of creating works of art that depicts their own people with these features, to become famous in the art-world or even because of lack of knowledge. This can be seen in the work on the next page. Cook also states that despite the strong efforts of human beings through slavery, racism,

oppression, and segregation, we as a people, and as individuals are still surviving. In spite of these ills; we must redirect Black youth by infusing Black art into everyday curriculums. Show Black youth positive works of art and have discussions on the aesthetic meanings of these works of art. Give Black youth a guide for discussing and analyzing these works of art that can introduce aesthetic and moral values.



Figure 7, “Nous Quatre a Paris”
Palmer Hayden

This depiction of Blacks with big lips is a stereotype that many artists use to indicate the differences of Black features and the features of other races. I will discuss this painting later on during the group discussion with the participants. Explaining to our youth the good aspects of being Black is important to enhancing their self-esteem. Learning what is meant by aesthetic values in art can also be related to moral values that may be buried deep down in the souls of many of our Black youth. Teaching teachers how to introduce aesthetics into the classroom is important to getting a hold on moral education.

One important figure in helping direct aesthetic education is Maxine Greene (2001), a professor of educational philosophy. The aesthetic aspects of Greene's work draws on popular culture, art, literature, poetry, and film. Although her work emphasizes these things, she makes note that she is, first of all, a philosopher of education. "Aesthetics, she says, is the term used to single out a particular field of philosophy" (p. 5). She notes that some people believe that aesthetics "has to do with kinds of experiences associated with reflective and conscious encounters with the arts" or she says, it may focus on the way in which it can become an object of experience and the effect it has in changing how we see nature, human beings, and all existence (p. 5). This may be for many Black artists to focus their subject matter, mainly on things in their background, creating works about family, friends, and people around them.

Greene states "*aesthetic*, is an adjective used to describe or single out the mode of experience brought into being by encounters with works of art" (p. 5). The educational part of this concept "is a process of enabling persons to become different" which I believe leads to freedom (p.5).

Art educators can evoke in each individual a spark to want to reach beyond usual boundaries. I also believe, as does Greene that a person can achieve individual freedom by embracing the belief that any appearance of obstacles can be broken, however she also states that, "freedom means to be engaged in searching for or creating an authentic public space" (p. 6). Art educators have the power to allow each student the opportunity to experience new techniques, and technologies. Art blends with a mixture of other disciplines, such as, reading, math, and writing, also civic life. Covington and Bailey (2000) wrote about these disciplines in *Politics, Public Art, and Public Education*.

Greene (1995) points out in *Releasing the Imagination*, how art plays two important roles in school curricula: (1) to release the imagination of students, to allow students to see what they believe in where they are socially, and (2) how they fit in society. Greene states that “it should be education for a more informed and imaginative awareness, but it should also be education in the kinds of critical transactions that empower students to resist both elitism and objectivism, that allow them to read and name, to write and to rewrite their own lived worlds” (p. 147). Having the right art program is imperative to giving the Black youth power, the power to get a better understanding of self, others, and to have a connection with nature, school, home, civic environment, and his/her intellectual growth.

Philosophical Views of Theorists

The philosophical viewpoints were gathered in order to put into perspective why Black youth reflect and react to certain stimuli in a particular way. I can associate this by first defining paradigm shift, which occurs when there is change in the natural process of our existence. The word paradigm is the constellation of rules, domain assumptions, theories, discourses, and values that govern and shape a discipline at a particular historical moment (Pinar, 2000). In other words, paradigm is a “mind-set” or a perspective that dictates. Shift is the reconceptualization, a change in ideas. When we put the two ideas together, we can see how events and circumstances may affect behaviors. In the Marxist belief system it is surmised that ideas were produced from things or from the relationship between things. “Everything we know, and the means by which we may come to know it is based in the material conditions of our life” (Reynolds

1994, p. 65). With this in mind, I recall the words by Rebecca Martusewicz on how we allow things to happen.

Martusewicz (1994) states that we are in constant flux with the *inside* (the complex processes, methods and relations that affect individuals in schools, which is within the context of the *outside* (the larger social, economic, and political forces that have affected those processes over time). This flux causes a shifting action with the political tides, with economic conditions, and with our own interpretations of what matters. They point out “that as teachers and students we are constantly engaged in making sense of what we do, how we live, and what matters” (p. 3). This system of political, social, and ideological processes are entangled within a larger cultural system made up of institutions, such as families, media, schools, churches, and government, and is woven with what we say, think, teach, live, and everything else we do.

Shaquille O’Neal (2001) said it best, we need a renewed commitment to our families, others, and ourselves, “a commitment to promote those ideas and values that take us back - back to the time and place where we believed that we were the keepers of our brothers’ history” (Smiley, p. 113). Black folk history did not begin with slavery as some would have us to believe, according to Cathy Hughes (Smiley, 2001) it began 4.5 million years ago. That means that every Black person should consider the importance of knowing his/her history. That also include coming to the realization that each of us are race models. The race model has an invisible audience who are admirers regardless of a standard being met. This is a little different than a role model, who has met a standard of perfection voluntarily, but the race model has no choice but to meet that standard, says Smiley (2001). People chose to admire a role model, but a race model must bear the

burden of having to be all things to all people. An old adage goes like this: “When and where I enter, the whole race enters with me.” Blacks must consider the consequences of their actions, because it offers another chance for the world to have a bad or good impression.

Those consequences should be strongly pointed out regarding the state of education as a whole for the Black youth today. Many times I have witnessed the lack of attentiveness in my class and including other teacher classes. I have tried to introduce a variety of ideas in my class to my students in order to keep them motivated. I have noticed that many of the Black youth are finding it very hard to focus; even with things they love doing. Introducing art criticism for the most part goes over fairly well; however, many times it starts off slowly. Normally takes one or two people to start first to get the others interested. Socializing is most important to them at this stage in their life, which causes many of them to loose the concept of keeping up their grades.

Understanding the Connection of Black Culture

Even the spiritual background of Blacks in America has to do with the origination of a connection. That connection is from the beginnings, the mother continent of Africa. Although great majorities of the African people were immediately dispossessed of their culture and way of life after entering America – Some who were slaves on large plantations, were able to maintain much of their cultural connection. However, the ones who were slaves on the small farms were not so lucky. On the small farms or plantations as new slaves were introduced, many of the resident slaves took pride in showing the new ones how to fit in and leave old ways alone. This is why much of the old art created by African ancestors was forgotten or lost its importance among this group. However,

according to Patton (1998) the few now African American people who refused to forget were able to practice some of their culture on the plantations during dusk to dawn and on the Sabbath, because the slaves were left to themselves during those times. Those times also helped create the bonding needed to sustain the spiritual connection and sanity of Black slaves.

In Black culture, spirituality is the backbone of what connects man and the heavenly bodies. Art was used to bind spirit and man. The creation of spirit dolls, masks, and objects of everyday uses served as connections to spirit. The creation of the drum for instance was significant to both artifact and art form. It was considered as the tone of the African speech (Patton, 1998). The colonoware jugs, hand made quilts, and many of the artifacts were used for rituals or to connect to the ancestral spirits.

Let us look at the quilt for a second as a communication and aesthetic piece. Many of the patchwork quilts were attributed to slave women on plantations. This is a tradition which was handed down and continues even today with some Black families, however much of the quilt tradition has been widely used by many White women in today's society as an art form. Many of the early quilts during the antebellum period were hung outdoors as signs for runaway slaves to use as guides to safe houses. Many of them had spiritual messages on them which signified particular themes.

Quilts by Harriet Powers during the 1800s were known as narrative quilts. Here quilts became an oral tradition of her way of creating stories from the bible, which clearly exemplified her spiritual background and encouraged a spiritual connection with those whom associated with her work. According to Patton (1998) narrative quilts were distinctive to Black art and Black culture in American society. Much of Black art

connected with Old and New Testaments of the bible as metaphoric images rather than cultural memories of Black life. It was not until modern times that Blacks began to create works of art depicting actual memories of things which occurred to them and the people around them. Much of this spiritual attitude has continued throughout the Black culture regarding art and all facets of Black life. According to Patton, art was a means for legitimizing in American culture. This worked in every avenue of Black life.

With all this in mind, I designed each question on the questionnaire to represent things I needed to know regarding the reactions by the participants regarding the works of art. Also choosing particular works of art helped in guiding the direction of the focus of my participants. Knowing this in advance helped me to keep an open mind when participants were engaged in the discussion.

Educating Blacks in the South in Art

Blacks have had huge obstacles to overcome and will continue to face these obstacles until race relations get better. However, Blacks have continued to press on and achieve success in spite of those obstacles. This section deals with the fact that education for Blacks in the early 1900s was hard to achieve and getting special teachers such as band, art, or a foreign language.

Du Bois (1902) was very critical about the struggles of Blacks in this country. He contended that Blacks were able to get through despair because they learned to have double consciousness of leaders and the led, that of a Negro and an American. To not be cursed at or spit upon, nor have the doors of opportunity closed in his face, and to escape the wastefulness of his/her desires and genius. Through the songs they created, they were

able to have hope in the mist of turmoil, and keep their secrets of acquiring their freedom from their masters.

According to Anderson (1988) and Patton (1998), after the Civil War Blacks began to openly pursue a system which would establish education for all. Although Sabbath schools were in place, Blacks demanded a universal public education which would present a more challenging program for the education of their youth. Anderson (1988) asserted that allowing Blacks to get an education comparable to Whites would prove to impact other communities from all classes and cultures, mainly because there was great opposition.

It was ultimately thought by the Southern Whites that if Blacks began to regard themselves as qualified scholars, then they would be unwilling to accept manual labor. At this point, Blacks were responsible for educating themselves. Blacks knew that in order to become politically and economically independent, they needed educated Blacks, such as teachers, ministers, politicians, managers, administrators, and businessmen. Hiring their own teachers and paying them through their own means, educators introduced subjects they believed would allow Blacks to compete in the White dominated society.

According to Patton (1998), during the 1960s many Blacks were becoming restless because of the lack of progress on civil rights issues throughout the country. Even landmark decisions made to help Blacks were rescinded or at best undermined by the laws enacted. This caused riots in major cities all over the United States. The moral issue of anti-segregation and voting rights drives became dominating causes for Blacks during this time. A large amount of energy was put on these issues from Blacks and

some liberal Whites. Social justice, political equality, and economic opportunity was the back bone of many protest and became a theme for Black artists. By the 60s, non-violent tactics were becoming a thing of the past. Many Blacks felt that it was ineffective. So the birth of new tactics and militant organizations were formed. The old Black Nationalism movement of the 1920s and 30s were rekindled. Ideas stemmed from Black pride, Black power, and pan-Africanism were now joined at the hip with the issues of social justice, and equality be it political or economic. A group of Black artists began to think about how they could outwardly show their support for what was going on throughout the country. This was the beginnings of open voices through the works of Black artists.

Anderson (1988) continues to explain that during the 1950s, Black elementary school students received instruction in reading, spelling, writing, grammar, diction, history, geography, arithmetic, and music. Black students in Normal schools were offered standard English as well as orthography, map drawing, physiology, algebra, geometry, and teaching.

History tells us that the early days of normal schools brought art into the classroom as a means to help with the growth of industry for Black youth as well as White youth. It was not considered as art in those days, but drawing, or mechanical drawing, (*elements of art making*). According to Anderson (1988) this adopted curriculum was not just a mere copy of the White schools, but it was believed to provide the best means to understand their own historical development and sociological uniqueness. In 1916 there were only 58 public high schools for Blacks in all sixteen of the former slave states. Of that number only 37 had four-year courses, 18 had three-year

courses, and only 3 had less than three-year courses. All of the four-year and three-year Black public high schools were located in large southern cities.

According to Anderson (1988) it was Richard Wright (1883), among others, who believed that the colored race, now called Blacks, were a superior race. Contrary to what was commonly believed, Blacks were not backwards, immoral or uncivilized. Wright also went as far as to say that the main reason this appears to be so is because of the inferior means to develop in the White world. According to Anderson (1988), it is and was very difficult for Blacks to overcome inequality in a society that is foreign and disallowed sameness or balance between races. Wright (1883) pointed out that the inferior factor had only to do with color, not the ability to use the brain. Art allowed Blacks to obtain equality in a personal sense. The world that paralleled the private world of art was the limited world of work Blacks were only allowed to do (Bullock, 1967). The work world supplied Blacks with work but the lower end of descent work, such as service work, laborers in factories, and sharecropping, which was the major economic savior. These jobs were sanctioned as “nigger work.” To change this, Blacks created their own trade unions in order to be accepted as apprentices in the labor class. After Blacks gained some apprenticeships, laws were set in motion to shape how they thought of themselves. Their social order materialized in terms of a caste system, in terms of residential restriction, and mental restriction. Blacks were socially isolated to the point where they even began to think like their oppressors. They began to see themselves as Black or “colored,” which automatically meant inferior. Many Black youth grew up and lived in one area all their lives and never knew anything else other than the people in their circle and a hand full of Whites they came in contact with. Since the personal

communication of the larger society was cut off to them, Black youth had no models other than their own race. Their teachers originated in the same sociocultural setting as they were. Even those who were able to leave did not return to change typical traits of the community. This only began to change as more and more Blacks and Whites exchanged cultural ideas through underground connections.

Through the work of the Black artists, you could see the progression of historical and social issues. The work in itself told stories and taught Blacks what had happened and what was happening around them. Take a look at each of the works of art by Black artists following and you can see what I am talking about. Each of the following works of art depicts some kind of moral aspect. What I am hoping is that the works that I have chosen for my participants will cause them to use their own values and get a sense of what moral values the works are portraying and somehow infuse it with their own.



Figure 8, "Harriet Tubman Series"
Jacob Lawrence

This painting by Jacob Lawrence takes a step back to slavery days in this country. The helplessness of the person lying on the ground feels us with despair for her. It allows us to become connected with her and want to warn her of the snake that is coming towards her. They are in the woods we can see if we look to the left were there are the trunks of trees and we also notice that she is lying in a clearing, similar to a trail. We can see the image of the person walking away from her and me the viewer wanting to tell him to stop, have some compassion and help her. This painting depicts a political and moral nature of what was going on in this country years ago and what has trickled down until today. The political nature of the painting deals with White control over Blacks, needing someone to make them appear empirical. In this sense, it was important to keep Blacks in a certain position. It also shows the background of Whites as bringing the attitude from Europe and England to have servants. This is not to say that it did not occur in other countries, and this has occurred since the beginning of time. However I want to get at the base of this painting regarding why Lawrence needed to express himself through it. Lawrence's moral understanding of human rights is portrayed through the sense that you can almost feel the despair of the person on the ground. He gives you a need to care for this person and want to jump into the scene and help her. He thought it important to help people remember and not forget the Black experience. To show how curial things were and can be if Blacks don't maintain a progressive move.

The following painting could portray early Biblical times or perhaps a time in today's world. What is the moral aspect of this work? Will the participants be able to look at this work and get a feel of moral principles from interpreting what the artist is trying to say?

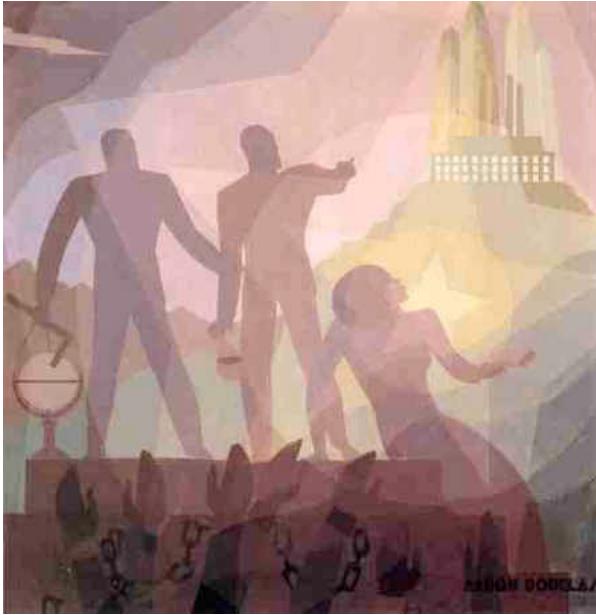


Figure 9, “Aspirations” Aaron Douglas

This painting clearly shows the hardship of people in shackles reaching up for help. It gives you a sense of neediness on the part of the subjects. Observing the look of the building in the distance, this could be of modern days. This painting shows that the people could be looking to the heavens or are they looking to the city on land? This can be determined by making a decision from values of the person interpreting and how well the artist has portrayed the subjects in the work. If the person interpreting the work has a sense of moral values, it can be found in this work of art. This work can be used to introduce behavioral or philosophical views from the interpreter. One could say that the painting represents an idea such as Plato’s Allegory or is it telling a story about Moses time in the Bible? There are other angles that we could see in this painting, for instance, the people could represent Blacks as a whole seeking to overcome the pressures of racism. As we look at each work, we can see a different impact that they all may impress us with and the impact that each has on what is happening in the society of Blacks.

This next painting shows a group of Black factory workers of whom we know migrated to the north to find jobs. The painting gives us a positive image of Blacks

wanting to work. This painting refers us back to the photograph of the Bigger family, where I talked about the father leaving home to find himself or find work. There were two reasons why Blacks had to leave the South to find work, one was industry made it difficult for them to stay in the South because of the invention of the cotton picker and other technology which cost the loss of jobs. Then two, they needed to learn new skills in order to compete for the new jobs that were coming because of industry.



Figure 10, “The Factory Workers” Romare Bearden

The painting also gives us an account on how they dressed during that time. They all wore suit coats and hats, which were a staple in the Black community. Having something on their heads gave a finished look to the way they were dressed. Each of these paintings portrays a visual narrative regarding Black culture in the South and after they migrated to the North. This was the Black artists’ contribution to educating Blacks in the South.

Although art was not an important element in the schools of the South, it was an important tool for expression in the lives of many. Hooks (1995) talked extensively about one artist in particular, Jean-Michel Basquiat, who used art to overcome a lot of deep seated problems brought on from childhood. Although Basquiat was Haitian born, we can consider him as a Southern implant to New York. Basquiat’s work spoke to

anguish of sacrifice which stem from inner spiritual turmoil. Take a look at the painting below. I learned that although much of his work was spiritual, it did not free him from his pain, which was clearly erupting inside of him. Many critics did not discuss this side of his work. They chose to believe that this was his playful side.



Figure 11, "Baptism"
Jean-Michel Basquiat

Artist Jacob Lawrence took at heart his soul's calling by taking his experiences and circumstances and creating an art career for himself. As a young person, Lawrence experienced many changes in a short amount of time. His family, as well as many Black families migrated to the north to find better jobs, better housing, better schools, and better treatment, were major events that affected the overall life of Blacks. The separation of his parents, him living in foster homes, and his move to Harlem, all had a tremendous impact. All these things and more laid the groundwork for creating his stories through his art (Leach, 2000, p. 12). Lawrence used the different events in his life to create a visual history of his family. Each of his pieces can be looked at individually and analyzed to relate to something that Black youth may be able to put into perspective.

The compositions created by this artist and countless others, present visual commentaries about Black life (Driskell, 1998, p. 40). Black families may use the works created by Lawrence and others as an instrument for directing moral character and as an archive of visual history.

Let's take a look at Lawrence's work, "The Travelers," which depicts a major event in the life of a Black family, moving to the North. Ideas pertaining to family life can be drawn on for a group discussion. The whole meaning behind the piece is centered on segregation. Lawrence's work represented a portrait of his life and his community. He believed that he embraced the Black experience (Leach, 2001). The Lawrence family moved several times by the time he was thirteen in search of a better life. In this painting you see a family resting before the trip. Lawrence's use of color helped his deliberate way to engage the viewer. You see the geometric shapes of the bags and the massive arms of the man we must assume he is the father as he allows the little girl to sit on the bench in front of him, as they wait. In America during this time the portrayal of a family traveling signified something that was looked down on and especially if they were not going to a better place. Blacks still had some embedded connections to the African ways of viewing things. It was important to "stay put," or "be constant," and if you are moving around, it appears that you are not stable or in constant flux. This was not a problem with Lawrence, because it was part of his experience and he needed to share that with us.



Figure 12, “The Travelers”
Jacob Lawrence

The Historical Development of Black Art in the United States

The 1920s proved to be an economic burst for Blacks and Whites in the United States. It was also a time when Blacks were migrating from the South to the North in record numbers. According to Patton (1998) “there was a sense of optimism, a revolt against traditional values, and an exploration of new ideals” (p. 110). With this in mind many Blacks were inspired to create things for themselves. This next painting shows Blacks working together doing manual labor, an earnest way to put food on the table.



Figure 13, "Ironers"
Jacob Lawrence

If we take a look at this painting, we notice again the bright colors used by Lawrence. He shows us how pains taken the job of working in a laundry house can be. You can tell that the women have developed massive arms from working with the large pressing irons. You can almost tell that they are in a very hot room and it appears that the way he placed the workers all together they must work in small quarters. What is the moral aspect in this painting? It is important to remember that I am bringing my own experience to this work of art. I can assume that the women have to work long hours and receive very little pay. I see that they are dressed alike, so they appear to have minimal budget for uniforms to wear. My take on this is that the moral aspect is for the workers to be treated with respect, such as a cool working place, shorter hours, and more pay. The work shows the jobs Blacks had to endure and also show that it was earnest work. This may or may not be the same way that the Black youth will interpret the work, which is why you can use key questions to get the conversation going in what ever direction they may see things.

While all of the economic movement was happening in the North, on one hand, some Blacks, such as Booker T. Washington wanted to become self-reliant and demanded social equality. Getting industrial training to obtain self respect and economic independence was one element to promote equality. On the other hand, many leaders such as W.E.B. DuBois sought political action and racial equality which they believed they deserved. America was becoming more aware of the nature of the art's expressive capabilities through plasticity and abstraction. Native forms inspired by geometric African art, used by artists like Brancusi and Picasso, helped to introduce this phase of modernistic art in America. As a result, the arts were being produced with a burst of energy and insight; however, becoming recognized in the visual arts was slow coming for Blacks. Patton states that the Black artists were being judged on the bases of the old ideas of the slave traders and planters. "White artists used Black artists as a symbol of personal freedom, strived to use this as a way to embody modernism" (p. 111). Black art work was looked at as modern, considering that it was created in that time, with a primitive form, that was not to be valued like White art. This was a way to keep White artists' works on a hierarchical level. European and White American audiences viewed Black art as works that were rooted in a subculture, to one that was inferior to mainstream America regardless of the fact that Blacks had been living in America for two centuries prior to that time. White America believed that Blacks should create works of art that centered on exotic aspects of Black life. Those scenes should include "voodoo" element as well as the cabaret (live show) element (p.111).

Additionally, Patton (1998) contends that many White patrons believed the African aspect in art was important for the development of a Black art idiom. The

downfall to this was that middle class Blacks had accepted ideals of White America and European culture and society. These middle class Blacks took the opportunity to cash in on the White culture and become a part of mainstream American society and culture. Visual artists took advantage of the interest in Black culture in order to expand modern art aesthetics and imagery, and to give White America what they wanted, and develop Black vernacular art. This was a type of art that embodied African features with Black American culture. Black artists were able to get recognition in France when they could not get noticed here in the United States. After the depression hit, many Black artists were limited in their travel to Paris, therefore the production of their work was halted.

Patton (1998), states that during the 1960s artist Houston Conwill focused on the concepts of life, culture and community, as well as the need for a spiritual continuum to validate human experience. Another artist Martin Puryear, a sculptor during the late 1970s, created his work with a humanistic approach; one inspired by the hope that the viewer will experience the site where he placed his work, in a profound manner. The following painting by Emma Amos provides symbolic and allegorical clues to the meaning of 'Equals' which pertains to being a Black female in America. This painting portrays the artist adrift who is under an economic and social oppression; she appears to be tumbling because of her dislocation with society. This work was created in conjunction with the civil rights movement during the 60s. The Spiral artist' group was formed to depict images of support for the movement. To critique this painting, I would begin by connecting the old cabin to hard times during the early days in this country. The painting shows me that the Black woman is caught in limbo because she came up from people who had a hard life of sharecropping, which I am sure affected her life to modern

days where she has to contend with supporting the flag and staying true to her beliefs as a woman. If you notice, the woman has no shoes on but she is dressed as though she would be in an office. She could be a professional person but she also has to stay in her place as a woman, as the term goes, “barefoot and pregnant” although there are no signs of her being pregnant. This painting was in protest of what was going on in America. Blacks were expected to be patriotic even though their living and economic conditions were substandard and there was a time when the Black woman had her things to overcome, which were different from that of the Black male.



Figure 14, “Equals,” Emma Amos

Early in her career Faith Ringgold, another Black female artist, created performance art along with her quilts. This was a form of expression of ideas which drew on her activism, feminism, and contemporary elements. Her quilts connected with family life. When Ringgold was a young girl, she learned sewing from her mother as a

release for having to stay at home because she was ill for sometime. Much of Ringgold's works portrayed the Black experience, a lot of it from Harlem. See next picture!



Figure15, "Tar Beach,"
Faith Ringgold

Faith Ringgold's works epitomize the oneness of family life among Black Americans. Her piece, "Tar Beach," depicts the connection between parents and children as they enjoy a warm sunny day on top of the building where her family lived. Although her family lived in the city, enjoying the outside was not a problem for them. This quilt shows an example of making due with what you have the never ending example of how Blacks are able to grow out of diversity. This too is an example of quilting which shows the history of a Black family. Experiencing a totally different life style in the South, I can still relate to this work of art in several ways regarding my family. Looking at this piece takes me back to my childhood when my family got together for picnics. The grown ups did their thing and the children did their thing. We didn't live in the city but the whole idea is the same. Story telling was done by the grown ups and the children

listened. This moral principle represented with this work of art is the respect of adults and knowing how was in charge, having a sense of safety when the adults were around.

There are a multitude of Black artists world wide that works in many mediums and subject matters. Many of them still work outside the traditional venues and produce work for everyday people just as the AfriCobra group did in the 1960s. One particular contemporary artist of today is ‘Kevin Cole,’ he was recently inducted as a member of the AfriCobra group. An example of his work follows.



Figure 16, “Wrapped in Pride” Kevin Cole

Cole points out that since 1992 his work has evolved from the use of the necktie as an icon, motif, and symbol of power. These particular works incorporate patterns and textures from traditional African cloths such as the Kente and Adinkra cloths that speak to human conditions and behaviors. This work has a sense of strength along with the impression of a spear with the linear pieces. The moral emphasis of this piece is based on pride in the Black experience. Knowing that you come from strong and eloquent people and that you share this through each generation. This piece represents the connection between a father and son. How the Black experience from the past is still rapped into the

experiences of today. The Black man's burden is still evident and even much so in the South. The piece expresses the toughness of Black faith but yet it has vulnerability about it. That knowledge can be brought out through the connection with Black art.

This is 2008 and the old ideas to control are still around in America, whereas a Black artist must be directed in his/her art content. Many Black artists have experienced that degrading idea that Black artists should paint or create a certain way in order for a gallery or museum to represent them and their work. Although many critics wanted to direct the work of Black artists and what to portray in their work, many continued to work with what inspired them. I believe that to be true in the works of William Buchanan, who has made it a point to follow what inspires him in creating his art. As we take a moment to absorb the brilliant colors and the underline message he has chosen to share with the viewer, we notice that the stereotypical images are not a factor. We have to look long and hard to predict that this work has anything to do with Black life. Understanding the values and influences that directs him, one can eventually arrive to this point when interpreting his works. I look at this work and the first thing you see are the eyes. My eyes are carried to the large key to the left of the painting. The yellow color helps guide you from bottom to top then you notice the large red leaf to the lower right corner, back up again to the figure of a woman to almost center top of the drawing. As I am looking from one point to another I begin think about the title, "The Secrets of Nature." The small figures at the bottom of the painting are standing alone. Could it mean that they are disconnected with nature, which is symbolized through the trees, the land, the sun, the woman, and perhaps the large key is symbolic to you having the secret but you are not using it? Though out Black history, connecting with nature and the spiritual

rhyme has been important. This work may be expressing to Blacks that the connection is there just unlock it. But who is the being with the large eyes? Is this God? What does this have to do with moral principles? Does this mean that we have a moral obligation to learn the secrets to nature? Or could the artist be telling us that we have the key all alone but we have to locate it and bring it out? There are so many questions we could get into with this work. One is, could the Black youth connect a moral understanding through interpreting “The Secrets of Nature?” See below!



Figure 17, “The Secrets of Nature”
William Buchanan

Blacks’ Moral Principles

In the early days of this country, expression of moral principles for Blacks was greatly affected by developments on slavery before and after the great Emancipation Proclamation. Up to this point in the history of the South moral principles for Blacks was mainly determined for them; who they would live with, work with, and belong to. A cloud of immorality hung over Blacks like a plague for centuries, controlled by others.

Blacks in Africa showed how they valued elders, women, children, and teachers. “Elders are highly respected, children are the reward of life, women are viewed as the

creators of life, and teachers are revered because no career can be learned without one” points out Jawanza Kunjufu (1996, p. 24). Kunjufu states that some Black countries in African society before and after slavery lived by a value system which was compared to The Ten Commandments (1996) Their system is called ‘Maat;’ Truth, justice, order, harmony, balance, righteousness/propriety, and reciprocity. Blacks have a spiritual foundation that they are not drawing upon. We must simply think of all the things Blacks have gone through and realize that the base is there and we must simply pull from it (1996). I realize that given the state of the country with the break down of the Black family, it is hard to think of salvation. Kunjufu asks the question; “When the home breaks down, when the father is absent, when the mother is addicted, when the family suffers from poverty, drugs, and crime, which individual or institution can come to the rescue of the children” (p. 144)? He tells us that the salvation of the Black youth lie in the hands of the entire village or community as you will. He also talks about the collective value system that Akbar (1998) and Woodson (1933) mentioned in their writings.

According to James D. Anderson (1988), in *The Education of Blacks in The South*, Samuel Armstrong in 1876, who was fundamentally indifferent and opposed to the interests of the freed slaves, believed that Blacks were saved from “moral ruin” because of slavery. J. Armstrong also stated that “the negro has one source of strength, the habit of industry acquired in the time of slavery” (p. 33). The main reason for this is because he benefited from Black strength. His ideals focused on creating a system which expressed the conservative society that favored a racial hierarchy according to Anderson. This would oppose black higher education, equal job opportunities, civil equality, and

equal political rights. Armstrong also proclaimed that Blacks were culturally and morally deficient and therefore unfit to vote or hold office in “civilized” society. James Armstrong and others like him believed that Blacks were a “savage race.” He also believed that it was the duty of the White race to rule over the weaker dark-skinned races until they were appropriately civilized, to obtain this, it would take several generations of moral and religious development. This ideal is not foreign to many Whites in this country, such as believing that White rule is justified because Whites have developed exceptional “moral strength, in guiding instincts, in power to sense things in the genius for this or that” (p. 39). Understanding the nature of the slave owners and the position of the Blacks could lead us to find out if Blacks had and have moral standing.

Moral, in the Thorndike and Barnhart (1957) dictionary, means “good in character or conduct; virtuous according to civilized standards of right and wrong; right; just: a moral act” (p. 529). Smiley (2006) tells us that ‘moral issues’ mean that “morality ultimately depends upon doing right by our fellow human beings and especially, as the Scripture says, “the least among us (p, 127).” The Georgia Education Webb site suggests that;

The goal is to raise children to become morally responsible, self-disciplined citizens. Problem solving, decision making, and conflict resolution are important parts of developing moral character. Through role playing and discussions, students can see that their decisions affect other people and things. (Retrieved on Tue. 10, 2007)

Now that we know the definition for moral it would be good to know what definition we use for civilized. According to the same source, it means “advanced in social customs,

art, and science” (p. 146). The problem with both these definitions is that Blacks were not allowed to participate in the everyday rituals as Whites did, mainly in the beginning not knowing the customs and not allowed to do certain things. I believe that Blacks in Africa were advanced in their social customs; they developed crafty works of art such as the masks and costumes. In science they created products that are still to this day incredible, including homes made from thick slabs of mud that stay cool in the summer and warm in the cold season (Akbar, 1998).

When Andrew Johnson took over the presidency after the emancipation of Blacks in 1863, the condition of the freed men and women did not change greatly, according to Thomas (2000) in *Freedom's Children*. Lincoln's plan for the south's Reconstruction was sorely compromised. Johnson granted amnesty to all white Southerners who pledged loyalty to the Union. After that, he also placed many of those same slave holders into political power. Blacks who had been newly emancipated by Lincoln suddenly found themselves pushed back under the wrath of the slave masters' political manipulations. The Fourteenth Amendment would grant citizenship and equal benefits under the law to all freed people, which allowed ex-slaves to be considered as human beings. This law did not give total freedom to all Blacks. It would take the passing of the Fifteenth Amendment to even suggest that Black males could have the ability to vote as a citizen of the Union. It was difficult for Blacks to obtain a small amount of citizenship in the South. After the 1950s Blacks were still going to the back door of White businesses to ask for work or even purchase goods from merchants. Also they were not allowed to fish and hunt in the same rivers or woods as Whites (Cecelski, 1994). All of this would have great barren on the moral character of Blacks in the United States. Look at the

painting on the next page. This painting is a satire of how Blacks were viewed and still is today by some Whites and others. This image was a dominate depiction of Blacks in the early days of this country during and after slavery. Although this particular painting was done by a Black artist, he captures the sentiment and imagery expressed by some White artists. Art about Blacks, early in this country were done to dehumanize them. They were portrayed as Big lipped, bug eyed, watermelon eating buffoons. What this work of art is saying to me is that the words white power is turned backwards to signify that Blacks are living in the shadow of Whites. They have their own idiosyncrasies but not to the extreme as this painting cast to the viewer. The idea of White power draws on the degradation of Black people. It is very obvious to me the immoral principles represented in this work. The act of holding down one group in order to keep your own elevated is a very selfish act. Perhaps the Black youth will be able to pick this out with his or her own interpretation.



Figure 18, “White Power”
Michael Ray Charles

Through every generation Blacks have had to work through the stigma of low self worth and the label of second class citizens. Over three-hundred years of mis-education caused a self hatred of Blacks to be under another kind of slavery. Through the years Blacks have always struggled to get equal rights for all. “The fundamental role of moral standing is to promote and distribute a quality standard of living for the have-nots and the have-too-littles” (West, 1993, p. 93).

Black Moral Principles in Black Art

As Black artists began to train and become recognized in other countries, some of them became known in the United States with the support of organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Urban League (Patton, 1998). This was in support of the New Negro movement, also known as the Negro Renaissance. Black artists began to introduce political, economic and social agendas that would benefit the Black communities. Driskell (1998) tells us that Black artists expressed during this time the overriding concerns about constructing self; how to be Black in America, how to be an artist, and how to arrange all of those things that represent self, in one body and one lifetime. The art work presented a devotion to cultural revitalization – Harlem was the capital of this devotion. The theme of Black artists explored Black urban experiences, Black labor, confrontation and resistance, and racial violence. Driskell also states that the Black artist helped to shape, document, and express a new visual vocabulary for the Black American experience. Many pieces created by Black artists gave and addressed historical narratives of the moral injustices in America. On the other hand, some works represented another side of Black America. Blacks began to do well, and hope was expressed through music and the

economy. This particular painting depicts Blacks at the boom of the jazz era especially during the Harlem Renaissance.



Figure 19, “Jazz Singers” Archibald Motley

This painting of the “Jazz Singers” represented positive image Blacks could identify with. Notice the energy displayed among the singers and the guitar player. Blacks have always shown a great deal of emphasis in their music, as shown here. They sang about the good and bad things that were happening in their communities and around the country. If you notice what they are wearing, I would say that they are dressed somewhat professionally, although there are three men without jackets. This says something about they cared about the way they presented themselves in public. Morally, you could see this painting two ways. One would be that some may say that they are singing the devil’s work. It has nothing to do with the church, which is immoral. Another way to look at this painting is to say that it gave Blacks a sense of belonging and a means for putting food on the table. You also could say that it uplifted Blacks around the country to a point to say that this was a way to be self sufficient in the Black community. This of course brought about positive self image, which in turn would flow to others.

What was notably visible in Harlem was also a notation of what was happening all over America in other major cities as well. This was a deliberate effort to move from under the European cultural hegemony and seek to rejuvenate Black culture. The arts were a means to define and establish membership in the Black race and simultaneously to enhance the reputation and self-esteem of Blacks in America. The Black artists believed that producing great literature and art would elevate the Black image in the European and American eyes. That idea of inferior could finally be laid to rest. They believed that their achievements would be defined by distinctive Black cultural identity, which was mostly grounded in folk culture. It was up to the Black middle class to set examples and lead the way in proving the worthiness as American citizens.

Photography came on the scene at the same time as this rebirth of the Black artists. It documented the lives of the urban middle class. Black photographers were able to use props to denote economic prosperity and education of the Black middle class. These photographers helped to create this period as well as document it. James Van Der Zee (1886-1983), one of those photographers who was considered as a documentary photographer and artist.

According to Patton (1998), in 1924 W.E.B. DuBois was integral in pushing a cultural vanguard the Negro Renaissance, which would be headed by writers and artists. DuBois and Alain Locke called for the New Negro movement to have an identifiable racial art style and aesthetic element. This union encouraged a literary journal that would be a collection of political, sociological and historical essays focusing on Harlem as the stage for a dramatic flowering of a new race spirit. Locke believed that the new up and coming generation would be capable of establishing the artistic vanguard, in style,

technique, and mostly subject matter which would show 'Black' sensibility. Black artists were faced with learning about African art right along with the White artists to gain an appreciation of the value of the African culture. Alain Locke wrote:

There is the possibility that the sensitive artistic mind of the American Negro stimulated by a cultural pride and interest, will receive from African art a profound and galvanizing influence. The legacy is there at least, with prospects of a rich yield. In the first place, there is the mere knowledge of the skill unique mastery of the arts of the ancestors, the valuable and stimulating realization that the Negro is not a cultural founding without his own inheritance. (Alain Locke from Patton, 1998, pp. 115-116)

Works of art created by Blacks during the 1930s up until the 50s were inspired and fueled by Black issues. According to David Driskell, an artist and collector of Black art, works created by Black artists emphasized issues of identity and racism; however political issues became a strong force during the 50s and 60s. Artists such as Romare Bearden, Allen Crite, Jacob Lawrence, Faith Ringgold, Charles White, Clementine Hunter, Margo Humphrey, and others, according to Driskell, have forged the role of leaders in the Black community, spiritual associations, and a realistic view of Black family life.

Another painting, the "Wanted Poster Series," (1970) by Charles White (seen on the next page) portrays a portrait of a mother and child surrounded by images of an old slave auction poster that appears to have been crinkled up and flatten out again (Driskell, 1998, p. 131). At the center bottom of the painting, White depicts a large X which is thought to represent the Nation of Islam (p. 131). The X symbolically replaces the slave

name for the mother and child; however, it also represents the large separation between Blacks and their culture (p. 131).



Figure 20, “Wanted Poster Series” Charles White

Allowing Black students to discuss this work and others can connect students to the past, which may help guide their actions in the present and future.

I believe in a moral sense, it is important for this discussion to take place because knowing one’s identity is a crucial step to breaking the trend of bondage for Blacks in the United States. Anyone of the artists I mentioned and many more have created works of art that has body and substance, which can be used for teaching. Imaging ones self in a particular situation can be enhanced by critiquing the works, especially works which display like features and positive situations of Black people. Showing works of art which also depict a religious view is one that can be talked about in a classroom setting if approached in a diplomatic way.

If we take a look at the above painting, we see the image of the mother on one side of the work then you see the child on the other side of the work, with a line that

divides them. Slaves were separated for years and that same thing is happening even today, just not literal. The colors are of dark tones which could represent the gloominess of the event. With some prompting, Black youth will be able to see the moral insinuations regarding this work, mainly because they should have gotten from the media and maybe schools at this point some information about slavery.

It is known that spirituality has been a guide for Blacks from the beginning. Although on the surface it appears that the strong force of it has dissipated, it still remains to be apart of the culture of Blacks. Connecting to this source through the use of art can help bring a relevance to the race as a whole. According to Na’Im Akbar (1998), “The way that a people think and consequently how they act is a product of what they *know*” (p. 67). Educating Black youth to know who they are through the use of art, can enrich personal growth. Greene (2001) supports this theory with her belief that coming in contact with the arts is like meeting another person. Such as, when people open themselves up to one another, new aspects are experienced. Encountering the arts can cause the same reaction when we open up and take it in (p.16). This too can we a spiritual meeting of sorts, because the experience can cause an awaking in the person who comes in contact with the works.

This piece below by Margo Humphrey shows a work that depicts a spiritual subject. Most Black youth by this time should have heard about the last supper. This painting represents the same concept but with Black subjects. The painting relates to the great Bar-B-Qs many Black families may have in the summer. It can provide many Black youth with something to relate to regarding their color and things they may enjoy eating. This painting; however can be considered as a stereotype because of the types of

foods introduced. Not all Blacks eat those types of foods. Look at the type of clothes they are wearing, they are very colorful. The painting does have lots of things referencing the Bible, as well as Egypt. You see the pyramid at the top center which is known as a Middle Eastern staple. The halos above the heads of each person for heavenly person and the dove at the bottom center of the painting signifying peace. The moral principles represented here deals with doing the right thing, caring for others. The religious connotation of this work gives Blacks a connection to what is held an important part to Black culture. Even those Blacks who do not have a particular religion have heard of the last supper. It deals with the betrayal of someone you should hold near and dear. This painting for Blacks could represent the different personalities one person may have and each person is a choice you make. The one that is Judas is the one representing the bad decision.



Figure 21, “The Last Bar-B-Q” Margo Humphrey

Black Moral Principles, Black Art, and Developing Cultural Relevant Curriculum

For the Black Youth

Growing up in a small town in the South proved to be worthwhile and hard for my

sisters, brothers, and myself. I had strong parents who believed that there is a supreme being who watches over all of us and that we should all strive to treat people with respect. They also explained to us that if we believe in something long and hard enough and worked towards it, we will see the results of what we believe. For Blacks, achieving our hopes and dreams did not come easy. Blacks were split up and kept apart to keep them confused, backwards, and lost, however, many of us were able to go on to do great things. It was also possible for some of the positive customs and cultures from the motherland (Africa) was maintained through our grandparents and great-grand parents with sure luck by nature. So what happened with the transference to the Black youth today? Why do we have so many of them going to jail or getting into gangs? It is perplexing to me to see our Black youth engage in bad and ill-mannered behavior. What I want to do is to deter the seemingly immoral behavior by introducing curriculum that educates Black youth moral principles through Black art throughout my school and perhaps others.

Earlier I wrote about Blacks during the early days of this country and how moral principles connected them to what was happening in their lives, such as helping each other learn to read. How even though they were stereotyped with the image of being savages and needing to be saved, they picked themselves up and made better lives for themselves. The problem is, now our Black youth have fallen to similar patterns. Many Black adults have begun to accept the ideas about the Black youth; they are assumed to be disrespectful, rude, and immoral. According to the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan (2003), Black people have accepted the attitude of inferiority even though it is

an unwritten law. This system of beliefs has been passed down to our Black youth, which is demonstrated by their self-destructive behavior. How did it get this way?

I realize as a parent and a teacher I might focus on the bad behavior more than I should. Jeanne and Don Elium (1999) tell us that “no matter how misdirected we think they are, they deserve our efforts to hear their undeveloped thinking, their hearts’ desires, their survival needs, and their souls’ callings” (p. 100). We must remember that they have feelings too and they have not learned how to ask for what they need. We must also remember that we must educate our youth in order for them to know what to expect in life. We can begin by making sure that our homes and schools portray what is needed in the lives of the Black youth. Romare Bearden portrays a nude woman with seemingly



Figure 22, “Prevalence of Ritual” Romare Bearden

shame, sitting in front of a fully dressed woman who appears to be an older lady. The introduction of nudity in this work and in the media to some extent a strong force to be reckon with. The woman on the left appear to cover up for both of them. She is wearing the puritan dress, which seems to suggest morality. You notice that the work is

very dark, which almost suggest that this should be kept in the dark. What is the purpose of the bull at the top of the work? Is it just to say that this is located on a farm and the nude woman is merely visiting? What is the moral message in this work which is a collage? Blacks have gotten a negative portrayal throughout history regarding promiscuity; however, the ones making these accusations are the ones causing it. Black women were taken and raped for centuries by their masters. Black men were used as baby making machines, as well as for the pleasure for the White mistress. We should not wonder why Blacks have so many problems to overcome. We have been taught that Black people caused their own problems. That Black people are immoral beings and need to become like Whites in order to get ride of these problems.

Would Black youth be able to determine what the moral principle is in this work? Remember the days when I was a teen, TV was suggestive, you did not see what we see now the same with other forms of the media. However, it was around, but it was not as open as it is today. You would find the occasional “Playboy,” and “Hustler,” magazines but now you have so many that you don’t dare count them all. There are movies like “Sex in the City,” and channels like HBO, Show Time, Playboy, and other channels which show explicit acts. I believe that the youth of today can tell me more today than I care to know. This work could be interpreted as a moral warning to the Black youth. Be more conscious about the things you do, the way you look, and where you do it.

Farrakhan (2006) explains “the challenges that we face is that the educational system is a failure and it is designed that way so that the mass Black and poor will always fit into socio-economic paradigm” (par. 3). He also points out that “the educational system was never designed to cultivate the talent within the human being. True

education cultivates what God has put within so that it comes out to glorify God and better the person, family, community, and the world” (par. 4). He states that we should stop telling our youth that the system works for all. He informs us that we should stop telling Black American youth that “if you work hard, you will achieve. You will achieve only if they open a door for you to achieve; the door does not open for everybody” (par. 4). Doors can be opened by introducing a better curriculum which has been designed for the Black youth. We have long known that the present system has left something out for the Black youth. This current system left out the historical connection for this group, it left out a way to shake the state of depression we as a group, seem to be in, that trickles down to the Black youth. Before the 1950s, even the Black art by Black artists would have been a way to connect to the past or even give an account of what was going on, had the system allowed room for it in the curriculum. The work by early Black artists dealt with political, social, and economic ideas, which were used to direct the emotions of many Blacks during the Black Renaissance. Even the quilts in early days were used as a tool for giving direction. Works by Black artists have taken on many subjects, however many of the underlying causes for creating certain works have stayed the same. Religious, political, and family orientation, are just a few. Now that the Black artists’ works have taken many directions, it is still possible to educate our Black youth about moral values. We have to make sure that the works of art chosen to represent moral values is introduced to them. Further more insure that a reasonable amount of discussion is taken place with in a learning environment. Communicating to the public a greater appreciation for works of art by Black artists is one part a consideration for this to be

added to the curriculum. It is important to get this respect in order to achieve results for the Black youth.

“If I never does do nothing more while I live, I shall give my children the chance to go to school, for I considers education the next best thing to liberty”

(One freedman from Mississippi). (Thomas, 2000, p. 6)

The education of Blacks undoubtedly has been different and extremely difficult in America than any other race, to date, and has met with multiple moral implications throughout the history of education, even today. Blacks’ schooling has been primarily based on the educational system of White America, but has prevailed in spite of the obstacles. Discussing the education of Blacks can not be done properly without first talking about the beginnings of the whole educational system of the United State in its early days and how this system works today, also what influenced the implementation of this system.

The educational system as we know it in this country had multiple beginnings (Kaestle, 2001). I want to discuss a little about how and why education began in this country and explain how teaching moral education in the schools is connected to all parts of a curriculum and even the arts. The idea of teaching morally in schools did not just begin, since the beginning parents have always worked to educate their children with moral guide lines (p. 12).

As a parent of three children, I have always tried to remember to teach my children what I learned as a child, to have self respect and to respect others. This is one aspect of a moral education for my children. It does not matter if we teach our children at

home, a private institution, or public school, having a moral foundation is first and foremost, in my opinion.

In the early days of this country's many educational systems, it was the parent who ultimately determined the importance of education for their young. They wanted their children to become productive citizens of the community. In society today, as parents, we also have the responsibility to nurture, teach, and guide our children as they grow up. Parents of different races have beliefs and aspirations that may differ from each other; however those parents who are truly parents have some things in common. They all want their children to succeed. Usually parents make ways possible for their children to excel in things parents may not have been able to excel in. For Blacks, this was a great undertaking, "Black men worked long hours and then stood armed guard to protect teachers, students, and schools from angry mobs who felt strongly that his people did not have the right to be educated" (Thomas, 2000, p. 6). Many Black families were learning how to read without the knowledge of some slave masters.

As I begin to describe education in this country, I will note the vast developments of teachings in the schools stemming from the different forms of moral education. The different curriculums stretched through the industrial age and to now, an age of post-structuralistic ideas, which includes many aspects, even art. What is a moral education anyway? Could this be the values of the teacher, the culture of the school, the community, or the government? A moral education could mean that students respect authority, have empathy and caring for others, exemplify the difference between right and wrong decision making, and it could go on. What I want is for our young to become

productive citizens in their communities and usually follow in our own footsteps.

Schools are expected to produce this in our children.

Joel Spring (2001), asks these question about schools; “Were public schools established to ensure that all citizens would be able to protect their political and economic rights? Or, were public schools established to protect the power of the elite by controlling the economic and political ideas taught to students? Another question is, were public schools established to ensure the dominance of Protestant Anglo-American culture over Native American, Irish American, and Black American cultures?” (p. 1). The answer will be found rhyme of where you stand with the history of our country.

However, Spring states that the purpose of public schools during the nineteenth century was to ensure the dominance of Anglo-American values. Spring believes that the Anglo-Americans’ dominance was being challenged by each of these groups, which is why they felt threatened. The Anglo-Americans wanted to create a national culture that would exemplify Protestant values. The Protestants believed they were superior to each of these cultures. Schools were established in order to manage ideologies by creating and distributing this knowledge to the masses. Therefore, schools were meant to be distribution centers, so to speak, for the children of the elite to obtain this knowledge.

The schools were also to serve as a place that the young could be educated to understand public issues and elect virtuous leaders.

During the eighteenth century, schools in the northern British colonies were supported by the town and parents of the children attending. These schools accepted White boys over girls and allowed no Blacks (Kaestle, 2001). In the French and Spanish colonies, education was most important for industrial purposes. The students’ education

was taught on the farms or plantations and was free from governmental control and the church, but parents were expected to pay a fee.

Knowing that there were so many different systems in various places in the early days of the country, Horace Mann (saw a need to unify these schools because he realized that there were many injustices being served in the present ones. He talked about the bad conditions many of these schools were in and the poor materials used. Later, by 1840s, the Northeastern states were under an industrial revolution which caused a need to reform schools (Kaestle, 2001). Most small schools were consolidated to the larger schools, which made them into districts and under state control. Schools grew as a result of many Roman Catholics immigrating in large numbers to this country. Later, there would be a clash of curriculums in the new common schools. The Roman Catholics would protest the dominance of a Protestant form of Christianity in the schools. Who is morally correct?

There are many angles we could look at moral education in American schools throughout its history. Spring (1997) suggests that what is considered moral depends on whose defining it. He states that violence and racism are basic to the history of American schools because since the beginning to now, educators have preached that there should be equality for opportunity and good citizenship and at the same time, exhibit intolerance of other religions. They also were for racial segregation, discrimination against immigrants, and believed that other cultures should commit cultural genocide (p. 5). How is it possible to want the best for your child and not want the best for all children? Is this morally correct? How can you say that you believe in the teachings of Jesus Christ, proclaiming that you are a Christian, and allow racism to prevail? What about teaching

the bible in schools? I do know that the value system of the Protestant church, in the beginning was the main focus in schools. Now there are many church based schools all over the country. Many people have tried from time to time to allow prayer back into the public schools with no avail, but that does not stop them from trying. These are some question I must ask myself when I look into how our schools are run.

Another question I must ask about schools today is; are schools equipped to teach a moral education to Black youth? Can we get out of the violent state and move into an aesthetic understanding for these students who seemingly have been pushed to fin for themselves? Could one of the answers be to develop an aesthetic curriculum for these students? This aesthetic curriculum would include visual art.

Having art in schools has been considered in modern times, mainly an unimportant segment of the curriculum for many administrators, parents, legislators, and some academic teachers. It has been through my observations and speaking with others, I have concluded that art has been very important in making students socially and educationally rounded. Eliot Eisner (1998) believes that if art is not entwined in education, then the cognition and epistemology in regards to it cannot adequately blossom. He realizes that art has been forced on the back halls of school curriculums; however, Eisner states that, “The job of making a painting, or even its competent perception, requires the exercise of mind” (p. 38). He notes that in order to do a painting, one must possess these skills: visualization technique, composition, sensibility, and inventiveness. All these skills are important for the development of the mind.

Gardner (1985) identifies seven independent intelligences: verbal/linguistic, musical, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and

later he added, naturalistic as an eighth one (Burden and Byrd, 1999, p. 255). Therefore, Eisner (1998) realizes and wants psychologists to acknowledge that the creation of a picture, requires at minimum, knowledge, which are qualities that must be seen, modulated, transformed, and organized in one's work (Eisner from Willis and Schubert, 1991, p. 40). These qualities help us to broaden our view of what it means to know and think (p. 40).

Schools with a stable arts program, have the opportunity to give their students a connection with history and future insights. Those art programs give importance to enhancing and elevating more power to the creative side of human growth (Eisner from Willis and Schubert, 1991, p. 36). This power will allow each person to become elevated in his/her own inner connection with self and others. Greene (1995) brings to point that human beings need something that deeply absorbs their interests, that something which can prevent boredom. She stresses how important it is to see through many diverse eyes, such as, Schutz, who talks about "multiple realities," which "marks lived experiences in the world." Greene quotes Schutz's perception of multiple realities. He says, 'it is the meaning of our experiences and not the ontological structure of the objects, which constitutes reality' (p. 112). In this thesis, the introduction of these theological insights advantage to making the arts equally important as other subjects in our culture. This in turn, will give art a power base for Black youth.

What is Art Education?

John Dewey (1934) describes art education as an experience; the kind of experience that constitutes meaning of medium in art. He states that "perceptions supply judgment with its material, whether the judgments pertain to physical nature, to politics

or biography.” He makes mention that having adequate experience is not a given, it is an act of controlled inquiry. Dewey points out that it is easier to tell people what they should believe regarding the arts, than to expect them to be able to discriminate and become unified about judgments pertaining to the arts. More than none expect to be told what to believe about the arts, because many have not learned to integrate it into their lives with some degree of sensitivity. Art education connects with human existence in various ways, according to Dewey, the dictionary states that the verb “to civilize” is defined as “to instruct in the arts of life and thus to raise in the scale of civilization” (p. 336). He points out that “works of art are the most intimate and energetic means of aiding individuals to share in the arts of living” (p. 336). He writes:

To some degree we become artists ourselves as we undertake this integration, and by brining it to pass, our own experience is re-oriented. Barriers are dissolved; limiting prejudices melt away, when we enter into the spirit of Negro or Polynesian art. This insensible melting is far more efficacious than the change effected by reasoning, because it enters directly into attitude (1934, p. 334).

Art education allows us, according to Eisner (1998), the means to develop potential consequences of what is observed and provides reasons for what is seen. It allows each observer a sense to interpret these means by way of his or her experiences. When viewing a work of art, *educational connoisseurs*, Eisner calls them, are regarded as appreciators of art. These connoisseurs become critiques of the arts. Eisner gives us meaning to educational criticism by listing four dimensions to help in educating through art. *Description* enables the viewer to visualize and understand more about the work, the

ability to make sense out of what is seen. Students will be able to discuss with each other the skill of *interpretation*. Eisner writes “It might be argued that one of the major functions of criticism is to provide the content through which readers of different critics can compare and contrast competing interpretations of the same work and thus deepen their understanding of its multiple layers” (p. 105). *Evaluation* is meant to change and enhance the lives of students. Since schools’ main function is to educate, it is important to appraise the value of that education on a continuous basis. Evaluation allows this to be done, and through the arts, growth in experience yields knowledge to be evaluated.

Thematics, the forth experience, which gives us a naturalistic generalized way of looking at something. Eisner (1998) points out that the theme is a particular that extends beyond it self and gives relevance to a larger whole. He states that the uses of particulars provide guidelines for futures folktales and proverbs. The particulars make the story or stories interesting and may give an important lesson to be learned, which can influence understanding as well as behavior patterns. Themes in particular pieces of art work may inspire stories that are recurring as a dominate feature of one student to the next. All four of these dimensions relate to critiquing educational standards in an aesthetic education, which will lead to fostering elevated experiences in schools.

The fate of the art educational programs here in the United States, is and always has been contingent on whether they are beneficial to industry or people of influence. By this I mean, the art programs are not considered important in many school systems. However, the systems that do have an art program implemented have them because the people with power believe in its importance or the arts may be regarded as, “desirable adornments” (Broudy from Willis and Schubert, 1991, p. 61). Leaders of the corporate

world stressed the fact that since European students were already being trained in art, Americans were at a disadvantage in industrialized training. In order to compete with European draftsmen, American students began taking art classes in drafting to compete for jobs.

The arts, at most times, has been highly valued in many cultures and seen as an important aspect of a culture that should be preserved and encouraged (Beyer, 2000). Art has begun to be considered as a holistic factor to the experience of human development. So how do we introduce art to the curriculum as a connector to moral education for Black youth?

There are many innovative ways to teach art. Many of them deal with art techniques. These techniques are crucial in producing and translating what is felt about a nonliving object – art. Why was art created? As early as the cave man, art has been used as a communicator. It is known that early man used art for, talking to each other, keeping records, as a teaching tool, and maybe even for pleasure. It is human nature to want to communicate with each other and art allows each of us and people of different cultures to exchange ideas through it. The different techniques in art can be used to bring about understanding of what is going on inside each individual, just as it would in special needs children, at-risk children, and the so-called normal child. This is where art therapy may be used. “Art therapy allows an expression of fantasy, creativity, and a spontaneous unconscious imagery.” (Wadeson, 1987, p. 1). Art also creates a self-reflection of a person and his/her world (p. 1). Collier (1972) states that a work of art manifests a double reality - that art shapes man’s visual perceptions of things outside himself, while

embodying also the workings of his inner mental life” (p. 8). Art also connects us to nature.

Art was introduced to the public schools in America as a formal form of education in the late 1800s (Freedman and Papkewitz, 1985). The curriculum was established in the form of industrial arts, design, and art was also used to teach social values.

Massachusetts and some other states in the US implemented this program early on.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the change of schools’ social, economic, and political conditions caused the arts to take a new direction. A change in the middle class interests towards a more awareness of status introduced the benefits of the arts to them. The beginning of the twentieth century proved to be a time when social interests were important. Things like psychology, history, sociology, and political science became subjects of interests. They no longer fell under the umbrella of philosophy.

It is important to note that great thought was given to how and why art was to be implemented into schools. There were different points of view explored to get the correct program for art education in public schools. Horace Mann believed, “that drawing could train the mind for other things”; “Training in one thing could supplement another” (Freedman and Popkewitz, 1985, p. 21). During the time of the threat of World War, it was believed that art should support the democratic make-up of our society. A third idea was discussed about art being taught as vocational training, which would prepare students for the technical skills they would need to support industry.

It is evident that the focus for child development and the concentration of the social and political make-up of our society dictates an art response. The interests of various groups reflected in these views relate their needs to art education in the schools.

The Massachusetts Drawing Act was established in 1870 to ensure that students' learning reflected what the Boston industries demanded. Their argument was that American students were not trained as well as the European students. In a Board of Education report in 1871, it was stated that since manufacturers in the US were hiring qualified workers from Europe, the American schools needed to develop their own capable laborers by creating programs which allowed students to be trained efficiently.

During this time, art was also used to teach moral values to immigrants, mostly Irish Catholics who were increasingly growing in the urban areas (Freedman and Papkewitz, 1985). Art was brought into the classrooms and used to show examples of moral values expected from every American citizen. The social elites looked down on the Catholic religion because they believed it worked against their standards of labor. The art showed themes of "honesty, family relationships, and loyalty" (p. 21). The emphasis on moral education lasted through the 1920s until a shift in concerns ignited the middle class. New job opportunities were developing. The different immigrants continued to pour in and cultural differences posed problems with communication. The arts allowed these immigrants to work with mediums of their native lands. Classes in wood, clay, and metal were included in the curriculum. The work on the next page shows the connection of art to religious beliefs. The woman appears to direct the viewer to Heaven with bible open and a stern look on her face. This appears to be a mother and she seems to be single focused. Although in much of Black history, the Black man was the preacher the priest and the woman could only be an advisor or sorts. That still holds true for many Blacks today. The role of the Black elder woman is still an important role

in the Black family. The elder woman is looked at as being wise and has connections to God. It is clear that this woman process those qualities.

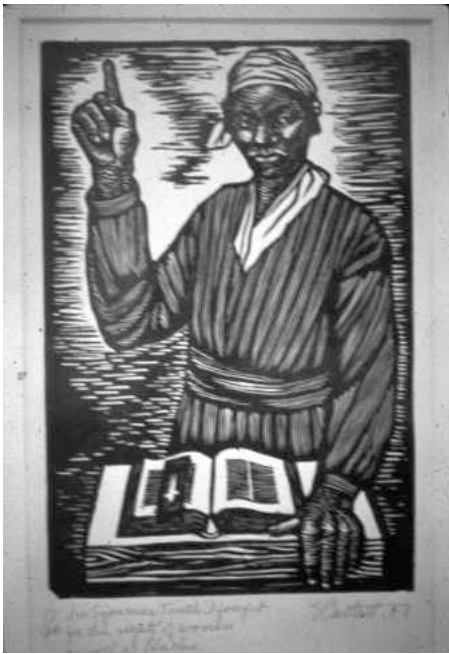


Figure 23, “The Black Woman Series”
Elizabeth Catlett

When I look at this work I see a mother trying to direct either her children or people in the community. She could be an elder in the church with a lot of wisdom about the Bible. The moral aspect is to promote a connection to God. Black youth may perhaps get the biblical connection, however they may need prompting to connect it to what ever is happening in their surroundings. This etching brings back memories of my childhood on early Sunday mornings.

One Sunday morning after I awoke from the night’s sleep, I walked through the dining room, which was adjacent to the kitchen to see my momma sitting at the table reading her Bible, as she finishes the last verse, she wets her finger and turns the page. I continue to walk through slowly and quietly, hoping not to disturb her. As I continued on my way to get ready for church, I knew I needed to hurry because my dad would be leaving soon. He so much hated to be late for church, because you see he was prepping

to become a deacon in the church. Later when I was almost dressed, I could hear my mom's voice from the kitchen. I could always tell when my mom was finished with her reading, because she began to sing. Singing old spirituals was something she did when she was working around the house. Momma did that when she was cooking, washing the dishes, or just being busy. She continues to sing "Take My Hand, Precious Lord," "The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow," or "Way up Yonder," even today when she uses her hands, making something creative, like a quilt, a dress, or just crocheting. My mom is crafty like that; I suppose that's where I got my need to create with my hands. My family was very much aware of art and things artistic around us. Her mom taught her how to be self-reliant and how to make something out of little of nothing. She mentioned to me several times how she loved creating pictures in her spare time when she was a girl.

During the Great Depression in the 1930s, art education endured another change. A move towards allowing students to choose their own courses was believed to ensure a more stable work force (Freedman and Papkewitz, 1985). Art education directed the attention to "what the good life should be" (p. 21). It also allowed people to make their surroundings elevate their spirits because of hard times. People began to beautify their homes with art. This caused the development of high aspirations to their environment. Children were allowed to create decorative art for the homes, which had a psychological affect on families who had come under bad times because of the depression. This feeling of renewed spirit caused people to put value on art. Teaching the "quality of fine arts to children" had begun to take root. If you owned a piece of art you were highly respected (p. 22).

In Owatonna, Minnesota, during the 1930s, the Carnegie Foundation gave funding to introduce art professors to the community. These professors from the University of Minnesota were to advise the community on how to implement art appreciation. Opposition developed between the professors and the community. The difference in values of the quality and aesthetic ideals were the conflict. From the Owatonna Project up through the 1940s, efforts were made to make art relate to the daily lives of individuals. Although the focus shifted to make art reflect a more “scientific” aspect of art education. It became important to understand individual thoughts. Art was used to analyze drawings made by children (Freedman and Papkewitz, 1985). The analysis of how and why children drew was to be an important scientific development. These drawings were gathered and looked at to determine patterns of child development. It was up to the art educators to figure out instructional strategies to cater to the development of children. It was believed that children learned naturally if given the atmosphere conducive to learning.

Freedman and Papkewitz (1985) points out that art education was also seen as therapeutic. It was assumed that art helped develop a healthy person. With art focused on creativity and mental stability, it took away from the moral and economic issues that still existed in the back of the minds of people.

Sienkiewicz (2002), states that thoughts and writings of Jean - Jacques Rousseau, helped to influence the development of art in kindergarten. It became important to understand how children were developing. Art in schools allowed teachers to analyze the child’s intellectual growth. Although Rousseau believed that art could corrupt children, he also knew people would not give up the arts. He believed that education was

connected to nature by experiences. He had a theory that a child goes through stages of development, which lead educators to ask questions about how children should learn or be taught. If children learned drawing, they would have an appreciation for nature because they would have to observe much closer the details, and thus have a greater connection to their surroundings.

In the kindergarten setting, art was introduced because at this age children should be allowed to be spontaneous and art helped them with this. During Rousseau's time, children were thought of as "little adults" (Sienkiewicz, 2002, p. 125). The schools were very dark and learning was not fun. Even the clothes were designed like the adults', just smaller. Rousseau, a philosopher during this time, had ideas that people should "follow nature" (p.125). This led to the educators realizing that kindergartens should be opened.

Carole A. Hubbard, of Norfolk Schools, points out that Blacks were taught industrial arts in high school rather than the fine arts. Industrial arts was taught in the academies of the northern states, as well as, overseas. By 1925, many Black artists and Black writers were multiplying in numbers as a result of new interests by Blacks following World War I and the migration to northern states like "Washington, Chicago, Cleveland, and New York." Harlem was especially important to the development of these artists (p. 163).

As I mentioned earlier, the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s caused notoriety for Black artists to the public. One of these known artists/teachers of this era was Aaron Douglas, a teacher from Kansas who moved to New York. Douglas, according to Hubbard (1985), painted murals with African forms. Hubbard states that Douglas is

known as “the father of Black American art” (p. 164). He also founded the art department at Fisk University in 1939.

Another noted instructor of African art is James Herring, who organized the art department in 1921 at Howard University. It was not until 1923 that they received their first student to major in this program (Hubbard, 1985). Many Black educators and artists came from Howard University at that time. Slowly, the development of art departments continued to spring up. Another one of those departments was at Atlanta University in 1931. This department was organized by “Hale Woodruff.” This allowed many renowned artists to have a venue to exhibit. This exhibition also allowed Atlanta University to acquire a very extensive collection of Black art. During the thirties, Black colleges opened art departments. Under the Federal Art Project, many programs were developed all over the country. According to Hubbard the Federal Art Project, under Roosevelt in October 1935, allowed local schools and community centers to also acquire some art teachers.

Some Blacks, as well as, some Whites looked down on the arts as a career. It was thought to be frivolous and not something a responsible person would do. Even when I was growing up, people considered art as a hobby, and thought it should not be looked at as a profession. I never had art in school when I was growing up - not until I went to college. I always created art because it was so much a part of me that I did not seem whole if I was not creating. I still had my focus on something else as a career and I would continue art on the side for myself. It was not until a classmate of mine in college suggested that I should go into teaching art that I decided to have it as a major.

The majority of schools will express the claim that they have a character education program for their students. This may be the case, but the fact is those programs have not made much headway. Low or high expectations of teachers may, in fact, affect students achieving this goal, therefore, it is speculated that middle school students who received high expectations of moral character from their teachers exhibited better performance in class than students with low or no teacher expectations. Earlier I stated that research has established that teachers play an important role in determining how students develop confidence and self-control and moral standing. What this research will do is give teachers a better way of helping students achieve respect for themselves and others.

Art educators want to reach beyond usual boundaries and produce an aesthetic environment. I also believe that each person can achieve individual freedom by embracing the belief that any appearance of obstacles can be broken through (Reed & Johnson, 2000). Reed and Johnson (2000) also state that “freedom means to be engaged in searching for or creating an authentic public space” (p.125). Art educators, along with a good arts program, have the power to allow each student the opportunity to experience that space with new techniques, technologies, and mixtures of other disciplines, such as, reading, math, and writing, also civic life - just as Covington and Bailey writes about in “Politics, Public Art, and Public Education.”

Having the right art program is imperative to giving an individual power - the power to get a better understanding of self and others, and to have a connection with nature, his or her school, home, and civic environment, and his or her intellectual growth.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The Right Shoes

You think you know how sure you are,
 placing one step, another.
Each choice you make to place your feet
 may cost you going further.
Your mom and dad have told you why,
 but you insist you can't comply,
 because your buds are doing this,
your impatient heart says, you must insist.

So choose your shoes with open mind,
 letting no one point and tease.
The right pair may be the one you find,
 to set your heart at ease.
Look here, look there, and everywhere,
 to find that special pair.
Keep knowing that there is a hand,
 to keep you from despair.

Search down and high and oh so deep,
look over the ones with flash and heap.
Your hand may hold that perfect one,
 give cause for friends to pry.
Strive on to walk with head held high,
 regardless of the weather.
Your world of friends, you can't deny,
 are clueless, altogether.

Don't let your choice hold you back,
 from standing on that step.
The right shoes have a special knack,
of giving you that extra needed pep.
No matter where you are in life,
 remember to find the good.
Even a pair of shoes with a stripe,
can help you to become the one that stood.

Mariah Spann

This poem was created as a metaphor to identify what happens in the lives of Black

youth. We are all searching and sometimes make the wrong choices, but with direction and consultation with others, the right moral shoes can be discovered. Black youth today are pulled in so many directions to become productive citizens and to be themselves. They are expected to respect authority and to be able to value life. How do they get to the point of knowing the right choices? One way is to show them a connection to their historical past. Finding out that your life has a beginning and is a continuation of history will I believe help give meaning to what is happening today.

Going back to African history, we can see that regardless of how the clutches of slavery tried to erase the African cultural ties, it did not destroy the spiritual souls of Blacks. This was apparent in the works of art created by Blacks early on and continues up to this date. As a way to overcome many obstacles Black Americans have had to draw up on an inner spirit that has been evident from historical accounts of African culture.

In this chapter, I described the methods used to address my research questions: (1) how can Black art be used to educate moral principles to Black youth? (2) How can Black art assist Black youth in making a connection between moral principles in Black art and their own experiences? (3) Why is it important to implement ways for Black youth to learn moral principles? In order to proceed through this process I refer to these works, such as, Alice Walker's (1989) ability to connect Black experiences to spiritual spoken word, Sandra Nettles' (1993), expressions of her struggle to achieve despite major obstacles, Ronald Bailey (2007) African American Studies, Bell Hooks (1995), experience of being different because of her connection to art, Tony Bolden's (2004), ability to equate public control of the arts with the ability to sustain power, David

Driskell's (1998) ability to use visual images to engage in identity, racism, and political themes of the Black urban experience, Toni Morrison's (1970) connection to moral and self-worth, and Jawanza Kunjufu's (2005) discernment of Black youth and pop culture; while adapting how they use oral culture to convey different experiences to Black individuals. Their writings have lead me to examine the prospect of creating critical visual narratives with Black youth through their interpretations of works of Black art based on their own experiences. Each of these authors has given us colorful aesthetic examples of Black culture. Collecting these narratives from Black art will elevate aesthetic values and produce an array of materials to help direct moral values in these youth, such as respecting themselves, respecting authority, and expressing care for other human beings. This is important because, the Black youth are part of our future and if this issue is not addressed, our society will continue in a downward direction. Kunjufu (2005) points out that it is important that we as adults guide them through challenges and keep them in harmony with life.

Visual Narrative Inquiry

According to Dr. He (2007) artists are writers who uses their work to tell a story, which is what a painter does when he/she use paint on a canvas and develop an image that the viewer can began to read and interpret what is being portrayed. The same goes for a sculpture, who make forms that brings you close and allows you to interact with its fullness. The photographer who develops the contrast of lights and darks of the subject in such a way the viewer is automatically pulled into it and connects with the story it tells even though it is two-dimensional. Hooks (1995), He (2005), Doy (2000), and Driskell (1998), agree that increasingly diverse nature of experiences of Blacks warrants the use

of visual narratives, and what better resource to use, than works of Black art. That is how I look at Black art. It can be a historical account of what was and is in the eyes of the artist, and the discovery of its importance should be explored within the confines of schools and homes alike.

Visual narrative inquiry can be used to investigate the lived experiences of my participants and their interpretations of Black art, which will create a critical race consciousness. This type of inquiry relates to my frame work as a visual analysis to my use of critical race theory. These narratives can take several forms throughout this process. The participants may engage in reflecting, construction of stories relating from their interpretation of the works, and understanding the collection of stories from others. Through out this inquiry, the participant will have and encouraged to verbalize reactions to social, political, or religious images displayed in the works of art.

Black art history is still quite young according to Driskell (1998). It has only been offered as courses on its development at Universities for the last 39 years. You can only imagine how hard it was to find specialists to teach these courses. Black art does not fit into any one category as far as style, development, geography or even time. The only commonness for this art is the fact that they are of the same race. This way of looking at Black art is called Diaspora art history, which is meant to be all inclusive and global. Looking at Black art this way could limit or omit qualities that could be discovered. The parameters in which Black art is conceptualized should be looked into on a larger scale according to Cecil Taylor from Bolden (2004). This is the question that should be asked.

I have learned that in our postmodernist society, our system is filled with codes which have multiple meanings. Such as, Bible Quilts, created Harriet Powers as a symbol to her devotion to the Bible, or many art pieces that embraces writing or symbols directly on it. In the traditional sense of mainstream America, Black art is labeled as vernacular, which is considered folk art, not necessarily fine art, because many Blacks create work about their experiences. Early on, this art was considered as nonexistent. It was simply not revered as art.

Black art is somewhat respected in the art world as a viable form of expression that bring meaning to the ordinary self, but according to the White establishment, Black art is not intellectualized (Doy, 2000). As we learn that we are influenced by different things by the way we react or relate to them, my focus is on learning how moral principles can be directed through the use of Black art. Since this study is based on critical visual narratives, which is connected to the visual character of the works of art demonstrated through the images narrated by artists of two dimensional and three dimensional forms, I must share this quote:

Art is a habit of the intellect, developed with practice over time that empowers the artist to make the work right and protects him ... from deviating from what is good for the work. It unites what he is with what his material is. It leads him to seek his own depths. Its purpose is not his self-enhancement, his having fun or feeling good about himself. These are byproducts. It aims solely towards bringing a new thing into existence in the truest manner possible. It is about truth and, as such, has to do with ultimates and, as such, posits self-sacrifice and consecration (Nell Sonneman from Hooks, p. x, 1995).

These works of art allows me another phase of directing research through semiotics in the Black culture today, which can direct an important way we determine teaching pedagogies. Semiotics is the study of signs which represent a particular language that has historical support and functions it is govern by. Learning the historical elements, economical aspects, social interactions, and political positions of Blacks may put some light on the reactions of today's Black youth. Hooks (1995) points out that art has not been a focal part of Black life, although it has been a great part of it, it has stayed in the background as nonrepresentational. That art may be irrelevant even if it is abundant, and that Blacks believe that art is not essential to our collective well-being. What makes this important is that Black leaders have rarely considered it a necessity to include art as part of a liberating element in the freedom of Black people. The significance of my research comes from literary works by many of the authors I have mentioned early in this paper as well as in this section. Driskell (1998) talks extensively about the Black experience through visual images and also deals with the historical depiction of Black Americans in the United States. Authors such as, Walker (1989) and Morrison (1979) have given us descriptives developed in the form of media as visual narratives which has greatly influenced the Black youth in what beauty is. The beauty aspect has a huge impart on moral steps and view points the Black youth demonstrates. Setting up situations where my participants are able to view works of art from artists who focuses on moral virtues like the one below can provoke ideas on self images.

Bailey (2007) a professor at Georgia, Southern reference Thomas Webber's *Deep as the River* to explain how important it was to maintain moral values in spite of slavery. This was part of the moral code Blacks continue to have regarding marriage, and family

values. If we look at the painting below, we see an image of a Black family in different stages of their life or marriage. Much of Black values are rapped in the premise that the man is the head of the house and everything should be centered on him. Although many Black males are not present in the Black homes, not having him as a head has caused detriment to the Black family.



Figure 24, “Feeling His Oats”
Robert Colescott

Focusing on personal emotions regarding this piece can bring about interactive dialogue. As youth begin to discuss the work, they see many layers of interest. The man is reflected in different situations, one as a man seemingly trying to impress a White woman on the bottom left. He is seated with another woman in the center pointing expressively, at an opening. If we look back through that opening we see a person flying like a super hero. Then continuing throughout the work we see much going on, such as in the lower right, where the man and woman appear to look older, but the woman is holding a white baby. What is the moral issue or issues in this painting? One could possibly get that the man is trying to prove that he is everything to all women. He could be expressing that he

is the head of the house, a strong person, a super man, and even a gentle person. The moral issue is that the woman is allowing the man to be who he needs to be or that the man demands who he needs to be. I mention the woman allowing the man to be himself mainly because I know that Black women can be very strong willed which can be in conflict with Black men. Black men also have come to a point where they are searching for themselves. They are not sure of the role they need to play as a result of historical events centering on the Black male. Respect of self and the respect of each one's position in life or a family is important. Each of these could lead to a body of conversation worth visiting. With much discussion, this may bring about personal conversations about moral understanding among Black youth.

Directing a discussion with Black youth on Black works of art that depict work ethics, family connection, religious elements, and political positions gives insightful dialogue. Setting up a situation whereas students are able to look at a piece of work and actually discuss the make up of the work is the key. While learning how to critically engage in formal dialogue regarding the political, ethical, and moral aspects of that work or explain if any of these things exist, everyone benefits.

Procedures

This research is centered on the interpretive critiques of Black art by 5, 8th grade Black youth, documentations from books, periodicals, news papers, articles, and the internet. Engaging each participant in a one-on-one critique and a small group discussion of choice questions asked in order for them to reflect on what they observe in the art is important to this study. Chosen pieces set up one at a time as students were given a guide outlining four discussion questions focusing on aesthetic analysis of moral character. Answering those

questions at the end of the section will help enforce what is interpreted. The setting of this discussion occurred in the homes of each participant. Getting information from my personal journal entries and using few pieces of my own works of art to direct reactions from students is another important part to this research. Facilitating conversations with students in their home setting helps to give a better insight to what the youth are thinking regarding their morals and the morals of their peers. Incorporating multiple discussions motivate reactions about the art, which depicts social, spiritual, or political lessons for the youth and others. Learning about their connection to society and what influence a responsibility they have to other Black youth may prove to benefit my study in the future.

Data gathering techniques includes participants' profile, participants' interpretations of the works of art, video analysis developed during the group discussion process, the responses to the questionnaire, and information from the literary reviews. Each person has the opportunity to look at this work and relate it to things that may be happening to them or people they know. This entire process takes several sections. Making it possible to write down his or her ideas about the pieces of work, allows the participants a venue, whereas they might not be able to verbally express what they want to say. Analyzing the data from each participant and recording what was stated is the major portion of my research, which makes the same day or following through on another day an added part. In this case, the teacher or person leading the discussion must read the answers and allow this idea to be brought to the forefront.

A copy of the proposed activity has been added to this paper, so that it is available for teachers, or anyone who want to use this method. Let us take a look at this painting

and go through the steps that the Black youth takes, in interpreting how the work relates to their experiences.



Figure 25, “Day One, Creation of Man”
Edwin Lester

Have the students to look at the painting without telling them the name of the work. You should give the artist’s name, the size of the work, and the medium the work was done with. At this point students should have learned one of the critiquing methods. For instance they are using the Feldman’s method, which deals with one; describing the work, tell what you actually see, two; analyzing the work by discussing the elements and principles of art, three; interpreting who they think the artist is trying to say through the work, and four; judging how they relate the work to his or her own experience. For the sake of argument I will not go over that part; however discussing the aesthetic aspect of this work is important, which falls under interpreting and judging parts. First ask the participants what they see. Of course they might say that they see an image of a man, two hands appearing to lift the man. Then ask for anyone to tell how the work relates to his or her life. This work can appeal to

the spiritual side of the viewer by impressing up on the fact that the large hand appear to be that of a God or a creator. You may notice that the figure in the foreground appears to be Black. The hands represent no particular nationality and it appears that a large amount of energy has influenced the creation of this being. It is important for the students to relate this picture to what is going on in society now and perhaps in the past. Black students need to relate how they are connected to the source of mankind and each other. I believe this painting generates lots of emotions, such as the person appears as though he is being brought out of darkness into the light. This could very easily help the Black youth to relate this to what is going on in society today. Another aspect about the work is that the muscular look of the upper body of the person could signify the strong nature of the Black person when he/she is freed out of darkness. This one painting could promote a very long discussion about purpose, values, and life. The moral values relate to the issue of Black struggle, Black pride, and a sense of connection, which is a result of learned experiences.

Theorists Doy (2000), Hooks (1995), and Driskell, (1998), support the idea that the reactions of Black youth are the result of historical events, in other words, what they have learned through their development. Producing evidence that substantiates the basis of this inquiry is correct through the use of Black art. Using these techniques developed to analyze aesthetic values can be incorporated in moral learning.

Aesthetic experience is ever present when aesthetic education begins. Greene (2001) says that “art educators reach out for the presence of works of art, and aesthetic educators open spaces for explorations of the materials of art” (p. 6). The ladder causes students to think deeper about a connection with what is expressed in the work, where as students have initiated new ways of seeing and feeling. This causes students to suddenly

understand and relate things around them to their own lives. The way this can be done is by looking at a work, investigating what is seen in the work, describing, analyzing, interpreting, and judging its content. Then allowing students to relate what is seen in the work and taking this experience to a higher or another level.

I propose that picking key questions to ask in order to produce a response that is used for evidence in the study, and these responses evaluated and compared to each other, must be used for future reference. How significant is it for you to see positive images of Blacks in our society? Give me some feed back or examples about Blacks and images you have seen in the media or the kind of works of art you are accustom to seeing. Would you say that it matters to your age group to identify with what is happening in today's world? I think it is important to have the students carry the discussion and my job would be to direct. I would like to know about the peer relationships of the participants regarding moral acts if it relates to the works of art. Using background information from Faith Ringgold, Elizabeth Catlett, William Buchanan, Jacob Lawrence, and my self, to present material to students regarding the artists point of view regarding works of art and moral principle is consider for this research.

Eisner (1998), mentions that artifacts in the classroom can be indirect surrogates for values, expectations, and behaviors that may be otherwise difficult to see or assess in that setting. This could be a primary source for information that can reveal values people share. He points out that as a general rule, researchers look for large patterns that occur for a body of participants. This normally occurs in the quantitative research arena. However, when those patterns are hard to come by, individual insights are used to predict meaning for small numbers of people. The insight of individuals can be predictors or

indicators for future data analysis. In this study we are seeking structural corroboration which are multiple types of information related to or may contradict what is interpreted. In this way, it becomes typical rather than exceptional themes, which are considered as characteristic of the situation.

Research shows that the aesthetic experience allows students to create dialogue in narrative form. The way we look at a work of art, shows us how to work through and decipher other subjects. Researchers utilizing the qualitative technique can direct students into broadening knowing, which will contribute to improving education. Using narratives and discussions allows students to gain knowledge from each other. This knowledge can be personal, cultural, historical, and or political. Works of art can carry any of these messages for gaining knowledge. What make this a valid educational source is by being receptive in obtaining insight from each other and works of art.

If we learn dialogue in critiquing art, we are able to learn more about how it connects to us. These features allow the viewer to speculate the essential positions of a work, the inner workings of it by giving us different ways of understanding concepts in art, such as; the traditional theories and the contemporary alternatives to those theories; the open concept, institutional theory, and critical theory. Explaining the traditional theories of Black visual art can help give us a better picture of how the mainstream view this art, which is important in understanding and developing this research. Also what is considered to be none traditional visual language of Black art, is very important in thinking how Black youth may relate to Black art.

According to Dewey (1934), we must go through experiences during the educational process. Each person acquires his or her own *individual experience* during

the educational process. This experience continuously evolves through interactions of things that may come to odds with each other. Those conflicts must evolve from past experiences, which will develop into meaning through imagination to present. Another hinders a person's growth in one particular area, such as participation in positive activities, and limiting one's perception. The third kind fosters human intelligence, which nurtures curiosity and produces satisfaction from doing worth while things. He continues to say that there are criteria in judgments which allows one to criticize it's connectiveness to the development of knowledge. The point of explaining experience through art education is to relate how connecting to art produces and demands perception which develops intelligence.

The Gees Bends guilt gives us ideas to discuss as a mode for aesthetic expression. We can talk about the appearance of being poor but yet having something that is valuable in the connection between the different types of fabric, using the fabric as a connection to families or perhaps to a particular event. Speculating how a person lived during a particular time in history can be important in the discussion. There are multiple experiences connected with viewing quilts, which consequently develops into a qualitative inquiry.

The poem that follows is an example of using art to expand education aesthetically. Interpreting a work of art can lead to relating seeing on a deeper level. Using qualitative research can determine ways to allow students the avenue to express in various ways what art means to them or how a particular piece speaks to you. This research could establish ways for teachers in other subject areas to connect with art, without using it as a separate entity.

Art Mimics Life

Understanding life through the world of art
produced through someone else.
Provides the mirror of the heart
that direct and commune with self.
I dare to merely pause and look
without the long felt wonder.
The reasons why my soul so shook
because I need not long to ponder.
The moving force of life, depends
On what each one's experience in
conveyed through moral and social trends
a culture connect of art, women, children, and men.
So never pass a work of art
without cause to venture deep inside
The meaning to look within your heart
that which connects self, soul, and pride.

Mariah Spann

CHAPTER 4

SEEKING MORAL UNDERSTANDING

Momma Said

My mommy told me not to do
that thing that I once did
She always pointed out, with finger too!
to be a good little kid.

She said, always treat everyone you see
with kindness as you pass
Because they might be the one who helps me!
on the street, down the hall, or even in my class.
Mariah Spann

“If you never tell them, then how will they know?” This is a mantra I use to guide me as I travel through the path as a parent, a mother, a teacher, and as I walk through adulthood, I must remember that, *“yes, I am my brother’s keeper.”* Educating Black youth moral principles through Black art is and has been my goal throughout this research process. Those several theorists I referenced encouraged my data in many ways such as giving me a base from which to begin and the direction I should take my research. Although I have spent my life around Black youth for multiple reasons, I needed clear data collection methods in order to put my study together.

Piercy & Benson (2005) suggest that I should “bring findings to life while involving the audience in reflecting on their meaning;” that there is a critical nature to this study as it plays out in each of the stories presented (p. 1). Denzin (2003) describes that using “narratives and storytelling as ways to create a critical race consciousness will extend the post-civil rights movement into the next century” (p. 479). I chose to use visual narratives in order to commit to the voices of my participants regarding moral

principle in Black art and my own remembrance of connecting to moral principles through stories in my life.

The data is represented with perspective reviews offered by theorists of human behavior, profiles of each individual participant, interpretations of works of Black art through the eyes of the youth, and my own interpretations of works of art. This chapter will also provide ideals on human behavior and the relationship of cause and affect relating to my participants in my study. I will go through the process of critiquing art just as the participants went through the process of learning how to critique art. The last part of the chapter will group the collective perspectives of the data collected.

Participants Profile

The five participants, Randal, Devon, Janet Desire', Kristal, and Leah were special names they gave themselves for this study. They were all middle class students from the same community in Jonesboro, Georgia. They all participated in the same gifted class as eighth grade students. All are planning to attend the same high school. As I write their impressions of the works of art, I am omitting some parts of the analysis for the sake of time.

Janet Desire' is a Black female who is 15 years old. She is very courteous to others and has a friendly disposition with students and teachers. She made it a point to mention that she attended the same middle school all three years and maintained a very high grade level. She lives with her mother, sister, and dog. She loves to play basketball and is on the school team. She loves to draw, sing, write poetry and songs, and she likes being a friend to others. She believes that her family is strong because she says that "I live in a family that goes through a lot, but we're the type of people that overcome very

difficult obstacles. People say that I act a lot like my mother and I find that to be a compliment. My mother is a very strong woman. She's been through more things than most women you find on TV, but I don't mind, she's my mommy! My mom is also very "real" and crazy!"

Randal is a Black male who is 15 years old, he was born on March 10, 1993 and just recently stopped living with his two sisters and two brothers and mother. He is the middle child and lives with his grandmother, although his mother and father are married. He also attended the same school for three years and participated in the gifted program. His favorite subject is math and sometimes science. He likes to be # 1 in his academics so he pushes himself to do so. He is a very energetic person and kind to his friends. He emphasized some important statements his parents told him. "My parent told me that my word is all I have and if I abuse it then we can't have any trust at all. They tell me to be the best me I can and to be nobody else."

Kristal is 15 and lives with mother, big brother, and has no sisters. She likes to read. Her favorite color is lavender and she loves to wear bright-colored clothes. She loves Tinkerbelle, so she connects with fantasy characters. She can already drive and she wants to try-out for the tennis team in high school. She loves math and likes to paint and color and would love to learn how to draw certain things as far as art goes. She wants to be a corporate attorney, which will allow her to get that silver convertible BMW she sees in the future. She is a normal teenager because she loves to talk on the phone and loves to have fun with her family going horseback riding and bowling. Although she states that her mom loves to argue and debate, she loves spending time with her.

Devon is a 15 year-old who lives with his father, mother, and little brother, Stanley. He plays recreational ball at his community park. “I enjoy playing sports such as football, baseball, volleyball, and basketball. More importantly, I enjoy the fine arts department. I am involved in many after-school activities such as drama, dance, piano, and chorus.” Devon believes that his mother and father are somewhat strict with him and his little brother because they won’t let him spend the night with his friends. Devon feels that he should be allowed to have a little more freedom than what he has. He also believes that his parents are keeping him and his brother’s best interest at heart. Devon states that his family goes to church at least twice a week and states that, “I like church. I learn a lot about the bible.”

Leah is a 15 year-old and lives with her mother, father, and three little brothers: Zion, Noah, and Joshua. “Zion is the youngest at three, Josh is in the middle at six and nine year-old Noah is the oldest under me. Being the oldest of three boys is hard. My little brothers copy my behavior so if I do something wrong the next day they do the same thing.” She writes, “but if I do something good they copy that too.” Some of the things she likes is Hello Kitty, which is a cartoon character, reading, and drawing. She was born in Louisiana, moved to Georgia when she was two in November, 1993. She has always lived in this country except when she visited he father’s native island, St. Lucia. She stated that when she grows up she wants to be a plastic surgeon, and get chances to travel a lot. “My parents teach me to love God and if I love God I will always do right.”

Student Perspectives

This section will present a picture of all data reported by student participants. The purpose of this interaction was to convey a general sense of visual interpretation relating

to participants' social and family experiences using Black art as the source. Second, the questionnaire was used to give the participants a medium to collect thoughts and allow any of them who worked well with writing things down to connect to what was seen and discussed. I hoped that these thoughts would assist in earnestly responding to their true reactions to the works of art and not just for what they thought I wanted them to express. Prior to me recording the first visual interpretation of the works of art I planned to use for my research, I began to teach them the skill of critiquing a work of art by using a painting from my own work. The selection was a painting called "Delusion," which is featured in chapter 1 of my dissertation and also is featured in this chapter. This piece was used as the ice breaker for the discussion.

When you teach someone how to critique art, you must give them the vocabulary. Certain terms are necessary in order to make educated dialogue when you speak about art. There are several theorists who have given us ways of talking intelligently about art, such as, Tom Anderson, Jack Hobbs, Harry Broudy, Eugene Kaelin, Edmund Feldman, and several others. I have decided to follow the direction of Feldman in my pursuit to teach critiquing to my participants. Feldman (1994) gives us describe, analyze, interpret and judgment. Describing means to point out the thing you see in the picture, analyzing is to explain how the artist used the principles and elements of art in the work, interpreting means what you think the artist is trying to tell us in the work, and judging means expressing how you feel when looking at the work. After these things are taught to the students, they are free or compelled to talk about the work without being prompted. I only mentioned moral principles during the critiquing lesson in order to let them know that I do want them to think in that direction.

As the participants were allowed to describe the painting, each one had the opportunity to give input. I see a girl holding a baby doll; there is a reflection in the mirror, etc. Then I move them on to analyzing the work, but before they talked about the painting, I explained concepts regarding the elements and principles of art. I informed my participants that these parts of art are important when creating and interpreting art because they can connect intellectually to what is portrayed. Each element is defined; line is a moving dot through space, which is explained by drawing on the board as different types - straight, diagonal, wavy, jagged, fat, skinny, and thick. Form is a three-dimensional object, which has length, width, and depth. Forms are seen everywhere; you and I are forms, a box is a form, and many of the things around the room are forms. Shape is a two-dimensional form which is represented through length, and width. I explained that a circle, square, rectangle, triangle, and a sheet of paper are shapes. There are two types of shapes, those I just mentioned are mathematical shapes, called geometric shapes and there are organic shapes that are irregular and found in nature. Texture is the way something looks or feels. This element gives the impression of realness to the objects as if you could actually see how it must feel. Tactile texture is the actual way something feels to the touch - rough, smooth, and prickly. Visual texture is the way a surface looks if it was touched - shiny and dull. Space is the area in and around an object. Things can be empty or full, nearby or far away. It could relate to a two-dimensional work or a three-dimensional work of art. Space can be positive or negative. Value is the lightness and darkness of an object. Different values are used to define an object's feature, such as creating a person's face. The artist must use light and dark values to show separation of the nose and cheek or any other features. That technique is

called shading, which can show contrast in objects. The last element is called color, which is the visual quality of an object caused by the amount of light reflected or absorbed. Many times we can use color to evoke a particular emotion or mood by using warm or cool colors.

Next, I talked about the principles of art, which are balance, emphasis, proportion, rhythm, pattern, unity, and variety. These principles can help an artist use the elements in a particular way. Balance creates a sense of visual weight that equals the overall work. There are three ways to balance a work of art - symmetrical balance, asymmetrical balance, and radial balance. I simply mentioned these three; however, they are not important to know when critiquing art. I didn't want to give them too much information because the process would become boring and dull. Emphasis is important because it stresses a particular area of the work. This might be the part the viewer needs to place the most attention or focus on. This can be brought about by color, size, a particular object, or a particular texture. Proportion is the relationship of the parts to each other or the whole work. The artist must consider the scale of the objects and people within the work. Rhythm is the repetition of elements, such as particular lines or shapes that create a feeling of visual motion in a work of art. This is different from the rhythm in music, which refers to patterns of a melody. Pattern is the repetition of colors, lines, etc. to express ideas or feelings. This creates the difference between a person's face and clothes, or the foreground from the background. Unity is the relationship of all parts working together to create the whole or working harmoniously to achieve unity. Variety uses different elements to add interest to the work. It works hand in hand with unity to create a pleasing work of art.

Not all of the elements or principles are found in one particular work of art, but knowing what they are and their relationship to the work is important. Learning how to critique a work of art took up the whole first two sessions with the participants. After learning how to use the elements and principles in the analyzing portion of the critique, the participants were directed to the interpretive portion. In this portion, students were given the definition of interpretation, which deals with what the artist is trying to tell us by creating this work. Of course, this is all speculative unless you have the inside scoop on what the artist was thinking. The last portion of the process is judgment. The students were given the opportunity to decide if they liked the work or how the work related to them, if at all. They got the opportunity to decide if the work was political, religious, radical, and family-oriented or anything that had not been discussed.

After deciding on the Black art, I knew I wanted works that I could get the greatest responses from my participants and I also wanted them to connect to the work. The type of moral principle I was most interested in was the social aspect more than a spiritual connection, although you could hardly have one without the other. I also needed to have in the back of my mind what kind of influences the youth were working with, such as family base, and connections with peers.

Through the introduction of key words such as morality, family, rules, and values, and their knowledge of the process of interpreting works of art, a dialogue was developed. In the beginning, the responses went slow as expected, but as I began to talk about my own relationship with the work of art, things began to change. They knew prior to the research event that as an art teacher I just happened to be an artist also. Many times students learn through their art classes that some art teachers can not draw, so this

was a plus for me. I did not, however always tell them if I had painted a particular work, when I did show them one of my own works of art. When each participant learned that I painted the first portrait, each one began to ask questions and seem to relate to the work. I told them about when I was a little girl, I did not have an opportunity to see or play with Black dolls, but as a child it really wasn't a problem, I thought. Perhaps not having a Black doll left a lasting impression on me as well. The moral value I got out of this piece has to do with the young girl's self image issues. She relates to what the doll represents, White is right, White is smarter or perhaps the fact that Whites get what they want.

After learning all of the particulars about critiquing a work of art, it was time to being to have fun. I placed the painting "Delusion" on an easel and at first, the participants wanted to ask me questions about the artist and how the work was done. I directed them to the other terms and told them I would talk about the artist after they finished critiquing. I stepped to the back of the room to let them think and write whatever they wanted to about the piece; of course I was able to continue to monitor them.

When I got with the participants, I went right into setting up the work. With this piece, I allowed them to follow the information they had written down about critiquing and they were asked to write down their thoughts. I told them to follow step by step and I also informed them that they did not have to use all of the elements or principles to analyze the work. Two of the participants followed the steps, but the others wanted to go right into the discussion of interpreting and judgment.



Figure 26, “Delusion” Mariah Spann

Here is what they had to say as they wrote about the piece:

Janet Desire’ – “Delusion” The painting consist of a girl, with a blue shirt, pig-tails, brown skin, holding a baby doll, and the overall painting is 16 X 24. There are a number of elements of design visible in the painting. There are straight and curved lines, smooth, shiny, course textures, blue, brown, and yellow colors, and the head of the baby is emphasized. My judgment is that when you are trapped in a world where there is only one way to doing things, you come to think that you have to adjust to what the world gives you.

Randal – “Delusion” The painting is of a girl holding a doll with blond hair. The little girl is looking sad and in the mirror, I see a reflection of the girl, also with blond hair. It appears that the little girl, who is Black, is thinking that she is the mom of the doll. She does not believe that color matters because when you are a mother, it doesn’t matter about those things.

Kristal – “Delusion” In this work of art, I see a young girl who is an African American holding a doll or baby that is the opposite race. I think that it represents

the time of segregation when Blacks had wished they were White. They wanted to get the opportunity to do things they would usually never do. They just wanted to be normal and I think that that is why the reflection of her is white. She knows that what she wants will never happen so she sits all alone with a sad expression upon her face just imagining.

Devon – “Delusion” I love the way the artist blends the colors to make the girl’s shirt and the background. I believe this painting is about a young Black girl who wants to become an adult faster than she is now. It is as if she sees herself as an adult in the mirror. The baby doll in the young girl’s hands represents an actual baby. To me, the point of using a real head is because the doll is a real baby in the little girl’s eyes. The point of using a white baby doll is to show that the girl thinks that being with all races is the adult thing to do. In order to become an adult, the girl knows that doing adult things such as loving everyone no matter what race they are is nice. The artist also used fantasy.

Leah – “Delusion” I like this painting because it is three dimensional. The doll head makes it look interesting. I see a little Black girl whose reflection in the mirror changes to make her a blond haired person. It is almost like she is dreaming about becoming White like the baby doll. It is hard to say what she is thinking about, but she does look sad.

This next painting relates to the Black male of today. To me the moral principle expressed in this painting deals with self image just as the painting “Delusion.” The young male in this painting appear to show confidence in himself on the court, but cares less about his appearance. He does not realize that how others see you matters a lot to

what happens in your life. Also, the way you see yourself has a lot to do with your own self respect values. The students were asked to interpret this work and express anything they wanted to about it. They were asked to write down their interpretation without discussing it with each other.



Figure 27, "Let's Shoot Some Hoops"
Mariah Spann

Janet Desire – "Let's Shoot Some Hoop," This painting is 28 x 20 and the main colors are dark blue and green. The texture is very pronounced because it has pants that stand out and the basketball is a smooth surface. This picture reminds me of my neighborhood at night. All the kids around my age come outside to play basketball. All the boys come out in baggy shorts and tank tops to play until the sun comes up. The boy in this picture seems like he is an ordinary kid!

Randal – "Let's Shoot Some Hoop" It's a mixed medium piece, very expressionism-esque. This is probably at night, but could be at early dawn, seems to be on a forest road or path. This painting has a feeling of running or swift

motion. I guess it might be about escape, escape from sadness, depression. The blue, purple, and green overtones allude to this.

His style of dress is typical urban clothing, which I associate with a certain universal feel, but the forest could be a memory, his special place that only he knows about. So he's part of this big world, but he's in his own place, doing something (basketball) that's his alone.

Finally, his hair is purple. Your hair is one of your special forms of expression. Maybe this is his way of expressing his own sadness. It's a very expressive painting.

Kristal – “Let’s Shoot Some Hoops” The size of this painting is 28 x 20 and it is three-dimensional. I think that this painting relates to today because a lot of boys are trying to sag their pants just because they see others doing the same thing and they want to fit in. Another thing is that many kids of today have talents and there are people out there who actually want to make something of themselves and become what they want to be. In the picture, the boy may want to become a basketball star so he tries to get in all the practice he can get so he can get better and become a step closer to his goal. I think that a lot of kids these days try to do that because they know that practice makes perfect.

Devon – “Let’s Shoot Some Hoop,” This piece contains a wonderful blend of colors. It shows how most citizens look in the world today. Not only just African Americans like the male in the painting, but of all races. The artist shows that the shirt is tied together in the back and the pants/shorts hang low because of what others do. I believe the artist is trying to explain that the way people dress has

nothing to do with the content of one's character. This is because the male in the artwork may be showing his underwear and his back, but it has nothing to do with his skills in basketball or his personality. I like the way the artist mixed blue and white to make the background. The artist used great mixtures and blending of blue, white, and green.

Leah – “Let’s Shoot Some Hoops,” I believe this picture is very nice and abstract. I think the dark blue represents depression and may be sadness. I think the male in the picture maybe escapes the sadness in his life through basketball. This relates to life today because people do play basket ball. Also, the jeans sagging is what a lot of boys wear. They also wear multiple shorts and let them hang below the waist. This painting is also three-dimensional, which is very cool. It looks like the boy is running so his shirt is kind of flowing up and his jeans are flowing in the air. I also noticed it doesn’t look like he’s on a court. Maybe he’s just running to relieve stress. His hair is unusually blue which is a little weird. His face moreover looks mean or mad like he’s angry with someone. That’s what I noticed about the painting.

The rest of the art was viewed and discussed in a group setting. The participants were able to listen to each other and bounce ideas back and forth. They were also recorded and the information was transcribed. After the participants were finished with all of the sessions, they were given a questionnaire to respond to. Each of them were allowed to respond separately without influence from seeing or knowing what the other person was going to say.

The next piece of art represents the moral principle of making right choices in right and wrong. The person in the forefront is dealing with what the white tee-shirt represents; also you can tell that the guys in the back are waiting impatiently to see what decision he will make. If you look at the painting you can see that the person is in deep thought.

On the fifth day of the group session, for the actual taping of the discussion the work, I began prompting the students to give me some feed-back on each of the art works they will see. I also told them that anyone of them could start.

Okay boys and girls, here is a painting that I want you to give me some feed-back on what the artist is trying to say, whoever wants to start can start.



Figure 28, “White Tee”
Mariah Spann

Leah – “I think that the painting’s emphasis is on the boy in the hat, because his picture is larger than everyone else. I think he is trying to make a decision that will change his life. I think that he is in a gang and wants to get out and he wants to figure out what he wants to do about it and is trying to get out or they want him to do something.”

Okay!

Janet Desire' – “So basically you are saying that he is stuck between the decision of doing the right thing or the wrong thing.”

Leah – “He wants to be like them, look at how his eyes are shinning. He seems that he is sad because he has been trying to fit in with those other boys. But because look at the way their arms are crossed, he seems a little annoyed with him and that he is crazy and he just want to be like them and he can't fit in.”

Devon – “I agree it looks like the two guys are, something about his eyes, it's showing that he doesn't want to do it, but then again that he is pressured to do something he doesn't want to do.”

Janet Desire' – “To me he looks a little bit younger than the other boys and it's like he is trying to figure out if he is ready to be like them or impress the big dogs, and the other two in the background are like, maybe you are too small or maybe not prepared for this. It really does compare to everyday society, you know you have people who think that they are really ready to do something but they are not sure. Like they seem to think that they are strong and know what they want to do or do I really have the time to do this. It's that kind of expression that I get.”

Okay, anybody else want to expand on that?

Leah – “So it looks like deep down inside, underneath that white tee shirt that his brain wants to but his body doesn't. It's that kind of expression that I get. Then they turn around and ask themselves.”

What's the whole thing about the white tee shirt thing?

Randal – “He is trying to be someone else.”

Devon – “Trying to be somebody else, it’s not really who he is, like he is wearing the white tee shirt.”

Randal – “It seems like the tee shirt is representing someone else.”

Janet Desiree – “It’s like the tee shirt is wearing him.”

That’s a good point, I hadn’t thought of it that way.

The next work of art deals with the moral issue of respect of authority. The boy has the luxury of have someone to mentor him and give him direction.

Now, I want to show you another piece of art work and I want you to give me some feedback on that piece also. It is a sculpture of two people and anyone can start first.



Figure 29, “Direction”
Mariah Spann

Devon – “I think that the man is trying to tell the other man something that he wants him to do.”

Kristal – “Yeah, I agree with that, but I think that it is two grown men; it is a father and son. He’s trying to help his elderly father like lead the way like he may be impaired or something like that or some kind of way he is trying to direct the son the way to go.”

Leah – “I think that it is a father and a son and the father is trying to direct the son
somehow, he seems hunched over and he is not sure that he wants to listen to his
father or not, the son is kind of looking over his shoulders.”

Devon – “Let’s see, I am trying to see what his finger is pointing at.

Everybody – “I think he is pointing him in the right direction!”

Janet Desiree – “The right direction or the wrong direction! He is pointing in the
right direction it’s like when the older generation is saying this is the way it was
back in the day and you should do it this way to get this result and the smaller
figure is saying, well, this is now and the way I want to do it now. Like most
people have their own way of thinking about things. It’s like they are rubbing
against each other or they are contradicting each other. That’s the word I am
looking for.”

Devon – “It looks as if, I mean, if you look real into the faces, you see from the
way the artist... the younger one looks in the face, and like the old man is trying
to support, you know like, be that father figure to the younger one.”

Kristal – “I think it also looks like the man, the shorter man with his arms folded,
is kind of up and like someone said that he might be trying to do something. The
older guy is like trying to change the younger guy’s way and he is pointing in a
different direction. There might be something the younger guy wants to do, like
he is stuck in between two positions.”

Janet Desiree – “It could be another way. It’s like the larger figure is correcting
what the smaller figure is trying to do. It’s more like, like I told you to do this!
You know, it’s like that; you’re on punishment kind of attitude.”

Randal – “In defense of us, you know how we change, he doesn’t want to listen.”

Kristal – “He is stuck with two decisions. He is probably going to do it again.”

Everyone – laugh!

Janet Desire’ – “It could be another way to look at it, like the older man is telling the younger man, you’re under punishment. It’s like, I told you to do this! But does anyone have anything else?”

Leah – “I like it!”

Randal – “I’m trying to see what he is doing with his other arm. His father looks sad too.”

Why don’t we turn it around towards the left and we can see it better. You have to pick it up a little bit, a little bit more! Yes! Yes!

Everyone – “His arm is behind his back!”

Kristal – “It’s like he did something wrong. It’s like when a parent has to come up to the school when a child has done something wrong. Like say if your child kicked another child. Like, let’s say if the child needs to go and apologize, he looks like he is saying, “I don’t want to do it.”

Devon – “Ah, look at the way the clothes look. I’m guessing like they’re kind of dressed like they are in the olden time.”

Leah – “They look like they are dressed for church.”

Janet Desire’ – “Yeah they are dressed with the pants pulled up on their waist and like they are supposed to be. Pants pulled up with a belt.”

Kristal – “It kind of looks like he has on a vest with a collared shirt underneath it.”

Janet Desire' – “And the father you know with the tie on.”

The painting below deals with the moral issue of respect of an adult and care in passing knowledge down to the next generation. You can see the gentleness and patience of the man towards the boy.

Okay we are going to look at one more today and the next time we get a chance to get together, I want to talk about how kids relate to each other, or how adults relate to kids.

Next session:

Okay girls and boys here is a painting by Henry O. Tanner and the name of this is the Banjo Lesson, and I want you to tell me about the time that this was done or maybe what the artist is trying to get across with this painting.

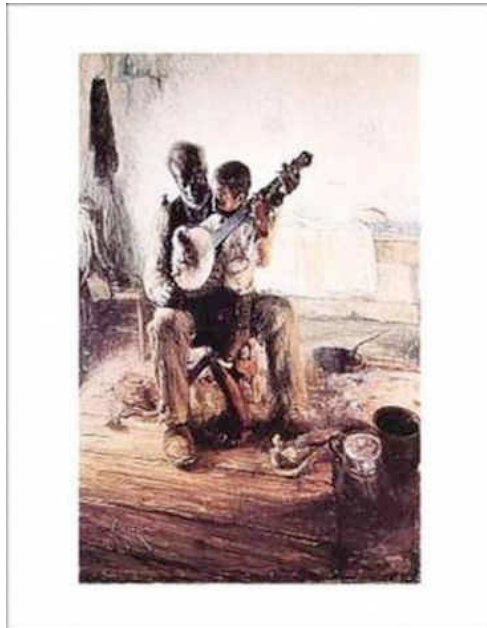


Figure 30, “The Banjo Lesson”
Henry O. Tanner

Randal – “I would say that the painting was done in 1890.

Janet Desire' – “I would think it’s more about slavery time. Since the boy is bare feet.”

Randal – “Slavery ended when, a long time ago!”

Leah – “I think it’s more about slavery time.”

Janet Desire’ – “It was about 1864.”

You’re almost right, it’s 1893!

Leah – “It seems more like its slavery time, they don’t seem to have a lot, since they seem to live in a shack. There is a whole bunch of rubbish on the floor.”

Randal – “It’s like you know, the water leaks, or there are water pans.”

Devon – “From the way the older man is looking, it’s as if they’re not thinking more about their lifestyle it’s more like the music that they are showing emphasis.”

Kristal – “It seems like it’s not about your surroundings and your community, its all about spending time with your family and I think its mostly about bonding and trying to teach and trying to go from young to old and pass down or share what you know with someone who doesn’t know as much as you know and that creates a sense of bonding, so, yeah that’s right a sense of bonding.”

Janet Desire’ – “From generation to generation; Not forgetting how tradition started, teaching how a person learns one thing and moves it on to teaching the eldest son and the eldest son teaches the younger son. And it keeps gradually getting bigger and bigger and then, like the saying goes....”

Randal – “Like the saying about history, you like knowing your history or you’ll forget it, it’s your past!”

Janet Desire’ – “Yeah! You’re not forgetting your values! You know teaching you how to understand where you started from and where you, you’re not forgetting about your values.”

Very good, that's some very good information there, what you said about not caring about the surroundings and focusing on teaching this young boy music lessons. Very good, anybody else? That's good. What we want to do when we meet again is to talk about another kind of work which focuses on the spiritual aspect. Hopefully when we meet you'll have some great ideas like that. So, be thinking about that.

Alright, this picture is entitled "The Preacher," who wants to start telling me something about whether it relates to anything you know or does it give you any kind of feeling or basically anything about this picture.

Kristal – "I have a question?"

Okay!

Kristal – "Is he the preacher that is standing or is it someone listening to the preacher?"

He is the preacher! So he is talking like someone is sitting in the chair or someone is going to sit in the chair. If anyone knows anything about the moaner's bench, like if you are going to be baptized, okay, it's something like that. Okay, tell me something about being baptized or something like that.

Janet Desire' – "But, I remember at my baptism it was at one of those old time churches, you know with the elders, they all surrounded the pool or well not a pool, but the little body of water. I have never seen that kind of expression before, you know at a baptism."

Everyone – "laugh"

Janet Desire' – “I know the preacher was talking about this, there would be a point in time where you will have to make a decision. So and when he is pointing in two different directions, I would have to make a decision.”

Leah – “I know at my baptism, I just remember that I was put in a pool and the man was holding me tightly and the pastor was saying Jesus’ name and I drowned for a second, then he pulled me back up. But I do remember him saying that I had a decision to make. You have the decision to get up and leave or stay here and be with Jesus. Like, he is pointing up to the sky to heaven, or you can stay here now. I don’t know what the chair means.”

Devon – “Looks like he is calling someone up on the chair to sit in it. I guess the other figure, well, from his head being back, it’s like he is in the moment, he’s really excited that someone is about to sit up on the chair or someone is already there.”

Janet Desire' – “Or maybe someone just got up and he is calling someone else to the chair and he wants to make an example of them.”

Randal – “He is saying, You!”

Janet Desire' – “It’s like he is saying, yeah, I’m talking to you!”

Okay, very good!

The next painting deals with the moral issue which relates to respect of a higher power and how one relates that to things they experience. The preacher represents the earthly connection to that higher power. This painting helps us deal with the philosophical value which relates to the inner self that directs those social aspects.



Figure 31, “The Preacher” Benny Andrews

So, is there anything else before we go to the next one?

The painting of the young girls deals with the moral principles of social issues. Friendship, caring for others, and self image are all in this work. The girls are clearly friendly to each other and you can see that they are dressed very neatly. You know that the parents' values have been impressed on them, which in turn will have an effect on them. Let's look at it as I set up the work for the participants.

It's going to take a minute, so, this one. These young ladies are in church and they are relating to each other. The thing about this one is it more like they are relating to each other more so than the spiritual aspect. I suppose you can find a spiritual aspect if you think deeply but the whole point about this one is friendship. Do you want to relate to this one or come back to it?



Figure 32, "First Sunday"
Gilbert Young

Janet Desire' – "I can relate to this one very well, it, I see this a lot now in church, with the little girls with the little Sunday dresses and bobby socks and such. They sit and talk about; well they look like they are around the ages of about nine, ten, or seven or something. They look like they are having these young age conversations because Sunday school is a place where you relate to people around your age thinking the way you do or that you can relate to."

Kristal – "I can relate to this. I have friends who meet in church one day, no two days a week, Sunday and Wednesday and kind of like when you sit in church and have friends that you want to tell everything or what was important to you that happened that week. And you just feel like you want to get it off your chest what you went through that week."

Devon – "From the looks of their faces, I can tell that they are happy and I think that the whole point is that church is a place of happiness and joyous times when you come together. By the expressions on their faces, they are happy."

Leah – "It's saying that church is a place to be happy."

The moral principles of this next painting relates to the last one. It deals with friendship, respect, and self image also. Looking at the way the women are dressed gives us an idea about their self respect. They are neat, they are all wearing a hat, and they are all presenting themselves as mothers of the church. Their dresses are below the knees and they all appear to hold the bible as something important.

Okay, this is the same thing, but older ladies, so I guess you can relate the same aspect with the older group of older ladies as you did with the younger set. Okay!



Figure 33, “Church Mothers”
Gilbert Young

Kristal – “Well, my grandma is kind of like that, she has her friends that she sees two, three or more times a week. I think that the older people, they like to gossip more than younger people. That’s how they are.”

Janet Desire' – “They’re like the women in church.”

Kristal – “Yeah and they talk about what they see in church that day. Like if somebody comes to church with an inappropriate outfit on. Oh, did you see such and such with that on today?”

Janet Desire' – “And wore it to Sunday service!”

Kristal – “You know she didn’t need that on. I just say they are doing their little gossipy thing and the lady on the end is not even listening to what they have to say and she is like the uppity person, like, “I’m too good for gossip and I’m too good to be even involved with what they are saying.” And the other lady on the end is not even listening to what they are talking about. It’s like the two in the middle are engaging in gossip.”

Since you said something about that, when you notice that other students are talking about someone else, how do you feel about engaging in different conversations like that? Tell me something about that.

Kristal – “To me if it’s true, you will agree in a respectable way. You wouldn’t go off and make it worst or start making it a whole lot worse or she shouldn’t have done this or she shouldn’t have done that. So you wouldn’t go off to other stuff to make it worse.”

Janet Desiree – “It depends on the people you’re talking too, you know, people have their own type of ways of doing things. Someone might say what you think of that? They say, well, you know from what I have learned or what I have experienced, this might have happened to result in that. It all depends on who you are talking too or what you are talking about and who might hear you.”

Look at the next painting depicting three little boys. They too are dealing with a moral issue of friendship. They may be dealing with right and wrong in this work. You can almost see the mischief on their minds. They must decide what to do with the frog that one of them is holding. They also must decide if they should misbehave in church.

Okay! Here is another group. We get to the boys. You see how they kind of grab each other; it's kind of different from the girls. I see one sitting off to the side. Is that a frog in his hand?



Figure 34, “First Sunday II”
Gilbert Young

Leah – “Yeah, looks like he is thinking of something bad.”

Kristal – “He is thinking about putting it down in a little girl’s dress. He is trying to sit there like, (laugh), he may be laughing about, I can see her face.”

Janet Desire' – “You know that’s how little relationships start. Little boys in Sunday school, little boys bring stuff to put in little girls’ dresses. Once you know it, they start fighting. Once they get to teenage years, she says, didn’t you once put a frog down my dress? Then there is a whole little relationship that really does happen in the church. I really do think that a lot of things that some people think don’t come from the church but it does.”

The next painting deals with the moral issue of dealing with death and communion with others. The person who has deceased is bringing a host of people together. They are showing respect for the person they have lost.

Okay so, it's like a social connection that occurs in the church, that's basically what you are saying. Because your' right, we don't think about this might have occurred in the church, the friendship cropped up from being in church. You know you think about school or maybe the neighborhood, yeah, daycare, but you don't think about church. Here is another one, "The Funeral Procession." Well, it's a funeral! They are going to a funeral. If you look up at the top, you see the casket and the only thing about this picture, when it was painted is that a lot of Black families were not depicted as being sociable in this fashion. It's like we didn't get together to mourn our dead. The only thing they would show with Black people was lynching and this is basically a positive way to look at a funeral, because you see that it's togetherness. Apparently this person was well respected, because it's a lot of people.

So, anything you want to say about this?



Figure 35, "Funeral Procession"
T. Coleman

Leah – “Seems like that person, that guy brought all those people together to make them as one while the person left the earth, like they are celebrating him leaving, not mourning him.”

Very good!

Janet Desire' – “Being a person from Alabama myself, with Alabama being a place where there is nothing but togetherness, you could go down the street and you could see your cousins you haven’t seen before. This reminds me, I had an uncle that passed. He was known by many people. I saw people I didn’t know; ah I did know them but it’s not that I didn’t know them but they knew my uncle.”

The moral principle in this painting deals with a philosophical view of getting connected with a person’s spiritual side. When one is able to do that, this allows one to connect with others in a caring and respectful way.

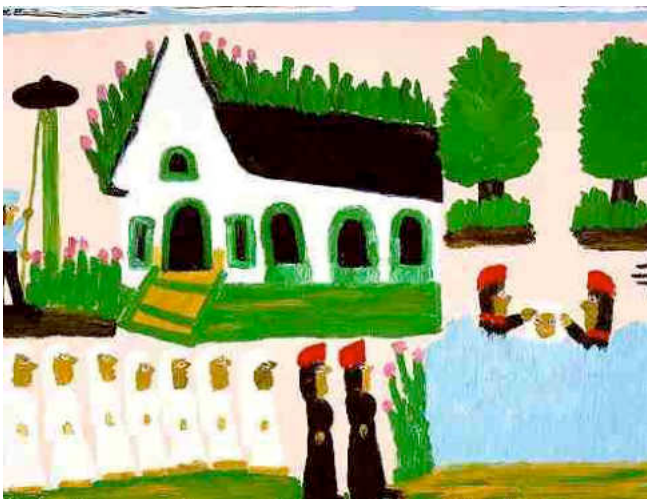


Figure 36, “Baptismal”
Clementine Hunter

This is another spiritual painting. Although a primitive painting, this artist painted it where everything looks flat, but it still shows us the relationship with the church and then the many people coming together relating to something that brings them together. I don’t know if it gives you any feeling or not.

Everyone – “No!”

So that’s okay!

Leah – “It looks like they are picking something from the side. Maybe they are talking about slavery time, and that the church is kind of small, and someone is ringing the bell for the church.”

Randal – “It looks like water!”

Janet Desire' – “A baptism.”

Everybody – “Yeah, a baptism.”

Yes, there is water in the back

Janet Desire' – “It looks like it's from way back in the day.”

Because you notice the way they are dressed and they are all wearing gowns.

Kristal – “I had to wear white too.”

Leah – “In a community center where everyone was swimming next to us.”

Really, well, that's quiet different. It was like it really didn't bother you, I suppose.

Leah – “I was a little afraid.”

The painting on the next page deals with personal issues regarding self sacrifice. The moral issue of caring for others more than one's self or as much as one's self, stands out most for me. It shows that being that way, makes you appear bigger than life and deals with a connection with the higher power.

So, what about this one?



Figure 37, “Crucifixion” Romare Bearden

Kristal – “It’s like a crucifixion. It’s not really Jesus like it’s not real, but it still represent him. You see the people around him. Like there is an evil spirit they kind of wanted it to happen.”

Devon – “Yeah.”

It is called the crucifixion, so I don’t know. I never thought of it that way, but I do see that in the middle there, ah, you never know.

Leah – “It is two different environments. The one has sand and a pyramid in the back with the evil spirit, and the other one they have people mourning and crying over him, Jesus. You see how it is on the left side? You know how women used to have a thing over their head, you know because the men are not supposed to see their hair. Well, it looks like they have a veil over their head and a snake on the other side.”

Kristal – “And it looks like they want to laugh. The person on the right and the other side is like purple and the mouth is black, part of the mouth. They are smiling like they wanted it to happen.”

Devon – “It’s like there are two personalities like red and one may be bad and black and one might be good and a bad side. The reason why God is smiling is because of the good side.”

The moral values of this next painting deals with family relationship and passing on a tradition of spiritual fortitude. A family that prays together, stays together is a good motto for this painting. This shows a family giving direction and setting a standard for the next generation.

Now this is another one called, “Come’ Worship the Lord.” They are going to church, alright. I know that the building is different, but how does this relate to your family or anything like that? As far as, do you go to church as a family or do you go by yourself or you see what I am saying? I know that in some families, the kids want to go to church and their parents don’t want to go. That happens. It doesn’t matter. It’s just what happens. So does this relate or have any meaning for you or anything.

Janet Desire’ – “I went to a church like that.”

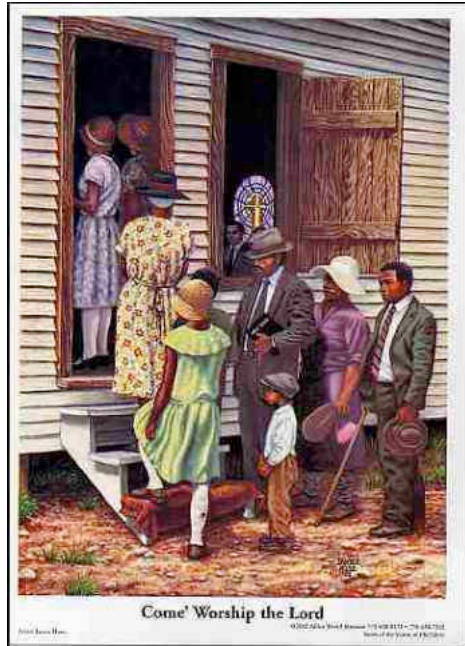


Figure 38, “Come’ Worship the Lord”
Janice Huse

Kristal – “I can relate because me and my family - it’s about ten of us - and we would go together and leave together. It kind of seem like the seats are taken like in the olden days in the churches. They are standing in the door way because they don’t have enough seats. Sort of like my church, it was so crowded they had to stand because there was nowhere else to go so you have to listen from the outside.”

Janet Desire’ – “I use to go to a church like this, being from a big family you beat everybody up in the morning, eat a big breakfast, and get to church and try to get there early enough to get a seat. I remember that we didn’t have any ceiling fans and we had to open the doors to make sure that everyone in their little Sunday dresses didn’t get too hot. It really reminds me a lot when I used to go to church in Alabama.”

Ok. Did you want to talk about that?

Leah – “It seems like the people walking in the church. You see the girl with her foot on the step?”

Uh huh!

Leah – “It’s like there is room to me. It has nothing to do with my family going to church because it’s just me and my mom and sometime my mom just goes by herself and my 3 little brothers just stay home and my dad is working all the time so he is tired on Sunday. It seems like by the cross, it’s a happy place and, like Janet Desire’ said, it looks like it’s going to be hot, even though it is Autumn outside.”

This painting below is one I talked about earlier and I will discuss it more in the last chapter of this dissertation. The moral values relates to strength, direction, and pride of a Black man.

Let’s look at this last one. Okay! Tell me something about this painting!



Figure 39, “Day One, Creation of Man”
Edwin Lester

The name of this is Creation of Man.

Everyone – “Ohhhh”

Kristal – “It kind of looks like those are the Lord’s hands and how they are creating man from dirt, from nothing. How he is giving him life and giving him the ability to live. And it also seems like he is saving somebody from falling to the ground or from failure and he is trying to lift him up. Trying to heal him in some kind of way, and because of what is coming out of his nose. That’s how I thought that he was bringing someone to life.”

Leah – “The little thing by his nose is like God is giving him the breath of life.”

Very good! That’s an idea!

Devon – “We have this painting at home and my mom says almost everyday that towards like his stomach, she says it looks like someone’s hand is there. Doesn’t it look like someone is trying to bring him down, back to what he was and God is there trying to change him, but it looks like someone is there trying to drop him down because they don’t want the change.”

Okay, what about the fact that he’s Black?

Janet Desire – “Ah, I don’t know!”

Kristal – “That make’s it more, it’s like he is stuck in between two choices, he doesn’t know how to make the right choice or the wrong choice and like Devon said, it’s kind of seems like there is someone always there if you are African American, to put a lot of pressure on you. There are always people around you trying to bring you down. They’re not trying to do anything with their life like you are trying to do; they want to sit at home all day while you are trying to get a

good education. God is trying to get him to the understanding to not try to make the wrong choice, but to make the right choice.”

Okay! Um huh!

Janet Desire – “This is, you know, I hear this a lot in church, the creation, it brings you back to that first chapter in the Bible, and I’m not going to preach! He said that you are created from the dust, and I think that it looks like he is being created from the dirt and I was thinking that everything that begins starts from the bottom up. And when you start something, you give it energy and give it life, you have to bring it up. You have to start somewhere. And even if it looks like someone is bringing him down, you have to - there are certain obstacles that you have to surpass, you know, that bring you back to your fullest to the peak of your life.”

Very good, we are going to stop here and pick up next time. Thank you guys a lot for giving me your ideas.

The painting on the next page although is not done by a Black artists deals with a lot of moral issues. The participants saw this work among my slides and thought that it was done by a Black artist. I did decide to discuss this piece with them because of the similarities it had with Black features and history. This work was done by a Mexican artist, whom is considered as a minority here in the United States. The work brings out moral issues of feeling powerless, hate-tread of war, and the need to help others, caring. Seeing the crying baby make me want to find him and take care of him.

Ah, okay boys and girls, here is another one that I would like you to talk about and look at it closely. Although this work is not done by a Black artist, I want you to give me some ideas about what the artist is trying to tell us with this particular painting.



Figure 40, “Echo of a Scream”
David Alfaro Siqueiros

Janet Desire' – “To me it is very disturbing; it’s a disturbing description of war.

The only thing that confuses me is the giant head in the background!

Everyone – “laugh”

Janet Desire' – “I don’t really understand that part, but you have like cannons and something that looks like clothing, a tree house. Something!

Okay, is there anyway this can relate to what’s going on today?

Kristal – “I think it can relate because when I look at it I think about life and how some people think about life is really horrible. They say that life will chew you up and spit you out. Yea, something like that, because life is ruff. I think that the bigger head that’s what it seems like and the smaller head is going to have to face some difficult obstacles and it’s like a war.

Leah – “For some reason when I first saw it, it looked like a baby, a baby’s head with some old starving man’s body. I don’t know!

Devon – “I think that they are the same people and that the bigger head in the back ground is showing the facial expression and is showing how this is a bad time, or something like that.

Okay! Relating this to maybe the war that is going on in Iran Iraq, Afghanistan, and? And what about even Darfur in Sudan in Africa, you know a lot of that can depict what is going on in today’s world. Ah you know for instance in Darfur they are having something like an ethnic cleaning, they are killing their own people. And this makes me think of that and as far as the moral aspect of the war. Any one want to address the moral aspect of what this picture might be depicting or something like that. You know what moral means right?

Everyone – “Yes”

Okay, Anybody think about it for a moment, maybe later on if you can’t think of anything right now, you maybe can give me a write up on this particular picture. We can move on, but if you can’t think of anything right now, let’s try and write some things down and maybe get that to me, okay! Alright!

The next painting brings out the moral issues of family life. Each of us relate to our family in different ways, so perhaps saying grace is one of those things we share. Being thankful for what you have is one thing that can bring us to what is happening in our families today. Many families have to stop and think about what is important and what they need to hold on to, because of the way the economy has taken a dive. Stay

close to family and link to a greater source is what many families may be doing. Respect of what you have and sharing with each other.

Let's look at this next picture, okay. What can you tell me about this? This is called family grace. Can this relate to your family or a family you know? What's happening here?



Figure 41, "Family Grace"
Fredrick Douglass

Janet Desire' – "You have, the, I guess you will say a typical Southern family at the table, you know saying grace.

Devon – "It look like it was a long time ago.

Randal – "They're giving thanks to God."

As far as giving grace, is it important in your family or maybe not or anything like that?

Leah – "In my family, we say grace all the time, it's like it is a family tradition. Maybe that's what it's trying to portray, that it is a family tradition that people usually do all the time.

Janet Desire' – "To me my family is always being thankful for what we have, what we want and even what we've had in the past. And even if we are not at the

table, we just give thanks for what ever we are going through now; it's going to be better in the end.”

Anybody else, this is another one that you might want to do a little write up on and give it to me later. Okay we are going to move on to another picture.

This painting below brings out the moral issues of stereotypes. Racism is a strong force here in the United States and around the world. The images of the people in this painting deal with the way other people view Blacks and how some Blacks view themselves as a result of ideas from those other people. Hatred of others and self-hatred is a very strong force to contend with.



Figure 42, “Nous Quatre a Paris”
Palmer Hayden

Look at this painting. Somebody give me some feed back about this picture.

Janet Desire' – “ah to me it reminds me of a road side billiard hall or like little play room where people, you have cute little Black people playing cards, shooting pool and most likely someone intended for a bar to be there.

Randal -Where the average Black person play cards.

Average!

Janice Desire' – “Saturday nights.”

Kristal – “Yeah road side.”

Leah – “My aunt puts stuff up like from slavery time where they would have ads with pictures of Black people with humongous lips or big noses and maybe where they show Black people, which make them look real ugly and really deformed.”

How do you feel about that, those types of paintings?

Kristal – “To me I think it’s not right, it’s being stereotypical where they think all Black people have big noses or big lips. Some of us may have those features and most of us have like big ears and big noses, they want to point that out, kind of like it’s a joke and I don’t think that’s right.

Janet Desire' – “To me it’s also kind of judgmental because you can be, well there are some African Americans who don’t even have big lips or their nose might be just as pointy as any one else. They put out this big picture that everyone is supposed to look like that, not everybody look’s like that. Instead of having a forehead, they have a two head. Of course I know that I don’t look like that.

Everybody – “laughs”

Kristal – “Did ya’ll notice that there are only boys , like there are no women and they are looking away.

Leah – “I seems like White people, the way they are putting the Black people down they are inferior to Blacks, because they have to take the extreme, the

feature . Like the White people are always getting botox in their lips, but here they want to say ours are so ugly. There always getting a nose job but they are saying that our noses are so big. This shows that they are inferior to Black people because they are always getting a nose job and put down black people, where they have to put them down to feel better about themselves.”

Randal – “They want big lips.”

Leah – “Yeah, this proves that they are feeling inferior to make extreme pictures like that.”

Kristal – “I see that all the time.”

Janet Desire' – “Those noses got to be small not pointy!”

What about the skin?

Kristal – “The skin, oh, they want to get tans so they can get darker.”

Everybody – “Yeah they get tans!”

Devon – “Well, what about what they are doing?”

Leah – “They are all looking away.”

Kristal – “What’s the point of playing cards?” Something about this picture is kind of confusing. No body’s paying attention.”

Randal – “They are playing poker.”

Janet Desire' – “no it’s like people be playing cards, just to have something to do when they are talking.”

Devon – “I think it is trying to personify that Black people don’t pay attention.”

Janet Desire' – “Short attention span.”

Ah!

Janet Desire' – “That’s kind of harsh!”

Everyone – “Sitting around looking at the wall,

- taking up space,
- not paying attention,
- like we can’t pay attention to a card game!”

Janet Desire' – “This is kind of making me mad.”

Everyone – “Laugh with hesitation.”

That’s interesting! Isn’t it strange that a painting can bring all these things out? You see what I am saying, looking at that you probably wouldn’t have taken the time to look at this painting and think of these things. So that the thing about art it can make you have all these different reactions if you just stick with it. So there it is!

This last painting deals with the moral issue of stereotypes also. Producing works of art that deals with high self image is the purpose of this piece. Caring for self and demanding respect from others is the main idea of this work.

Look at this particular piece of art work, it is “The liberation of Aunt Jemima” the large piece is the stereotypical big lips, the rag on the head, and the rag dress.

Tell me something about this. Have you ever seen Aunt Jemima before?



Figure 43, "The Liberation of Aunt Jemima"
Betye Saar

Leah – "My aunt has pictures of her all over the house."

Kristal – "I have seen her on the bottle. The rag on the head!"

Leah – "That picture of her is so different from most pictures I have seen."

Kristal – "I have seen her on the syrup; I don't think she had a scarf on her head."

So tell me something about the small picture. Tell me something about the picture in front of her.

Janet Desire' – "She is a lot skinner!"

What about the way she is dressed?

Kristal – "She is dressed like modern."

Janet Desire' – "Her lips takes up half of her face."

Kristal – "The eyes pop out at you."

Randal – "Like those pictures you see that make your head bigger."

Kristal – "Yeah, caricature."

Devon – “The one in the background is the way someone sees her as, and the picture is the way she really is.”

Janet Desire' – “Good Job!”

Good idea, I had not thought of it that way, yes!

Okay one thing about the large eyes I know there was a saying that Black people can be seen in the dark if they opened their eyes or mouth.

Leah – “There is nothing wrong about big eyes. They are bug eyes not big eyes.”

Janet Desire' – That’s for people who are seriously dark, if you turn the lights off and they blink. Yeah, my mom used to say that, because she knew a lot of people when she was young and they have gotten much darker over the years. She would walk up to them and say that, man if I saw you in the dark all I could see is your eyeballs or your teeth.”

The thing about that is, think about that guys, think about that, we can be just as hard on each other as another race, because we will down each other.

Randal – “Sort of what we are doing today!”

Janet Desire' – “Not really! But they don’t do it on purpose. You wouldn’t say it just because you’re Black.” They might say they call you that, why shouldn’t I call you that?

Randal – “That’s the point, why should you?”

Kristal – “ Kind of make you think that there shouldn’t be Black on Black and we should unit. I am not saying that we should gang up on another race, but we should be equal like everybody should get along, instead of having your little

clicks. Like Black people are over here and White people are over there. It should be one big section.”

Since you touched on that, is that kind of what is going on in today’s world, like the John Imus controversy in the news? The man that said those things about the Black ladies, ball players.”

Randal – “Yeah, nappy headed hoes!”

Kristal – “Randal!”

Yeah, well he did say that!

Leah – “What do you think if somebody Black said that about the same people, nothing would be done? It depends on who said it.”

Janet Desire – “But nobody is saying anything, the president is not saying White people get along with Black people and Black people get along with White people, and Asians get along with Blacks. Nobody is saying anything; we just keep going and going.”

Don’t you think that’s what’s happening now, don’t you think that is why now they are trying to change the music.

Devon – “I think they should because it is getting out of control, because when somebody says something of another race, then there’s a problem. You just are making it easy for someone else to say it.”

Kristal – “Who is trying to change the music?”

Randal – “Al Sharpton and others.”

Anything else about this work.

Leah – “She has inner beauty.”

All of these pieces you have seen were done by African American artists.

Everyone – “What!”

Leah – “So they are making fun of themselves?”

No, remember the name of this is “The Liberation of Aunt Jemima.”

The artist is liberating her by showing her a different way from the old stereotypical version.

So this brings us to the end of our session and works of art. The next thing I would like you to do for me, which will finish up this process is to respond to the questionnaire.

Responses to the Questionnaire

I gave each student a questionnaire to answer after they viewed the art works.

The questionnaire had four questions that related to either the art work they had viewed or things the participants learned or valued.

Question # 1; How significant is it for you to see positive images of Blacks in our society? Please express your true ideals.

Janet Desire’ – Question # 1, “Nowadays, people don’t see any positive images of “Blacks” in our society. Now that Blacks have gone through the Civil Rights Movement and Martin Luther King Jr., it seems like we have gone downhill from there. We go through life feeling like we cannot stand up for ourselves because the heroes of the old times have aged or have died.”

Randal – Question # 1, “Well, as a young adult, I am influenced by many things and many people. Even though it may be wrong, we’ll try anyway. So, yes, it is very important and we need more positive images because we seem to have forgotten the good that is left.”

Kristal – Question # 1, “I think that it is a good way to let other Blacks see that everything doesn’t have to always revolve around violence and by showing it to other Blacks that it can inspire them to want to create more positive images and it would also get many of them off the streets and out of trouble.”

Leah – Question # 1, “Usually when I see Black people they are on ads about cereal so it really wasn’t that significant, but it was very real to look at these paintings, because it showed what people do in their everyday lives. The cereal ads don’t.”

Question # 2; What kind of images are you accustomed to seeing when you view images of Blacks? I usually see pictures of Blacks killing other Blacks and Blacks also playing the part of how others see them in everyday life.

Briana – Question # 2, “Well, I’m accustom to seeing Blacks being the loudmouth people who say it how it is and the people who always get killed first in scary movies.”

Janet Desire’ – Question # 2, “The only thing I see “Blacks” succeeding in is getting in gangs at young ages. Also, going to jail for murders of people for no reason, but that all starts with what they see on T.V. and the people on T.V. only promote violence, drugs, and getting in trouble with the law.”

Devon - Question # 2, “I usually see negative images of Blacks when I am viewing certain pieces of art.”

Randal – Question # 2, “Boys and men with pants hanging, single mothers, girls with tight clothing, drugs and violence.”

Regarding the third question, I told my participants they did not have to answer that question again because they had already answered it when they did the summary on the third day of the research session. The third question was as followed:

Question # 3, “Tell me something about one of the paintings you saw today.”

Janet Desire’ – Question # 4, “These paintings basically explain why Black people don’t do well anymore. Because of what others think, Blacks either think they aren’t good enough or aren’t beautiful enough. But I think that if Black people look past the fact that they are darker than the rest of the community and just do what they know is best for them things will be better.”

Devon – Question # 4, “These two paintings, ‘Cousins’ and ‘Rock- A- Bye Baby’ show that Black children are/can be happy and/or nice. I believe that they show a positive image of Black children, which could help people understand more about the Black society.”

Briana – Question # 4, “I learned that there can be some positive images of Blacks. They do not only have to be negative ones.”

Leah – Question # 4, “I learned that African Americans can come out of a struggle. I also learned that a message could be given through a picture to teach a lesson.”

Randal – Question # 4, “Black people can be pictured in many different ways. Good and bad, I always learned that a picture can have many different meanings depending on how you look at it.”

Questions to Ask

In this section I want to give you some suggestions on what questions to ask when trying to direct Black youth to engage in interpreting works of art. My focus will be on works of art that depict Black subject matter. What you want to do is to allow the youth to have some kind of opinion regarding the works of art you have chosen. So, therefore you give them something to see, instead of asking them what they see. To get them started, you may begin by asking some basic questions such as Barnett (2005) would ask; “what is your first response to the work?” In this case you may have them to write this down or if this is not the first time you may have them to respond freely, of course in an orderly manner. Another one might be; “when, where, and why was the work made? Give them some time to answer each one rather than combining them all together. By whom, and for whom?” With this question you may have to give them a little more information in the beginning, such as showing works of art from different artists and different periods. You may impress up on them in the case of moral principles, does this enhance family pride or was this work created for children, parents or a group of people? If the work is old and worn, you may ask them; “what did the work originally look like?” You may ask, “where would the work originally have been seen?” For instance if the work is “The crucifixion” or the painting of “The Baptism,” these pieces could have been placed in a church. You might want to ask the youth if the place where the work was and is hung could change the importance of the piece. Another question; “What does the form contribute? For instance, would you respond to it differently if the work was larger or smaller, made into a sculpture, painting, or drawing? Then all those questions could lead you back to, what is the title? Does the title help in any way to clarify what the work

is about? Many times you can look at a work of art and have a dilemma about the subject or content. However, after you find out the name of the work, it makes clear that which you had confusion about. This happened in one of the paintings my participants interpreted, which was “The Creation of Man.” The participants were trying to figure out what was happening in the work without knowing the name. The room was quiet for a moment until I told them the title. You can find this painting on page 140, plate # 39. Another thing to consider according to Barnet (2005), is the subject matter of the work. To engage the youth you may ask the question, if the work is about figures, what relationship does the figure have to them the viewer or if there is more than one figure, what relationship do the figures have to each other?

Some of these questions are good to get you started, but perhaps you may use these next questions to get you to the point of your discussion a little faster, if time is something you have to consider. What is the subject in the work? Is there a relationship going on in the work between the figures? Do you believe you can tell me what is happening in the work of art? Or, can you relate to what is happening in this work? Is there a moral to this work? If the technical details are not what you want to focus on, then perhaps you should consider looking at that side of the critique at another time, such as, elements and principles of art. I believe this is where I fell short in teaching my participants how to critique the works of art. I spent more time on analyzing rather than on the subject matter in interpreting and judgment which fell short on what I expected to get. However, by the end of my research, I began to get what I wanted from my participants.

Summary

This reflection on the visual interpretations proved to be very enlightening and helpful to my research. My participants have interpreted what I believe their sincere beliefs about works of art created by Black artists. Many people may believe that young people do not care or think about what is important. Even though these youth are influenced by whatever is going on around them, they genuinely want guidance from adults. This is what led me to choose the different works depicting certain images. Each of the works of art chosen was done so to initiate cognitive thought which would lead to consistent reflection on moral matters. This process motivated students to honestly express their thoughts about what matters in their daily social connections with their peers and adults.

CHAPTER 5

RECLAIMING THE FOUNDATION

Remembering the Connection

Through my life's journey, I have come to see
my thoughts aren't my own, my beliefs have been grown
from the people I have come in contact with.
I used to believe that it was me,
who needed to prove why I didn't choose
to exclude those who believe that truth, couldn't set you free.

What is this thing that lets me know
That who I am is more, much more.
Pretending to be this massive show
Even when walking out the door.
Yet a person alone on a path somewhere,
knowing not a friend to share.

It is my he, my she, my time to be
with thoughts complete
that one is all with humanity.
Remember to keep that in mind,
when you start to fall somewhere behind.

Mariah Spann

The purpose of this study was to examine the possibility that students are able to get a moral connection with their own experiences through critical interpretations of works of art created by Black artists. The perceptions of the five participants were very forthcoming and informative. The atmosphere was relaxed and non-intrusive. Three key questions were asked in this study: (1) How can Black art be used to educate moral principles to Black youth? (2) How can Black art assist Black youth in making a connection between moral principles in Black art and their own experiences? (3) Why is it important to implement ways for Black youth to learn moral principles?

This study allowed the participants to express what they believe to be true through their interpretations of works of Black art. It gave me tangible material to share with educators of all arenas and it gave the participants a third eye for looking inside themselves for an aesthetic connection. It also allowed me to get a better understanding of the affective encounters each participant share with others and their surrounding. This study will allow teachers another avenue to direct moral principles, which is a form of character education, but using art as a tool to do so. Art depicts historical facts, cultural differences, and aesthetic values each of us may have. Art can also foster a sense of identity through the interaction between the viewer and the work. This study should, I believe, be investigated further because it will contribute to the overwhelming need in America to enhance the lives of Black youth, because many are considered at risk. Black youth in Jonesboro, Georgia make up 30% of the under the age of 18 group from a population of 51% Black. This group, I feel need positive interactions in and out of schools, which is why I am introducing my study as an important component to education.

The critical race theory framework (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, and Bell, 2004) was used to examine the makeup of Black youth in this county, as well as the country. This research drew upon historical events ranging from development of democracy relating to Black culture, the education of Blacks in the South, educating through the arts in the South, education of moral principles of Blacks relating to art, schools, social events, and finding out what curriculum would be the best for educating moral principles. I also used a number of poems, which are reflective of the Black experience, including

my own. A narrative inquiry method (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999) was instrumental in collecting stories of the participants.

All participants in this study were members of the same suburb in Jonesboro, Georgia, who all happened to be gifted eighth grade students. I decided to focus on Black youth because these youth appeared to have the largest struggle with direction. In my study, I realized that the ultimate behavior of students depends on a result of positive or negative connections with adults, whether it is with parents, teachers, or leaders in the community. Therefore, I chose a critical race theory framework because it linked the background of Black Americans in early days of this country to what is happening now to Black youth.

In this chapter, I am going to talk about the different findings relating the interpretations of the art works. What ever has occurred with Blacks in American society, in education, religion, self worth, and their relationship with art, began as a strong correlation to (1) the advancement of Blacks in the South, (2) the education of Blacks in the South in art, (3) the development of Black art in the United States, (5) Black moral principles, (6) Black moral principles in Black art, and (7) Black moral principles, Black art, and developing a cultural relevant curriculum for the Black youth. The stories of Leah, Devon, Janet Desire', and Kristal, who revealed through interpreting the works of art, were interesting ideas and reflections they experienced. Those ideas also included the revelation of morals exhibited by their peers and the adults they came in contact with. These youth were able to think and talk about art in ways they had never witnessed before.

In order to understand the findings of my research, I need to talk a little bit about the works of art, why I chose those pieces, the connection of moral principles in the work, what I believe the participants got out of this process, and of course what kind of meaning I got out of the conversations. In the following section I want to discuss my findings and I will refer you back to each work of art the participants had a chance to interpret. At the end of this chapter I will discuss if my findings answered my questions.

If we take a look at the first work of art “Delusion,” (Figure, 4.26) which is one of my own works of art, because when I painted this piece, I wanted to relay a message of what I had observed in society with Black youth. I wasn’t sure if the youth would get what I felt when I was painting this work, but I had to try. The moral principle behind this piece is the self hatred. The image in the mirror reflects the consciousness of the little girl. Her wanting to be what the doll represents, blond, blue eyed, and privileged. If we go back to the beginning history of Black representation in this country, we know that the majority of the products presented to them were and are White oriented. White dolls, White hair, face, and beauty products, books about Whites showing White images, and a host of things that had and have nothing to do with Black life. This painting represents all those things that have nothing to do with identifying self to a Black person. It has everything to do with identifying with the doll, which embodies the so called dominate culture.

The participants wrote their interpretations down on paper after I had gone over the process of critiquing. Janet and Leah came close to understanding what I wanted them to get about the underlined message in this work. The other three, Randal, Kristal, and Devon came up with other ideas, which could take on an entirely different concept

about being an adult with the same issues as the child. (Finding 1) Only two out of the five participants understood the moral connection of this piece. My belief about some Black youth is supported with this statement, “behind the boarded-up windows of Black America, a little Black girl yearns to have beautiful blue eyes like the little white girls she sees, and the horror at the heart of her yearning is exceeded only by the evil of its fulfillment...” (Morrison, 1970, p. 1) Although I hold this statement as close to the truth for many Black youth, I disagree with the way Morrison describes the yearning of the young girl as being ultimately evil. I do however believe that it is a detriment to the young girl, but perhaps this is a process for learning self. I could be wrong about the influence of the doll and what it represents to the little girl. Another way to look at this painting is to believe that society will eventually see the little girl as universal. Meaning there is no color. The person is viewed as a collection of the world.

Through the years, it took me experiencing different things to come to who I am now. The different people I have encountered, as well as the many events that have affected choices that I have made and am making today. Akbar (1998) addresses the importance of knowing one’s self, to reach inside to stop the continuation of what’s bad and figure out the good connections. What is happening in this painting relates to long ago in this country, which if we look back through what has happened, mainly in the South with their forefathers and mothers, Black life occurred in an ill democratic system. The advancement of Blacks in America is the over arching influence to what is happening to Black youth today. This system produced slavery, a fight for education, the Civil Rights Movement, and the racial and cultural transformation from “Negro” to “Black” during the 1960s, which was an important factor to Black self-esteem. All of

these things helped direct what Black art is about. This is why Black art touches the souls of the viewer.

If we move on to the next work, which is another of my own paintings, “Let’s Shoot Some Hoops” (Figure, 4.27), you find that this piece’s subject matter is the Black male. The moral principle in this painting is confronting the issue about the sagging pants that the youth are sporting today. To me the very idea of a person, a Black person wearing his pants where another person can see his under clothes, destroys what Blacks have had to work hard for. Meaning that Blacks came here as proud people who were stripped down to less important as dogs. To see that a young male would dress in a fashion where he did not care about his appearance says to me that you have no respect for yourself nor do you have respect for the people who fought for Blacks to get respect as a human being. I wanted them to get a sense that wearing the pants like that was affecting their morality. That showing your underwear is disrespectful to them and to others who were subjected to seeing what was under their clothes. The point of my choosing this work was to have the participants to become aware of the connection between the struggles of Blacks and how dressing this way contributes to that struggle. Each of the participants wrote down what they thought I wanted them to say about the painting. Everyone focused on analyzing the work more than interpreting the meaning. They all mentioned that the young man in the painting was an ordinary person. They also mentioned slightly about the way he was dressed, but they mainly focused on the positive outcome of him putting in hours of practice. (Finding 2) None of them got the moral implication out of this work. The opinion that Black youth have formed habits which are a hindrance to their moral principle is supported by Akbar (1998) “the learning, pains,

joys, habits that we develop along our personal journey becomes the content of the personal self” (p. 25.)

“White Tee” (Figure, 4.28) is another one of my works which was chosen because it had a close connection to me. I used my son as a model to portray the moral concept in this painting. The moral principle I wanted to focus on was the issue of choices, making decisions that would affect you and the people around you. As a Black person, I have noticed that I must choose wisely in making decisions because I am not looked at the same way as another nationality. Why do I say this? Let me give you an example. Blacks have for years worn their hair in corn-roles. The moment that Bo Derrick wears her hair in them in a movie, this became the creation of the corn-roles. Michael Vick, a Black football player who got in trouble by providing a place for a dog fighting ring. He was not the person operating the business; however he was the person who got the longest sentence, mainly because he was known, and I think because he was very smart as a quarterback. Whites and Mexicans have been in this business for years but they were not gone after as strongly as he was. Don’t get me wrong he made a bad choice getting mixed up with this in the first place. The whole point of this is to say that, the young man in the painting has a choice to make. It is apparent that the white tee shirt represents something in the Black neighborhood. The first time they came out, gangs members began wearing them to make it hard for police officers to figure out which person they were looking for. It was important for me to show the participants this painting and relate it to how Black youth have diverted to standing on the street corners and using their minds for destruction instead of building buildings and inventing new inventions. Blacks have come from dressing very elegantly after slavery times to

dressing down which is part of the devastation of Black pride. Much of this lowing of pride for oneself had a lot to do with the damage done by fatherless homes and many mothers not knowing how to help their young boys become young men. You can tell that the young man has hesitation and is in need of direction. Where is the guidance for the young Black youth of today? They are begging for our help.

By the time we got around to this painting, the participants were placed in a group setting. Leah started with her critique of the work. Right off, she got it! This caused a chain reaction with the other members of the group. (Finding 3) What I saw was the participants were most comfortable in the group setting. They were able to learn from each other and expand on what they learned. They were able to compare their interpretations with what they see among their peer group. Kunjufu (1996) let's us know that "90% of African American children who were born out of wedlock are reared in an extended family. We need African American organizations to teach our children their history and culture." If we don't do this our youth will learn from each other, not necessarily the correct things, to carry them forth.

The next picture is "Direction" (Figure, 4.29) which is a sculpture. This piece depicts two people, a man and a boy. If we look to the sculpture, we see that the man has one hand on the boy's shoulder and the other hand showing direction, either pointing to a particular situation or just gesturing as he is talking. The boy is attentively listening with one hand folded behind his back and the other hand almost wanting to show that he is taking everything in. My moral focus for this piece deals with respect of authority. Just as I mentioned regarding the last painting, this work shows that the young person apparently needs some assistance in making a decision. I grew up in the South where

there was not a lack of adult direction. I could count on most adults in the neighborhood being available to help me make the right decision about something. Some way, if a young person got in trouble at school, the adults knew about it before the child got home and believe me, you knew about it. The young people listened for the most part and showed that adult respect, by listening and responding accordingly. As a young person and as an adult, I always said “yes ma” and “yes sir” to an adult. In the Black culture this was important, just as it was in Africa, according to my professor Dr. Onyile. In a class I took during my graduate studies, Dr. Onyile told us many stories about his family and the importance of the male figure as head of the family. One particular story that stands out in my mind is when his sister was engaged to me married. She had to get his permission before she could get married. This was a great sign of respect to him. (Finding 4) The participants’ interpretation took a little longer to get to what I wanted them to see, but they all ultimately came to the same conclusion that the older person was giving direction to the younger person. He has a support of an adult, in which we want for all our Black youth. The participants were able to associate this with what’s going on with society today.

“The Banjo Lesson” (Figure, 4.5) shows the connection again between man and boy. This piece deals with the human connection of teacher and student, also the respect of authority. You want to assume that this person may be a master with the banjo because of the age he appears to be. You see that the place where the lesson is going on is not a grand place. It appears that it is either the man’s home or the home of the little boy or theirs together. The home appears to be of meager means because you see pots on the floor and very little furniture. But does that have anything to do with weather or not

learning can take place? Blacks have known from the beginning that teaching your own or helping a young person is important for the expansion of the Black race. Even after Black were allowed to be educated in schools, they knew that in order to get a quality education, they had to teach them selves or seek out the person who could do the job. This painting represents the importance of learning and teaching. Where you are is not important. An example is Tri-cities High school where my son attends. The school is old, sand is coming out of the walls, the stage floors have nails coming up, but so many great things are happening there. The heart of learning and teaching is in the students and the teachers. This is what is happening in the painting. Blacks have always been about to achieve over insurmountable odds. This painting is no exception.

In the beginning the participants talked about slavery time. When Devon began talking about the lifestyle not being important, everyone else began to feed on that. They began getting more detailed with their interpretation, talking about the sense of bonding between different generations. (Finding 5) The participants were able to connect with the importance of learning values from the elders. Having a respect for the adults in the home and community is a learned trait. Learning our history from those before us will enhance what is being learned.

The next work is “The Preacher” (Figure, 4.31) which is a dramatic depiction of a man whom we assume is a preacher, being very expressive with his gestures towards Heaven and either the chair or Hell. Many times this dramatization occurs in the Black church were as the subject gets very expressive. This painting focuses on the spiritual aspects of Black life, committing to the teachings of a heavenly power, believing that there is something to hold fast to and look up to. Religion is a large part of most Black

culture, whereas centering on having hope and faith was the basis of helping slaves overcome and even today has a strong part in helping Black overcome difficulty. The significance of this painting deals with preparing to be reborn. The importance of sitting in that chair tells us that you have chosen the path of following righteousness, that you will place the Heavenly master first, above any other master.

The participants talked about when it was their turn to get baptized. Leah especially was very descriptive about her own baptism. This painting allowed the participants to connect with the choice they made to sit in the chair. To decide that they wanted to make good choices and the ones that would help them develop as good citizens and spiritual beings. Each of the participants had similar experiences about the church and getting prepared to be baptized. (Finding 6) With familiar examples Black youth are able to reflect on things that relate to them. The church has long been recognized as the heart of Black people. West (2001) and Reese (2000) supports this by discussing the religious nature of the Black youth and how important it is to develop moral reasoning. Du Bois (1902) criticized the way Blacks had to struggle to make any strides in this country. He pointed that out by the mention of old songs they sang, Blacks were able to have hope in the midst of turmoil and keep secrets of escaping or helping others seek their freedom. This reminds me of my own mother who passed the time away while working by singing old spirituals.

“First Sunday” (Figure, 4.32) reflects the days of Sunday mornings at Sunday school. The three little girls sitting on folding chairs supposedly reading the Bible but engaged in fun conversations, you can tell that whatever the topic is, they have clearly neglected their main focus. You can’t help but notice the connection they share. The

moral value in the painting is care of friendship, respect of learning spiritual history. Having a friend is important to a well rounded person. This painting shows up that having the ability to connect with others helps up become more in touch with who we are as beings. Having the ability to relate, compare and contrast to your peers allows Black youth to grow. Communing with others has always allowed humans to learn and grow, Black youth are no different. Janet began talking about relating to the work. Through Black art, Black youth are able to get a connection of historical and social issues from the subject portrayed in the work. You can see the historical elements through the dress the (Finding 7) Friendship is an act of caring and respect. Also learning about a spiritual connection is important in caring for others. This is supported by the work of Patton (1998) stating that many artists use their work to express political, social, and spiritual issues in society. Even in some cases of abstract art, depending on the title of the work, Black youth can get a sense of what the artist is trying to get across to the viewer. Looking at the works of art, the viewer can get an idea of compassion, fear, hope, and togetherness from the works of art. This in turn gives the person viewing the work, Black youth, the ability to judge and discern what is seen, what ideas and events they have known or have heard about. Kristal talked about the painting of the little girls sitting in church having a conversation about what ever; this made her relate to her own childhood. She and her friends telling stories to each other about what had happened during the week and needing someone to listen in order to get things off his or her chest.

The painting “Church Mother” (Figure, 4.33) gives us respect of the elder mothers of the church. See the four women sitting on a pew two of them engaged in a conversation. It could be a serious topic because they don’t appear to be smiling and the

ladies on the end are choosing not to engage in that topic. They are all wearing hats as many of our church mothers do. This may perhaps be a day set aside for them or the pastor because they are all wearing white. I talked about the respect of our elders before regarding Black culture. I was taught that this was very major in keeping in good favor with God. As a teacher I was told by one of my students that her parents told her not to say “yes ma” or “no ma” to people because it was a slave mentality. I was just flabbergasted at that comment. That attitude reflects the mis-education of many Black youth today. As you can see, the child was only reflection what her parents had taught her. This way of thinking may be transferred to other students and to the off spring of this person as well.

The participants had a lot to say about this painting regarding adults and gossip. Kristal interpreted the painting representing how older ladies gossip in church about each other or someone else. “Oh, did you see such and such with that on today, you know she didn’t need that on....” With the support of all stakeholders, these youth will have a better support system in making better choices. This is one of the main reasons why character education was deemed necessary for the promotion of citizenship among school age children. Each of them interpreted this work as focusing on adult relationships. I asked them how they would handle gossip with their peer group. Although they said they might agree with it, Kristal pointed out that she would try to handle it respectfully. The moral focus is mutual respect. (Finding 8) Being an adult means having respect for life, others, and community. My participants demonstrated an understanding for the adult knowledge and communication with each other.

For many Blacks art has long been a staple for connecting with life even before slavery. According to Anderson (1988) Blacks used art to teach about their spiritual connect, as well as their association with their past and future. The participants began to talk about their experiences in church and told stories about them. The stories were experiences of joy, fear, and sorrows, just as the stories told by myself and the people around me. “The First Sunday II” (Figure, 4.34) which is the painting of three little boys with open books, either a hymn or bible are clearly up to something. The boy on the right is very innocent looking with a frog in his hands. The other two are laughing hysterically about something. The moral principle reflective of this work deals with a connection with others and respect of friendship. This painting connects us to how little boys are playful and mischievous all in one. In this painting we can see that the little Black boys have innocence about them that we need to nurture. Many young Black parents have allowed their boys to raise themselves and they haven’t been guided to express caring for many things. When I was a young girl, the adults in the church would make sure that the children were supervised and there was not very much horse play in the church. The playing was left for outside. In this painting we can get the sense that these boys still have it. (Finding 9) The participants agreed that the little boys are mischievous by nature and need guidance from adults.

My next choice of Black art is called “Funeral Precession” (Figure, 4.35) which subject is pertaining to death. By the look of the number of people who are attending the funeral, this person was important or had a very large family. The people are orderly staying on the path. You notice that in front of the casket there are four men playing instruments. This funeral could possibly be held in New Orleans because we have

become familiar with some customs that may occur there. The moral implications for this painting is the respect of the dead, caring of another person, and sorrow. Black families say this time to be able to commune with members of the family they had not seen in a while. I was also important for the family and friends of the deceased to view the body during the funeral. However, as I grew up and attended many other churches, I find that many people view the body at the funeral home the night before and leave the funeral for reflection. (Finding 10) lets me know that the participants have a sense of family and respect of customs dealing with death. This finding is supported by Kunjufu (2005) & (1996) “You must have a collective value system and believe, I am because we are.” Blacks’ moral principles are tied to their connection with what is happening around them.

Next we move to the work “Baptismal” (Figure, 4.36) regarding a painting with a primitive feel to it. The painting deals with someone getting baptized in a lake near the church. The treatment of the subject matter is without the sense of perspective. The water is raised above the ground; the same is said about the trees that appear to float above ground also. You can tell that the building is a church and someone in the distant left is ringing a bell. You also see four people who look like church mothers who are clearly members of the preparation team for the baptism along with the person being baptized. This painting deals with the moral issue of the spiritual enlightenment, being connected to a higher source. Connecting the moral value of Blacks to art, as a staple of Black culture, was once important to Blacks. Getting baptized was talked about frequently in the Baptist church and in my family when I was a little girl. It became a

greater topic when I became a young adult because my mom really wanted us to get ourselves in order.

During Slavery, many Blacks held on to their tradition to include art in daily life. How can Black art be used to educate moral principles to Black youth? Black art feeds the soul and opens up new ways of seeing and understanding what goes on in daily life. When the participants viewed this painting “Baptismal” by Hunter, they were able to discuss a lot about their own Baptism. Leah pointed out that she was Baptized in a community pool, and told how she was surrounded by people who were swimming. She also stated that she was afraid during that experience. I found that each participant connected this work to their own relationship to the church. (Finding 11) This work deals with a connection with self redemption and preservation of life. The participants were able to express a relationship with the church and what happens in the church, however there was not a great deal of discussion about this piece. I believe that the treatment of the detail was not effective enough to get the students to get a deep feeling about it; however in all of the previous pieces and the ones following this does allow some connection. Supported by the claim that the Black church serves as a place where Blacks could get the most freedom and control. It became the most accessible place to have social groups (Lutz, 2001).

Moving on to the next work, we encounter the “Crucifixion” (Figure, 4.37). This painting was created by Bearden and focused on the Bible story of Jesus on the cross. This expresses to us a very dramatic occasion surrounding the death of the son of God. If we take a look at the image of Jesus we see that he is much larger than the other figures. I don’t know if the artist is painting him larger than life or simply making him appear to

be elevated over everyone else. I do remember the story where the cross was placed on a hill or rising. Bearden paints with limited pallet of colors and also works with geometric shapes. This work deals with morality of suffering and compassion. The significance of showing Jesus on the cross was and is a strong image seen in many Black churches. Showing the suffering of this human like figure only perpetuates the struggles of Blacks. So therefore some nondenominational churches omit the person and only show the cross. One of the participants, Kristal talked about the fact that although she knew who the image was supposed to be, it didn't seem real to her. Leah expressed the subjective parts of the painting regarding the way the woman was dressed, whereas she thought that she was wearing a veil; however Kristal and Devon began to read deeper into the work. They both talked about human feelings, such as good and bad. At first, the discussion was going in a direction of subjectivity, but as the participant continued on, it began to turn to content. The (Finding 12) deals with the ability to discern between right and wrong. I believe that with time, the Black youth will learn how to constructively interpret the works in a way they can use it. Cook (2004) tells us that Blacks have been misdirected through magazines and television, which is why it is important to give them encouragement to do great things.

As we move on, the church theme continues. This next painting is called "Come' worship the Lord" (Figure, 4.38) in which it depicts a group or a family entering the door of a church. We see that they are dressing in their church clothing and they are walking on dirt clearing right at the building. The window is opened for, we assume, to bring in fresh air. Also we notice everyone has a hat, which is something Blacks viewed as an important part of the daily dress. The hair was considered as your crown a glory and the

hat was to adorn it. I also notice that one of the men have already taken his hat off his head. This was another important custom in the Black culture. Men were always supposed to take their hats off before entering a building; this was a sign of respect. This painting centers on the church as a gathering place for Blacks. Just as the previous paintings dealing with the church and spirituality, this painting tells us that Blacks believed in a higher power. This was necessary for the up-liftment of the race. Kristal and Janet Desire' mentioned their connection with this painting makes them remember the togetherness of their families. (Finding 13) The Black youth associates the church with their connection with family and friends, in which they can trust and care about. Lutz (2001) supports this with his thoughts that the church outside of the family became the most accessible social group.”

The painting “Day One, Creation of Man” (Figure, 4.39) depicts a Black man being lifted out of the ground. I see these large hands coming from the clouds gripping on to the arms of the man. The raised hand of the man appears to signify that he is feeling for his way. I also see streams of air coming out of his nose, almost like he is inhaling the source of energy surrounding his head. Understanding the meaning behind this piece can be taken to two directions. This work depicts a strong spiritual influence Blacks have known since the beginning of time. Blacks are God’s children just as all races. This painting has a very powerful connection to the spiritual aspects that have been important to the Black experience. The need to show an image such as this helps to lift up the Black consciousness, just as Reverend Wright has tried to do in his sermons. Leah talked about the breath of God being pushed into the man’s nose. However, Devon talked about the Black experience of being held down and Kristal interpreted the meaning as the

pressures of making choices. This led into them talking about people who don't want to do anything with their life and starting from the bottom first and growing from there. The moral issue covered in this work deals with trust that the creator will bring him through. If I look at the (Finding14) I see that the participants were able to connect with the experience of having the source help them make a choice, the source being God, also realizing that there may be a supreme being to draw from, respect and faith of authority. Relating this to Akbar (1991) ideals that "the beginning step to gaining contact with the inner powers that have been given to us is to conquer and restrict the outer noise that keep us away from ourselves." Akbar (1996) "freeing the Black minds is to change the consciousness of Black people." Interpreting art that depicts the spiritual nature of a person, such as the works showing the baptisms and the creation of man, motivated a connection with a greater source

"Echo of a Scream" (Figure, 4.40) is an extreme dramatization of oppression. This painting deals with the screams of a young child with the enlarged head expressing to us that the child cry is loud but apparently not clear enough. Part of the smaller child's head is blocking the larger head. The area in the foreground and distance is filled with destruction. This painting delivers the devastation of an area and of a group of people. Black youth can relate to this piece because the child is brown skin like them. Many of them can relate because of what they see each day and hear on the radio about the destruction in other countries. Many of them can relate to this because they see so much that happens in their own neighborhoods. The painting appears to reflect a dark and desolate place with the use of the colors. You can almost feel the cries from the child. This painting deals with human suffering. When Janet mentioned that this painting

disturbed her, this made the others relate this to things they have seen or heard in society today. We did not talk a lot on this particular one painting because I could see that it was disturbing to them, however war came up during our conversation. The (Finding 15) in this painting brings up the ability to develop care and justice for others. We can reflect what Katz (1999) has to say about morality, “we have categorized and analyzed using false dichotomies and excluded the importance of aspects of the “other” perspective... we must begin to look at ...a more complete view of the thoughts and actions of people as they struggle with moral issues in all their complexity.”

Now, I decided to move to something other than the church, but still that connection. “Family Grace” (Figure, 4.41) is a painting about a family at the dinner table. If we look at this painting we notice that the man is an older gentleman and the woman could be, but her hair has not grayed yet. They could be grandparents raising the grandchildren or perhaps older parents. They appear to have modest means, because the furniture doesn’t even match. They don’t have a lot on the table, although the table is small. They do seem to be a neat and clean family. The important thing about it is they are all being attentive and focused on what they are doing. If you look at the painting, you will see that the artist made a point in having each unit represented, the father, the mother, and the children. This painting deals with faith, respect, and their connection to God. This painting makes me think of my family before my father passed away. We always tried to eat as a family and say grace at the table. When we were young children, my mother and father taught us how to pray at night and say grace at the table before we ate. I know that my friends did the same. Now that I am older, I taught my children the

same things. I don't think this is happening in many of the Black youth homes I meet. I would love to be proven wrong.

The participants began talking about their families and that saying grace is an important part of their life. Leah mentioned that her family says grace all the time. Janet pointed out that her family was always thankful for what they have, even to the point of when they are not at the table. The (Finding16) tells me that the participants through family practices have a sense of faith, respect of authority, and caring of doing the right thing. Powell (1997) deals with the educational part, which played a great part in the life of Blacks. Education was important for learning what was needed to over come or to enhance the life they wanted to live.

Looking at this next painting "Nous Quatre a Paris" (Figure, 4.42) we notice groups of people playing cards and shooting pool. The first things you notice are the large lips on each person. This painting is a stereotype of how many people view Blacks. With the people looking to the side, almost suggest that the shapes of the heads and the feature of the lips are most dominating things they want us to see. This painting says a lot about how Blacks are degraded and how difficult it is for Blacks as a people to have positive self-esteem when they are forced to see negative things about them. This painting deals with self-esteem, caring of others, and truth. The participants didn't see this right off; they talked about the place and what the people were doing. Leah was the first one to comment on the negative points of this painting. She believes that the reason why Blacks are degraded like that by other races is because the other race feels inferior to Blacks, so that is why they have to find ways to keep Blacks down. Janet points out that they are being judgmental to Blacks. The (Finding17) deals with the issue of race,

hatred, and self-esteem. The participants were able to interpret this as they continued looking at the work. They are able to discern things with a little bit of practice and teaching from parents and educators.

The last work of art deals with “The Liberation of Aunt Jemima” (Figure, 4.43). Looking at this work which is a three-dimensional piece, we can see that the woman in the back is very large, she has a rag on her head, her eyes are large and bucked, and her lips are big and painted red. This is the image that was depicted in many publications in the White world. It shows that the Black female was someone who could go out and kill the food, cook it up for you, and even clean up after you. The point of this piece is to free the person, who is aunt Jemima, from the way she was portrayed. Although the one at the bottom is not the most flattering, it does enhance her looks. Blacks have had to undergo very hurtful things written, said, and illustrated about what make them unique and different. As Jeremiah Wright, a well known minister stated, Blacks are different not inferior, there is nothing better or less. This work deals with the degrading, disrespectful, dishonest, and untruthful side of people. This particular image of Black women is very hard to shake. In the past it was much easier for heavy or fat women to get a part on television because that was the image the powers that be wanted to portray.

The participants had a lot to say about this work. Devon spoke about the smaller picture as being the true person and the larger one was how she was thought of. Janet even talked about how her mother used stereotypes with a friend of hers. Kristal pointed out that we all should be seen as one group instead of many. The conversation even led to John Imus and his denigrating comment about the players of a basketball team. (Finding 18) Some of the participants had seen and heard about aunt Jemima because

their parents had discussed the implications surrounding her. This work had a great impact on all of the participants regarding self-image and caring for others.

My plans for this research are to encourage educators and parents alike to introduce the use of art in every area of the lives of Black youth. My belief is that art is an important medium for touching the hearts of the viewer. My idea is supported by Patton (1998) in her book *African-American Art*, whereas she spoke about the importance of art during 1800s for the abolitionist patronage. She stated that it was important to humanize Blacks in order to get people to sympathize with them. The goal of the art works were to appeal to the emotions of the viewer. I believe even today as it was in the past, art does that.

My first question, *how can Black art be used to educate moral principles to Black youth?* – was answered when students began to relate what they say in many of the works to caring for others and self, respect for authority, knowing the difference between good and bad, having good character, and showing good citizenship. The works of art appealed to the inner emotions and ideas of the youth. The youth were able to interpret what they thought the works represented which spanned to people they knew little about, even in other countries. Looking at the second question, *how can Black art assist Black youth in making a connection between moral principles in Black art and their own experiences?* – The youth talked about how the work reminded them of something they experienced or experiences of someone they knew. When they were able to interpret things like self-respect, caring, and respect of authority, they began to connect those things with the things they know as true. The final question, *why is it important to implement ways for Black youth to learn moral principles?* – is addressed when we

discuss the choices Black youth make. I talked about the mis-education that Blacks receive as a whole in American society. How Blacks are taught to follow the status quo and not what is best for Black Americans. I do believe that the development of a base for helping to introduce Black art in schools will be important in learning about what they do and how they connect with all of us.

I must also agree with Edward Rhymes that we tend to dehumanize ourselves. We don't want to assume that Black youth have lost all moral connection, and are in a sea of total destruction. We all must take conscience efforts to not get to that point of seeing the negative. Rhymes give us evidence of how some Blacks react about each other.

“It appears that if we hear something negative about ourselves we are quick to take ownership. “Black people are drug addicts and drug dealers, and our response? Yep, that’s us.” “Most Black folks are lazy and on welfare,” and our response? Yep, that’s us.” It seems that we don’t challenge, we won’t question and we do ourselves a great disservice.” (Rhymes, retrieved 2008 at, http://www.blackcommentator.com/103/103_guest_misedudation_rhymes.html)

Limitations of Study

Throughout the critiquing process of the works of art, students were able to interpret and compare the works with stories they relate to their own personal experiences. The connection with the works allowed the participants to pull from a deep aesthetic base and explain their thoughts to the group. From the first day of the interactions with the works, the participants became engaged. Right after the first group setting, each made a point to ask when they can get together again. I was enlightened by the fact that I needed to be more selective in choosing the work and how I taught the

participants to critique the works of art. I found that my focus on the moral aspects in the works could have been more defined. Without leading the participants, I wanted them to connect to the meaning of moral aspects in the works and compare it to their own. I realize that this study is a short version of an important element of understanding; however, it can grow to have a positive outcome. It is important to note that these youth could be the exception to the rule. This was a qualitative study which means that the participants were giving their opinions and interpretations of the works based on their own experiences. Not every Black youth may be as versed as my participants. This process was very new and different to these participants and it allowed them to reflect on their life and culture or someone else they knew. I believe I should have spent more time on that process, because I don't think that they completely got it, although they were able to use the terminology, I could tell they were not sure. My whole reason for the short lesson was do to the amount of time I would take away from the youth. This is the way it was for me when I was introduced to expressing my ideas and relating it to the way my sisters, brothers, and I were raised. Therefore, the findings in this study may not be generalized and reflect all Black youth. Some may be hesitant to speak about their family life and even what is happening with their peers. Although this may be a factor, my major concern is that we continue to follow the patterns and programs that we are currently on now and not attempt to try new things, such as my research in Black art as an educational tool for moral principles.

As I remember growing up with my mother and other adults in the neighborhood, they expressed strong ideals about the way we dressed, treated each other and how it would appear if we did not follow certain principles. This allowed us the richness of

knowing our culture. Although we, as Black people, have gotten away from traditional costumes and customs, we still somehow continue to adorn ourselves with special things, such as, hats, jewelry, and certain clothing. The Black youth have maintained some of the traditions in spite of what is going on with their moral principles.

If this is true, is this a good thing, or have these young people fallen under the direction of the Matrix? It's an interesting fact that the Matrix has an uncanny parallel to the lives of Black youth of today. The Matrix, the movie talks about machines and computer chips implanted in humans and causing them to be dehumanized. The people who are in the Matrix are under the influence of the controller and are not subject to their own thinking; they are simply led as puppets. This is similar to "Plato's Allegory." The people in the cave also had blinders on. They could only see what was given to them and right in front of them, but as they began to find their way out of the cave, they were able to see the light. The problem here is that human nature is fickle. Many times we know the truth, but we become lazy and give up working hard to find the truth or we simply refuse the truth. Relating to the Black art allowed these students the opportunity to take control, to allow the art to pull out things they had not realized before.

Given the fact that we live in a poststructuralist society today, Black youth appear that they have fallen into a sea of despair, according to West (2001), Akbar (1996), and other theorists. The links to human existence in the world like racial disagreements, war, poverty, peace, disease, wealth, job security, and many other elements, which are related to humanness, have been created by humans. We, as humans, with regard to our connection to each other, have allowed or are responsible for whatever conditions we have. How do we change this course of unawareness? Is it as

easy as to make choices and act on them? These are some questions Black youth as individuals must ask themselves. We all must also ask ourselves if we are ready to stand up and speak out about individual immorality.

Martusewicz (1994) states that we are in constant flux with the *inside* (the complex processes, methods and relations that affect individuals in schools, which is within the context of the *outside* (the larger social, economic, and political forces that have affected those processes over time). This flux causes a shifting action with the political tides, with economic conditions, and with our own interpretations of what matters. They point out “that as teachers and students we are constantly engaged in making sense of what we do, how we live, and what matters” (p. 3). This system of political, social, and ideological processes are entangled within a larger cultural system made up of institutions, such as families, media, schools, churches, and government, and is woven with what we say, think, teach, live, and everything else we do.

As an educator, I want students to become dilettante about art, as I am. Having a passion for learning is something you cannot make someone have; however, if a teacher demonstrates passion for what he/she teaches and has creative lessons to introduce to students, this will encourage most students to want to take an interest. Teachers must get excited about teaching and students will sit up and notice.

Implications

It is my belief that art is one thing that can help bring each person closer to changing the lack of morality around them. I think allowing art to connect with individual souls can elevate the spiritual aspects within. It appeared that the spiritual essence had fallen by the wayside in many of our Black youth, according to Akbar

(1998). However, this research has brought me to the realization that it's in there, each participant revealed to me that they simply needed help bringing it to the forefront.

Akbar (1998) also points out that in order to advance, Blacks must have vision. This vision must offer an environment of moral and spiritual refinement of the human being consistent with the highest values of African people over the ages. Reverend Jeremiah Wright said it best, Blacks learn differently, not with a deficiency, and we must realize that and allow them to have the correct education. Incorporating an aesthetic education in the lives of Black youth can prove to give them a strong education and a spiritual connection that does not have to include religion. The participants were given an avenue for knowing and empowerment as they interpreted each piece of art.

All education professionals, teachers and administrators have been encouraged from the state to use a word of the day and phrase of the month, to promote character education. At my school the principal mentions the word and gives the definition and phrase each morning. It is left to the teacher to do something with that if they so choose. I suppose this would be part of "No Child Left Behind." Educating moral principles would be a difficult thing to do as educators, but perhaps it could be easier if there is a curriculum set in place to help with this. I would like to develop my research into a curriculum that every stakeholder can use. As a result of this research, students can actively engage in their own learning of moral principles.

Conclusion

Art has always been used as a form of expression for artists for medical practitioners and educators in helping patients and others who believe and know that art is a connector between humans and a spiritual base. Powell (1997) and Patton (1998)

made mention that Blacks inherently is connected to the mother land in regards to many of the ingrained traditions which are very similar. One of those things would be a spiritual base and that base is tied to in many instances art. It has been a means of expression for abused children and also as a tool to learn about the human experience. I believe everything has a deeper meaning than what we see on the surface. I surmise that epistemologically I am directed to believe that it is important to know the why and how of things, which sometimes leaves me standing alone. Throughout my life or the different stages of my life, I have had moments of “hermeneutics,” the term which means “lived experiences.” Heidegger (Ozmon, 1999) believed that each individual should construct his or her own personal world of meaning and I believe that is the ultimate result of this research.

Cornel West believed each of us should work towards four basic components in life; however, I will mention only three. These components contain “prophetic thought” (Reed, 2000) which he explains: (1) Discernment is to have the capacity to provide a deep and broad analytical grasp of the present in light of the past. Connection must relate to or connect with others. One must value and have empathy. (2) Tracking of hypocrisy should be done in a self-critical, rather than a self-righteous manner. “Remaining open to having others point out our own.” (3). Hope should be continued regardless of how things look, because without it, nothing has meaning (p. 173). I would like to agree with West, especially on hope. We must have something to believe in for life to have meaning, which is why it is important for us to teach our young Black youth to meditate, to reflect, and to discuss their feelings, which can be accomplished when they view works of art.

Many forms of art can be integrated into the curriculum of schools, such as painting and drawing, drama, dance, music, photography, and media, to serve the vital psychological needs of human beings. This psychological need also affects the cognitive and emotional areas of human development. Through the use of aesthetics, which is in the arts, we as humans can be able to direct our values in positive ways. The arts are mimetic in nature and allow us to be selective in learning what is important in life.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
PARENT INFORMED CONSENT
AND
MINOR'S ASSENT



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM, FOUNDATIONS, AND READING

PARENT INFORMED CONSENT

1. My name is Mariah S. Buchanan. I am a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University and I am conducting a study entitled: Educating Black Youth Moral Principles Through Black Art. A study will be conducted at the homes of each participant in the community of Jonesboro, Georgia. This study will supplement research on the experiences of Black youth who exhibit moral behaviors.
2. The purpose of this study is to explore how we can use Black art to educate Black youth through art and how they interpret and relate these works to his/her own experiences. The eventual purpose for doing this is to provide implications for educators to understand Black youth, and to find a proper way to teach moral principles through art.
3. Participation in this research will include a focus (group) discussion with other eighth grade males and females. The intent is to meet six to possibly seven times. If needed, an individual written questionnaire may occur to clarify responses from focus group discussion.
4. The risk to participants in this research is minimal to none. Participants will not be asked to do anything which might cause physical or mental harm. Personal discomfort may rise when questions are asked which pertain to race as it relates to schooling and educational matters. Discomfort may also surface when sharing a negative or embarrassing experience which resulted in a positive effect. Steps will be taken to minimize the degree of personal discomfort by explaining that the purpose of the study is to give participants an opportunity to voice their experiences as it relates to their moral beliefs and social success.
5. Benefits:
 - a. Participant will receive personal gratification of being able to recognize the relationship between works of Black art and his/her personal life. Secondly, participant will be provided with exposure to a research project dealing with aesthetics for higher education while at the same time acquiring first hand experience with their culture according to Black artists. Most importantly, participant's experiences will be documented as a resource which may assist teachers with ways to benefit these youth in social and moral achievement.

b. The benefits to society include learning more about factors which can develop moral behaviors in Black youth.

6. Student participation will last no longer than 45 minutes. Students may be asked to repeat the session seven times. Students will be taped for the sole purpose of obtaining an accurate recording of information. No actual names of participants will be used in the transcription of data.
7. Statement of Confidentiality: All obtained data will be kept secure and confidential in electronic and/or paper form.
8. Right to Ask Questions: You have the right to ask questions and have those questions answered. If you have questions about this study, please contact the researcher named above or the researcher's faculty advisor, whose contact information is located at the end of the informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant or the IRB approval process, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at 912-681-0843.
9. Compensation: There will be no inducement as an incentive to participate.
10. Voluntary Participation: Please note that the student does not have to participate in this research. He or she may end his/her participation at any time by telling the person in charge, not returning the instrument or other options. He/she does not have to answer any questions that he/she does not want to answer.
11. Penalty: There is no penalty for deciding not to participate in the study. You may decide at any time they you don't want to participate further and may withdraw without penalty or retribution.
12. There will be no deception in this study.
13. I am asking your permission for your child to participate in this study, and will provide him/her with a simplified "assent" letter/verbal description before enrolling him/her in this study

A copy of the assent letter is attached

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Title of Project: Educating Black Youth Moral Principles Through Black Art
Principal Investigator: Mariah S. Buchanan, 5981 Heatherwood Lane, Riverdale, GA30296, mwbuc134@bellsouth.net

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Ming Fang He, Department of Curriculum, Foundations, and Reading, College of Education, P.O. Box: Post Office Box 8144, Statesboro, GA 30460-8144, (912) 871-1546, mfhe@georgiasouthern.edu

Parent Signature

Date

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

Investigator Signature _____

Date _____



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM, FOUNDATIONS, AND READING

MINOR'S ASSENT

Hello,

My name is Mariah S. Buchanan and I am a graduate student at Georgia Southern University. I am conducting a study dealing with educating Black youth moral principles through Black art.

You are being asked to participate in this project to help me learn about the relationship of moral principles in Black art to everyday life around you and/or peers. If you agree to help, you will be asked to take part in a small group discussion about selected works of Black art. While you are discussing these works of art, I will be filming this process. After the session, I will give you a questionnaire and ask that you write down your interpretation and judgment about some of the pieces you saw. Also, I will ask you questions about your ideas regarding moral values relating to youth today as a reaction to what you view in the works. It will take about 45 minutes for you to help me. You may be asked to do this seven times during the data collection process.

You do not have to help me with this project. You can stop helping me whenever you want to. If you do not want to read or answer any of the questions, it is okay. Nothing bad will happen and I will not be upset with you. You can refuse to help me even if your parents have said yes.

None of the teachers or other people at your school will see the answers to the questions that I ask you. All of the answers that you give me will be kept in a locked cabinet in a room at my home. Only I or people helping me will see your answers. We are not going to put your name on the answers that you give us, so no one will be able to know which answers are yours.

If you or your parents/guardian has any questions about this form or the project, please call me at 770-997-3459 or my advisor, Dr. Ming Fang He, at 912-871-1546. Thank you!

If you understand the information above and want to help in the project, please sign your name on the line below:

Yes, I want to help in the project: _____

Child's Name: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX B
MORAL ART PLAN

Moral Art Plan: Stimulating Moral Understanding Through Works of Art by Black artists and Igniting Creative Expression Grade 8

Overview: In this lesson, there will be a number of focuses. First we want to discuss one of the four techniques created for understanding works of art in order to give a base for developing cognitive thought. The works of art to be used will be selected pieces by Black artists. Students will be shown a number of pieces from slides and power point presentations. There will be group discussions where as students will be able to express through verbal and written language how they feel about the work and what they think the artist's intention was in creating the work. Teacher and students will be video taped in order for the teacher to review and reflect on the pros and cons of the lesson. The final lesson will relate to students' creating a work of art that expresses their beliefs and ideals. The works will center on the student's values, heritage, dreams or myths. Students will be asked to place something in the work that connects to one of these things they feel strongly about. Each student will have an opportunity to display his/her work.

Behavioral Objective: TLW explore techniques in critiquing works by Black artists.

This lesson will focus mainly on Bearden's work.

TLW create an understanding between moral values and popular culture, with works of art through group discussions

TLW be able to create works of art that expresses empathic

analogies through the use of personal exploration.

Resource List: Transparencies, power point, text book, slides, museum trip, and the World Wide Web.

Materials and Supplies: Magazines, fabric, canvas board, drawing paper, acrylic paint or water color, found objects, Photographs, personal objects, glue, pencils, water, paper towels, palettes, cups, and brushes.

(Not all these things will be used by one person)

Affective Activity: Have you ever wondered why certain artists create a particular work of art?

Have you ever looked at a particular piece of work

and it made you think of someone or something familiar?

When you take a look at Romare Bearden's art, try and figure out what he is trying to tell us. After you have done this, then create your own work of art that tells a story about your family.

Think about in your own work what you can do to show your family values and the values you can learn a lot about.

Time Allotment: Day 1 – Talk about focus artist and have a discussion on critiquing those works.

Day 2 – Discussion of moral understanding while showing the works. Allow students to write down a reflection from discussion.

Day 3 – Begin draft on paper, canvas board, or illustration board.

Day 4 – 6 Spend time creating and constructing the project.

Day 7- Discussion, and written reflection on their own work.

Activities and View the works of Bearden or other artists and discuss the

Procedure: different parts of art, such as, element and principles of art.

Go over how to critique his works by using E. Feldman's method. You may decide to make a visit to a museum verse staying in the classroom. After you are confident that your students understand your concepts on moral values, the proceed to the next phase. Students may create their own work of art. Allow students to bring in scrapes of old clothing from a relative or jewelry or even a note or letter they may want to put in their art work. Make sure that students understand that what ever they bring in is appropriate for school. Allow time for creating the work. After the work is done, allow students to show and talk about their work.

Aesthetic Activity: Discuss with students about what they have learned. Ask question concerning moral values and will they begin to notice how works of art can show what someone believes and how our society can direct what an artist create.

Mastery: TLW be able to explain the meaning of moral values and present a piece of work that shows personal values.

Closure Activity: Discuss what plans you may have to continue this project. Have students to give you some feedback about what they have done before on similar projects or subjects.

Bio-evolutionary: A human universal need, ultimately biological which is
A human need to produce art.

APPENDIX C
STUDENT HANDOUT
LIST OF CONCEPTS

List of Concepts

Here is a list of terminology for the arts. Later I will explain how it connects with us and how we can use them as a source to draw from.

Aesthetics: The properties of things valued, like goodness or truth.

Art: In medieval times, art was predominately for religious purposes. Art was valued as something to reveal the divine (Dissansyake, 1992, p. 195).

Artist: creative individuals, who use imagination and skill to communicate in visual forms (Ragons, 2000a, p.11)

Beauty: Beauty and expressiveness are outcomes, products of a design philosophy that emphasizes (1) the direct (or honest) use of materials, 92) disclosure of the method of construction; and (3) suitability of form to function” Feldman, 1985, p. 353).

Essentialist Theories: An attempt to describe the essence of an individual object, that is, the structures of meaning implicit in the experience of that thing. These elements fall under this theory, the mimetic, instrumentalist, formalist, and expressivity.

APPENDIX D
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Student Questionnaire

Understanding through art

1. How significant is it for you to see positive images of Blacks in our society? Please express your true ideals.
2. What kind of images are you accustomed to seeing when you view images of Blacks?
3. Tell me something about one of the paintings you saw today.
4. Write some important things you learned about the works of art you saw today regarding moral conduct.