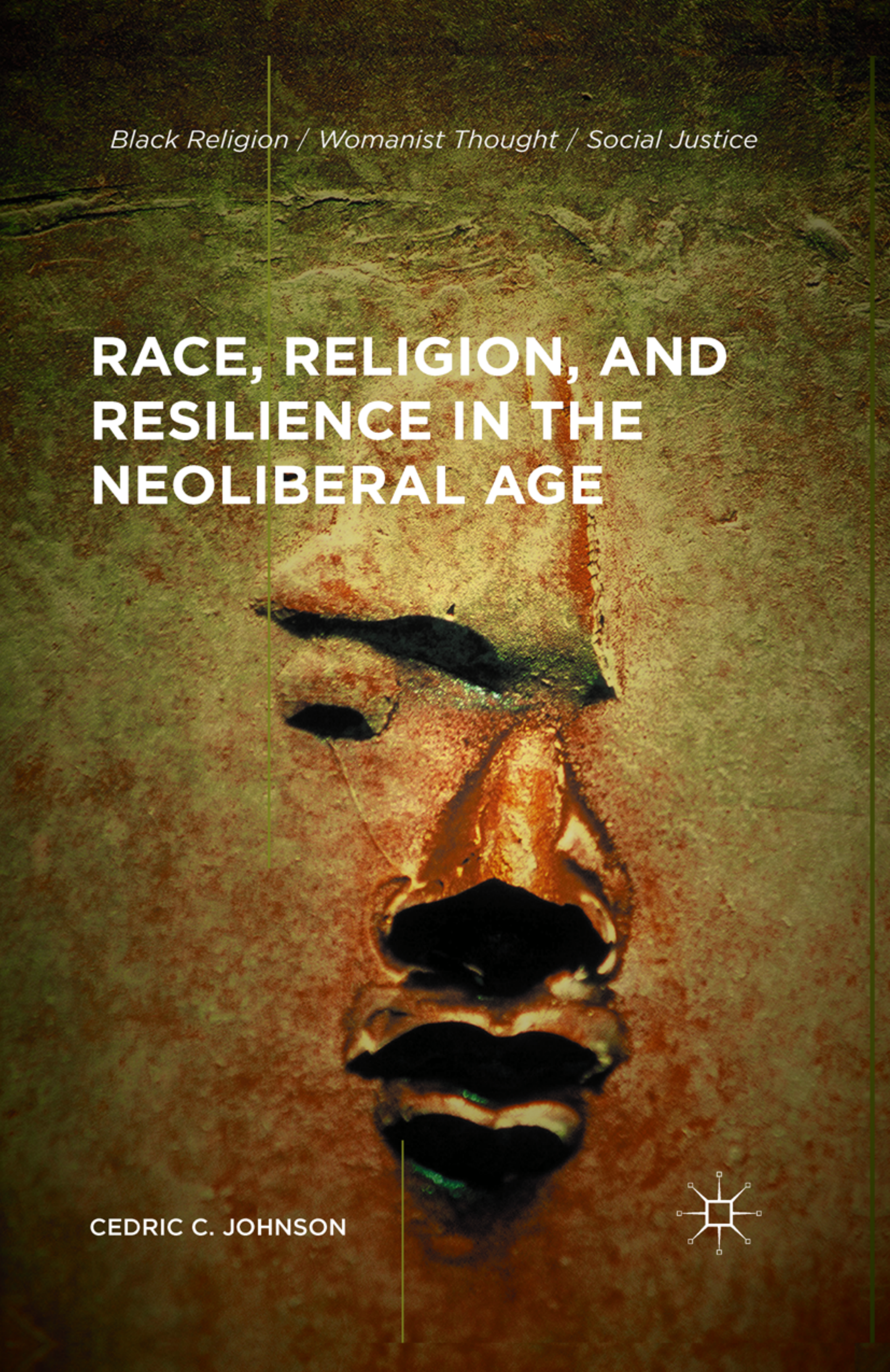

Black Religion / Womanist Thought / Social Justice

RACE, RELIGION, AND RESILIENCE IN THE NEOLIBERAL AGE

CEDRIC C. JOHNSON

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RACE, RELIGION, AND RESILIENCE IN THE NEOLIBERAL AGE

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To my wife,
Veronica Diane Cohn Johnson,

And my parents,
Cornelius and Marjorie Ruth Johnson

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Preface and Acknowledgments

The ideas in this book began to take shape during the years I worked as a mental health professional in New York City. My interests in mental health treatment centered on the challenges and needs of multicultural populations in urban settings. After completing my graduate studies at Hunter College School of Social Work, I was employed as a staff psychotherapist at an outpatient community mental health clinic in Harlem. It was there, under the clinical supervision of the inimitable Doris Dennard and her husband, Fred Dennard, that I was introduced to a holistic psycho-spiritual approach to mental health counseling. This orientation ran counter to the theories and approaches I was trained in that focused on interpersonal dynamics, while muting cultural factors, including the role of spirituality in assessment and treatment strategies. The seeds planted during the years serving in Harlem, in many ways, set the trajectory for much of my future work.

I advanced in the field through promotions to clinical supervisor and then to director of an outpatient mental health clinic in Brooklyn. Now responsible for the oversight of a staff of psychiatrists and clinicians, I was increasingly troubled by the amount of influence pharmaceutical companies exert in the field. I was also disturbed that the preponderance of research on African Americans and mental health, at that time, was deficit-oriented. Diagnostic protocols situated pathology within the patient, with little to no consideration given to how poverty and racism functioned in people's lives as precipitating factors. Scant attention was given to promoting prevention or wellness. However, my exposure to the seminal text *Black Families in*

Therapy: A Multi-systems Approach by the African American psychologist, Nancy Boyd-Franklin, confirmed my own conviction that a culturally sensitive, multi-systems approach was needed to care effectively for the well-being of black and brown populations.

The ideas presented in this study, however, have as much to do with my personal journey. I was born and raised in New York City. My parents, seeking a better life for their children, purchased a home and moved the family to the East New York section of Brooklyn. The neighborhood was racially mixed upon our arrival. An Italian medical doctor operated a private practice on the block. Without warning, though, the neighborhood drastically changed. Our white neighbors suddenly disappeared as if they were forewarned that the outbreak of a plague was imminent. And indeed it was. We were unaware, at the time, that they thought it was us. Devastating forces were, in fact, about to be unleashed upon our community and several others in the city. What was a stable area comprising working class and middle class families would soon resemble a war zone. I would grow up haunted by nightmarish scenes of decimated neighborhoods littered with endless blocks of abandoned apartment buildings. My parents, like so many others who had worked so hard to purchase a home here, continued to work to ensure their children weren't swallowed up by this voracious urban cesspool. Most of the media's "talking heads" were blaming the black and brown victims. But when your dad models a work ethic that had him leaving the house for work before dawn every day and your mother goes back to college after having three children, even as a kid, you instinctively knew something was amiss with the media's portrayal of the dominant narrative. Yet, as I sought to understand what had transpired in the inner city, the available meaning-making resources proved insufficient. The official interpreters for black America were predominantly former leaders in the Civil Rights movement. They saw the world and black America's challenges through an interpretive lens tethered to the 1960s. That heuristic lens, however, did not adequately address the dynamics of what, in the 1980s and 1990s, was a distinctively different socio-historical moment. As a result, even before my experiences as a mental health professional heightened my sensitivity to the importance of family systems, spirituality and culture, my personal experiences made me acutely aware of the impact of economic policies and political systems on human development.

The subtext informing both my personal and professional development is derived from my experiences in the Black Church. My formative years were spent in an atypical Church of God in Christ (COGIC). The church was co-pastored by Ithiel Clemmons, one of the first black Pentecostals to receive his formal education from Union Theological Seminary in New York. For Dr. Clemmons, African American Pentecostalism contained the psychocultural and spiritual resources needed to live an effective and empowered life in the "here and now." This was the overriding emphasis of his ministry. As a practitioner of soul care, I am likewise oriented to view black religious forms as complex and contested spaces capable of facilitating empowered living. African diasporic religious forms, from this perspective, are seen as rich potential resources for individual and communal healing.

My desire to develop a framework for pastoral care that integrates all of these strands—culturally sensitive forms of communal care, the healing capacity of black religious forms, a multi-systems approach, and critical analyses of structures of power and oppression—led me to pursue doctoral studies. In light of these stated interests, I became intrigued by the therapeutic value of a congregation-based ritual known as the Maafa Commemoration. I had previously attended the commemoration at St. Paul Community Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York, and was powerfully impacted by the presentation. The commemoration is understood as being responsive to the vestiges of historical trauma in the lives of black Americans. However, my research suddenly took on new meaning when I realized that the Maafa Commemoration had its inception during the period when policies informed by neoliberalism were having a devastating effect on the community in which St. Paul Community Baptist Church is located. The project thus shifted to exploring whether the Maafa Commemoration might be, in fact, as much a response to these contemporary traumas.

The dynamics of African American development are undeniably connected to the experience of trauma. Whether it is the physical violence of race-based domestic terrorism, the economic violence engendered by capitalist exploitation, or the epistemic violence caused by white supremacist discourses and images, African American development cannot be fully understood apart from an engagement with the ongoing reenactment of trauma in the lives of black Americans. This includes the effects of three cultural traumas: (1) the transatlantic slave trade and chattel slavery, (2) the enactment of Jim Crowism, and (3) the emergence of the neoliberal age in the aftermath of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements.

Interestingly, the discipline of pastoral theology, care, and counseling is in the process of navigating its own "transitional space" between the field's traditional understandings of care as individual counseling and a conception of care that necessarily engages broader social, cultural, economic, and political contexts. While various schools of psychology continue to undergird the parameters of the field, practitioners are just as likely to draw upon cultural studies, discourse theory, and feminist/womanist studies as bodies of knowledge that inform our understanding and action. Even so, pastoral theology, care, and counseling have not attended sufficiently to the increasingly global nature of the forces impinging upon African Americans and other populations. The dimensions of African American development in the twenty-first century cannot be fully understood without reference to a complex and shifting matrix that includes the modern idea of white supremacy, the emergence of the neoliberal age, and the changing labor needs of transnational corporations. This project represents an inquiry into the dynamics and challenges of African American development for the purpose of articulating a framework for soul care that gives consideration to how specific economic, political, and sociocultural configurations shape and are shaped by expressions of black identity.

Although this text is by no means exhaustive and there is much more room for clarification and expansion, it aims at no less than pointing towards a new framework for soul care in the United States and, given the global nature of the forces being addressed, a model of care for indigenous populations throughout the world. To this end, this approach is influenced by diverse areas of inquiry. Most prominent are neoliberalism, globalization, postcolonialism, trauma theories, systems theories, narrative counseling and African diasporic religious studies. This book, in essence, represents the early stages in a constructive project that builds a multidisciplinary frame for a new mode of care in the neoliberal age.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the central components of this study. American neoliberalism is identified as an essential interpretive lens for practitioners of pastoral theology, counseling, and care. While chattel slavery and the Jim Crow era are identified as the core trauma scenes, the neoliberal age is seen as having a traumatic impact on the material and symbolic worlds of African Americans. Prophetic soul care is introduced as a integrative approach that is attentive to both human persons and human systems. Black religious practices are posited as promoting resilience and resistance for black Americans impacted the neoliberal age. African American Pentecostalism and Rastafarianism are presented as two black religious forms that serve as precedents for this assertion. Finally, helpful insights from postcolonial theory are highlighted.

A historical analysis of the rise of the neoliberal age in the United States is provided in chapter 2. American neoliberalism is explored within the context of the modes of economic exploitation and nation state repression directed at African Americans in the aftermath of the modern Civil Rights and Black Power movements. The chapter contends that the emergence of the neoliberal age between the 1960s and 1990s represents a historic shift in the United States from a system of racial domination to a neoliberal hegemony. Of particular import to this study is the fact that the neoliberal system that emerged in the United States is deeply racialized and continues to reflect the legacies of North America's racial history.

Chapter 3 examines the impact of the neoliberal age on the development of African American identities. African American identities are understood as being constituted in the context of specific social formations. By studying particular periods of stabilization and intervals of change, such as the neoliberal age, one is able to comprehend the shifting relations that shape particular conceptions of black identity. While forms of black identity may be impacted by the psychocultural traces of previous historical phases, African American identities are nonetheless enunciated in particular ways during different historical moments. In the neoliberal age, African American identities are seen as developing in a dialogical transaction between black subjects shaped by a matrix of market-driven structures and discourses, even as these structures and discourses are transformed by resisting black subjects.

Trauma theory is drawn upon in chapter 4 as a heuristic lens to elucidate the impact of the neoliberal age on African American development. Strategies utilized to secure the containment, cooperation, and contributions of black Americans subsequent to the emergence of American neoliberalism constitute a cultural trauma which has and continues to impinge upon the well-being of black Americans. Trauma theory makes it clear that in the neoliberal age many of the behavioral strategies and identity commitments black Americans make might be considered as responsive to a racially driven neoliberal society.

Healing from the traumatic impact of the neoliberal age includes the process of remembrance. When trauma is remembered in a safe environment, it enables the trauma survivor to integrate the traumatic experience and form a new understanding of what has happened. The process of healing can thus be facilitated by public acts of commemoration. Chapter 5 examines a black religious practice known as the Maafa Commemoration which can be understood as a mode of soul care in the neoliberal age. In this study, the Maafa Commemoration is characterized as a “memory performance” that helps African Americans reframe and “make meaning” out of their traumatic experiences in the United States. The commemoration enables African Americans to reframe past traumas and heal from their effects.

Chapter 6 concludes the book with a framework for an integrative approach that promotes resilience and resistance in the neoliberal age, namely, prophetic soul care. Prophetic soul care is posited as a transformative practice that promotes healing and challenges neoliberalism's hegemonic hold. This chapter sets forth some of the foundations of a prophetic soul care praxis in which counter-hegemonic action is understood as therapeutic. Several assessment and interventive strategies are offered. This includes the introduction of two "images of care" that "metaphorically structure" prophetic soul care with African Americans and other groups traumatized or threatened by the neoliberal age.

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1

Bearing Witness

In 2008, the American financial system teetered precariously on the brink of a total collapse. This financial crisis signified the monumental failure of a hegemonic configuration in economic, political, and sociocultural relations that coalesced in the second half of the twentieth century. The time period between the late 1960s and mid-1980s witnessed a radical shift characterized by the emergence of a new social formation, delineated in this study as the *neoliberal age*. Unbeknownst to many, this pernicious neoliberal ideology, which has now been exported globally, was given its initial "test drive" domestically on the backs of countless black Americans. While attention has been given to the traumatic impact of chattel slavery and the Jim Crow era on African Americans,[1] insufficient consideration has been given to the traumas black Americans incurred subsequent to the emergence of the neoliberal age in the aftermath of the modern Civil Rights and Black Power movements.[2] This chapter introduces the core components of this study. American neoliberalism is identified as an essential interpretive lens for practitioners of pastoral theology, counseling, and care. The neoliberal age is seen as having a traumatic impact on the material and symbolic worlds of African Americans. Consideration is given to expressions of black religiosity that function as modes of soul care in this context.[3] I then introduce an integrative approach to soul care that promotes resilience in black Americans and other populations traumatized or threatened by the neoliberal age.

This book gives particular attention to an African American religious practice known as the Maafa Commemoration that had its inception during the rise of American neoliberalism. The term *Maafa* is Ki-Swahili. It means the great disaster, calamity, or catastrophe. The term references the atrocities endured by black Americans during the hundreds of years black people were forcibly captured, transported, and enslaved in the Western hemisphere and the horrific exploitation of African Americans during the Jim Crow era. The term also signifies the politics of abandonment, containment, and control perpetuated against black Americans during the emergence of the neoliberal age. This study contends that the Maafa Commemoration promotes resilience and resistance in African Americans whose lived realities and identities have been traumatically impacted by policies and practices informed by neoliberal ideology.

The Maafa Commemoration had its inception at St. Paul Community Baptist Church in New York City. At the time, a host of problems engendered by the neoliberal age were ravaging urban centers throughout the United States. The commemoration is a two-week experience that includes dramatic reenactments of chattel slavery, the Jim Crow era, and the neoliberal age, as well as rituals of remembrance, educational workshops, lectures, worship services, and prayer. These commemorative rites have since spread to other congregations throughout the United States. For black Americans traumatically impacted by the neoliberal age, the Maafa Commemoration might be understood as an alternative mode of soul care than those paradigms constructed for individuals or families.

Neoliberalism, most strongly articulated by Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, asserts that an unfettered market is the most effective means for encouraging individual freedom.[4] Neoliberalism, at first glance, is a theory of economic principles that purports that human well-being can best be achieved by liberating entrepreneurial freedoms within a framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. Neoliberal ideology holds that "the social good will be maximized by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions, and it seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market."[5] Neoliberalism "values market exchange as 'an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide to all human action, and substituting for all previously held ethical beliefs.'"[6] As a result, in too many instances, commercial interests and values have superseded concern for human rights, democracy, social justice, and the environment. Proponents of neoliberal ideology contend, however, that it has its benefits. Many individuals now live longer and, in some regions, standards of living have increased. The exportation of neoliberalism globally has led to a reduced sense of isolation experienced in parts of the developing world and provided the people of those societies with access to information that was previously unavailable to them. Proponents of neoliberalism tend not to emphasize, though, that the net effect of these policies has too often been to benefit the few at the expense of the many and the well off at the expense of the poor.[7] Joseph Stiglitz, the former Chief Economist at the World Bank, concurs,

> In too many instances, the benefits of [neoliberal] globalization have been less than its advocates claim, the price has been greater, as the environment has been destroyed, [and] as political processes have been corrupted…The crises that brought in their wake massive unemployment have, in turn, been followed by longer term problems of social dissolution.[8]

As an African American pastoral psychotherapist, the impetus for much of my work arises from one central question: *How can we effectively care for the souls of black folks, and other oppressed, exploited and commodified communities?* Of particular import to this study is the fact that the neoliberal system that emerged in the United States is deeply racialized. White supremacist ideals did not end with the emergence of the neoliberal age. An alliance of political and ideological forces coalesced to form a hegemony characterized by both "racially driven neoliberalism" and "neoliberally fueled racism."[9] Racist discourses and practices have been redeployed as a component of this new socioeconomic configuration. In the neoliberal age, however, racist discourses are but one of several strategies utilized to secure the containment, cooperation, and contributions of black Americans.[10] How then do we understand the specific coincidence among neoliberalism, white supremacism, and troubling articulations of political, economic, and cultural oppression in the aftermath of the modern Civil Rights and Black Power movements? How were African Americans inserted historically? What are the forces that have tended to erode, or transform and preserve race-based distinctions, both as residues of previous social formations and as organizing principles of the present societal structures?[11] To answer these questions, this study is attentive to the particular conditions within which American neoliberalism emerges, the ever-shifting structural constraints under which black Americans have accommodated and resisted forms of oppression and the crucial conjunctural opportunities that African Americans have either missed or seized.[12]

To be effective in the twenty-first century, practitioners of soul care must understand how the neoliberal age has and continues to impact the individuals, families, congregations, and communities they serve. Strategies that uncritically apply Western psychological discourses and interventions that focus solely on the individual have too often functioned as a deterrent to, rather than a facilitator of care. It could be argued that, historically, many Western psychological discourses have, in fact, been complicit with the forces impinging upon African American development.[13] In the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* (1851), for example, Samuel Cartwright identified two "psychopathologies" that African Americans are uniquely prone to. *Drapetomania* was characterized by a single symptom, the uncontrollable urge to escape slavery. *Dysaesthesia aethiopis* was the diagnosis recommended for any of the following symptoms: destroying property on the plantation, being disobedient, talking back, fighting with masters, or refusing to work.[14] In both of these "conditions," the system of chattel slavery as a precipitating factor was rendered invisible. Unfortunately, many Western psychological discourses continue to function as "sites of control," where socially constructed "insanities" are eliminated and those whose behaviors risk compromising the social order are silenced.[15] Though some may dismiss the diagnostic categories cited above as archaic relics from a bygone era in psychiatry, it should be noted that current diagnostic instruments do not identify racism explicitly as a potential precipitating factor in traumatic stress and other challenges in human functioning. Racism is also not listed in the index of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fifth Edition (2013), utilized by the vast majority of mental health professionals.

Traditional psychodynamic approaches do not give sufficient consideration to the person in context and tend to disregard the needs of the collective and the complexities of the total situation.[16] Too often these approaches are characterized by "psychoanalytic functionalism." Psychoanalytic functionalism divorces its study of the subject from the historical and political contexts in which they were formed. It privileges intrapsychic dynamics over the social and historical contexts in and through which such dynamics are constituted. Conflict, oppression, exclusion, subjugation, discrimination, and other forms of "social terror" are typically consigned to the intrapsychic world. Cultural context is then typically assessed as neutral or benign.[17] As a result, the challenges of human functioning in the neoliberal age have primarily been defined in terms of individual pathology, cultural inferiority, or criminal activity. However, racism and other forms of injustice can elicit powerful emotional reactions and precipitate a host of behavioral difficulties. Yet, those who express appropriate rage or realistic fears in response to experiences of injustice are often criminalized or pathologized. The etiology for appropriate rage or realistic fear is now situated within the individual or group, rather than a problematic neoliberal system that fosters feelings of inferiority, material deprivation, dissociation, emotional repression, ruthless competition, and narcissistic self-concern. From this perspective, strategies of care erroneously tend to focus only on managing symptoms and controlling individual behavior, with no consideration given to changing the oppressive structures, practices, and discourses that adversely impact human behavior. Any situation involving the care of souls necessitates a thorough analysis of how the dynamics of power and difference are functioning in the lives of those who have come for care.[18] Practitioners of soul care require theoretical resources that not only provide psychological insights but can also interpret and engage the wider cultural, social, economic, and political milieu.

The pastoral theologian, Christie Neuger notes that the Judeo-Christian prophetic tradition carries the concept of "bearing witness."[19] The prophets critiqued the dominant culture and functioned as witnesses to the harm that was perpetuated against those who were oppressed, abused, or marginalized. Those who offer pastoral care to oppressed, exploited, and marginalized populations are likewise called to bear witness—we are called to critically analyze and engage structures of power, employ practices of care that facilitate healing and human agency, and enable the voices of the silenced to be heard. Standing in the tradition of bearing witness, this study will encourage strategies for *prophetic soul care* in the neoliberal age. In doing so, I seek to inform practitioners of care working with other populations who are traumatized or threatened by the seemingly unrelenting forces of the neoliberal age.

An Integrative Approach

Prophetic soul care employs an *integrative* approach.[20] This approach is concerned with integrating theories pertaining to human development and behavior with theories dealing with the contexts in which human beings function. It draws from theoretical stances pertaining to both human persons and human systems. An integrative approach argues that understanding human functioning is not possible without comprehending the context in which it is formed as a subsystem within a matrix of interlocking historically situated systems. It entails assessing interpersonal dynamics, family systems, sociocultural systems outside the family, economic and political systems, as well as religious, spiritual, or other meaning-making systems (see figure 1.1). An integrative approach considers the potential influence these systems may have on those who come for care. It thus requires one to "think systems" at all times, even if the practitioner of care is seeing only one member of a family. Strategies for care are derived from an ongoing assessment of

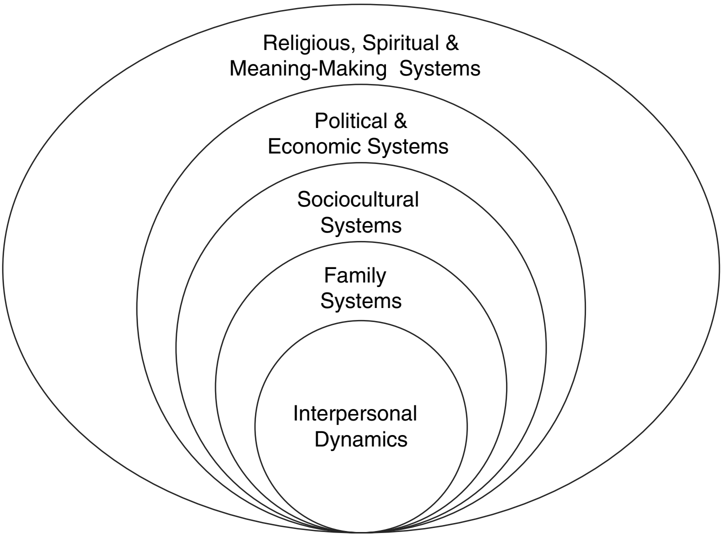
Religious, Spiritual &
Meaning-Making Systems
Political &
Economic Systems
Sociocultural
Systems
Family
Systems
Interpersonal
Dynamics

Figure 1.1 A multi-systems framework for an integrative approach.

where and how to intervene, whether the practitioner is addressing interpersonal dynamics, family dynamics, or the larger systems within which the person or group exists.[21]

In this study, the diagnostic focus is therefore not on the formulation of individual pathology, but rather on how African Americans and other populations are positioned and position themselves within the context of what might be characterized as a "pathological" racially driven neoliberal structure. Oriented in this manner, prophetic soul care seeks to employ methods that deconstruct dominant discourses, privilege indigenous and local perspectives, and promote justice.[22] Prophetic soul care entails a transformative challenge to regimes of power and domination. The underlying theological claim is liberative: God desires that every person and community live in the fullness of their humanity with dignity, mutual respect, and freedom. The restoration of the *imago dei* from this perspective includes the restoration of selfhood, recovery of culture, and resistance against forces that would attempt to deny a people's sense of self and self-determination.[23]

Core Traumatic Scenes

While the traumatic impact of the neoliberal age is the focus of this study, a brief discussion is warranted of what constitutes the "core trauma scenes" for many Americans of African ancestry, namely, chattel slavery and the Jim Crow era. The transatlantic slave trade was an integral component of a global "imperial complex" that emerged during the so-called Age of Europe. Between 1492 and 1945, the contours of the modern world were structured by advances in oceanic transportation, agricultural production, and industrialization, in conjunction with urbanization and imperial domination. The European model of imperialism, upon which America is founded, entailed the conquest and direct control of territories overseas. With Europe's limited population in the sixteenth century, the cheap labor needed to cultivate the staple crops of sugar, tobacco, and cotton in the "New World" could not be supplied in the requisite quantities to permit large-scale production. After unsuccessful attempts at utilizing the native population as slaves and poor whites as indentured servants, Europeans turned to Africa. Enslaved Africans were fitted into a system European traders had already developed to transport white servants. Infused with this abundant source of cheap labor, the plantation economy experienced exponential growth.[24] The system of chattel slavery sustained by the transatlantic slave trade served as a central dynamic in the growth of the modern world. It, in effect, produced the cotton that served as a base for modern capitalism.[25]

The enslavement of Africans in colonial America signified a "state of perpetual and inheritable domination" that produced the modern black diasporic problem of "invisibility and namelessness."[26] While the challenges to African American development cannot be reduced to the economic sphere, the formation of black subjectivity cannot be fully understood apart from these "capitalist labor dynamics." Characterized by the subjugation and annihilation of indigenous peoples, the confiscation of their lands, and the capture and enslavement of Africans, America's imperial project was fundamentally an act of cultural and geographical violence. The experiment called America was undeniably founded upon a series of terrorist acts perpetuated against indigenous peoples that abrogated their land rights and their human rights.

After hundreds of years of enslavement, black Americans would suffer yet another cultural trauma. In the wake of the Civil War, a new mode of subjugation was instituted, quenching the fading embers of freedom and democracy that had been ignited by the Emancipation Proclamation. The government's promised 40 acres and a mule would not be forthcoming. The so-called Reconstruction would be aborted and a race-based caste system would be implemented, ushering in a new reign of terror for black Americans. Cornel West recounts,

> The northern victory in the Civil War…left black people in a precarious situation: allied to a northern industrial ruling class hungry for control of devastated southern land, labor force, and production, and located in a demoralized southern U.S. culture bent on keeping black folk subjugated.…After twelve brief years (1865–77) of northern martial law in the South…the Reconstruction was brought to a close…[I]t became clear that the northern capitalist commitment to private property and profit-maximization was much stronger than the commitment to democracy and black political rights.[27]

The defection of northern Republicans in the election of Rutherford Hayes in 1877 consummated the disenfranchisement of African Americans by southern legislatures. The subsequent crisis in race relations was evident in unprecedented acts of terrorism against black people between 1890 and 1914. Jim Crow laws enacted in the south after 1900 erected new barriers of segregation and discrimination in virtually every area of interracial contact. Thus, in the years immediately following events that had given African Americans their greatest hope, their dreams for full citizenship were vehemently crushed. Though some legal concessions were secured for formerly enslaved African Americans, a form of apartheid remained in effect, particularly in the South, for the purposes of retaining blacks as an abundant pool of cheap labor. Douglas A. Blackmon notes, "The commercial sectors of U.S. society have never been asked to fully account for their roles as the primary enforcers of Jim Crow segregation, and not at all for engineering the resurrection of forced labor after the Civil War."[28] It was, in fact, US businesses that reinforced compliance to American apartheid more than any other sector in the society.[29]

In light of this history of heinous crimes committed against black humanity, theorists and practitioners have attempted to understand the contemporary challenges to African American development through the lens of these core trauma scenes. Marimba Ani, who introduced the term "Maafa" into contemporary scholarship, states,

> The trade in African lives and the enslavement of African beings by Europeans constituted the most thoroughly destructive act ever to be perpetrated by one group of people upon another.... To begin with, within the setting of our enslavement, the ideology of white supremacy was systematically reinforced by a set of interlocking mechanisms and patterns that functioned to deny the validity of an African humanity.... This system of European oppression and denial was buttressed by a materialistic, aggressive worldview...that sought to make of Africans simply one more machine in the service of Europeans.[30]

The experience of chattel slavery and the raced-based domination of "New Europe," Ani argues, have traumatized the African "soul." Johnny Ray Youngblood, the founder of the Maafa Commemoration, similarly asserts that the collective suffering of African Americans during almost four hundred years of cultural domination is unequaled in modern history. Youngblood determined that the absence of cultural memory is a missing link in the individual and collective healing of Africans in America. The victims of any kind of trauma cannot heal, he asserts, until they fully acknowledge what they've been through.[31] For African Americans, it is necessary to grieve about the pain and humiliation that our ancestors experienced. Several books have been published that likewise examine the ongoing impact of chattel slavery on black American functioning. This includes, among others, Joy DeGruy Leary's *Post-traumatic Slave Syndrome* (2005).[32] More recently, Michelle Alexander's notable text *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (2012) utilizes the Jim Crow era as a framework for analyzing the disproportionate percentage of black people incarcerated in America's prison system. Sufficient consideration, though, has not be given to the specific dynamics of what many African Americans have experienced as a *new* mode of oppression, namely, the emergence of American neoliberalism in the aftermath of the modern Civil Rights and Black Power movements.

Religion, Resilience, and Resistance

Historically, black religious forms have served as contested spaces, capable of informing new conceptions of identity and organizing alternative modes of cultural, economic, and political life. This study similarly argues that black religious forms are potent sites for practices that facilitate psychocultural resilience and sociocultural resistance.[33] Ani concurs, "We must turn our spirituality…our Africanness into a political tool. We must harness the energies that lie dormant and diffused throughout Pan-Africa, and forge them into a powerful political force for liberation and self-determination."[34] Religious forms then are one of the essential systems prophetic soul care practitioners attend to. For black people impacted by structures of oppression and exploitation, black religious forms can generate emancipatory practices. This section highlights two expressions of black religiosity that function in this manner. They subsequently establish a precedent for this project's focus and serve as precursors for the research presented.

Black Pentecostalism, as reflected in the ministry of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), might be viewed as a black religious form that served as a mode of resilience and resistance to the structures of power impinging upon African Americans during the Jim Crow era. Chartered in 1897, from its inception COGIC was shaped by its charismatic founder, Charles Harrison Mason. The denomination was inspired by his desire, among other things, to retain many of the slave worship practices that much of the mainline Black church sought to forget.[35]

Black Pentecostalism appropriated the vibrancy of indigenous African spirituality, incorporating ingredients of African culture into polity, liturgy, ethics, and doctrine.[36] C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, in their seminal work, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, note,

> The pole of resistance meant that it was possible to resist the accommodative forces and pressures of the American mainstream. Resistance meant affirming one's own cultural heritage…One of the major roles of black churches in the future will be as historic reservoirs of black culture and as an example of resistance and independence.[37]

Despite being characterized for decades as primitive by white mainline churches and as "holy rollers" by mainline Black churches, Black Pentecostalism has functioned as a depository for indigenous West African religious remnants and provided a vital role of psychocultural resilience. C. H. Mason believed that the church's greatest failure would be loss of identity if it blended with the surrounding society. He had both cultural and theological suspicions about the black mainline church's emulation of white reason-centered culture and religion.[38] Mason sought to preserve a *cultural* tradition and expression, as much as to preserve a *theological* perspective.[39] Ogbu Kalu concurs, "[T]he major contribution of the [Pentecostal] movement is the way it addresses the continued reality of the forces expressed in African cultural forms."[40] Black Pentecostalism, as expressed through COGIC, thus provided black Americans with the psychocultural resources needed to resist the cultural falsification and psychic harm perpetuated by chattel slavery and Jim Crowism.

The Church of God in Christ also displayed the capacity to create mechanisms that fostered sociocultural resistance. From its beginning, COGIC was a holiness church with the attendant expectations of Christian piety. After the Azusa Street Revival, to this was added the Pentecostal baptism in the Holy Spirit. COGIC believers testified to being "saved, sanctified and filled with Holy Ghost." In the context of a dehumanizing race-based caste system, the doctrine of sanctification might be understood not simply as a theological stance, but as a form of cultural criticism and social protest. To confess that you were "sanctified," was to make a radical statement regarding your orientation to the world and to the surrounding culture. The experience of sanctification engendered a new moral and social sensibility. It involved some form of rejection of the dominant culture.[41] Sanctification became a process whereby people answered God's call to a life of holiness and to co-create with God in the transformation of society. To be sanctified was to be "to be in the world, but not of the world." The "sanctified saints" didn't smoke, drink alcohol, use profanity, go to the "juke joint," "speak easy," or movie theater. Women didn't wear makeup or skirts with hems above the knee.[42] Sanctification is thus understood as a process that aims at radical change in one's perception of reality, which leads to a commitment to an ongoing struggle for personal and social transformation. The Church of God in Christ, from this perspective, is viewed as propagating a subversive community of sociocultural resistance.

Lastly, C. H. Mason's stance against World War I and his urging of COGIC members to declare conscientious objector status might be understood as a discourse of sociopolitical resistance. Mason, as a result, was charged by the US government for being anti-patriotic and actively monitored by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). This occurred during a period when prejudices against conscientious objectors and suspected sympathizers were manipulated by both public officials and super-patriotic organizations. Reflecting on his pacifist stance during World War I, Mason would later state, "In 1918…I took a scriptural stand against the ungodly deeds of the various races…The Holy Ghost through me was teaching [people] to look to God, for [God] is their only help. I told them not to trust in the power of the United States, England, France or Germany, but to trust God."[43]

Though COGIC in its formative years stood as a counterpoint to the dominant order of its day, like other mediating structures, it has been a contested space comprising both prophetic and problematic impulses. The global expansion of capitalism, along with the concurrent development of communications technologies and mass media outlets, has threatened Black Pentecostalism's prophetic voice. The proliferation of nondenominational neo-Pentecostal prosperity ministries and the "Pentecostalization" of mainline Black churches points, among other things, to the commodification of Black Pentecostalism in the global marketplace. In the neoliberal age, the prophetic character of Black Pentecostalism has unfortunately been dampened.[44] It remains, however, an important example of the capacity of black religiosity to function as a mediating space that fosters resistance against structures of domination. These same capabilities have been witnessed in other African diasporic religious practices including a vitally important Afro-Caribbean religious form that had its inception at the intersections of race and the global expansion of capital.

Rastafarianism is a form of black religiosity that combines African religious practices; Ethiopianism, which celebrates the greatness of ancient Ethiopia and espouses a future Ethiopian empire; the Pan-Africanist philosophy of Marcus Garvey; aspects of the Black Power movement; and the messianic and apocalyptic traditions in the Bible; to create a syncretized Afro-Caribbean religious form. It evolved from being a denigrated and excluded religious practice in Jamaica to being a resistance movement that has impacted popular culture throughout the world. Rastafarianism emerged among the poor in Jamaica around 1930 at the center of a movement against British colonial rule. Though England formally ended slavery in Jamaica in 1834, the state of Afro-Jamaicans did not substantially improve. Horrific conditions associated with colonial domination persisted. Former slaves remained economically marginalized, politically disenfranchised, and culturally alienated. The earliest proponents of Rastafarianism were Jamaican workers who put forth the idea of a black God. Rastas rejected the legitimacy of British colonial rule and called for allegiance to a new authority, Haile Selassie, who was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia in 1930. Some Jamaicans saw Selassie's ascendancy as the fulfillment of a prophecy attributed to Marcus Garvey regarding the imminent crowning of a black king in Africa. Rastas believe that Selassie, also known as Ras Tafari, is divine and the embodiment of God. They assert that African peoples share in this divinity and equated liberation with their repatriation to Africa. Against the colonial domination that linked Jamaica culturally with Britain, Rastafarians sought to define themselves in relation to Africa.[45]

Rastafarianism contends that Western cultural values and institutional practices are a contemporary expression of *Babylon*. Drawing upon the Bible's imagery regarding ancient Babylon—as a violent and morally degenerate empire, as a place of forced captivity, as the menacing beast in Daniel's apocalyptic vision, and as a tyrannical global power in the book of Revelation—the term symbolizes the forces and institutions that have sought to devalue and dehumanize the peoples of Africa and the African diaspora. Rastafari's concept of Babylon includes the experience of alienation and frustration under slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism, and their enduring legacies. Ennis Edmonds notes that "Rastas see Babylon not so much as an assemblage of distinct institutions but as a tightly knit system in which each institution intertwines and interlocks with all of the others...All of these institutions are contrived and controlled by...people who are without Rastafari consciousness and who are agents or instruments of Babylon's schemes."[46] Rastafarians understand that Jamaica is but one part of an international imperialist complex. The designation Babylon is thus applied to an expansive Euro-American global alliance, which has received the vast benefits of colonialism and international capitalism.[47] Babylon represents the entire Western European and North American imperial power structure and its supporting ideologies and practices.

Rastafari's conception of Babylon might therefore be viewed as an incisive black theological critique of the globalization of capital. Babylon's economic system is understood to be exploitative by nature. Rastas characterize the economic activities of Babylon as a struggle in which people trample one another to get ahead. The education and religious institutions of Babylon are designed to “whitewash” the African mind, inculcating European values and creating cultural alienation. Rastafarians believe they must be rescued from their captivity in Babylon. While many equated liberation with repatriation to Africa, a “return to Africa” is also understood as a metaphor for a spiritual and psychological return to one’s African identity and heritage. Liberation for Rastas entails not just learning black history and resistance to political domination but also a commitment to a “decolonizing of the mind” that establishes a new identity. Rastafarianism represents an attempt to “free the African soul from the alienating forces of domination.”[48] This effort is reflected by Rastafarians in the wearing of the natural hairstyle known as dreadlocks. This practice was adopted as a symbol of resistance to a colonized Jamaican society in which blacks were made to feel ashamed of their skin color and hair texture. By the late 1960s, the diffusion of Rastafarianism in Jamaican culture was reflected in the growing popularity of dreadlocks, affirmation of Africa and “blackness,” and condemnation of neocolonialism and Eurocentrism that yet pervaded Jamaican society.[49] Symbolized by the international popularity of Bob Marley, the 1970s saw the emergence of reggae music as a vehicle for protest.

Like Black Pentecostalism and other sites of cultural resistance, however, Rastafarianism was impacted by the corrosive effects of commodification. Also, while neither Black Pentecostalism nor Rastafarianism is constituted by monolithic groups, both have been impacted by patriarchal structures that subordinate women. As complex and highly contested spaces, religious practices can thus function as “forms of resistance or accommodation or accommodating resistance and resistant accommodation to the dominant practices of [an oppressive] society.”[50] Rastafarianism and Black Pentecostalism yet represent important examples of black religiosity’s capacity to serve as mediating structures. As such, even when confronted with the forces of commodification and cooptation, black religious practices are, potentially, potent sources of psychocultural resilience and sociocultural resistance.

The Shaping Power of Religious Practices

The prism of “religious practices,” discussed by Richard R. Osmer in *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations* (2005), I believe, provides valuable insights into some of the dynamics inherent in black religious forms that contribute to their capacity to function as therapeutic spaces. Here, religious practices are understood to be the distinct socially shared forms of action that embody a community of faith’s way of life.[51] Four characteristics are central to this conception of religious practices. First, they are “tradition bearing.” Religious practices often draw upon traditions that unite a religious community with communities of the past and with a wider religious community in the present. One reason religious practices have depth is that they transmit the spiritual heritage of several generations. Black Pentecostalism and Rastafarianism, as noted, both draw upon African spiritual traditions. Second, religious practices build up a sense of individual and collective identity. Religious practices form and transform the identity of the faith community and its individual members.[52] Through their joint participation in socially shared activities, the adherents of a religious community learn to play certain roles and make use of certain cognitive scripts that are held in common and create a collective sense of identity. The dress codes that designated one as “sanctified” in COGIC and the wearing of dreadlocks in Rastafarianism are some of the practices that contributed to a common sense of identity within these two communities.[53] Third, religious practices shape character. Character has to do with those enduring patterns and dispositions, those habits of thought, feeling, and action that give shape to the self. Religious practices have the capacity to form and transform the character of those who participate in them. The psychocultural, sociocultural, and sociopolitical resistance practices implemented by both COGIC and Rastafari, often at great risk to their adherents, reflects the capacity of both communities to shape character. Last, religious practices embody an “interpretation of the ultimate context of existence.”[54] The practices of a religious community interpret “the ‘context of contexts’ that impinge upon and ultimately determines the conditions, direction, and outcome of [their] immediate and particular contexts."[55] This allows for the interpretation of one's present circumstances within a wider field of actors and forces. Situating human meaning making within an understanding of the ultimate context of existence can therefore have the effect of reframing the narratives by which individuals and communities construct their identities. The theological and sociocultural frameworks enacted within Black Pentecostalism and Rastafarianism interprets for each community the "ultimate contexts" of their existence. It is this process of meaning making that allows the community to reframe their past and open up new possibilities for their future. Religious practices are hence understood to be "socially shared, tradition-bearing activities that embody an interpretation of the ultimate context of existence and have sufficient depth to forge a common sense of identity among the members of a community and to shape the character of individual participants."[56] This conception of religious practices illumines some of the factors that enable black religious forms to function as therapeutic sites of resilience and resistance in the neoliberal age.

Postcolonial Insights

Caring for souls in the neoliberal age requires theoretical resources that can attend both to human relationships and structures of power. To that end, this study draws upon insights from postcolonial theorists. Postcolonial studies emerged as a way of engaging with the historical and cultural articulations of societies disrupted by the historical reality of domination. It engages contexts where the imperial projects of the past have given way to societies whose makeup still reflects the disjunctions of their specific histories of domination. The term does not signify a process that merely examines events and phenomena that pertain to specific "postcolonial constituencies," nor does its prefix infer that the effects of imperial power have been surpassed. Postcolonial criticism does entail a larger project that interrogates the injustices and imbalances fostered by regimes of power wherever these are found in the global East, West, North, or South. The term "postcolonial," subsequently, refers not simply to a period in history but also to a strategic response to contemporary contexts of domination, exploitation, and differentiation.

Postcolonial criticism is also concerned with the psychocultural disruptions that lie in the wake of imperial histories. Postcolonial studies are attentive to the ways in which imperial encounters impact indigenous identities and how the subjugated develop strategies in order to articulate their own subjectivity and self-worth. Postcolonial studies are engaged in the formulation of frameworks within which "psychological decolonization" can occur. History has revealed that a society can gain political autonomy, while remaining psychologically subjugated, culturally alienated, and economically dominated. Postcolonial theory thus provides a valuable heuristic lens for a nuanced analysis of the psychocultural impact of the neoliberal age on African American development.[57]

Postcolonial theory recognizes that race, caste, gender, class, religion, and ethnicity have all been employed by imperialist regimes at various times as tropes in the construction of "otherness" and the justification of imperial projects. Postcolonialism connects the African American struggle to the struggles of other oppressed and marginalized populations whose identities have likewise been disrupted by histories of domination. Clearly, the experiences of people of African ancestry in the United States differ in significant ways from those of people from other subjugated or formerly subjugated regions. Nevertheless, there are numerous points of correspondence between these histories of domination and exploitation for which postcolonial perspectives have the capacity to illumine the global struggle for liberation and transformation. A postcolonial hermeneutic can thus inform the African American experience. It provides African Americans with a new conceptual framework to analyze their traumatic encounters with the neoliberal age and the ongoing challenges these encounters pose to the development of black American identities.

This study draws primarily upon two prominent "postcolonial" thinkers—Frantz Fanon and Stuart Hall. The psychiatrist and activist, Frantz Fanon, is singularly recognized for bringing the tools of psychoanalytic thought to bear on the problem of imperial domination and black identity development. It is largely through his influence that postcolonial studies developed with a dual focus: first, emphasizing the history of anti-colonial activism and second, examining the ways in which imperial encounters impact indigenous identity development. Though his work precedes the academic codification of postcolonial theory, his writings are regarded as some of the field's central theoretical texts.

Stuart Hall's work consistently engages the question of what is the best prism to conceptualize cultural identity so that white supremacism can be combated through an emancipatory anti-racist politics. Though there have been shifts in Hall's heuristic lens over the years, he continued to focus on the relationship between race, identity, and broader cultural, economic, and political forces. Between the 1960s and the mid-1980s—following his most consistent interlocutor, Antonio Gramsci—hegemony is employed by Hall as a conceptual tool to understand the forces constitutive of race and identity. However, from the mid-1980s onward, Hall argues that Western epistemologies have been overturned, creating new spaces for the articulation of new identities.[58] Identity is now understood as how we position ourselves within and against dominating discourses and representations. In this study, Hall's early and later work is synthesized. In several ways, I believe, theoretical concepts articulated by Fanon are refined or extended by Hall. Their writings thus serve as invaluable resources in understanding the challenges of African American development in the neoliberal age. Hall once commented that he appropriated the thought of, Antonio Gramsci to address the circumstances of his time. In this book, the writings of Fanon and Hall are "repositioned" to address the traumatic impact of the neoliberal age on black Americans.

Two contextual models inform this study: *liberation* and *ethnographic*.[59] Liberation approaches seek to interrogate the lived experience of a people to uncover the forces of oppression, violence, and power. They focus on the conflictual elements oppressing a community or tearing it apart. Ethnographic approaches seek to address questions related to cultural identity in the context of social change. These approaches are concerned with the reassertion or reconfiguration of identities that have been denied or considered inferior, often by oppressive regimes. The traumatic impact of the neoliberal age calls for the development of a model of prophetic soul care that encompasses both the liberation and ethnographic approaches. The liberative component of this project entails the employment of social theory, trauma theory, and postcolonial theories to analyze the debilitating impact of the neoliberal age on African American development. The ethnographic component of this project is concerned with how black religious practices facilitate resilience and resistance capacities for African Americans impacted by the emergence of American neoliberalism.

No heuristic lens can adequately interpret everything going on in a dynamic system. With the use of any interpretive framework, certain characteristics will come into view while other elements recede into the background. This study will therefore draw upon a number of frameworks in an attempt to provide a "thick" description of the processes underlying the relationship between the neoliberal age and African American development. To that end, a mutually critical dialogue will be put forth between pastoral psychology and the insights of postcolonialism, trauma theory, and social theory. This interdisciplinary approach will attempt to provide a multilayered analysis of this multifaceted subject. More specifically, this project involves a historical analysis of the emergence of American neoliberalism, an investigation into the conditions inherent in the neoliberal age that traumatically impacted the lived realities and identities of countless African Americans, and an analysis of black religious forms that promote resilience and resistance to the debilitating effects of the neoliberal age. Finally, it is our hope that this book informs practices of soul care with populations in other parts of the world that are similarly impacted by neoliberal forces that are now global in their scope.

2

Race to the Bottom

The time period between the late 1960s and mid-1980s witnessed the rise of a "market-centered agenda" in domestic and global relations that has ushered in the neoliberal age.[1] Neoliberal ideology is grounded in a privileging of the individual, the free market, and the noninterventionist state. Central to neoliberalism is the assumption that individuals' freedoms are guaranteed by freedom of the market. American neoliberalism is characterized by the fluid movement of capital across regional and national boundaries in a proverbial "race to the bottom." Here, low-wage local, regional, or national economies attract capital, with jobs subsequently being moved from place to place, "leaving disarray and unemployment where jobs have vanished and dislocations and worker exploitation where those jobs are relocated."[2] Caring effectively for the souls of black folks in the neoliberal age thus requires a historical analysis of the various factors that contributed to its emergence in the aftermath of the modern Civil Rights and Black Power movements.

Supporters of neoliberalism argue that economies should be unfettered by governmental regulation and open to the free movement of capital, goods, and services across regional and national borders. They seek *deregulation*, arguing that governmental regulation inhibits economic growth and trade. Neoliberalism hence calls for the elimination of regulatory agencies over capitalist markets. Proponents of neoliberalism promote *privatization*, asserting that markets are more efficient than governments in the provision of services. Neoliberal ideology consequently espouses the dismantling of the welfare state and end of government-sponsored social programs designed to address the effects of poverty. Advocates of neoliberalism also promote trade "liberalization." Countries are encouraged to focus on producing the goods they can produce most efficiently and use those products to trade on the market for all their other needs. High tariffs, import quotas, and controls on foreign exchange are all seen as restrictive measures that impede growth. Cities, states, and countries that open up their economies to increased trade allow domestic production to become competitive with the rest of the world, which consequently increases efficiency.[3]

The *neoliberal age*, however, signifies a social formation that is far more complicated than the tenets of neoliberal ideology. In addition to the removal of regulatory barriers, hypermobility of capital, goods and services across regional and national boundaries, and the privatization of public goods and services, the neoliberal age is characterized by: (1) the subordination of democratic political power to unaccountable economic power in order to facilitate that movement; (2) *Westoxification* - the strategic marketing of Western culture and consumer-oriented ways of life around the world; (3) the commodification of life forms and cultural practices; and (4) advances in communication and information technologies capable of facilitating massive shifts in capital, instantly, by investors unaccountable for social and environmental impacts.

Of particular import to this study is the fact that, in the United States, the neoliberal age is coupled to a form of social conservatism, rooted in an effort to resurrect a past set of social conditions. As a result, the neoliberal system that emerged in the United States is highly racialized and reflects the legacies of North America's racial history. The emergence of the neoliberal age in the United States is thus interpreted within the context of a historic transition from a system of racial domination to a hegemonic "racially driven neoliberalism." Faced with several challenges to earlier forms of racial hierarchy, a new socioeconomic configuration emerged that blended old racial practices and new political rationalities. Massive and fluid movements of capital have transformed some areas into "emerging markets," while others have been marginalized into socio-economic "basket cases." As a result, the neoliberal age has engendered an extraordinary growth in economic disparities and social inequalities, with traumatic repercussions for countless black Americans. Capital has always worked in and through racial, ethnic, and sexual divisions of labor. Of particular import to this study is the manner in which American neoliberalism has been able to preserve, (re)articulate, and exploit constructions of race-based difference. Archie Smith Jr. similarly observes,

> While there exists an American ideal of equality of all persons, there is also a built-in contradiction concerning who gets what and when. The question of equality is rationalized by the prevailing ideology and conditioned by specific social practices and the social relations that derive from them. For a great many people, actual equality does not exist, especially for minorities such as Native Americans and blacks as a group.[4]

The paradox is that in the neoliberal age, the poor and disenfranchised occupy a position that is simultaneously marginal and central to the social order. They struggle to make ends meet, yet the burdens they shoulder are indispensible for the operation of societal institutions and quality of life that people in developed areas take for granted.[5] In light of these dynamics, in the neoliberal age, a matrix of governance strategies are utilized: (1) to *maintain* the full reign of the free market; (2) to *contain* left behind sectors of the population whose presence discloses the system's inequities; (3) to *control* segments of the society who pose a threat to the system's stability; and (4) to secure the continued *contributions* of those who are, in fact, indispensible to the system's operations.[6] To accomplish this:

> They...quiet disruptive political demands...They create incentives...to smooth the path to preferred behaviors, and they police and imprison the poor...They [also] design social programs to teach prevailing norms...Through these and other

> methods, [they] work continually to…transform them into cooperative subjects of the market.[7]

Figure 2.1 depicts the "diffuse network of actors who are positioned in quasi-market relations and charged with the task of bringing discipline to the lives of the poor and disenfranchised."[8] Different actors are employed, however, in different localities. In many rural farming regions, for example, agribusiness is a prominent actor. In areas where oil or natural gas deposits have been detected, energy corporations are predominant actors. In cities where real estate properties are seized for private enterprise projects utilizing the legal smokescreen of "imminent domain," the state is functioning as an actor. Neoliberal governance thus takes on distinctive localized forms depending upon the geopolitical context.

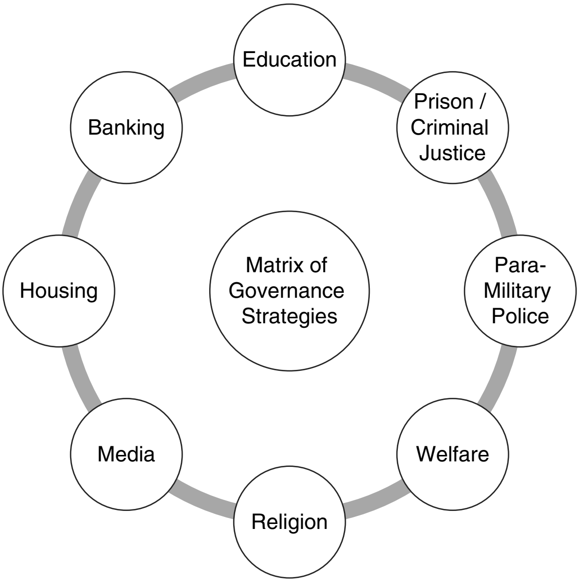
Education
Prison / Criminal Justice
Para-Military Police
Welfare
Religion
Media
Housing
Banking
Matrix of Governance Strategies

Figure 2.1 Matrix of variable actors deployed in neoliberal governance (*A variation of this schematic was developed by Dr. James M. Shopshire, Professor of the Sociology of Religion, Wesley Theological Seminary).

Keynesian Prelude

Following World War II, the world was reconfigured as a result of the agreements reached at the UN Monetary and Financial Conference at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in July 1944. Various institutions, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), were established as part of an effort to finance the rebuilding of Europe, save the world from future economic depressions, and help stabilize international relations. The proper name of the World Bank—the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development—points to its original mission. The IMF was charged with the more difficult task of ensuring global economic stability and preventing another global depression. To this end, fiscal and monetary policies usually characterized as "Keynesian" were implemented.[9] With a focus on full employment, economic growth, and the welfare of its citizens, state power was actively utilized to achieve these goals. Governments intervened in industrial policy and put forth standards for the social wage by establishing a variety of welfare systems, such as health care and education.

During the post-war decades, US businesses adopted a posture of acceptance toward social protections, recognizing that many firms benefited from public programs. Increased competition from European and Asian businesses, however, began to challenge American economic dominance and rates of profit. European nations had gained strength and the newly industrializing countries of Southeast Asia were introducing lower-priced goods into markets in which North American companies had previously held a stronghold. To remain competitive, US corporations began establishing suburban, southern, and foreign factories that could undercut the wages paid by northern factories that were increasingly unionized. Large amounts of capital were moved out of older industries and regions in search of higher rates of return on investments. Corporations lowered costs by laying off millions of workers and closing factories, many of them in higher waged northern US cities. When the American business community held a dominant position in the global markets, they had been tolerant of Keynesianism. However, by the end of the 1960s, markets were more competitive, profits declined, and the expanding burdens of regulation and "social protection" were now more costly. Though Keynesian approaches contributed to the continued growth of the US economy during the 1950s and early 1960s, the strategy began to break down after 1968.

Increased spending on Vietnam, the social programs of the New Deal, the Great Society, and, to a lesser extent, the War on Poverty, combined to precipitate a recession in 1969. Unemployment and inflation were both skyrocketing, ushering in a period of stagflation—the combination of high unemployment, high inflation, and low or no growth—that extended into the 1970s. Interest rates dropped and nominal dividends and profits were the norm. In the United States, the wealth of the top 1 percent of the population plunged as the value of stocks and property collapsed.[10] As the American economy unraveled under the weight of stagflation, some alternative strategy to Keynesian policies was called for to avert the looming crisis. An established network of advocates for a neoliberal agenda was well positioned to provide it. At the core of the neoliberal critique of Keynesian approaches is the supposed superiority of markets over government intervention in the economy. Keynesianism's inability to address the problem of stagflation thus opened the door for the implementation of neoliberal influenced methods.

The election of Richard Nixon marked the beginning of the slow dismantling of Keynesian policies. Nixon's decision to abandon the gold standard and float the dollar in 1971 effectively ended the Bretton Woods' fixed exchange rate system which had been in place since 1945. Market-based solutions gradually supplanted Keynesian approaches in the areas of perceived policy failure. Politicians now sought to facilitate greater private sector involvement in areas such as housing and urban policy. As it relates to the delivery of services and job creation, market mechanisms were employed as an alternative to public provision, benefits, and subsidies. The "neoliberal political turn" was, notably, bipartisan in the 1970s. Democratic

President Jimmy Carter launched the first significant efforts at deregulation of the airlines, trucking, railroad freight, and parts of the financial sector. This initiated an ongoing movement toward deregulation in the United States that persisted up until the financial crisis in 2008.[11]

The economic crises of the 1970s and the need for new ideas, nevertheless, is but one of several factors that influenced the emergence of the neoliberal age. It was, in fact, a confluence of historical traditions, economic and political forces, and institutional arrangements that contributed to why and how American neoliberalism emerged. In addition to the forsaking of Keynesianism, the rise of the neoliberal age cannot be fully understood apart from "the crisis of the ghetto as a device for the sociospatial confinement of blacks in the wake of the Civil Rights Revolution" and the subsequent backlash of urban insurrections that arose in the 1960s.[12] David Harvey concurs,

> The crisis of capital accumulation in the 1970s affected everyone...Discontent was widespread and the conjoining labour and *urban social movements* throughout much of the advanced capitalist world appeared to point towards the emergence of a socialist alternative to the social compromise between capital and labour that had grounded capital accumulation so successfully in the post-war period...In the United States popular forces were agitating for widespread reforms and state interventions. There was, in this, a clear *political* threat to economic elites and ruling classes everywhere...But beyond this, the *economic* threat to the position of the ruling elites and classes were now becoming palpable.[13]

Prominent among the "urban social movements" advocating for widespread reforms and state interventions were the modern Civil Rights and Black Power movements. The longstanding legacy of chattel slavery and race-based segregation in the United States had exploded into unceasing urban insurrections and mounting unrest. Entwined with the rise of American neoliberalism was a vehement backlash to the cultural upheavals of the 1960s and early 1970s, embodied by these freedom movements.

Dismantling a Freedom Movement

Characterized by the strategic employment of direct action, the modern Civil Rights movement confronted the prevailing system of racial domination in the United States through marches, demonstrations, sit-ins, and boycotts. December 1, 1955 is often identified as a defining moment, when Rosa Parks refused to surrender her seat to a white passenger on a Montgomery, Alabama bus, sparking a year-long boycott that thrust Martin Luther King, Jr. and the movement into the larger public's view. By the end of February 1960, sit-ins were being staged in towns and cities throughout the South. In April 1960, many of the student activists who had participated in the sit-ins formed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) initiated a "freedom ride" from Washington DC into the Deep South to confront segregation on interstate transportation. The courageous acts of this interracial group of "freedom riders," many of whom endured bodily harm, led to the discontinuation of these discriminatory practices.

The effectiveness of these strategies was undeniably connected to the media coverage of these events, which graphically depicted the horrific acts of violence inflicted upon peaceful protesters. It was television, the new media technology, which brought the plight of politically disenfranchised blacks to the attention of people around the world. The footage of bloodied black and white "freedom riders," police dogs attacking nonviolent protesters, and fire hoses knocking marching children off their feet shocked people around the world and garnered support for the movement, bringing international pressure to bear on the United States. During the summer of 1963, civil rights activists initiated nearly eight hundred nonviolent direct actions.[14] That summer climaxed on August 28 with a quarter of a million people assembled in front of the Lincoln Monument for what is arguably the most prominent symbol of the modern Civil Rights movement, the 1963 March on Washington DC. It was in the wake of the march and the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy that President Lyndon B. Johnson would prod Congress into passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and a series of policies intended to eradicate poverty. In 1965, Johnson then proposed and Congress enacted the Voting Rights Act and legislation that would create the Great Society.[15] These pieces of legislation marked the formal end of Jim Crow and were monumental victories for the Civil Rights movement.

Merely two weeks after the 1964 Civil Rights Act was signed, however, protests in New York City, ignited by a police killing of a black teenager, turned into days of rioting, prompting similar protests in Philadelphia and Rochester, New York. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others had assumed that Northern blacks would benefit indirectly but significantly from the victories secured in the South. King's encounter with the plight of black people in northern cities helped him to understand that the nature of injustice in the United States was deeper and wider than racism.[16] Increasing unemployment, poverty, a general withdrawal of city services, and instances of police brutality fueled a series of revolts by black people in urban centers. Uprisings continued, particularly in the period between 1964 and 1968. In 1965, five days after the Voting Rights Act was enacted, revolts occurred in the Watts section of Los Angeles. Riots in Detroit and Newark decimated both of these cities in 1967. In 1968, the Kerner Commission, chartered by the Johnson administration to study the roots of urban unrest, concluded the causes originated in social and economic injustices that had developed over the previous two decades.[17]

The most prominent voice in the northern cities during the modern Civil Rights era, however, was not King's, but that of Malcolm X. Malcolm, whom many consider a progenitor of the Black Power movement, advocated self-defense, racial pride, and self-reliance. He was a staunch critic of King's nonviolent approach and appeal to the "conscience" of America. While Martin and Malcolm were portrayed as antagonists in the media, they were, in fact, moving toward common ground by the end of their short lives.[18] Both Martin King and Malcolm X "began gradually to recognize that capitalism itself is based upon the exploitation of many poor people by a few rich people."[19] It was after the uprising at Watts that King recognized the need for a greater emphasis on economic justice. Similar to the paradigm shifting impact of Malcolm's trip to Mecca, the Watts insurrection initiated a major shift in King's thinking about the struggle in America. He came to understand that poverty was not arbitrary, but was "the consequence of a calculated decision of the wielders of economic power."[20] The black struggle for freedom in the United States, King now realized was inextricably linked to the resistance movements of oppressed peoples throughout the world.

Even as the legislation was being passed in 1965 to create the Great Society, the United States was becoming increasingly involved in the war in Vietnam. Federal funds were consequently diverted away from domestic programs to the "theatre" in Southeast Asia. While the war on poverty received about one billion dollars, the Vietnam War cost approximately one hundred fifty billion dollars.[21] In 1966, SNCC publicly opposed the war and supported draft evasion. While King had voiced his opposition to the bombings in North Vietnam as early as 1965, he publicly expressed his opposition to the war in 1967. "The promises of the Great Society have been shot down on the battlefields of Vietnam," he commented in 1967.[22] These statements were but a prelude to his pivotal speech at Riverside Church in New York City in April of that same year. Here, King declared that he saw a direct link between the escalation of the war abroad and the shortcomings of the war against poverty at home.

During 1966 and 1967, the issue of class was becoming increasingly important to King. He began to argue for the redistribution of the country's wealth to address the needs of the poor. In November 1967, King initiated discussions with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) that would widen the movement beyond civil rights for black Americans. Plans were made to direct the struggle more broadly to economic matters that affected all poor Americans. A decision was made to launch the Poor People's Campaign and lead the nation's poor and disenfranchised of all colors in a massive march on Washington DC in the spring of 1968. This demonstration would focus on the need for jobs, ending the war in

Vietnam and pressuring the government to live up to its stated ideals of democracy, liberty, and justice for all. The campaign, however, would never achieve its full purpose. The hope engendered by the historic achievements of the Civil Rights movement were about to be devastated by a deluge of despair. The tragic assassination of Malcolm X in February 1965 might be seen as one of the inaugurating events of the Post-Civil Rights era. Then on April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr., the ambassador of nonviolence who believed in the fundamental goodness of America, was violently murdered. Black Americans in over one hundred cities revolted.[23]

During its later stages, Martin Luther King, Jr. realized that the Civil Rights movement was inextricably linked to the resistance movements of poor and oppressed peoples throughout the world. With King's public critique of the imperialist incursion of the United States into Vietnam and his plans to confront the economic injustices affecting all poor Americans, the movement effectively transcended race. In the United States, both Martin and Malcolm thus unleashed "popular forces" that proved to be a threat to the position of the ruling elites. By the end of the 1960s, a "rights revolution," which emanated outward from the civil and voting rights achievements, had reshaped the social landscape of the United States.[24] "The upper classes," Harvey states, "had to move decisively if they were to protect themselves from political and economic annihilation."[25]

The economic problems of the late 1960s and 1970s, the Cold War, modern Civil Rights movement, nascent Black Power movement, desegregation, Vietnam War, and vehement cultural reaction to the upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, all bred disenchantment with the politics of Keynesianism, the welfare state, and social democratic initiatives. Widespread disillusionment with urban unrest led to a breakdown in the prevailing belief in the effectiveness of government action. In the United States, resistance to the civil rights movement spurred the growth of a conservative movement. Economic conservatives sought to replace Keynesian-inspired government initiatives with free market policies. Social conservatives, largely in the South, were disturbed by the disruptions in the racial structure of US society secured by the successes of the Civil Rights movement. Southern conservatives bemoaned that the government had become, for black America, the instrument of affirmative action, the principal educator, the leading employer, the guarantor of welfare, and the underwriter of housing. The government, Southern conservatives lamented, had been co-opted and "metamorphosed by the Civil Rights revolution into a Black institution, or at least one whose mission was now foremostly to serve the interests of African Americans."[26]

Nixon's "southern strategy" tapped into the concerns of this powerful suburban class in the South, who abhorred the prevailing racial instability and economic insecurity. Wealthy elites in the executive offices of Southern banks and on Wall Street had, in fact, financed much of the organized opposition to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.[27] The modern Civil Rights movement and the reactions to it contributed to a "Southernization" of US politics united in opposition to the perceived failings of Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. It enabled conservatives to form an electoral majority in the late 1960s as a complex coalescence of economic, political, and cultural forces fused together. Neoliberal ideals and politics, with its emphasis on radical individualism, were imported into this cauldron of Southern American conservative belief. Here, "neoliberally fueled racism" would seek to delimit state power and denude it of resources that had been directed at producing greater racial equality.[28] The emergence of American neoliberalism thus reflects its ability to commandeer virulent anti-desegregationist discontent from conservatives over the incendiary issues of race and social policy.[29]

Ground Zero

The neoliberal age arguably had its initial domestic "human trials" run during New York City's fiscal crisis in the 1970s.[30] As indicated, high unemployment, increasing poverty, deteriorating housing, and recurring instances of police brutality had fueled a series of uprisings by black people in urban centers. In the wake of the cultural upheavals of the 1960s, New

York City was pressured to increase expenditures for housing, health care, and other social services. In 1970, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, New York's Democratic senator, sent a memo to President Richard Nixon, citing Rand Corporation data regarding the outbreak of fires in New York City and bemoaning the rise of radicals such as the Black Panthers. "The time may have come," Moynihan wrote, "when the issue of race could benefit from a period of benign neglect," in which social services to inner cities are drastically curtailed or eliminated.[31] Moynihan would later complain that the memo should never have been leaked to the press and he never meant to suggest that services be withdrawn from African American communities. Even so, Nixon had responded, "I agree!" and forwarded it to his Cabinet.[32]

Deindustrialization and white flight to the suburbs were dissolving New York City's tax base. Efforts to pay for social services by raising taxes and issuing short-term notes proved unsuccessful. President Gerald Ford denied a federal bailout to New York City when the banks refused to continue to fund the city's debt, plunging New York into a financial disaster. The State of New York stepped in to restructure the city's finances. The strategy entailed issuing bonds and drastically cutting New York's social service expenditures. The city's capitulation to the austerity programs of the banks and financial markets, in terms of cutting essential public and municipal services, was a harbinger for the neoliberal approach.[33] A New York City mayoral official, Roger Starr, following Moynihan's notion of "benign neglect," outlined a strategy of "planned shrinkage" in which health, fire, police, sanitation, and transit services would be radically reduced in certain neighborhoods until all the people that remained had to leave or be left behind. The neoliberal practice of administering austerity programs, prioritizing the needs of banks and financial institutions over the social service needs of citizens, was not without consequence. The political and cultural transformations produced by the emergence of American neoliberalism brought with it a series of social and economic consequences, most notably the broken communities their policies abandoned and left behind.

In light of the disruptions in North America's racial structure caused by the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, the politics that followed are believed by some to reflect an active governmental policy of disinvestment in urban centers, as the black working class and poor people were penalized with the liquidation of their cities' industrial bases. In the Post-Civil Rights/Black Power era, urban landscapes would quickly be decimated and militarized by local police forces engaged in the process of demobilizing and containing the African American rebellion of the previous decade. While the Johnson administration's "war on poverty" was a noble gesture, the federal government's commitment to eradicate poverty never matched the neoliberal policies that encouraged the disinvestment in and abandonment of largely African American and Hispanic neighborhoods in New York City and other northern cities.[34] The neoliberal turn in urban centers would be characterized by the reduction of public subsidies and regulations, and the privatization of previously public services.[35] By the mid-1980s, large sections of New York City resembled what appeared to be the aftermath of devastating attacks. Urban centers that contained vibrant working class enclaves in the 1950s were, by the 1980s, decimated and reduced to uninhabited "ghost towns" reminiscent of post-World War II Europe. Ronald Reagan would seize upon the clues gleaned from what transpired in New York City to consolidate an alliance of political and ideological forces to champion and congeal a neoliberal hegemony.[36]

Reaganomics

Reagan entered office in 1981 with a strategy that included major tenets informed by neoliberalism: increased deregulation, market liberalization, tighter control of the money supply, tax cuts, and cuts in public spending.[37] His administration proceeded to implement a radical reordering of the US government's budgets. Reagan infamously characterized these initiatives as "trickle down" economics. These policies, also known as Reaganomics, put forth the idea that tax cuts for the wealthy and for corporations would stimulate the economy. The rationale, guided by neoliberal principles, was that these measures would lead to increased investment by the rich and, thereby, promote economic growth and more opportunity for all. Investment in the business sectors of local and national economies would eventually trickle down and benefit the rest of the population through increased job opportunities and better social services. A crucial aspect of Reagan's economic philosophy was the notion that "a rising tide lifts all boats." This concept, however, created space for an *acceptance of inequality* as an essential component of economic growth and social progress.[38] These trickle-down policies merely served as a theoretical justification for what, in practice, ended up being an unprecedented redistribution of wealth. In the 1980s, the corporate share of federal taxes fell to 15 percent, half of what it had been in the 1950s. Most of the tax burden shifted to middle-class and working-class taxpayers. The gap between rich and poor was wider than at any time since the eve of the Great Depression. Between 1983 and 1989, the top 1 percent of American households saw their net worth increase by 66 percent, while four out of five households saw their net worth decrease. African Americans were hit even harder. In 1983, the median white family owned 11 times the amount of wealth as the median family of color. By 1989, the gap had virtually doubled. The 1980s thus witnessed a massive redistribution of wealth back to the wealthy and big businesses. Some American corporations grew larger than nation-states. Republican Kevin Phillips concurs, "the 1980s saw the triumph of upper America—an ostentatious celebration of wealth, the political ascendancy of the richest third of the population and a glorification of capitalism, free markets and finance."[39]

This "reordering" of governmental budgets was done through so-called structural adjustment programs. Reagan put into effect a number of policies aimed at limiting the power of labor, deregulating industry, agriculture, and resource extraction, and liberating the powers of finance both within the United States and internationally. Budgetary cut-backs in the social and educational sectors were purportedly a way to "trim fat," aimed at making economies more efficient. This resulted in drastic reductions in domestic spending. To Reagan, only a "private"

America unhampered by government restrictions and welfare-dependent populations would be able to sustain its position as the most powerful nation on the earth. The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1981, for example, effectively removed 50 percent of the 450,000 to 500,000 Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients from the rolls. Another 40 percent of employed AFDC recipients experienced reductions in their benefits. It is estimated that the changes to AFDC initiated by OBRA pushed 600,000 people below the poverty line.[40]

After Reagan was elected, many polls indicated weak support for his administration's neoliberal agenda. Between 1981 and 1983, the number of Americans who thought Reagan was going too far in decreasing government social programs increased from 37 percent to 52 percent and in 1982 large majorities supported retaining government regulations that protected the environment, worker safety, and government owned lands. Large majorities also supported government spending designed to benefit the poor and nearly 75 percent of all Americans favored government management of the economy.[41] Elites therefore had to shape popular opinion to suit their economic and political interests. To that end, billions of dollars from corporations and wealthy individuals were mobilized for the campaigns of conservative political candidates, and the formation of political action committees and foundations that became the proponents of free-market policies, deregulation, and decreased social spending.[42] The right-wing found a large cadre of dedicated followers in the growing Christian right, which received significant financial support from wealthy conservatives. Right-wing evangelical ministers used this wealth to preach conservative agendas over 1,400 radio stations, 3,500 local television and cable channels, and 4 satellite systems.[43]

Finally, in an effort to craft and sell a message that would garner American support for policies that primarily benefit the rich, conservatives employed the politics of fear. In the 1960s, conservatives conjured urban violence and threatening machine gun carrying Black Power revolutionaries to attack the Civil Rights movement and the war on poverty. In the 1980s and

1990s, conservatives redeployed those strategies, launching another campaign of fear, this time using African American gangs, unwed welfare mothers, and addicted minorities to gain support for conservative agendas. Reagan used coded attacks on affirmative action and welfare that played well in the South. In the North, he employed attacks on minorities to manipulate white voters who faced rising crime and slumping economies in urban centers. George Winslow adds, "Racially oppressed blacks were transformed into Uzi-carrying gangsters. Desperately poor women became crack-crazed, sexually promiscuous welfare moms... Young people who had hit the streets to oppose US-backed drug-dealing dictatorships in the 1960s mutated into potent living symbols of drug abuse, senseless violence, and sexual promiscuity."[44] These tactics, in addition to attacks on immigrants, labor, and liberals, helped conservatives shift the dominant political discourse to the right.

Attempts at applying neoliberal ideas would reveal tensions that proved to be problematic for African Americans and other populations. First, there proved to be a problematic conflict between the individual's role in the market as a consumer and their role as a citizen. Viewed through a neoliberal lens, politics and the provision of public services were increasingly being seen in terms of market processes rather than in terms of citizenship rights. Second, the neoliberal rhetoric of freedom and opportunity was incongruent with the gross inequality, deindustrialization, and globalization engendered by competitive free market capitalism.[45] These trends had horrific implications for countless black Americans residing in urban centers, particularly in the North.

The Politics of Black Abandonment

Between 1910 and 1970, more than six and a half million African Americans migrated northward, shifting from farm to industrial work and from rural to urban living. By 1970, Philadelphia and Chicago were 30 percent black; Cleveland, Detroit, and St. Louis were 40 percent African American; and Newark and Washington, DC had black majorities.[46] In the early twentieth century, the presence of industry in northern cities brought a wealth of well-paid jobs. However, by the 1960s, the "deindustrialization" of northern urban centers was spreading like a cancer. Industries left the cities, seeking cheaper sources of labor in the suburbs, the South, and overseas. Antilabor legislation passed at the height of McCarthyism made it easier for corporations to move jobs out of unionized northern cities to locales with fewer unions and cheaper labor.[47] In 1960, 13 of America's 20 largest corporations were headquartered in US cities. By 1970, only 4 remained. The loss of industry depleted tax revenues and led to increased unemployment. Local governments responded by drastically reducing services in largely black urban neighborhoods. Public schools in African American districts were overcrowded, had decaying facilities, and few adequate libraries. Decreases in garbage collection led to rodent-infested neighborhoods.

The development of US cities, defined spatially by racial and class separations, was not accidental. African American efforts to partake in the "American dream" and escape urban ghettos were thwarted at every step. Black Americans were often the victims of housing discrimination, segregation, lack of private investment, and political gerrymandering as they were confined to decaying urban neighborhoods that whites were fleeing from. To bolster faltering local economies, the federal government approved a "stimulus package." Suburbanization was encouraged as a solution to the economic malaise through programs such as the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and Veterans Affairs (VA) mortgage programs, the secondary mortgage market, thrift lenders, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), and local tax abatement programs.[48] Suburban property development, utility extension, housing construction, and mortgage lending were deployed as the panacea for local economic and social woes. These programs and policies effectively facilitated white flight out of urban centers to newly developed suburbs, serving as the vehicle that lifted many working class whites into middle class status. Black neighborhoods were usually assigned a poor rating by financial institutions, making it virtually impossible for residents to obtain mortgages to purchase property in suburban neighborhoods. This led to a new demarcation of the line of segregation in US cities around suburban enclaves. Cities that had already suffered large declines in the 1960s now experienced massive population losses. Between 1970 and 1992, middle-class taxpayers left urban centers in droves: New York City lost 583,000 residents; Chicago, 601,000; Detroit, 502,000; Philadelphia, 396,000; Baltimore, 180,000 and Cleveland, 248,000.[49] Discriminatory lending practices left working class and poor blacks trapped and abandoned in deteriorating, increasingly segregated inner cities.

A different governmental strategy was put forth for these black and brown populations: public housing and "urban renewal." Both programs were "spatial undertakings," rooted in strategies of government sanctioned isolation of minorities.[50] Here, black and brown people were literally cordoned off in public housing "projects." By 1970, more than four hundred fifty public housing projects had been built in US cities. Typically immense in scale, over half of these were designed to house over five hundred families. Though the program was roundly criticized as "slum-sustaining, paternalistic, and welfare-perpetuating," it was not curtailed because it effectively isolated "property value threatening" people.[51] By 1975, New York City operated 116,000 units of public housing, Philadelphia, 22,900, Chicago, 38,600, Baltimore, 16,200, and Atlanta, 24,700.[52] Between 1967 and 1973, over half a million new public housing units were constructed.[53]

Urban renewal programs would ultimately prove to be destructive, demolishing more homes than they built and displacing more people, businesses, and services than they relocated. Between 1960 and 1970, the nation's five largest cities—New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Houston—lost more than 965,000 people.[54] In 1975, there were approximately 199,000 abandoned housing units in New York City, 44,500 in Chicago, 62,000 in Detroit, and 33,000 in Philadelphia.[55] Urban renewal was an utter failure. Entire buildings, blocks, and neighborhoods were abandoned. In New York City, hundreds of vacant lots and abandoned buildings littered the South

Bronx, Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and East New York. Images captured from this time period were inconceivable and disconcerting.[56] In 1973, Robert Moses, the retired architect of urban sprawl, would declare that the South Bronx, Harlem, and several black neighborhoods in Brooklyn were "irreparable" and "beyond rebuilding, tinkering, and restoring."[57] President Jimmy Carter, on a visit to the South Bronx in the fall of 1977, gazed silently upon four square blocks that were completely desolate. Standing amidst turf that even the gangs had abandoned, Carter took in the devastation, turned to his secretary of housing and urban renewal, Patricia Harris, and said, "See which areas can still be salvaged."[58] Large sections of urban America were uninhabitable. Huge public housing complexes "rose above the cityscapes like faceless warehouses."[59] Inner-city neighborhoods were effectively considered "no go" zones by whites. Tragically, during the dawning of the neoliberal age, urban ghettos came to be treated as "storage facilities rather than communities."[60] The National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing (1989) similarly concluded that public housing "systematically created neighborhoods of isolation, alienation and fear, devoid of any meaningful community social interaction."[61] The time period is vividly captured in this excerpt from the rap song entitled, *The Message* (1982) by Grandmaster Flash:

> Broken glass everywhere,
> People pissin' on the stairs, you know they just don't care,
> I can't take the smell, can't take the noise,
> Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice,
> Rats in the front room, roaches in the back,
> Junkies in the alley with the baseball bat…
> Don't push me cause I'm close to the edge,
> I'm trying not to lose my head,
> It's like a jungle sometimes,
> It makes me wonder how I keep from goin' under.[62]

Urban centers were undeniably shaped by structural inequalities between whites, blacks, and Hispanics, with the complicity of federal agencies. State and county governments, frequently with the support of federal judges, applied a legal framework, implementing zoning rules and the practice of redlining, which effectively excluded black Americans from affordable housing and mortgages. The idealized conception of the "American dream"—of owning a detached single family home in a nice suburb—was, at best, complicated for black Americans excluded from its attainment by both overt and covert means. These practices effectively distracted whites from the real sources of their economic and social woes and stoked racial anxieties directed at the black "other," who was constructed as a "menace to society." Neoliberally fueled racisms functioned to exacerbate already heightened tensions that, in many instances, led to riots within and between different communities. In New York City, the case of Michael Griffith represents only one of countless incidents that underscore how neoliberally fueled racisms fostered a combustible urban environment:

> The Friday afternoon before Christmas of 1986, twenty-three year old Michael Griffith, his friend, Timothy Grimes, his stepfather, Cedric Sandiford, and his cousin, Curtis Sylvester, were driving back from Far Rockaway. Sylvester's 1976 Buick overheated and stalled in Howard Beach, as daylight faded. Howard Beach was a whites-only enclave. It was one of the few remaining areas in Queens and Brooklyn from which whites had not taken flight. The black men stopped at the New Park Pizzeria and asked for directions to the nearest subway station. They sat to rest and eat. By the time they got up to depart a group of white youth had arrived, some carrying baseball bats. When they attempted to leave, the mob attacked them. The mob chased them into a field adjacent to Belt Parkway and beat them mercilessly. Michael Griffith slipped through a hole in the fence onto the parkway. In an attempt to escape the violent mob, Griffith tried to cross the six-lane parkway. He was hit by a car, his body crushed on the hood.

Jobs left the inner cities in droves as the housing stock deteriorated and millions of dollars were diverted out of urban centers into suburbs or non-union Southern states. The emergence of the neoliberal age and the subsequent relocation of manufacturing plants to low-wage regions drastically reduced the number of unskilled blue collar jobs that had been the foundation of many cities. Nearly three million manufacturing jobs were lost nationwide between 1979 and 1990. During the same period, the work force in light manufacturing industries, such as apparel which employed many urban dwellers, decreased by more than 25 percent. In addition, from 1973 to 1989, increased competition from low-wage factories outside the United States led to reduced pay for many low skilled jobs in America. For black men in their twenties, pay was reduced by 24 percent and for African American dropouts, by 50 percent.[63] For city residents who relied on factory jobs that require little education, these losses were devastating. During the 1970s, more than one million jobs that did not require a high school diploma were lost in New York, Chicago, Boston, Cleveland, and Detroit. Between 1976 and 1986, two-thirds of all new jobs were in the suburbs. Between 1980 and 1986, the suburbs produced all the new jobs in Chicago, Cleveland, Dayton, and Detroit, and 75–90 percent of the new jobs in Los Angeles, Newark, Philadelphia, and Washington DC.[64] The result was a dramatic increase in poverty and a surge in crime in the nation's cities. As jobs disappeared, so did opportunities for a way out of crime and gang membership. The disappearance of low skilled jobs and the decrease in pay for such work made it harder for urban youth to abandon crime and gang violence. As a result, many turned to the underground drug economy.[65]

Urban police were ill-equipped to deal with the increase in crime rates that occurred subsequent to the neoliberal policies that destabilized US cities. The 1961 US Civil Rights Commission concluded that police brutality was a serious problem. The uprisings in New York City and Philadelphia in 1964, Watts in 1965, San Francisco and Atlanta in 1966, and Newark and Detroit in 1967 all erupted after allegations of police brutality or complaints about the manner in which police treated minorities. It is estimated that nearly three million Americans were brutalized by the police in the early 1970s. In the 1980s, the lack of an effective mechanism for controlling police behavior led to increasing complaints in New York City regarding the excessive use of force. In 1982, police misconduct complaints in

New York City reached a new high. In response to a congressional inquiry, the police department found that an overwhelming number of the police brutality cases involved white officers and people of color. Nearly half of those cases resulted in death.[66] The highly publicized case of Michael Stewart represents only one of innumerable known incidents of police brutality in northern cities during this period:

> In the early morning before dawn on September 15, 1983, twenty-five year old Michael Stewart left the Pyramid Club in lower Manhattan and headed into the subway station to catch the L train back home to Brooklyn. Seeing no one else on the subway platform, Michael pulled out a marker and wrote graffiti, when a white Transit Authority police officer walked up to arrest him. It was almost three o'clock in the morning. Half an hour later, Michael was lying face down on a gurney in Bellevue Hospital's emergency room. He had bruises all over his body. His face and hands were turning blue. His neck was scarred below his Adam's apple. There was swelling around his eyes. He was still "hogtied" with his ankles tied to his wrists which were still handcuffed. He had no heartbeat, no pulse, and was not breathing. Thirteen days later, having never regained consciousness, Stewart died in his hospital bed. The public would learn that eleven transit cops had been involved in his arrest.

Between 1987 and 1991, complaints regarding police brutality increased by 25 percent. New York City was subsequently forced to pay out more than forty-four million dollars to victims during that period. Formed in 1993, the Mollen Commission uncovered evidence that New York City Police (NYPD) officers were beating up suspects, stealing drug money, fabricating evidence, taking bribes, and even selling drugs. Police corruption helped several drug gangs to earn enormous profits in Harlem, East New York, and the Bronx. Thirty eight NYPD officers in the Bronx were indicted in 1995 for charges ranging from brutality to drug sales.[67] In 1997, NYPD officers were accused of torturing a Haitian immigrant, Abner Louima, with a toilet plunger, inflicting anal injuries that caused him to be hospitalized for weeks. In 1999, New York City police killed an unarmed African immigrant, Amadou Diallo, in a fuselage of forty-one bullets, sparking community protests and outrage. And though this study is primarily concerned with the time period in which the neoliberal age emerged, I would be remiss not to mention the police-involved deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and Eric Garner in New York City that sparked the Black Lives Matter movement in 2014. All of these incidents point to the fact that alleged acts of police brutality against black Americans cannot be fully understood apart from the role that paramilitary policing plays as a mode of governance in a racially driven neoliberal system that employs various forms of oppression, exploitation, and negation.

The pervasiveness of "paramilitary-styled policing," Mark L. Taylor argues, must be viewed in connection with the massive growth of the prison-industrial complex during this period. Since 1980, the prison population in the United States nearly quadrupled, constituting the largest correctional build-up of any country in history.[68] Since 1990, more than seven billion annually has been spent on the construction of prisons. In 1996 alone, construction began on 96 state prisons and 26 federal prisons.[69] This massive growth in the prison industry occurred concurrently with the implementation of Reagan's neoliberal policies. Although African Americans make up only 13 percent of the US population, black people have been estimated to comprise as much as 50 percent of the prison population. The National Criminal Justice Commission report of 1996 states that this disparity is so great that "cumulative racial bias at all points of the criminal justice system must now be seen as the major cause of the disparity in our prisons."[70] In the year 2000, it was estimated that one out of every ten African American men was incarcerated.[71] Thirty percent of all black American men between the ages of 18 and 34 are under the supervision of the criminal "just-us" system. Over 70 percent of the prison population is made up of people of color.[72]

The exponential growth of the prison-industrial complex reflects yet another component of the politics of black abandonment. As stated, the neoliberal age requires mechanisms to manage those left behind by the unequal distributions of wealth.

Consequently, systems of punishment, with all the policing, sentencing, and institutions of confinement, are utilized to contain left behind sectors of the population whose presence discloses the society's inequities and to control those who pose a threat to the system's stability.[73] African Americans and other disenfranchised groups whom US policy makers deem expendable are sacrificed "through isolation of them, rejection, exclusion, paramilitary-police intimidation and crackdowns, imprisonment, and execution."[74] In the United States, a racially driven neoliberalism thus promulgates strategies of containment and systems of control. Taylor poignantly states,

> A capitalism that chooses to live with economic inequality has built into it, then, the need to control the potentially harmful effects of that inequality. In this need to control faction and rebellion lies the seed of the connection between a system of capitalist production and the system of punishment.... We have a system of terrorizing punishment, meted out directly to more than two million people in prison (a disproportionate number of whom are people of color), because unequal distribution of property and general economic disparity have reached greater, nearly unmanageable levels. To control resulting faction, wealthier sectors have had to intensify means to control the lives of the less fortunate.[75]

The need to protect the elites that sit atop the economic order from the "wretched of the earth" have yielded the kind of paramilitary-styled policing, imprisoning, and executing observed both in the prisons, on the streets of New York City and Ferguson, Missouri, and in other urban centers. In the neoliberal age, the penal state in the United States thus serves to "physically neutralize and warehouse...the dispossessed members of stigmatized groups who persist in entering into 'open rebellion against their social environment.'"[76] Paramilitary-styled policing and incarceration function as modes of "punitive containment and disciplinary supervision" of African Americans and other disenfranchised populations dwelling at the margins of the neoliberal order. In the neoliberal age, the security state (police, courts, jails, and prisons) are all utilized as a crucial component of neoliberal governance, deployed to mold, neutralize, or warehouse its most disruptive elements and those rendered expendable. Here, the penal state serves "as a judicial garbage disposal into which the human refuse of the market society are thrown."[77] What is crucially important for practitioners of soul care is the fact that, African Americans and other groups deemed as menacing are the ones actually threatened with alienation, intimidation, incarceration, marginalization, externalization and, potentially, annihilation.

The Neoliberal Matrix

By the 1980s, neoliberal thought had coalesced around a set of core ideas including individual liberty, free markets, competition, consumerism, deregulation, low taxes, and limited government. The neoliberal age, however, denotes the emergence of a hegemonic configuration driven by neoliberal ideals, but permeated by a myriad of other forces. As indicated, the neoliberal system in the United States is deeply racialized. A host of strategies are utilized to manage, in politically viable ways, those left behind by the unequal distributions of wealth. The neoliberal age, as stated, involves a matrix of systems that function to: (1) *maintain* the full reign of the "free" market, (2) *contain* left behind sectors of the population whose presence discloses the systems' inequities, (3) *control* those populations who pose a threat to the systems' stability, and (4) secure the continued *contributions* of those who are indeed indispensible to the system's operations.

In the United States, the neoliberal age signifies a historic transition from a system of racial domination to a racialized capitalistic *hegemony*.[78] Hegemony, however, is never about pure victory or absolute domination. It is always about tendencies in the balance of power in a society. Hegemony operates at multiple levels in a society, exerting authority in the cultural, political, economic, intellectual, and material domains of life. Authority is not attained or sustained merely through the forcible imposition of power. Hegemony is attained and sustained by "coercion" and by securing a substantial degree of "popular consent."[79] Neoliberal hegemony subtly and effectively encourages people to identify themselves with the habits, sensibilities, and world views supportive of the status quo and the class interests that dominate it. It is successful in persuading people to "consent" to their oppression and exploitation. This involves the power to frame alternatives and contain opportunities so that the granting of legitimacy to the dominant group appears to be natural and normal. Neoliberal hegemony is highly decentralized. It is not one thing. Different strategies for managing the marginalized are employed in different regions and localities.

The state and civil society both play a crucial role in the construction and maintenance of neoliberal hegemony. Neoliberals have embraced the state as a vehicle for creating market opportunities, imposing market discipline and absorbing market costs. In the neoliberal age, the nation state is not conceived merely as a coercive apparatus, but is also "educative and formative."[80] It applies "educative pressure" to those whom it rules so as to obtain their consent and collaboration, turning coercion into "freedom."[81] In the United States, as noted above, this has included employing many of the practices and sustaining many of the problems associated with earlier systems of racial domination. Neoliberal hegemony is sustained, as well, in and through the "civil society." Civil society is constituted by a myriad of relations and institutions, including schools, churches, media, cultural organizations, and "so-called private relations, gender, sexual and ethnic identities, etc."[82] While the police and the military are often the "official spokespersons," in many hegemonic formations, the education system, labor practices, popular culture, religious institutions, and psychological discourses are all employed "to create around the exploited person an atmosphere of submission and of inhibition which lightens the task of policing considerably."[83] Neoliberal hegemony governs disenfranchised groups through containment and control, but predominantly by transforming them into subjects who voluntarily embrace particular kinds of choices and behaviors. West concurs,

> A hegemonic culture subtly and effectively encourages people to identify themselves with the habits, sensibilities, and world views supportive of the status quo and the class interests that dominate it. It is a culture successful in persuading people to "consent" to their oppression and exploitation. A hegemonic culture survives and thrives as long as it convinces people to adopt its preferred formative modality, its favored socialization process.[84]

This historic transition in the United States from a system of racial domination to a racially driven neoliberal hegemony highlights the fact that the subjugated have also become a market. African Americans, under chattel slavery, were sources of cheap labor responsible for handling raw materials which, once turned into manufactured goods, were distributed on the global market. However, under Jim Crow and more fully in the neoliberal age, black Americans are regarded as customers ready to buy and consume goods. Subjugation founded solely on brute force is no longer, economically speaking, worthwhile. Corporate elites and the state must now safeguard segments of the dominated, to some extent, to serve their own exploitative interests.

The neoliberal age has to do not only with economic and political relations, but also with the dissemination of a form of "mass culture."[85] The development of new forms of mass communication and representation enabled the exportation of a neoliberally driven culture that remains centered in the West. Though the concentration of capital has begun to drift to the East, the narratives, values, and imagery of Western societies remain the "driving powerhouse" of this neoliberal mass culture. These movements involve the imposition, in whole or in part, of Western worldviews and values on every culture they encounter. This neoliberally driven culture does not attempt to obliterate other local cultures. It operates through them, absorbing cultural differences. Stuart Hall notes, "Capital has had to negotiate, has had to incorporate and partly reflect the differences it was trying to overcome."[86] Countless communities in the United States and throughout the world thus experience the neoliberal age as a new mode of cultural imperialism.

In an attempt to inscribe "otherness," neoliberal hegemony constructs symbolic and material boundaries among socially constructed categories. It operates through positioning difference so that some forms of black American identity are accentuated while others are silenced or marginalized. In doing so, it causes a form of "epistemic violence."[87] This epistemic violence depersonalizes both individual and collective identities. For African Americans, this epistemic violence has traumatic implications, constituting and effacing black identities and engendering the internalization of the self as other.[88] Here, cultural products such as the visual images disseminated on television and film play a key role in producing and securing, by "consent" rather than force, the values and objectives of the dominant group. These dynamics were visibly on display in a popular television show aired during the 1980s. Sardonically entitled, "Good Times," the show depicts an African American family trying to survive while living in public housing projects. The following excerpt from the show's theme song illustrates the not so subtle role of media in the construction of symbolic *and* material boundaries among socially constructed categories:

> Just looking out of the window, watching the asphalt grow,
> Thinking how it all looks "hand me down"...
> Keeping your head above water, making a wave when you can,
> Temporary lay-offs, good times, easy credit rip offs, good times...
> Ain't we lucky we got 'em, good times.[89]

Popular culture is a highly contested space in a state of hegemony. Popular culture is often the scene of commodification "where control over narratives and representations passes into the hands of the established cultural bureaucracies, sometimes without a murmur."[90] West concurs,

> One of the most effective strategies of corporate marketers has been to target the youth market with distractive amusement and saturate them with pleasurable sedatives that steer them away from engagement with issues of peace and justice. The incessant media bombardment of images (of salacious bodies and mindless violence) on TV and in movies and music convinces many

> young people that the culture of gratification—a quest for insatiable pleasure, endless titillation, and sexual stimulation—is the only way of being human.[91]

At the same time, popular culture is a site of "alternative traditions" counterposed to the dominant discourses and traditions. The customs, languages, representations, and practices of any dominated group can constitute potential sites both for the construction of hegemony and the struggle against it. Popular culture, from this viewpoint, can never be fully dominated by one side or the other. It can never be characterized in terms of simple binary oppositions such as resistance versus accommodative. Hip hop culture, for example, had its inception in the experiences of African American, Caribbean American, and Hispanic youth attempting to navigate the impact of American neoliberalism on urban landscapes during the Post-Civil Rights and Black Power eras. In the song "Niggaz4Life" (1991), the hip hop ensemble N.W.A. (Niggaz with Attitude) provides a raw unfiltered description of the prevailing economic conditions impinging upon young black Americans during the dawning of the neoliberal age (contains explicit lyrics):

> Why do I call myself a nigger?—Ya' ask me,
> I guess it's just the way shit has to be,
> Back when I was young, gettin' a job was murder,
> Fuck flippin' burgers because I deserve a
> Nine-to-five I can be proud of,
> That I can speak loud of and to help a nigger get out of
> Yo! The concrete playground,
> But most motherfuckers only want you to stay down.[92]

Black rage and suffering, however, would be commodified by big business for global consumption. Media conglomerates soon realized there were potentially millions of consumers for rap music. Recording budgets grew exponentially, as labels sought the formulaic in an attempt to appeal to the mass market. Fashioned with the facade of authentic vernacular expression, gangsterized rap performance styles were taken as legitimate, when these practices were often market-driven media productions. With the emergence of the use of videos in rap music promotions, the line between rap artist as conveyor of the truth about life in abandoned urban centers became blurred with the cinematic fantasy perpetrated both by artists and media executives. Hip hop culture became a highly contested space represented by rap superstars obsessed with "shaking derrieres, platinum jewelry, fine alcohol, premium weed, pimp culture, gangster rituals, and thug life."[93] With the mass-mediated "gangsterization" of hip hop, an intriguing coexistence was forged between identifications with poverty, criminality, and capitalist aspirations. The purveyors of hip hop would stand in a precarious space between culture and commerce.

The rise of the hip hop mogul points to another characteristic of hegemonic formations evident in the neoliberal age. Hegemonic societies tend to include fragments of the dominated groups, who have been seduced by concessions and compromises, albeit functioning within the society in a subordinate role. Hegemonic societies often concentrate wealth in the hands of market-oriented "collaborative minorities," widening disparities of wealth between these ethnic minorities and the majority ethnic group(s).[94] Neoliberal hegemony operates by partially accommodating subordinate elements of a society. It works through incorporation and concession rather than by simple oppression.

Neoliberal governance, as indicated, is pursued through a diffuse network of actors using various methods depending upon the geopolitical context. The neoliberal age then is not one thing. It is many things. Neoliberal governance emerges through interactions between a matrix of forces, taking on various forms and employing distinctive strategies in different localities. In North America's racially driven neoliberalism, this finds expression in systematic but highly contingent racial disparities, without imposing a uniform racial system from above.[95] Hegemonic formations, however, are not fixed or impenetrable. Crises in a society can undermine it and lead to its disintegration. Civil society is not subject to the direct control of the nation state. Institutions, practices, and discourses in civil society have the capacity to perforate and undermine hegemonic formations. Sociopolitical resistance then is not suspended during hegemonic moments.[96] The emergence of such resistance movements illustrates that the social forces which lose out in any hegemonic period do not disappear from the site of struggle.

Reagan's political success helped facilitate the formation of a racially driven neoliberal hegemony in the United States. With Reagan's re-election in 1984, neoliberal ideas reigned supreme. However, the elevation of the market to an almost "theological status" brought with it a cadre of problems.[97] Whatever the intentions of its proponents, the wide-ranging effects of the neoliberal age resulted in an overwhelming coup for some sectors of the society at the expense of others. The corporate class and economic elites were the undisputable winners, through deregulation, privatization of state assets, "trickle-down" economics, and business-friendly policies. At the same time, middle-class earners benefited through lower income taxes and personal subsidies such as mortgage interest tax relief. However, poor and working-class earners, many of them African American, were the irrefutable losers. The allocation of assistance to the poorest was curtailed as the public was swayed by arguments about escalating costs of welfare and the criminalization of black bodies. What was rarely mentioned was that white middle-class earners benefitted more through the tax system from state subsidies during this same period than poor and working-class earners had ever done.[98] Tragically, as indicated, *the neoliberal age brought with it an acceptance of exorbitant levels inequality.* The most vulnerable members of society, many of them African American, were and continue to be tragically impacted in the harshest ways. In the United States, racially driven neoliberalism yet endangers the material well-being of African Americans, even as a racialized neoliberal culture threatens to inflict epistemic violence upon the symbolic worlds of black Americans.

3

Black Roses, Cracked Concrete

The identities of people of African ancestry in the United States are not unaffected by the complex and ever shifting relations among political, economic, cultural, and psychological forces. Though identity discourses may draw upon the psychocultural traces of previous historical phases, black subjectivity is enunciated in particular ways during the historical period and specific social formations within which it emerges. This chapter examines the myriad of dynamics that impact the articulation and development of African American identities in the neoliberal age. In this study, black identity development is understood as occurring in "the multileveled interplay between historically situated subjects who act and materially grounded structures that . . . enable and constrain such action."[1]

The conception of African American identity put forth in this study is not essentialist. Indisputably, a "racial epidermal schema" that structured American capitalist society for centuries continues to be salient in terms of the experiences and identities of people of African ancestry in America. This study thus takes seriously the critique of essentialism—challenging static conceptions of identity and the perception that there are certain "authentic" expressions of black life which conform to predetermined patterns or stereotypes. The search for commonalities, though, is not a search for universalized essential principles that determine black identity. To the contrary, the emphasis here is on the significance of "the authority of experience."[2] As bell hooks indicates, "There is a radical difference between a repudiation of the idea that there is a black ‘essence’ and recognition of the way black identity has been specifically constituted in the experience of exile and struggle.”[3] This study therefore points to an understanding of identity that is strategic and positional, providing African Americans with the psychocultural moorings required for human agency in the face of the daunting racially driven neoliberal forces which shape their lives.

The Dialogical Dance

In the neoliberal age, African American identities arise in the context of a *dialogical* transaction between black subjects shaped by the human psyche, mediating spaces, and market-driven structures and discourses, even as these structures and discourses are transformed by struggling and resisting black subjects.[4] The ongoing “dialogical dance” in the neoliberal age between black subjects and market-driven structures and discourses was vividly reenacted during a summer concert. The audience was anxiously awaiting the performance of the evening’s headliner—the popular African American vocalist, India Arie. India soon took the stage dressed, to our astonishment, like a blond-haired Hollywood film-inspired American diva. The audience was visibly bewildered as she sassily strutted across the stage. However, before the roaring crowd could realize what had transpired, Ms. Arie dramatically pulled off the blond wig and discarded her glitzy sequined outfit. She revealed her closely shaven head and the blue jeans and tee shirt she was wearing underneath. India’s band and background vocalists launched into performing her latest single entitled, “I Am Not My Hair.” She sings, “Good hair means curls and waves, bad hair means you look like a slave; At the turn of the century, it’s time for us to redefine who we be . . . I am not my hair, I am not this skin, I am not your expectations; No, I am not my hair, I am not this skin, I am the soul that lives within.”[5] Ms. Arie’s poignant lyrics elucidate the ongoing challenges many African Americans face as they navigate the dominant cultural ideals posited in the neoliberal age. bell hooks similarly asserts, “Light skin and long straight hair continue to be traits that define a female as beautiful and desirable in the racist white imagination and in the colonized black mind set."[6]

The debilitating impact of capitalist practices and white supremacist discourses on African American identities is an enduring theme in the work of the Pulitzer Prize winning author, Toni Morrison. Morrison's writings examine the ongoing plight of African Americans and bear witness to the psycho-cultural effects of chattel slavery and the Jim Crow era. In *The Bluest Eye* (1970), for example, Morrison depicts an African American character whose shame is intensified by her inability to meet the aesthetic standards of the dominant white culture. In *Beloved* (1987), a character is "dirtied" by slavery and her teacher's racism. Morrison adeptly explores the tensions engendered by colorism and classism among blacks as she repeatedly brings together dark-skinned lower-class and light-skinned middle-class characters.[7]

The neoliberal age is likewise a historical moment marked by the infliction of "epistemic violence" on African American identities. Racialized discourses and practices yet permeate the United States, inflicting deep "ontological wounds and emotional scars" that disrupt black identity development.[8] These discourses and practices attack black intelligence, black ability, and black beauty on a daily basis. For many African Americans, the trauma suffered in a racialized neoliberal society has led to a loss of hope that results in a numbing detachment from others and a destructive disposition toward one's self and the world.[9] At the same time, the cultural and psychic resources capable of combating the impact of the neoliberal age have been weakened by the incessant onslaught of market-driven forces that tend to commodify black people and black life, reducing them to objects, for the purposes of personal pleasure and mass consumption.[10] In many ways, hip hop culture has and continues to "bear witness" to the challenges black people face in navigating a racially driven neoliberal hegemony. It is not surprising that the *dialogical dance* between market-driven structures and resisting black subjects can be detected in many of hip hop's "sacred texts." It is certainly evident in the following excerpt from the song that inspired this chapter's title—Tupac Shakur's *The Rose That Grew from Concrete* (2000):

> Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete?
> Proving nature's law is wrong it learned to walk without having feet,
> Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams, it learned to breathe fresh air.
> Long live the rose that grew from the concrete when no one else ever cared.[11]

Hybridity and Black Identities

In the neoliberal age, the "self" is seen as fragmented, hybridized, repositioned, and perpetually in the process of becoming. The idea of hybridity recognizes that societies impacted by systems of domination are often characterized by an interweaving of identities, ideals, and practices that produce new cultural forms even as older forms continue to exist. Indeed, to be a person of African ancestry in America has never signified a homogeneous identity. It has always conveyed a hyphenated, hybridized and, at times, fragmented existence. As reflected in W. E. B. Du Bois' notion of "double consciousness," conceptions of black identity as hybridized have long had cultural capital among black Americans. Commenting on the impact of white supremacism on African American identities, Du Bois notes, "It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness…One ever feels his 'twoness,' an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body."[12] In the neoliberal age, the concept of hybridity similarly theorizes an interweaving of identity discourses, regimes of representation, and relationships of power that produce new forms of black subjectivity even as older forms persist.

Regimes of Representation

African American identities do reflect, to some extent, the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes that provide black Americans with frames of reference and meaning. The shared history of displacement, enslavement, and disenfranchisement and the shared struggle against white supremacism and capitalist exploitation are seen as profoundly formative, unifying African Americans and giving expression to common identifications. While this perspective does not suggest that identity is fixed, it does point to the reality that the struggle against these forces has and continues to be a common element influencing the development of black subjectivity.

African American identities might be conceived as emerging within the context of several regimes of representation. Three spheres are common for many black Americans—the African, European, and American spheres.[13] These are certainly not the only regimes of representation that have import in shaping black subjects, as figure 3.1 alludes to.

In addition, the boundaries between the spheres are permeable and not fixed, allowing transcultural pollination, albeit, governed by relationships of power. For most black Americans, the *African* sphere denotes the site of the erased, repressed, or misrepresented. "Africa, the signified which could [often] not be represented directly," is the masked, muted, or misunderstood presence in the cultures of many diasporic Africans.[14] The

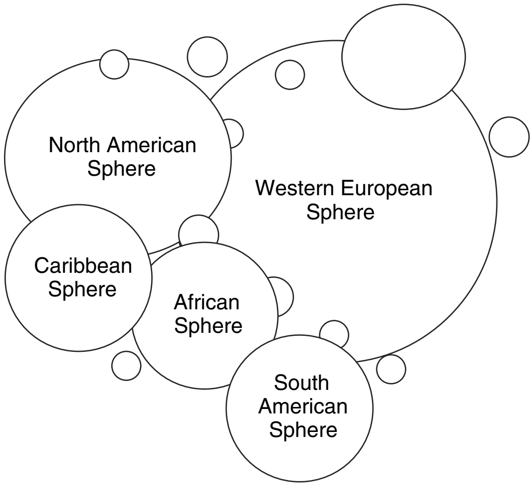

Figure 3.1 Permeable regimes of representation shaping black subjectivity.

recovery of this repressed presence portends a symbolic journey to a re-membered Africa. It suggests a symbolic return to what "the displaced" have made of Africa, as they recall it through trauma and desire.[15] It is a "return" to Africa, mediated by memory which signifies the opening of new spaces for the emergence of new modes of identity. The white "normative gaze" is disrupted. Here, black people discover that the white person's "skin is not of any more value than a native's skin."[16] Crucially, this remembrance of Africa entails not the rediscovery of an "authentic" black identity fixed in some essentialized past, but the imaginative *production* of identity. It is a conception of African American identity not grounded in archaeology, but in the subversive *retelling* of the past.[17] Still maligned by white supremacist discourses and exploitative capitalist practices, Africa continues to "speak" in the customs of black Americans, in syntactical structures of "creolized" languages, in folk tales shared with children, in syncretized religious expressions, in culinary practices, and in rich musical forms.

While the African sphere is a case of the muted "unspoken," for black Americans, the *European* sphere is "a case of that which is endlessly speaking."[18] The European sphere exposes the architect of the doctrine of white supremacy,[19] which has been a constitutive element in many African American identities. Enlightenment science would situate Western Europeans at the pinnacle of a hierarchical configuration that moved upward from dark-skinned Africans to fair-skinned Caucasians. Beauty was configured in terms of racialized categories. The privileging of Western European aesthetic and cultural values produced a "normative gaze" that constituted the mode for determining a person's place in the social hierarchy. This racialized discourse would be appropriated by European powers to justify imperial projects and capitalist expansion.

To justify relationships of domination, it was usually purported that the dominant group was culturally different from, and superior to, the subjugated group. The distortion of indigenous traditions and identities, by virtue of their representation as inferior, has been shown to be the typical pattern of the imperial process.[20] This denial of indigenous histories and identities functioned as a strategy of "representational containment," legitimating the imperial agenda and silencing the subjugated and marginalized. The modern idea of white supremacism thus serves as both a "prelude to and expression of the drive to marginalize and exclude, to dominate, and to exploit."[21] Black people were thus constructed as different within the epistemologies of the West and positioned as "Other" by European imperial powers.

Having been subjected to that "knowledge," these dominant discourses and disruptive practices have had deleterious effects on black identity development. In the neoliberal age, this entails the violence of *psychocultural dislocation*, in which dehumanizing discourses and demeaning practices are affirmed and superimposed over the ways of life, ideals, histories, and identities of black subjects.[22] Frantz Fanon similarly recognized that encounters with oppressive regimes of representation can lead to the inner expropriation of cultural identities that cripple and deform. The experience of psychocultural dislocation in the context of racially driven neoliberalism is a pervasive violence that is not only internalized by black Americans but also often directed against one's own people. Fanon provocatively writes, "This is the period when the niggers beat each other up."[23] The experience of psychocultural dislocation often causes black Americans to internalize the ideals of the dominant group and project them onto other black people "with horizontal hostility that cannot be expressed directly to the ones in power."[24] The process of psychocultural dislocation then is a violent act that impedes, distorts, and disrupts human "being." It is tantamount to an act of psychocultural terrorism.

Finally, the *American* sphere signifies the contested "New World" where hybridized black identities are negotiated. Bantu, Yoruba, Fon, and other ethnic groups formerly distinct in their self-understandings and modes of religious expression were thrown together in the crucible of the transatlantic slave trade and chattel slavery. Finding common ground for the purposes of survival and resistance in the new hostlands required the convergence of diverse worldviews and subjectivities. Forged in hostile environments, the construction of "Africanness" as an identifier might thus be understood then as an American phenomenon.[25] The experience of displacement—linguistic and geopolitical—serves as the ominous backdrop for this violent American encounter.

The methods that enable one human being to subjugate another are remarkably consistent, "they are organized techniques of disempowerment and disconnection."[26] African American development has and continues to be disrupted by modes of displacement and disconnection. Psychocultural dislocation can occur, as indicated, when the language and traditions of the subjugated are negated and supplanted by the supposedly superior language and culture of the dominant group. To speak a language often involves the unconscious adoption of its worldview.[27] The experience of being forced to speak nothing but the oppressor's language affirms the other's values and ideals, alienating the oppressed from their own history and worldview. For people of African ancestry in America, this dehumanizing process also involved the taking away of the person's name. The subjugated are often given a new name to signify the total annihilation of their previous identity and their submission to a new order. In the neoliberal age, psychocultural dislocation continues to be perpetuated by several actors. This is reflected in the absence of African history in the curriculums of most educational systems and the paucity of positive media portrayals of African American life in most media outlets.

While many dominated populations experience linguistic displacement and cultural dislocation, for black people the American sphere also encompasses the experience of geographical displacement. Not only were the culture and language of white Euro-Americans superimposed on the cultural traditions and languages of enslaved Africans, Africans in the Americas were also geographically displaced, wrenched from their families and homeland, and forcibly transported to the "New World." This triple jeopardy of linguistic, cultural, and spatial displacement discloses an unimaginable experience that decimated structures of meaning and precipitated a "crisis of identity" for many African Americans. Here, the destruction of attachments involves not only the isolation of the victim from other human beings but also the destruction of objects of symbolic importance. Symbols serve as psychocultural resources, functioning as mediating structures and enabling the oppressed and exploited to construct individual and collective identities different from those espoused by the dominant group. Prolonged isolation from objects of symbolic importance can cause victims to be more susceptible to identifying with their captors and internalizing their ideals. The capacity to sustain resistance practices will therefore be hampered if the group lacks its own distinctive symbolism and rites.[28]

Code Switching

The American sphere, however, is not only the space of cultural negotiation for peoples stolen from Africa. It also references the annihilation of the indigenous inhabitants of the United States. Constructed as the savage "Other" by the West, both African Americans and native Americans were dehumanized and decimated. The American sphere thus signifies not only the constitution of hybridity and diaspora but is also the blood-drenched site of a heinous crime against humanity. One cannot speak for long, then, about the shared historical experiences and common struggles of black people without acknowledging the crucial ruptures and discontinuities which constitute the richness and uniqueness of African American identities. Any adequate conception of black identity must contend not only with the points of similarity, but also with the many points of difference which constitute who they are and, since history has intervened, what they have become. For African American identities are always shaped simultaneously by the vector of similarity and continuity and the vector of difference and rupture.[29] The first gives black people some grounding in and continuity with their past. The second highlights the fact that what African Americans share is precisely the traumatic experience of rupture and a profound discontinuity.

The boundaries of difference, though, are continually resituated depending upon one's point of reference. Not all black people stand in the same relation of otherness to racially driven neoliberalism in the United States. Each black American negotiates its economic, political, and cultural terrain differently. The ability of African Americans to navigate multiple identity commitments in a matrix of market-driven systems in the neoliberal age is often referred to as *code switching*. Here, various identifications can emerge—various configurations of black subjectivity, various degrees of self-consciousness in relationship to racially driven neoliberalism, and thus various forms of political, economic, cultural, and social behaviors, and practices.[30] Code switching signifies that in the neoliberal age, black subjects are composed of multiple "selves" positioned in relation to the different "worlds" they encounter. Code switching finds its expression in their employment of identity commitments that are *multimodal*—shifting identifications depending on whether one is navigating the 'hood of the inner city or working on Wall Street.

Relationships of Power

This study contends that African American identities develop in a dialogical transaction between black subjects shaped by a matrix of market-driven structures and discourses, even as these structures and discourses are transformed by resisting black subjects. Black subjectivity then is constructed in the context of a matrix of power relationships. Discourse, as theorized by Michel Foucault, denotes the complex web of interrelatedness among language, institutions, power, subjects, objects, and practices. The dynamics of power are inextricably connected with discourse. Within any society, certain discourses are privileged while other discourses are marginalized and excluded. What is put forth as "truth" in any society involves privileging certain types of discourse, sanctioning certain ways of distinguishing true from false statements and underwriting certain techniques for arriving at the truth. "Truth" therefore is not an objective reality to be discovered. Truth emerges as a result of multiple practices of power. Power produces "reality"; it produces what a society comes to understand as truth.[31] From this perspective, *black identity discourses develop in the context of* *competing or complimentary regimes of representation and the complex relationships of power within and between them.*

Emmanuel Y. Lartey points to the power-laden junctures between identity discourses and regimes of representation in his delineation of the terms *globalization*, *internationalization,* and *indigenization.*[32] Lartey defines *globalization* as the process whereby North American or Western European worldviews, values, paradigms, and practices are exported to and privileged over non-Western cultures and discourses. *Internationalization* references a dialogical engagement between Western and non-western discourses and practices in an effort to develop culturally sensitive approaches relevant to the local context. Here, indigenous cultural traditions and practices blend with the dominant culture to create new hybridized forms. Lastly, *indigenization* occurs when non-western discourses and practices are adopted and appropriately employed in local contexts. Regimes of power thus work "in part by policing the boundaries of cultural intelligibility, legislating, and regulating which identities attain full cultural signification and which do not."[33] In the neoliberal age, certain black identity discourses are privileged while others are concurrently marginalized and excluded. Which black American identities attain full cultural signification and which do not are determined by relationships of power particular to specific social formations and historical moments. The neoliberal age has subsequently not resulted in the erosion of difference, but has entailed its rearticulation. Race-based and gender-based distinctions have been preserved, constructed, and deployed, providing the means for differentiated forms of exploitation. Of particular import to this examination of African American identity development "is the persistent way in which these specific, differentiated forms of 'incorporation' (and exclusion) have consistently been associated with the appearance of racist, ethnically segmentary and other similar social features."[34]

Theories of Black Identity Development

Beginning in the late 1960s, theorists postulated models that described a process in which black Americans, in response to the stark realities of racism, moved through various stages in identity development. These models attempted to codify new modes of identity that emerged among African Americans in the context of the Black Power movement. They are known as models of psychological *nigrescence*.[35] The term, derived from French, means the "process of becoming black." Nigrescence models generally entail a process of "deculturalization" in which people of African ancestry are stripped of their cultural identity, followed by a process of "cultural revitalization." These models can be summarized in terms of four stages: (1) *Pre-encounter*, where the person exhibits a deracinated or non-Afrocentric identity; (2) *Encounter*, where a consciousness-raising event initiates the process of identity change; (3) *Immersion-Emersion*, signifies the turbulent process in which the old identity is demolished and the new identity is constructed; and (4) *Internalization*, where the new identity is internalized. An individual may recycle through these stages several times during the course of their life.[36] Nigrescence models represented a monumental shift in psychological discourses regarding black identity development. They gave voice to the structural impediments to black American functioning that were silenced by many of the predominant deficit-oriented psychological frameworks. Though nigrescence theorists have not attended fully to the historical or dialogical dimensions of black identity development, this model represents a vital theoretical step forward.[37]

The African American psychologist, Na'im Akbar posits that black Americans have been the victims of psychological oppression, suffering from "the abusive use of ideas, labels, and concepts geared toward the mental degradation of a people."[38] According to Akbar, enslavement was ultimately a psychological process. It entailed the disruption of the enslaved Africans' consciousness-building processes and the imposition of an alien consciousness. The roots of the challenges to black identity development, from this view, are grounded in the traumatizing experience of being enslaved, dominated, and oppressed. Much of what has been characterized as psychopathological in black America, Akbar believes, has its origin in the conditions of slavery and its aftermath.

Akbar posits a typology that outlines the effects of domination on the psyches of black Americans.[39] In response to the violence of white supremacism, he asserts, many black Americans adopt the perspectives and behavior patterns of the dominant group. As discussed, some African Americans also identify with the hostility and negativism projected toward their own group of origin. These black Americans have so thoroughly identified with the dominant group that they desire to maintain the values and structures that account for their own oppression. There are also African Americans who, having found the door to legitimate self-determination blocked, choose personally and socially destructive means to alleviate immediate needs and wants. These responses represent self-defeating attempts to survive in an oppressive environment that systematically frustrates African American identity development processes. Black Americans, Akbar argues, must confront the "demons and ghosts" of our past head-on so that we can heal and move beyond the psychic wounds that the United States and others have perpetuated in the name of profit and power. The black psychologist, Wade Nobles similarly states,

> The principles and practices of oppression are primarily psychological in nature. Thus, the control over physical space (geography), modes of production (labor), and the educational and religious indoctrination of a people all involve a reformation of the psyche of the oppressed victim. The consequence is the deliberate construction of the psychologically rooted political, economic, social, educational, and religious systems.[40]

I concur that a comprehensive understanding of African American identity formation must be attentive to a complex matrix that includes political, economic, social, educational, and religious forces. In the neoliberal age, identity cannot be cogitated simply as a cultural or psychological category. Nor can identity development be reduced to the realm of economic relations. While the economic level is an indispensible component in any analysis of African American identity formation, it is not sufficient.[41] Sociocultural, psychological, political, *and* economic structures and discourses must be accounted for to fully comprehend the forces that influence black identity development in the neoliberal age.

Alienation and Estrangement

To posit a diagnostic framework, I propose fusing concepts from African American theorists noted above with insights from Erik H. Erikson, Frantz Fanon, and Karl Marx. The term "identity formation" was put forth by Erikson. He postulates that identities are shaped by the cultural context and histories into which individuals are socialized. In his psychosocial theory of development, identity formation is governed by a succession of stages. It develops through a series of positive cognitive experiences and significant social interactions between individuals and their environment. Erikson's theory of development asserts that identity is constituted in an ongoing interaction between the individual and their parents, society, and other environmental factors.

Erikson wrestled with the challenges of African American identity development.[42] In "A Memorandum on Identity and Negro Youth" (1964), he theorizes that identity formation is a process based on the capacity to "let oneself be identified" by concrete persons as an individual in a particular sociocultural context.[43] Societies, he asserts, confirm individual identities in the context of various ideological frameworks, assigning roles and tasks to individuals in which they can recognize themselves and feel recognized. In "Race and the Wider Identity" (1968), black identity development is characterized as having been undermined by chattel slavery and a "system of enslavement" perpetuated during the Jim Crow era. Erikson theorizes that an oppressed and exploited minority that is aware of the dominant group's cultural ideals, but prevented from emulating them, is apt to fuse the negative stereotypes promulgated by the dominant group with negative forms of identity cultivated in their own group.[44] Identity crises reflect not only the developmental crisis of a person, but also "the crisis of a generation and the ideological soundness of its society."[45] There must be a "complementarity of identity and ideology."[46] Identity crises will occur least in the segments of a society which are able to invest in the ideological trends associated with technical and economic expansion. Those who are systematically excluded from such opportunities will feel *estranged* from that society.[47] The systematic exclusion of any group from the ideological trends associated with economic expansion will have "catastrophic consequences" for the members of that society, not only in material but also in psychological terms.

Insights form Erikson along with those gleaned from the African American psychologists noted above are instructive. First, as discussed above, identity development unfolds in the context of the life of the individual and a matrix of societal forces. Second, identity is constituted in societies that are themselves ensconced in "ideological" frameworks. Third, the exclusion of a subgroup from full participation in a society will adversely impact the identity development of the excluded group. As a result, they will feel psychologically estranged from that society.[48]

In *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952), Frantz Fanon similarly purports that as a result of the experience of being subjugated, many individuals experience psychocultural *alienation*.[49] The term denotes a psychic alienation from one's self and one's culture that arises in the subjugated who find themselves caught up in a white European world that functions as the rule of law and the dominant frame of reference. This white world exists as the dominant referent not only in political and economic terms but also in all other spheres as well, supplying the values, ideals, and discourses that constitute identity.[50] The dominated group, having been politically, economically, and culturally subjugated, is dehumanized by this multidimensional method.[51] This experience of subjugation subsequently undermines the group's structures of meaning. While the term alienation, posited in Fanon's early writings, describes the conditions that arise in black identities as a result of the experience of racialized domination, the term *estrangement*, employed in his later work *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), I believe is attuned to the nuanced dynamics of exploitation inherent in the neoliberal age.[52] Fanon's appropriation of the term estrangement appears to be influenced by Karl

Marx's formulations.[53] Marx understood estrangement to be a debilitating condition in which the human capacity for meaning making and self-reflection is undermined by a situation that reduces people to objects and commodities.[54] Estrangement is manifested as human beings and their products are turned into commodities to be exchanged on the market. What is pointed to here is the experience of estrangement from one's self and other human relations. While Marx's conception of estrangement is helpful in interrogating the tendencies of capital, it does not attend fully to the challenges of black identities. Kelly Oliver concurs,

> Although Marx describes how estranged labor alienates workers even from themselves in terms of the capacities for reflection and meaning, he does not go far enough in describing how oppression, especially racist and sexist oppression, denigrates and abjects people in an attempt to deny a positive sense of self. . . . It is this aspect of racialized alienation that even Marx's distinction between estrangement and alienation does not address.[55]

For Fanon, however, estrangement entails the systematic negation of a people that results in the feeling that they are "the living haunt of contradictions . . . without an anchor, without a horizon, colorless, stateless, [and] rootless."[56] Fanon, I believe, extends Marx's notion of estrangement beyond the economic realm. It is a conception of estrangement that is also cultural and psychological, affecting every area of life. Erikson, as indicated, similarly notes that if a group is systematically excluded from full participation in a society, individuals in the excluded group will feel "estranged."[57] These ideas fused together point to a conception of *estrangement* that contributes to this analysis of African American development in the neoliberal age. Estrangement, employed now as a *diagnostic category*, points to the fact that the systematic exploitation and exclusion of people of African ancestry from full participation in American society has undermined their opportunities for meaning making and disrupted attempts to develop a positive sense of self. This conception of estrangement disavows the tendency to pathologize or criminalize the individual victims of the neoliberal age. Rather, it situates the etiology of many of the challenges to human functioning in the neoliberal age firmly at the doorstep of an oppressive pathological antidemocratic society.

Turn White or Disappear

Threatened by the psychic abyss of alienation and estrangement engendered by structures of domination and exploitation, Frantz Fanon provocatively exclaimed, black people "should no longer be confronted by the dilemma turn white or disappear."[58] In this study, *turning white* signifies the uncritical internalization of a racialized neoliberal culture grounded in Western worldviews, aesthetics, and values. In an attempt to escape the dehumanizing exploitative conditions of the neoliberal age, many people of color adopt Western cultural and consumerist ideals, condemning their own indigenous cultural style.[59] Turning white refers to the process by which this alienating sociocultural reality is assimilated into the black person's internal psychic reality. It thus signifies one of the ways black Americans are positioned and position themselves within a neoliberal hegemony.

In an attempt to assimilate into the American mainstream, many people of color internalize light skin and other characteristics of the dominant culture. This often results in the emergence of the "bleaching syndrome."[60] The existence of the bleaching syndrome is reflected in the substantial present day use of skin lightening products, worldwide, by Africans, Indians, and other cultural groups.[61] For African Americans, the bleaching syndrome also includes references to hair, which is considered "bad" if it is of a natural African texture and "good" if it is of a straightened texture. The compulsion to seek validation from Western institutions; the uncritical acceptance of the cultural norms of Western society; and the assimilation of one's values, life style, and behaviors into what Western culture defines as acceptable are all manifestations of the dilemma "turn white."[62]

Disappearing entails being negated, silenced, and rendered "invisible" by a neoliberal hegemonic society. It references the matrix of market-driven actors charged with the task of containing left behind sectors of the population and controlling those who pose a threat to the system's stability. This involves being made to disappear physically through "housing apartheid" and incarceration. It also entails being made to disappear symbolically through the erasure of history and other strategies. Indeed, the historical record of the United States reveals that the possibility of survival has, in fact, been *enhanced* by one's ability to "disappear." Around whites, many blacks master the art of concealment, obedience, and deference. bell hooks notes, "black people were socialized to believe that survival was possible only if they learned how to deceive."[63] Richard Majors and Janet Billson agree, "One result of pervasive and prolonged oppression is that blacks have developed an exquisite sensibility to white cues. Many have become proficient at concealing their emotions."[64] Through the use of posturing and cultivating a sense of what to say and how and when to say it, blacks cope with the conflicts that arise in the context of navigating American society. In the face of racially driven neoliberalism, many African Americans adopt a psychological stance that is protective, cautious, and secretive.

The possibility of "survival" in the neoliberal age is also enhanced by one's ability to "turn white." Mimicry, as theorized by Homi Bhabha, is a strategy akin to "turning white." It is through mimicry that the discourses and practices of imperial power exercise their authority.[65] Here, mimicry operates as a vehicle of political regulation, social control, and psychological alienation. Diana Fuss, however, posits an alternate conception of mimicry, not as a condition of domination, but rather as a tactic of dissent which resists and subverts the dominant regimes of representation. Some imitations, it is suggested, only disguise themselves as identifications. This form of "tactical mimesis" involves the deliberate taking up of a cultural role for political ends. These two conceptions of mimesis, albeit, can interact and converge in ways that make it difficult to differentiate between a "mimicry of subjugation" and a "mimicry of subversion."[66] Though identification is not an inevitable outcome of imitation, imitation can at times veer over into identification.

The production of mimicry can therefore prove to be disruptive in ways neither intended nor easily controlled by either the dominant or the dominated group.[67] "The mimicry of subjugation can provide unexpected opportunities for resistance and disruption," Fuss writes, "[and] the mimicry of subversion can find itself reinforcing conventional power relations rather than eroding them."[68] Confronted with alienating discourses and practices promulgated by racially driven neoliberalism, black Americans are "enjoined to identify and to disidentify simultaneously with the same object, to assimilate but not incorporate."[69] The customs and practices of any dominating group thus constitute potential sites both for the construction of hegemony and the struggle against it.

My Nigga'

In the neoliberal age, this contested interplay between "identification and disidentification" is manifested in a complex expression of black subjectivity. These dynamics point to a particular form of cultural activity, namely, *bricolage*.[70] Bricolage involves the reframing and recontextualization of an object or practice in a different position within a discourse to communicate new meanings.[71] It entails the utilization of available cultural materials, putting them to alternative uses by creatively adapting or combining objects to convey a different message.[72] Bricolage, as a mode of resistance, is concerned with how these cultural materials are appropriated, transformed, and deployed. Unlike revolutionary practices which attempt to directly overturn oppressive structures, discourses, and representations, bricolage works by adopting, adapting, and subverting these same structures, discourses, and representations.

One creative, yet controversial, example of bricolage has been deployed by African American youth in response to the neoliberal age. In the 1980s, urban black and Hispanic young people created hip hop, utilizing the available cultural materials—the muted black voice and menacing black body—putting them to alternative uses to convey a counter-hegemonic discourse. However, the forces of commodification assaulted the subversive impulse of hip hop culture, as media conglomerates and

Madison Avenue fashion moguls repackaged hip hop for mass consumption in the global marketplace. In its wake, a complex expression of African American bricolage emerged which exemplifies the propensity of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic "forces" to contest for the same "site." I refer here to the emergence of the linguistic signifier *my nigga'*. Disarticulated partially from its dominant derogatory meaning, the term my nigga' was adopted, adapted, and rearticulated by black youth as a term of endearment. Created in the wake of the commodification of hip hop, this representational strategy signified an audacious attempt at a "discursive turn" that African American youth hoped was commodification-proof. Employed as a subversive and provocative strategy, the signifier my nigga' appropriates materials from the dominant culture, adopting and adapting them for counter-hegemonic purposes. The counter-hegemonic potency of this linguistic creation, however, was grounded discursively in the specters of traumatic imperial memories that yet haunt large segments of black America. The term my nigga' as an identity discourse thus represented an expression of black youth bricolage that proved to be problematic. What is evident is that bricolage, as a mode of resistance, often finds expression in hybridized or contested forms of black subjectivity and culture, where it yet functions to destabilize the dominant discourses and create new spaces for the emergence of counter narratives. The concept of bricolage highlights the fact that, as with the African American adoption and rearticulation of Christianity, new counter-hegemonic spaces are often created by adapting structures, discourses, and representations once utilized by the dominant group to oppress the dominated group.

Identity Commitments

What comes into view is the fact that the identity commitments made by African Americans in the neoliberal age might be characterized, in many instances, as being *multimodal*—fluid, strategic, and positional—depending upon the context. The psychologist, James Marcia similarly posits that a key undertaking in human development is the extent to which an individual has explored and committed to an identity in a variety of life domains, including vocation, relationships, religion, gender roles, and so on.[73] Here, the process of identity formation is comprised of two dynamic components: a crisis and a commitment. A *crisis* is a time of upheaval when old values or choices are being reexamined. This leads to a decision-making process that precipitates a *commitment* to a certain role or value. Identity is determined by the various choices and commitments the individual makes as it relates to a myriad of societal domains. Four potential "identity statuses" can arise as part of this process: (1) identity diffusion, (2) identity foreclosure, (3) identity moratorium, and (4) identity achievement. These are conceptualized as *statuses*, not stages, and should not be perceived as occurring in a sequential process. *Identity diffusion* is the status of individuals who have *neither* experienced a crisis *nor* made any commitments. *Identity foreclosure* is the status of individuals who have *not* experienced a crisis, but *have* made a commitment. They tend to conform to the expectations of others, such as parental ideals or the dominant culture's ideals, and have not explored different options. *Identity moratorium* is the status of individuals currently in the midst of a crisis. Commitments are either absent, being explored, or only vaguely defined. *Identity achievement* is the status of an individual who has undergone a crisis and made a commitment to a certain role, ideal, or value. This nonlinear framework theorizes the formation of numerous identity "commitments" in multiple realms. Individuals are seen as exploring various components of their identity throughout life, such as faith, politics, and occupational preference.

For many African Americans, an identity moratorium (state of crisis) is incited by an encounter with any one of a host of neoliberal governance strategies utilized to maintain a racially driven neoliberal structure. The notion of *identity commitment*, for black Americans, should therefore be viewed as a position that is constantly being renegotiated in the context of a hegemonic society that (1) attempts to limit the range of identity commitments African Americans can choose and (2) is shaped by those very commitments. In the neoliberal age, black subjectivity is not generated within a neutral value-free vacuum. The identity positions available—who it is possible to claim to be—within a multidimensional matrix of discourses and practices are policed by regimes of power and crosscut by cultural, political, and economic practices and traditions that affirm or disavow the available positions. Identity is the name we give to the different ways we are positioned and different ways we position ourselves within these structures, narratives, practices, and traditions.[74]

For many African Americans, this dialogical dance involves an engagement with an often deliberate process in which the disenfranchised are dehumanized, their identities are distorted, their cultures are commodified, and their histories are denied. Racially driven neoliberalism threatens the material well-being of African Americans, even as the encroachment of a market-driven mass culture threatens the identities and cultural traditions of black Americans and other indigenous peoples. The emergence of American neoliberalism and the concomitant politics of black abandonment have indisputably impacted the development of African American identities in profound ways. The neoliberal age and the impingement of a matrix of forces aligned to maintain the full reign of the free market have been experienced by many black Americans as traumatic events.

4

Forgetting to Remember

African Americans have been acquainted with prolonged, massive, and repeated trauma since the first ship arrived in the "New World" with shackled black bodies bound in its bowels. Stolen from Africa and transported to colonial America under brutal and inhumane conditions, enslaved Africans suffered the loss of homeland, family, and a sense of the world as a secure place. For many black people, their worldviews and structures of meaning were disrupted and radically changed. Trust in others was undermined. Basic structures of the self were assaulted, producing profound alterations in identity. The shock of being forcibly pulled from one's home, eliminated from one's community, and ousted from one's homeland has had enduring effects. Brenner concurs,

> It is a massive trauma that viciously assaults one's identity and all the basic assumptions one has about one's place in the world. . . . The murder of loved ones, the confiscation of property, the violent atrocities, the starvation, disease, beatings, torture, and slave labor, along with the lost hope for rescue due to feeling utterly forgotten by the world, further the decimation of one's psyche. . . . For ethnic and religious groups with a long history of repeated attempts to annihilate them, we find elements of their pasts incorporated into their cultural identity.[1]

Appallingly, African America's protracted engagement with trauma is not limited to the experience of chattel slavery. It also includes untold acts of domestic terrorism committed during the period of American apartheid known as the Jim Crow era. Sufficient consideration has not been given, however, to the traumatic effects of the neoliberal age on African American development. This chapter draws upon trauma theory as a heuristic lens to elucidate the impact of the neoliberal age on African American development. Strategies utilized to secure the containment, cooperation, and contributions of black Americans subsequent to the emergence of American neoliberalism constitute a cultural trauma which yet impinges upon the well-being of black Americans. Trauma theory makes it clear that many of the behavioral strategies and identity commitments black Americans make in the neoliberal age might be considered as responsive to a racially driven hegemonic society. Here, the neoliberal age is regarded as a *traumatogenic environment*.

This study purports an integrative approach to soul care in which the practitioner is attentive to interpersonal dynamics, family systems, and the larger social systems within which a person or group exists. To this end, insights from the disciplines of psychological trauma and cultural trauma are drawn upon to comprehend the impact of the neoliberal age on black Americans. Sigmund Freud's evolving understanding of trauma and insights from cultural trauma theorists have particular import for this study.[2] A close reading of Freud's work and the context that gave rise to it reveals an interdisciplinary inquiry into the psychological and sociocultural dynamics of trauma.[3] Freud's experience as a racialized Jew impacted by imperial power, I believe, informs a trauma theory that sheds light on the collective transformations and adaptations that occur in relation to the imposition of disruptive hegemonic cultural ideals.[4] In so doing, Freud also provides a psychoanalytic rationale for psychocultural resilience and sociopolitical resistance. Edward Said notes,

> [Freud's] work is all about how life history offers itself by recollection, research, and reflection to endless structuring and restructuring, in both the individual and collective sense. That we, different readers from different periods of history, with different cultural backgrounds, should continue to do this in our

> reading of Freud strikes me as nothing less than a vindication of his work's power to instigate new thought, as well as to illuminate situations that he himself might never have dreamed of.[5]

Freud's insights, nevertheless, will be employed critically, with sensitivity to the fact that classical psychoanalytic thought reflects Western epistemologies and tacit assumptions that may undermine non-Western understandings of trauma. This study therefore proceeds cautiously, informed by an increasing body of research which suggests that, in much of the world, the core aspects of trauma are very similar, though the social meanings and modes of expression can vary in significant ways.[6]

Neoliberalism as Cultural Trauma

Trauma often occurs following an experience that overwhelms the systems that give people a sense of control and meaning. Traumatic experiences typically include threats to one's life or bodily integrity, a close personal encounter with violence or witnessing a grotesque death. Traumatic events can engender a feeling of intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and threat of annihilation. When an identifiable group encounters a devastating event that destabilizes one or several fundamental presuppositions of their culture, they have experienced cultural trauma.[7] As a result, shared values and norms, accepted ideas and beliefs, narrative forms, symbolic meanings, and frames of discourse can all be undermined. The experience of cultural trauma indelibly impacts group consciousness, marking their memories and changing their identity in fundamental ways.[8] Thrust into environments which are at odds with their previous cultural world and their accustomed habits of thinking and doing, these traumatic experiences abruptly and adversely affect the structures that inform the group's self-understanding. Since culture is the depository of heritage and tradition, cultural trauma, by definition, entails a subverting of "structures of meaning." Cultural trauma then is not simply the consequence of a group experiencing pain. It is not dependent merely upon the intensity of an incident, but upon the collective's inability to make meaning out of the event.[9]

The systematic exploitation and exclusion of black Americans from full participation in the neoliberal age disrupted their identity development processes and undermined opportunities for meaning making. Comprised of several elements that threatened the fundamental presuppositions of countless African Americans, the neoliberal age proved to be traumatogenic. These include: the drastic loss of low-skilled manufacturing jobs that had served as the economic ladders to middle class status for previous immigrant groups; the community disarray and unemployment that arose in their absence; the severe reduction in services that led to overcrowded, underperforming, and decaying inner city schools; the mass construction of public housing projects that functioned as a type of spatial apartheid; the redlining practices implemented by banks that kept black and brown people cordoned off and trapped in these conditions; the use of paramilitary police practices to quell the resultant urban unrest; and the explosive growth of the prison industry to control those deemed as threatening to the system's stability. These are only *some* of the experiences that undermined many of black America's meaning making systems in the aftermath of modern Civil Rights movement. In addition to the material violence, epistemic violence was wrought by neoliberally fused racism. For the neoliberal age also involves the violent imposition of market-driven systems of cultural classification and the dislodging or commodification of indigenous cultural systems. American neoliberalism thus functions as a primary source of psychological and cultural trauma.[10] Piotr Sztompka similarly states:

> The most traumatizing situations occur when the imposition and domination of one culture are secured by force...But even when the spreading of alien culture is more peaceful, by virtue of economic strength, technological superiority, or the psychological attractiveness of cultural products that flow from the core toward the periphery, the result is often the break of cultural stability, continuity, and the identity of indigenous groups; a milder and yet resented form of cultural trauma.[11]

Cultural disorganization and disorientation are seen as preconditions for the emergence of cultural trauma. They create a climate of anxiety and uncertainty against which a disruptive incident emerges that is perceived as dangerous or threatening. The precipitating cultural disorganization may be a result of policies undertaken by the government in the aftermath of revolutionary upheaval.[12] High rates of unemployment, inflation, crime, poverty, or deteriorating economic conditions are all potential precipitating factors that could render a group susceptible to cultural trauma. Policies or reforms undertaken in the aftermath of an incident of vast cultural significance could also leave a group vulnerable. From this perspective, the dismantling of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements and the politics of black abandonment implemented in their wake are deemed as leaving black America culturally disorganized and disoriented. These incidents are viewed as creating a climate of anxiety and uncertainty for African Americans against which the neoliberal age emerged. Black Americans experienced American neoliberalism as traumatogenic not *merely* because of the intensity of its material and symbolic effects, but also because these precipitating events had left black America psychoculturally and socioculturally vulnerable.

Power and the Politics of Trauma

The signifying of cultural trauma to a collective is contingent upon the capacity of authorized "meaning makers" to represent the particularities of the event in the public arena. In any culture, there are socially sanctioned persons that disseminate symbolic representations to and for the collective. These authorized meaning makers deliberate in the public arena, signifying and symbolizing events. Meaning makers may be elites, academics, religious leaders, songwriters, novelists, activists, movie-makers or emerge from other segments of a society. Referring to James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison as "artistic spokespersons and prophets," Erik Erikson similarly notes that in their writings "previously not conscious or unverbalized facts are faced and symbolized in a way which often resembles the process of psychoanalysis."[13] These authorized meaning makers function as *cultural brokers* (see discussion in chapter 6), mediating and translating between different social spheres, representing and giving voice to the ideas, concerns, and interests of others. The meaning maker's capacity to signify an incident as cultural trauma, albeit, is contingent upon (1) the constraints and opportunities afforded by the structures of power within a society, (2) the symbolic resources that are available, and (3) the interpretive competence of the carrier group.[14]

There may be incidents with objectively strong traumatizing potential, but the structures of power attempt to explain away, rationalize, deconstruct, reinterpret, or repress the event in an attempt to silence the subjugated. Here, a dominating group's "plausibility structures" are very often functioning as "obfuscation structures."[15] To escape accountability, the perpetrators of both individual and cultural trauma may do everything in their power to promote forgetting. Secrecy and silence are the initial line of defense.[16] The "conspiracy of silence" imposed by the larger US society regarding the traumatic impact of chattel slavery, Jim Crow and, more recently, American neoliberalism on black Americans has functioned to impede public acts of remembrance, reconciliation, and restitution required to facilitate communal healing. Structures of power in the United States have served, rather, to intensify a profound sense of alienation and estrangement.[17] In the neoliberal age, though, the internet, social media, and advances in communication technologies have made the maintenance of secrecy increasingly difficult. Yet, when secrecy fails, the credibility of the survivor is often attacked. In the neoliberal age, this often involves the *criminalization* of the unarmed victims of paramilitary-styled police practices. This tactic was employed, for example, following the death in 2015 of the African American male, Freddie Gray while he was in the custody of several Baltimore police officers. This strategy included the "*thug*ification" of predominantly peaceful protestors by the news media and the city's mayor in the immediate aftermath of the incident, with even President Obama employing the "T-word." The contested spaces of mass media thus enable traumas to be dramatized as well as allowing competing interpretations to gain persuasive power over others. Finally, when the trauma survivor cannot be silenced, the perpetrator or their cohorts attempt to insure that no one listens. A variety of arguments are put forth, ranging from outright denial to the most sophisticated rationalization or justification. Herman states:

> After every atrocity one can expect to hear the same predictable apologies: it never happened; the victim lies; the victim exaggerates; the victim brought it upon herself; and in any case it is time to forget the past and move on. The more powerful the perpetrator, the greater is his prerogative to *name and define reality*, and the more completely his arguments prevail [italics added].[18]

As discussed in chapter 3, what prevails as "true" and "real" in a society emerges as a result of multiple practices of power. Regimes of power produce what a society comes to understand as truth. Contrary to the perpetrator's attempts to promote secrecy and silence, healing from neoliberal trauma requires a societal context that *affirms* the survivors. For African Americans and other cultural groups, this context is created and sustained by mediating structures, people, and spaces that give voice to the exploited, commodified, and disenfranchised. However, since the signifying of an incident as cultural trauma is contingent upon the constraints and opportunities afforded by the structures of power in a society, whether an incident with objectively strong traumatizing potential is even discussed in the public realm is itself a political question. Herman similarly asserts:

> Advances in the [study of trauma] occur only when they are supported by a political movement powerful enough to . . . counteract the ordinary social processes of silencing and denial. In the absence of strong political movements for human rights, the active process of bearing witness inevitably gives way to the active process of forgetting. Repression, dissociation, and denial are phenomena of social as well as individual consciousness.[19]

Finally, the signifying of a disruptive incident as cultural trauma is contingent upon the availability of *symbolic resources* to represent the event and the *interpretive competence* of socially sanctioned meaning makers. Several important efforts have been made to interpret and respond to the contemporary challenges impinging upon African American development. The ongoing impact of historical trauma, often labeled “post-traumatic slave syndrome,” has been a vital frame of reference.[20] The characterizing of the horrific impact of the prison industrial complex as the “new Jim Crow” has been an equally important contribution.[21] More recently, *#BlackLivesMatter* signified a national movement focused on curtailing unjustified police actions against black people. Each of these function as “mediating spaces” that affirm the survivors. Each makes available symbolic resources that facilitate the process of meaning making and truth telling.

This study posits an integrative approach to soul care that foregrounds the traumas engendered as a result of the emergence of the neoliberal age. While an integrative approach “thinks systems” at all times, it recognizes that even changes in individuals can affect the homeostasis of the systems in which they exist. As a result, an integrative approach is attentive to both the systemic and interpersonal dynamics of neoliberal trauma. To this end, insights from the disciplines of both cultural trauma and psychological trauma are drawn upon.

Responses to Neoliberal Trauma

The onset of trauma, as indicated, is not contingent solely upon the intensity of the event. Traumatic events tend to overwhelm the normal systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning.[22] Psychocultural trauma might be understood as a response to an intense experience that (1) is life-threatening, (2) is unexpected, and (3) cannot be ascribed meaning within the available personal or cultural “meaning making” systems. People generally respond to potential traumas either by flight, repression, adaptation, or fight. *Flight* encompasses strategies to insure *physical* safety or *psychic* safety from overwhelming stimuli. *Repression* consists of storing up experiences about the incident in memory. *Adaptation* entails dealing with the stimuli through adaptive and maladaptive changes. *Fight* involves engaging in activities that confront the source of the trauma.

While a traumatic experience can be immediately followed by symptoms, typically, the trauma is successfully guarded against through the process of repression, allowing a period of undisturbed development.[23] The traumatic memory is repressed and feelings associated with the traumatic experience are denied entry into consciousness.[24] Nothing is remembered. Symptoms, however, will manifest later as a delayed effect of the trauma. The defenses of repression may later begin to break down, though, because the traumatic material retained its strength, is *revived by a new experience*, or *a similar experience rekindles it*. The memory and feelings associated with the original trauma can gain access through a "vulnerable area."[25] This delayed response is called the "return of the repressed."

Trauma then can be theorized as either an individual experience or a collective phenomenon. The *collective* memory of a traumatic event can be repressed by an entire cultural group. Like individuals, collectives retain an impression of the past in isolated memory traces. For ensuing generations, these memory traces can be rekindled. If the transatlantic slave trade and chattel slavery signify the *original* trauma scenes for many Americans of African ancestry, this study contends that this traumatic material was rekindled by a similar experience, namely, the violence engendered by American neoliberalism and the attendant politics of black abandonment. From this perspective, the adaptations and transformations of black American identities in reaction to the neoliberal age are not understood as inherently pathological, but as responses to a traumatogenic environment.

The *ordinary* response to danger entails a complex system of reactions. Threats initially arouse the nervous system, causing the endangered person to go into a state of alert. Changes in arousal, attention, perception, and emotion are *normal* adaptive reactions. They mobilize the person for either fight or flight. Traumatic reactions usually occur when neither fight nor flight is possible. As a result, the innate human system of self-defense becomes overwhelmed. Each component of the normal response to danger, having lost its functionality, tends to persist in an altered and exaggerated state well after the actual danger has dissipated. Traumatic experiences can produce changes in physiological arousal, emotion, cognition, and memory. In addition, traumatic experiences may fragment these normally integrated functions from one another.[26] The responses to trauma are commonly organized into three categories: *hyperarousal*, *intrusion*, and *constriction*.[27]

Hyperarousal

Hyperarousal refers to the permanent state of alert that the human system of self-preservation goes into after experiencing a traumatic event. It entails the persistent expectation of danger. The person or group remains mentally and nervously organized for the traumatic event. In this state of physiological arousal, survivors of trauma typically startle easily, sleep poorly, or react irritably or explosively to small provocations. Chronically traumatized people are continually hypervigilant, anxious, and agitated. They no longer have a baseline state of physical comfort or calm. They can become so accustomed to a state of hyperarousal that they no longer recognize the connection between their symptoms and the traumatizing environment in which these responses are formed and sustained. Much of the research on hyperarousal has been focused on combat veterans. Insufficient consideration has been given to the prevalence of hypervigilance and agitation as symptomatic of neoliberal trauma in African Americans. The implications are considerable. Countless traumatized African American youth, for example, who exhibit hypervigilance or explosive behavior in school, are possibly misdiagnosed and treated for Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) when they are, in fact, exhibiting hyperarousal strategies that are adaptive in inner city neighborhoods in which paramilitary-styled policing is common. Here, *adaptive* responses to the traumas experienced in a racially driven neoliberal society are mistakenly pathologized and frequently criminalized in schools with "zero tolerance" policies.

Intrusion

Intrusion reflects the "compulsion to repeat" past experiences.[28] As indicated, the defenses of repression can break down and allow traumatic material to gain access through vulnerable areas. The dreams of people with trauma repeatedly bring them back to the situation in which the trauma occurred. Long after the threat has passed, traumatized persons relive the incident as though it were continually recurring in the present. Traumatic dreams endeavor to master the traumatic experience retrospectively. The relentless return of traumatic dreams reflects the mind's attempt to work through the trauma. Trauma, as indicated, does not simply represent the violence of an incident, but also conveys "the impact of its very incomprehensibility."[29] The repetition of traumatic dreams is understood as "the inability of the mind to avoid an unpleasurable event that has not been given psychic meaning."[30] The experience of trauma is not solely situated in the intensity of the event, but rather in the way its unassimilated nature—the way it was not known in the first instance—returns to haunt the victim later on.[31] Jacques Lacan similarly posits that there are experiences which have been registered but not symbolized and therefore not integrated into one's psychic system.[32] They include intense events of our life which resist symbolization and cannot be fully grasped by our cognitive or perceptual fields. These experiences are by definition "traumatic," insofar as they are unassimilable by the systems that structure subjectivity.[33] Trauma is thus understood as a response to an intense experience that is unexpected, is life-threatening, and "cannot be fully or directly narrativized within cultural or personal systems of symbolization."[34]

Held hostage by the repetitive intrusion of flashbacks and nightmares, the trauma tends to arrest the course of the person's development. Herman notes, "Traumatized people relive the moment of trauma not only in their thoughts and dreams, but also in their actions.... Adults as well as children often feel impelled to re-create the moment of terror, either in literal or in disguised form."[35] While intrusive symptoms that emerge after a single traumatic event tend to abate in weeks or months, intrusive symptoms that emerge in the wake of prolonged and repeated trauma may persist for years. Not all reenactments, however, should be viewed as destructive. As the commemorative ritual discussed in chapter 5 demonstrates, some reenactments are attempts to facilitate healing. Recovery from neoliberal trauma, though, involves not only remembering the "core trauma scenes." The traumatic experiences must be "narratively objectified."[36] Assisted by the "cohesive effect of narrative," the traumatic events must be given meaning.

Constrictive Strategies

Constriction involves the numbing of one's responses. If the human nervous system perceives there is neither time nor strength for fight or flight and death appears imminent, the body will often "freeze." The victim of trauma enters an altered state—time slows down and there is no fear or pain. "Freeze" responses are instantaneous, instinctive responses to perceived threat. They are *not* consciously chosen. Many trauma survivors feel guilt and shame for freezing and not doing more to protect themselves by fighting back or running away. Understanding that freezing is an unconscious automatic response can often facilitate the healing process. When "flight to safety" is not possible, the employment of constriction may be necessary to avoid the descent into total despair. Here, people escape from traumatizing situations by altering their state of consciousness. This detached state of consciousness can be characterized by a subjective detachment or a suspension of initiative:

> Sometimes situations of inescapable danger may evoke not only terror and rage but also, paradoxically, a state of detached calm in which terror, rage, and pain dissolve.... Perceptions may be numbed or distorted, with partial anesthesia or the loss of particular sensations.... These perceptual changes combine with a feeling of indifference, emotional detachment, and profound passivity in which the person relinquishes all initiative and struggle. This altered state of consciousness might be regarded as... a protection against unbearable pain.[37]

For African Americans, who have endured chattel slavery, Jim Crow, and now the neoliberal age, constrictive strategies are an essential form of adaptation. In an attempt to bear the unbearable and maintain hope in seemingly hopeless circumstances, disempowered people can become adept practitioners of altered states of consciousness. This includes fragmentation in the organization of the personality. In these cases, two psychical attitudes form in an act of self-preservation. Split identities can emerge as a constrictive strategy to safeguard one's psychic survival. Here, the splitting of one's self protects one's sanity and continued existence by disaffiliating the impact of the traumatic event. If this happens, "the domination of an inner psychical reality [will be] established over the reality of the external world."[38] "Ordinary psychological language," Herman asserts, "does not have a name for this complex array of mental maneuvers, at once conscious and unconscious," demonstrated by people who have been traumatized.[39] Fanon similarly notes, "The black [person] has two dimensions…That this self-division is a direct result of…subjugation is beyond question."[40] "The very place of identification," Homi Bhabha elaborates, "is a space of splitting…'Black skin, white masks' is not a neat division; it is a doubling, dissembling image of being in at least two places at once."[41] In the neoliberal age, the splitting of one's self likewise protects one's sanity by disaffiliating the traumatic violence of racially driven neoliberalism. Ashis Nandy writes,

> Such splitting of one's self, to protect one's sanity and to ensure survival, makes the subject an object to himself and disaffiliates the violence and the humiliation he suffers from the "essential constituent" of his self. It is an attempt to survive by inducing in oneself a psychosomatic state which would render one's immediate context partly dreamlike or unreal. Because, in order to live and stay human, the survivor must be in the world but not of it.[42]

Traumatized individuals who are unable to dissociate may attempt to produce these altered states and numbing effects by using alcohol or other substances. While various methods employed to constrict one's field of consciousness may be adaptive as an initial response to trauma, this strategy becomes maladaptive once the threat has passed. As a result, the trauma is never integrated into the individual's or community's life story. Altered states, whether dissociative states or even intoxication, keep traumatic experiences cordoned off from ordinary consciousness thereby hindering the integration necessary for healing. The more the traumatizing memory is disavowed, the more this disconnected fragment of the past remains alive. Constrictive strategies can thus lead to a kind of atrophy in the psychological capacities that have been suppressed that ultimately impedes the integration needed for recovery.

Constriction can be applied to every aspect of life, including relationships, activities, thoughts, memories, emotions, and sensations. The suppression of one's *thoughts* is a typical constrictive strategy. This constrictive practice particularly applies to thoughts about the future. Thoughts of the future can stir up such intense yearnings and hope that disempowered people find it unbearable. They learn that hopefulness for the future makes them vulnerable to massive disappointment that can be traumatizing. Each of black America's cultural traumas was precipitated by a collective state of hopefulness for the future. The hope of impending freedom and full citizenship engendered by the Emancipation Proclamation and, later, the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965), stirred up intense yearnings among black Americans. When those hopes and dreams were vehemently quashed, by the institution of Jim Crowism and, again, by the emergence of American neoliberalism, countless black Americans were collectively traumatized.

Survivors of trauma subsequently constrict their *attention*. The future is reduced to surviving just another day. The oppressed no longer think of liberation, but rather of how to survive and make subjugation bearable. Even years after a traumatizing event, individuals who lived through the incident can retain a foreshortened sense of the future. In the neoliberal age, a predominant constrictive strategy evident among many African American youth is a foreshortened sense of the future. Many traumatized black youth in inner cities do not fantasize or make plans for the future because they expect to die young.

What has too often been characterized as apathy in many black youth in school settings might in fact be constriction—a foreshortened sense of the future, emotional detachment, and narrowing in the range of initiative, employed as a mechanism to defend against the traumatic impact of life in the neoliberal age. Though alterations in time begin with the obliteration of the future, disempowered groups eventually progress to the obliteration of the past. "The past, like the future," Herman notes, "becomes too painful to bear, for memory, like hope, brings back the yearning for all that has been lost."[43] Conversely, people engaged in active resistance consciously cultivate memories of their past lives. But as coercion intensifies and the capacity to resist deteriorates, disempowered people will tend to lose a sense of continuity with their past.

Trauma survivors also constrict their *action*. The narrowing in the range of initiative becomes engrained with prolonged domination and must be unlearned after the subjugated is liberated: "The constriction in the capacities for active engagement with the world, which occurs even after one traumatic event, becomes most pronounced in chronically traumatized people, who are often described as passive or helpless."[44] Mistakenly assessed by some theorists as "learned helplessness," to the contrary, the disempowered have learned that every action will be watched by the dominant group, with any exercise of their own autonomy potentially perceived as an act of insubordination that warrants retaliation. The traumatic impact of chattel slavery, the Jim Crow era, and the neoliberal age thus caused black Americans to "disappear" and "become proficient at concealing their emotions."[45] While these adaptive practices help blacks Americans to survive, this stance of emotional detachment and dissimulation can adversely impact African American development. The adaptive responses of emotional detachment and dissimulation, denying what they genuinely think, feel, and experience, frequently persist. The constrictive practice of emotional detachment and dissimulation then no longer operates primarily as an adaptive strategy. It now functions as a maladaptive disruption that engenders psychic pain and has destructive implications for many facets of African American life. This includes the harm that occurs when dissimulation is employed in interpersonal relationships. It also includes expressions of emotional detachment that may preclude some forms of "black on black" crime.

Constrictive strategies, which were adaptive, will now narrow and deplete the person's quality of life and deprive them of opportunities to mitigate the effect of the trauma. For example, the threat of reprisal often prevents the subjugated from expressing their rage directly at the perpetrator. Rather, rage is displaced and directed toward others who are similarly subjugated. It may also be directed against those who were complicit with or indifferent to the fate of the disempowered. Throughout the United States, outrage has been expressed regarding the deaths of black Americans subsequent to their encounters with police officers. That outrage in many instances has found expression in protests within black neighborhoods directed at the businesses of those who are similarly subjugated, complicit with or indifferent to their fate. Finally, rage may be directed inwardly against oneself, resulting in depression or a host of other maladies.[46] This narrowing in the range of initiative can often become ingrained.

Even more than adults, children who develop in a disempowering climate can develop disempowering attachments to the dominant group. For children, dissociation can become not merely a defensive adaptation, but the fundamental principle of personality organization.[47] When the child cannot avoid the reality of the trauma, they must construct a system of meaning that justifies it. If the environment conveys that white is good, then black and everything associated with "blackness" is bad. The child determines, if he is bad, then he can try to be good, he can try and be white. Fragmentation can therefore become the central principle of personality organization for children of color.[48]

Cultural Group Responses

Cultural groups commonly employ four coping strategies in response to trauma. They include retreatism, ritualism, innovation, and rebellion.[49] *Retreatism* entails collective efforts at ignoring, repressing, or forgetting the trauma. It is reflected in attempts at escaping the trauma through passivism, resignation, and isolation. Groups that employ *ritualism* as a coping strategy find security in following traditional, accustomed patterns of action, albeit under changed circumstances. Here, cultural traditions are employed as therapeutic spaces to deflect neoliberal trauma. *Innovation* involves creative attempts at reshaping the group's situation within the changed circumstances in order to cope with trauma. This includes strategies that usher resources to strengthen their position within the new circumstances. *Rebellion* entails attempts to alleviate the trauma by undermining and subverting the foundations of the system. The goal is to replace the source of the traumatic condition. Interestingly, in the neoliberal age, religious practices have and continue to be employed as a core component in any of the four coping strategies. The practitioner of soul care is thus called upon to assess whether the religious form is being utilized to facilitate retreatism, ritualism, innovation, or rebellion.

Reception of the Disruptive

The dynamics underlying the process by which a traumatogenic sociocultural reality is assimilated into the black person's internal psychic reality are illumined by Freud's "structural" model.[50] Here, the self is comprised of three different kinds of agencies—the ego, id, and super-ego. The task of self-preservation is assigned to the ego. The ego decides whether stimuli are allowed expression, repressed, or postponed to times and conditions acceptable in the external world. The id is the repository for our primitive drives and urges. The super-ego is a depository of the moralistic ideals one has internalized from significant others, most often one's parents and culture. The super-ego, as being comprised of the internalization of cultural ideals, thus links a person's inner life with their external cultural, political, and economic realities. For African Americans threatened by the neoliberal age, this conception of the super-ego theorizes a connection between the intrapsychic and potentially traumatogenic racially driven neoliberal ideals. Guided by these ideals, the super-ego will construct standards of conduct that restrict the activity of the ego. Seen as a kind of conscience, the super-ego monitors the ego, gives it orders, judges it, and threatens it. Individuals who have internalized a society's cultural ideals are transformed from being opponents of a culture into being its vehicles. As a society's cultural ideals are taken up by the super-ego, external prohibitions are of less importance. The person's super-ego takes it over, setting up watch over the ego like a "garrison in a conquered city."[51] External coercion gradually becomes internalized.[52] While internalized cultural ideals are the bedrock of a civil and humane society, they can be a source of trauma in an oppressive society where a dominant group attempts to impose its ideals on a subjugated group. Here, these internalized cultural ideals can now operate as modes of coercion and control. The human agency required for liberative action and resistance to oppressive structures can be sublimated by the super-ego and directed instead toward maintaining the structures of domination. The subjugated group can thus become complicit in its own subjugation. It can unwittingly participate in its own oppression. The implications for African Americans subjected to the traumatic effects of the neoliberal age become clear. For black Americans, the *internalization* of the dominant culture's ideals has in too many instances functioned as a mode of coercion and control. As a result of the imposition and internalization of individualistic racialized capitalistic ideals, many African Americans have become complicit in their own subjugation and participated in their own oppression. Imani Perry similarly notes:

> We want to be considered attractive, even though we understand how attractiveness is racialized, gendered, and classed in our society, and how the designation often affirms structures of power and domination. Separating out healthy desires to be deemed attractive from those desires for attractiveness that are complicit in our oppression proves challenging. Similarly, we want to be successful, but success is often tied to race, class, gender, and body politics that implicitly affirm the oppression of others.[53]

As it relates to disruptive cultural ideals, not only what is repressed but also what is *received* has the capacity to function as a source of trauma. Freud's "theory of repression" points only to the *banishment* of unwanted feelings or ideas. Christopher Bollas posits "a theory of reception" in which some ideas are *invited* into the psyche.[54] This theory, however, has to do with the reception of feelings or ideas that are generative and result in "creative new visions of life." There are ideas or feelings, though, which are *received* into the psyche that are fundamentally traumatogenic. DiCenso concurs, "there is a dimension to the engagement with ideals that is disruptive…and may be described as traumatic."[55] For African Americans, the imposition of a hegemonic racially driven neoliberal culture grounded in Western values can be characterized as traumatogenic. The uncritical internalization of these ideals can similarly be described as disruptive. The African American psychologist, Wade Nobles adds, "The degree of psychological and even behavioral devastation experienced by African Americans will correspond directly to the degree that one includes Eurocentric values into one's life."[56] The content of the "received" then is not always generative, but can serve as a source of trauma. Individuals who have internalized the dominant culture's ideals are often transformed from being opponents of that culture. Once internalized, the super-ego is now ready to impose potentially traumatizing standards of conduct on the ego that are congruent with the ideals of the dominant group. The ego therefore appears to be faced with the daunting task of maintaining itself when threatened by potential traumas emanating both from the outside world and, internally, from the super-ego. This can later lead to psychic fragmentation and cultural alienation. The ego or super-ego may become fragmented or lack cohesion, as the subjugated group is caught between adhering to its own ideals and identifying with the ideals of the oppressor. Trauma theory thus illumines the fact that uncritical cultural assimilation—"turning white"—comes at an immense intrapsychic and psychocultural cost.

Neoliberalism and Its Discontents

In instances when the dominant cultural ideals have not been internalized, the ego will attempt to protect itself by engaging in activities that *confront* the source of the trauma. Herein lies what I consider to be a psychoanalytically informed rationale for resistance. In societies where one group is privileged and another is oppressed and the oppressed group has yet to internalize the dominant group's ideals, the "underprivileged" will do all they can to free themselves from this oppressive condition. This includes the engagement of oppressed groups in counter-hegemonic actions against systems of economic injustice. Freud notes,

> If, however, a culture has not got beyond a point at which the satisfaction of one portion of its participants depends upon the suppression of another, and perhaps larger, portion…it is understandable that the suppressed people should develop an intense hostility towards a culture whose existence they make possible by their work, but in whose wealth they have too small a share…It goes without saying that a civilization which leaves so large a number of its participants unsatisfied and drives them into revolt neither has nor deserves the prospect of a lasting existence.[57]

Interestingly, where liberative action is not possible, the culture will experience a "permanent measure of discontent."[58] Freud, I believe, positively correlates an oppressed community's psychological well-being with their capacity for counter-hegemonic action.

The "return of the repressed," might now be reconfigured as a rationale for neoliberal resistance. In Freud's compelling and controversial narrative,[59] the "return of the repressed" signifies revolutionary action by those upon whom the hegemonic had been forcibly imposed. Cultural groups that had been subjugated afterward revolted and threw off the burden of alien cultural ideals. These subjugated groups eventually resisted and reasserted their own worldviews and values. The psychological health of a suppressed group, then, is positively correlated with its ability to resist the imposition and uncritical internalization of the dominant group's ideals. Interestingly, I find much correspondence between Freud's notion of the return of the repressed and what Michel Foucault understood as the *insurrection of subjugated* *knowledges*. The phrase references histories of subjugation, conflict, and domination. "Subjugated knowledges" are indigenous knowledges that have been regarded as being either primitive or deficient by intellectuals in the dominant group. These are muted and maligned "native knowledges, located . . . beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity."[60] Freud's "return" and Foucault's "insurrection" both involve a reaction against the imposition of disruptive cultural ideals. Woven together, I believe, these theoretical strands posit that the psychocultural health of black Americans is positively correlated with their ability to resist the imposition and uncritical internalization of hegemonic racially driven neoliberal ideals. Here, I detect a provocative and controversial strategy later proposed by Frantz Fanon, namely, the *therapeutic value of active resistance*.[61]

Recovery and Resistance

Recovery from trauma entails an unfolding process. The initial task is the *establishment of safety*. The second phase of this process is the *enactment of remembrance and mourning*.[62] The final phase involves *reconnecting with ordinary life*. These stages of recovery are applicable in both the healing of individuals as well as the healing of traumatized communities.[63] Establishing safety begins with focusing on issues of body integrity and moves outward toward control of the environment.[64] When a cultural group is the focus of care, establishing safety involves putting an end to acts of violence, containing if not disarming the aggressor, and providing for the basic survival needs of the survivors. Environmental issues include the establishment of safe living conditions, financial security, and a plan for self-protection. The task of developing an adequate safety plan thus entails identifying and securing the requisite social supports. The process of establishing safety may therefore be hindered if the survivor encounters a hostile environment. As discussed above, the securing of a safe environment requires providers of care to be attentive to the relationships of power impinging upon the survivor's sociocultural context.

Healing from trauma also includes remembrance and mourning. When trauma is remembered in a safe environment, it enables the trauma survivor to integrate the traumatic experience and form a new understanding of what has happened.[65] Unless the "core trauma scene" is remembered and symbolized, distorted representations of the experience will repeatedly rise to the surface in the form of unexplainable symptoms. Jeffrey Alexander similarly emphasizes "the importance of working backward through the symbolic residues that the originating event has left upon contemporary recollection."[66] As traumatic events are remembered and reframed, collective identities will also be reconstructed. Through the process of remembrance and reframing, new identities can emerge that subvert trauma-based cognitions fostered by the experiences of domination, exploitation, or commodification. There will be a re-imagining of identities as the group re-members the traumatic event. Alexander concurs:

> This identity revision means that there will be a searching re-remembering of the collective past, for memory is not only social and fluid but deeply connected to the contemporary sense of the self. Identities are continuously constructed and secured not only by facing the present and future but also by reconstructing the collectivity's earlier life.[67]

One of the most unappreciated aspects of trauma is how the traumatic experiences of one generation can impact the next. Children of the survivors of cultural traumas have thus had the developmental challenge of integrating their current reality with the traumatic pasts of their parents, who were unconsciously reliving aspects of it in their daily lives.[68] Consequently, the traumatic past of the previous generation may saturate the mental life of ensuing generations. The ensuing generation is now left to do the work of mourning not possible for previous generations. They are left to institutionalize a *"way of remembering"* and trying to work through what their parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents were unable to. This study argues that, for many African Americans, the emergence of the neoliberal age was and continues to serve as a psychocultural trauma. Trauma theorists assert that for healing to occur, the "core trauma scenes" must be re-membered and re-presented within a new perceptual framework. From this perspective, the atrocities engendered by chattel slavery, Jim Crow, and the neoliberal age must be "narratively objectified" and given meaning. The process of healing can be facilitated by "public acts of commemoration, cultural representation, and public political struggle."[69] This is the basis for the therapeutic value of the public act of commemoration discussed in chapter 5.

5

A Healing Journey

Healing from the traumatic impact of the neoliberal age entails an evolving process. Central to this process is the enactment of remembrance and mourning.[1] Several documented cases verify that collective traumas linked to particularly inhumane atrocities return to "haunt" the group's descendants.[2] Studies have also shown that if a trauma has not been sufficiently spoken of and acknowledged at the time of its occurrence, traces of it can remain and surface in the family 50 or 100 years later.[3] Remembering the trauma story includes a systematic review of the meaning of the event.[4] Here, recovery from trauma requires the reconstruction of meaning and the rebuilding of hope. The therapeutic task involves accessing systems of symbolization that situate the traumatic experience within a new perceptual framework. Though fragmentation and dissociation often lay in the wake of cultural traumas, rituals of remembrance can facilitate healing. Public acts of commemoration thus serve as effective modalities of care for black Americans recovering from the traumatic impact of the neoliberal age.[5] This chapter presents an African American rite known as the *Maafa Commemoration* that can be understood as a healing resource which is capable of helping black Americans transform the traumatic effects of racially driven neoliberalism. The commemoration promotes healing by remembering and reframing black America's core trauma scenes.

The impact of trauma on populations globally has challenged many helping professionals to delve more deeply into the cultural, ethnic, political, and religious belief systems of the people they are assisting. Western interventions have too often disrespected indigenous beliefs, not given consideration to the person in context and focused only on individuals, disregarding the needs of the collective and the complexities of the total situation.[6] To the contrary, "when people hold traditional cultural beliefs about dealing with emotional distress and value their curative powers it is essential to recognize the longstanding effectiveness of these [healing practices] within the community."[7] The uncritical "imposition of Western, decontextualized views marginalizes local voices and cultural traditions, disempowers communities, and limits healing."[8] For practitioners seeking to provide soul care to populations impacted by traumatic events, we can avoid both disempowering and decontextualizing these groups by utilizing "culturally appropriate, sustainable, healing resources." The Maafa Commemoration can be understood as a culturally appropriate healing resource that offers the practitioners of soul care an alternate interventive strategy than those constructed solely for individuals or families.

The term *Maafa* (pronounced Mah-ah'-fa) is Ki-Swahili. It means the "great disaster, calamity or catastrophe." Increasingly, it is the preferred term used to reference the enslavement, sustained dehumanization, and disenfranchisement of Africans in America.[9] The term not only references the atrocities endured by black Americans during the hundreds of years they were forcibly captured, transported, and enslaved in the Western hemisphere. It also alludes to the horrific exploitation of black people during the period of American apartheid known as the Jim Crow era. In this study, the term also signifies the politics of abandonment, containment, and control perpetuated in conjunction with the emergence of the neoliberal age.

The promise of the Maafa Commemoration resides in its ability to operate as a "diasporic African religious practice," as delineated by Paul Christopher Johnson, which facilitates healing from the traumatic effects of American neoliberalism.[10] Diaspora has been defined as a social identification based on collective memory that links a group to a present space and a left-behind place. Here, diaspora is characterized by a collective's dislocation from a homeland, the continued existence of communities in multiple sites, the incomplete assimilation of the collective into the host society, and the ongoing relation of the collective with the remembered place. To be "in diaspora" does not depend merely on being a member or biological descendent of a group that dispersed from another place to two or more new sites. To be "in diaspora" rather is to reside in two or more places, at least imaginatively, and occupy a memory space between them.[11] It entails negotiating the liminal gap between here and there, between homeland and hostland, between a recollected past and a projected future.[12] Being diasporic involves an active engagement with and evocation of these "memory spaces" as a source of meaning and identity.

As the displaced attempt to navigate the challenges of the host society, a sense of continuity with the past is maintained primarily in cultural domains, such as religion.[13] Diasporic religions consist of the words, acts, and objects utilized by a dislocated collective that sacralizes the left-behind homeland; the journey from that homeland; or the kinds of extraordinary powers perceived as residing or originating in that place. They serve as a basis for organizing diasporic communities and ritual practices.[14] Diasporic religions are constituted by displaced groups whose affiliation is not primarily based on religion, but whose practices and sentiments toward a left-behind homeland are mediated by and articulated through a religious culture.[15] Here, religious affiliations only take on special significance as diasporic communities seek to "make meaning" out of their experiences in the host society. Dislocated groups recall indigenous religious practices for strategic employment in new places. This oftentimes includes commemorative rituals and other "memory performances" that call the homeland to mind in order to improve or transform the experience of the hostland.[16]

When attached to new sites, diasporic religious practices signify within a new system of relations, shifting the meanings they communicate.[17] Symbols that had a certain meaning in the homeland must be attached to new sites of meaning in the host society. Diasporic religions then do not merely recollect and reproduce indigenous discourses and practices. They appropriate and transform them in response to the challenges, needs, and opportunities presented in the new space.[18] Diasporic rituals do not merely replicate the past. They represent it and the homeland through *memory* and *performance*.[19] These representations of collective memory can reframe the past in ways that are transformative of the group's experience of the present. The Maafa Commemoration might therefore be characterized as a "memory performance" that calls the homeland to mind in order to help African Americans "make meaning" out of their traumatic experiences in the United States.

In response to historical and contemporary forms of trauma, many African Americans seek to secure not only what they need for material existence but also some sense of their symbolic place in the world.[20] Threatened with racially driven neoliberalism and neoliberally fused racism, African Americans and other traumatized groups attempt to reclaim some form of representation for themselves. Stuart Hall notes:

> They have to retell the story from the bottom up, instead of from the top down…One cannot discover, or try to discuss, the black movements, civil rights movements, the movements of black cultural politics in the modern world, without that notion of the rediscovery of where people came from, the return to some kind of roots, the speaking of a past that previously had no language. The attempt to snatch from the hidden histories another place to stand in, another place to speak from—that moment is extremely important. It is a moment that always tends to be overrun and to be marginalized by [neoliberal] globalization.[21]

Confronted with unyielding economic, political, and cultural forces, black Americans reach for points of attachment, reconstructing "re-membered" places and "hidden histories." This move to recover "hidden histories" signifies a return to groundings that give people a sense of "place" and "position" in the world.[22]

Neoliberal Nadir

The Maafa Commemoration had its inception in the early 1990s at St. Paul Community Baptist Church, located in the East New

York section of Brooklyn, New York. At the time, the problems engendered by American neoliberalism were ravishing inner cities throughout the United States. Policies informed by neoliberal ideals encouraged the disinvestment in and abandonment of what were predominantly African American and Hispanic neighborhoods in urban centers.[23] The South Bronx, East New York, and Brownsville neighborhoods represented only some of the communities in New York City that were decimated by neoliberal policies. The East New York section of Brooklyn, which was predominantly Italian until the mid-1960s, underwent a radical demographic shift and by 1968 was largely African American. Working class blacks sought in East New York the same "modest virtues" as their Italian American predecessors. However, the politics of abandonment, containment, and control would plunge these African Americans into a nightmarish abyss. In the wake of the disinvestment and "white flight" of the 1960s, East New York and other neighborhoods suffered the collapse of several business districts. The most educated of East New York's residents would depart for the suburbs, leaving behind those who most needed such role models.[24] The neighborhood now had the second highest number of welfare recipients and foster-care placements. Less than half of its adults had graduated from high school and 40 percent of the households were led by a single mother.[25] By the 1980s, sizeable segments of the housing stock had been abandoned or were deteriorated. For endless blocks, vacant lots filled spaces where thriving businesses, sprawling apartment buildings, and job-creating factories once stood. Images of New York City from this time period are still disconcerting.[26] Large sections of East New York and other formerly vibrant neighborhoods now qualified as archeological sites.[27]

As the infrastructure of the community crumbled, East New York became one of the most crime-ridden and drug infested areas in Brooklyn, with one of the highest murder rates in New York City. Evenings, particularly during the summer months, were filled with the sounds of gunshots that the uninitiated mistook as fireworks. It was a militarized war zone. Police in East New York's famed Seventy-fifth Precinct wore tee-shirts that said "The Killing Fields."[28] During the 1980s, the Seventy-fifth Precinct would regularly place in the top two or three citywide for violent crime. In the past, education and small neighborhood businesses served as the social ladders for those aspiring to middle class status in East New York. However, by the 1980s, those ladders had collapsed and "only crack cocaine and prostitution could be deemed growth industries."[29] The illegal drug business burgeoned. With little more than a frying pan, baking soda, and a few ounces of powder cocaine, anyone could enter the crack business. Ceaseless battles over turf and money would ensue. In an attempt to control a contagion of gun violence, Thomas Jefferson High School, once the proud home of one of the city's premier high school football programs, would have metal detectors installed at its entrances. By the early 1990s, East New York had the highest concentration of violent crime in all of New York.[30] The roots of the violence, however, lay in a tangled web of hopes dashed by neoliberal policies, and modes of abandonment, containment, and control.

St. Paul Community Baptist Church moved to its East New York location in 1980 during this turbulent period. At that time, the block was comprised of only six homes and several parking lots. The modest church was surrounded by a landscape of tenements, housing projects, and barred bungalows where black and brown people tried to etch out a meager living. Piles of garbage were strewn all over vacant lots, empty vials were discarded by crack addicts, and bottles of Wild Irish Rose littered the street just steps from the church itself.[31] Dwarfed by several immense public housing "projects" that surrounded the church's facility, St. Paul Community Baptist Church appeared to be an oasis in a wasteland of urban blight. This is the context in which the Maafa Commemoration had its inception.

The Way Out Is Back Through

In September 1994, Rev. Dr. Johnny Ray Youngblood, then Senior Pastor of St. Paul Community Baptist Church, began a dialogue with his church's leadership about the need for black Americans to grapple with the impact of historical trauma on black functioning. [32] These early conversations were followed by a series of formal lectures presented at the church by a cadre of renowned scholars. As part of this educative process and in an attempt to put forth a vehicle that would honor the rich legacy of the African presence in America, in September 1995, St. Paul Community Baptist Church initiated a two-night presentation of slave narratives, Negro spirituals, and African dance. Since its inception, the initial two-night presentation evolved into a two-week event that includes dramatic reenactments, rituals of remembrance, educational workshops, lectures, and worship services.

The Maafa Commemoration thus had its inception when countless black Americans in New York City and elsewhere were attempting to come to terms with the traumatic impact of racially driven neoliberalism. The commemoration at St. Paul Community Baptist Church, I believe, was prompted by the material and epistemic violence engendered by the neoliberal age. As discussed in chapter 4, for healing to occur, the "core trauma scenes" must be remembered and represented within a new perceptual framework. They must be "narratively objectified" and given meaning. The Maafa Commemoration represents a "way of remembering" that enables African Americans to work through and recover from individual and cultural trauma.

The motto for the Maafa Commemoration is "The Way Out is Back Through." The victims of any kind of trauma cannot heal, Rev. Youngblood asserts, until they fully acknowledge what they've been through, every traumatized community needs vehicles that facilitate "organized grief work."[33] For African Americans, it is necessary to grieve about the pain and humiliation that our ancestors experienced. The Maafa Commemoration is a vehicle for the constructive expression of anxiety, grief, and anger. It is intended to provide African Americans with the opportunity to remember and reframe the trauma inflicted upon our forerunners.[34] By confronting fully the trauma of the past, Youngblood exclaims, it is possible for African Americans, and all of America, to move forward and experience profound personal and political change. The

Maafa Commemoration is therefore characterized as a “healing journey.” It is a spiritual experience aimed at healing cultural trauma. The commemoration convenes annually during the third and fourth weeks of September. Various articulations of the Maafa Commemoration have reportedly been convened in more than 50 locations throughout the United States, including St. Croix, US Virgin Islands.

Following a three-year transition in pastoral leadership, in 2009, Rev. David Brawley succeeded Rev. Youngblood as the Senior Pastor at St. Paul Community Baptist Church. The congregation and neighborhood surrounding the church are now made up of primarily working class and middle class African American and Afro-Caribbean families. The church facility is a contemporary complex of low-rise buildings comprised of light tan bricks and ornate-stained glass. It could easily be mistaken for a modern library or a multipurpose community center. The main entrance opens into a sprawling complex that includes a sanctuary which seats approximately 1000 people, a charter school which serves over 200 elementary school and middle school students, a chapel, offices, and rehearsal rooms.

The entire church facility is radically transformed during “Maafa season.” Artwork, quilts, African and African American artifacts and other materials, some borrowed from the private collections of benefactors, are put on display throughout the church. Many of these artifacts and historical materials are presented in an area the church converts into the “Maafa Museum.” During the first week of the commemoration, guided educational tours of the “museum” are conducted for New York City school children and other members of the public. The church’s prayer chapel is transformed into an “ancestral room.” In the “ancestral room,” numerous photographs of African American “ancestors”—parents, grandparents, and great grandparents—are displayed on the walls. An altar is constructed on the floor in the center of the room. African masks are hung from the ceiling. Only a single row of chairs lines the four walls. Lit by only the flames of a few candles on the altar, the “ancestral room” is used solely for private prayer, meditation, and reflection.

The sanctuary receives some of the most elaborate treatment. The church staff literally transforms the sanctuary into something akin to the interior of a slave ship. Like a stage in a Broadway play, the sanctuary is physically reconfigured in preparation for multiple presentations of the theatrical production known as the Maafa Suite. This dramatic presentation reenacts the atrocities of the transatlantic slave trade, chattel slavery, and Jim Crowism. It is described as "sacred psychodrama." Produced on several evenings during the second week of the commemoration, the presentations of the Maafa Suite usually sell out. With a cast of more than 100 people, comprised largely of the church's members, the Maafa Suite is arguably the centerpiece of the commemoration. Lectures and worship services convene in the sanctuary during the day. The Maafa Commemoration concludes at the end of two weeks with a predawn Oceanside Closing Ceremony on the shore of the Atlantic. Excerpts from interviews with commemoration participants and my own observations of both the Maafa Suite and Oceanside Closing Ceremony are included below (also see www.spcbc.com/maafa).[35]

Sacred Psychodrama

St. Paul Community Baptist Church characterizes the Maafa Suite as *sacred psychodrama*. The reference to psychodrama is, indeed, warranted. The structural and functional similarities between various components of the Maafa Commemoration and other group-oriented psychodramatic modalities points to the commemoration's efficacy as an innovative approach that is capable of promoting healing. Group-oriented psychodramatic approaches often deal with the responses of a collective to a catastrophic event in which the whole balance of a society is shaken.[36] This is an apt description of the objectives of the Maafa Suite and the commemoration as a whole. Psychodramatic approaches provide a space to remember and consciously re-experience unprocessed trauma for people who have been impacted by overwhelming catastrophic events.[37] For African Americans, as indicated, healing from neoliberal trauma requires a safe reenactment of the "core trauma scene." These therapeutic goals are made evident to the audience at the very onset of the Maafa Suite, as the following excerpt from my observations illustrate:

> As I approach the entrance to St. Paul's sanctuary, a number of undistinguishable sounds can be heard emanating from within. Walking into the sanctuary, I am disoriented as I find myself standing in a dark, foggy and foreboding world. In the middle of the stage, two huge masts protrude upwards with large flowing sails, evoking the slave ships that participated in the trading of black human cargo. Hidden ominously in the shadows on the left side of the stage is a large tree with a hangman's noose swinging ever so slightly from one of its branches. Several black dolls are also "hung" from nooses on miniature trees, conjuring thoughts of the untold number of Africans who were lynched. On the right side of the stage, several of these dolls are suspended high above the platform like a heavenly cloud of ancestral witnesses. Still disoriented, my eyes attempted to adjust to the virtual darkness in the sanctuary. I was mystified further by the now discernable sounds of human suffering. As I apprehensively moved forward, the gut-wrenching wails intensified…until, finally, I could see the source of the desperate cries. I am horrified by the sight of black people packed like cargo in small wooden cages, stacked on either side of a narrow entrance way into the sanctuary. Black men, black women and black children bound in chains and caged, like animals, crying out for loved ones, crying out for their homeland, crying out for their freedom. As the audience passes this horrific sight, we are compressed down to little more than a single file. We are forced to move in close proximity to these captured and caged black bodies. We are not permitted to keep our distance. We are forced to see the sweat on their brows…forced to see the terror in their eyes. There is no looking away…And for a brief fleeting moment, we too feel a modicum of what it meant to be "tightly packed."

For healing to occur, as indicated, there must be a safe reenactment of the "core trauma scene." During this sacred psychodrama, the core trauma scene for many African Americans is remembered to provide a new understanding of what transpired. Such a process of reenactment and reframing has the capacity to ameliorate the impact of traumatic events. One of the commemoration's coordinators, Kim Jones, points out:

> This is not Broadway theater. . . . This is not just theater for theater's sake. This is sacred space. . . . Many people come not knowing what to expect. Many come expecting just to see a production. But it's more. The entrance into the sanctuary where the audience has to walk in close proximity between cages filled with African captives crying out in agony is intentional. We want the audience to be shocked and disoriented. We want to immediately let them know, viscerally, that they are about to experience something that requires their participation and their engagement.

An attendee of the commemoration concurs:

> In the beginning . . . when our brothers and sisters did the Maafa Suite, we clapped. But some education had to go into it. We learned that this is not a play, this is not a production. This is a psychodrama, it's a reenactment. So now you can barely get a clap out of us. It's nothing really to be applauding. It's something to get in touch with, to come to terms with, to heal from it and move forward.

The Maafa Suite commences with the "Drum Call" and the serving of Communion by the church's recently installed Senior Pastor, Rev. Brawley:

> Seven drummers emerge from the rear of the sanctuary pounding out indigenous African rhythms as they dance down the center aisle. The power and celebratory joy of the drums fill the sanctuary, "speaking" to all in attendance. Even in the virtual darkness of the sanctuary, an ocean of black silhouettes can be seen moving in sync to their primeval call. The polyrhythmic pulses of the "Drum Call" palpably resonate with an African archetype, fostering deep unconscious communal connections. These connections are manifested in the synchronized movements of black bodies in response to the indigenous African

> beats. Afterward, Pastor David Brawley emerges on stage dressed in a white robe. He declares it would be inappropriate to commemorate the Maafa of our African ancestors without first recognizing the Maafa of our "Chief Ancestor," Jesus Christ. Brawley proclaims, "The significance of the Maafa cannot be understood apart from the cross of Christ." He invites the entire audience to partake in Communion. The Communion concludes with a rousing rendition of the congregational hymn, "Because He Lives." "Because Christ arose," Brawley declares, "the madness of the lynching tree is not the final word for black folk. Because Jesus lives, we too have hope!"

Having received the bread and the wine in remembrance of our Chief Ancestor, Jesus Christ, respect is given to countless African American "ancestors," as the entire cast recites the stirring poem entitled, "For the Millions":

> For the millions of Africans chained to the slave ships,
> For the millions of scars on the backs and faces by the bullwhip,
> For the millions who jumped overboard,
> For the blood that poured...
> Each ripple in the ocean is a grave
> For an African who refused to be a slave.
> For the millions who cut the cane, picked the cotton,
> Whose names have been forgotten...For the millions...[38]

Reenactments go over the traumatic event to verbalize memories, facilitate the experience of emotions, and present in action whatever cannot be put into words. Reenactment thus makes possible the emergence of new narratives which facilitate the healing process for every participant. In the Maafa Suite, participants volunteer to play various roles in the drama. When a cultural group is emotionally invested in the drama's central concern, members of that group can benefit vicariously from each other's work. In this way, people in the audience observing the Maafa Suite gain the therapeutic distance needed to safely recollect the horrific details of the experience. Entitled "The Capture," this dramatization is hauntingly unforgettable and points to the value of therapeutic distance in the enactment of remembrance and mourning:

> A group of slavers descend upon unsuspecting Africans and proceed to capture them. Bruised and battered black bodies being carried off to a strange land “snake” down the aisles of the dark sanctuary, arms locked to represent the chains that bound them together. This chain of captured Africans stretches around the entire circumference of the church. Now on a stage barely lit, over one hundred black bodies huddle together in several rows, bound in the hull of a slave ship. The crashing sound of the ocean fills the sanctuary. On the stage, a mass of black humanity sways to and fro moving with the ebb and flow of the tide. Terrorized and traumatized in the “belly of the beast,” these captured Africans huddle together trying to find solace from those who have met a similar fate. Black bodies forcibly brought together from different clans, speaking different languages, bound by this common experience of terror and trauma. This mass of blackness is then herded off the ship, still shackled together, now under the stinging lash of a bullwhip. Bound black bodies are led off to the auction block and finally to the plantation…Afterwards, a young black male attempts to throw off the shackles of American tyranny by running away from the plantation. He successfully escapes and tastes freedom for the first time. His freedom, however, is short-lived. The young man is soon tracked down by a murderous mob, led by a pack of bloodhounds. The plantation owner, determined to make an example out of him, allows the slave catchers to torture the young “runaway.” The noose that was hanging ominously on the large tree is now put to use. We are confronted with the horrific sight of a lynched black body swinging in the southern breeze—“strange fruit” indeed.

A participant’s comments underscore the vital importance of therapeutic distance:

> There’s so much going on, it’s hard to take it all in. Each time maybe I take in a different portion of it. The first time I couldn’t get past the dance piece called the “The Capture.” Reading books and looking at different things, it’s never been so close…the chain and the whips. I mean it was like being there. I had a hard time…I was there, but I wasn’t there. So each time I get to see something different, but each time it’s presented differently also, so you experience something different…And then

> seeing someone being hung. That's just...It's not describable. It's just unimaginable.

From this semidetached stance, participants are enabled to experience healing without being retraumatized by the horrific details of the event. This includes the conscious experiencing of repressed feelings, unprocessed images, and body memories. The goal, however, is not unrestrained abreaction. As reflected in the following comments of two participants, what is sought is a suitable combination of detachment and involvement:

> The anger that's there that you feel...It is a healing journey because you have to heal from that and the mis-education. You have to heal by crying and letting the anger out because you can't act on it. It is a healing journey...I'm not saying that you're going to heal that same day, but every year that you experience the Maafa Suite, you heal a little more...It's not going to be a short healing journey. There's a lot of anger that needs to be processed.
>
> Just being able to mourn and to freely express yourself so that you can be liberated. It's still a journey. It hasn't healed everything that I've gone through personally. Sometimes I might be crying and remember the loss of my grandmother. I'd just close my eyes and release this also at the same time.

Reframing the meaning of core trauma scenes to provide a new understanding of what happened is central to the Maafa Suite's effectiveness. One example is the chilling reenactment of the renowned slave revolt organized and led by Nat Turner. In the Maafa Suite, this dramatization signifies a silenced legacy of insurrection against America's heinous system of racial domination. Enslaved Africans were not simply passive victims, but were in fact engaged in ongoing acts of resistance, subversion, and rebellion. Reenacted in a safe space, this powerful dramatization remembered the outrage the audience's parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents were prevented from expressing directly at their perpetrators. Situating trauma scenes within new perceptual frameworks enables survivors to construct new schemas and correct distorted attitudes. When the meaning of an event changes, the person's or group's responses and behaviors often change. The following interviewee's reflections point to these processes in the Suite:

> My sister...wanted to come and see the production. So she came out. My sister has never been the same. It has changed her life. Her children were taken away from her. They're on the east coast and she's on the west coast. Their relationship is a bit strained. But it didn't have to be that way and her children know this...So it's a very strained relationship. When she came and saw the Maafa Suite...it caused her to see her life in such a way that she can now acknowledge what she's done wrong, release it to God and get a sense of what she should do, no matter how painful it is, because many of our ancestors didn't have the opportunity to even know where their children were...Those are the kinds of life-changing experiences that many people have gone through.

Reframing is also facilitated by "repair scenes" enacted to change distorted attitudes and construct new schemas. Repair scenes utilize "transpersonal symbols" as healing agents for the core trauma experience.[39] In the Maafa Suite, this is demonstrated in a segment entitled "The Blood Knots." Here, long strips of red cloth, symbolizing the shed blood of Jesus, are utilized to recast the atrocities of the Maafa in the context of the eschatological hope of Christianity:

> An elder dressed in a white robe emerges on stage carrying several long strips of red cloth with several knots tied in each strip. Reciting the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews, he exclaims, "Others were tortured to death...others had to suffer...they were stoned to death...they were slaughtered...utterly destitute, oppressed, cruelly treated." As he recites the text, the elder places the strips of red cloth on the branches of the lynching tree and on the smaller trees where black dolls are "hung." Moving to the right side of the stage, he puts strips of red cloth on the African drums and on the African dolls that resemble a "cloud of ancestral witnesses." "All of these," the elder proclaims, "though they won divine approval by faith, did not receive the fulfillment of what was promised, because God had us in

> mind...so that they should not come to perfection apart from us." The elder then recites portions of the seventh chapter of the book of Revelation. He proclaims, "After this I looked and a vast host appeared which no one could count, of every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. These stood before the throne and before the Lamb...Who are these clothed in the long white robes? These are they who have come out of the great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Employing long strips of red cloth to symbolize the shed blood of Jesus, this segment signifies what the previous day's lecturer, James Cone, had declared: The cross of Christ reveals God's loving solidarity with unspeakable suffering. The cross can redeem the lynching tree and thereby bestow upon lynched black bodies an eschatological meaning for their ultimate existence.[40] Unless the cross and the lynching tree are viewed together, Cone declares, there can be no understanding of Christian identity in America and no healing of the racial divide in the society.[41] The cross and the lynching tree interpret each other. The crucifixion was essentially a first-century lynching. Cone exclaims, like a black naked body swinging on a lynching tree, the cross of Christ was an utterly offensive affair, subjecting the victim to its utmost indignity. Jesus died like a lynched black victim, in torment and in shame. Likewise, the lynched black victim experienced a similar fate as the crucified Christ. African Americans, then, can identify with Jesus' agony on the cross. Through the experience of being lynched by white mobs, blacks transcended their time and place and found themselves existentially and symbolically at the foot of Jesus' cross, experiencing his fate and his suffering. Jesus can not only identify with black bodies being hung and burned on lynching trees but can also redeem black suffering and make beautiful what white supremacy attempted to make grotesque. The memory of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus can redeem the lynching tree and bestow upon lynched black bodies an eschatological meaning for their ultimate existence. The memory of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection therefore reframes black America's history of suffering and struggle, reshaping the past in ways that are transformative of the group's experience of the present and hopes for the future. This *emancipatory memory* is recalled in the Maafa Commemoration. The blood of Christ and the cross are thus utilized as "transpersonal symbols" capable of promoting healing for black Americans. The meaning of the Maafa is now reframed within a larger field of actors and forces:

> I look at what my ancestors endured and say if they made it, then whatever I'm going through can also be overcome. Because a lot of their overcoming had to do with their faith. That gives me faith; that makes me believe. The faith of the ancestors is what sustained us before I was born, so I believe that that same faith will sustain me in my troubles. As a result of Maafa, I have this incredible strength and self-esteem. If it wasn't for Maafa, I wouldn't know how to deal with my situations. But since the whole Maafa experience is centered on God and the Word, I believe in it.

Individuals engaged in dramatic reenactments as well as those observing can experience a wide range of emotions. On the one hand, reenactments of traumatic events can leave participants deeply shaken and overwhelmed with anxiety. On the other hand, participants can experience an "energy" that is embodied in a sense of vitality, aliveness, or spirituality.[42] This energy or sense of spirituality can be collective as well as personal. In other settings, participants in reenactments have concretized this energy into roles such as a higher power or guardian angel. In the Maafa Commemoration, this energy or sense of spirituality is often characterized as the Holy Spirit or the ancestors.

> They told us that we would get emotional and I was like, oh yeah, right...but I really felt like a spirit went through me. I didn't remember coming off the stage, I didn't remember coming downstairs, I didn't remember anything. Before we go upstairs to perform we pray together and when we come downstairs we huddle together and pray again because it hits you from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet....I was telling one of the girls that always does the Suite what I was feeling and she

> was saying she understood exactly what I was saying. It's not something that you can verbalize all the time because it's more of an emotional feeling.

During the Maafa Suite, community support is provided by the church's "Healing Ministry." Participants can experience strong personal reactions, attachments, or other intense feelings. They often need assistance disengaging themselves from the roles assumed during the reenactment. The Healing Ministry at St. Paul comprises ordained elders, psychotherapists, registered nurses, Reiki practitioners, and others trained to provide support to anyone observing or involved in the Maafa Suite. The important role the Healing Ministry provides to those participating in the Suite is reflected in the following comments:

> I'm a registered nurse and I've had the opportunity to work behind the scenes and see my sisters and brothers who get out there and reenact this whole situation and how they really get in touch with the ancestors and this "character" they're playing and by the time it's over, I'm telling you, once they come off that stage and go behind the curtain, they're crying, they're just in another world. When they come off the pulpit after the reenactment, we're there to bring them back and get rid of whatever energy they may be experiencing at that time. We have our elders, we have nurses; people that are trained to do "healing touch." We reorient them.... I've seen our sisters and brothers really get into our ancestors in a way that's remarkable. I can truly say that it's real. There's no fake in it.

Wade in the Water

After the end of a drama-based reenactment, a closure ritual is often suggested as a shared group activity for the participants. This might be a commemorative event, such as revisiting the site of the catastrophe to conduct a farewell ceremony at that location. Closure rituals at the symbolic site of the catastrophic event honors those tragically lost.[43] The Maafa Commemoration comprises a number of components that bring closure to this transformative experience. Held at a symbolic site of the Maafa, the shore of the Atlantic Ocean, the two-week commemoration concludes with a ritual of remembrance called the Oceanside Closing Ceremony:

> It was pitch black outside when I arrived at 4:30 a.m. The stillness of the night was broken only by the sound of waves crashing against the shore. On the beach's boardwalk people were gathering and greeting one another. An elder traversed the beach area where the ceremony would be held carrying an urn emitting the aromatic scented smoke of burning sage and herbs. This was a "ritual cleansing" of the area. The scented smoke hung in the air, mixing with the salty smell of the sea. By 5:00 a.m. over three hundred pilgrims, all dressed in white, had gathered and lined up on the boardwalk. Midway between the boardwalk and the shoreline, two large open-air tents were set up. Everyone was directed to walk, in two rows, through the tents. A handful of flower petals was given to each of us. As we moved through the second tent, Communion was served. The elders then directed everyone to walk to the shore where a lectern was set up. The crowd spontaneously began to sing a hymn. After the hymn, Rev. Brawley and Rev. Youngblood offered words of exhortation. The church's dance team then performed...moving from the sandy beach down to the gently crashing waves. Rev. Brawley invited everyone to throw the flower petals we had been given into the sea in remembrance of our ancestors. Everyone moved silently to the shoreline. The sea water was surprisingly warm and inviting. Many proceeded to go ankle deep into the water. I followed them in, silently singing the Negro Spiritual, "Wade in the water, wade in the water children, wade in the water, God's going to trouble the water." Some tossed their entire handful of petals all at once. Others threw only one flower petal in at a time. Many just stood there, fixated on the sea. My mind traveled to the African coast and back again, reflecting upon the tragic loss of black humanity now buried in the murky depths of the Atlantic Ocean. Time seemed to stop as we stood there. It was a solemn assembly. We were on holy ground. The children of those who had been stolen had returned. We had returned to remember and honor the millions who had been lost and forgotten.

The Oceanside Ceremony thus functions as the closure for the entire two-week commemoration. This ritual of remembrance at a symbolic site of the catastrophic event honors the ancestors in a farewell ceremony and functions as a fitting end to the commemoration. One participant notes:

> At the Oceanside Closing Ceremony there was a particular year that I was very much overwhelmed. We were there at about six o'clock in the morning. And I was just looking at the Atlantic, just looking out into the sea. The sunrise was coming up. And I don't know exactly what hit me in that sunrise. In the radiance of it…it just brought back the full memory of my father who passed in 1985. I couldn't hold back the tears…it was like he was there beside me telling me to keep pressing on, that everything's going to be o.k. I answered back, "I will keep pressing on." I've experienced his presence from time to time over the years, but this time it was like he was very much there. It was like he let me know that you all are doing a great thing.

The therapeutic value of the Maafa Commemoration has thus far been explored through the heuristic lens of sacred psychodrama. No lens, though, can adequately interpret everything going on in any dynamic system. With the use of any interpretive framework, certain characteristics will come into focus while other elements recede into the background. Important new insights come into view when the Maafa Commemoration is examined as an *African diasporic religious practice.*

Conjuring African Diasporic Traditions

African diasporic religions are "those sets of religious discourses and practices that invoke Africa as a horizon of memory, authenticity, and sacred authority—whether Africa is physically known, imagined, or ritually created—and which consider the distance from that idealized place as a problem that is remedied by rendering the place as present in ritual."[44] Here, adaptations of indigenous African religious gestures and materials are creatively incorporated into diasporic religious practices. In the Maafa Commemoration, this is reflected in the utilization of

African conceptions of ritual as a healing resource. In many indigenous contexts, ritual is an indispensable technology used to cure disorders and bring about material change in the lives of individuals, families, and communities. While many rituals function as modes of self-care, others are utilized to facilitate the repair of egregious collective conditions.[45]

Part of the work of ritual is to prepare the space for ritual. In indigenous settings, ritual space is opened whenever “spirit” is invoked. The Maafa Suite appropriates these West African understandings of religious ritual to address the contextual challenges of the present. In the Maafa Suite, the “Nommo Invocation” serves as a form of prayer that formally invites spiritual resources to participate in the rite:

> The Maafa Suite begins with the “Nommo Invocation.”[46] A muscular black male covered in white ash, wearing only a grass skirt, moves slowly down the center aisle. He silently waves an African staff over the audience several times and then over the entirety of the stage area. The Nommo Invocation evokes African rituals where white ash is thrown into the air by the priest to invite the presence of benevolent spirits and prevent the intrusion of malevolent spirits. . . . Afterwards, Rev. Brawley offers a libation, first to God and the Lord Jesus Christ. The libation entails pouring out a small amount of water to make peace or be in harmony with someone or something in the spirit world. Brawley continues the libation, giving honor to several African American “ancestors,” such as Harriet Tubman, Fannie Lou Hamer, Martin Luther King Jr., and Malcolm X. He concludes the libation, thanking God for the Black Church and the role it has played as a healing resource for black people.

The Maafa Commemoration’s employment of indigenous religious practices is also reflected in the utilization of African conceptions of the “ancestors.” Many indigenous people believe the physical world is one component of a more complex and subtler invisible reality. For many, the physical universe is the shadow “of a vibrant and endlessly resourceful intelligence dynamically involved in a process of continuous self-creation.”[47] Intriguingly similar to the notion of a dynamic and complex multiverse with numerous planes of existence purported by modern physicists, many Africans believe there are multiple dimensions which contain other living entities, residing albeit in a different time/space continuum.[48] For many indigenous groups, death is therefore not understood as a termination of life, but as a transition to a different dimension. Death does not represent a separation, but a "different form of communion, a higher form of connectedness with the community, providing an opportunity for even greater service."[49] In many African cosmologies, departed persons who lived purpose-filled, community-affirming lives are hence believed to become "ancestors." As ancestors, their "spirits" continue to live on in the unseen world. While one's ancestors are venerated and honored, they are not worshiped. Similar to individuals who have been designated as "saints" in Catholicism, these unseen ancestors have the ability to assist and aid those who yet live in the physical world. Many Africans believe, however, if the proper burial rites are not administered or the death of a loved one is not grieved appositely, it will have a detrimental effect upon the living and the dead. The resultant disorder will find expression in a vast array of individual and communal ailments. For indigenous Africans, a number of afflictions experienced by the living are thus believed to arise from the ancestors having not been venerated and properly honored.[50] When catastrophic events, such as the Maafa, disrupt normal communal life and interrupt the performance of the usual burial rituals, the convening of such ceremonies and rituals for the dead is viewed as essential to the process of communal healing. West African religiosity and the Maafa Commemoration share the same invocation of the ancestors in ritual events. What is important in the Maafa Commemoration seems to be the appeasement of the "type" of the ancestor, rather than the satisfaction of any specific ancestor.[51] These dynamics are reflected in the following interviewee's comments:

> As the commemoration became bigger and bigger, we started to really get in touch with the ancestors; just experiencing them and allowing the ancestor spirits to "invoke us," so to speak, while we're in the midst of experiencing the Maafa, so the focus now

> is really more toward seeing what they went through...so we can never forget them....I've been doing a lot of crying. It seems like I've been really able to get in touch with what happened and able to just open myself and be vulnerable to my ancestors and what they went through: the slavery, the beatings, the lynching, the segregation...and even up to the present because there's still a lot that's going on. So I cried a lot during the commemoration. I just felt pain in my heart...just focusing on our ancestors and what they went through just to "be" in this country.

Indigenous African understandings of cosmology are thus appropriated and integrated into the Maafa Commemoration in an effort to heal the traumas which disrupt African American development. Indigenous cosmological concepts are recalled for strategic employment in a new place. The commemoration thus employs several interventive strategies. As an African diasporic religious practice, it appropriates indigenous healing technologies to help African Americans address contemporary needs and challenges. Drawing upon indigenous understandings, the Maafa Commemoration facilitates "organized grief work." In the process of venerating and properly honoring our ancestors, black Americans experience individual and communal healing. Utilizing religious resources from both the homeland and hostland, African diasporic religions are also overtly syncretic in their practice. The syncretic nature of the Maafa Commemoration is evident at the Oceanside Closing Ceremony.

> We walked towards the tents set up on the beach. As we passed through the first tent, popcorn was sprinkled on our heads. Here an Afro-Bahian purification ritual is appropriated. There was a period of time in Brazil when Afro-Bahians prayed to an African deity they believed protected them from smallpox.[52] To commune with this deity they took large baskets of popcorn and showered themselves with it. This purification ritual is now drawn upon in the commemoration's Oceanside Closing Ceremony.

The Maafa Commemoration does not simply reproduce African discourses and practices. It adapts and incorporates African diasporic religious gestures and materials in response to the challenges and needs presented in the host society. The recoding and replanting of religions in new sites thus result in more than the idealization of the place left behind. During the Maafa Commemoration, representations of collective memory are conjured to reframe the past in ways that are transformative of the group's experience of the present. History is (re)made as black Americans project present events, and their present selves, against remembered African horizons.

Viewed against new historical and territorial horizons, diasporic communities can reshape their religious, ethnic, and racial identifications.[53] Identities are reconstructed not only as groups shape and are shaped by the present and future, but also by reframing the collective's past. Cast against new "diasporic horizons," collective memory is reframed and collective identifications are transformed. The Maafa Commemoration can now be seen as a resource for the shaping of "African diasporic identities." Unlike conceptions of the African diaspora tethered to color-based classifications connected to an actual or imagined territory, this new identification is not one essentialized in race, ethnicity, or territory, but rather focused on history and the shared experience of suffering under chattel slavery, Jim Crow, and the neoliberal age. Here, "Africanness" is redefined as a set of claims and practices, rather than a biological determination or territory.

African diasporic identifications, though, may or may not be a part of a black person's repertoire. Some African Americans understand themselves as black, but do not locate their ancestral homelands in or in relation to Africa. At the same time, Afro-Bahian or Afro-Caribbean immigrants in the United States may not view themselves as black Americans or diasporic, choosing rather to locate their homelands in the contested spaces of South America or the Caribbean. Informed by broader horizons of memory, African diasporic identifications are typically anchored to the past through traditions, symbols, and practices associated with ancient African origins and indigenous roots. Many blacks only join the African diaspora subsequent to their affiliation with African diasporic religious forms.[54] Here, black American or Afro-Caribbean identifications are fused in religious performances and reframed against multilayered diasporic schemas, thereby facilitating the emergence of new diasporic identities. The following interviewees' comments point to the presence of these dynamics in the Maafa Commemoration:

> My maternal grandmother is from the island of St. Thomas. We still have cousins there. But now I'm more inclined to think that my ancestors weren't just from the West Indies or from the South, but that they came across the water from Africa. The commemoration helps me identify with that and make the connection with the African continent.
>
> I'm originally from Panama. I came here when I was seven. And I only spoke Spanish. When I came they didn't understand who I was or what I was. They called me a black Puerto Rican. I never got the recognition. I wasn't Puerto Rican. I wasn't white and I wasn't black. The Maafa has showed me it's just that they dropped my ancestors off in Panama. And that's where I happened to be born, but we all came from Africa. So though my hair is a little softer and my skin is a little lighter, we're all black people. When white people see me, they only see black. So it gave me an identity. I reject labels based on my hair being finer or my skin being a little lighter or I speak a different language, I am black ultimately. The Maafa Commemoration has showed me my blackness.

Those who participate in the Maafa Commemoration make use of diasporic scripts in an effort to reshape individual and collective identities. These scripts undermine trauma-based cognitions and racialized frameworks which have pathologized black Americans. Racial and ethnic self-understandings are transformed:

> At one time I probably might've as a little girl wondered why I'm not white. But now as a woman who has gone through the Maafa, the education and the teachings and coming in touch with my feelings, it's great to be black. We are still going through a lot as a people. But it's great to be black. There's nothing wrong with

> me having the skin tone that I have. Other people got to come to terms with *their* racism. No longer am I going to think I'm at fault. It's not my fault that I'm black and I'm beautiful. I have a right to be where I am. My ancestors paid and paved the way for me to be where I am this very day.
>
> This production has caused me to love myself more than I ever have in my life. And it caused me to be able to look at my family differently. Enjoy the contour of the nose. Enjoy the southern drawl. Just to love who I was, where I came from and understand that I don't have to talk like a Caucasian person to be somebody. The commemoration has caused me to . . . realize that I've been hoodwinked and bamboozled in so many ways.

Through its creative employment of indigenous West African religious traits, the Maafa Commemoration appropriates traditions that unite the St. Paul community with other African diasporic religious communities. This diasporic reimagining facilitates the development of new identities that have generated a potentially disruptive "globalization from below," connecting African Americans to Afro-Brazilians, Afro-Colombians, and other diasporic communities engaged in the struggle against the neoliberal age.[55] Here, a left-behind homeland is conjured in order to help African Americans "make meaning" out of and transform the cultural traumas encountered in a hegemonic hostland. The commemoration does not merely replicate the past, but represents it and the homeland through memory and performance. These representations reframe core trauma scenes in ways that are transformative for African American's experience of the present. Indeed, there is much more to learn about this innovative African American religious form.[56] This research does confirm that the Maafa Commemoration represents a "way of remembering" that enables African Americans to transcend the traumas engendered by the neoliberal age and develop new conceptions of identity.

6

Prophetic Soul Care

The emergence of the neoliberal age in the United States signifies a historic transition from a system of racial domination to a hegemonic racially driven neoliberalism. This study argues that in the neoliberal age a matrix of governance strategies are utilized: (1) to *maintain* the full reign of the free market; (2) to *contain* left behind sectors of the population whose presence discloses the system's inequities; (3) to *control* segments of the society who pose a threat to the system's stability; and (4) to secure the continued *contributions* of those who are indispensible to the system's operations. These governance strategies engender material and epistemic violence in the lives of countless African Americans, overwhelming personal and cultural meaning making capacities. The neoliberal age is, subsequently, regarded as a traumatogenic environment for many black Americans and countless other populations worldwide who are equally confronted by these same forces. This racialized neoliberal hegemony, however, is not impenetrable. Modes of resistance are not totally suspended during hegemonic moments. West similarly notes, "No matter how wide the scope of hegemonic culture may be, it never encompasses or exhausts all human practice or every transformative modality in a society. Human struggle is always a possibility in any society and culture."[1]

To properly attend to populations traumatized or threatened by the neoliberal age requires the employment of *prophetic soul care*. Prophetic soul care is a transformative practice that integrates ongoing analyses of: (1) the manner in which the neoliberal age tends to preserve, articulate, or exploit constructions of race-based and gender-based difference; (2) the disruptive ways in which these globalized capitalist forces are mediated through local cultures; (3) the often traumatic impact these forces have on human flourishing; and (4) strategies that foster resistance practices that facilitate individual and communal healing, wholeness, and liberation. Prophetic soul care thus includes a transformative challenge to regimes of oppressive power and domination. This chapter sets forth the components of a prophetic soul care praxis in which counter-hegemonic action is understood as therapeutic. Two essential images that "metaphorically structure" prophetic soul care are introduced.

A Theoretical Framework

Central to this study is the assertion that religious forms can function as mediating structures and therapeutic spaces capable of promoting healing in the neoliberal age. A theoretical framework is outlined below that supports this claim and posits a conception of prophetic soul care that connects psychological health to counter-hegemonic action. As argued elsewhere, religious forms have the capacity to serve as therapeutic spaces, capable of functioning as sites of resilience and resistance.[2] Religious practices have the capacity to lay the psychocultural groundwork for the emergence of human agency and subversive action in the neoliberal age.

D. W. Winnicott contends that any conception of human living that focuses solely on either the inner life of the individual or on the external environment is inadequate. He posits a third area of human living to which inner reality and external reality both contribute.[3] This intermediary area or *third space* is defined neither by the objective environment nor by the isolated individual, but rather by the interaction between them. Drawing upon his observations of children, Winnicott notes that *play* occurs in this third space: "Into the play area the individual gathers objects or phenomena from external reality and uses these in the service of some sample derived from inner or personal reality."[4] This *play area* transcends the dichotomy between the outer and the inner and creates an interpersonal psychological space between both worlds. The space created in this intermediate area functions as a *holding environment*. The quality of the holding environment has to do with the process of differentiation—the child's transition from a state of fusion with the parent to a state of being in relation to the parent as someone outside and separate. Healthy emotional development requires a quality holding environment that provides people with sufficient trust in life's dependability, allowing individuals to venture beyond the boundaries of their private world. Conversely, if we are not reliably "held" when we are dependent—if we are dropped from our parent's attention—we may experience "the threat of annihilation through disintegration."[5] Playing in this third space is thus understood as a *therapeutic activity*, for it facilitates emotional health. The transitional phenomena and play that begins in infancy, however, later spreads out to the intermediate space between the inner reality and external world, as perceived by an entire cultural group.[6] Winnicott thus proposes the creation of third areas of experience that can serve as therapeutic spaces for entire communities and cultural groups.

Building upon Winnicott's concepts, Ann Belford Ulanov posits an understanding of religious experience as therapeutic space. Ulanov contends that religious experience is neither solely about our subjective human experience nor some objective truth about God. It is, indeed, neither and both. Religious experience is located in the third intermediary area "in-between subjectivity and objectivity…between faith and fact."[7]

> Located in this transitional space, we see that our religious experience arrives neither totally from outside ourselves, like a lightning bolt, nor totally from inside ourselves, as from a dream, but in the space in between. In theological discourse this means God is disclosed neither as totally transcendent to human life—apart from us, unaffected by us, untouched by human suffering, a self-enclosed, self-propelling being—nor as totally immanent within human experience—as found in some part of ourselves, as part of nature, the created order, [or] a product…of human psychology.[8]

Religious experience cannot be reduced to our projections. It takes place in the third intermediary space in-between "subjective" God-images covered in our projections, "objective" traditional God-images found "lying around" in culture, and the transcendent reality many religions call God.

In order to thrive as human beings, we need an "other" to reflect back to us our spontaneous gestures and discoveries. Like a parent, the subjective God-image reflects our self (ensconced in our projections) back to us, whether personal or social. Such a God-image may function as a therapeutic resource in times of difficulty or despair.[9] For example, when hegemonic systems undermine the cultural and psychic structures that serve as mediating environments for communities; when subjugated groups instead find "others" who refuse to see that self or who try to annul the self by asserting that nothing exists there; when a *people* are not reliably "held"—they can collectively experience the threat as traumatic.[10] A unique contribution that religious experience makes available is its capacity to function as a holding environment that allows traumatized individuals and communities to go back and look into "gaps of dissociation" and begin to knit together what was broken apart.[11]

Religious forms can thus serve as therapeutic spaces. They might be understood as communal sites of alternate ordering.[12] Religious forms are undoubtedly contested spaces comprising both counter-hegemonic and hegemonic capacities. At their best, however, religious forms serve as spaces of freedom, healing, and change. Religious forms thus have the capability to function as "sites of resistance" that mediate regimes of power. They provide opportunities where subjects can deflect the impact of hegemonic structures and make creative use of intermediary spaces for formation of the self. West, similarly, points to the therapeutic value of cultural practices that function as "third spaces" for black people:

> The genius of our black foremothers and forefathers was to create powerful buffers to ward off the nihilistic threat, to equip black folk with cultural armor to beat back the demons of

> hopelessness, meaninglessness, and lovelessness. These buffers consisted of cultural structures of meaning and feeling that created and sustained communities....In other words, traditions for black surviving and thriving under unusually adverse New World conditions were major barriers against the nihilistic threat....If cultures are, in part, what human beings create (out of antecedent fragments of other cultures) in order to convince themselves not to commit suicide, then black foremothers and forefathers are to be applauded.[13]

The articulation of counter-hegemonic action is contingent upon a community's capacity to transcend the dichotomy between external structures of domination and the inner impulse for liberation, to create "therapeutic space" in the third area of living between both worlds. This requires the ability to "play." In other words, it entails a community's capacity to utilize "transitional objects"—such as religious forms—in order to deflect hegemonic forces in the service of that community's dream of freedom. The capacity to "play" in these intermediary spaces is therefore the very ground for psychological resilience and cultural resistance. And if "play" in intermediary cultural spaces is understood as promoting emotional health, we now have a framework in which *counter-hegemonic resistance can be understood as therapeutic.* The implications for prophetic soul care are revolutionary. An understanding of resistance as therapeutic points to the vital importance of soul care practitioners being involved in initiatives not traditionally associated with the discipline of pastoral care and counseling. It points to a conception of prophetic soul care that connects psychological health to participation in local and global resistance movements. Here, practitioners of prophetic soul care are called to be involved in initiatives that resist the imposition of "alienating western ways of thinking" on non-Western societies.[14] It calls for practitioners of prophetic soul care to identify and support efforts that resist "all forms of exploitation...and all oppressive conditions that have been developed solely for the interests of corporate capitalism."[15]

Realms of Practice

Seven realms of practice are indispensible to prophetic soul care. These seven realms include educate, assess, heal, empower, support, advocate, and collaborate. While there is overlap among these areas, each realm informs essential elements of practice crucial to the effectiveness of prophetic soul care in the neoliberal age. These realms of practice should not be construed as sequential and can occur in various combinations (see figure 6.1).

The first realm of practice is *educate*. Practitioners of prophetic soul care are engaged in educating populations regarding the dynamics of the neoliberal age and how those dynamics frequently inflict material and epistemic violence on their communities. This includes educating segments of the society concerning the matrix of market-driven systems utilized to secure their control, containment, and contributions. In the United States, it also involves educating black Americans about the manner in which neoliberally fused racism informs the narratives, images,

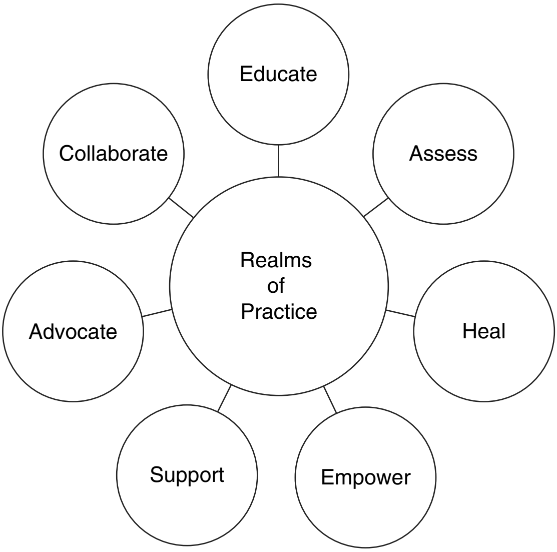

Figure 6.1 Prophetic soul care: Realms of practice.

and practices that inflict epistemic violence and contribute to countless individual and cultural challenges.

The second realm of practice is *assessment.* As an integrative approach, prophetic soul care requires one to think systems at all times. A system's orientation asserts that change in one component of a system affects other components and the system as a whole. An assessment of the significant systems and structures impacting an individual or group provides the practitioner of care with a comprehensive picture of the challenges faced. Practitioners of prophetic soul care can subsequently feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the issues that need to be evaluated. Whether one is providing care for an individual, family, congregation, or cultural group, the assessment typically begins by identifying the issues of concern or presenting problem. It is crucial, though, that the care provider identifies strengths as well as challenges to functioning. Since prophetic soul care is attentive to the impact of regimes of power and domination on human functioning, the care provider must assess the relative safety of the recipient of care. Regardless of whether care is being provided to an individual, family, community, or culture, the process of healing cannot begin until the care recipient's safety has been reliably secured.[16]

The soul care practitioner assesses interpersonal functioning, family systems dynamics, and larger social systems. A crucial component of the assessment process entails discerning the spiritual and/or meaning-making systems employed by the individual or group receiving care. The meaning-making system is comprised of the various thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and memories that a person or group employs to make sense out of their daily experiences. The meaning-making system structures how an individual or group interprets internal and external experiences, and how they will respond to those experiences. Questions that assess spirituality/meaning-making systems include: Is the person or group presently or have they been affiliated with a formal belief system? Is the person presently a part of any communities of shared belief? What meaning do they ascribe, if any, to their current problems? Have any past or present problems altered or undermined previously held beliefs? Since healing from traumatic experiences is largely dependent upon a person's ability to make meaning out of their experiences (see chapter 4), an assessment of spirituality and meaning-making systems is indispensible to the practice of prophetic soul care.

Assessing family systems involves an exploration of patterns stemming from one's family of origin which contribute to the presenting difficulties. Social systems outside the family, such as congregations, schools, employment, housing, criminal justice, and health and medical services, should also be assessed. An integrative assessment is attentive to the influence each of these systems has on the individual or group receiving care. An analysis of the larger cultural, political, and economic systems is a central focus of this study. This investigation of the neoliberal age reveals how macro-systems can impinge upon human functioning. Race, for example, is only one of several tropes utilized to secure the control, containment, and contributions of disempowered and exploited segments of the society. As indicated, this is secured through a diffuse network of actors using various methods depending upon the context (see figure 6.2).

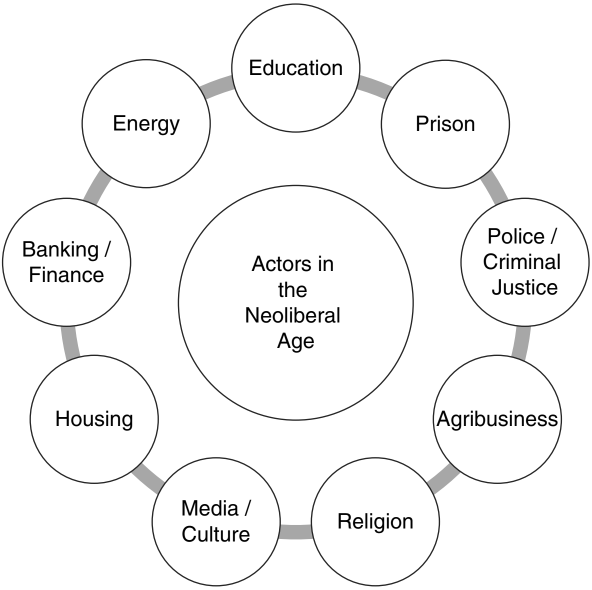
Education
Prison
Police / Criminal Justice
Agribusiness
Religion
Media / Culture
Housing
Banking / Finance
Energy
Actors in the Neoliberal Age

Figure 6.2 Matrix of actors in the neoliberal age.

Neoliberal governance strategies take on various forms in different localities. The process of assessment thus entails gaining clarity regarding the distinctive neoliberal governance strategies impacting a particular locus of care, how those governance strategies create and sustain the individual's or community's presenting problems, and which systems are most salient in the development and deployment of interventive strategies that address the presenting problem.

Practitioners must constantly make determinations as to which systems are most significant at any given time, as soul care strategies are considered. The manner in which each sphere is engaged will depend upon a host of factors including the presenting concerns, the available resources, the care provider's interventive proficiencies, and the locus of care. These determinations are informed by the following assessment questions: How does the individual or group receiving care view the various systems that impinge upon their lives? In what ways are these systems complicating or improving their life? What patterns currently exist between the individual or group and these systems? What systems could potentially improve the person's or group's life? To what extent have cultural identities and traditions, including spiritual practices/meaning-making structures, been supplanted, commodified, or suppressed by these various systems? How successfully have these forces been resisted?

The practitioner of prophetic soul care also identifies and assists in developing practices that promote *healing*. In the neoliberal age, people are constantly being positioned by market-driven images and narratives that shape their desires, ambitions, and identities. From this perspective, people not only create stories in which they live, but are also characters in the narrative plots of neoliberal policy makers, transnational corporate elites, and multinational media conglomerates. Prophetic soul care enables individuals and communities to gain "voice" as new narratives emerge, in which they are the subject in their own story, rather than merely characters written and manipulated by neoliberal forces. *Empowerment* is the fourth realm of practice that informs prophetic soul care. This includes efforts to facilitate personal, familial, communal, cultural, political, and economic empowerment. The goal is to promote practices which enable people to be connected relationally and to act on behalf of self and others. The fifth realm of practice is *support*. Support entails partnering with groups in their efforts to promote human flourishing. Supportive practices help communities function as safe environments or "therapeutic spaces."

Finally, *advocacy* and *collaboration* are critical realms of practice that inform prophetic soul care. Advocacy entails critiquing and confronting societal forces that undermine human flourishing. Practitioners of prophetic soul care serve as advocates themselves *and* help communities advocate for their needs in various social systems. In the context of racially driven neoliberalism, the prophetic soul care practitioner is called upon to advocate for the transformation of demeaning discourses, traditions, and practices. The practice of collaboration involves enlisting assistance, building coalitions, and developing collaborative relationships. In the neoliberal age, collaboration is a requisite care practice.

Transformative Theater

One way practitioners of prophetic soul care assist in the process of empowerment is through the use of *transformative theater*. Transformative theater, like the Maafa Suite discussed in chapter 4, is a group-oriented psychodramatic healing modality. It utilizes improvisational dramatic reenactments to facilitate the process of "re-authoring" to disrupt and revise problematic narratives.[17] Here, small to midsized groups participate in the process of building preferred narratives for individuals, families, congregations, communities, and cultural groups. In the neoliberal age, transformative theater functions to challenge demeaning dominant narratives. Problematic narratives are disrupted, deconstructed, and displaced as "counter-stories" are re-membered, reenacted, and integrated.

Transformative theater addresses issues in which the collective nature of the problem is put in the foreground. The goal is to explore social, political, or historical events and community patterns that transcend particular individuals. This study argues that people are influenced not only by interpersonal conflicts but also by demeaning and disruptive sociopolitical realities. Transformative theater seeks to help a collective cope better with their shared psychological distress. It unfolds under the guidance of an experienced group leader who monitors the improvised dramatic reenactment and attempts to keep the group focused and actively involved. The timeframe for a reenactment varies, ranging from fifteen minutes up to an hour or more. The process can continue, however, over a period of time. The size of the group can also vary, from as few as 5 people to a larger group of 15 or more. The group leader seeks to let as many people participate as possible in the dramatic reenactment. Every participant is regarded as significant. Their feelings, thoughts, and actions can neither be predicted nor controlled. Transformative theater thus provides a healing modality in which preferred narratives can emerge.

The primary components of transformative theater include: (1) introduction and trust-building; (2) improvisational drama-based reenactment; (3) reflective sharing and interpersonal support; and (4) closure ritual. After the group leader completes introductions and trust-building exercises, participants volunteer to play the various roles in the drama. The incident is reenacted by the participants, who are encouraged to discuss their experiences, emphasizing their thoughts, emotions, and physical reactions. Taking enactments out of the flow of life, symbolically, to examine, replay and reframe them, provides a vehicle for influencing and changing existing patterns of thinking, feeling, behaving, and interacting.[18] Reflective sharing revises the event, correcting distorted attitudes and constructing new schemas. It situates the event within a new perceptual framework, changing its meaning and facilitating the healing process for every participant. The goal is to foster meaningful communication and interpersonal connection. It is vitally important that the participants share on a deep emotional level. Lastly, transformative theater should end with a closure ritual. The group leader or participants may suggest a shared group activity that serves as a culmination to the process.

Transformative theater can also be enacted utilizing nonverbal forms of expression. The dance form “krumping,” for example, might be characterized as the performance of a type of transformative theater. Popularized in the film documentary *Rize* (2005), the dance form was created in the late 1990s by African American youth attempting to traverse the traumatic effects of American neoliberalism in their South Central Los Angeles neighborhoods. In krumping, the dramatic reenactment occurs, not with improvised spoken words, but between free-styling black bodies. Members of the local community gather to “get krump” in “sessions,” where socially authorized safe spaces are formed to witness the dramatic exchanges improvised in dance. These “left behind” observers, cordoned off and contained in communities where Reagan’s promise of a trickle, never came down, gather to witness black bodies moving, “popping,” conversing, reenacting, and releasing neoliberal trauma. These are living human documents dancing counter-hegemonic stories; black human documents struggling to deflect, to disrupt, and to disentangle themselves from the debilitating effects of a neoliberal web. “Getting krumped,” as a mode of transformative theater thus enables the disenfranchised to gain “voice.” It helps young black Americans to cope with their interpersonal conflicts and shared socioeconomic realities. For practitioners of prophetic soul care, krumping points to the potency of dance as a mode of expression that opens up intriguing new possibilities for transformative theater as a healing modality. Krumping also points to the fact that soul care practitioners will need to be attuned to the presence of “culturally appropriate healing resources” situated in noninstitutional spaces.

Community Building

Community building is a core empowerment and supportive strategy employed by practitioners of prophetic soul care. The neoliberal age is built upon a privileging of individual autonomy and an acceptance of various forms of inequality. As a result, left behind sectors of the population frequently experience alienation and estrangement. The neoliberal emphasis on individual liberty thrives at the expense of an alternate worldview that values the common good of the community. This worldview recognizes that individual actions have communal effects, both detrimental and beneficial. It is a worldview in which the common good of the community is given consideration in any decision-making process. In the midst of a matrix of demeaning market-driven forces eroding connection, community building functions as an indispensible mode of soul care. The Maafa Commemoration represents, among other things, black Americans "drawing upon one of the most important and powerful resources at their disposal—their very identity as a community."[19] For many people, worldviews and identity are still forged within the context of particular communities. And it is from the locus of these potentially subversive spaces that counter-hegemonic discourses can be fostered and resistance practices can be sustained. Community building, then, is a crucial component of prophetic soul care. As the forces of an alienating racially driven neoliberalism threaten African Americans and other populations, the value of community building as a counter-hegemonic strategy takes on greater urgency.

Because the neoliberal age signifies a level of authority established in a matrix of market-driven systems, it cannot be totally undermined solely on one front (see chapter 2). Any successful challenge to the neoliberal age must comprise a collaborative network of different strategies.[20] In an effort to "metaphorically structure" prophetic soul care, two "images of care" are proposed.

Cultural Brokering

Certain enduring metaphors have served to inform the care of souls. Some of these metaphors[21] include the *wounded healer*, the *wise fool*, and the *agent of hope*.[22] The essence of metaphor entails understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. The use of any metaphor, albeit, provides only a partial understanding of the concept which it seeks to illustrate. Any metaphor which brings into focus one aspect of a concept in terms of another will also necessarily mute other aspects of that concept. “Metaphorical structuring” is always partial.[23] At the same time, one of the fascinating aspects of the employment of metaphor is its capacity to bring into view continuities among actions that previously appeared to be disconnected or unrelated. The image of the *cultural broker* is helpful in metaphorically structuring the realms of practice that inform prophetic soul care.

A *broker* is usually defined as an intermediary, agent, interpreter, or messenger. The concept of cultural brokering can be traced back to the earliest recorded encounters between cultures. The term cultural broker was first utilized by anthropologists who observed that there were certain indigenous people whose role in their society was as a cultural intermediary, usually with a Western imperialist society.[24] Cultural brokering has subsequently been defined as “the act of bridging, linking, or mediating between groups or persons of different cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change.”[25] Cultural brokers, however, also function as mediators, negotiating complex processes *within* communities and cultures.[26] Cultural brokers might be understood as functioning in four capacities: cultural guide, mediator, liaison, and catalyst for change.[27] As a *cultural guide*, the cultural broker facilitates the enhancement of cultural awareness and competence to manage cultural change.[28] In the role of *mediator*, cultural brokers serve as intermediaries, enabling groups to access mediating structures and diffuse distrust between groups. As a *liaison*, the cultural broker serves as a facilitator of communication between or within groups. Acting as a *catalyst for change*, the cultural broker advocates for and facilitates transformation.

As stated, practitioners of soul care serve as *cultural guides*, facilitating the enhancement of cultural awareness. This includes educating about the impact of the neoliberal age on traumatized and threatened communities. Practitioners of soul care serve as *mediators*, working as intermediaries that enable groups to access mediating structures and diffuse distrust between entities. Mediating structures are “meaning making” environments that support personal and political efficacy.

They are safe spaces that promote healing and aid in reframing past traumas and future possibilities. These structures function as "sites of resistance" that mediate relationships of power and provide opportunities where subjects can make creative use of the "third space" for formation of the self.[29] From this perspective, the Maafa Commemoration serves as a mediating structure. It is a communal site of alternate ordering where the harm done by racially driven neoliberalism's misrepresentations are rectified.

Prophetic soul care practitioners may, as indicated, be called upon to function as mediators themselves. This study argues that the reframing of cultural trauma always involves a "meaning struggle" in which a community grapples with the significance of the past event in the context of various regimes of power.[30] To facilitate this process, within any culture there are "socially authorized" persons or groups that disseminate symbolic representations to and for the collective. These are typically significant individuals or groups working within the community who are authorized to give voice to the community's concerns. Here, the poet, preacher, activist, artist, or practitioner of prophetic soul care may be among those who are socially authorized to re-present a significant event. These meaning makers have the task of identifying or developing systems of symbolization which best give expression to the community's experiences. These meaning makers function, in essence, as cultural brokers. Socially authorized by the collective, they function as mediators, giving voice not to their own ideas and interests, but rather articulating ideas to and for the collective.[31]

As a *liaison*, practitioners of prophetic soul care facilitate communication between and within groups. Neoliberal governance, as indicated, is pursued through a diffuse matrix of actors using various methods depending upon the context. It takes on various forms and employs specific strategies in different localities. In too many inner cities, for example, the public school system seems to initiate black youth into, rather than liberate them from, systems of disempowerment. Research regarding the so-called school-to-prison pipeline concurs,

> The increase in prisons and the policing of schools are both rooted in the convergence of neoliberalism, conservatism, and penal populism. This convergence criminalizes minority youth and reinforces the school-to-prison pipeline...Law enforcement and school officials compound the matter by implementing zero-tolerance policies in the name of public safety. The result is that minority youth who have been suspended, expelled, or adjudicated in the juvenile justice system will likely be fed into the school-to-prison pipeline and be further excluded from our neoliberal society.[32]

The prophetic soul care practitioner, operating as a liaison, might broker communications between parents and school officials regarding zero-tolerance policies in systems where education functions as a "practice of domination" as opposed to a "practice of freedom."[33] In light of ongoing unrest and outrage following countless cases of black men and women dying subsequent to their encounters with local police, "socially authorized" prophetic soul care practitioners, functioning as liaisons, can broker communications between estranged segments of the population.

Finally, soul care practitioners are *catalysts for change*, who advocate for and facilitate transformation. This includes facilitating interventions that address not only interpersonal impediments but also structural hindrances to human development. This includes interrogating any system aligned to maintain the hegemonic hold of neoliberalism on the lives of black Americans and other disempowered and exploited groups. Here, prophetic soul care critiques and confronts social forces inhibiting human flourishing and undermining human worth. This includes the development of strategies that enable people to resist the debilitating impact of the neoliberal age. In sum, the practitioner of prophetic soul care is called upon to *build bridges of communication, manage the dynamics of cultural difference, help groups mediate those differences, and advocate for transformation.* The image of the cultural broker thus proves to be helpful in "metaphorically structuring" the realms of practice that inform prophetic soul care in the neoliberal age. It brings into view continuities among care practices that may have previously appeared to be disjointed.

This study argues that representations of collective memory can reframe the past in ways that are transformative of a group's experience of the present and future (see chapter 5). The Maafa Commemoration is examined as a "memory performance" that calls the past to mind in order to help African Americans make meaning out of their traumatic experiences in the present. A longstanding African principle underlies these dynamics and provides yet another important image that metaphorically structures the practice of prophetic soul care in the neoliberal age—the African concept known as Sankofa.

Sankofa

The concept of Sankofa had its inception in the West African countries of Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The word Sankofa in the Akan language translates in English to "go back and retrieve." Sankofa can be represented by a bird with its head turned backward taking an egg off its back (see figure 6.3).[34]

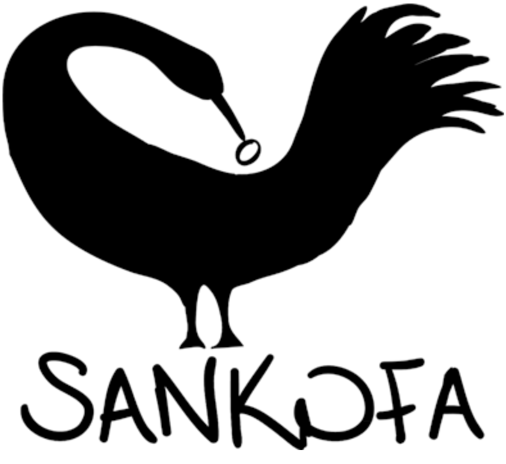

Figure 6.3 Sankofa bird.

It symbolizes taking from the past what is good and bringing it into the present in order to make positive progress through the benevolent use of knowledge. Although the reference is to the past, Sankofa entails the process of retrieval for the purposes of building a successful future. Surviving centuries, the concept has since been adopted by other cultural groups around the world.

Sankofa as a metaphor for prophetic soul care entails the retrieval of *emancipatory memories* that promote healing and facilitate liberative action by African Americans and other groups who have and continue to struggle against the traumatic impact of oppressive exploitative systems. Sankofa is central to the effectiveness of the Maafa Commemoration. The commemoration represents a "way of remembering" that calls the homeland to mind in order to help African Americans "make meaning" out of their contemporary experiences in a hostile hostland. Remembrance is not employed merely to conjure nostalgic reminiscence. Here, remembrance is utilized as a cultural resource in the struggle for social and economic justice. Emancipatory memory is utilized to excavate psychocultural resources and deploy them to facilitate movement into the future in a way that honors the community's values and beliefs. Emancipatory memory is thus understood as a vital resource for practitioners of prophetic soul care.[35]

Memory, however, is a highly contested space in the neoliberal age. As countless histories of domination attest, imperial power engenders practices that distort, repress, or explain away memories of suffering and struggle. Frantz Fanon similarly observes, imperial power "is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip…it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it."[36] In the neoliberal age, transnational corporations and media conglomerates expend billions in explicit and insidious strategies that erase, supplant, and commodify non-Western histories, traditions, and identities. Emancipatory memory, then, is subversive. It does not simply mirror or reproduce the prevailing "social-economic determinants." Rather, it challenges and interrogates the ruling structures. It resists forgetfulness, recalls what has been lost, fights against distortion, and critiques the status quo. Sankofa conjures emancipatory memories that unleash new insights for the present and new possibilities for the future. By maintaining that the future is yet open, emancipatory memory grounds and restores hope.

Emancipatory memory provides a basis not only for psychocultural resilience but also for sociopolitical resistance. Benita Parry elucidates the political potency of modes of refusal nurtured by unsuspected emancipatory impulses :

> There is of course abundant evidence of native disaffection and dissent under [imperial] rule, of contestation and struggle against diverse forms of institutional and ideological domination. Inscriptions and signs of resistance are discernable…and can be located in narrativised instances of insurrection and organized political opposition. Traces of popular disobedience can also be recuperated from unwritten symbolic and symptomatic practices in which a rejection or violation of the subject position assigned by colonialism is registered. Here the modes of refusal are not readily accommodated in the anticolonial discourses…Since they were not calculated to achieve predetermined political ends…the anarchic and nihilistic energies of defiance and identity-assertion, which were sometimes nurtured by dreams, omens and divination, and could take the form of theatre, violated notions of rational protest.[37]

Part of the struggle for African Americans and other exploited and marginalized groups is the struggle against the dominant symbolic paradigms. By remembering the past and reframing its meaning for the present, communities can plant symbolic seeds of change, rather than simply propagate symbols that legitimate and maintain the existing political arrangements. As opposed to merely propping up the status quo, the process of remembrance and reframing functions as a crucial weapon in the political struggles of the disenfranchised. It provides a basis for a new definition of political relations and the delegitimating of the existing power relations.[38] Through remembrance and reframing, the disempowered can overcome their politically debilitating disenfranchisement and be galvanized to challenge the position of the dominant group. Sankofa can now be seen as a counter-hegemonic strategy that transforms cultural resources into political tools. In the neoliberal age, herein lays the political potency of emancipatory memory. It can lead people to reframe their political universe, creating alternate conceptions of the present and new visions for the future. The following comments of an attendee of the Maafa Commemoration point to these dynamics:

> Even people that work in our community who are Caucasian, Jewish, and Muslim have come to see the commemoration. Afterwards, they start to *do* things in a different way because they *see* things in a different way. They need to heal as well. It's not for me to say, well it wasn't you who did it; it was your great grandmother. But it's been passed down, so if they are crying let them cry. Let them release and feel sorrow for what their ancestors did. And then try to work on what we can do next.

As a paradigm for prophetic soul care, Sankofa might therefore be characterized as a process of retrieving *emancipatory memories that disrupt the hegemonic hold of the neoliberal age, calling it into question by reframing the past, creating alternate conceptions of the present and inspiring new visions for the future*. Sankofa, as an image of care, thus employs remembrance and reframing to facilitate healing and liberative action. It informs subversive acts of resilience and resistance that seek to undermine demeaning and oppressive structures. As a paradigm for prophetic soul care, it entails the retrieval of emancipatory memory that shapes our psychic, cultural, and political realities. Sankofa thus signifies openness to past experiences of suffering and struggle. It is an openness that looks backward in remembrance of and in solidarity with the dead. This looking backward in remembrance and solidarity includes mourning for those in the past.

Reclaiming Lament

The expression of lament is a crucial component of prophetic soul care in the neoliberal age. To lament means to express grief, to mourn, to weep, wail, or regret. It arises in situations where individuals or communities experience suffering and cry out for release from pain, deliverance from evil, or for justice to be established. Lament is "faith's alternative to despair."[39] It encompasses both the voice of pain and the voice of prayer.[40] This study has argued that the experience of trauma is often "language shattering." Lament is the voice of pain, the possibility of speech, when suffering is so great that it is difficult to speak. Lament gives expression to the experience of suffering and provides a language to articulate anguish, grief, and outrage. It, however, is not only the voice of pain. Lament is also the voice of prayer. In lament, "the mute voice receives speech and a mode of prayer, a way to ask for help when the ordinary modes and structures of human life cannot provide that anymore. Where all language has been shattered by suffering, lament becomes a speech-enabling gift of God."[41]

Lament is characterized by an individual's or community's sense of unjust suffering and their feeling of being abandoned by God and/or significant others.[42] When a community gives voice to its suffering, it stands in the Hebrew Bible's tradition of lament. It is instructive that the first time the voice of lament is heard in the Hebrew Bible, it is the voice of Abel—one who is already murdered and dead.[43] This warns us against assuming that past cries of suffering do not matter, that once the suffering has annihilated the individual or group it is too late, that nothing can be done, God cannot and will not help.[44] Just as God heard the "voice" of Abel crying out from the grave, God hears the cries of Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland, and Freddie Gray. God yet hears the cries of disempowered, oppressed, and exploited populations. At the very beginning of the story of God and humanity, we see that God is attentive to the human voice that cries out in pain and suffering.

Language of Lament

Lament, however, is not an end in itself. The goal of lament is healing. Billman and Migliore identify three central convictions which support the use of lament as a prophetic soul care resource. First, the bringing of one's experience of suffering to "voice" is vital to the process of healing and hope. Lament facilitates healing by helping suffering people move from a condition of muteness to the "language of lament." It is an act of faith that conveys a willingness to trust God with the blatant honesty of one's experience rather than deny or avoid a painful reality. Second, the process of healing is facilitated by the availability of some flexible structure or form of expression for suffering people. Individual and communal expression is enhanced when there are vehicles that help give shape and form to that expression. The Maafa Commemoration thus serves as a vehicle for communal lament. It is a flexible structure that fosters the articulation of suffering, anguish, and outrage. The commemoration facilitates the bringing of individual and collective suffering to "voice" and promotes healing. Historically for black Americans, musical forms such as the spirituals, the blues and, more recently, hip hop have functioned as modes of expression that have given shape to communal lament.[45] Third, the transition from lamentation to hope is facilitated in the context of community.[46] The use of communal lament enables people to enter the invisible company of those who have had similar sufferings.[47] The soul care practitioner's role is to help facilitate communication among those who grieve, moving from private lament to public acknowledgment, "transform[ing] what is individual into something corporate."[48] Cultures that recognize the value of the "village" in human development often show a spontaneous comprehension of this. The suffering person is joined by family and friends who "weep with those who weep" and join their tears and prayers in communal lament. They do not silence the sound of lament. They augment it. Human beings need the strength that comes through shared sorrow. When others join in the lament, sanction is given for the expression of loss. It is in this communal context that "each member is upheld and each person's sorrow matters to all."[49] In communal lament, the isolation of suffering is broken by an experience of solidarity that is essential if change is to occur. "Suffering is not too much to bear," James Cone poignantly reflects, "if there are brothers and sisters to go down in the valley to pray with you."[50]

As a mode of communal lament, the Maafa Commemoration is enacted in the presence of the visible community and the "invisible company" of those who have had similar sufferings in the past.

Deferred Urban Dreams

From this perspective, the so-called riots in the United States, witnessed in the aftermath of several cases of black Americans being killed in encounters with local police, might be understood as expressions of lament. Many have commented that these acts are violent and seem woefully counterproductive. While there have certainly been those who have taken advantage of these incidents, should these manifestations of outrage be totally dismissed? To the contrary, I believe, what America witnessed might be characterized as powerful expressions of communal lament. This study contends that various governance strategies are utilized to control and contain the pain engendered by the material and epistemic violence of the neoliberal age. The anguish experienced by many African Americans, however, has too often been turned inward and expressed in depression, feelings of indifference, and emotional detachment (see chapter 4). The unbearable pain of being left behind in the neoliberal age and forgotten on the other side of the economic divide continues to be anesthetized by black people through the use of drugs, alcohol, and mind-numbing mass media. What Langston Hughes wrote about Harlem is yet clearly applicable to Baltimore, Ferguson, and countless other urban centers impacted by racially driven neoliberalism: "What happens to a dream deferred . . . Maybe it just sags like a heavy load . . . or does it explode?"[51]

Lament, as stated, facilitates healing by helping suffering people move from a condition of muteness to the "language of lament." Communal lament enables people to enter the company of those who have had similar sufferings. It facilitates communication among those who grieve, transforming what is individual into something corporate. Many of the so-called riots that arose in response to paramilitary-styled police actions represent the efforts of traumatized people attempting to give voice to communal lament. In the absence of the availability of flexible structures that help black Americans give shape and form to the material and epistemic violence inflicted upon them, the riots, or rather the insurrections, represent attempts to articulate communal anguish and outrage. They are expressions of agency. The insurrections facilitate communication among those who grieve, moving from private lament to public acknowledgment. They are indicators of "justified anger" in response to the violence perpetuated against black Americans in the neoliberal age.

Justified Anger and Authentic Rebellion

For Eliezer Berkovits, in the wake of the Jewish Holocaust, expressions of faith were caught between trust and protest, answers and silence. One cannot speak of faith in the abstract, he determined, so he was forced into seemingly untenable solidarity with both the Jewish victims who continued to affirm God and those whose experience forced them to rebel. Such rebellion was characterized as "authentic rebellion" or "holy disbelief." Both were considered religious positions in their own right. For Berkovits, both believers and rebels retain their status as members of the faith community. Zachary Braiterman posits a formulation that is similarly informed by post-Shoah Jewish thought.[52] Theodicy is the familiar term that has been employed to include any attempt to justify, explain, or find acceptable meaning to the relationship that subsists among God, evil, and suffering. In contrast, Braiterman posits the term *anti-theodicy* to illustrate those discourses that *refuse* to find acceptable meaning in the relationship that subsists among God, evil, and human suffering. Anti-theodicy, however, does not constitute atheism. To the contrary, it may express a stubborn love that humans have for God. Auschwitz, he found, forced many people to at least consider that no promised redemption is worth the price of catastrophic suffering. Anti-theodicy refuses to be intimidated into sacrificing its innocence so that God might save face. Braiterman asserts, *not* to question God's existence in the presence of burning children would amount to blasphemy.

Throughout the United States, cities, towns, and suburbs have been filled with people expressing anti-theodic responses or “justified anger” in response to the various ways in which the neoliberal age has traumatically impacted their lives, their communities, this nation, and the world. For many of them, not to question God and every human authority in the presence of a relentless assault on black humanity amounts to blasphemy. The deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, Freddie Gray, and countless other known and unknown victims of police brutality have engendered an “authentic rebellion.” Crowds in urban centers have responded, staging “die-ins,” interrupting sporting and political events, and shutting down bridges. In the neoliberal age, practitioners of prophetic soul care are thus called to be involved in the nurturing and development of faith communities which serve as safe spaces that help give shape and form to expressions of anguish, outrage, complaint, and protest. These are communities of faith that recognize it is inappropriate to call for peace when either a victim of domestic violence is not safe or when victims of neoliberal violence are not safe.

We Are the World

While this study is concerned with the traumatic impact of American neoliberalism on African Americans, the global expansion of neoliberalism has profound implications for populations worldwide. The term “globalization” is employed to characterize the trans-regional interconnectedness involving networks and cultural flows across regional and national boundaries. The globalization of neoliberalism signifies the closer integration of the peoples and countries of the world which has been facilitated by the reduction of costs of communication and transportation, and the breaking down of barriers to the flows of capital, goods, services, knowledge, and people across borders.[53] Neoliberal globalization thus refers to an integrated global economy fueled by export-oriented trade, best facilitated by a deregulated highly competitive private sector.

Though it is supported by transnational corporations, corporate business leaders, bankers, and the institutions they have created, such as the World Trade Organization, the uncritical acceptance of neoliberalism masks the fact that this model is a particular form of corporate capitalism that has become the dominant conceptual framework for globalization in the West, even as it threatens “the rest.” Increasingly, powerful transnational corporations are forcing nation states to comply with business and trade policies that benefit big business at the expense of local cultures and communities. In 1993, former Citibank chairman Walter Wriston stated:

> [E]stimates are that two to three trillion dollars a day are exchanged in Manhattan [stock exchange] alone…This huge floating pool of capital goes where it is wanted and stays where it is well treated. If people who own that capital perceive that a nation’s economic policies are bad or that the return on their investment…is higher in another country, it goes…Thanks to the growing power of technology…[b]orders are not boundaries anymore. Foreign exchange control is no longer possible. In effect, technology gives government a choice: create hospitable climates for capital or suffer the consequences.[54]

In the late twentieth century, some transnational corporations subsequently grew larger than nation states. With the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the breaking down of the traditional Cold War trading blocs, the door was opened further for the articulation of a new economic paradigm that was more global in focus than previously possible. The loss of the Soviet Union as a trading power hastened China’s interest in capitalist trade. Corporations besieged the former eastern nation states with the hopes of profiting from the privatization of heretofore state-owned enterprises. As the Cold War trading blocs dissipated, new trading allegiances emerged in regional trade alliances such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), The European Union, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation organization (APEC).[55] What is not emphasized often enough, though, is the fact that these trans-regional networks and cultural flows were and continue to be largely asymmetrical. The cultural, economic, and political structures of certain populations are subordinated to foster the economic interests of transnational corporations, banking executives, and finance elites. These exploited populations play a vital and important role in the international economy, as their internal development is "conditioned" by the needs of the corporate entities within the neoliberal capitalist system.

The neoliberal policies and practices that exacted material and epistemic violence on many black Americans now threaten populations worldwide. In light of the expansion of neoliberalism, countless societies now struggle to live their lives in a world that increasingly escapes their grasp, one that is irrevocably and globally networked. Neoliberal governance, as stated, takes on various forms and employs distinctive strategies in different localities. Deployed in various global contexts, these governance strategies yet overwhelm personal and cultural meaning-making capacities. The neoliberal age is, subsequently, regarded as a traumatogenic environment not only for many black Americans but also for countless other populations worldwide who are equally confronted by these same forces.

Practitioners of prophetic soul care are thus called to critically engage structures of oppressive power and employ practices of care that facilitate healing and hope. Religious practices have the capacity to provide communities, which are traumatized or threatened by the neoliberal age, with the requisite psychocultural resources for resilience and the sociocultural resources for resistance. Religious practices provide disempowered groups with the psychocultural moorings essential for human agency in the face of the daunting global character of the neoliberal age. This study strongly supports the use of prophetic soul care in which (1) "counter-hegemonic" resistance is understood as therapeutic and (2) indigenous religious forms are viewed as potential sites of resistance. It is my hope that this research will inform the practice of prophetic soul care with African Americans and other populations traumatized by the neoliberal age, and contribute in some way to the ongoing development of pastoral care practices that help give "voice" to other counter-hegemonic sources of subversive power.

Notes

1 Bearing Witness

1. See Ron Eyerman, "Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity," in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004); Joy Leary, *Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome* (Milwaukie, OR: Uptone Press, 2005); Omar Reid, Sekou Mims, and Larry Higginbottom, *Post Traumatic Slavery Disorder* (Charlotte, NC: Conquering Books, 2005); Na'im Akbar, *Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery* (Tallahassee, FL: Mind Productions, 1996).
2. Two important exceptions include Manning Marable's *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy and Society*, updated edn (London: Pluto Press, 2000); Archie Smith, Jr.'s *The Relational Self: Ethics and Therapy from a Black Church Perspective* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1982). Though both texts predate the academic codification of the term "neoliberalism," both are concerned with the impact of an exploitative capitalist system on African American functioning. Like Marable, I argue that neoliberalism (what Marable characterizes as "Reaganism") created an environment in which US corporations "culturally manipulated" and then abandoned much of Black America. This study, however, attempts to attend to some of the "conceptual flaws" Marable identified in his own text. He notes, "The most significant conceptual flaw in the work is its central organizational premise—that the totality of African American history has been polarized and structured around the class division between the Black 'haves' and the Black 'have nots.' The real contours of Black American social history were always much more complicated, more textured, than this analysis suggests...The real problem, however, isn't the contradictory and accommodationist behavior of the Black

middle class, but the exploitative policies and practices of the capitalist ruling class" (xxxi). I agree with Marable's observations and attempt to put forth a textured analysis that foregrounds the exploitative neoliberal policies and practices of the capitalist ruling class and their implications for African American soul care. Archie Smith Jr.'s *The Relational Self* likewise posits a multi-system's approach to African American pastoral care that foregrounds the problematic impact of capitalism. Smith rightfully notes that conservative shifts in politics and religion occurring in the US during the 1970s "helped to strengthen an uncritical commitment to the structural arrangements and social relations that underlie an expanding and exploitative economic system, namely profit-centered capitalism" (167). This project extends the analyses posited by Smith during the dawning of the neoliberal age.

3. Though this study focuses on the traumatic intersections between American neoliberalism and race-based oppression and exploitation, it must be noted that gender-based oppression and exploitation has and continues to be employed by what are now globalized neoliberal structures that likewise function as sites of terror and trauma for women.
4. The publishing in 1951 of Milton Friedman's paper, "Neo-liberalism and Its Prospects," has been characterized as a "the moment when neoliberalism became a self-conscious political and economic concept in the United States." The paper articulates a vision of a limited state whose central role is the establishment and maintenance of the free market. In the neoliberal age, the government is not eliminated from the market process. Rather, the government "protects and reinforces the space for individual actors to pursue economic goals freely." For example, the state guarantees the quality and integrity of money, and sets up the military, police, and legal structures required to secure private property rights and insure the proper functioning of markets. Where markets don't exist, they must be created, by state interventions if necessary. Beyond these tasks the state should not venture. See Jones, Masters of the Universe, 96. See Milton Friedman, "Neoliberalism and Its Prospects," 1951, Friedman Papers. A version of this essay was later published in the journal *Farmand* (February 1951, vol. 17, 89–93).
5. David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford, 2005), 3.
6. Ibid.
7. Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), 20.
8. Ibid., 8.

9. David Theo Goldberg, *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism* (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), viii.
10. Joe Soss, Richard C. Fording and Sanford F. Schram, *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 1.
11. Stuart Hall, "Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance," in *Race Critical Theories*, edited by Essed, Philomena and Goldberg, David T. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 38–68.
12. Cornel West, "Race and Social Theory," in *The Cornel West Reader*, ed. Cornel West (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 1999), 256–257.
13. Suki Desai, "From Pathology to Postmodernism: A Debate on 'Race' and Mental Health," *Journal of Social Work Practice* 17, no. 1 (2003): 97–98.
14. Samuel A. Cartwright, "Report on the Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race," in *Health, Disease, and Illness: Concepts in Medicine*, Arthur L. Caplan, James J. McCartney, and Dominic A. Sisti, eds. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 28–39.
15. Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Routledge, 1988), 181.
16. Kathleen Nader, Nancy Dubrow, and B. Hudnall Stamm, eds. *Honoring Differences: Cultural Issues in the Treatment of Trauma and Loss* (Philadelphia, PA: Brunner/Mazel, 1999), xviii.
17. See Celia Brickman's discussion in *Aboriginal Populations in the Mind: Race and Primitivity in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 158.
18. See Christie Cozad Neuger, "Power and Difference in Pastoral Theology," in *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms*, ed. Nancy J. Ramsey (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 65–85.
19. Christie Cozad Neuger, *Counseling Women: A Narrative, Pastoral Approach* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 103.
20. While an "integrative approach" is new to the practice of pastoral care, it was introduced to the field of family therapy by William C. Nichols. See *Treating People in Families: An Integrative Framework* (New York: Guilford Press, 1996).
21. William C. Nichols, "Integrative Family Therapy," in *Family Counseling and Therapy*, ed. Arthur M. Horne (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2000), 540.
22. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, "Feminist Theory in Pastoral Theology," in *Feminist & Womanist Pastoral Theology*, ed. Bonnie

J. Miller-McLemore and Brita L. Gill-Austern (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 86.

23. Homer U. Ashby, *Our Home Is Over Jordon: A Black Pastoral Theology* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003), 51.
24. Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 26.
25. Ibid., 5.
26. Cornel West, "The New Cultural Politics of Difference," in *The Cornel West Reader* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 1999), 128.
27. Cornel West, *Prophetic Fragments: Illuminations of the Crisis in American Religion and Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 74–75.
28. Douglas A. Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 390.
29. Ibid.
30. Marimba Ani, *Let the Circle Be Unbroken: The Implications of African Spirituality in the Diaspora* (New York: Nkonimfo Publications, 1980), 12; *Yurugu: An Afrikan-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Washington, DC: Nkonimfo Publications, 1994), xxi.
31. Monica Dennis, ed. Maafa *Commemoration 10th Anniversary Newspaper* (Brooklyn, NY: St. Paul Community Baptist Church, 2004), 4.
32. Also see Eyerman, "Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity"; Reid, Mims, and Higginbottom, *Post Traumatic Slavery Disorder*; Akbar, *Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery.*
33. Here, I differ with two important interlocutors: Frantz Fanon and Stuart Hall. Fanon discounts the ability of indigenous religious forms to generate emancipatory practices. He does not detect the revolutionary potency of the counter-narratives embedded in indigenous traditions and customs. For Fanon, the dynamism inherent in African religious practices, what he terms the "phantasmic plane," is not capable of facilitating revolutionary anti-imperial actions. Hall also dismisses religion as a space capable of organizing an alternative politics, or an alternative cultural or economic life. Harnessed to a secularist ideal, he admits, "we forgot about" religion. See Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 55–58; Colin MacCabe, "An Interview with Stuart Hall, December 2007," *Critical Quarterly* 50, nos. 1–2 (2008): 38.

34. Marimba Ani, *Let the Circle Be Unbroken: The Implications of African Spirituality in the Diaspora* (New York: Nkonimfo Publications, 1980), 52.
35. Ithiel C. Clemmons, *Bishop C.H. Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ* (Bakersfield, CA: Pneuma Life Publishing, 1996), 4.
36. Ibid., 115.
37. C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 15.
38. Clemmons, *Bishop C.H. Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*, 18.
39. Ibid., 31.
40. Ogbu U. Kalu, "Preserving a Worldview: Pentecostalism in the African Maps of the Universe," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 130.
41. Clemmons, *Bishop C.H. Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*, 26.
42. While this discussion of sanctification employs a sociocultural lens to highlight its capacity to inform resistance practices in the larger society, I recognize that in some COGIC churches the holiness doctrine of sanctification devolved into a legalistic practice which informed dress codes that proved, at times, to be oppressive, particularly to women.
43. Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., "Bishop C.H. Mason and the Church of God in Christ during World War I: The Perils of Conscientious Objection," *Southern Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of the South*, 26 (Winter 1987): 279.
44. Though women have, from its inception, been intricately involved in the development and growth of the Church of God in Christ, the denomination's episcopal leadership comprises entirely men, and the denomination does not ordain women for pastoral ministry.
45. Robert Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2000), 115.
46. Ennis B. Edmonds, *Rastafarianism: From Outcasts to Culture Bearers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 50.
47. Ibid., 45.
48. Ibid., 41.
49. Ibid., 89.
50. See Daniel Boyarin's discussion of "cultural poetics" in *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 17.

51. Richard Robert Osmer builds upon the discussion of "practices" initiated largely by Alasdair MacIntyre, Stanley Hauerwas, and others. Osmer appropriates the concept of religious practices and reframes it in light of Christian theology. See *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 95. Also see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981); Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).
52. Richard R. Osmer, *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 63.
53. Each site has been a contested space, with forces of oppression against women impeding their involvement in leadership in COGIC and Rastafarianism; and forces of commodification impinging upon the cultural practices of both groups.
54. Osmer, *Teaching Ministry*, 92.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., 91–92.
57. African American scholars have heretofore not drawn, in any extensive manner, from postcolonial perspectives. This may be related to the fact that postcolonialism has tended to overemphasize theoretical concepts that do not attend sufficiently to the traumatic violence of the African American experience. One exception is Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), which is arguably the most significant attempt to date to correlate postcolonialism and African American studies. Postcolonialism has otherwise marginalized the horrific lived reality of the dominated and muted the relevance of a revolutionary praxis of resistance. African American scholars know all too well that the "subaltern" does speak. bell hooks' critique of postmodernism might therefore be directed at post-colonialism as well. She observes, the discourse "still directs its critical voice primarily to a specialized audience that shares a common language rooted in the very master narratives it claims to challenge." See bell hooks, "Postmodern Blackness," in *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*, ed. Gloria Watkins (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990), 25.
58. Chris Rojek, *Stuart Hall* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 5.
59. See Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 12–16.

2 Race to the Bottom

1. Joe Soss, Richard C. Fording and Sanford F. Schram, *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 20.
2. D. Stanley Eitzen and Maxine B. Zinn, eds. *Globalization: The Transformation of Social Worlds*, 3rd edn (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2012), ix.
3. Rebecca Todd Peters, *In Search of the Good Life: The Ethics of Globalization* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 49.
4. Archie Smith Jr., *The Relational Self: Ethics and Therapy from a Black Church Perspective* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1982), 163.
5. Soss et al. *Disciplining the Poor*, 1.
6. Mark L. Taylor, *The Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 56–57.
7. Ibid., 2.
8. Soss et al. *Disciplining the Poor*, 3.
9. The theoretical roots of this model trace back to the British economist, John Maynard Keynes. Keynes argued that if private enterprise was unwilling or unable to initiate investment in the economy, then the government should fulfill that economic role. Keynes' approach, though firmly rooted in neoclassical economic theory with its emphasis on growth, individualism and the free market, nonetheless offered an alternative to the laissez-faire economists who argued that the markets worked best when government left them alone. Keynes' lasting contribution to economic theory is his highlighting the necessity of governments to sometimes take an active role in directing, controlling and stabilizing market economies.
10. David Harvey, *Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford, 2005), 12.
11. Daniel Stedman Jones, *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 217.
12. Loic Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Security* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 2009), 12.
13. Harvey, *Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 15.
14. Nell Irvin Painter, *Creating Black Americans: African-American History and Its Meanings, 1619 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 295.
15. This legislation established Medicare, Medicaid, the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

16. James H. Cone, *Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream of a Nightmare* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 286.
17. Painter, *Creating Black Americans*, 308.
18. See Cone, *Martin and Malcolm.*
19. Ibid., 282.
20. Ibid., 223.
21. Painter, *Creating Black Americans*, 305.
22. Ibid.
23. See Anthony Badger, "Martin Luther King, Jr." and Patricia Sullivan, "Civil Rights Movement" in *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*, ed. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 1999).
24. Soss et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, 29.
25. Harvey, *Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 15.
26. David Theo Goldberg, *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism* (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), 91.
27. Douglas A. Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 390.
28. Goldberg, *The Threat of Race*, 91.
29. Jones, *Masters of the Universe*, 137.
30. See Harvey, *Brief History of Neoliberalism.*
31. Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip Hop Generation* (New York: Picador, 2005), 14.
32. Ibid.
33. Harvey, *Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 73.
34. George Winslow, *Capital Crimes* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999), 142.
35. Jason Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 16.
36. Harvey, *Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 62–63.
37. Jones, *Masters of the Universe*, 263.
38. Ibid., 264.
39. Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop*, 220.
40. David Wilson, *Inventing Black on Black Violence: Discourse, Space, and Representation* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 44.
41. Winslow, *Capital Crimes*, 164.
42. Between 1974 and 1978, the number of corporate-sponsored political action committees (PACs) grew from 89 to 784. An additional 500 PACs were created to represent trade associations and business interests. See Soss et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, 29.

43. Winslow, *Capital Crimes*, 165.
44. Ibid.
45. Jones, *Master of the Universe*, 132.
46. Painter, *Creating Black Americans*, 308–309.
47. Winslow, *Capital Crimes*, 145.
48. Wilson, *Inventing Black on Black Violence*, 23.
49. Winslow, *Capital Crimes*, 154.
50. Wilson, *Inventing Black on Black Violence*, 25.
51. Ibid., 26.
52. Ibid.
53. G. Galster and J. Daniell, "Housing," in *Reality and Research: U.S. Urban Policy Since 1960*, ed. G. Galster (Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press, 1996), chap. 5, 95.
54. Wilson, *Inventing Black on Black Violence*, 26.
55. Ibid., 26.
56. See photographer Steve Siegel's flickr photostream at https://www.flickr.com/photos/stevensiegel/page26. Scroll down to view "NY in the 80s" photos #7, 41, 42, 45 and other images of urban blight caused by neoliberal policies. Accessed on May 15, 2015.
57. Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop*, 18.
58. Ibid., 17.
59. The President's Commission on Housing, *Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1982), xix.
60. L. Vale, *Reclaiming Public Housing: A Half-Century of Struggle in Three Public Neighborhoods* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 8.
61. Urban Institute, *A Decade of Hope VI: Research Findings and Policy Changes* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2003), 10–11.
62. *The Message*, verse 1, written by Anthony DeWayne Perkins and Eric Jay Robinson, published by Warner/Chappell Music (1982).
63. Winslow, *Capital Crimes*, 153–154.
64. Ibid., 154.
65. Ibid., 155–156.
66. Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop*, 196.
67. Winslow, *Capital Crimes*, 189.
68. Taylor, *The Executed God*, 20.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid., 26.
71. Ibid., 25.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., 56–57.
74. Ibid., 49.
75. Ibid., 50–51.

76. Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor*, xvi.
77. Ibid., xxii.
78. While the concept "hegemony" was introduced by Antonio Gramsci, it was Stuart Hall who appropriated the term and employed it as a conceptual tool to understand the forces constitutive of race and identity. Hall's work engages the question of what is the best prism to conceptualize cultural identity so that white supremacism can be combated through an emancipatory anti-racist politics. Though there have been shifts in Hall's heuristic lens over the years, he continued to focus on the relationship between race, identity, and broader cultural, economic, and political factors and forces. The reference to "a world constituted through confrontation between the West and its 'others,'" to macro changes of the neoliberal age are a common theme in his writings.
79. Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (New York: Routledge, 1996), 424.
80. Ibid., 428.
81. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, trans. and eds. Hoare, Q. and Smith, G. (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 242.
82. Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 428. Gramsci nuances his conception of hegemony based on two distinctions—between the state/civil society and between the "East" and the "West." These terms illumine a historical transition from one form of politics to another that takes place in "the West" after 1870. It juxtaposes the conditions of pre-revolutionary Russia, with its lack of modernization, enlarged state apparatus, undeveloped civil society, and low level of capitalist development, against the conditions of "the West," with its mass democratic forms and complex civil society. The conditions of "the West" are viewed as increasingly becoming characteristic of modern political forms in more and more countries. "The West," however, does not merely stand for a geographical identification. Rather, it signifies a new mode of politics, constituted by emerging forms of the state and civil society and new, more complex, relations between them.
83. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, translated by Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 38, 140.
84. Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance!: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity*, Anniversary edn (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 119.
85. Stuart Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity," in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial*

Perspectives, ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shofat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 178.

86. Ibid., 182.
87. Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (New York: Routledge, 1996), 445. Also see Gayatri Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 169 and 172.
88. Hall, "New Ethnicities," 445.
89. Theme song for "Good Times" written by Alan and Marilyn Bergman.
90. Stuart Hall, "What Is This 'Black' in Black Popular Culture?" in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (New York: Routledge, 1996), 469–470.
91. Cornel West, *Democracy Matters* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), 175.
92. "Niggaz4Life," verses 2 and 3, written by William Collins, Tracy Curry, Lorenzo Patterson, Andre Young, and George Clinton, Jr., Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, A Side Music LLC, Sony Music Publishing LLC (1991).
93. Imani Perry, *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 195.
94. Barbara Bush, *Imperialism and Postcolonialism* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2006), 199.
95. Soss et al., *Disciplining the Poor*, 12.
96. Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 423.
97. Jones, *Masters of the Universe*, 270–271.
98. Ibid., 338.

3 Black Roses, Cracked Concrete

1. Cornel West, "Race and Social Theory," in *The Cornel West Reader.*, ed. Cornel West (New York: Basic Civitas Books), 1999, 257.
2. bell hooks, "Postmodern Blackness," in *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*, ed. Gloria Watkins. Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990, 29.
3. Ibid.
4. West, "Race and Social Theory," 257.
5. India Arie, "I Am Not My Hair," in *Testimony: vol. 1, Life & Relationship* (New York: Motown Records, 2006), track 11, verse 3, lines 1 and 2, and chorus, written by Shannon Sanders, Alecia Moore, India Arie Simpson and Andre Ramsey.

6. bell hooks, *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 179.
7. See J. Brooks Bouson, *Quiet as It's Kept: Shame, Trauma, and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000).
8. Cornel West, *Race Matters* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 27.
9. Ibid., 23.
10. Ibid., 24–26.
11. Tupac Shakur, *The Rose That Grew from Concrete* (2000), written by Tupac Shakur, Femi Ojetunde, Jamal Joseph, Royal Iman Bayyan, Tarik Jackson Bayyan, Samaria Graham, Universal Music Publishing Group.
12. William E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Signet Classic, 1995), 221.
13. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Padmini Mongia (New York: Arnold, 1997), 116.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 117.
16. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 45.
17. Hall, "Cultural Identity," 111.
18. Ibid., 117.
19. The idea of white supremacy is understood in this study as having been constituted as an object of modern discourse in the West, independent from the demands of the prevailing modes of production or the political interests of imperial powers. The doctrine of white supremacy has from its inception had a life and logic of its own within history, related to and intersecting with economic and political factors, but not reducible to the interests or forces emanating from these realms. The doctrine of white supremacy predates capitalism. Images of blackness constructed through discourse, literature, and art can be found in Roman times. The current conception of white supremacy is grounded historically in the rise of modernity. Modern white racism was a product of the Enlightenment. Several scholars have done substantive examinations of the development of white supremacy as a modern discourse. See Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance!* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982); Frank M. Snowden, *Before Color Prejudice: An Ancient View of Blacks* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); David Theo Goldberg, "Modernity, Race

and Morality" in *Race Critical Theories*, ed. Philomena Essed and David Theo Goldberg (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002).

20. H. Adlai Murdoch, "(Re)Figuring Colonialism: Narratological and Ideological Resistance," *Callaloo* 15, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 2.
21. Goldberg, "Modernity, Race and Morality," 290.
22. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 43.
23. Ibid., 52.
24. Lillian Comas-Diaz, "An Ethnopolitical Approach to Working with People of Color," *American Psychologist* 55.11 (November 2000): 1320.
25. See James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441–1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 115–117.
26. Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 77.
27. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1952), 38.
28. David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 181.
29. Hall, "Cultural Identity," 113.
30. Charles F. Peterson, *Du Bois, Fanon, Cabral* (New York: Lexington Books, 2007), 94.
31. See Michel Foucault, *Power*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: New Press, 1994).
32. Emmanuel Y. Lartey, *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World* (London: Epworth, 2007), 43.
33. Diana Fuss, "Interior Colonies: Frantz Fanon and the Politics of Identification," *Diacritics* 24, no. 2/3 (Summer–Autumn 1994): 21.
34. Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. Morley, David and Chen, Kuan-Hsing (New York: Routledge, 1996), 437.
35. See William E. Cross, Jr., Thomas A. Parham, and Janet E. Helms, "Nigrescence Revisited: Theory and Research," in *African American Identity Development*, ed. Reginald L. Jones (Hampton, VA: Cobb and Henry, 1998), 3–71.
36. See Thomas Parham, *Psychological Storms: The African American Struggle for Identity* (Chicago: African American Images, 1993), 39–40.
37. Nigrescence theorists have not attended sufficiently to the historical dimensions of black identity development. One exception is

Bailey Jackson. Jackson posits that the stages of nigrescence models are themselves identity types. These identities, he asserts, are not period specific, but are present throughout the history of blacks in America. At any particular historical moment, Jackson allows, one identity may be normative for reasons unique to that period, while other identity profiles are present, but take on less significance. As time progresses, he indicates, the ancillary identity may become normative and the previously normative identity less pronounced. See Cross, Parham, and Helms, "Nigrescence Revisited," 18–19.

38. Na'im Akbar, *Akbar Papers in African Psychology* (Tallahassee, FL: Mind Productions and Associates, 2003), 160.
39. Ibid., 169–171.
40. Wade Nobles, "Introduction," in *Psychological Storms: The African American Struggle for Identity*, byThomas A. Parham (Chicago: African American Images, 1993), iii.
41. See Cornel West's discussion in "The Indispensability Yet Insufficiency of Marxist Theory," *The Cornel West Reader* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 1999), 213–230.
42. See Erik H. Erikson, "Black Identity," in *Childhood and Society*, ed. Erick H. Erikson (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963 rev. ed.), 241–246; Erik H. Erikson, "A Memorandum on Identity and Negro Youth," (1964) in *A Way of Looking at Things: Selected Papers from 1930 to 1980*, ed. Stephen Schlein (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 644–659; Erik H. Erikson, "Race and the Wider Identity," in *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, ed. Erik H. Erikson (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), 295–320. In addition, in the concluding lecture in *Dimensions of a New Identity* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), Erikson addresses the challenges of African Americans who are neither able to choose to be different nor free to decide to remain what they are (114).
43. Erikson, "A Memorandum," 648.
44. Erikson, "Race and the Wider Identity," 303.
45. Ibid., 309.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Here, we may be seeing the influence of Frantz Fanon on Erikson. Erikson's characterization of the term estranged parallels Fanon. Alienation and estrangement were both terms employed by Fanon in his effort to conceptualize the impact of systems of domination on the development of black identities. As reflected in Erikson's comments during two lectures in 1968, he was familiar with the writings of Fanon. See *Life History and the Historical Moment* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), where Erikson indicates, "some psychiatric

activists believe in the cathartic healing power which the exertion of violence, so long suppressed, may have for the 'wretched of the earth'" (188). In another lecture, Erikson notes, "By emphasizing the therapeutic necessity of revolutionary violence, Fanon forms an ideological link between anti-colonialism and the 'Freudian revolution'" (201).

49. Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1952) is a groundbreaking treatise that explores the dynamics of imperial domination. While it calls attention to the significance of political and economic factors, the focus is on the challenges of identity development in a dominating white society that takes its supremacy for granted. Though some point to a lack of theoretical sophistication in *Black Skin, White Masks*, it nonetheless represents a revolutionary "opening salvo" that subverts the hold of universalized Western discourses. In Lola Young, "Missing Persons: Fantasizing Black Women in Black Skin," in *The Fact of Blackness: Frantz Fanon and Visual Representation*, ed. A. Read (London: I.C.A., 1996), Lola Young rightly criticizes Fanon for his exclusion of black women in his theoretical frameworks. And while it is arguable whether a charge of sexism is warranted, Fanon's use of the term *man* to connote humanness in *Black Skins, White Masks* effectively mutes issues related to gender difference in the colonial encounter. When Fanon explicitly reflects upon how this "paranoid fantasy" works for black Antillean *women* he concludes: "I know nothing about her" (180). While these admissions and omissions are certainly troubling, it is clear that Fanon's work has contributed immensely to contemporary theorizing regarding black identity development in the context of white supremacism and imperial domination. Also see Alice Cherki, *Frantz Fanon: A Portrait*, trans. Nadia Benabid (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).
50. Cherki, *Frantz Fanon*, 26.
51. Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1964), 34.
52. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 211.
53. See Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 52–103.
54. Kelly Oliver, *The Colonization of Psychic Space: A Psychoanalytic Social Theory of Oppression* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2004), 9.
55. Ibid.
56. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 218.
57. Erikson, "Race and the Wider Identity," 309.

58. Fanon, *Black Skin*, 100.
59. Fanon, *African Revolution*, 38–39.
60. Ronald Hall, "The Bleaching Syndrome: African Americans' Response to Cultural Domination Vis-à-vis Skin Color," *Journal of Black Studies* 26, no. 2 (November 1995): 172–184.
61. Skin lightening soaps and creams are commonly used in India and certain African and Asian nations. In India, 61 percent of the dermatological market consists of skin lightening products. In 2010, India's skin whitening cream market was worth 432 million, with Indians spending more money on these products than on Coca-Cola. Seventy seven percent of the women in Nigeria and 59 percent of the women in Togo report using skin lightening products on a regular basis. A study by the University of Cape Town suggests that one woman in three in South Africa bleaches her skin. In 2004, nearly 40 percent of women surveyed in China (Province of Taiwan and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), Malaysia, the Philippines, and the Republic of Korea reported using skin lighteners. The reasons for this are as varied as the cultures in this country but most people say they use skin lighteners because they want "white skin." See World Health Organization, "Mercury in Skin Lightening Products," in *Preventing Disease through Healthy Environments Series*, ed. World Health Organization (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2011).
62. See Parham, *Psychological Storms*.
63. bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005), 12.
64. Richard Majors and Janet Billson, *Cool Pose: The Dilemmas of Black Manhood in America* (New York: Touchstone, 1992), 59.
65. See Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge Classics, 1994), 121–131.
66. Fuss, "Interior Colonies," 24.
67. Ibid., 25.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., 24.
70. See John Clarke, "Style," in *Resistance through Rituals*, ed. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (New York: Routledge, 1993), 149–150.
71. See C. Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966) and C. Levi-Strauss, *Totemism* (New York: Penguin, 1969).
72. James Procter, *Stuart Hall* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 91.
73. See James E. Marcia, "Development and Validation of Ego Identity Status," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 3 (1996): 551–558.
74. Hall, "Cultural Identity," 112.

4 Forgetting to Remember

1. Ira Brenner, *Psychic Trauma: Dynamics, Symptoms and Treatment* (New York: Jason Aronson, 2004), 115.
2. Freud's engagement with psychological trauma is evident in his early work with hysterics. Following the renowned neurologist, Jean-Martin Charcot, Freud hypothesizes that hysterics suffer from a condition that is psychological in nature. Freud and his colleague, Joseph Breuer, argue that the symptoms of hysterics are distorted representations of traumatizing events that were banished from memory. Freud's first extended articulation of a formal "theory" of trauma is found in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle, trans. and ed. by James Strachey* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961) . He modifies his concepts in subsequent writings and presents an intriguing theoretical shift in *Moses and Monotheism*, trans. Katherine Jones (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1939), the last book he completed before his death. *Moses and Monotheism* has subsequently become a central text in trauma studies because in it Freud reads trauma not merely as an individual occurrence, but as a collective psychocultural experience.
3. The use of psychoanalytic concepts may seem inappropriate to analyze the traumatic effect of the neoliberal age on African American development. Narrow readings of Freud have led to the "Occidentalizing" of psychoanalysis—as a universalized master narrative that characterizes the lived realities of non-Europeans as "primitive." There is undoubtedly a recurring tendency in Freud's formulations to privilege the perspective of the white male subject. However, contrary to the assertions of some critics, psychoanalysis is not an integrated homogenous point of view. Contemporary psychoanalytic thought has in fact become quite complex and varied. This is reflected in the ongoing production of numerous lines of inquiry that have expanded the boundaries of psychoanalytic theory.
4. Freud, as a European Jew, personally experienced the trauma of cultural imperialism and suffered as a racialized "Other." His experience as a racialized "Other," I believe, informs a trauma theory that sheds light on the collective transformations and adaptations that occur in relation to the imposition of disruptive hegemonic cultural ideals. In so doing, Freud also provides a psychoanalytic rationale for psychocultural resilience and sociopolitical resistance. The development of Freud's thought cannot be divorced from his own traumatic encounters with racism and imperialism. However, Freud's work, like that of any other scholar, has been informed by a diverse set of factors, including the larger society in which he lived. These

forces, along with others, created the unique social context out of which Freud's thought emerged and was given meaning. See Celia Brickman, *Aboriginal Populations in the Mind: Race and Primitivity in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). Also see Sander L. Gilman, *Freud, Race and Gender* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993) and Janet Liebman Jacobs and Donald Capps, eds., *Religion, Society, and Psychoanalysis* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

5. Edward Said, *Freud and the Non-European* (New York: Verso, 2003), 27.
6. Gordon R. Dodge, "In Defense of a Community Psychology Model for International Psychosocial Intervention," in *Handbook of International Disaster Psychology*, vol. 1, ed. Gilbert Reyes and Gerald A. Jacobs (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), 54.
7. Neil J. Smelser, "Psychological and Cultural Trauma," in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 38.
8. See Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma," in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 1.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 10.
11. Piotr Sztompka, "The Trauma of Social Change," in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 162.
12. Ibid., 164.
13. Erik H. Erikson,*Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), 298.
14. Alexander, "Theory of Cultural Trauma," 12.
15. Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, trans. and ed. J. Matthew Ashley (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2007), 89.
16. Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 8.
17. Yael Danieli, ed., *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma* (New York: Plenum Press, 1998), 4.
18. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 8.
19. Ibid., 9.
20. See Joy Leary, *Post-traumatic Slave Syndrome* (Milwaukie, OR: Uptone Press, 2005); Omar Reid, Sekou Mims, and Larry

Higginbottom, *Post Traumatic Slavery Disorder* (Charlotte, NC: Conquering Books, 2005); Na'im Akbar, *Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery* (Tallahassee, FL: Mind Productions, 1996).

21. See Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2012).
22. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 33.
23. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, 122.
24. Ibid., 109–110.
25. Ibid., 201.
26. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 34.
27. Ibid., 35.
28. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961), 24.
29. Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 6.
30. Ibid., 59.
31. Ibid., 4.
32. Kareen Ror Malone and Stephen R. Friedlander, eds., *The Subject of Lacan: A Lacanian Reader for Psychologists* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), 191.
33. Ibid., 192.
34. James J. DiCenso, *The Other Freud: Religion, Culture and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 44.
35. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 39.
36. See Christopher Bollas, *Being a Character: Psychoanalysis and Self Experience* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
37. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 42–43.
38. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, 124.
39. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 87.
40. Fanon, *Black Skin*, 17.
41. Homi K. Bhabha, *Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge Classics, 1994), 63–64.
42. Ashis Nandy, "The Uncolonized Mind," in *Exiled at Home*, ed. Ashis Nandy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 109.
43. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 89.
44. Ibid., 90.
45. Richard Majors and Janet Billson, *Cool Pose: The Dilemmas of Black Manhood in America* (New York: Touchstone, 1992), 59.
46. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 94.
47. Ibid., 102.
48. Ibid., 107.
49. See Sztompka, "Trauma of Social Change," 184–189.

50. Freud came to realize that his earlier formulations did not sufficiently explain the mechanism of repression and how the self was protected against traumatizing stimuli. Repression could not be based in the instincts, since the instincts were precisely what were being repressed. Some entity or structure within the person had to be capable of transcending and censoring external stimuli and internal impulses, allowing them to be repressed, sublimated, or expressed. In response, Freud puts forth a "structural model" of the "self" comprised of three different kinds of agencies—the ego, id, and super-ego. See Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961).
51. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 84.
52. Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961), 14.
53. Imani Perry, *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 186.
54. Bollas, *Being a Character*, 73.
55. DiCenso, *The Other Freud*, 90–91.
56. Wade Nobles, "Introduction," in *Psychological Storms: The African American Struggle for Identity*, ed. Thomas A. Parham (Chicago: African American Images, 1993), x.
57. Freud, *Future of an Illusion*, 15.
58. Ibid.
59. In *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), Freud posits a provocative reinterpretation of the Exodus narrative. His reinterpretation of the Exodus narrative begins with the assertion that Moses was an Egyptian aristocrat who was associated with the historic reforms of the Egyptian king, Akhenaten. Known also as Pharaoh Amenhotep IV, Akhenaten plunged Egypt into a religious revolution that shattered centuries of tradition. He abolished Egyptian polytheism and established a purely monotheistic religion that radically changed Egypt's entire cultural system. The images of Egyptian gods were demolished, their names were erased, the temples were closed, and their cults were discontinued. The nonobservance of ritual disrupted the Egyptian's worldview and dismantled their structures of meaning. Akhenaten's reign lasted, however, for only 17 years, from 1375 BCE until 1358 BCE. After Akhenaten's death, the nation revolted against his reforms. Every effort was made to erase all memory of him from Egypt's historical record and almost every trace of his existence was obliterated. His name and his reforms were repressed and forgotten. At this point, Freud deviates from the historical record. He posits that after Akhenaten's death and the subsequent revolt, Moses decided to

secure the allegiance of a second people who would remain true to monotheism and lead them out of Egypt. Freud proposes that, like Akhenaten, Moses imposed monotheistic religion on the Israelites. The Israelites later rose up against Moses, killed him, and abandoned their new religion. According to Freud, Moses thus met with the same fate as Akhenaten.

60. Sharon D. Welch, *Communities of Resistance and Solidarity* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985), 19.
61. See Fanon's discussion in *Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963).
62. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 155.
63. Ibid., 241.
64. Ibid., 160.
65. Ibid., 41.
66. Ibid.
67. Alexander, "Theory of Cultural Trauma," 22.
68. Brenner, *Psychic Trauma*, 181.
69. Alexander, "Theory of Cultural Trauma," 7.

5 A Healing Journey

1. Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 155.
2. Anne A. Schutzenberger, "Health and Death," in *Psychodrama with Trauma Survivors: Acting Out Your Pain*, ed. Peter Felix Kellermann and M. K. Hudgins (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), 287.
3. Ibid.
4. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 178.
5. Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma," in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 7.
6. Kathleen Nader et al., *Honoring Differences: Cultural Issues in the Treatment of Trauma and Loss* (Philadelphia: Brunner/Mazel, 1999), xviii.
7. Ibid., 12.
8. Ibid., xvii.
9. The term "Maafa" was introduced into contemporary scholarship by Dr. Marimba Ani, an African studies professor at Hunter College in New York City. African Americans, she contends, need a term that

will allow them to claim their unique experience of suffering and reframe it from their own perspective. In *Let the Circle Be Unbroken* (1980) and *Yurugu* (1994), Ani appropriates the term Maafa to reference the catastrophic suffering of diasporic Africans at the hands of Europeans. See Marimba Ani, *Yurugu: An Afrikan-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Washington, DC: Nkonimfo Publications, 1994) and *Let the Circle Be Unbroken: The Implications of African Spirituality in the Diaspora* (New York: Nkonimfo Publications, 1980).

10. See Paul Christopher Johnson, *Diasporic Conversions: Black Carib Religion and the Recovery of Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
11. Ibid., 48.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., 41.
14. Ibid., 258.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 33.
17. Ibid., 45.
18. Ibid., 41.
19. Ibid., 245.
20. Stuart Hall, "The Meaning of the New Times," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (New York: Routledge, 1996), 235.
21. Hall, "Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity," in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shofat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 184.
22. Hall, "Meaning of New Times," 237.
23. Winslow, *Capital Crimes*, 142.
24. Samuel G. Freedman, *Upon This Rock: The Miracles of a Black Church* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993), 117.
25. Ibid., 105.
26. See photographer Steve Siegel's flickr photostream at https://www.flickr.com/photos/stevensiegel/page26. Scroll down to view "NY in the 80s" photos #7, 41, 42, 45 and other images of urban blight caused by neoliberal policies. Accessed on May 15, 2015.
27. Freedman, *Upon This Rock*, 28.
28. Ibid., 3.
29. Ibid., 106.
30. Ibid., 243.
31. Ibid., 28.

32. Rev. Dr. Johnny Ray Youngblood served as Senior Pastor of St. Paul Community Baptist Church from 1974 to 2009. During this study, St. Paul Community Baptist Church was in the midst of a 3-year transitional period during which pastoral leadership was being transferred from Rev. Youngblood to his successor Rev. David Brawley. During Youngblood's tenure, St. Paul established a reputation for being explicitly Afrocentric in its theological commitments and liturgical practices. This emerges, to a great extent, out of Youngblood's commitment to racial parity, social justice, economic equity, and spiritual healing for all people. Youngblood is a staunch proponent of liberation theologies that inform empowerment ethics. Here the focus is not only merely on a future-oriented eschatological hope, but also on a pragmatic liberative praxis that equips individuals to live effectively in the here and now.
33. Monica Dennis, ed., *Maafa Commemoration 10th Anniversary Newspaper* (Brooklyn, NY: St. Paul Community Baptist Church, 2004), 4.
34. The pastoral theologian Emmanuel Y. Lartey similarly notes the vital importance of finding or establishing "sites of memory" or sacred places where trauma is commemorated which have particular poignancy for African Americans. See "Black Memory: Commemorating the Sacred and the Traumatic in the African Diaspora," in *Suffer the Little Children: Urban Violence and Sacred Space*, ed. Kay A. Read and Isabel Wollaston (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 2001), 157–168; and *Postcolonizing God: An African Practical Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2013).
35. While this project only describes the initial Maafa Commemoration founded at St. Paul Community Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York, the research has been enriched by interviews and observations made at the Maafa Commemoration convened at Mt. Airy Baptist Church, pastored by Rev. Dr. Anthony Bennett, located in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Rev. Bennett previously served on the staff at St. Paul Community Baptist under the tutelage of Rev. Dr. Johnny Ray Youngblood. Shortly after accepting the call to pastor at Mt. Airy Baptist Church, Rev. Bennett instituted the Maafa Commemoration at this congregation. Where appropriate, content from interviews with participants in the Maafa Commemoration at Mt. Airy Baptist Church have also been included.
36. Peter Felix Kellermann, *Sociodrama and Collective Trauma* (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007), 67.
37. Peter Felix Kellermann and M. K. Hudgins, eds., *Psychodrama with Trauma Survivors: Acting Out Your Pain* (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), 11.

38. Excerpt from recitation of "For the Millions," at St. Paul Community Baptist Church during the 2008 Annual Maafa Commemoration. See Abiodun Oyewole, "For the Millions," in *The Last Poets on a Mission: Selected Poetry and a History of the Last Poets*, ed. Abiodun Oyewole et al. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 146.
39. M. K. Hudgins, "The Therapeutic Spiral Model: Treating PTSD in Action," in *Psychodrama with Trauma Survivors: Acting Out Your Pain*, ed. Peter Felix Kellermann and M. K. Hudgins (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), 250.
40. James H. Cone, "Blood on the Leaves," lecture at annual Maafa Commemoration, St. Paul Community Baptist Church, Brooklyn, NY, September 22, 2008.
41. Cone, "Blood on the Leaves."
42. Hudgins, "The Therapeutic Spiral Model," 234.
43. Kellermann, *Sociodrama*, 77.
44. Johnson, *Diasporic Conversions*, 53–54.
45. Malidoma Patrice Somé, *The Healing Wisdom of Africa: Finding Life Purpose Through Nature, Ritual, and Community* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1999), 150–151.
46. The term "Nommo," was appropriated by Marimba Ani to conceptualize the capacity to spiritually activate another being. Nommo, she believes, is manifested in the ability of the Creator, the ancestors, and human beings to make use of the energy within the universe. Nommo can be spoken. It can be thought, sung, or activated in silent prayer. The black preacher, she suggests, uses Nommo to motivate the congregation. The "roots" man uses it to energize the herbs and potions he prescribes. See Ani, *Let the Circle Be Unbroken*, 40–41.
47. Somé, *Healing Wisdom*, 23.
48. For more information about what modern physicists now call "M Theory," see Michio Kaku, *Parallel Worlds: A Journey Through Creation, Higher Dimensions, and the Future of the Cosmos* (New York: Doubleday, 2005) and Brian Greene, *The Fabric of the Cosmos: Space Time, and the Texture of Reality* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005).
49. Somé, *Healing Wisdom*, 53.
50. Johnson, *Diasporic Conversions*, 110.
51. Ibid., 237.
52. See Chester Higgins, Jr., *Feeling the Spirit: Searching the World for the People of Africa* (New York: Bantam, 1994).
53. Johnson, *Diasporic Conversions*, 3.
54. From this perspective, "becoming black" in the United States and "becoming African" are understood as distinct processes. "Blackness is primarily based on color and on an event-driven temporality and

set of narratives about events caused by color-based racism, from the Middle Passage to abolition, citizenship, suffrage, and civil rights." This view of black identity, however, is confined to the experience of struggle in the United States. See Johnson's discussion in *Diasporic Conversions*, 46–49.

55. See Leith Mullings, "Race and Globalization," in *Transnational Blackness: Navigating the Global Color Line*, ed. Manning Marable and Vanessa Agard-Jones (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 11–18.
56. Concerns remain regarding the potential for retraumatization and the need for additional safeguards to protect participants from being emotionally overwhelmed by the commemoration. Also, can the Maafa Commemoration facilitate healing for black women for whom the *church* has been a site of violence and oppression? These are some of the questions that remain to be addressed in future research.

6 Prophetic Soul Care

1. Cornel West, "Black Theology and Marxist Thought," in *African American Religious Thought: An Anthology*, ed. Cornel West and Eddie Glaude (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 887.
2. See Cedric C. Johnson, "Resistance Is Not Futile: Finding Therapeutic Space between Colonialism and Globalization," in *Healing Wisdom: Depth Psychology and the Pastoral Ministry*, ed. Kathleen Greider, Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, and Felicity Kelcourse (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).
3. D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (Philadelphia: Brunner-Routledge, 1991), 2.
4. Ibid., 51.
5. Ann Bedford Ulanov, *Finding Space: Winnicott, God, and Psychic Reality* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 44.
6. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 5.
7. Ulanov, *Finding Space*, 18.
8. Ibid., 20.
9. Ibid., 23.
10. See Johnson, "Resistance Is Not Futile."
11. Ulanov, *Finding Space*, 49.
12. Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring, 1986): 24.
13. West, *Race Matters* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 24.
14. Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 113.

15. Ibid.
16. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 159.
17. This conception of transformative theater is informed by a synthesis of two counseling frameworks. The first is narrative theory as articulated by Michael White and David Epston. The second is the field of psychodrama and sociodrama as discussed by Peter Felix Kellermann. See Michael White and David Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (New York: Norton, 1990) and Peter Felix Kellermann, *Sociodrama and Collective Trauma* (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007).
18. Rory Remer, "Secondary Victims of Trauma," in *Psychodrama with Trauma Survivors: Acting Out Your Pain*, ed. edited by Peter Felix Kellermann and M. K. Hudgins (Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000) (see note 53), 329.
19. Rebecca Todd Peters, *Search of the Good Life: The Ethics of Globalization* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 160.
20. Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, edited by David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (New York: Routledge, 1996), 429.
21. Metaphor is typically understood as a device of poetic imagination or rhetorical flourish. For most people, it is understood to be a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Metaphor is similarly characterized as a matter of words as opposed to *thought* or *action*. Lakoff and Johnson contend however that the *concepts* which govern our thoughts *and* actions are also thoroughly metaphorical. They argue that, not just in language, but in the thoughts and actions of everyday life, what we *do* is very much a matter of metaphor. See George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980).
22. See Robert C. Dykstra's discussion in *Images of Pastoral Care: Classic Readings* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2005).
23. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 13.
24. National Center for Cultural Competence, "*Bridging the Cultural Divide in Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs*," Georgetown University Medical Center, Spring/Summer 2004, 2.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 3.
27. Ibid., 3–4.
28. Ibid., vii.
29. See discussion in Johnson, "Resistance Is Not Futile."

30. Eyerman, “Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity,” in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 62.
31. Ibid., 63.
32. See Catherine Y. Kim, Daniel J. Losen, and Damon T. Hewitt, *The School-to-Prison Pipeline: Structuring Legal Reform* (New York: New York University, 2010) and Richard Mora and Mary Christianakis, “Feeding the School-to-Prison Pipeline: The Convergence of Neoliberalism, Conservatism, and Penal Populism,” *Journal of Educational Controversy*, Woodring College of Education, Western Washington University, retrieved March 10, 2015 (www.wce.wwu.edu).
33. See Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).
34. Sankofa Bird” is a not a copyrighted work. It was retrieved from http://www.africawithin.com/akan/akan_knowledge.htm on January 22, 2010.
35. Emmanuel Lartey similarly points to the concept of Sankofa as a resource for pastoral care in “Black Memory.”
36. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 169.
37. Benita Parry, “Resistance Theory/Theorising Resistance or Two Cheers for Nativism,” in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Padmini Mongia (New York: Arnold, 1997), 85.
38. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 169.
39. Deborah Hunsinger, *Pray Without Ceasing: Revitalizing Pastoral Care* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 138.
40. Patrick D. Miller, “Heaven’s Prisoners: The Lament as Christian Prayer,” in *Lament: Reclaiming Practices in Pulpit, Pew, and Public Square*, ed. Sally A. Brown and Patrick D. Miller (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 16.
41. Kathleen D. Billman and Daniel L. Migliore, *Rachel’s Cry: Prayer of Lament and Rebirth of Hope* (Cleveland, Oh: United Church Press, 1999), 107.
42. Ibid., 7.
43. See Genesis chapter four, verses one through twelve.
44. Miller, “Heaven’s Prisoners,” 16.
45. See James H. Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1972).
46. Billman and Migliore, *Rachel’s Cry,* 86.
47. Eugene Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1980), 144.

48. Ibid., 145.
49. Hunsinger, *Pray Without Ceasing*, 152.
50. James H. Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1972), 58.
51. Langston Hughes, "Harlem," in *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes* (New York: Random House, 1990).
52. Zachary Braiterman, *(God) after Auschwitz: Tradition and Change in Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).
53. Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and It's Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), 9.
54. Winslow, *Capital Crimes* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999), 158–159.
55. Peters, *In Search of the Good Life*: *The Ethics of Globalization* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 48.

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