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The inclusion of the African-centered aesthetic within the tradition of aesthetic inquiry as a tool for promoting inter- and intra-cultural understanding

Ambush, Debra Jean, Ph.D.

The Ohio State University, 1993
THE INCLUSION OF THE AFRICAN CENTERED AESTHETIC
WITHIN THE TRADITION OF AESTHETIC INQUIRY AS
A TOOL FOR PROMOTING INTER-
AND INTRA-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

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*****

The Ohio State University
1993

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Adviser
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To my son Malcom.
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The horizons of the 21st century compel those concerned with the viability of art education to pause and reflect on the daily practice of embracing traditional and popular notions of visual art. Such notions have been buoyed by educational and societal structures which shape and cultivate a particular set of cognitive processes directing thinking about what is beautiful and useful and what is not. The rationalized absence of African American cultural images and symbols along with the recognition and accommodation of cognitive processes that undergird their meaning within educational venues have been increasingly called into question by those concerned with the concept of self (Brown, 1993; Asante, 1993; Snowden, 1983; Jewell 1993; Myers, 1989).

The largely unacknowledged relationship of these variables within art education practice highlights a point of intersection
that is nonetheless central to the everyday experiences of both
the teacher and the student. My own memories of reconciling
what I carried out as a teacher in the name of art education along
with the stark contrast in realities that touch the lives of African
American children I have taught over the years have lead me to
formulate a set of questions in this regard.

As I look back on my fourteen years of teaching, student
centered issues of race and identity were constant factors to
which my position as art teacher was not immune. Whether the
educational settings were Chapter One\textsuperscript{1} schools where minority
populations were high, rural high schools where the minority
population was little or none, juvenile detention centers housing
disproportionate numbers of African Americans, or home
instruction sites for expectant mothers, all of the students
appeared to have been touched in some way by the relationship
of race and identity while immersed in art curriculum that was
anchored in a philosophical distance.

This was never so clear for me as it was during my last
year of teaching. During that time African American students
sometimes choose to share with me what their experiences of
coping with racism had been, while others expressed a desire to
know more about their own cultural heritage. The extent to
which I could be responsive and supportive to the students through curriculum was relative to the ecological factors within the school district.

In other words, dependent on the type of autonomous curriculum leadership given within a school, acceptance in the school community of curriculum that went beyond episodic attentiveness to African American culture and experience, was something that was characteristically monitored and tempered. For example, one administrator told me, after several parent inquiries, that I could not "make" a class of predominantly white students go to the African Art museum- while the previous trip to the American Museum of art went off unquestioned and without incident.

Contrastingly, in another school I was given the freedom to construct an art program in which ESOL (English speakers of other languages) children were supported in learning the English language through art. At this same school I was able to coordinate an interdisciplinary project between local African American visual and performing artists that resulted in a learning experience in the form of an assembly for an entire school.
At other times I have been a member of public school faculties who sit at the political sidelines of communities uncomfortable with the prospect of projected minority increases in student populations. As an African American educator, I often wondered if people really believed that young African Americans and other minority children never knew that they were often in the eye of such political storms. Paradoxical images (e.g., the consistent ones of African Americans going to jail "first thing" on the evening news, or disgruntled white middle class parents filling board of education rooms, in contrast to the images to be found in Shorewood reproductions and Eurocentric surveys of twentieth century art) confront daily the African American children who are asked to digest them.

The educational landscape in which art curriculums are played out subsequently appears to vary in terms of the socio-political climate in which a school exists. Edmonds (1983) concurs in his study of schools effectiveness as he concludes that variability in the distribution of achievement among school age children in the United States derives from variability in the nature of the schools to which they go. A major question that emerged from my experiences as an art teacher over the years has to do with elements within and outside of educational curriculum which keep intact hegemonic ideologies
within our society and, hence are an ever present part of an existing hidden curriculum.

In order for art educators to begin to grasp more broadly what Schubert (1986) defines as the ecology of curriculum, several concepts are developed within this study. Curriculum ecology speaks to the interdependent network of education curricula that forges outlooks and ideals learned in a culture, society and world (Schubert, 1986).

Two entities are introduced here,

1.) the concept of cultural representational form and symbol systems and their function within-

2.) my theory of aesthetic negation systems which move us closer to an understanding of "Padeia"¹, the ways in which historical processes form human character, ideals, and actions.

If we are to openly and honestly contribute to more positive academic outcomes for greater numbers of African American children who comprise a growing proportion of the overall school population, we must abandon the invisibility factor in art education curriculum design, development, and implementation. In this way we can begin to face within each of these aspects of curriculum what has been out of sync.
**Obstacles to Achievement:**

**Understanding What We Teach Art Against**

Sylva (1993) suggests there is a growing sense in the field of art education that we need to give more thought to what it is exactly that we are teaching art against.

A crucial part of that concern should be accountable to the educational plight of African American children who do not enjoy mainstream status in the American social system (Spencer, 1983). While African Americans constitute about a third of the U.S. population and are expected to grow in numbers faster than those of the European American majority, the maintenance of unequal worlds for African Americans and European Americans in education and achievement remains a major obstacle for success (Spencer, 1990). Steele (1991) asserts that these circumstances are in fact characteristic of a particular kind of stigma, an endemic devaluation that positions African American children in our society as essentially unvalued clientele. This is illuminated in Steele's (1991) discussion of African Americans and European Americans who typically begin school with equivalent test scores. While advancing through school,
large gaps between the achievement levels of these groups occur (Steele, 1991).

Steele (1991) asserts that a familiar set of explanations for this disparity is disseminated through the media and sustained within institutions. For example, we hear of the preponderance of societal disadvantages for African Americans which include historical, economic, and educational factors. These factors allegedly result in problems of broken families, drug infested communities, and social isolation. Other explanations for this discrepancy in achievement are targeted at African American culture, charging that it fails to sustain the values and expectations critical to education, or that it fosters learning orientations ill suited to school achievement (Steele, 1991). These facts fail to concur with several realities:

1) these achievement deficits occur even when African American students suffer no major financial disadvantage;

2) references show that even poor African Americans value education highly and;

3) research into racial bias in testing shows that in educational venues, from elementary schools to graduate schools, something depresses African American achievement at every level of preparation (Steele, p.4, 1991).
Boykin (1983) posits that the incorporation of psychological factors that attend to social structure and culture must be included in the explanatory framework in education— the structure of society plays a major role in determining the nature of the schooling process. Boykin (1983) suggests that African Americans must negotiate simultaneously three realms of experience which include the mainstream, the African rooted Black culture, and the status of an oppressed minority. Consequently the response to these three realms of experience is manifested in coping strategies of African American students.

Kohl (1991) develops a discussion on the role of assent in learning as a pervasive component of such coping strategies. Kohl (1991) emphasizes the essential role that will and free choice play in learning as they reveal the importance of considering people’s stance toward learning in the larger context of the choices they make as they create lives and identities for themselves. For some of the youth in Kohl's (1991) interviews, cooperative not learning is often the only stance they can take in order to resist racism and not be thrown out of school—not learning serves as a passive defense of their personal and cultural integrity. Kohl (1991) posits that "willed not learning consists of a conscious and chosen refusal to assent to learn" (Kohl, p.41, 1991). The conscious, willed refusal not to learn for political
and cultural reasons becomes the silent factor in oppressive education that so often remains unacknowledged (Kohl, 1991).

The lens for viewing these issues within art education has been called into question through the years. As early as 1940 Colson (1940) raised the question of specific references to African Americans in curriculum for the education of teachers. In her examination of art education curriculum, Colson (1940) supported her assertion that full appreciation of art comes only to those who enter into the attitudes as well as the activities of the artist by citing the work of Dewey (1934),

This new movement in art illustrates the effect of all genuine acquaintance with art created by other peoples. We understand it in the degree in which we make it a part of our own attitudes, not just by collective information concerning the conditions under which it was produced. We accomplish this result when, to borrow a term from Bergson, we install ourselves in modes of apprehending nature that at first are strange to us. To some degree we become artists ourselves as we undertake this integration, and by bringing it to pass, our own experience is reorientated. Barriers are dissolved, limiting prejudices melt away, when we enter into the spirit of Negro or Polynesian art. This insensible melting is far more efficacious than the change effected by reasoning, because it enters directly with attitude (Dewey, 1934 cited in Colson, p.69, 1940).

The degree of non-response to Colson’s (1940) advocacy of this educational philosophy, which she saw as capable of delimiting the interpretation of aesthetic experience, resonates within Davis’s (1983)
examination of African American art educational philosophies. For instance in Davis (1983) interview of African American art educator Harvey Johnson, he relates Johnson's criticism of the total system of art education as it is exercised today and his call for a hard reevaluation of its position. Johnson (1981) acknowledges and supports the capacity of art education to create balance in the lives of students but is opposed to what he feels are contradictions and contrivances that have fueled a certain havoc, confusion and destruction upon African American youth and its environment. Johnson (1981) calls for situations within art education that facilitate proper development of perceptual, intellectual, and aesthetic abilities of the world around them— as he felt that the only way that a student's individual expression can honestly reveal itself in art education is that the student must be encouraged in terms of his own reality and value relationships.

Hence it is reasonable to assume, the most pervasive obstacle to optimizing the experiences of all children in art education has to do with the self imposed (art education's) limitations on "the route" to aesthetic experience within the classroom. The cultural expressions highlighted in the art classroom, as well as the subsequent establishment of parameters for interpretation, can be enriched through the
exploration of other ways of knowing (Elliott, 1986). This study proposes that the ideological borders that envelop aesthetic inquiry curriculum development are enjoined with the cultural value orientations that have dominated the discipline. Carter and Helms (1987) define cultural value orientations as those dimensions that are characteristically considered important and desirable—what a group considers important and desirable guides the behaviors of its individuals, forms the basis for group norms, and dictates lifestyles that are deemed appropriate for group members (cited in Carter and Helms, 1990).

As will be expanded upon in chapter three, Carter and Helms (1990) posit that there is a relationship between Black and White racial identity and cultural value orientations (see table 1.1 and 1.2) as they are both reflective of different type of worldviews. The three value orientations articulated by Carter and Helms (1990)—person/nature orientation, time/sense orientation, and activity orientation—raise the question of their role in the cognitions, affect and behavior that undergird the facilitation and reception of aesthetic inquiry. As success for every student is the ultimate goal of education, such opportunities for African American students may often be confounded by an atmosphere which emphasizes a singular value orientation often reinforced through the presentation and
examination of correspondent representational form and symbol systems. As such,

.....it is only by their defiance of conformity, their repudiation of traditional cultural value systems, their rejection of the intellectual status quo rather than the acceptance of it, and their critical questioning of themselves and their positions in the world in which they live that a shift toward more meaningful education and life experiences will occur (Cross, p.25, 1990).

Multiple Roles for Cultural Symbol Systems and Representational Forms

My experiences as an art educator over the years would concur with Sylva's (1993) idea that major representational forms and symbol systems are central to art curriculum as they are reflective of cultural value orientations. The capacity of image and form to provide consonance, dissonance, and resonance within our culture cannot be overstated. It is suggested here that in art education, representational forms and symbol systems facilitate student responses ranging anywhere from assent to learning to non-cooperative learning. S. Lewis (1977) calls for research that examines the process of how the literal or symbolic exploration of self through the use of media assists the student in the process of learning the more academically oriented subjects. Within this study I have extended Sylva's (1993) use of the terms representation
and symbol systems within culture to a discussion of cultural representational form and symbol systems as it is unique to the African American experience. My rationale for doing so is anchored in Welsing's (1991) assertion that,

...within the framework of a given system and culture, certain perceptions may exist that are never acknowledged overtly and certain ideas, thoughts, concepts and theories that are uttered rarely, if ever. These perceptions, words, ideas, concepts that are repressed or channeled into the unconscious level...become an entire world of ideas treated as though they had never existed in the form of concrete reality. (Welsing, 1991, p.59).

Dr. Linda J. Myers' (1988) Afrocentric optimal psychology theory expresses ideas concerning social context and the psychogenesis of knowledge (see Table 1.3). Central to L.J. Myers' (1988) theory is the idea that individuals integrate into their knowledge those aspects of experience common to society based not only on manifest expressions of social thought but also on those aspects underlying and implicit in social interaction. The consonance, dissonance and resonance of cultural representational form and symbol systems seem to rest on this.

Representational form has always been at the heart of visual artistic endeavor. Schubert (1986) asserts that optimal understanding of our world and our relationship to it hinges on our ability to "aesthetically perceive the overlapping patterns that
situate ourselves and that human growth of all kinds has its roots in the aesthetic perception of form and grace" (Schubert, 1986, p.228). Webster's dictionary (1972) defines form as an orderly arrangement in which parts of a whole are organized, patterned or styled. Representational form is defined in this study as the presentation of an organized, patterned, or styled structure resulting in the mental picture of something giving rise to a conception, idea, or impression.

Representational form has the power to convey various types of imagery within and outside of the study of art. Brown-Iles (1991) defines imagery as a mental picture that one has of a person or thing, as well as a concept of a person or product held by the public as well as the picture one has of one's self. In art education aesthetic perception plays an important role in developing in students what Schubert describes as an "imagic store"- a context of ideas and concepts that give meaning to reading, any other symbolic learning, and to life itself (Schubert, 1986, p.124). Jewell (1993) states that through cultural images, assumptions and beliefs that define whether specific groups of individuals are entitled to benefit from social policy, are constructed and proliferated.

Image takes on symbolic meaning when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning- such images have a wider unconscious aspect that is never precisely defined or fully
explained (Welsing, 1991). Rushton and Wood (cited in Forrest 1983) assert that symbolization is to be judged by how well it serves the cognitive purpose encompassing such aspects as the making, manipulation, retention and transformation of knowledge.

The concept of symbol system within this study then becomes a way to talk about the repression of data which Welsing felt acts as a substratum from which symbols can be formed. Scruton (1947) (cited in Forrest 1983) posits that works of art may be thought of as systems of symbols which convey meaning to us. Within the field of art education aesthetics assist students in engaging cultural representational form and symbol systems in order that they can generate belief statements/questions about meanings and values, clarify belief statements or questions, and develop reasons which support belief statements or questions (Hagaman, 1990).

Assumptions and beliefs within the visual arts traditionally have presented a negative scene of instruction regarding the visual in African American culture (Wallace, 1990). This is often proffered by the choice of cultural referents within the discipline of aesthetics, the sporadic and isolated presentation of African American cultural forms and symbols, and the invisibility of established African American aesthetic traditions.
Cultural Representational Form and Symbol Systems
As A Factor within the African American Experience

As I contemplate a personal curriculum theory that concerns itself with aesthetics, reflection on the points of intersection of traditional notions of aesthetics with the realities that race and identity pose for African American children becomes the initial step in that direction. K. Mercer (1990) posits that distinctions of aesthetic values concerning what is beautiful and ugly, have always been central to the way racism divides the world into binary oppositions of human worth.

The dissertation process for me becomes a space for working toward the generation of a particular aesthetic inquiry curriculum. It embraces the reality of being an African American teacher who touches the lives of African American children through the administration of art education curriculum that contributes to the nurturing of their full potential.

This is vital because existing cultural representational forms and symbol systems typically embraced in art education pedagogy have at their foundation a historical component supported by racist ideologies advanced in the form of Western aesthetic traditions.
(Chalmers, 1992; Johnson 1981 [cited in Davis, 1983]; K. Mercer, 1990; Wallace, 1990). An accounting of the history of African American representation within art forms, typically studied under the guise of art education, is not enough. A broader context is needed to understand the perimeters beyond cultural representational form and symbol systems which are typically presented within the context of art education. When critical examination of cultural representational forms and symbol systems is undertaken, we are better able to understand those aspects that are counterproductive to bringing to the fullest capacity the creative potential of African American children, and all children.

Historically, the functionality of cultural representational form and symbol systems within and outside of African American culture is glossed over and seen as unrelated to the shaping of American social policy (Jewell, 1993). Cultural representational form and symbol systems appear to have a vital role in establishing and maintaining what constitutes human capital, or ownership and access to societal resources. An inability to access human capital requirements for the changing economy shares a curious relationship with the educational and skill deficits that encumber high numbers of African Americans typically receiving a contemporary urban education (Tidwell, 1992; Ogbu, 1983).
This is particularly true for African Americans who are poor (Ladson-Billings, 1992; Boykin, 1983; Ogbu, 1983, Watson, 1992). Kozol (1990) maintains that many poor African American children are recipients of policies that put them in competition for equal access and opportunity on a playing field that is not level. While African Americans comprise a growing share of the American population and workforce, their potential to become the critical human resources of the future does not match up with the exceptional disadvantages they continue to face.

Boykin (1983) contends that school is a place that socializes as it stratifies. Parsons (cited in Boykin, 1983) identifies four distinct functions that schools serve:

1) presentation of cognitive skills within a particular social and ideological context;

2) training in a complementary/ appropriate behavioral repertoire;

3) training in an appropriate commitment to the existing social order and;

4) training in the appropriate system of values.

Specifically, the questions for the art educator, who throughout the course of a year presents through curriculum implementation a wide range of cultural representational form and symbol systems that advance and nurture ideas about the nature of
art, begin to take shape here. How do possible selves, elements of self concept that represent what individuals could become, would like to become, and are afraid of becoming, interface with effective performance? What is the impact of a person's self-perception on behavior and functioning? What is the role of the visual in young children's ability to access possible selves? What has the role been historically in America in the utilization of imagery as a controlling mechanism regarding access to possible selves?

**The Relationship of the American Caste**

**System to Curriculum:**

In a discussion of social class and the hidden curriculum, Anyon (1981) asserts that there is a variation between students in potential relationships to the ownership of symbolic capital, authority and control, and their own productive activity. These variations are manifested in the educational setting with deference to social classes. For instance, curriculum for working class children appears to prepare them for future mechanical and routine wage labor (Anyon, 1981). An additional distinction is made between what Anyon (1981) terms as working class and middle class orientations to
curriculum. A curriculum tailored for the latter attends to work tasks and relationships that prepare students for a future relationship to capital that is bureaucratic.

While Ogbu (1983) would agree to a difference in curriculum orientations, he would account for these differences in terms of caste like minority status. Ogbu (1983) asserts that membership in a caste like minority group is often acquired at birth and retained permanently. Members of this group are regarded and treated by the dominant white group as inferior and ranked lower than whites (Ogbu, 1983). African Americans are commonly faced with a restricted opportunity structure in which they are relegated to menial jobs and comparable socio-political positions while simultaneously ensuring that future generations are prepared to do the same with a particular set of cognitive skills.

Schools have been found not to foster within African American children who are poor what are often described as middle class cognitive skills and, problem solving skills (Ogbu 1983; Boykin, 1983; Kozol, 1991). Boykin (1983) contends that these are cognitive skills that are delivered in a particular context that is imbued with cultural chauvinism and psycho-ideological hegemony. According to Boykin (1983) these variables are manifested in three important ways in schooling:
1) task definition-how a particular skill or competence is defined for students and how its purposes are presented to them;

2) task format- the manner in which the skills in question are acquired and performed and;

3) ambience- the environmental flux that envelops the task itself and forms the backdrop for learning.

Ogbu (1983) suggests that lower intellectual ability and knowledge are the product of African American subordination within the caste system whose structure denied generations the opportunity to participate in activities that require and promote cognitive skills which are conducive to higher levels of career opportunities. Such a caste system requires the participation of the oppressor and the oppressed (Tatum, 1992). Cross (1990) posits that Americans have expected their schools to socialize students to the dominant value system and to develop in students the skills they need to proceed along the approved pathway to economic and social success. Part of that structure requires that the experience of schooling not encourage the development of the kind of intellect that could conceivably dispose students to question prevailing folkways. Boykin (1983) concurs,

"perpetuation of the low socioeconomic status of Black Americans cannot be blamed solely on the school system, but some of the responsibility must be attributed to the nature of the schooling to which they are exposed" (Boykin, 1989, p.358).
Concurrently, we witness the promotion of excellence through curriculum that enables students to conduct analyses of society and to control situations (Anyon, 1981). Characteristically embraced by elite schools, knowledge and practice in manipulating the socially legitimated tools of analysis of systems allow for the development in children certain potential relationships to their work that will be useful to their role in the workforce (Anyon, 1981). The cognitive skills that are attributes of these schools are aligned with the popular concept of artistic appreciation in art education. In both cases individual thought and expressiveness, expansion and illustration of ideas, and choice of appropriate method and material emerge as their commonly held features.

Codd (1982) asserts that the teaching of artistic appreciation involves how to think and talk about a work of art in order to make an appropriate interpretation of it in terms of publicly identifiable criteria. The problem becomes the type of knowledge, via identifiable criteria, that is typically disseminated. Typically such information gives legitimacy to and perpetuates a hierarchical structuring of society, not unlike that which was characteristic of the social engineering of educational philosophy at the turn of the twentieth century (Gordon, 1985, p.36).
According to Codd (1982) the appreciation of the arts is a cognitive ability with which knowledge and understanding have a central place. Aesthetic cognition best represents the vehicle for knowledge acquisition about cultural representational form and symbol systems in aesthetic inquiry (Codd, 1982, Zusne, 1986). Aesthetic cognition is defined in this study as the process of aesthetic appraisal. It is the communicable interaction between knowing a subject and a cultural object capable of being apprehended (Codd, 1982).

The process of aesthetic appraisal entails seeing the work of art under one aspect which requires the application of public interpretive standards (Codd, 1982, p.18). As the concept of public interpretive standards suggests, within the framework of aesthetic cognition there has traditionally been a commitment to a particular set of values that determine the degree to which students are deemed capable of possessing an interpreting mind. When the orientation for aesthetic inquiry reflects a singular aesthetic tradition, students may develop the belief that all cultural objects and works of art should be judged on those terms.

Hart (1991) suggests the consideration of a pluralist aesthetic whereby the concept of a comparative, relativist aesthetics would allow students to understand that art systems different from the
Western art system exist and have their own aesthetic criteria. While young children are open to understanding that the criteria for making art is dependent on the artist and who is evaluating it, policy makers and teachers who determine and teach curriculum content are likely to have problems with this (Hart, 1991). Cultural representational form and symbol systems within media and as well as within educational venues are central to the way in which emphasis for a particular set of values are communicated. This is particularly significant for African American children,

The Afro-American child in our society receives a variety of subtle and sometimes blatant messages that there is something inherently wrong with him. Standards of beauty as projected in media advertising, television programming, movies, etc. tell the Black child that his physical features fall outside of the desired norm. Beauty in America has been associated with Blonde hair, blue eyes, white skin, pointed noses, and thin lips. Much attention has been focused on assisting the Black child (and adult) in changing those things about him that society finds physically unappealing. Most of the advertising that specifically addresses the grooming of Black people deals with the chemical denaturalization of their natural hair to make it straight or more loosely curled (Hamlin, 1986, p.209).

**Statement of the Problem**

This study develops a personal theory that focuses on how knowledge of cultural representational form and symbol systems is
conveyed in the curriculum stratification process and to what extent this knowledge acts as a precursor to the curricular endeavor of aesthetic inquiry. To develop this theory, three issues will be investigated:

1) the historical significance of aesthetic negation systems;

2) the identification of key conceptual strands of African centered aesthetic theory and;

3) development of a framework for aesthetic inquiry that is responsive to experiences of African Americans.

This personal theory is defined within this context as aesthetic negation systems. Aesthetic negation systems thrive when inquiry is posed, but critical consciousness is simultaneously stifled. One exercises critical consciousness when during the course of events or opportunities participants are encouraged to analyze their reality, become more aware of the constraints on their lives and, take action to change their situation (Peavy, 1992,p.3). It is proposed here that aesthetic inquiry, as a curricular event, is an unrealized force. When aesthetic inquiry is consistent with traditions that communicate cultural representational form and symbol systems in ways that nurture aesthetic negation systems a caste system is perpetuated to the detriment of all children.
Aesthetic inquiry is the process of searching for answers to questions about the nature of art (Lankford, 1990). While aesthetic inquiry is aligned with critical consciousness methodology that accommodates the reality of African American culture historically and contemporarily, their enjoinment is often characteristically unaccounted for within aesthetic negation systems.

The invalidation of basic cultural components which emanate from an essential core of shared cultural experience, is a hallmark of the negation system. Such invalidation is often buoyed by rationales developed by socially and economically advantaged classes to explain why different members of society are and are not represented in the art world. Three key tenets of aesthetic negation operate as an oppressive dynamic that works against African American culture within and outside of the art world.

These tenets to be explored in the review of literature, are:

1) the historical artificial constructs of Africanness and Whiteness;

2) absence of a cohesive decoding system that would promote understanding of these constructs; and

3) the propagation of assimilation as a vehicle for minority culture compliance with dominant culture. These tenets work to assure the viability of aesthetic negation systems within educational frameworks and contexts.
Thus, the first issue addressed in this study involves articulation of the historical significance of aesthetic negation systems under which cultural representational form and symbolic systems are subsumed. Such an investigation is intended to promote understanding of what we work against in art education curriculum development, design and implementation. This is in congruence with the recommendations of Spencer and Markstrom-Adams (1990) who have outlined what they believe should be prevention and intervention efforts that enhance the identity formation process among ethnic minorities (see appendix).

The identification of key conceptual strands which promote understanding of an African centered aesthetic theory is developed in Welsh-Asante's (1993) theory of an Afrocentric aesthetic that is Pan African in its focus. A concern for the characteristic terms of an aesthetic theory that builds upon the relationship between African aesthetics and its forms within the African diaspora recognizes the multitude of aesthetic systems within Africa and its various forms of dispersion as are manifested in traditional aesthetic cultural practices. Collectively these diaspora traditions are organized in Welsh-Asante's (1993) conceptualization of a family of aesthetics. Achtemeir (1980) defines traditions as the means in which a community understands itself in relationship to its past
In addition, they protect the value they attribute to past events which lend to the uniqueness of the community as well as aiding the community in shaping its life in accordance to those originating events (Achtemeir, 1980 cited in W.H. Myer, 1991).

Welsh-Asante posits that "an aesthetic defines and establishes culturally consistent elements and then enthrones standards based on the best historical and artistic examples" (Welsh-Asante, p.4, 1993). Discerning an African American historical tradition has been limited to either a catastrophic or a contributionism view of history (Hale-Benson, 1982). In the catastrophic view of African American history cultural experience is related as a long list of disasters, while the adaptive mechanisms are overlooked. The contributionism point of view concerns itself with the African American's contribution to civilization, while ignoring the point of intersection representative of the exchange between the two cultures. Welsh-Asante (1993) asserts that within the African diaspora the aesthetic is part of the survivalist tradition. Pasteur and Toldson (1982) emphasize the interlocking of affect, intellect, and movement as evidenced in the perceptual and expressive behavior of the African in the diaspora that has served in providing internal harmonizing psychological order. The challenge in identifying the
distinctive characteristics of an African centered aesthetic tradition rest on discerning the degree to which the African heritage was destroyed during slavery and what the mechanisms for retention and transmission were (Hale-Benson, 1986).

In the field of art education, aesthetics (as in the philosophy of art) attends to the development of critical thinking skills and philosophical inquiry through classroom dialogue (Hagaman, 1990). Aesthetic inquiry proposes to engage students in understanding the nature of philosophical inquiry as it relates to their own thinking and the thinking, speaking, and writing of others. It offers opportunities to learn the skills involved in philosophical inquiry, and in addition it promotes the acquisition of pleasure and fulfillment in engaging in philosophical inquiry (Stewart, 1988). While contemporary approaches to aesthetic inquiry are valuable in their capacity to provide cognitive skills and are seen as a vehicle for accessing human capital and resources, they typically do not reflect a consideration of African based aesthetic philosophy.

This has been problematic in the case of African American culture and the field of art education. There is a lack of openness to a serious consideration of that culture as a source for expanding ideas regarding the exploration of expressiveness and the cognitive structures that access and embody it. It has become a sort of playing
in the dark, where what lies beneath the skirt of our tunnel vision may perhaps have much to do with an inability to part with the last vestiges of colonialism within our field.

The possibility of developing critical thinking skills through philosophical inquiry that is culturally based opens up exciting avenues, yet to be realized. Other art education disciplines such as music have begun to develop curriculum designs in this fashion. For instance, Elliot (1986) advocates maximizing the musical experience of the African American art form of jazz by replacing the isolated principles of pedagogy and predominately European classical aesthetic with what he terms as a perceptual-affective system (which approximates the African worldview.) Hence, the third issue in the formulation of a personal theory is the development of a framework for aesthetic inquiry that is responsive to Boykin's (1983) strategies for curricular change.

Boykin (1983) makes four recommendations:

1) the curriculum should be responsive to African American cultural style;

2) there should be a use of culturally relevant material;

3) there should be teacher responsiveness and;

4) finally there should be acceptance of the child.
Of tantamount concern to those of us who attempt to teach or write about non-white, non-middleclass, non-western persons is how to center our work, our teaching, in the lives of the people about whom we are teaching and writing (E.B. Brown, 1989). Asante (1991) defines centering as a perspective that involves locating students within the context of their own cultural references so that they can relate socially and psychologically to other cultural perspectives. In the employment of personal theorizing as a methodology, this study provides understanding of the nature of educational experience for African American children, particularly in matters of temporality, transcendence, consciousness, and politics. Instead of curriculum prescription as an overarching goal in this study the purpose is to some extent self directed,

I am attempting to infuse my perspective throughout my talk about schools and curriculum with the intent that the perspective will permeate productively, my thinking about curriculum and planning. My perspective establishes the conditions for curriculum planning and helps me to understand what is important and where to look as I plan (Zaret, p. 47, 1986)

From an Afrocentric perspective- a personal curriculum theory must do more- especially in promoting understanding within and beyond the African American community. Chernoff (1979) felt
that when we try to understand the artform of a different culture or historical period, we must be prepared to open our minds to the potential for different standards of quality and conception of what that artform is. Chernoff (1979) asserts that our habitual notions of art as an endeavor separate from the rest of life, cannot hinder investigation into a cultural tradition that is African centered.

Teachers who design, develop and implement aesthetic inquiry from a singular perspective may in fact enable the existence of aesthetic negation systems. Sylva (1993) concurs with this possibility in his consideration that images and forms can convey consonance with our culture, surroundings and events, a dissonance with aspects of the culture we live in -as well as the conditions and quality of our surroundings, and a resonance with cultures other than our own. The study initially assists us in promoting increased understanding of these factors as they relate to African American culture.

Art educators who choose to facilitate aesthetic inquiry that is not weighted down by aesthetic negation systems face at least three distinct challenges. One challenge that is addressed in this study is how teachers may go about the practice of culturally relevant teaching as opposed to teaching that validates aesthetic negation systems. The idea of instilling children in the course of their
development the desire to do well requires that they be given self relevant forms capable of individualized translation that will create and sustain their motivation (Keenan, Golding and Brown, 1992, Asante 1991, Boykin, 1986).

Culturally relevant teaching, in the context of this study, is the embodiment of the recognition, celebration, and utilization of African and African-American culture (Ladson Billings, 1992). This study addresses the second challenge of the identification of an African and African centered aesthetic conceptual framework that may serve as a basis for culturally relevant teaching and its development into an aesthetic inquiry curriculum.

The final challenge explored in this study has to do with the cultural learning style of African Americans. In examination of African American children and their culture and learning styles, Hale-Benson (1982) maintains that participation in their culture shapes their cognitive development and affects the way they approach academic tasks. Pasteur and Toldson (1982) assert investigation of a culturally nourished method of information processing that leads to aesthetic expressiveness is perhaps the newest and best theory of learning. Spencer and Markstrom-Adams (1990) and Spencer (1990) maintain that the integration or consideration of culture and context can be useful in obtaining a better match between policy,
practice, and positive family and child outcomes.

The study in its entirety is directed toward addressing what Hagaman (1990) terms as the lack of aesthetic inquiry models in art education for the purposes of curriculum and instruction.

**Assumptions**

The following assumptions were considered in designing a framework for aesthetic inquiry that is open to the existence of an African centered aesthetic.

1. Aesthetic inquiry is an established discipline in which students have the opportunity to examine personal, cultural, and global values relative to cultural representational form and symbol systems.

2. An aesthetic inquiry curriculum has the capacity to ground students in a proactive stance in regard to promoting inter-cultural and intra-cultural understanding.

3. Aesthetic inquiry recognizes itself in its role as a catalyst for the formation of possible selves.

4. Art educators poised for aesthetic inquiry reflect understanding of aesthetics as a personal and cultural phenomenon.

5. The role of "will" in inclusion behavior is central to the facilitator's role in aesthetic inquiry and supported within the curricular ecology in which it exists.
6. African-centered aesthetic inquiry is operationalized as a conceptual strand consistently present in the day to day pedagogical practices and delimited by the deconstruction of aesthetic negation systems.

Summary

This study provides a perspective through personal curriculum theory that establishes a relationship between cultural representational form and symbol systems as variables in the identity process of African American children. My own personal experience, informed by eleven years of teaching, has lead me to reflect on this presence—this point of intersection—within art education curriculum, particularly aesthetic inquiry. The concept of aesthetic negation is developed as a theory here to promote increased understanding the capacity of cultural representational form and symbol systems to provide consonance, dissonance, and resonance within our culture. The variation of their meaning within and outside of African American culture should become a valued part of curriculum planning and implementation.

Curricular ecology, which speaks to the interdependent network of education curricula that forge outlooks and ideals learned in a culture, society and world, is employed as a tool for analysis in this study. As a precursor to curriculum design and
implementation, considerations of the curricular ecology of aesthetic inquiry can be conceptualized as a teacher and student empowerment tool.

For the student this process will produce the benefit of culturally competent teacher preparation which acknowledges that no task can be performed without the construction of the possible self that carries out the action, completes the task, or masters the difficulty.

As a motivational resource that organizes a person's future, possible selves are crucial to the process of centering. The idea of instilling in children during the course of their development the desire to do well requires that they be given self relevant forms capable of individualized translation that creates and sustains their motivation. When such aspects of self are attended in curriculum planning the choice to assent to learning, rather than non-cooperation, is within grasp. Optimal experiences within the aesthetic cognitive process can be actualized.

The teacher is supported in this study through shared reflections and creation of approaches to challenges that are embedded in culturally relevant teaching. In aesthetic inquiry the challenge of culturally relevant teaching involves the recognition,
celebration, and utilization of a conceptual framework for aesthetic inquiry. Chapter three develops a methodological framework for a personal curriculum theory that is Afrocentric in its orientation.
Methodological consideration has been given in this study to the idea that theories, models, and laws that exist in any field provide the framework that enables practitioners to think and communicate with one another (Eichelberger, 1989). This analysis of aesthetic inquiry, as is relevant to the developing identity of African American children, draws on concepts from the field of philosophy, social cognitive theory, Afrocentric psychology, and curriculum inquiry. Hence, this interdisciplinary study is developed through the employment of methodological frameworks for personal curriculum theory, aesthetic anthropology, and historical and philosophical inquiry.

Curriculum theory as a subset of philosophy, is devoted to the study and examination of the decisions that go into the selection
of what is taught (Schubert, 1986). It is comprised of a category scheme which includes descriptive, prescriptive, critical, and personal conception. Any serious philosophical writing about the aims and nature of education is enveloped in this theoretical framework and includes basic principles which become the essence of curriculum (Schubert, 1986). Descriptive curriculum theorists analyze present forms of curriculum and construct explanatory propositions which define, predict, and direct. Prescriptive theory involves the development of principles that establish norms for action in articulating what ought to be done. Critical curriculum theory focuses on exposing and penetrating social relationships that communicate status. Personal theorizing concerns itself with the internal and existential experiences as a way of understanding the nature of the educational experience.

While this study draws on all of these categories, the category of personal theorizing is adopted here as the organizing methodological strand. Personal theorizing emphasizes matters of temporality, transcendence, consciousness, and politics. In some ways it bears a resemblance to hermeneutic philosophy which concerns itself with the study of interpretive understanding or meaning (Eichelberger, p. 1, 1989). Hermeneutists take the position that social science should provide individualized accounts of a situation in ways that describe the meaning of the events to the participants (Eichelberger, p. 1, 1989).
Schubert (1986) distinguishes differences between the two philosophical positions by stating that the rationalization for hermeneutical inquiry in curriculum involves a concern for reality's intersubjectivity within a shared historical, political, and social context. Critical praxis refers to an integration of the theoretical critique of society and action or practice that seeks to improve society and the individual through education. Schubert (1986) feels that this version of hermeneutics blends with the paradigm of critical inquiry or praxis because of its emphasis on social justice (Schubert, 1986). This process enables teachers, learners, and curriculum developers to articulate sources of meaning and direction in their lives.

Schubert (1986) makes the observation that the arts have not been studied sufficiently by those in the curriculum field. Heard (1990) suggests that positive changes in arts classroom practices may occur when a teacher has experienced personal insight into her own arts making behaviors. Additionally, Heard (1990) suggests that in arts classrooms differences in socio-cultural perspectives must be a factor in pedagogy as teacher's reliance upon a western art model may not be the best way to develop multicultural teaching and learning strategies.

In addressing Heard's (1990) concerns, Mudimbe's (1988) distinction between two kinds of ethnocentrism may be useful here. In the first sense ethnocentrism is connected to an epistemological filiation
where an intellectual atmosphere gives anthropology its status as discourse, its significance as a discipline, and its credibility as a science in the field of human experience. The second sense of ethnocentrism refers to a behavioral attitude which is both a consequence and an expression of a complex connection between the scholar's projection of consciousness, the scientific models of his time, and the cultural and social norms of his society. As such, "cultural ethnocentrism explains the ideological changes and struggles in the history and practice of the social sciences" (Mudimbe, 1988,p.19). This translates in the relationships between students and teachers, as well as the type of research that undergirds the pedagogy (Heard, 1990).

Concurrently, African American researchers are calling for an end to the encouragement and production of research that promotes: underestimation of the abilities of African American children, the invisibility of the realities of their existential experiences, the misunderstanding of their attitudes, the disregard for their perspectives, and the misinterpretation of their behavior (Gay and Abrahams, 1973; Washington and McLoyd, 1982; Gordon, Miller and Rollock, 1990, Spencer and Markston-Adams, 1990). Clearly, Daniel (1992) speaks against this in outlining her reproduction theory which involves insuring the maintenance and sustenance of hegemonic behaviors disseminated by a core of teachers who are at best well
prepared to act out cultural anxiety and/or hostility as opposed to a more proactive approach involving:

a) an alternative which requires critical introspection regarding the cognitions we inscribe as quasi-arbiters of culture;

b) we then investigate tools which facilitate teacher and student empowerment.

Personal theorizing involves several phases aimed at attempting to understand the nature of the educational experience (Schubert, 1986). Theorizing involves a continuous process of questioning and interpreting which gives the person who theorizes increased capacity to deal with problems and dilemmas in life: it is a source of empowerment in that it enables the cultural literacy that brings the freedom to take responsibility for one's own situation (Schubert, 1986). The methodological process calls for the individual engaged in theorizing to engage in:

1) a regressive phase involving the free associative remembrance of the past. Excavation of the present by focusing on the past is done in order to get underneath personal interpretations of what is experienced and to enter experience more deeply;

2) a progressive phase where contemplation of the future is exercised as a way to uncover the current state of one's own philosophical direction;

3) analysis of what has been uncovered in the first two phases along with an analysis devoted to intuitive comprehension and cognitive codification; and
4) a synthetical stage in which a choice is made about what should be honored and what of it should be let go as a renewal of social commitment and direction is made (Pinar and Grumet, 1976 cited in Schubert, 1986).

The criticisms of personal theory merit attention here. Some criticize it for its non-resemblance to theory or curriculum and its subjectivity and absence of descriptive and prescriptive theory (Schubert, 1986). The intellectual traditionalist condemns personal theory for wanting to remake the world, while the social behaviorist is critical of its perceived radicalism and softminded subjectivism (Schubert, 1986).

**Locating Subjectivity Within Optimal and Sub-Optimal Conceptual Systems: Delimiting the Limitations**

Peshkin (1988) asserts that subjectivity operates during the entire research process. Therefore, researchers should systematically identify their subjectivity throughout the course of their research. Further, such commitments to mark subjectivity at various points enable the researcher to write unshackled from orientations that they did not realize were intervening in their research process (Peshkin, 1988). Peshkin (1988) recommends that during the research process self-monitoring should occur which will enable the researcher to create an
illuminating, empowering personal statement that acknowledges the places where self and subject are intertwined.

In this regard, L.J. Myers' theory (1988) pertaining to Afrocentric—optimal psychology locates what are possible points of intersection for self and subject within her discussion of optimal and sub-optimal conceptual systems. In defining conceptual systems, from which subjectivity emanates, Albert (1970) sees them as patterns of beliefs and values that define a way of life and the world in which actions, judgments, decisions, and solutions are played out (cited in L.J. Myers, 1988). One of the most important differences between what she terms as "sub-optimal and optimal conceptual systems" are the ontological assumptions contained in each and their implications for moral and faith development³ (L.J. Myers, p.60, 1988).

L.J. Myers (1988) develops the idea in her theory that self, within the optimal conceptual system, is seen as multidimensional encompassing the ancestors, those yet unborn, nature and community. This necessitates a broader view of personal theory that suggests in the process of relating personal experience a sense of one's relationship to these various aspects should be included.

Higher levels of moral and faith development are contingent on the degree to which conceptions of self and other merge (Myers, 1988). The self represents the individual's definition of life space, or most
relevant context of existence, while other represents the individual's unrealized or irrelevant context of existence. Individuals may move through a sub-optimal view of "self- egocentric" with limited view of family, community, nations, and world order- to an optimal view of self where the concept of self is expanded to include ancestors, the yet unborn, all of nature, and the entire community.

The changing of meaning and concepts of words over time and across cultures mark the state of consciousness of a people. Hence, this definition of Afrocentricity is embraced here as a personal point of departure for this study that reflects who I am and my relationship to my community,

Afrocentricity is a term categorizing a quality of thought and practice which is rooted in the cultural image and interest of African people and which represents and reflects the life experiences, history and traditions of African people as the center of analysis. Afrocentricity is the intellectual and philosophical foundation upon which we create the political, scientific and moral criterion for authenticating the reality of African human processes. It is the core and fundamental process of our beingness and becoming (The Institute for the Advanced Study of Black Family Life and Culture, Inc., cited in Habari Ya Walimi, p.1).

Personal theory appears to outline built in "markers" in its various phases and places them at the center of the process of theorizing. The examination of one's own conceptual systems becomes central to that process. As such an African-centered personal
curriculum theory would operate on four basic assumptions. First, an African centered personal curriculum theory would carry as an assumption the axiological aspects of African American culture where the highest value lies in the interpersonal relationship among human beings. L.J. Myers (1988) defines a spiritual/material ontology at work where the idea of individualism is replaced by the African concept of extended self. A second assumption would lie in the epistemological base of African American culture where one knows through symbolic imagery and rhythm. L.J. Myers (1988) asserts that self-knowledge in an African centered epistemology becomes the basis for all knowledge. A third assumption in an African centered personal curriculum theory would entail the diunital aspects of knowledge where the union of opposites is possible. Finally the fourth assumption for a African centered personal curriculum theory involves ntuology where all sets are interrelated through human and spiritual networks.

Issues of External Validity and the African American Experience

In contrast to the critics of personal theory, Washington and McLoyd (1982) suggest that the addition of cultural and interpretive validity to the construct of external validity may provide an empirical
mechanism for the inclusion of intentionality and meaning to the research process. For the purpose of this study the concept of personal theory is expanded here as a way of attending to the concerns illuminated not only by the critics of personal theory, but also attending to Washington and McLoyd's concerns for various aspects of external validity which include cultural, interpretive, ecological, population, and construct validity. External validity has traditionally emphasized population, ecological and construct validity as a way to explain behavior thereby giving the impression that the cultural context has not been taken into consideration.

Washington and McLoyd (1982) assert a more complete understanding of culture could be attained by utilizing the strengths of the mechanistic and teleological approaches to explanation. The mechanistic or causal approach emphasizes theory measurement, and intersubjective agreement in the search for similarities and differences across cultures, while the teleological or intentional approach emphasizes the goal directedness of human actions and the different meanings which human beings give their experiences. Washington and McLoyd (1982) assert that external validity can be enhanced by including within its framework these emic (behavior as perceived from within the system) and etic (perspectives from outside of the system) approaches. Peshkin (1988) supports this in his discussion of untamed
subjectivity in research that mutes the emic voice.

In presenting the concept of cultural validity, Washington and McLoyd (1982) define it as the procedures necessary to identify the rules which regulate conduct as well as those rules which define various practices and institutions. These rules can be seen as two basic types of norms. In the first sense, these norms tell us that certain things ought to or may be done in a certain manner. In the second sense, norms are presented as a system of rules which give structures to things (i.e., marriage, contracts, language, religion, games, etc.). Personal norms are equated with attitudes, while social norms are equated with rules which prescribe institutions and their associated practices. Triandis (1976) concluded in his research on African American and European American perceptions of social environment that there were systematic differences between the two groups which he attributed to differences in their respective subjective cultures (cited in Washington and McLoyd, 1982).

Interpretive validity places the individual at the center of the explanation of action, as it is the individual who is best able to describe the motivational background, the goals and the means to achieve the goals which set the stage for actions (Washington and McLoyd, 1982). Social science research is plagued by misinterpretations of African American culture which can be only corrected through opportunities
for African Americans to provide interpretations of their own experience (Washington and McLoyd, 1982). Washington and McLoyd (1982) do not advocate that social scientists should not interpret the meaning of that experience. Rather such interpretations should be kept distinct from the interpretations of those who are the subject of inquiry so that others can distinguish between the two sets of interpretations.

**Reshaping Personal Theory in a Way that is Responsive to Cultural and Interpretive Validity**

Both cultural and interpretive validity, as aspects of external validity, become important considerations in incorporating aspects of aesthetic anthropology, as is outlined in Maquet (1986), into a personal curriculum theory. According to Maquet (1986) the approaching of art forms within cultures as cultural phenomena sets up questions regarding the function of the art forms, the perception of the art form held by that culture, and variation of meaning within the culture held about that particular art form. Additionally, Morrison (1990) brings an emic perspective in regard to insider exploration of art forms and thereby contributes to an African centered methodical direction in her discussion of traveling to the "site of memory" (Morrison, p. 302, 1990).
Site of memory is interpreted here as symbolically representative of those things tangible and intangible which remain within the African American community that serve to inform the ways in which the world is seen. For Morrison (1990) the "site of memory" is the anthropological site of exploration of those things left from the African American slave community that give an accounting of what their life had been as interpreted by members of that community. For some African American families this may range from the few photographs kept by family members to the recollection of an elder.

Few African Americans make the sojourn home and return without having been in the presence of some elder who in activating race memory5 recounts what the matrix of their own identity has been. Morrison (1990) focuses a concern in her literary works for the interior life of people who did not write about their own experience- while deconstructing the long standing ideology that the absence of their writings meant that they did not have some way in which to cherish memory of themselves (Morrison, 1990).

The African philosopher Mudimbe (1988), discusses a similar situation in the development of the concept of "primitive African art" at the beginning of the twentieth century. In defining this concept as "a process of aesthetization", Mudimbe (1988) finds it difficult to understand how standards for judging the work could come from
outside the "power-knowledge" field of a given culture. Critical that an oversight has been made regarding an accounting of the "internal patterns of cultures", Mudimbe concludes that, "The African has become not only the other who is everyone else except me, but rather the key which in its abnormal differences specifies the identity of the Same" (p.12).

The concept of traveling to the "site of memory" then, to see what remains is a way of centering aesthetic anthropology in the African American experience, thereby making it accountable to cultural and interpretive validity. Moreover, contemplation of Morrison's methodological concern for an emic perspective leaves us at the doorstep of hermeneutics for the reshaping of this discussion regarding the anthropological/ historical aspects of an African -centered personal curriculum theory methodology.

The Role of Hermeneutical Philosophy in Establishing Cultural and Interpretive Validity Within Personal Curriculum Theory

Hermeneutics appears to play an increasingly important role in African philosophy. Mudimbe (1988) defines philosophy as an intellectual practice distinguishable from cosmology and ethnography which concern themselves with paraphrasing a tradition, its wisdom
and its linguistic richness, "Yet philosophy concerns the experience of humans, although it cannot be assimilated to it; philosophy bears on experience, reflects it without being congruent with it" (p. 154). In relating what he feels are major aspects of African philosophy, Mudimbe (1988) includes philosophical studies, critical anthropology, and hermeneutics as avenues to new praxes on African cultures and languages. He sees hermeneutics as having a role in developing a conceptual analytical framework where a selective and flexible inventory of African values—be they attitudes, categories or symbols—would provoke thought.

Gadamer (1964) defines hermeneutics as the bridging of personal and historical distance between minds. In arguing for the inclusion of the experience of art within that stream of thought Gadamer (1964) takes the position that art is a form of the spirit’s self-knowledge. The task set before the hermeneutist is to avoid misunderstanding through clarification and mediation presented in the form of interpretation (Gadamer, 1964).

Eichelberger (1989) takes the position that hermeneutical studies are similar to those of the social phenomenists as they are both interested in what meaning people attribute to activities and how that relates to their behavior. Hermeneutists are clear about the fact that they are constructing the reality on the basis of their interpretation
with the help of the participants who provided the data in the study. Eichelberger (1989) equates the task of the hermeneutists with that of the cultural anthropologists regarding their activities of observation, reading of documents produced or read (cherished, valued) by members of the groups being studied, and development of classifications and descriptions that represent the beliefs of the various groups.

In W.H. Myers's (1991) discussion of the hermeneutical methodological dilemma for the African American biblical student some parallels emerge relative to the task of the African American student who would also seek to bring an emic perspective to aesthetic philosophy. At the heart of the matter for the biblical student is the presupposition of a Eurocentric worldview and approach to biblical interpretation which emphasizes selective highlighting of historical events in interpretation, methodical concerns, and hermeneutical motifs (i.e. authorial intent, inspiration, inerrancy, propositional revelation) (W.H. Myers, 1991).

According to W.H. Myers (1991) the Eurocentric approach yields little more than the predominance of one cultural worldview over another, as well as holding interpretation hostage to the past. Issues of race, intra-cultural, and inter-cultural dialogue remain obscured from the discussion. Interpretation of biblical scriptures by African American biblical scholars is rarely included in contemporary forms of
hermeneutical texts. Consequently, the dilemma for the African American biblical student also centers around the way in which the student is prepared to answer Eurocentric-oriented questions and concerns (W.H. Myers, 1991).

It is suggested that these students are somewhat handicapped in their adoption of the Eurocentric interpretation of text presented as the normative way by which all other approaches are to be tested- the Eurocentric approach implies objectivity- absence of cultural bias- while simultaneously implying that the African American reading of the text is embedded in cultural bias. This is further compounded in the biblical student's service to the "believing community of faith " who have the expectation of continued African American cultural tradition (W.H. Myers, p.42, 1991).

Smith (1992) typifies this stance in art education presenting what he feels are choices that come out of the dichotomy concerning cultural pluralism "versus" (his emphasis) cultural particularism. Smith (1992) sees this as either a richly varied common culture that stresses shared and universal values or a plethora of ethnic enclaves and special interest groups (which he later identifies as African American historians and writers) bent on pressing rights derived from perceived past and present injustices and inequalities.
Although his commentary strongly represents what he feels are scholarly viewpoints (i.e. Ravitch, 1990 and Schlesinger, 1991) that support his interpretation that separatists present a viewpoint grounded in ethnocentric notions of racial superiority and cultural predestination, representation of that vital aspect of scholarly debate which seeks to let the opposing voice speak is curiously absent. In his etic approach, the blueprint for hegemony becomes instructive and reproductive.

For instance, in Tomhave's (1992) analysis of what is deemed to be representative of multicultural art education literature and the value positions it exposes, we are privy to the preoccupation with framing culture specific discourse within the field as "cultural separatism" aimed at the rejection of assimilationist endeavors (Tomhave, 1992, p.52). At times the field of art education appears to be weighted down in a dance of contradiction by its rejection of the most culturally specific arenas for research and investigation (particularly when culturally based philosophical discourse is presented) against its mandate for inclusiveness as a centerpiece to the multicultural paradigm. This is especially evident when we are attentive to what Tomhave (1992) states as the key factor for inclusiveness for cultural groups being,

that we draw upon information from scholars that is representative of each cultural group, both in terms of information that they can bring to us about the arts of their people living in the United States and in terms of
histories that they bring from their native lands" (Tomhave, 1992, p.58).

Mudimbe (1988) relates that the pertinence of an individual's projection of consciousness and the perception of a discipline from the normative perspective of its practice and history serve as comments upon itself from a paradigmatic cultural model. Hence the dilemma for the African American biblical student and the student of aesthetics shares common ground with regard to the task of interpretation. W.H. Myers (1991) highlights a set of limitations to theological interpretive methodology which are rooted in Enlightenment ideologies. They are:

1) the exclusivity and non-appreciative stance regarding developments in hermeneutical approaches in non-western culture and minority cultures within western culture;

2) the open relationship between text and meaning that is sought in hermeneutical philosophy is confounded by the notion that a text has only one legitimate meaning enabling it to retain the status of orthodoxy;

3) there appears to be an overemphasis of text production and mediation, whereas text reception is obscured in the interpretive process;

4) the overemphasis of propositional statements to the exclusion of the historical experiential event;

5) sole dependence on the historical-critical method and historical interpretation theory as a means for appropriating meaning;

6) the reader is placed in a passive state as opposed to an active state;
7) catering to a literate bourgeois class while condescending and/or excluding the oral traditions and methods of interpretation traditionally resident in minority cultures;

8) interpretive methodology sees the text as a product of history, which in turn frames the search for original meaning of in the past (W.H. Myers, p.46, 1991).

The key to addressing these issues for African American students of theology and aesthetics who seek to engage in the task of interpretation may be found in what W.H. Myers (1991) suggests is a unique relationship between a believing community's canonical perspective and its hermeneutical methodology. Gadamer (1964) illuminates this point in his discussion of the relationship between the language of art and the legitimacy of the hermeneutical point of view.

Gadamer (1964) posits that hermeneutics does in fact include aesthetics and thereby requires us in our quest for understanding to have a will to understand, which specifically includes wanting to let something be said. Cultural differences in the approach to hermeneutics can be ascertained at the level of Gadamer's (1964) argument where he expresses that he would not require a contemporaneousness with the author or the original reader through reconstruction of his historical horizon before we begin to grasp the meaning of what is said. Conversely, Asante (1993) posits that contextualization of an Afrocentric aesthetic requires the incorporation
of a "reward of recognition" so that the beholder, the participant and the creator are recognized (Asante, p. 16, 1993). The "believing community" is positioned in an active role in making the aesthetic experience viable and this is manifested in their knowing, bearing witness and empathizing (Asante, 1993). Under these conditions resemblance and recognition are cornerstones for the functionality of the aesthetic.

W. H. Myers (1991) prescribes a methodical direction for theological hermeneutical inquiry that begs for reflection with regard to the task of the student in aesthetic inquiry. It includes the following variables:

1) leadership in resolving the dilemma must be initiated by African American scholars

2) the solution will probably evolve as a result of a combination of both contextual research and interdisciplinary accord as individuals and groups address the issue

3) the solution may lie in methodologies held in balanced tension with one another as opposed to one methodology. If this is the case, then all concerned may be forced to wrestle with the amount of contradiction that each of us can accept.

4) we will have to decide to what degree contributions by (and dialogue with) European, Euro-American, and Third World scholars are helpful or harmful to the resolution of the dilemma. On this point, we must decide whether we want to be heard only in our community or in the larger community as well. Are we speaking merely to and for ourselves? (Myers indicates that he does not believe this is the case)
5) African American biblical scholars must take the lead in restructuring the pedagogical content and structure of academia (W.H. Myers, p. 57, 1991).

The concerns expressed in hermeneutical inquiry mirror the issues that surface in cultural and interpretive validity in personal theorizing. As part of a personal curriculum theorizing process, hermeneutical philosophy enriches the discussion, provides direction, and delimits the dialogues both inter-culturally and intra-culturally. Because the concept of self in an African centered personal curriculum theory is conceptualized here to include community and ancestors, hermeneutical philosophy provides a comprehensive methodology for looking inward and providing an emic perspective.

Other Issues Concerning External Validity

One of the things Lankford (1992) asks the aesthetic inquiry curriculum designer to consider is the extent to which the themes are sensitive to the students' community and cultural context. In this regard this study deals with the issue of ecological validity. Ecological validity attends to relationships between persons, tasks, situations, and cohorts across the life span. Washington and McLoyd (1982) are critical of this area of research which they felt had been lacking in
Attempting to unravel the interactions between variables involved in ecological research. Ogbu (1981) presents a definition of cultural ecology which concerns itself with the study of:

1) the way a population uses its natural environmental influences;

2) the way a population is influenced by its social organization and cultural values;

3) how the relationship between the personal attributes and behaviors of the members of a population and their environment is to be found in the strategies of today (cited in Slaughter-Defoe, Nakagawa, Takanishi, and Johnson, 1990).

Ogbu (1981) has developed a cultural ecological model which brings a theoretical perspective on human competencies within the African American community. The focus of the model includes theoretical linkages between patterns of child rearing, the development of competence and patterns of subsistence within a culture. Ogbu (1981) outlines three dimensions in his cultural ecological model;

1) the origins of human competencies (general and specific) lie in the nature of culturally defined tasks, such as the subsistence tasks of a given population. It follows that most children in the population grow up as competent men and women. Child rearing techniques serve only as a mechanism for inculcating and acquiring certain culturally defined instrumental competencies and are in fact shaped largely by the nature of those instrumental competencies;
2) Populations possess unique instrumental competencies that meet their societal needs, and they adapt their child rearing techniques to inculcate these needs. These societal needs may be defined as the cultural tasks which are appropriate for age, sex, and other criteria of distinction. The differences in such cultural tasks are not readily acknowledged but these tasks are in important ways different for the middle class than for African American ghetto residents;

3) Child rearing is the process by which parent and other child-rearing agents transmit and by which children acquire the competencies required by their social, economic, political and other future adult cultural tasks. The casual relationship between competencies and child rearing practices appears to be the reverse of our conventional thinking. Contrary to our usual interpretation, adult competencies determine the techniques parents and parent surrogates employ to raise children and how these children seek to acquire these attributes as they grow older (cited in Washington in McLoyd, P. 332, 1982).

The discipline of Afrocentric psychology is drawn from in this study as a response to issues raised here in ecological validity. Several theoretical strands are utilized in the development of a curricular framework for African centered aesthetic inquiry. One such theory is the Cross (1971, 1978) model of racial identity development, outlined as a four stage process, and described as a life long process beginning at late adolescence/ early adulthood. Tatum (1992), building on Cross's racial identity theory has examined the cultural ecological factors that envelop the issues of process which emerge when race class, and or, gender
emerge in the classroom. Nobles (1989) contributes to the ideas in this study regarding an African-Centered theory of aesthetics as he contends that an Afrocentric model of identity would have to raise the question of African retentions and residuals in African-American beingness.

Other psychologists, such as Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan and Buriel (1990) have attended to the family ecologies of ethnic minority children focusing on a proposed interconnectedness between the ecologies of ethnic minority families, adaptive strategies, socialization goals, and child behavioral outcomes. Boykin (1983) articulates the idea that the richness and integrity of the African American experience can be captured by casting it in terms of the interplay between three realms of experiential negotiation:

1. Mainstream realms of negotiation, of which all members of society have some experience, is tempered by concomittment negotiation through the minority and Black cultural experience. In addition hegemony defines all other values as essentially illegitimate;

2. The minority experience calls for a unique set of adaptive reactions to social, economic, and political oppression. Dialectical cultural relationships between European and African Americans has formulated a distinctive African American response;

3. The African American experience represents a culturally indigenous basis from which African Americans interpret and negotiate social reality (Boykin, 1983, p.57).
Boykin (1983) concludes that these three realms of negotiation create a triple quandary for African Americans as they are incompletely socialized to the Euro-American cultural system, victimized by racial and economic oppression and participate in a culture that is sharply at odds with mainstream ideology. In developing the aesthetic inquiry model, this has been considered and is reflected in the adaptation of Lankford's (1992) aesthetic inquiry model for integration within the curriculum.

Summary

A methodology has been developed in this chapter for an interdisciplinary study that analyzes aesthetic inquiry as is relevant to the developing identity of African American children. A methodological framework is established for personal curriculum theorizing that draws from the field of curriculum theory, aesthetic anthropology, historical and philosophical inquiry.

Personal curriculum theorizing, the organizing methodological strand for this study, concerns itself with internal and existential experiences as a way of understanding the nature of the educational experience.
Table 2.1 An African Centered Methodology for a Personal Curriculum Theory for Aesthetic Inquiry

AN AFRICAN CENTERED METHODOLOGY FOR A PERSONAL CURRICULUM THEORY FOR AESTHETIC INQUIRY

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Process for Personal Curriculum Theory:

- reflecting on past experience
- outlining current philosophy and future directions
- seeking meaning in perceptions of both past and future directions
- making choices for curriculum planning and implementation that reflect a renewal of social commitment and direction

African Centered Concept of SELF:
Multidimensional relationship to

- ancestors
- yet unborn
- nature
- community

Investigation Draws From:

- philosophy
- social cognition
- curriculum inquiry
- Afrocentric psychology
Table 2.1 (continued)

**Interdisciplinary Approach Addresses:**

- underestimation of the abilities of African American children
- The invisibility of the realities of their existential experience
- misunderstanding of attitudes
- disregard for perspectives
- misinterpretation of behavior

**External Validity Concerns:**

- cultural- identifying personal and social norms
- interpretive- seeking emic perspectives
- ecological- relationships between persons, tasks, situations
- population - theoretical linkages between patterns of child rearing, development of competence and patterns of subsistence within a culture
Hermeneutical inquiry blends in with this paradigm of critical inquiry because of its emphasis on social justice. The overall process of personal curriculum theory is important in that it enables teachers, learners, and curriculum developers to articulate sources of meaning and direction in their lives.

Reflection on one's own art making behaviors as well as the degree to which one relies on a western model of art is a way of addressing the dual role of cultural ethnocentrism in contributing the ideological changes and struggles in the history and practices within the social sciences. The translation of this duality into relationships between students and teachers as well as the type of research that undergirds pedagogy relating beliefs about the underestimation of the abilities of African American children, the invisibility of their existential experiences, the misunderstanding of their attitudes, the disregard for their perspectives, and the misinterpretation of their behavior, maintains and sustains hegemonic practices.

In the continuous process of questioning and interpreting, an increased capacity for introspection regarding the cognitions we inscribe as quasi-arbiters of culture and the problems and dilemmas attached to cultural literacy is a source of empowerment. The personal curriculum theorizing process calls for several phases
that involve reflecting, contemplation, analysis, and synthesis (Schubert, 1986). The personal curriculum theory puts the examination of one's subjectivity at the center of the process enabling the researcher to write unshackled from orientations that may not be realized as intervening in the research process. Incorporating Afrocentric optimal theory into the research process allows for a self reflective aspect to the study.

The concept of self within an optimal conceptual system is multidimensional encompassing the ancestors, those yet unborn, nature and community. Hence a broader view of personal curriculum theory reflects a sense of one's relation to these various aspects. In adopting an Afrocentric perspective into the personal curriculum theorizing process, a commitment to reflecting the life experiences, history and tradition of African people is identified as the center of my own analysis. An African centered personal curriculum theory would operate on four basic assumptions that include consideration of various aspects of African American culture which include axiology and ontology; epistemology; diunity; and ntuology.

Cultural, interpretive, ecological, and population validity have been presented in this chapter as a consideration in the construction of this methodology as they collectively enhance the external validity of a
study in presenting an emic and etic perspective.

The idea of an African-centered personal theory cannot be advanced without consideration of core cultural values that may serve to move curriculum and its supporting research to a more comprehensive level of development. An African-centered perspective is in alignment with the ideals in art education that promote pluralism. An African-centered perspective promotes the idea that people of color throughout the world have the right to develop their own independent intellectual perspectives from which a global "pluriversal" and polycentered perspective can be realized (Keto, p.27, 1991).

Chapter three will explore issues that clarify the relationship between aesthetics and race that historically and contemporarily remain outside of what has traditionally been the social and ideological context of aesthetics in art education.
A methodological framework has been established for this study in chapter two. Personal curriculum theory serves as the organizing methodology for this interdisciplinary study. In incorporating the philosophy of Afrocentrism in this personal curriculum theory, the concept of personal theorizing is extended to include the concerns of the African American community. Hence, a review of literature that establishes a conceptual framework from the field of philosophy, social cognitive theory, Afrocentric psychology, and curriculum inquiry informs this process.

This chapter will explore issues that clarify the relationship between aesthetics and race that historically and contemporarily remain outside of what has traditionally been the social and ideological context of aesthetics in art education. Goals inherent in curricular ecology direct us to a critical examination of social and
ideological factors that interface with the aesthetic inquiry content we seek to teach. Open and honest consideration for the ecology in which curriculum is played out may decrease what Boykin (1983) relates as cultural chauvinism and psychoideological hegemony. Thus, delivery of the various aspects of schooling defined as task definition, task format, and ambience (discussed earlier in chapter one) may optimize opportunities for positive outcomes for greater numbers of students.

The preoccupation of aesthetics has always been that of seeking meaning and conditions of value (Santayana, 1955). Those who speak about and use the term aesthetics are held to a particular context and meaning in investigating the perception of value in art. This has always carried over into the daily cultural practices in our society. As early as the 1800's the cultural category "highbrow" emerged as a way to describe intellectual or aesthetic superiority, while the cultural category "lowlbrow" was indicative of something or someone who was without the capacity to be highly intellectual or aesthetically refined (Levine, 1988). Such cultural categories were "openly associated with and designed to preserve, nurture, and extend the cultural history and values of a particular group of peoples in a specific historical context" (Levine, 1988, p.223).
While the aforementioned cultural categories are not overtly represented in the aims of contemporary aesthetic inquiry, introspection as to the degree to which the discipline may serve as a conduit for the perpetuation for such categories is due.

An increasing body of literature has devoted itself to the concept of negation inherent in the lives of African Americans as it is relative to American standards of beauty (Russell, Wilson and Hall, 1993; Brown, 1993; Skillings and Dobbins, 1991). The resonation of these social and ideological factors within the lives of contemporary children, whose investiture in western conceptions of aesthetics, remains of vital interest to those who employ such concepts in teaching aesthetic inquiry (Tomhave, 1922; Chalmers, 1992; Stankiewicz, 1992).

Specifically then, this chapter is directed at three thematic components of aesthetic negation, as defined in this study, and their relevancy to the ongoing identity process of African Americans:

1) the historical artificial constructs of Africanness and Whiteness;

2) absence of a cohesive decoding system that would promote understanding of these constructs and;

3) assimilation as a vehicle for minority culture compliance with dominant culture within aesthetic inquiry.
A discussion of how negation manifests itself within African American culture prefaces this.

**The Historical Role of Social Cognition in Transmitting Negation As A Cultural Value**

Social cognition, devoted to the study of how people interpret and construct their social environment, is relevant to any discussion regarding curricular ecology that is responsive to the experience of African Americans. This particular field of social psychology emphasizes the process of extracting meaning from behavior, making attributions for events that have occurred, inferring characteristics of people associated with those events, and constructing of social reality (Weiner, Graham, Taylor, and Meyer, 1983). Concurrently we have a body of social cognitive research literature that enables us to examine these variables as they are particular to European American children. One such study, *Individual Correlates in the Belief in a Just World* (1984), examined the relationships perceived among the factors of social inequality, evaluated social inequality, the work ethic, political preference, several social identity variables, and the belief in a just world concept⁶.
The results indicate that race, income, age, and political party preference were significantly associated in a just world concept while sex, educational attainment, and occupational prestige were not (Smith and Green, 1984).

In another study, The Early Development to Stigmatizing Reactions to Physical Differences Study (1986) European American children in grades kindergarten through third grade were tested. Results indicate that preference for the same-sex, same-race, nondisabled child over other target children was apparent at all ages, suggesting that the earliest form of stigmatization is a generalized bias against anyone who is physically deviant (Sigelman, Miller, Whitworth, 1986). Relatedly, Essed (1991) asserts in her study on everyday racism that the degree of saturation of racist ideologies in an individual's social cognition contribute to their indulgence in racist practices.

Hence, it is reasonable to see this specific type of cognition as having a central role in setting the tone of a community and its larger society. Moreover, social cognition processes involving race appear to interface with ongoing identity formation for all children. Racism, as a system of advantage, is a pervasive aspect of social reality (Tatum, p.3, 1992).
Of particular interest in exploring the experiences of African American children and their developing identity is the phenomenon of negation. Various aspects of it have been discussed.

For instance, Spencer (1990) asserts that African American parents, relatives, and teachers must actively and continually struggle to present evidence to children that confirms the worth of African American culture as a mechanism for offsetting cultural identity confusion (cited in Spencer and Markstrom-Adams, 1990). The prevalence of color stereotyping and color bias results in the potential for unique identity formation processes for minority youth (Spencer, and Markstrom-Adams, 1990). In more general terms, social cognitive scientists have looked at the power of self-relevant imagery in influencing how one thinks about one's abilities,

Markus and Nurius (1986) have defined possible selves as "those elements of the self concept that represent what individuals could become, would like to become, or are afraid of becoming. They are specific representations (imaginial, semantic, inactive) of the self in future states that serve to facilitate performance actions. The efficient performance of any task...requires the construction of the possible self in future states that carries out the action, completes the task, or masters the difficulty " (Ruvolo and Markus, p.96, 1992).

Historically it is possible to examine the ways in which social cognition has served as an agent in reproducing negation relative to the ideas embodied in aesthetics if we attend to the role of symbol systems in
culture as indexes for locating possible selves. Goodman (1968) advances the idea that aesthetic experiences are those in which some attention is focused on specific symbols as well as that to which the symbols refer (cited in Dickie, 1988). The position of the African American in this particular "index of symbols" has early on presented a set of challenges not unlike those studied by the social cognitive scientists. The viability of African American culture has been anchored by the genesis of distinctive cultural aesthetic responses. The mechanics of this particular type of negation inherent in these symbol systems may elucidate a portion of the framework for a cultural aesthetic in the form of a response to the absence of self-relevant imagery that nurture and sustain the possible self. Nobles (1989) provides a definition for culture that clarify the relationship between symbol systems and culture,

Technically, culture is the vast structure of behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, habits, beliefs, customs, language, rituals, ceremonies and practices peculiar to a particular group of people which provides them with a general design for living and patterns for interpreting reality. The system of culture teaches the people to recognize phenomena and to respect certain logical relations amongst phenomena. Culture gives meaning to reality. As such, culture has the power to compel behavior and the capacity to reinforce ideas and beliefs about human functioning, including issues of educational achievement and motivation. As such culture is the invisible medium in which all human functioning occurs" (Nobles, p.42, 1989).
If it were possible to put the question of a personal and cultural investiture in western concepts of beauty to the generations of African Americans who were raised during reconstruction, responses on the part of African Americans are likely to have been a reflection of the cultural milieu in which they lived (Levine, 1988). Such responses on the part of African Americans whose survival depended on accurate reading of cultural representational form and symbol systems, may delimit what is traditionally a discussion regarding the philosophy of beauty as a theory of perception of values to a broader understanding of the complex role of those values in their lives. Eaton (1988) asserts that aesthetic value is both a matter of individual response to things and the social and cultural context of those responses.

For example, Doyle (1933) in relating the etiquette of race relations at the time of pre- and post- reconstruction, describes slave clothing as a derived form of etiquette that served as a class distinction indicating inter and intra-group delineation. Clothing, as symbol system, was denoted by the use of cotton osnaburg- known as "Negro cloth" (Doyle, 1933). Such relationships between racial codes of etiquette and their paralleled representation in art served as an index for communicating public sentiment about African Americans. McElroy (1990) confirms this,
Naming is a form of power, and visual images have the power to identify and define place and personality. Whether through portraiture, genre scenes, allegorical history painting, or narrative realism, the work of artists of differing races and ethnic groups has detailed the prevailing negative as well as the rarer positive opinions that one race held for another (McElroy, p.xi, 1990).

Additionally, Levine (1988) supports this in his view that as early as the 1850's the ideology of culture had taken on dimensions of ethnicity and race denoted by hierarchical connotations. In this regard, Cross, Parham, and Helms (1989) have identified within their racial identity theory a psycho-historical outline that describes four distinctive eras which can also be seen as markers in the formulation of the phenomenon of aesthetic negation;

1) the implementation of slavery via strategies designed to eliminate an Afrocentric perspective;

2) the era of institutionalization of slavery during which Blacks continued the process of acculturation to Euro-American culture began during the earlier era and lost the capacity to consciously identify with Africanity;

3) the postslavery experience (1895-1975), an era wherein thousands of Blacks who had "converted" to "Negresence" contended with assimilationists for the right to self define themselves according to an Afrocentric perspective and;

4) the aftermath of the Black consciousness movement of the 1960's characterized by sustained and meaningful opportunities only for some Blacks, the birth of the underclass, and the encouragement of socialization experiences designed to deemphasize the significance of race in Black peoples' developmental experiences in the United States (cited in Helms, p.229, 1989).
It is suggested here that the emergence of major 19th century and early 20th century aesthetic ideologies coincide with the initial phases of the psycho-historical eras as are denoted in The Conceptual Matrix for Aesthetic Inquiry (see figure 3.1). The absence of overt race referents from philosophical language did not necessarily mean the influence of these psycho-historical eras could not be accounted for within them. This body of work might be conceived of collectively as representing a period of time in which the art of invisibility, the operationlizing of hegemonic social reality, emerges and is sustained. An example of this is the 19th century aesthetic philosopher Hume who proposed that standards of taste could be produced by studying the assessments of competent judges (cited Eaton, 1988), the assumption being that there is a body of competent judges who have met some standards- to the exclusion of others.

Hume's lesser known views regarding people of color bracket who is deemed ineligible as he believed that Africans had no culture or civilization worthy of acknowledging (Mercer,1990). Similar ideologies resonate within contemporary aesthetic philosophy. Frank Sibley (1983) posits that we experience things aesthetically when we exercise our taste, provided we have the capacity to do so (cited in Dickie,1988).
## Conceptual Matrix for Aesthetic Negation

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**Figure 3.1** Conceptual Matrix for Aesthetic Negation
In a discussion of basic principles of image projection Szalay and Deese (1978) develop the idea that the images that we project on other people are made up chiefly of those components that easily contrast with our perceived characteristics of ourselves. Essed (1991) asserts that Eurocentric practices are often conveyed in social relations, in the language, in habits of thinking, institutional regulations, and consequently ingrained in the social cognition of the dominant group. This is illuminated in a descriptive 1860 Harpers Weekly newspaper account given by a slave trader,

Travelers describe the natives of the Congo as being small of stature, cheerful, good-humored, unreflecting, and possessed of little energy either of mind or body. Negro indolence is carried with them to the utmost excess. The little cultivation that exists, entirely carried on by the females, is nearly limited to the manioc root, which they are not very skillful in preparing (author unidentified, June, 1860).

Szalay and Deese (1978) establish in their study of culture and subjective meaning that subjective representational systems are concerned with representing the kind of relations implicit in linguistic statements, associations, images, and other products of the representational system. Morrison (1990) develops the significance of this in her literary discourse,

...the climate in which they (slaves) wrote reflected not only the Age of Enlightenment but its twin, born at the same time, the Age of Scientific Racism. David Hume, Emanuel Kant and
Thomas Jefferson... documented their conclusions that Blacks were incapable of intelligence. Hegel, in 1813, had said that Africans had no history and couldn't write in modern languages. Kant disregarded a perceptive observation by a Black man by saying "This fellow was quite Black from head to foot, a clear proof that what he said was stupid.

Szalay and Deese (1978) conclude that knowledge of a particular culture and of a particular group of people must be employed to infer from associations what people are saying. To say during the course of the formulation of ideas regarding aesthetics in the nineteenth century, those in positions of dominance did not have such information regarding the culture cannot be substantiated- rather, what becomes evident is the emergence of a framework for fixed relationships between aesthetics and race. Danto (1981) maintains that appreciation of aesthetic qualities within a work of art are a function of their own historical identity. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the issue of race became part of what was consciously or unconsciously identified in aesthetic quality in nineteenth century American and may possibly remain with us today.

This idea of associative meaning is further supported in Szalay and Deese's (1978) contention that relations which are implicit in such associations reveal the dominance of particular concepts in the subjective representational system, the salience of particular relations, the affinities among relations, and the degree of affectivity associated

Race as a component of aesthetic ideologies was communicated through a carefully established relationship between visual images and text often presented outside of the context of "art", and yet fundamental to its discourse.

Consider two newspaper series columns devoted to reporting on agricultural Negroes in the November 27, 1880 and December 4, 1880 issues of Harpers Weekly (see plates I and II). The November 27th column conveys,

The Charleston negroes are the aristocracy-so far as I have seen-of their race. They copy the white, and that very fairly, in courtesy, hospitality, and especially in that air of "we are the cream of humanity" which the white Charlestonian is sure to inform you is the case, if she or he fails to make the discovery yourself (Author unknown, p.781, 1880).

In comparing African Americans from Georgia with those from Alabama the unidentified columnist December 4, (1880) writes,

physically the Alabama negroes are very large and strong, and in this respect resemble those of Georgia, though mentally and morally I doubt if they are quite equal to them (Author unknown, p.765, 1880).

DECEMBER 4, 1880.

INSIDE SOUTHERN CABINS.

HARPER'S WEEKLY.

I.

ARMS.

Plate II. Inside Southern Cabins.

HARPER'S WEEKLY.

I.

IN ARMS.

Plate II. Inside Southern Cabins.

December 4, 1880.

...
Such texts were often accompanied by what were "questionable" realistic renderings and quotations that perhaps constitute the origins of exploring the African American in the style of physionomic character (see plate III and IV). Medhurst and Desousa (1981) define the function of physionomic caricature as the amplification and repetition of existing characteristics to the point where signs to cease to function in a iconic manner and begin to take on symbolic significance (Medhurst and Desousa, 1981). It is this symbolic significance evident in the earliest forms of media that were produced and circulated in this country that created an atmosphere of psychologically unsound acceptability and normalcy (see plate V and VI).

The prevalent usage of psysiomnomic character became a symbolic shroud to which the preceding generation of Harlem Renaissance painters felt compelled to formulate a response (Verdino-Sullwood, 1990). Their challenges laid in the character of established consumerism which matriculated against the backdrop the legal separation of African Americans (Verdino-Sullwood, 1990). Henderson (1989) cogently expresses how the emotions and sensibilities that could be found in manufactured products such as ashtrays, games, golf tees legitimized lynching and other forms of physical and psychological violence against African Americans.
Plate III. Illustration, Every Saturday, December 31, 1870
Plate V. Illustration, The Graphic, June 7, 1884

THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE—SLAVES TAKEN FROM A DHOW CAPTURED BY H.M.S. "UNDINE"
SAMBO'S TESTIMONIAL

PEARS' SOAP

I have found matchless for the complexion—

Adelina Patti

"Matchless for um complekshun."

Specially drawn by H.S. MARKS, R.A. for the Proprietors of PEARS' SOAP.
McElroy (1990) interprets "The New Negro", the philosophical embodiment of the Harlem Renaissance artists, as a paradoxical metaphor that combined historical and cultural antecedents. This period of intense creativity in the African American community, during the second psycho-historical era, was an important turning point in formulating a collective response to the existence of aesthetic negation as Sims-Wood (1988) has suggested that negative stereotypical images of African Americans in popular culture have been an important vehicle for the transmission of the myth of inferiority. Driskell (1988) concurs with this in noting a significant parallel between the positive development of African American imagery done by African American Artists and the various views depicted by European American artists.

This is important in grasping the power of social cognition to imbue a strong sense of consensus regarding where the African American was to be positioned within the framework of aesthetic ideologies - this index of symbols. In all, the visual appeared to be bracketed by agendas directed at maintaining and sustaining a particular social cognition which maintained social order. The following sections are an extended discussion of aesthetic negation and
the various ways in which this has been sustained and nurtured through social cognition.

**Foundations for the Construction of Artificial Africanness & Whiteness as a Mechanism of Aesthetic Negation**

It has been established thus far that historically subjective meaning has defined the group status of African Americans and is drawn from a macrolevel of our environment that gives it a certain structure and reality. Reality, as the mental construction of a group, draws its validity from the consensus of the total society or one of its specialized groups (Maquet, 1986). This becomes central to a discussion of the artificial construct of Africanness and Whiteness as part of the mechanism of aesthetic negation. Morrison (1992) speaks of their invention as part of the formation of our nation which "necessitated coded language and purposeful restriction to deal with the racial disingenuousness and moral frailty at its heart" (Morrison, 1992, p.6). Developing identity of African American children throughout the history of this country is marked by its existence.

Spencer and Markstrom-Adams (1990) define identity as a psychosocial task, involving the development of a sense of unification
and cohesiveness within one's self, thereby providing meaning, direction, and purpose while serving a critical function for the individual's manifest competence and adaptive functioning. Emergence of recent social cognitive theories suggest that cognitive processes undergird the identification process (Ogbu, 1990; Spencer and Markstrom-Adams, 1990; Tatum, 1992). The complex process of identity formation may be intensified by such issues as skin color, behavioral distinctions, language differences, physical features, and longstanding, although unaddressed, social stereotypes (Spencer and Markstrom-Adams, 1990).

This process occurring in the core of the individual and his or her communal culture has been discussed by Ben-Jochannan (1988) in highlighting what he terms as the psycho-esthetical phenomenon of severe self contradiction of one's inner beauty or inner self. J.F. Brown (1993) contends that the role of psychologists must be expanded to that of educator and political scientist in helping clients to reject the Euro-American definition of physical beauty as the only valid definition. Gillespie (1993) reflects on the question regarding the degree to which African American children are impacted by American ideals of beauty in their ongoing identity development.
Spencer and Markston (1990) assert that schools continue to reflect historical values and beliefs, including racial stereotypes and prejudice,

...as a function of color and easy identifiability, there are within- and between group commonalities of experience that emanate from the macrosystem's devaluation of African American people...In addition at the microsystem level (e.g. peers, church, school, and family) significant differences may exist in the preparation of African American children for macrosystem-derived devaluation of African American people (Spencer and Markstrom-Adams, 1990, p.293)."

Aesthetics ideologies historically constitute an important function within the microsystem and macrosystem's derived devaluation of African American people. The emergence of a symbol system that advanced social control in the form of racial hierarchy was an invention whose inception is rooted in nineteenth and twentieth century American culture (Barnett, 1984). Prior to the construction of such a hierarchy, Snowden (1983) relates that ancient views of skin color were typified by a stance of non-significance. Classical and Old testament writings are used to support Snowden's (1983) assertion that while there was evidence of an awareness of racial differences, there was no value attached to it.

Snowden (1983) characterizes the Greeks and Romans as having a narcissistic canon of physical beauty. This is characterized within his discussion as a somatic norm image rooted in an ethnocentric standard
for judging beauty. Somatic norm image is defined as the complex of physical characteristics which are accepted by a group as its norm or ideal (Snowden, 1983). Although the ideology of aesthetic superiority was attached to their thinking, there was also an acknowledgment of the existence of varied criteria for beauty.

Contracting, the negative portrayal of the African American image has been critiqued with regard to the work of both European American and African American artists (Driskell, 1988; McElroy, 1990). Others have extended the discussion of the utilization of the African American visual image within popular art forms used in everyday culture (Sims-Wood, 1988; Wilkinson, 1988). The perpetuation of notions concerning African American inferiority can be seen as having a distinctly political, aesthetic, economic, and sociological impact on American society (Jewell 1993; Smith 1988; Luebeck and Woods, 1989; Henderson, 1988; Toldson & Pastuer, 1975).

Morrison (1992) distinguishes the use of her term "Africanism" in two ways that elucidate this devaluation as a cognition within the literary imagination. In the first sense, she refers to "American Africanisms" as the denotative and connotative blackness that African peoples have come to signify. In addition, this first sense refers to the
entire range of views, assumptions, readings, and misreadings that accompany Eurocentric learning about African people.

This is not the same as the second sense in which Morrison (1992) uses "Africanisms". This second sense refers to the larger bodies of knowledge on Africa—the varieties and complexities of African people and their descendants who have inhabited this country. It is the first sense of "American Africanisms" that Morrison (1992) feels is favored by education, as it "makes it possible to say and not to say, to inscribe and erase, to escape and engage, to act out and act on, to historicize and render timeless (Morrison, 1992, p.7)".

As a shared process of the European and Europeanized, the concept of "invented Africa" validated the use of underscored omissions, startling contradictions, heavily nuanced conflicts (Morrison, 1992). As these are illuminated in Morrison's literary criticism, this analysis can be extended to a discussion of aesthetic ideologies that address the visual. Boykin (1983) brings to light the transcendence of the psychological dimensions of this concept as are manifested in cultural deficit theories.

Given the prevailing doctrine that all groups in our society should ultimately become like Euro-American, it has been easy to see Afro-Americans as deficient deviations from the social ideal. Psycho-culturally speaking, Black people in their "deficient" state are needed to provide living testimony of the cultural sanctity of
being Euro-American: "things may be tough for me, but thank God at least I'm not Black (Boykin, p.63, 1983).

Positioning Africa as the antithesis of early European American identity has also been addressed by Kalpin and Kaplin (1989). During what has been described earlier in this chapter as the first psychohistorical era of the African American experience, America was engaged in fighting for its own nationhood while simultaneously fashioning a strategy for the suppression of their own guilt with regard to the enslavement of Africans (Kaplin and Kaplin, 1989).

W.D. Myers (1991) relates that this suppression required a process of changing African captives into slaves which he refers to as "seasoning" (W.D. Myers, p. 36, 1991). This necessitated the removal of all symbols that were representative of the African heritage which included traditions of personal adornment (i.e. stylization of hair), African religious rituals, and the practice of naming.

The breaking down of African identity was systematically replaced by an invented one- whereby the tradition of self identification denoting African people as Mandingo, or Fula, or Hausa, or Yoruba, or Bambara was discontinued (W.D. Myers, 1991).

Consequently, few images of the real Africa or real Africans were permitted to demolish the myth of a non-past. The seasoning process further required construing Africa as the dark continent- a non place
inhabited by non-people. Destruction of memory of the motherland's tongues, arts, wisdom, had to be obliterated from the minds of enslaved Africans so that they could be divided, ruled and denationalized (Kaplin and Kaplin, 1989). McElroy (1990) has developed the idea of this artificiality in discussing the period of reconstruction, which occurs during the second era of the psycho-historical experience of African Americans, as having a prevailing influence in present forms of African American negation,

But reconstruction also signifies the manner in which a thing is artificially constructed or naturally formed: structure, conformation, disposition. This definition, coupled with the bitter experience of political reconstruction, helped shape the two antithetical images of African Americans that still inflect the ways that Black people are seen in this country (McElroy, p. xxxii, 1990).

This artificiality is evidenced within what was been defined as the American tradition of popular arts and fine arts as early as the seventeenth century and peaking at the 20th century. For example, Boskin (1990) identifies the origin of "Sambo art" - occurring during the earliest colonization in the seventeenth century- as drawing its life from initial contacts with West Africans during the slave period.
Two examples of their evolution into the mainstay of consumerism, a 1936 piece of sheet music (Plate VII) and a grape juice can label manufactured in the early 1900's (Plate VIII), convey the enduring power and complexity of such stereotypes.

Gates (1990) relates that a complex relationship between race and representation in American fine art between 1710 and 1940 was a period in which fabricated images such as the contented slave, wretched freeman, comic negro, Brute negro, tragic mulatto, local color negro and exotic primitive become convention. As such, these symbol system as part of the canon of representation overlap into the practices of visual artists in this country to a great extent (Gates, 1990). Artists such as William Sidney Mount (1807-1868), James Goodwyn Clonney (1812-1867) and others are highlighted by McElroy (1991) as artists who steadfastly maintained the limitations of conventional attitudes about race. The experiences related by the American painter Winslow Homer indicate the degree to which this became part of the canon. Websters (1986) defines a canon as a norm, criterion, model or standard used for evaluating or criticizing as well as general principle or rule commonly accepted as true, valid and fundamental. The criticism Homer received for including a serious study of African American figures in his work characteristically centered around the worth of African American
Plate VII. "Black Joe" Juice Grapes. Juice Can Label

Black Joe

ED KURTZ
figures as representations of beauty and their alleged ability to devalue the work of art (Flexner, 1966). The transcendence of these ideals into the current canonical practices which shape not only the stance on what is created but who is worthy of creating has been discussed by Pindell (1990) who asserts,

Double speak and "double think" codes are used in the art world to imply the ability of one group of artists (people of European descent) to produce "quality" work, and the inability of another group of artists (people who are not of European descent) to produce "quality" work. The word "quality" is therefore used as if it were synonymous with skin pigmentation and ancestry, but stated publicly as signifying an unsullied and courageous color-blind standard (p.19).

The key to understanding aesthetic negation as it is relevant to the developing identity of African American children is centered in the issue Doyle (1933) raises about African Americans retaining a self-conception that was engineered around European conceptions of them as subordinate in the social scale. This practice of altering and inventing the identity of Africans Americans is a practice rooted in the economic survival of colonial America (W.D. Myers, 1991). Additionally, it should be noted that Henderson (1989) suggests the distortion of African American physical appearance was a way in which European Americans could achieve social, emotional, intellectual, and physical distance. The cultural dynamics at the turn of the century included a
drive for cultural order which was paralleled with a drive for economic order, organization of a cultural sphere was paralleled with organization of an economic sphere, and quest for cultural authority was paralleled with the quest for social authority (Levine, 1988).

Hence "invented tradition", as a set of symbolic ritual practices that function to inculcate values and behavior patterns signifying continuity with the past, became a way to fix certain aspects of emerging modernity (Levine, 1988). It can be concluded therefore that aesthetic negation constitutes a component of that "invented tradition" that undergirded and sustained the aforementioned cultural dynamics as part of the modernity motif.

For African Americans this required fundamentally changing the scope of the "possible self" social psychologists currently concern themselves with. It is reasonable to conclude that development of the artificiality of possible selves- what individuals could become, would like to become, and are afraid of becoming- rests largely on the employment of such symbol systems.

If we attend to Dubin's (1986) assertion regarding African American representations in popular culture as a form of symbolic slavery, it is further reasonable to conclude the fluidity of such symbol systems within the material culture share a relationship with the social
structure and social interaction that occur in this society. As pervasive forms, Walker (1981) saw the emergence of caricatures and stereotypes as enduring images that imposed the psychological construct of a prison where, "the eyes and the hearts of these despised relatives of ours, who have been forced to lock their spirits away from themselves and away from us" (cited in Henderson, p.7, 1989). McELroy (1991) cogently places them within the context of symbol systems in his suggestion that the repeated use of these images gave them the immediacy of symbols.

**The Absence of a Cohesive Decoding System That Would Promote Understanding of the Constructs of Aesthetic Negation**

A myriad of responses to the phenomenon of aesthetic negation emanating from the African American community have constituted a fundamental challenge to its (the African American community's) existence. When we examine the character of these responses it is possible to discern ways in which this challenge has always been intricately tied to the mental health for the African American community. L.J. Myers (1993) asserts that a critical question that must be posed has to do with the issue of survival of African American people
over a period of 400 years which included the worst form of slavery known in the history of mankind.

For L.J. Myers (1993) the response is largely determined by the ability of Africans and their progeny to perceive a reality beyond what their five senses could inform, a spiritual/material reality that allowed them to sustain themselves in the face of the most dreadful circumstances.

Aesthetics as a component of mental health has been discussed by several authors. Pastuer and Toldsen (1982) assert that the mental health of a society can be linked to its art forms. Korzenik (1985) highlights the combination of spiritual convictions and aesthetic interests as having the capacity to keep one mentally in tact. Toldsen & Pastuer (1982), Schubert (1986), and L.J. Myers (1993) have conceptualized aesthetics as holding the key to a relationship between the harmony and rhythm of the universe. Schubert (1986) suggests that aesthetics has a close relationship to axiology and ethics in advocating judgment about a work of art.

Beginning with the period of slavery, the primary "canvas" for artistic expression for African Americans was consistently their own bodies of which they had little authority over. The prior discussion has related the circumstances that dictated this. Appearance as a
component of the interchange of social gestures between slave owners and the enslaved was a fixed reciprocal association which produced both peace and harmony (Doyle, 1933). This study suggests that beginning with the issue of appearance (as a function of survival), there is nonetheless a point of tension in aesthetic ideologies (between that of African culture and American culture) which appear to result in a division of train of thought regarding African American self definition within and outside of the African American community.

Moreover, this point of tension may be representative of a process of self-definition in which the seeds of African American aesthetic traditions are planted- an African centered aesthetic emerges from a cultural frame of reference tied to the African American community's health and well being. These points of tension translate as self-actualization and are made operable through the activation of three fundamental types of intelligence Asante (1987) identifies as creative, recreative and consumer intelligence. In the utilization of creative intelligence, innovation and improvisation dominate the creative process. In the recreative mode of intelligence the process of creating in tandem with final form is drawn upon in the creative act. Consumer intelligence is grounded in Welsh-Asante's (1993) concept of "reward of recognition" whereby the community's participation in bearing witness,
remembering, and empathizing encircle and complete the creative act (Welsh-Asante, p.16, 1993).

Aesthetic negation amounts to the antithesis, the denial of freedom, to engage in these creative intelligences. Aesthetic accommodation constitutes the phenomenon of aesthetic negation. Aesthetic accommodation refers to the alteration not only of physical appearance as a means of negotiating one's survival, but additionally adapting value orientations that also serve the same needs. Gerald (1971) supports this in explaining the importance of image relative to one's self definition,

Because all images, especially created images, represent a certain way of focusing the world...they represent a certain point of view. Now, if we hold a certain point of view, we have automatically emphasized some aspects of reality, blocked out others, and glossed over the rest, and the image which we perceive is not objective reality but our own- or someone else's- reshaping of reality (cited in Toldson and Pastuer, 1975.).

The concept of aesthetic subjugation would then refer to an intergenerational process of bringing under control or subjection to value orientations in a way that impacts cultural aesthetic practices,

If it is someone else's reshaping of reality which we perceive then we are within that person's sphere of influence and can be lead to believe: that a rosebud is pleasant because it has a fragrant smell, or that it is unpleasant because it has thorns. If these two images of the rosebud are combined into a metaphor, we have created images which lead us to make an
association between the reality of the rosebush and another level of reality, and we can be influenced, for instance on a moral level: "sweet smelling roses have unpleasant thorns; therefore, beware of the sweet fragrance of pleasure for underneath it lie hidden the thorns of destruction". In this way, the association made in the mind of the hearer or the reader is controlled. By guiding, by controlling our associations the image maker can and usually does, shape our view of reality, because the words the images conjure up...provoke an immediate emotional response in us, and dim out of our consciousness all the untold other points of view at our disposal (Gerald (1971) cited in Toldson and Pastuer, 1975).

With regard to this idea of aesthetic accommodation, it is interesting to note that slaves themselves practiced class distinctions that approximated their perceived worth by the slave owner (Doyle, 1933). This carried over into the aesthetic practices of adornment discussed by Morrow (1989) who articulates the adaption of artificial hair grooming practices as a disconnection from their own tradition and as outward manifestations of the "right attitude" which enabled them to survive. For example Morrow discusses the covering of the head as a response to the desire of being perceived as "visually tolerable" while engaged in servitude. Other methods included the application of lye to the hair and the ironing of hair along with the bleaching of skin. According to Morrow this desire for conformity (as a means of survival) extended to the child rearing practices where upon the birth of the child the physical features of the face were pinched and shaped to approximate features of the slave owner.
As sub-optimal systems of consciousness, the earliest dialogue about the worth and value of African American physical beauty was indicative of confusion, alienation, and dysfunction. This occurred not in academia, but rather between slave and slave owner. Consequently, it is reasonable to conclude the internal dialogue within the African American community around standards of beauty is early on confounded by the extent to which they can determine their own survival. For example, Russell, Hall, and Wilson (1992) emergence of a racial classification (dark skin as inferior to light skin within the African American community) for African Americans can be seen as interwoven with the practice of preferential treatment by European Americans. Russell, Hall and Wilson's (1992) relate the implications for this aesthetic value among the interpersonal relations in the African American community at the turn of the century,

Black families wishing to join a color conscious congregation might first be required to pass the paper bag, the door or the comb test. The paper bag test involved placing an arm inside a brown paper bag, and only if the skin on the arm was lighter than the color of the bag would a perspective member be invited to attend church services...a fine-toothed comb was hung on a rope near the front entrance. If one's hair was too nappy and snagged in the comb, entry was denied (Russell, Hall, and Wilson, 1992).

Perhaps the most damaging aspect of aesthetic negation cultivated at the turn of the century is its role in the developmental
framework for African American children and their identity. Morrow (1989) gives numerous examples of the kinds of negation that comprise the fabric of a child’s existence during the first two psycho-historical eras of the African American’s experience. This characteristically involved the devaluation of the physical attributes of the child (i.e. in daily conversation relaying the ability to get a comb through the head, and the utilization of physical attributes- as equivalences of intelligence), particularly in establishing a relationship with these perceptions and their life chances. Birtha (1988) confirms this in addressing the role of the parent during the institution of slavery in encouraging the African American child to keep a low profile and to be conciliatory in order to survive. Hence, these various aspects of aesthetic negation can be seen as counter productive to the ideas embodied in "possible selves". Ruvolo and Markus (1992) develop the idea of the critical relationship between the desire to do well and specific self-relevant form,

such individualized translation creates and sustains the motivation. It is specific, personalized images and conceptions of desired end states, and how to approach these end states that mediate the relation between positive expectancies, high levels of aspirations, optimism, control, self efficacy, perceived competence and performance. Similarly, it is specific, personalized images and conceptions of undesired end states that may explain the relation between negative expectancies, low self-efficacy, low self esteem, low perceived competence, helplessness and poor performance. Whether or not one has
available or can generate these specific images and conceptions of self - these mental modes of self in the future - depends on the nature of the self concept (Ruvolo & Markus, p.121, 1992).

The extent to which educational institutions have served either as reinforcement of the various aspects of aesthetic negation as part of the makeup of African American identity or nurtured the establishment of space for its decoding appears to parallel the psycho-historical eras of the African American experience. Early conceptions of the role of aesthetics in education were perceived as fostering a "sympathetic and ardent" identification with literary and historic characters as well as artists or composers (Thomas & Lang, 1937).

Stankiewicz (1984) conveys that picture study and school room decoration were the embodiment of romantic aesthetic theory taught to upper-class Americans as a means of promoting practical virtues and improving society in the late 1800's. In the advocation of art as a cultural study, close ties were established between art, nature and spiritual experience positioning art education as moral education (Stankiewicz, 1984). Young's (1947) initial ideas relating to the idea of aesthetic standards as being culturally determined seem promising until they take on hierarchical connotations. Later Young (1947) advises against the imposing on "the masses" the higher and more logical foundations of aesthetics, but suggests instead creative education that slowly
introduces through daily contact with "good art" (Young, 1947, p.801). Wilson (1990) contextualizes the stability of Young's (1947) position for contemporary African Artists as she asserts,

artists of color cannot even participate in the dialogue pertaining to their own sense of ethnic and racial culture, history and, aesthetics...thus in the absence of knowledge about the Joshua Johnsons, Edmonia Lewises and Charles Ethan Porters who preceded them, young Black artists are doomed to repeat a drama of assimilation vs. alienation from U.S. culture, which they might bypass or experience less acutely if they knew they were not the first artists to face such dilemmas (Wilson (1990) cited in Pindell, p.20, 1990).

Assimilation as a Vehicle for Minority Culture Compliance with Dominant Culture and as a Component of Aesthetic Inquiry Practices

Of the four major disciplines currently emphasized in art education, aesthetic inquiry offers the most compatible framework for the organization and examination of issues related to not only to aesthetic negation but the survivalist tradition that is embedded in the African American aesthetic tradition. It is a discipline in art education that is supported in a large body of innovative ideas that are aimed at maximizing the practice of philosophical inquiry. For example, Lankford (1990) advocates issue-centered approaches that are grounded in an inquiry model characterized by participation, questioning
analysis, investigation, discovery, testing ideas through their applications, and the tolerance, exploration and acceptance of alternative views.

Lankford (1992) breaks new ground in including into the discussion of aesthetic inquiry the possibility of a African American cultural specific aesthetic and raises questions that are relative to its discernment. Robert Adams (1990) has developed an art response model that employs sequential phases of aesthetic inquiry that begin with the idea of sensuousness and expression, move into simple description, technical and thematic description and formal analysis. Adam's final phase of his art response model includes looking at meanings. This is in essence an important contribution to aesthetic inquiry in reordering the aesthetic cognitive process by placing the affective domain at its center. As will be expanded upon later attending to the cognition that are field dependent along with those that are field independent may facilitate greater participation (from children who exhibit this orientation) in aesthetic inquiry.

Similarly, John Sharer (1986) proposes an aesthetic inquiry strategy aimed at statements about art. Sharer (1986) feels that the philosophical focus should involve inquiry into the meaning underlying what is said about art. According to Sharer critical examination should
involve generating belief statements/questions about meanings and values, clarifying belief statements or questions, and examining the reasons given (cited in Erickson, p. 147, 1986).

However, the unique circumstance of African Americans as participants in aesthetic inquiry involves issues of biculturality that challenge us to think about assumptions inherent in the aesthetic inquiry models we develop. In setting the stage for aesthetic inquiry the color blind view of "people as people" may run counter to unique cultural values (Spencer, 1990). Locke (1992) asserts that the method of dealing with people who are different must be amended to provide for people's unique needs based on their own unique cultural group characteristics. Biculturalism, as a form of acculturation is proposed by Locke (1992) as a classification denoting the ability of a cultural group to function effectively in the dominant culture as well as in their own, while holding on to manifestations of their own culture.

Staples (1976) suggests that the bicultural nature of African Americans is something that is forced on them and is often antithetical to their own values (cited in Locke, 1992). This chapter has devoted itself to a discussion of various ways in which this has historically held true with regard to aesthetics and race. A plethora of issues connect
themselves to aesthetic negation, biculturalism, and the psychological well being of all of our youth\textsuperscript{10}.

For African American children, their existence is still very much predicated by nineteenth and early twentieth century ideas regarding the visual (i.e. color symbology, stereotypes, and other aspects of symbol systems)\textsuperscript{11}. For instance, they are the children of parents who when writing a check may experience being classified by the color of their skin (Pyatt, 1991). Drake (1991) suggests that skin-color provides a stimulus cue to thoughts and emotions in some domains of interpersonal relationships. Youths themselves are tied to interlocking assumptions about color that are protected by the law. An example of this is the Florida judge who awarded compensation to a woman who allegedly has a phobia that allows her to equate skin color with danger (Duke, 1992). On a New York campus, police in looking for a crime suspect obtained the list of every Black male on the campus and commenced to the examination of all of their hands (Washington Post, 1992). Collectively these represent the paradox of desocialization or assimilation. Desocialization, as a process for African American youth that reflects the inversion of the socialization process, places the primary responsibility for developing coping skills and social competencies on the youth themselves (Perkins, 1993).
When youth are left to develop their own socializing skills the effects can be devastating as they attempt to circumvent or modify those fundamental developmental tasks that prepare children for adolescence and adolescence for adulthood (Perkins, 1993). Thompson (1992) recently reported that gunplay now has become a part of growing up for many youth in the Washington D.C. area. District of Columbia Medical services Bureau (1992) statistics support this in relating that between January 1985 and July 1992 743 reports of shootings of children 15 or younger in the district have occurred (cited in Thompson, 1992).

Assimilation represents one of four options in the acculturation process with a bidirectional approach12 (the others being integration, rejection, and deculturation) (Sodowsky, Wai Ming Lai, & Plake, 1991). Assimilation as part of the acculturation motif can be a dynamic in the group level adaption of value systems where individuals answer yes or no to the following questions: "Is my cultural identity of value and to be retained" and "Are positive relations with the larger society to be sought?" (Berry, 1980 cited in Sodowsky, Wai Ming Lai, & Plake, 1991).

Isaacs & Benjamin (1991) suggest that assimilation into dominant culture for minority groups has historically and contemporarily meant accepting negative stereotypes and beliefs about one's own ethnic group. They conclude that there is an increasing sense that denying the
importance of ethnicity creates problems that are having a negative impact on their children. This raises the question of aesthetic subjugation as part of the developmental identity process for ethnic minority children. What are the developmental outcomes for children who raised in an atmosphere of aesthetic practices that have their foundation in someone else's reality? How is aesthetic subjugation manifested? At what point in identity development are minority children asked to alter their self-conceptions and how does this occur?

Morrison's (1970) literary masterpiece, The Bluest Eye, provides a cogent example of how this paradox of assimilation versus desocialization is manifested in the lives of younger African American children. Pecola, the central character of this novel, unceasingly prays for blue eyes in the hope that she could be freed of a certain kind of pain that ensnares the very core of her own ongoing identity.

Pecola, as a developing individual, inevitably is impacted throughout the novel by the societal mandate of falling in line with a particular kind of acculturation process that runs counter to her own cultural conceptual system. At an early point in this novel Pecola demonstrates an awareness of the contradictions posed in the adults' avocation of embracing a doll that has no features similar to their own. As Pecola initially rejects the doll with European features and skin
color, she eventually succumbs to the adoption of behaviors that prove to be self-alienating.

The dilemma that Morrison constructs within her novel has proven to be empirically verifiable. Findings reflected in data collected by the Clarks in the 1940's revealing strong identification with a white doll by African American children remain virtually unchanged from data and subsequent findings from replicated studies done by Hopson-Powell (1988) (cited in Talan, 1988). Often the commitment to Eurocentric values is assumed to be of positive benefit to those who engage in these practices, while their compliance behavior may be misconstrued to be a strong commitment to them (Locke, 1992, p.16).

This is poignantly illuminated throughout Morrison's novel in the portrayal of value conflicts that exist between cultures, a lack of identity-achieved role models, a lack of culture focused specific guidance from family, and the preponderance of negative stereotypes about minorities that assault and tear at the very essence of who Pecola is.

It is in fact, the visual with which eleven year Pecola is preoccupied and in which it appears that the construction of her identity is manifested and subsequently played out. Her daily existence is fractured by the fabric of a skewed self-referent imagery sewn into the relationships she has with her childhood peers. With a centered
eloquence Morrison, in the accounting of an exchange that occurs between Pecola and children who are her own race and age, conveys this for her readers,

They had extemporized a verse made up of two insults about matters over which the victim had no control: the color of her skin...That they themselves were Black...was irrelevant. It was their contempt for their own Blackness that gave the first insult its teeth. They seem to have taken all their smoothly cultivated ignorance, their exquisitely learned self-hatred, their elaborately designed hopelessness and sucked it all up into a fiery cone of scorn that had burned for ages in the hollows of their minds and cooled-and spilled over lips of outrage, consuming whatever was in its path (Morrison, 1970, p.55).

Pecola is tragically never able to transcend the societal condemnation on her distance from the European aesthetic and her encasement within the American invention of Africanness. The intra-cultural dimensions of assimilation can be revealing to those desiring to develop aesthetic inquiry. One needs to look only as far as the unwavering line drawn from 1964 Ebony magazine ads (Plate IX) for hair straighter (promising African American men that the "Ultra Wave will make one really proud... not only straightening the hair but culture grooming it") and the slightly altered themes found in an 1992 Essence magazine ad for Lustersilk (hair products that tell us of their ability to give you hair "that gets you noticed") to come face to face with the time

Yes sir! You'll find that Johnson's Ultra Wave not only straightens your hair, it "culture-grooms" it. You'll find your hair becomes wonderfully natural looking and lots easier to manage. Follow the lead of well-groomed men everywhere—insist on Johnson's Ultra Wave Hair Culture. Just follow the simple directions and you'll be truly proud of the way your hair will look. Today is a good day to try Ultra Wave!

Nearly all good drug stores carry Ultra Wave. If you know one that doesn't, please write us.

JOHNSON PRODUCTS CO., INC., 5823 South Green Street, Chicago 37, Illinois
honored assault on coming to terms with one's identity. Although we are assured that 1964 advertisements advising Ebony magazine readers to lighten their dark skin (Plate X) may no longer exist, Peterson-Lewis (1993) in looking at the commercial courting of consumers by cosmetics manufacturers asserts that the social and psychological implications of the view that one must alter oneself in order to be acceptable do in fact exist in contemporary society and merit further research.

It is suggested here that in the case of Morrison's novel, a deeply ingrained aesthetic negation system is part of a greater societal structure that contributes to the stifling of Pecola's ability to decode this system in which she exists and to recognize its objective of oppression in a way that would allow her as well as her peers to analyze symbols and patterns of logic, thought, speech, action, emotional response and perception that comprise this system. This is further illuminated in the concern's expressed by Ireri (1992) who as an Kenyan woman and mother of a young daughter has become increasingly aware of the misconceptions, hostility and shame that African Americans communicate in regard to their African heritage. Similarly Jeffries (1991) has lectured to museum education audiences about the preconceptions that African American, as well as all children, bring to the gallery experience. Jeffries (1990) articulates how dramatically the x
Announced by German Science—A New Cosmetic Substance to
Lighten Dark Skin

To lighten skin pigment itself required a new discovery—a new cosmetic substance. Whether the problem is the face— or just darkened neck, brown spots, blotches or merely muddy complexion, the substance is now available in Palidia.

Palidia, a lovely greasewood vanishing cream, penetrates to the under skin. Here it stops production of dark pigment by about half, while pigment naturally present is steadily carried away. Palidia was found by West German scientists, clinically tested by American doctors, and is produced by a trustworthy 60-year old laboratory.

Now dark skin can be lightened!
Now dull complexion can be bright—those unwanted brown spots on hands, blisters, and dark close areas can be lightened—for Palidia really works!

For Dark Skin Problems of Various Degrees

Dark skin—however dark it naturally may be—is bound to lighten when dark pigment formation is reduced about half. This is what Palidia is designed to do, while the dark pigment naturally present is steadily carried away.

“Significant lightening” are the words used to describe results in clinical reports, but remember, Palidia works with nature, steadily but gradually. So look for slight, your even-tinted, smoother skin in 4 to 8 weeks.

Age Spots and Dark Elbows

Those hateful spots that make hands look old are concentrations of pigment. Dark elbows (and sometimes knees) are a glaring blemish. Until now, very little could be done. But when Palidia is smoothed in, production of dark pigment naturally present is steadily carried away. Now you can see these problems yield to lovely, lighter, smoother skin.

PALIDIA is sold at leading drug and cosmetic counters.
interest in the African Art object is raised when the various aspects of the African centered aesthetic, such as meaning, function and ethos are conveyed.

Sources of inspiration for African American children that are available in the public domain send troubling messages. For example, Puente (1991) points out the contradiction posed by Michael Jackson in presenting a pro-self acceptance stance evident in the slew of multicultural faces melding into each other while simultaneously altering his own African features. Gilliam (1991) provides commentary on the destructive stance high profile achievers produce in negating youth who are in search of their own positive self identity. She cites the 1990 Miss America Debbye Turner and the second Black coach in the NFL, Art Shell as two who have publicly given racial disclaimers to their success.

Concurrently, the research findings of Smith, Burlew, Lungren (1991) support the need to identify culturally sensitive definitions of beauty for African Americans. J.F. Brown (1993) asserts that those in the counseling profession need to be prepared to take on the role of educator/political scientist in helping African American women reject the Euro-American definition of physical beauty as the only valid definition.

..the social implications are staggering. If individuals among us feel compelled or willing to risk health for actual or perceive social rewards, we should all be moved to examine the pattern of reinforcements we give in our interaction with others. The concept of the "looking glass-self" maintains that individuals come to see and indeed behave toward themselves in ways that are consistent with the images or reflections significant others have of them. In other words, individuals self concept is no more than the reflection of how they are treated themselves and regarded by significant others in their environments (p.139).

**Implications for Developing Models for Aesthetic Inquiry**

In the construction of aesthetic inquiry curriculum, which values what Hagaman (1990) describes as the "student-student" community of dialogue where students are encouraged to examine and explain why they think as they do about issues being discussed, the facilitator of such discussions should be able to preface such events with the question of who is to be affirmed in the proposed dialogue. Additionally other questions may include: what enables me to bring this particular set of questions to the dialogue- what values are framed here? What constitutes the phenomena of aesthetic negation in the lives of children I
teach- is there any measure of that in the proposed dialogue? What does the proposed dialogue accomplish: commitment to a cycle of oppression or empowerment? How does the inquiry experience facilitate the cultivation of positive directions for the possible self? What is the aesthetic tradition that supports and affirms my students?

Collectively these questions are representative of the kinds of issues that structure what Cross, Bazron, Dennis, and Isaacs (1989) have framed as the cultural competency continuum\(^{13}\). T.L. Cross et al. (1989) define cultural competency as a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. Culturally competent systems incorporate the importance of culture, the assessment of cross cultural relations, vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cross cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs (T.L. Cross, Bazron, Dennis, and Isaacs, 1989). The cultural competence continuum, spanning from cultural destructiveness to cultural proficiency, has a variety of services in between them that are denoted in the manner of six points. Although this continuum is created in the context of mental health workers who work with minority children, its application as an
analytical tool to systems that are committed to working cross-culturally constitute a sound and logical practice. The continuum is described as beginning and moving through:

1) cultural destructiveness- represented by attitudes, policies, and practices that are destructive to cultures and consequently to the individuals within the culture. It carries the assumption that one race is better than another race and therefore operates on the level of power differentials that disenfranchise, control, exploit, or systematically destroy the minority population;

2) cultural incapacity- within which cultural destructiveness is not intentional but those who wish to deliver services lack the capacity to help minority children. The supremacy dominant cultural authority is reinforced. The characteristics of cultural incapacity include: discriminatory hiring practices, subtle messages to people of color that they are not valued or welcome, and generally setting a posture for lower expectations of minorities;

3) cultural blindness- as midpoint in this continuum one functions with the belief that helping approaches traditionally used by the dominant culture are universally applicable- if the system worked as it should all people regardless of race or culture would be served with equal effectiveness. Unbias is equated with colorblindness, when in truth unbias means acceptance of difference. A color blind perspective encourages the view that color or culture should make no difference. Consequently, such beliefs shape services ethnocentrically and are hence virtually useless to all but the most assimilated people of color;

4) cultural pre-competence- there is an awareness that there is a need for change as weaknesses in serving minority populations are realized. There is a desire to deliver competent services in tandem with a commitment to civil rights. Accomplishments of
singular tasks are taken to mean that they have committed their fulfillment to the minority community;

5) Cultural competence- cultural competence agencies are characterized by acceptance and respect for difference, continuing self-assessment regarding culture, careful attention to the dynamics of difference, continuous expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, and a variety of adaptations to service models in order to better meet the needs of minority populations. Minority groups are seen as distinctive with heterogeneous aspects. They seek advice and consultation from the minority community and actively decide what they are and are not capable of providing to minority clients. Self-analysis of one's own role has left those who give service committed to their community and capable of negotiating a bicultural world. These agencies provide support for staff to become comfortable working in cross cultural situations. Additionally culturally competent agencies understand the interplay between policy and practice, and are committed to policies that enhance services to diverse clientele;

6) cultural proficiency- This point in the continuum is the highest point where culture is held in high esteem. The knowledge base of culturally competent practices is ever expanding through the conducting of research, the development of new approaches and, publication and dissemination of findings and pilot models. Such agencies advocate for cultural competence throughout the system and for improved relations between cultures throughout society. practices become more congruent with the culture of the client from initial contact through termination.

According to T.L. Cross, Bazron, Dennis, and Isaacs (1989) a culturally competent system would incorporate into its structure five essential elements that would contribute to cross-cultural understanding. When these five elements are adapted to the
formulation of aesthetic inquiry models, the possibility of presenting inquiry that is culturally competent can be actualized.

Diversity, as the first element of cultural competence, would not only have to be valued but a respect for worth would have to be cultivated. Differences in the response to meeting universal needs point out that cultures find some behaviors, interactions and values more important or desirable than others (Cross et al, 1989). Implications for aesthetic inquiry models would have to be comprehensive in scope as well as distinguishable from politically correct rhetoric. This means also that aesthetic negation cannot be a part of the inquiry process, rather the self-relevant imagery and content has to become part of the paradigm. Secondly, the discipline of aesthetics must be able to assess itself and have a sense of its own culture. This means that the discipline of aesthetics would have to understand how it is shaped by tradition that structures how it perceives other cultures. Curriculum developers must make an effort to minimize cross cultural barriers.

The third element concerns the dynamics of difference. When one system of culture interacts with another system of culture, miscommunication and misjudgment based on learned expectations direct what has been discussed earlier as assent to learning or non-cooperation (non-cooperation is conceptualized here to include
assimilation behavior). In inquiry, cultures bring unique histories and political positions that shape culturally prescribed patterns of communication, etiquette and problem solving. Implications for aesthetic inquiry models include providing cross cultural interventions that positively facilitate participation on the part of all cultural groups. How we are able read the dynamics of silence, anger, and frustration may influence the effectiveness of the inquiry process.

Institutionalization of cultural knowledge, as the fourth element of cultural competency, empowers the ability of the aesthetic inquiry facilitators to effectively communicate. Mechanisms that secure knowledge needed to make inquiry productive require the formulation of networks that can access and authenticate sources within the African American community itself. Such networks should also be available to those who participate in the inquiry process as well.

Finally the last essential element for cultural competency is adaptation to diversity. Curriculum developers who are sensitive to the impact of oppression can develop empowering interventions through the aesthetic inquiry process. The presentation of culturally enriching experiences that teach the origins of stereotypes and prejudice make the aesthetic inquiry process optimal for minority participants.
Summary

Locke (1992) maintains that the cultural group serves as the basis for individuals to become humanized—individuals become fully human through the process of participating in a cultural group or groups. In clarifying the relationships between aesthetics and race, this chapter examined three thematic components of aesthetic negation and their relevancy to the ongoing identity process of African Americans' children who are a part of two cultural communities. These components include:

1) the historical artificial constructs of Africanness and Whiteness;

2) absence of a cohesive decoding system that would promote understanding of these constructs and;

3) assimilation as a vehicle for minority culture compliance with dominant culture.

The historical role of social cognition as an agent in reproducing negation relative to the ideas embodied in aesthetics was examined. The role of aesthetic negation (see table 3.1) in shaping the reality of the African American community historically (serving as a form of imposed and artificial aesthetic) and its contribution to a sub-optimal framework for survival was elaborated upon in denoting the four psycho-historical eras of the African American experience.
### Table 3.1 Key Tenets of Aesthetic Negation

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<th>KEY TENETS OF AESTHETIC NEGATION</th>
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<td>• historical artificial construct of Africaness and Whiteness</td>
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<td>• absence of a cohesive decoding system that will promote understanding of these constructs</td>
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<td>• propagation of assimilation as a vehicle for minority culture compliance with culture</td>
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### CURRICULAR ISSUES SURROUNDING AESTHETIC NEGATION

| AWARENESS OF THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF AESTHETIC NEGATION | IDENTIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTUAL STRANDS WHICH PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING OF AND AFRICAN CENTERED AESTHETIC | DEVELOPMENT OF A FRAMEWORK FOR AESTHETIC INQUIRY THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICANS |
Palmer (1993) suggests that we must become more critical of the images that surround us daily and lead to negative stereotypes of different races. Drake (1991) posits that four significant domains of evaluation of the color Black as a symbol and of people designated as Black are reflected in cross-cultural studies, some content analysis of literary and biographical works, and discussions of educational and political philosophy. Domains that include the aesthetic, the erotic, the moral/mystical and the status allocating, affect and are affected by a cognitive dimension (Drake, 1991). According to Drake (1991) in the modern world negative esthetic evaluations of "Negroidness" persist tenaciously and reinforce negative beliefs about the intelligence and personality traits of African Americans and consequently factor into the life chances and self esteem of people so evaluated. This chapter has given a detailed analysis of the implications for aesthetic negation within and outside of the African American community.

Unless aesthetic inquiry model developers subscribe to the privilege of invisibility, where the bulk of what is done is seen as work that nurtures the creation of a mirror image (McIntosh, 1991), aesthetic inquiry has the capacity to promote cross cultural understanding through development of curriculum that is culturally competent. Five essential elements for cultural competence have been elaborated on in
this chapter which include valuing diversity, cultural self assessment, and dynamics of difference, institutionalization of cultural knowledge and, adaption to diversity. This chapter provides ground work in the area of cultural self assessment.

In support of these five essential elements of cultural competency, chapter four addresses the characteristic terms of a aesthetic theory that builds on the relationship between African Aesthetics and its forms within the African diaspora. In the identification of an African-centered conceptual framework, a basis is developed for culturally relevant teaching and its incorporation into aesthetic inquiry.
C H A P T E R  IV

INNER VISION: THE ROLE OF THE AFRICAN-CENTERED AESTHETIC AS A SOURCE OF STRENGTH AND SUSTAINING POWER

Cultural ecological factors that have precipitated a distinctive direction for an African-centered aesthetic have been presented in chapter three. The role of social cognition in transmitting aesthetic negation as a cultural value\textsuperscript{14} is made clear in examining the utility of symbol systems constructed around the issue of race during the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. A definitive relationship between aesthetics and race has been established, as they are enjoined in varying degrees (during the four eras of African American psycho-history) with the cultural practices that shape our conceptions of popular and fine art.

In chapter three, the concept of aesthetic negation has been developed as a phenomenon of experience that undergirds the ongoing identity process for African American children in its
adherence to three basic components. These three basic components include:

1) the historical artificial constructs of Africanness and Whiteness

2) absence of a cohesive decoding system that promotes understanding of these constructs and

3) assimilation as a vehicle for minority culture compliance with dominant culture.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to provide an analysis of the philosophical foundations of a visual African American aesthetic tradition made clear in its relationship to a larger family of aesthetics, defined by Welsh-Asante (1993) as a Pan African aesthetic (in this discussion the use of the term African American aesthetic, Pan African aesthetic and African-centered aesthetic are therefore interchangeable). In delineating the differences between the conceptual systems for aesthetic and aesthetics from a European and African centered perspective, Richards (1993) emphasizes that the European discussion of aesthetic centers around taste and appreciation of the beautiful. Aesthetics deals with the essential character of the beautiful and how it can be judged (Richards, 1993).

Hence, the European tradition becomes one of judgment and critique. Conversely, Richards (1993) positions the dynamics of judgment and critique in Afrocentric philosophy. This changes the
focus of the African sensibility because beauty does not carry weight as an abstraction, but rather refers to spirit and the process of using spirit to guide the endeavor of collective consciousness (Richards, 1993).

Such an analysis is critical because, as it has been established in chapter three, aesthetics is a component of mental health which performs a principle function for the African American community in augmenting the process of being and becoming. Richards (1993) makes the point that one of the most significant functions of culture is its role in determining consciousness. When this is viewed within the context of African culture, creative motifs function in affecting the awareness-experience of members of the culture (Richards, 1993). In the embracing of cross cultural understanding as a part of art education philosophy¹⁵, this principle function cannot be overlooked.

Pastuer and Toldson (1982) assert that happiness, as the end goal of all healthy personalities, is only possible when a conducive atmosphere is created that nurtures the affect and feeling component of personality in a way that gives free range or equal significance in the lives of a society's population. Chernoff (1979) has suggested that Africans rely on aesthetic rather than metaphysical conceptions to ground a number of their social and existential concerns, therefore it is reasonable to conclude that when the inclusion of the African American visual aesthetic tradition is not part of the educational
philosophy that frames the development of aesthetic inquiry models, we remain in the mode of reproducing aesthetic negation.

When the unique circumstance of biculturalism and assimilation\textsuperscript{16} for African Americans is contextualized by the concept of aesthetic negation, the necessity for cultural competencies relative to aesthetic inquiry is made clear. Attending to the essential elements of cultural competency may direct us to the development of more comprehensive models for inquiry. When aesthetic inquiry models are structured around cultural competencies (see chapter three) as guiding principles, the inquiry process has the capacity to promote an optimal sense of well being in all children.

The artificial construction of symbols that have contributed to subordinating African Americans have had a profound affect on the psychological well being of African American children, particularly in the area of developing identity. The internal dialogue early on in African American culture regarding the worth and value physical beauty reflected necessitated conformity that was attached to the issue of survival. Consequently, a cohesive decoding system that would assist in dismantling this artificiality is largely non-existent. This begins to change when self actualization truly becomes part of the African American's "possible self" (to be referred to in future as being and becoming).
When spiritual development becomes part of the aesthetic motif for African Americans, a way of being and experiencing that comes through awareness of a transcendent dimension is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life, and whatever people consider to be the "ultimate." Richards (1990) asserts that the depth and strength that enabled Africa to survive the middle passage and other aspects of the African holocaust can be attributed to the source of our ethos, spirituality. In using the term ethos Richards (1990) suggests that there is an acceptance of the idea that when a group of people share a common heritage, a common set of experiences, and a common culture, an emotional bond is created between them (Richards, 1990). Mason (1992) confirms this spiritual centrality in African American culture in his assertion that African Americans are a spiritual people,

they are also beings moved by social currents, struggling for survival in a system that got its impetus through their sufferings. This social situation affects the way African Americans relate to their spirituality and the way they reflect it in their speech and in their arts (Mason, p.49, 1992).

The position is taken in this chapter that a distinctive visual aesthetic tradition has its genesis in activating- in an optimal fashion- primary spiritual, rhythmic, and creative sources. Their configuration
may be seen in what Mason (1992) has called soul, whose functional essence he suggests serves both a social and spiritual need. Dr. Kariamu Welsh-Asante (1993) asserts that spirit, rhythm, and creativity provide the axiological premise for a Pan-African aesthetic. As will be elaborated on in this chapter, these sources in turn give foundation to seven aspects that are used in the production of a work. These seven aspects outlined in Welsh-Asante's (1993) Pan-African aesthetic theory include: meaning, motif, ethos, mode, function, method and form (Welsh-Asante, 1993, p.13)

Hence, there are three propositions relative to a philosophical analysis of an African American aesthetic that will be discussed in this chapter. The first proposition involves comprehension of our own conceptual systems that facilitate sub-optimal and optimal structures for one's worldview. An African-centered aesthetic is based on an African worldview. The formulation of aesthetic inquiry models that do not reproduce oppression must be prefaced by this understanding. L.J. Myers, Speight, Highlen, Cox, Reynolds, Adams, & Hanley (1991) take the position that oppression constitutes being socialized in a worldview that is suboptimal and therefore promotes a fragmented sense of self, regardless of racial and ethnic group 18.

In attending to Noble’s (1989a) definition of culture, a second proposition involves the identification of an African-centered aesthetic
through the discernment of a continuum where people have been taught to recognize phenomena and to respect certain logical relations amongst phenomena as a way of giving meaning to reality. Asante (1993) suggests that given an individual's centeredness, references which serve to inform the African's ideas, concepts, and productions, the person who is at the center of a culture is better able to utilize all of the elements of that culture for the creative production of an idea.

Respectively, a third proposition addresses the issue of heterogeneity within African American culture as a factor in establishing protocol for an African centered aesthetic. An African-centered theory of aesthetics would conceptualize and embrace variations within the African diaspora visual arts tradition as residuals relative to an African heritage as opposed to unnegotiated dichotomies that devalue the sum total of their existence. According to Asante (1993) centeredness is not determined by the use of referents from other cultures or restricted to those referents within one's own culture, rather that the principle conscious references should be those of the congruent culture. How that congruent culture is defined by those who participate in it will reflect in the varied melding of English, Dutch, French, Portuguese or Spanish heritage with African speech, customs, art, and music.
**The Role of Worldview in Establishing a Protocol for an African-Centered Aesthetic**

An African-centered aesthetic is based on an African worldview. The issue at hand in defining the role of worldview in establishing the protocol for an African-centered aesthetic is not one of justifying the existence of a cultural philosophy, but rather understanding what guides our ability to apprehend aesthetic systems in a cross-cultural fashion. Chernoff put it cogently in posing the question, "How can we bring something of a different order to our world of understanding and at the same time recognize and appreciate it on its own terms?" (Chernoff, 1979, p.3). It is reasonable to assume therefore that optimal forms of apprehension rest on the degree to which we are culturally competent. The ability to give recognition and acknowledgment to any cultural aesthetic tradition may share a relationship with the level at which we find ourselves within the range of optimal to sub-optimal levels of identity development.

Increasingly we are coming to understand the importance of worldview in understanding culture. Luckman (1967) defines worldview as an encompassing system of meaning where an integrated mesh of central attitudes and values make up an inner core which he saw as the sacred cosmos (Cited in Sobel, 1987). Sobel (1987) posits that the
worldview provides a structuring of significance encompassing taxonomies, models, and goals in relation to which the individual must evaluate reality and choose action. Hecht & Ribeau (1991) suggest that self identity and worldview can be used to understand the unstated assumptions of a culture. Similarly Myers et al. (1991) conceptualizes worldview as the "essence or substance of an individual's views that are lived and that may be influenced by examination, reflection, discussion, and conclusions" (p.60).

The notion of cross cultural understanding that promotes understanding of the cultural deep structure or worldview of African American culture will be likely to reveal fundamentally different basic beliefs and values or philosophy of life that undergird the behavioral manifestations of European and African Americans (Baldwin & Hopkins, 1990). Particularly if we understand Boykin's (1983) assertion that culture deep structures involve the ordering, patterning, and meaning of a given pattern of behaviors that provide cultural distinctiveness. Baldwin and Hopkins (1990) conclude in their empirical analysis of African American and European American cultural differences as assessed by the worldviews paradigm that a significant relationship appears to exist between racial group and worldview orientation.
Sobel (1987) suggests that institutions, as products of worldviews, also have the power to change worldviews in stabilizing or emphasizing particular aspects of culture- the relative importance of cultural aspects that have undergone change can lead to new responses (Sobel, 1987). In addition Sobel (1987) asserts that, "in times of unusual social change, normative processes are altered and individuals, institutions, and worldviews undergo change, but the nature of these developments is related to the character of the original values" (Sobel, p. 15). Consider Chief Seattle's (1854) response to President Franklin Pierce's offer to buy land in Washington State that had been occupied by the Puget Sound Indians,

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing, and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees comes from the memories of the red man....all things are connected. (cited in Scott, J.A. & Seidman, L., 1988)

As worldview has guided the relations between Native Americans and European Americans, the same seems to hold true for Africans transplanted from their homeland into 17th century America. An example of this is found in African American experiences and perceptions of agriculture during this period which were guided by
African beliefs and attitudes toward culture (Hunte, 1992). This was reflected in the characteristically short lived ecology centered stance taken toward farming (Hunte, 1992). That is to say, African families in America saw land as a map of social relationships in contrast to Western beliefs which centered the idea of a map in terms of property and values- positioning the social system as a series of contracts (Hunte, 1992).

The assumed heterogeneity of enslaved West Africans brought to the Americas precludes the idea of a shared set of perceptions in establishing a common worldview (Sobel, 1987). While differing in their perceptions of gods, family structures, economic pursuits, languages, folkways and mores, they were bonded by the commonality of a more basic shared worldview which facilitated their melding into one African American culture (Sobel, 1987). Shared understandings among the Africans brought to the Americas revolve around spirit power, its nature and its possible control, of human beings and their purpose, and of time and its relation to space (Sobel, 1987).

It is the character of these original values that Welsh-Asante (1993) speaks to in her assertion that "worldview structures and extends the aesthetic by determining and establishing symbols, codes, motifs, themes both in a sensory and abstract manner" (p.7).
Hall (1990) underscores this in a discussion of what is typically a conceptual limitation regarding how the diffusion of material culture works. Hall (1990) is critical of the reliance on the identification of actual artifacts brought over by slaves as being constitutive of a basis for making the assertion that the reproduction of material culture was not possible. In advocating a distinction between the specific materials from which artifacts are made and the aesthetic protocol that guided that production

Hall suggests, what we see is not necessarily what the craft worker had in his head. It is rather, the end product of an interaction among the craftsperson's skill, practice, and ability to shape the materials in conformity to the ideal image. The ideal image is a mental image carried, not in the hands or on the backs of the African bondsman, but in their heads. The reappearance of artifacts conforming reasonably well with African cultural ideas for pot, basket, chair, or door is therefore a mental feat before it becomes a physical reality (Hall, 1990, p.107). Richards (1990) extends this idea of what occurred in the absence of the material aspects of culture which had traditionally provided a source of spirit, "To survive as Africans, to survive spiritually, we had to create meaning, We had to re-create order out of the midst of chaos. According to the European worldview, to be African was to be nothing" (p. 216).

An African worldview, as the basis of a belief system for Africans in the Americas, became the source of a driving energy (referred to by Welsh -Asante (1993) as Ntu, the life force or vital energy) for a continued existence (Richards, 1990). Time, space, causality, and purpose as the essence of the African worldview takes its highest form

1) Time that is marked by notable events is important time. Life events, and phenomena derive meaning value and significance through relationships to a organic whole. Phenomena and events are understood on many different levels at once. Babies represent a life continuum and elders that die a physical death are reborn into the spiritual realm as ancestors, future is not envisioned in a Western sense, rather memory becomes critical in regard to homes of forefathers. Time has a scale of value tied to the sacred cosmos. All sets are interrelated through human and spiritual networks;

2) Events occurring in spaces hallow them. Space and time are closely related. There is a strong tie to the land because this is where the graves of the forefathers are. Separation from such land is thought to bring disaster to family. Ritual is the ultimate philosophic expression of the African worldview. It is the modality where the unity of the human and the divine is expressed. When rituals are performed as tradition one becomes as one's ancestors and is therefore able to transcend the boundaries of ordinary space. Space where rituals occur is a place where one comes to energize and revitalize (i.e. hush harbors, night sings, ring shout, prayer meeting). Place is sanctified and inextricably bound to time, as was true for Chief Seattle, spirits are held in particular places;

3) Causality is based in the belief that spirit power lies with the forefathers who lived in time past. Spirits and forefathers affect destiny. Contact with power or an agent who holds power is possible, the axiological premise being that the highest value lies in the interpersonal relationships between men. A deep
respect for social harmony is observed. Each part is a reflection of the whole. God is the ultimate explanation of the genesis and sustenance of both man and all things;

4) Purpose as part of worldview has to do with tradition. Selfhood is symbolized in given names. Self knowledge is the process of coming to know who and what we are as the unique expression of infinite spirit. There is a holistic and integrated realization of self in attending to purpose. Self knowledge includes full awareness of relationship to the ancestors, the yet unborn, nature, and community.

The translation of time, space, causality and purpose as elements of African world view has been discussed by Boykin (1983) in terms of their presence within African American culture as is manifested in nine distinctive dimensions of African American culture:

(a) spirituality, an approach to life as being essentially vitalistic rather than mechanistic, with the conviction that non-material forces influence people's everyday lives;

(b) harmony, the notion that one's fate is interrelated with other elements in the scheme of things, so that humankind and nature are harmonically conjoined;

(c) movement, an emphasis on the interweaving of movement rhythm, percussiveness, music, and dance, which are taken as central to psychological health;

(d) verve, a propensity for relatively high levels of stimulation, to action that is energetic and lively;

(e) affect, an emphasis on emotions and feelings, together with a special sensitivity to emotional cues and a tendency to be emotionally expressive;

(f) communalism, a commitment to social connectedness which includes an awareness that social bonds and responsibilities transcend individual privileges;
(g) **expressive individualism**, the cultivation of a distinct personality and a proclivity for spontaneous, genuine personal expression;

(h) **oral tradition**, a preference for oral/aural modes of communication in which both speaking and listening are treated as performances and in which oral virtuosity- the ability to use alliterative, metaphorically colorful, graphic forms of spoken language-is emphasized and cultivated; and

(i) **social time perspective**, an orientation in which time is treated as passing through a social space rather than a material one, in which time can be recurring, personal, and phenomenological (Boykin, 1983, p. 61).

An African-centered aesthetic is given order through these culturally deep structures in the form of what Welsh-Asante (1993) has identified as seven aspects which are used in the production of the artwork:

1) Meaning, significance of expression in relationship to individual or community.

2) Ethos, quality of expression that exudes spirit, emotion and energy.

3) Motif, incorporation and use of symbols in artistic product that reflect a specific culture and heritage.

4) Mode, manner in which artistic product is expressed.

5) Function, operative relationship of artistic product to individual and community.

6) Method/Technique, practical, physical and material means of realizing artistic product.

7) Form, status of artistic product in terms of structure, shape and composition.
A Continuum for an African-Centered Aesthetic Tradition

The person who is at the center of a culture is better able to utilize all of the elements of that culture for the creative production of an idea. The culturally deep structure guides the artistic production as well as its reception. For example, the Ntu in the African dance masks embodies the great spirits and forces of the people, thereby constituting the grounds for the community's respect (Opoku, 1992). In Bantu ontology Ntu is a sign of universal similitude meaning its manifestation within human beings brings them life while attesting to their value and the measure of their integration into vital energy (Mudimbe, 1988). As such,

Ntu is both a uniting and a differentiating vital norm which explains the powers of vital inequality in terms of difference in human beings. It is a sign from God father of all beings...has put a stamp on the universe, thus making it transparent in a hierarchy of sympathy. Upwards, one would read the vitality that from minerals through vegetables, animals and humans, links stones to the departed and god. Downwards, it a genealogical filiation of forms of beings, engendering or relating to one another, all of them witnessing to the original source that made them possible (Mudimbe, 1988, p.148)

Masked dances in West Africa manifest the generations-old values and beliefs of the people and function as instruction and inspiration for the youth of the community (Opuku, 1992). The African culturally deep structure distinguishes between what can be misuse of
the African mask as a decorative art form for the living room and its proper use as a mode for ritualized conveying of meaning (Opoku, 1992).

This is different from the ways in which Picasso and Brancusi incorporated the seeds of African artistic expression into the realm of international art (Johnson, 1974). The label of abstract, non-objective and purely Western on their work serves as paradox to the African universal principles that compel them. Clifford (1990) suggests that Picasso's attention to African art shifted its categorization (within western culture) from an evolutionary ethnographic context to the conceptualization of "primitive art " where it now occupies the category of universal art. When Picasso visited the Parisian Trocadero Museum of Ethnography in 1907 he experienced a range of emotions that ran the gamut of initial revulsion to the level where he found himself bowled over by the emotional power of masks (Allen, 1989). Eighty two years latter Allen (1989) ponders the perception of ambivalence gnawing away at the foundation of our attitudes toward "African tribal art" asking the question,

Do we follow Picasso's lead and look for objects that still have the shock and surprise? Or do we attempt to evolve criteria for judging African art that derive in some way from the African's own tribal aesthetics (Allen, 1989, 2.B).
Johnson (1974) concludes in his research findings on the non-categorical status of African art that there in fact exists,

cubism in the Bukuba, the spirit of constructivism in Zaire, surrealism with the Makonde, naturalism and portraiture with the Ife and Benin, genre narration with the Yoruba, hardedge geometric symbolism within the Akan goldweights and Adrinda, abstraction in Nafana, Ghana, Bambara, Dogon, and expressionism in Guere, Cameroons. Pop exists wherever the popular converges with the religious, secularism with the sacred or contemporary with the traditional (Johnson, 1974, p.1).

While Picasso and Brancusi's preoccupation with adapting African expressive qualities in a way that is aligned with the Western aesthetic tradition emphasizing aesthetic quality elements of composition; clarity; simplicity; integration of composition; expression power (Maquet, 1986), the aesthetic qualities anchored in an African-centered aesthetic of form, feeling, and rhythm are not consciously the aesthetic focus. Chernoff (1979) speaking in the context of music extends this idea, "The beauty of an expression comes from the special and distinct way the formal structure of the art form becomes a process, the way the tradition comes alive, through rhythm that moves and a particular movement that sophisticates" (p.126).

The Pan-African aesthetic makes clear the diasporic continuum which encompasses a multitude of facets of traditional African cultural artistic production and philosophical thought. Welsh-Asante (1993) asserts that "when the historian and philosopher deal with the question
of aesthetics, they represent a particular frame of reference" (p.5). According to Chase (1971) the African American's ancestral story is sewn through the Divine Kingship of Egypt to Zimbabwe in Rhodesia, and numerous West African kingdoms.

Prehistoric paintings and engravings found on the Tassili Plateau of the Atlas Mountains in the Sahara share commonalities with those found in Egypt and Libya; Nigeria and Cameroun; Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Angola; and well as Rhodesia and South Africa. When the ancestral aspects of the African American participation in the visual arts is related, the 25th Dynasty of Kushite pharaohs and their leadership in the flowering of the arts in Egypt constitute its foundation.

The African ancestral seed was germinated in the lands of Nubia located south of Egypt below the first cataract of the Nile, known to the Egyptians as the kingdoms of Kush (Diop, 1974: Chase, 1971). Farther southwest were other "dark skinned people" in the countries of Punt and Axum known as Ethiopia and Somalia Republic today (Chase, 1971, p.22). The Nubians, whose physical features were Black, shared with the Egyptians and the others of the Nile valley the same African cultural and philosophical modalities (Asante, 1992, Diop, 1974). The great pylon in the state temple to Amun at Karnak, and a papyrus column built by
King Taharqa, and the mortuary chapel of Amenardis (who was a princess of Kush) represent but a sampling of the Kushites' contribution to Egyptian art (Diop, 1974; Gillon, 1984; Chase, 1971). Gillon (1984) includes Nubian art in his survey of the history of African art as he considers it to be a key element in reconstructing the art history of sub-Saharan Black Africa.

Chase (1971) suggests that there were "unities of thought, technique, and pattern that existed between the ancient peoples of the Nile Valley and the West African folk from whom African Americans sprang" (p.22). The glory of West Africa lasted 1,000 years during which time great empires such as Songhai, Mossi-Dagomba and Benin enjoyed law/order and stability (Shepard, 1969). West Africa had its own iron age after 600 B.C.: at which time the smelting of ore and the production of iron took place (Chase, 1971). Its original diffusion and mining dated back to the Nile.

Nok artists of the Niger-Benue country crafted quartz jewelry, iron axes, tin beads and finely molded terra cotta heads two centuries before the first Christmas (Shepard, 1969). Nok culture flourished between 300 B.C. and 200 A.D. marking the transition from the stone age into the iron age (Chase, 1971). The use of seven metals throughout Africa embody and enrich the aesthetic forms created:
gold, silver, copper, iron, zinc, tin, and lead, along with bronze (an alloy of copper and tin) and brass (an alloy of copper and zinc) (Daniel, 1987).

Here, the basis for an African aesthetic tradition that extends over 2,500 years is further developed (Gillon, 1984). This art in turn inspired magnificent brass heads cast at Ife around 100 A.D. Ife artists, who produced the greatest artistic manifestations of the Yoruba, imported copper to cast brass heads that influenced the art production in Benin (Gillon, 1984; Shepard, 1969). Ife used the cire perdue, or lost wax, method which involved a series of steps: the head was molded in wax; covered with clay; molten metal (brass or bronze) poured in, thus melting the wax mold out; and later the clay broken away to reveal the metal sculpture (Shepard, 1969).

Ghana, as one of the earliest of the West African states, emerged as a empire of wealth, having profited from the bartering of gold, ivory and salt along with imposed taxes on all imports and exports that passed along caravan routes through these territories (Gillon, 1984). Chase (1974) attributes it strength to the superiority of its iron-pointed weapons by which it was able to dominate.

The evolution of sophisticated techniques that emerge from the entire West African culture include brass casting, filigree work, embossing, creation of voluminous and elaborate clothes, the art of
weaving in silk, wool and cotton, leatherworking, pottery- or jewelry making. The use of baked clay reflected a predominant feature of the West African civilization evident in its fine craftsmanship and its capacity for great art. Consider the renowned, elegant Kente and Adinkra cloth of the Ashanti and the superb applique' work of the Fon (Daniel, 1987).

If worldview is thought of as a way in which one sees, then it would seem to follow that an aesthetic that is informed by the cultural ontology and cosmology provides the framework for that apprehension. Ife (1993) suggests that it is cultural values that determine the qualitative standards by which art is judged. Consider that in writing about limitations that the "western eye" would have in apprehending the funerary aspects of African art forms, The National Museum of African Art (1981) attributes this to a penchant for agnosticism sparked by a cultural value that ties rituals to shrouds and corpses. The National Museum of African Art (1981) suggests that the viewer understand that as these figures live in the home, on the alter, and in the shrine, they are indicative of the soul- the continuum of life through afterlife to life. Anderson (1990) concurs with this in his discussion of the type of ethnocentrism that has characterized western conceptions of "primitive peoples" incapable of critical thought and philosophical speculation (p.125).
Concomitantly, Johnson (1974) asserts that the most famous and prevalent forms in Africa deal with biomorphic, zoomorphic, and nature or soul related imagery. For example, there is the belief in Yoruba culture that a work of art should embody physical perfection as well as ethical and moral ideals (Anderson, 1990). A disproportionate amount of time is given to the subject's head as it is understood to be the seat of conscious (Anderson, 1990).

Animal iconography functions within African culture at various levels including entertainment, education, symbolism, social status, and demonstration of community recognition of spiritual forces (National Museum of African Art, 1982). An example of this would be the literal and allegorical support provided by animals created in a Lobi beaded royalty stool (Daniel, 1987). In another example, nineteenth century Akan women artisans incorporated iconographic symbols such as snakes, frogs, "ladders of death" often referring to proverbs, into the creation of lids and overall decoration (Gillon, 1984).

As West African culture constitutes the culture from which African Americans come (Chase, 1974), a continuum which speaks to the character of the original values enjoins African American culture with other African derived traditions throughout the diaspora. In the case of African American culture Verdino-Sullwood (1990) suggests that the works of the early twentieth century African American artists reveal
the persistence of African memories and motifs. Johnson (1974) relates that the symbolism for African Americans is identification at a level that is more personalized, regardless of whether it is abstract or naturalistic, figurative or non-figurative - the self must be included. Johnson's idea of identification as the basis for imagery is echoed in the sentiments of the Africobra artists who strove for the essence of "shine" (Richard, 1989,G.1).

In this regard, it is interesting to note that Anderson (1991) in describing the Yoruba aesthetic canon includes the idea of "ephebism" which calls for the depiction of mankind at the optimum of physicality between the extremes of infancy and old age. This is conveyed through the depiction of Yoruba elders in the manner of smooth appearance of lustrous skin, visible markings of clan scars, erect and symmetrical stance of early maturity, sensual roundness, harmonious proportion, and demarcation of the mature body (Anderson, 1991).

The symbolic significance of this can be further understood in the ritual among the Baule, Agni, and Ashanti peoples of Ivory Coast and Ghana involving the application of soot and egg yolk to dull and blacken surfaces that normally were smooth and glossy surfaces (National Museum of African Art). Jeff Donaldson in speaking to the aesthetic that guides the Africobra artists relates, "We want the things to shine, to have the rich luster of a just washed 'fro, of spit shined shoes of de-

Driskell (1989) posits that the cultural legacy that African Americans inherited from their African ancestors serves as a vital force in their art in the later quarter of the twentieth century. An African-centered aesthetic underlines Catlett's concerns for not only working with the subject matter of her people but "seeing if they think I am on the right track" (Trescott, 1993, p.B1). This is aligned with African centered philosophy in that artist, form, and community collectively become the community's generative power (Welsh-Asante, 1993).

**An African-Centered Aesthetic As an Embracing of Heritage Throughout the Diaspora**

Heritage is how a people have used their talent to create a history that gives them memories that they can respect, and use to command the respect of other people (Redding, 1960). Relatedly transnational thinking describes the relationship between ethnic groups to their global antecedents (Cortes (1979) cited in Fleming, 1990). The two variables in transnational thinking are always affinity and identity. They compel the dynamics of African-centered diaspora thought often communicated with creative, recreative and consumer intelligence.
Within the diaspora, transnational thinking has created an atmosphere where creative, recreative, and consumer intelligences draw from and are energized by a common African heritage- in tandem with a progression of consciousness. Their varied configuration as symbol systems can often manifest in ways that are unfamiliar to us, if we think solely in terms of the Western concept of art. Welsh-Asante (1993) utilizes Edmond's (1967) definition of art in her conceptualization of Pan African aesthetic,

Wherever materials are given form, whenever movement has direction, wherever life has, as it were, line and composition, there we have intelligence and then we have that transformation of a given chaos into a desired and desirable order " (p.2).

Consider that for the Afro Brazilian Candombl'e, value is determined by direct descent from African, mastery of African languages used in chants, familiarity with medicinal and spiritual properties and uses of herbs, ability to dance well, and African dress achieved criteria of mobility in their spiritual hierarchy is expressed through the "primacy of self as canvas"19. Candombl'e is the Portuguese term used to describe Afro-Brazilian religion (Omari, 1990).

According to Omari (1990) Candombl'e contemporarily is understood to mean the ideological corpus of the group which would include myths, cosmology, rituals, values and ethics, as well as the
physical locality. Omari (1990) sees their religion as a response to their powerless roles within mainstream Luso-Brazilian society, and refers to what they do as creativity in the face of adversity. Power, the ability or authority to control and influence others, is obtainable in both the microcosm (Candomblés) and the macrocosm (Luso-Brazilian) in different ways (Omari, 1990).

Power in the macrocosm is reflected in the embracing of Western tradition of aesthetics whereby the society is characterized by a "self-conscious hierarchy based on lightness of skin color, straightness of nose and hair, thinness of lips, and European heritage" (Omari, 1990, p.34). These values also extend to what is visibly apparent in preference for western style clothes and type of residence. Western sources provide models for emulation that are studied as vehicles for social mobility. Afro-Brazilian women are excluded from this in that they do not possess necessary biological, educational or economic requirements delineated by this macrocosm system (Omari, 1990).

Significant opportunities for social mobility and power are created in the religious institution of Candomblés (Omari, 1990, p.40). Aspects of the African worldview are amplified in its activities: there is the concept of extended family which is incorporated into the way in which descendants in the organization are traced and acknowledged; initiation is conceived as rebirth; physical locality is where deities are
enshrined and the ceremonies held. A ritual context associated with the liturgical dress is symbolic of the designation of power. Omari (1990) concludes that megacosm values are inversed as African dress and behavior are esteemed as, "a strict socio-religious hierarchy" (p. 41).

Mphande and L.J. Myers (1992) develop a discussion of optimal theory and the indigenous healing practices of the Tumbuko of Northern Malawi, particularly as related to mental illness. They reveal a lot about the function of cultural objects, we are likely to call art, in this process of psychological healing. In focusing on the phenomena of relinking with history and cultural source, Mphande and Myers (1992) make the observation that,

In the New world, the personality trait of the individual, cultural tradition of the slaves and the church as a social grouping combined both to cause the illness through the stressful operation of the capitalist society and also to cure the disease through the actualization of its social and cultural solidarity (p. 30).

Mphande and Myers (1992) draw parallels to the character of this "relinking" in the practices of the Haitians who "transformed the meaning of the Catholic icons by observing their similarities to African spirits, and restructured the identity of the saints, for example, in terms of their own religious language" (p. 24).

In addition, Mphande and Myers (1992) include the French Santo Domingo population, who at the time of the commencement of the 1791
Haitian revolution, represented the two thirds of the people who had survived the middle passage. The practice of Vodun, as a derivative of Africa, resuscitated the essence of who they were as evidenced in their methods of cultivation, family relations and social practices. Haitian paintings and sculptures typically depict subjects from everyday life or from the practices of this religion (Dayton Art Institute, 1992).

In investigating the specific healing practices of the Tumbuka of Northern Malawi, Mphande and Myers (1992) relate the historical background of these people. The Tumbuka, having undergone a military conquest by Ngoni (people who gained conspicuously through cooperation with colonial authorities), restructured their institutions and culture in secret both in "exile land" and in their native land. The restructured identity of their own religion through the reorganization of the religious language of their conquerors served as a way to protect their cultural institutions (Mphande and Myers, 1992).

Vimbuza, as a healing practice, was a way of relinking with their history and their cultural source, as well as maintaining their identity. Contemporarily, it is distinguished from entertainment and instructional performance, as it also refers to the disease curable only when dance is incorporated into the prescription. The tradition of Vimbuza was typical of the type of religion that intervened in extreme cases of dislocation enabling former African slaves to re-enter the
individual or group back to the communal values and cultural stability. The frequent reference to "a yearning to go back home" in the Vimbuza healing songs represents a plea for a return to the stage when harmony can once again be restored to the society, rather than a yearning for a pristine past that is unchanged by history (Mphande and Myers, 1992).

The use of paraphernalia of beadwork, ankle-bells, feathery headgear, fly whisks are "visible signs of a religious tradition and social organization, and can only be explained within the context of the Tumbuka kinship system, class structure, religious practice, and historical development" (p.31). Experienced blacksmiths craft the ankle bells from wrought iron, experts hunt and craft the animal skins into skirts, females make the beadwork (to be given as treasured gifts to loved ones). As diseases are thought of in terms of spirits, they require a particular dance and dress, rhythm of drums, handclapping and songs that go with it.

Richards (1993) posits that the African legacy is centered in the ingenious approach to the use of environment as media, "Our houses, our planting fields, our hair, our bodies—all contain designs, images and symbols which affect us spiritually and physically" (p.77).
Refracted Light: The Historical and Psychological Component of 
Pan-African Aesthetics As Evidenced in The Tradition of African 
American Culture

Refracted light has to do with the bending of a ray or light, heat, or 
sound as it passes obliquely from one medium to another of different 
density, in which its speed is different, or through layers of different 
density in the same medium (Webster's, 1972).

Although the light is changed as it passes through the density of 
materials, particularly in its speed, nothing in our conception of 
refraction disavows the original character of the light as a condition of 
its existence or recognition. An African-centered theory of aesthetics 
would conceptualize and embrace variations within the African 
diaspora visual arts tradition as residuals relative to an African 
heritage as opposed to negotiated dichotomies that devalue the sum total 
of their existence.

The African continuum in the African American visual arts 
tradition as a progression of thought can be characterized much like the 
process of refracted light- the historical and psychological obstacles have 
failed to change the essential character of the original values.

This analogy is helpful in articulating the foundation of an 
African centered aesthetic. In the search for an African continuum in
the visual art of African Americans, there has always been an apprehension in tracing the direct path of that light or character of original values.

If there is no familiarity with the history of African American's participation in the fine arts and the cultural tradition of the African American community, it is easy to mistake the diversity apparent in American contemporary culture as unnegotiated dichotomies that devalue the sum total of accomplishments. The process of enslavement, like the process of refraction, is reflected in the density of ethnophilosophical thought that codifies replication and accommodation in the place of philosophical activity that recognizes and affirms one's own cultural essence.

Mudimbe (1990) sees the distance that has been achieved in this way, "He or she has gone from the situation in which he or she was perceived as a simple functional object to the freedom of thinking of himself or herself as the starting point of an absolute discourse" (p.200).

In the definition of refraction, reference is made with regard to passing through things either that have dense properties and things that are of the same medium. Consider the function of a range of courses described in a teacher education course catalog at African American institutions at the beginning of the twentieth century. Drawing and normal art programs at Wilberforce University (1915-1916)
offers: freehand drawing, flat wash and applied design; decorative designing including a theory of practice including harmony of line, plant analysis, conventionalism; ornament. The teachers courses in art included; history of art; the lives of great artists, lectures on fine art; The social teaching of art; and method application in public school art.

A Wilberforce University course (1920) on religious social engineering is described as offering a view capable of,

acquainting the student with a knowledge of social conditions as they exist in the field. It is the purpose to enable him to make a study of social, commercial, racial, economic, and Christian relationships of the people among whom he may labor, and to apply himself to the betterment of their temporal and spiritual conditions (p.5).

The double consciousness that Dubois (1903) spoke of in the beginning of the twentieth century was nurtured even within some African American schools in a way that stifled and discouraged any interest in their own ancestral heritage. Harris (1993) refers to two senses of double consciousness which included that possessed by the African American "as the result of seeing the self through the eyes of disdaining white majority as well as through one's own self-consciousness" or in the second sense, "the double lives many African Americans were forced to lead, masking their true identities and intelligence to act out imposed expectations scripted for them
by whites and adopting a more comfortable identity at home behind the color veil" (Harris, 1993, p.108).

Hence, the belief has been cultivated that tracing visual art continuities that parallel the aesthetic tradition of Africa in any way while at the same time being in step with the visual arts tradition in North America (outside of the slave craft tradition) is difficult before the early part of the 20th century as African American values and life potentials seemed too controlled to nurture any great art, regardless of how great the talent of the artist (Bontemps, 1980).

Notable exceptions to this are believed to be best represented in the sculptural traditions of African American women artists Edmonia Lewis and Meta Warwick Fuller who in their artistic production began the incorporation of African heritage into the work of art as they were supported to some degree by the emergence of DuBois's Pan African philosophy.

Odita (1992) identifies the Harlem Renaissance as the watershed of African American Art. His analysis of three major African-centered schools of thought in African American art begins here. These are identified as Ancestral Idealists, Folkways Expressionists, and Sensory Impressionists are useful in developing an awareness of how the seven aesthetic senses that are articulated by Welsh-Asante (1989) reflect a progression of consciousness in regard to an African-centered aesthetic.
Harris (1993) posits that there has been a resonance in African American culture that is not always recognized or valued which was known and available to artists in their vernacular cultural reservoir,

African resonances should be seen not as cultural wholes imported intact but as surviving parts of Old world cultural practices; although often continuing in concept and spirit, they are increasingly divergent in form from the original cultural practices. What may remain consistent is how a people respond to change, order and each other (Harris, 1993, p.109)

Epic Memory, Polyrhythm, Multidimensionality, Holism, Curvilinearality, Polycentrism, and Repetition, contribute to the work of art, its touch, feel, voice and emotion (Welsh-Asante, 1989, p.72). A brief discussion of these seven senses were highlighted in accordance with the emergence of their dynamics within these African-centered schools of thought. This should not be construed to mean that any of the aesthetic senses is limited to any one category, but rather a way in which their emergence and progression may be realized.

A discussion of the Ancestral Idealist requires historical context. The Harlem Renaissance, basically a literary movement 1920-1935, was largely influenced by Alaine Locke, America's first African American Rhodes scholar, who advocated connecting their art aesthetically to the ancestral arts of Africa (Driskell, 1993). Adams (1989) identifies five major aesthetic strands in Locke's writing that pertain to the work of the
African American visual artists:

1) African American artists should employ their work;

2) The African American artists should know that African art is the fountain head source of Modern art;

3) The African American Artists should not be restricted to racial subject matter;

4) The African American artists' work should embody the particular and the universal;

5) The African American artists' work should have rootage in cultural soil (Adams, 1989, p.20).

Locke's philosophy differs from that of the Afrocentric aesthetician in that he was unwilling to acknowledge the validity of the African American artists' use of non-western aesthetic conventions and styles in their art, although he encouraged an awareness that this was his second career in the visual arts-Africa being his first (Adams, 1989, p.24).

He wanted African Americans to capitalize on the strengths of the race that could be visually significant in the making of meaningful racial signs and symbols that delineated and defined a African American ethos in American art (Driskell, 1978, p.14). In other words, the recreative aspects of Lock's ideas had boundaries that were a reflection of his time. This double consciousness sometimes dictated a safe and contradictory distance from deeper levels of cultural understanding of African ancestry.
For many of the visual artists who responded to Locke's tenets their exposure to African art was new and many of them had ancestral roots in the rural south where African derived speech, religion and daily life caused them to be one generation removed from African based cultures.

**The Ancestral Idealists**

The Ancestral Idealist strived to revive African tradition in the creation of works of art. These artists for the most part had never visited Africa and this greatly shaped the context from which they created. For example most figures were not full representations as they basically worked from the African prototypes available to them. Epic Memory was a major focus in these works.

Ancestors are important in Epic Memory because they convey a sense of solidarity and security. In African society the ancestors integrate worldview and serve as mediator between God and man (Sindima, 1990, p.200). The ancestors remind the living of those virtues which define the morally good life (Sindima, 1990, p.200). Two such examples of works that fall under the category of the Ancestral Idealist and are characteristic of the aesthetic sense of Epic memory are Nancy Prophet's "Congaleise" (1930) and Sargent Johnson's "Miller's Head".
Spirituality is a component of epic memory as these artists were interested in the use of wood or metal as sacred medium (Odita, 1992). Even when impersonal portraits are done by the ancestral idealist, there is regard for one's own ethnicity that comes through in the works.

Individualized details may be glossed over by Ancestral Idealists to present recognizable features. The common feature of Epic Memory across the art forms is that it is seeking continuity- "we will never be able to reproduce the authentic but rather strive to echo it" (Odita, 1992). Welsh-Asante (1989) asserts that only through memory can the viewer be intimate with the work of art.

In a recent exhibition at the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum in Washington, the African American artists Richmond Barthé and Richard Hunt received recognition. In relating the similarities in the styles of the representational sculptor, Barthé and the abstract sculpture, Richard Hunt, curator Samella Lewis conveys, "Their work is similar in its movement, the way they perceived things, the sensuousness qualities" (citied in Davis, 1993, p.B.1.) According to Davis (1993) both artists displayed a concern for the fluidity of rhythm, as opposed to form as well as elongation of form.
The Folkways Expressionists

The other two categories of Afrocentrically based African American art are not bounded by Western concepts of chronological time in an art historical sense. They are evidenced in both the historical and contemporary realms of African American art. The **Folkways Expressionists** are defined in two ways. One definition centers around the idea of incorporating historical events through interpretations of the experiences of African Americans, while those identified as the romanticists, deal with emotion.

Odita (1992) felt of all the schools of thought, these were the most powerful works. The visual historian is exemplified in the work of Hale Woodruff in his "Armistad Series" (1939), as he recounts the misfortunes of slavery. **Multi-Dimensionality** as an aesthetic sense/standard would account for levels of meaning as something is occurring and existing simultaneously within the work of art. In Aaron Douglas's historical narratives,"Aspects of Negro Life" (1934), we are able to see into the past, present and future. There are layers of texture that add to its perceived dimensions. There is an openness to the interrelationships between the art forms.

The Romantics, as Folkways Expressionists, reflect on the emotional aspects of African American heritage while focusing on
ritual and genre. Daniel Pressley's "Acapulco"(1970) is representative of this in his rendering of ritual. Polyrhythm as an aesthetic sense of superimposed motion pervades this piece. Diunital elements, multiple rhythms within the composition, are represented in the three rhythmic movements in this composition: the guitar player, the priestess and the bull. On par with this aesthetic ideal of Polyrhythm is Polycentrism which is conceptualized as the time spent within each movement; visually this means the rendering of fast and slow movement within a work of art.

Always central to the Folkways impressionist is:

1) the need to show a visual example of divine inspiration;
2) the creation of a personal statement;
3) portrayal of a moment of courage;
4) the portrayal of mystical powers;
5) trans-historical African reference;
6) the work must be the bearer of man's testimony of man's identity.

An example of this can be found in the work of Nora Mckeown Ezell who creates beautiful freehand narrative quilts that show her to be "a master of applique and embroidery, blessed with a vibrant sense of color and history" (Harrington, 1992, p.B.1). Carrie Mae Weem's background in African American folklore at Berkeley as well as
experience in art and photography has set the foundation for her Sea Island series (1991-92) which focuses on the Gullah who can still be found on the sea Islands off South Carolina (J. Lewis, 1993). This series is enriched by sub-themes written under her displayed ceramic plates among her photographs which read "Went looking for Africa and found it lurking quietly along the shore of the Carolinas, the island of Georgia, the delta of Mississippi, the hills of Oakland, the malls of Newark, the plateaus of Arizona; while yet another subtitle reads "Went looking for Africa and found it tightly woven in a woman's hair" (J. Lewis, 1993, p.c.2).

**Sensory Impressionist**

The **Sensory Impressionists** primarily focus on creating a visual experience in one of two ways; either through the experimentation of African traditional art forms or experimentation of colors and forms. There are six principles of the sensory expressionist:

1) in depth knowledge of composition;
2) meaning and purpose;
3) sense of becoming-particularly in the use of lines and forms-now you see it now you don't;
4) emphasis on overall design quality is always more important than the individual elements-no image dominates;
5) evidence of high level of technical skills;
6) strong sense of artist innovation (Odita, 1992).

The aesthetic sense of Curvilinearity, seen as form, shape and structure, is the antithesis of the heavily relied upon principles of symmetry, proportion, and profile oriented form (Welsh-Asante, 1989, p.79). This principle of Curvilinearity, is circular and carves out images that are similar and resemble essential aspects of African Society and mythology (Welsh-Asante, 1989, p.77). Mudimbe (1988) emphasizes the importance of being able to recognize in African myth and ritual, symbolic networks.

In Michael Kelly William's "Around About Midnight" (1984) there is a strong presence of circular that strongly resembles at one moment dancers and the next, African sculpture; figures. One of the hallmarks of African sculptural tradition is the twisted perspective much like the Egyptian pose and is also evident in this piece. In Charles Searles's "Filas for Sale" (1972) the aesthetic sense of Holism, where the parts of the creation are not accentuated beyond the whole, is achieved through the use of color.

There is a concern in the composition for the way that color and light engage themselves as each color is lighted differently- each color has its own vibrancy. The final aesthetic sense is repetition which involves the use of intensity to achieve repetition that would result in ecstasy, euphoria, possession, saturation, and satisfaction have been
reached (Welsh-Asante, 1989, 81). In James Phillips' "Mojo" the movements of the repetitive patterns are "reminiscent of kuba textiles whereas the interlocking motifs move across the picture plane with the rhythmical tightness of an African drum ensemble (Gaither, 1989, p.213).

One example of a Sensory Impressionist, is Sam Gilliam who has enjoyed a long career as part of the color field school. The fact that Gilliam is set apart from his fellow color field painters has been attributed to the "African American music in his marking" (Richard, 1993, G.1).

Another example of sensory impressionism is reflected in the evolutionary art career of William T. Williams. Mercer (1991) relays Williams' initial explorations with the tenets of minimalism and his progression into the stage where he begins to include his own history into the work. More recent works by William T. Williams reflect a concern for his personal and artistic history as he relates that the resurgence of color in his series is "the result of a long and gradual move back to a full spectrum. It signifies a kind of rejoicing about my life" (Mercer, 1991, p.19)

Renee Stout has developed in her work the ability to internalize some of the fundamental principles behind the Kongo tradition of
Minkisi as a way in which she is able to bring expression to the work of art,

the work voices a dynamic doubling that echoes the mirrored two worlds at the center of Kongo cosmology. There is oscillation between the past and the present, between invented realities and personal experiences. In a conceptual pointillism, Stout lays thick, intense African and African American cultural elements next to one another for the mind's eye to juxtapose into seamless imagery leaving powerful impressions (and post impressions) ..... they seem almost animated with the life and power that people a century ago in Kongo associated with Minkisi. Yet the work materializes an evolution of response to their particular history in the Western Hemisphere" (p.108).

**Summary**

This chapter has provided an analysis of the philosophical foundations of an African American visual aesthetic tradition made clear in its relationship to a larger family of aesthetics, which has been referred to in this chapter as a Pan-African aesthetic. The concept of beauty in a Pan-African aesthetic refers to spirit and the process of using spirit to guide the endeavor of collective consciousness. This interfaces with the primary role of culture which is the determination of consciousness. In embracing of cross-cultural understanding as part of art education philosophy, the principle function of aesthetics is in affecting the awareness-experience of members of the culture.
Comprehension of an African-centered aesthetic philosophy is empowering, as it offers a substantive body of information from which a teacher may draw in his/her efforts to include aspects of the African American experience within aesthetic inquiry.

Hence, three propositions have been presented:

1) An African-centered aesthetic is based on an African worldview;

2) the person who is at the center of a culture is better able to utilize all the elements of that culture for the creative production of an idea; and

3) An African-centered aesthetic theory would conceptualize and embrace variations within the African diasporan visual arts tradition as residuals relative to an African heritage as opposed to unnegotiated dichotomies that devalue the sum total of their existence.

In the first proposition, worldview is presented as the structure for our apprehension. As an encompassing system of meaning, worldview provides a structuring of significance encompassing taxonomies, models and goals in relation to which the individual must evaluate reality and choose action. A relationship between social change and altered structures of worldviews has been elaborated upon in order to develop an idea that is central to an African-centered aesthetic- the character of values and their enduring essence.
Key aspects of an African worldview including time/space/causality and purpose become the foundation for nine distinctive dimensions of African American culture which include spirituality, harmony, movement, verve, affect, communalism, expressive individualism, and social time perspective. An African-centered aesthetic is given order through these culturally deep structures apparent in the seven aspects of a Pan African aesthetic: meaning, ethos, motif, mode, function, method/technique, and form.

The second proposition focused on the idea that the person at the center of the culture is best able to utilize all the elements of that culture for the creative production of an idea. Aesthetics as a way in which beliefs and values, moreover the ritualized conveying of meaning, is communicated is distinguished from the way in which Picasso and Brancussi incorporated the seeds of artistic expression. The African American ancestral tradition has as its foundation unities of thought, technique, and pattern that existed between the ancient peoples of the Nile valley and the West African culture. The basis of an aesthetic tradition that has developed over 2,500 years is expanded upon.

The third proposition relates that an African-centered theory of aesthetics would conceptualize and embrace variations within the African diasporan visual arts tradition as residuals relative to an African heritage as opposed to unnegotiated dichotomies that devalue
the sum total of their existence.

Chapter five outlines an infusion competency model that provides a pedagogical framework for incorporating African centered schools of thought and the aesthetic senses that have been outlined in this chapter.
A framework for the philosophical foundation of an African American visual arts aesthetic tradition, made clear in its relationship to a larger family of African-centered aesthetics, has been presented in chapter four. This comprehensive analysis provides a philosophical basis for exploring the African American experience within the aesthetic inquiry process in a culturally competent manner. Teachers are supported in their efforts to include the African American experience within aesthetic inquiry through the discussion of three key propositions.

The first proposition supported in chapter four addressed the African worldview as the basis for an African-centered aesthetic. Aesthetic inquiry models that do not promote socialization in a sub-optimal fashion will reflect an understanding of this. Recognition and appreciation of an African-centered aesthetic can best occur
within aesthetic inquiry when it is presented on its own terms. The second proposition supported in chapter four addressed how the person at the center of a culture is best able to utilize all of the elements of that culture for the creative production of an idea. Unity of thought, technique, and value shape the frame of reference that dictate qualitative standards in an African centered aesthetic. In the actualization of social and cultural solidarity, the two variables of transnational thinking emerge as affinity and identity.

The third proposition speaks to the embracement of variations within the African diasporan visual arts tradition as residuals relative to an African heritage as opposed to unnegotiated dichotomies that devalue the sum total of their existence. The Harlem Renaissance philosopher Alaine Locke set a standard for exploration of the universal and the particular as is reflected in his philosophical tenets. In a time when double consciousness was openly articulated as part of the dilemma of African American artists, Locke called for self-imposed boundaries in the use of African symbols. At another level Locke's cautionary concern for "copying" African art could be interpreted as a concern for the maximization of creative, recreative and consumer intelligences.

Preceding generations of African American artists made choices that reflected a progression of thought in this regard. In the
consistency of response to change, order and each other, resonance undergirds African-centered schools of thought that have largely shaped the African American visual arts tradition. These African-centered schools of thought have been presented in chapter four as Ancestral Idealism, Folkways Expressionism, and Sensory Impressionism. Each school of thought has drawn upon a repository of aesthetic senses that contribute to the touch, feel, voice and emotion in a work of art. Epic memory, Polyrhythm, Multidimensionality, Holism, Curvilinearity, Polycentrism, and Repetition are discussed as seven aesthetic senses that are employed by the African-centered visual artists within these various schools of thought.

In this chapter an infusion competency model is presented as a tool for the promotion of inter-cultural and intra-cultural understanding within the process of aesthetic inquiry. Aesthetic inquiry is the process of searching for answers to questions about the nature of art. (Lankford, 1990). When aesthetics is used in aesthetic inquiry it refers to the denotation of concepts and methods in the philosophy of art, "including inquiry aimed at describing and comprehending aesthetic experience as it is related to artistic processes and products" (Lankford, 1992, p.5).
The concept of infusion of African American content into aesthetic inquiry curriculum can be understood to refer to a pedagogical methodology whereby:

a) an educational experience is provided that affirms and advances the "human imperatives", "cultural prerequisites" and "relational essence" of the student's culture;

b) an educational experience is designed to encourage the student's constant participation in and immediate impact upon the development and positive transformation of cultural reality;

c) an educational experience is provided that has a vision and purpose as its foundation that goes beyond the goal of acculturation and accommodation by instilling in children the personal and collective desire to understand and influence the direction of world governance toward global cultural understanding and respect;

d) educators are provided with the skills and attitudes (i.e., feelings and beliefs) that culturally diverse children can learn and are worth every effort, every sacrifice and deserve every chance to develop their minds and human potential;

e) understanding is encouraged between teachers and parents in regard to cultural truths and shared conviction that the children's cultural group is first and foremost responsible for the education and development and protection of the children;

f) education is conceptualized to be in the service of the people's right to determine their own history and the child's right to experience an educational environment that maximizes each individual's human possibilities (Nobles, 1990, p.19).
There is a clear sense in this model that infusion is a process of change. The goal and aim of the model is that infusion occur in a competent fashion. The word competence is defined as having the capacity to function effectively (Brazon, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989). The curriculum change process has been discussed by Schuster & Van Dyne (1984) as involving: initial stages where the absence of a cultural group is conceptualized as normal; the second stage where exceptional minority/women exemplars are added on within conventional paradigms; the third stage where there is an attempt to empathize with "disadvantaged and subordinate groups" within the perspective of the traditional paradigm: the fourth stage involves a cultural group being studied on its own terms whereby an insider perspective is embraced; the fifth stage involves requestioning of paradigms initiated by the acquisition of new knowledge and; the final stage is represented by an inclusive vision of human experience based on difference, diversity, not sameness or generalization (p.419). A fundamental goal of this infusion model is to promote competency in achieving this final stage in aesthetic inquiry curriculum change.

Williams (1993) asserts that "inquiry consists not only of formulating questions but also of addressing the questions to those who have firsthand experience, or at least some first hand experience, about the matter at hand" (p.12). Earlier in this study it has been established that engendering aesthetic cognition within the
inquiry process fosters an appreciation of the arts shaped around a particular set of values advocated in the appraisal of a work of art. When the teaching approach is based on the idea of a pluralist aesthetic a variety of cultural values can be examined. As the process of aesthetic appraisal entails seeing the work of art under one aspect requiring the application of public interpretive standards, a pluralist aesthetic would require students to engage in perspective shifting. In tandem with this idea is Boykin's (1983) assertion that "the acquisition of skills must be embedded in value constellations that promote human welfare and do not degrade the pluralistic society that is America" (p.84).

An African-centered aesthetic as the basis of inquiry should be understood and taught from a Pan African perspective- whereas the facilitator of inquiry can speak to the way in which deep-level cultural principles, assumptions and understandings shared by Africans in the new world have provided a limited but crucial resource (Mintz & Price, 1976). As has been elaborated upon in chapter four, "they have served as catalysts in the processes by which individuals from diverse societies forged new institutions, and could have provided certain frameworks within which new forms have developed as they became a community and shared a culture (Mintz & Price, 1976, p.14).
Culturally relevant teaching, as the embodiment of the recognition, celebration, and utilization of African and African American culture, would seek to illuminate this particular set of ideas and values which are embodied in aesthetic choices and artistic products. Such an ambition is supported here in attending to Boykin's (1983) strategies for curriculum change.

The first strategy for curriculum change is concerned with responsiveness to African American cultural style. Adaption of teaching methods and task context that lend themselves to the African American cultural styles leads to improvement in the performance of African American students (Boykin, 1983). Disparity in performance between African American and European American students can be reduced when children are taught in a manner congruent to their own cultural styles.

The second strategy for curriculum change is concerned with the use of culturally relevant material. Academic performance can be enhanced when tasks are embedded in a context that is experientially familiar or culturally compatible (Boykin, 1983). Teacher responsiveness as a third strategy for curriculum change requires that the educator understand the nature of the African American psychological experience and its attendant values and styles in order to maximize teaching materials and procedures. Boykin (1983) cogently states,
Ideally, they would learn that the values and cultural styles of Afro Americans are not to be devalued in relation to the Euro-American ethos. If teachers have no appreciation of Black culture, if they have no respect for it, it would be unrealistic to expect them to alter their teaching methods successfully, let alone their attitudes toward their Black pupils, particularly those from working class homes (p.361).

The fourth strategy for curriculum change involves instilling the will to learn into the formal school setting along with the encouragement of intrinsic interest in academic tasks and task persistence.

Collectively, these strategies have been organized under the rubric of A Curricular Ecology of Aesthetic Inquiry: A Model for Assessing Curricular Directionality Relevant to the African American Experience (see figure 5.1). This chapter will explain the dynamics of the model and in addition outline specific infusion competencies for aesthetic inquiry (see table 5.1). The preceding discussion is organized with regard to three contexts of schooling mentioned earlier in this study:

a) task definition-how a particular skill or competence is defined for students and how its purposes are presented to them,

b) task format- the manner in which the skills in question are acquired and performed,

c) ambience- the environmental flux that envelops the task itself and forms the backdrop for learning.
A Curricular Ecology
For Aesthetic Inquiry
Model for Assessing Curricular Directionality Relevant To The African American Experience

SOCIETY

Teacher Intent
Point of Convergence
Task Related Cognitions
Race Identity Cognitions
Social Cognition

Student Assent/Non-Cooperation

Dimensions of Classroom Experience

MULTIPLE AESTHETIC SYSTEMS
VARIED & consistENt COgnITIONS
INFUSION AS NORMALCY

HIERARCHY CULTURAL AESTHETIC
OCCASIONAL VARIATION
EPISODIC/INVISIBILITY

SINGULAR AESTHETIC
SINGULAR COGNITIVE TASK
SUPPORTS SINGULAR SYSTEMS

TASK DEFINITION
how a particular skill or competence is defined

TASK FORMAT
the manner in which the skills in question are acquired

AMBIENCE
the environmental flux that envelopes the task itself and form the backdrop for learner

Sub-Optimal to Optimal Levels of Aesthetic Cognition

TEACHER STAGE
OF
IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT
{ begin here }

Figure 5.1  A Curricular Ecology For Aesthetic Inquiry
### Infusion Competencies for Aesthetic Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key to Western Aesthetic</th>
<th>Key to African-Centered Aesthetic</th>
<th>Implications for Aesthetic Inquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O components of aesthetic quality: elements of composition clarity simplicity integration of composition expression power * emphasis on final form</td>
<td>O components of aesthetic quality form, feeling and time (rhythm) which emanate from cultural consciousness * seven aesthetic senses as canon</td>
<td>O (T.D.) philosophical investigation outlines acceptability of both sets of aesthetic qualities (T.F.) recognition of qualities in cultural forms (adornment, videos) (A) environment reflects forms that can be inventoried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O distinction between beautiful and good</td>
<td>O goodness and beauty interchangeable ugly not equated with bad</td>
<td>O (T.D.) development of awareness of what these ideas have been, why they exist, where they overlap. (T.F.) their translation becomes part of inquiry process (A) forms not limited to western forms. students/community contributes to what is acknowledged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O no relationship between those who design and shape aesthetic objects and those who contemplate those works</td>
<td>O artist, form, audience, collectively become community's generative power</td>
<td>O (T.D.) utilize experiences of artists in both communities in analyzing their perception about roles. (T.F.) evaluative components encompass both approaches (A) providing opportunities for students to participate in community ritual/performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O European symbolism representational, sequential, and analytic</td>
<td>O African symbol is spiritual truth, not its representation. symbol conceived as spiritual energy manifested in the form or shape {example - mask as a force, not representation} * basis of symbolism is &quot;identification&quot; symbolic imagery defined as the use of phenomena, such as words, gestures and objects, to convey multiple meanings</td>
<td>O (T.D.) identify and explore artists' employment of meaning and value to community (T.F.) interpretation supported by historical referents (A) students partake in preparing and sustaining aspects of room</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Table 5.1** Infusion Competencies for Aesthetic Inquiry
Table 5.1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY TO WESTERN AESTHETIC</th>
<th>KEY TO AFRICAN - CENTERED AESTHETIC</th>
<th>IMPLICATIONS FOR AESTHETIC INQUIRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>aesthetic hierarchy:</strong></td>
<td>practice of the acceptance of using and living with more than one dominant cultural element simultaneously</td>
<td>(T.D.) philosophical investigation defined on terms other than hierarchy. (T.F.) entire inquiry process facilitates application grounded in cross cultural understanding. (A) reflects perception of classical in terms of worldview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>establishes European art as high and others as low. Presents traditional aesthetic as predominate route to aesthetic experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>deepest expression of cultural reality logical analysis</strong></td>
<td><strong>deepest expression of African cultural reality through art, music, folksongs and myths. Africans throughout the Diaspora generally know reality through synthesis of symbolic imagery and affect.</strong></td>
<td><strong>(T.D.) philosophical inquiry communicates functional and non-functional aspects in a work of art.</strong> (T.F.) encourages passion for beliefs framed by optimal thought. (A) range of expression in communication nurtured through dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>segmented system of ideas regarding affect, cognition, action, and contemplation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>contemplation, as aesthetic experience separate from emotion and affect. Contemplation believed to be an act without the ego, an &quot;only looking attitude&quot; nondiscursiveness and disinterest</strong></td>
<td><strong>reality of the aesthetic &quot;mind&quot; is desired, making the aesthetic &quot;mine&quot; personalized</strong></td>
<td><strong>(T.D.) philosophical inquiry process is open to variation in aesthetic response. (T.F/A) acceptance of difference is centerpiece of how tasks are defined. (A) sum total of experiences occur in environments conducive to cross-cultural understanding.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** The abbreviation for task definition is (T.D.); for task format (T.F.); and for ambience, (A).
Task Definition in Aesthetic Inquiry

Task definition in aesthetic inquiry gives emphasis to the way in which a particular skill or competence is defined for students and how its purposes are presented to them. Lankford (1992) advocates that curricular goals for aesthetic in art education be based on six topics: The concept of art, values in art, metacriticism, the artworld, artistic expression, and aesthetic experience. Goals should address not only the content of these topics, but development and refinement of the inquiry processes used to study content. These inquiry processes are simultaneously centered on individual skills of inquiry, and on interactional, or social, skills and attitudes that allow for a community of inquiry to exist in the classroom.

a) the teachers should be able to reflect on how their own critical values, meanings, beliefs are brought with them to the profession and,

b) make central the goal of working toward ethical, moral, and social responsibilities and commitments in providing increased opportunity for social justice and economic equity in society (Gordon, 1985, p.36).

Aesthetic inquiry objectives that are aligned with the goals outlined by Lankford (1992) should be generated at a level where the comforts of naivete or selective amnesia concerning the social and political dimensions inherent in the act of educating people are not found useful.
In speaking to the conceptual needs of the general populace in a modern world, Mills (1959) calls for a quality of mind that will help them to use information and to develop reason in order to achieve lucid summations of what is going on in the world and of what is happening within themselves (cited in Gordon, Miller, and Rollock, 1990, p.15).

In this regard, a major concern in formulating the way in which a task is defined in aesthetic inquiry should be communicentric bias. Gordon, Miller, and Rollock (1990) have conceptualized communicentric bias as the tendency to make one's own community the center of the universe and the conceptual frame that constrains all thought. "This communicentricity has sometimes results in knowledge production and utilization that has negative consequences for the life experiences of groups who have been inappropriately represented in the enterprise" (Gordon, Miller and Rollock, 1990, p.15).

Within this study a theory of aesthetic negation has been established which provides a context for this communicentric bias. As part of an invisible paradigm, the internalized assumptions, the network of unspoken agreements, and the implicit contracts make viable the existence of aesthetic negation within educational frameworks. Unchecked, the sum total of aesthetic inquiry objectives may be written in a fashion that presents a singular tradition or
multiple traditions that are framed by a Ethnocentric hierarchy. Task definitions may carry assumptions that at best lend themselves to a singular mode of aesthetic inquiry. Gordon, Miller and Rollock (1990) suggest that art of various cultures is in fact representative of multiple ways of knowing.

Keddie (1971) asserts that while the inquiry based mode is intended to change the emphasis from mastery of given contents of a subject to mastery of the method of inquiry itself, inquiry may amount to the reorganization of content. Facilitation of inquiry can be problematic as the teaching material may be treated as a body of facts to be gotten across to pupils, rather than as ways of organizing facts or content in relation to each other. "In the classroom it may seem that the students are more inquiry minded than the teachers, whose presentation of material does not allow concepts to be distinguished from content because the concept is presented in terms of its content" (Keddie, 1971, p.33).

Task definitions may be enriched if after having looked at both the European American and African American aesthetic tradition, the facilitator of aesthetic inquiry can create culturally competent inquiry objectives that:

a) focus on a philosophical investigation where both aesthetic qualities and senses can be explored;
b) develop an awareness of what the ideas of beauty in both of these cultures have been, why they exist, and how they overlap and are different;

c) utilize experiences of artists in both communities in analyzing their perception about roles and/or relationship of artist to form, and community;

d) identify and explore artist's employment of meaning and its value to the community;

e) define terms of investigation without creating a perception of hierarchy;

f) communicate within the context of culture, the functional and non-functional aspects in a work of art;

g) allow for variation in aesthetic response.

When these infusion competencies are utilized in the issue oriented approach posed by Lankford (1990, 1992), a fundamental questioning and reordering for the facilitator is inevitable. An awareness of unstated assumptions regarding what students come to the aesthetic inquiry process knowing may make the difference in the degree of response to issues that are outlined. In other words meeting the challenge of infusing objectives that reflect issues regarding an African-centered aesthetic tradition, requires that the fundamental structure of art education be understood in terms of the aesthetic tradition which it supports. Mitler (1980) describes stages of art appreciation that are undergirded by theories of art such as imitationalism, formalism, and emotionalism which "serve as guides to various aesthetic qualities in a work of art" (p.19).
In the issue centered approach students are asked to confront problems of art prior to the formal introduction of related aesthetic theories (Lankford, 1990). Issues that lend themselves to theories of imitationalism would reflect a concern for aesthetic qualities that emphasize the accurate description of subject matter whereby the most important aspect of the work is its "verisimilitude: the appearance of being true or real" (Mitler, 1980, p. 19). Issues that lend themselves to formalism would emphasize what are thought of as formal qualities which focus on the organization of the work of art through the use of the elements and principles of art. Issues that lend themselves to emotionalism would emphasize expressive qualities which focus on the ideas, moods, and feelings conveyed in the work of art. All of these issues have the advantage of interfacing with an established program of study which gives students foundation in "an appropriate vocabulary of terms and repertoire of concepts" (Lankford, 1990, p. 42).

Both the nature of an African-centered aesthetic and its limited circumstance of support and exposure within the field of art education as it currently is outlined must be taken into account in task definition. Aesthetic inquiry processes that seek to include an African centered aesthetic philosophy must be augmented over a period of time by other art experiences that give emphasis to the employment of "aesthetic senses" and the historical aspects of the
African American experience, opportunities to explore culturally defined processes of creating with media, as well as the development of an awareness of the wide range of visual art throughout the diaspora. The African-centered schools of thought delineated in chapter four of this study offer a sound basis for raising issues.

**Task Format in Aesthetic Inquiry**

Task format in aesthetic inquiry addresses the manner in which inquiry skills in question are acquired and performed. Classroom discussion dialogue is emphasized by Lankford (1992) as the most effective means of engaging in inquiry. Several advantages are cited by Lankford (1992) in the use of this approach to inquiry: all students encouraged to participate; more advanced students model thinking for others; dialogue determines level of ability that is appropriate; teacher’s ability to assist students in process is enhanced; assessment of student levels of comprehension of course material; encouragement of application of knowledge; and creation of a level of interest and motivation that sustains a learning encounter.

Stewart (1988) describes the process for aesthetic inquiry as involving listening carefully to others points of view; making general statements about beauty, art, aesthetic experience, and aspects of art
criticism; selecting and evaluating use of words, statements and definitions, recognizing and raising philosophical, clarification and challenging questions; using all of these skills to productively engage in philosophical inquiry with others.

Erickson (1986) outlines skill learning objectives which call for the student to be able to: distinguish types of words; speculate, handle abstract ideas, discuss rationally; distinguish opinion from arguing as well as distinguish objective and subjective statements; imagine possibilities, see implications, recognize necessary conditions within a definition, recognize sufficient conditions within a definition.

Hagaman (1990) suggests a community of inquiry involving three components necessary for a student-student discussion:

1) Use of criteria- children are encouraged to examine and explain why they think as they do about some issues being discussed. This process requires reasons for judgments and reflection upon criteria used in making judgments;

2) Self correction- Individuals are encouraged to listen carefully to comments of each group member and be willing to reconsider opinions. Reflective thinking advocated in the place of singular correct answer;

3) Attention to context- understanding the important influence of context upon one's judgments and opinions is crucial (p.2).
Given this type of structure for acquisition of knowledge and student performance in aesthetic inquiry, a central consideration in task format should be cultural style, defined as a central tendency that is characteristic of both individuals and groups (Hilliard, 1990). Cognitive styles help in environmental adaptation as well as coping—they guide individual behavior in meeting the demands placed on individuals with various situations (Shade, 1983). A popular ethnocentric assumption has been to interpret differences as deviance on the part of the African American child (Akbar, 1978). Hilliard (1990) asserts that a "proper sensitivity to style can provide a perspective for the enrichment of instruction for all children and for the improvement both of teacher-student communications and of the systematic assessment of students" (p.3).

Misreading cultural style may lead educators to make mistakes in estimating a student's or a cultural group's intellectual potential (Hilliard, 1990). Stylistic differences can be misunderstood as evidence of capacity rather than a expression of preference. Hilliard (1990) cautions teachers to consider how differing style may be mistaken for lack of intellectual potential and hence lead to students becoming educationally deprived when efforts are made to teach down to the estimated level. According to Akbar (1978), differences may be ascertained at the level of language, oral patterns, people orientation, interaction vs. reaction, African thought, and
spontaneity. Differences in language may be described in terms of dialect, subcultural idioms, or unstructured distortions of English language. Akbar (1978) suggests that the language evolved in African American culture is based upon certain shared experiences and agreed upon symbols for the expressions of those experiences.

The oral system of communication is an important continuity with African tradition as it is the predominate means of information transmission within the African American community. Akbar (1978) suggest that this results in a highly developed auditory or listening facility on the part of the African American child whereby an acute sensitivity to subtleties in expression and intonation may be apparent (Akbar, 1978).

A people orientation is a significant characteristic of the African American child's cultural experience. Akbar (1978) speaks of the dual medium of the spoken word and the living person as a form of motivation.

The rhythms, the cadence of the storyteller is as important as what he is saying. For effective communication, one would hope there exists a correlation between the rhythm and the content of the message...this can serve as a transitional method to move the child to exploring other areas of learning" (Akbar, 1978, p.10).
In the case of interaction versus reaction, the African American tradition of call and response is characterized by spontaneous reactions and supportive statements of encouragement involving the speaker and listeners in a dialogue of interaction. African thought is characteristically a form of thinking and problem solving which is gained from the conditioning of cultural and life experience. A strong reliance on internal cues and reactions is typically a way in which problem solving in carried through.

This is in contrast to the external cues to which aesthetic inquiry relies on in the process of problem solving. Typically what is perceived to be objectivity is rewarded instead of subjectivity. Akbar (1978) makes a critical point in this regard, "though objective observation is critical in the acquisition of certain methods of knowledge, it is not the exclusive means of acquiring knowledge" (p. 13). The ability to operate from internal cues and hunches is a primary means of knowledge acquisition. "Sensing" whether a teacher dislikes or likes how a student performs can make the difference on how the student performs intellectually (Akbar, 1978).

Finally spontaneity for the African American child means that he has the facility to adapt to different situations rapidly, along with responding quickly and appropriately to environmental changes.
Shade (1983) talks about cognitive style observed in African American children in terms of field dependency as opposed to field independency. Characteristically field dependency refers to a cognitive style where cues from the environment are used to solve problems. Students who are field dependent have little problem providing their own structure. They like people and do well in people oriented work environments and they are skilled at remembering material especially when placed in a social context, they have a preference for learning in a auditory or kinesthetic manner. According to Shade (1983) these relational and intuitive learners differ in their cognitive orientation from field independent learners who are self directed, interested in and able to handle abstract and theoretical thought as they are likely to take a hypothesis testing approach to learning, able to handle visual material and are task oriented.

Interestingly Kennels (1970) found in his study on the effects of instructional methodology in art education for African American children that analytical teaching seems to be the most effective with field dependent students, particularly when the style included presentation of relationships between concepts, active discussion, use of objects relevant to the environment, and in some instances, demonstration of concepts using pictures of members in the class (cited in Shade, 1983).
Cole and Bruner (1971) bring a similar perspective to this issue suggesting that the teacher stop laboring with the impression that he/she has to create new intellectual structures but rather,

start concentrating on how to get the child to transfer skills he already possesses to the task at hand. It is in this context that "relevant" study materials become important, although "relevant" should mean something more than a way to motivate students. Rather, relevant materials are those to which the child already applies skills the teacher seeks to have applied to his own content. It requires more than a casual acquaintance with one's students to know what these materials are (p.121).

This is supported in Asante's (1991) centrist paradigm which posits that students must be located within the context of their own cultural references so that they can relate socially and psychologically to other cultural perspectives. Infusion competencies for the task format component of aesthetic inquiry should include:

a) format in which there is a recognition of qualities/senses in cultural forms;

b) student translation of ideas of beauty and worth become valued part of inquiry process;

c) evaluative components of format take into account the relationships of artists, audience and form from cultural perspectives;

d) interpretations given support through historical and contextual references. Subjectivity becomes part of inquiry;

e) entire inquiry formats facilitate cross-cultural understanding through task formats that lend themselves to field dependency and independency;
f) encourages passion for beliefs framed by optimal thought (highest value in interpersonal relationships);

h) acceptance of difference frame how tasks are defined.

Ambience in Aesthetic Inquiry

Ambience in aesthetic inquiry is concerned with the environmental flux that envelops the task itself and forms the backdrop for learning. Lankford (1990) calls for a learning environment that is constructive and supportive in order that a community of inquiry may exist. Stewart (1988) suggests that there be a promotion of respect for an atmosphere that is conducive to inquiry. Erickson (1988) suggests that the teacher of aesthetic inquiry must be able to: provide a measure of freedom from practical preoccupations, maintain a semblance of order without stifling philosophical discussion; behave self confidently when uncertain; cope with the accountability demands, resist lecturing, show students that they make the teacher think, resist manipulating the class to the teacher's view; resist group therapy; resist settling issues by voting; provide a situation which raises aesthetic issues.

Hagaman (1990) suggests aesthetic inquiry approaches that have a multicultural nature to them, wherein meaningful knowledge and experience of many cultures for students can be conveyed. Goodman (1981) asserts that "a major intention of aesthetic education is to make available the option, and develop the habit, of
regarding the whole of the world aesthetically, not to provide a kind of mental pocket of values and criteria which is switched on when entering an art gallery or a cathedral" (p.64).

Willower, Eidell & Hoy (1967) define school climate in terms of a custodial or humanistic nature (cited in Beane, 1990). If the school has a custodial climate there is an emphasis on the maintenance of order, autocratic procedures, student stereotyping or labeling, punitive sanctions, moralizing by authorities, impersonalness, and obedience. A humanistic school climate is characterized by democratic procedures, high degrees of interaction, personalness, respect for individual dignity, self discipline, flexibility, and participatory decision making.

Beane (1990) contends that the belief systems of adults in the school play a major role in creating the school’s climate. For instance Rubovits and Maehr (1973) found in their study of teacher expectations and race that the differential treatment of students by teachers can be markedly similar to treatment that is known to change concepts of self and the direction of interests. Further, teacher behavior may also influence the student's belief about his/her ability to control events as well as his/her motivation to achieve (Rubovits and Maehr, 1973).

Rubovits and Maehr (1973) also found that the teacher's level of dogmatism can affect his/her susceptibility to racial and labeling
effects whereby differences in behavior can be discerned. In their particular study, there were no differences in the amount of attention given to African American and European American children but there were qualitative differences. Rubovitz and Maehr (1973) found that African American students who were labeled gifted were usually identified as the least liked in the group and were typically perceived by the teachers in the study to be unfriendly and felt a certain amount of fear toward them.

Implications for aesthetic inquiry that would rely on students with advanced tendencies toward analytical reasoning to assume roles of leadership could in certain instances mean African American students are denied opportunities in this level of inquiry activity. Overall, African American students were given less attention, ignored more, praised less, and criticized more. This suggests that if inquiry is to be undertaken where there are racial differences superficial understanding on the part of the teacher in terms of meeting the needs of the students in a culturally competent fashion.

In this regard, a concern for the ability to make a distinction between competence and performance on the part of the student can be seen as a critical factor in the environmental flux of a task. Cole and Bruner (1971) suggest that when performance is treated only as a shallow expression of deeper competence, then the ecological
problem of performance is obscured. Cole and Bruner found that when they systematically study the situational determinants of performance, cultural differences reside more in differences in the situation to which different cultural groups apply their skills than to differences in the skills possessed by the groups in question.

If the concept of competence in aesthetic inquiry is advanced in a way that is both situationally blind and culturally blind, it can perhaps be problematic. Cole and Bruner (1971) suggest that a teacher inquire first whether a competence is expressed in a particular situation, and second, what the significance of that situation is for the person's ability to cope with life in his own milieu (Cole and Bruner, 1971). Situational factors may account more for cultural difference than anything else as cultural groups may apply their skills differently. What may be interpreted in inquiry as cultural deprivation may represent a case of cultural difference which will arise when demands to perform are inconsistent with his past (cultural) experience. This for instance, raises the question of cultural relevancy and aesthetic experience. If affinity and identity are primary constitutive parts of aesthetic experience for African Americans, what kinds of works of art should shape the enterprise of aesthetic inquiry? How do teachers identify topics for dialogue if a repository of information is not readily available?
One approach in creating aesthetic dialogue is to become familiar with the community of artists in which a school exists. A sampling of art work from two communities of artists, Columbus, Ohio and Washington D.C., is provided here which emphasize the ideas related to the Folk Expressionists and the Sensory Impressionists. In addition, work representative of the Ancestral Idealists (the only school of thought chronologically tied to time), photographs that convey a sense of community and the interconnectedness between the visual and performing arts, and African Art forms as well as cultural objects offer excellent departure points for discussion regarding the aesthetic senses (Plates XI thru XXIII). In tandem with Lankford's issue oriented approach to aesthetic inquiry a collection of articles from such major newspapers as the Washington post may provide topics regarding theory and concepts of valuing art in the community along with issues regarding the artworld. In choosing such sources there should be a concern for the presentation of an emic perspective to students. Examples of this would be profiles done on artists like Sam Gilliam by Paul Richard (1993) or a focus on points of view within the African American community regarding the work of David Hammons (Kastor, 1989). Two other outstanding sources for identifying aesthetic inquiry issues are The International Review of African American Art and American Visions magazine as they
Plate XI  William E. Artis, Head of Negro Boy, 1937. terra cota 12".
Plate XII  Nancy E. Prophet, Congolais, 1931. wood 16 1/2".
Plate XIII. Aaron Douglas, Aspects of Negro Life, 1934.
Plate XIV  Michelle West, Visions of an Artist/Awakening, 1991. acrylic on canvas, 18" x 24".
Plate XIV. Pheoris West, Yemaja, 1989.
Plate XVI  MaPo' Kinnord, Chamber of the Three Internals, 1990. ceramic.
Plate XVII  Peggy Valentine, Masks Series I, 1986. oil.
Plate XVIII  Benin Wall Plaque, 9th. Century. bronze.
Plate XIV. MaPo' Kinnord, Untitled, 1992.
Plate XXI. Samuel Tyus, Imani Dance Class, Columbus, Ohio, 1992.
Plate XXIII.  Alix Desdunes, Man and his Rooster, 1989.
acrylic 18" x 24"
consistently provide a wealth of information regarding not only the traditional aspects of art recognized by the larger community but also are committed to developing an awareness of the Pan African tradition of art for life’s sake.

Frye, Hoard, and Kantner (1992) assert that a central aim in multicultural education should be to introduce students to a wide range of diverse cultural groups, in order to facilitate successful interpersonal relationships, to develop a sense of self, and to foster the appreciation of success within a novel set of cultural standards. Infusion is suggested as a methodology that fosters an environment for multicultural learning through the instilling, imbuing, and inspiring of connective human relatedness in the classroom. Frye, Hoard and Kantner (1992) see the goal of this philosophical method as enabling the teacher to address and incorporate the "I-Thou" attitude.

One of the most important aspects of infusion, as a way to promote a humanistic environment, might involve developing an understanding of the physical environment through which the family sets the stage for the child's interaction with symbols and objects, the interpersonal interaction which provides feedback to the child relative to his performance and expectations, and the emotional and motivational climates which influence the child's personality and behavioral patterns (Shade, 1987).
The personality and cognitive development of children are developed through the perpetuation of habits, values and attitudes that successfully mediate the interaction between the individual and the environment (Shade, 1987). The influence of social interaction principles on classroom performance challenges the facilitator of aesthetic inquiry to broaden the focus regarding accomplishment of tasks and the acquisition of content to the recognition and acknowledgment of the social dimensions of learning.

Hale-Benson (1982) writes about the bicultural socialization of African American children. As defined earlier in this study biculturalism has to do with a dual socialization for minorities, consisting of enculturation in their own group as well as socialization within the larger society. De Anda (1984) lists six factors that can determine whether a member of an ethnic minority is likely to become bicultural:

1) The degree of overlap or commonality between the two cultures with regard to norms, values, beliefs, perceptions, and the like;

2) The availability of cultural translators, mediators and models;

3) The amount and type (positive or negative) of corrective feedback provided by each culture regarding attempts to produce normative behaviors;

4) The conceptual style and problem solving approach of the minority individual and their mesh with the prevalent or valued styles of the majority culture;
5) The individual's degree of bilingualism;

6) The degree of dissimilarity in physical appearance from the norm in the majority culture, including such traits as skin color and facial features (De Anda, 1984 cited in Hale-Benson, 1982, p.188).

De Anda (1984) makes recommendations for assisting minorities in acquiring the information and skills to interact with mainstream institutions while retaining the ability to participate in his/her own culture:

1) determining areas of interface between the two cultures that can serve as "doorways" between them;

2) Noting the major points of conflict between cultures and the negative consequences for the client;

3) Finding and making available translators, mediators, and models who can provide guidelines for dealing with such conflicts and offer critical experiential information;

4) Arranging when possible, for increased corrective feedback for the client in the environment;

5) Working to expand the client's repertoire of problem solving skills, particularly those that are the least context bound, and helping to develop a larger repertoire of context specific problem solving skills;

6) Educating people of the majority about the significant characteristics, values, and needs of minority cultures, as well as serving as advocates of greater flexibility and adjustment in the mainstream culture's institutions.

Environmental flux can also be understood at the level of the equalization of educational outcomes. As curriculum encompasses what is taught in schools, formally and informally, and what is
valued, the content materials and symbols selected for inclusion in
the classroom, and its social context requires that teachers be
educated and reeducated (Hudson, 1992).

Aesthetic inquiry that is committed to a humanistic school
climate will have facilitators who have a foundation in: a formal
survey of African and African American history and culture; insight
into attitudes and educational strategies which impact, positively and
negatively, the academic and social/psychological development of
African American children (Hudson, 1992). The environmental flux
for aesthetic inquiry can be enriched by:

1) a physical environment that reflects relevant forms that
can be inventoried. A sense of a continuum from the
traditions of African Art and its production can be
conveyed through timelines, iconographic studies,
student work etc.;

2) forms available in this environment are not limited to
Western tradition. Students and their community
contribute to what is acknowledged as topical for
aesthetic inquiry;

3) the provision of opportunities for students to participate
in community ritual/ performance. Investigation of
community organizations that are involved in
contributing to the positive development of children in
the community and affirming students participation
(i.e. Kwanzaa) by connecting aspects of art program to
events;

4) students have a role in preparing and sustaining
aspects of classroom. At one level this may entail
developing routines for opening class. For instance the
idea of beginning or ending class with a proverb. At
another level this may mean drawing from visual
images that convey an awareness and respect for the
culture of the children you teach. A possible approach may involve formulating a gallery space within the educational environment for community artists;

5) the concept of classical as it is determined by worldview, not hierarchy. For example the Classical period in Africa might be referred to the time period 1200 to 1400 A.D.;

6) A range of communicative expression nurtured through dialogue. Acceptance of difference in terms of cultural styles of communication;

7) A sum total of experiences which occur in environments conducive to cross-cultural understanding.

Summary

This chapter has presented an infusion competency model as a tool for promoting inter-cultural and intra-cultural understanding within the process of aesthetic inquiry (see table 5.2). Aesthetic inquiry is the process of searching for answers to questions about the nature of art. The denotation of concepts and methods in the philosophy of art is a major emphasis in this type of inquiry, as well as inquiry aimed at describing and comprehending aesthetic experience as it is related to artistic processes and products.

A concept of infusing African American content into the aesthetic inquiry process has been presented that frames it as a pedagogical methodology. Various components of the methodology have been outlined here with the understanding that infusion is a process of change.
Table 5.2  An Infusion Competency Model for Aesthetic Inquiry

INFUSION COMPETENCY MODEL
FOR AESTHETIC INQUIRY

CURRICULAR STRATEGIES FOR THE INCLUSION OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN AESTHETIC TRADITIONS
WITHIN AESTHETIC INQUIRY

Key Philosophical Propositions

0 An African centered aesthetic is based on an African worldview.
0 The person who is at the center of a culture is better able to utilize all the elements of that culture in the production of a work of art.
0 An African centered theory of aesthetics would conceptualize and embrace variations within the diasporan visual arts tradition as residuals relative to an African heritage as opposed to unnegotiated dichotomies that devalue the sum total of their existence.

Aspects of a Pan African Aesthetic as the Proposed Focus for Aesthetic Inquiry

0 Meaning, significance of expression in relationship to individual or community.
0 Ethos, quality of expression that exudes spirit emotion, and energy.
0 Motif, incorporation and use of symbols in artistic product that reflect a specific culture and heritage.
0 Mode, manner in which artistic product is expressed.
0 Function, operative relationship of artistic product to individual and community.
Table 5.2 (continued)

- Method/Technique, practical, physical and material means of realizing artist's product.
- Form, status of artistic product in terms of structure, shape and composition.

Infusion Competency Approaches

- Culturally Competent Task Definitions:
  * topics defined in terms of aspects of aesthetic tradition;
  * experiences and concerns of artists within culture highlighted; and
  * concepts presented allow students to explore their world and themselves.

- Culturally Competent Task Format:
  * format attends to cultural style;
  * cultural context employed in developing understanding of other cultural perspectives; and
  * presentation of relationships between concepts achieved through class dialogue.

- Culturally Competent Ambience:
  * self examination of attitudes;
  * networking with community in identifying artists who work in artistic tradition; and
  * building a resource of self relevant images that students can access.
The goal and aim of the model is that infusion of African American content occur in a competent fashion. The facilitator of aesthetic inquiry will be able to actualize, in a competent fashion, an inclusive vision of human experience based on difference, and diversity. Aesthetic cognition, the primary knowledge acquisition modality in aesthetic inquiry, calls for a process of aesthetic appraisal. This involves seeing the work under one aspect and the subsequent application of public interpretive standards. Infusion competency would involve the acquisition of these skills through students being able to participate in the examination of value constellations that promote human welfare, rather than degrade the pluralistic society that is America.

When an African-centered aesthetic is the basis of inquiry, a particular set of ideas and values which are embodied in aesthetic choices and artistic products become the focus. The infusion paradigm presented in this chapter has as its foundation strategies for curriculum change which involve: responsiveness to African American cultural style; utilization of culturally relevant materials; teacher responsiveness; and instilling the will to learn. These strategies have been organized within a two fold process in which the teacher has available to her/him; an assessment model of aesthetic inquiry curricular directionality relevant to the African American
experience; and an outline of infusion competencies for aesthetic inquiry.

The discussion of the model is organized around three contexts of schooling which include task definition, task format, and ambience. Task definition in aesthetic inquiry gives emphasis to the way in which concepts in art, values in art, metacriticism, the artworld, artistic expression, and aesthetic experience are defined for students— as well as the manner in which the purpose for studying them is presented. Major concerns in task definition with regard to the infusion of African American content in aesthetic inquiry include: the existence of communicentric bias, presentation of a singular tradition and the reality of presenting an African-centered context which traditionally has not had the advantage of visibility, and relatedly distinguishing content from concepts. Goals for the creation of task definitions that reflect infusion competency have been outlined in this chapter.

Task format in aesthetic inquiry gives emphasis to the way in which inquiry skills in question are acquired and performed. Classroom dialogue is the primary way in which aesthetic inquiry is formatted. Major concerns in task format with regard to the infusion of African American content in aesthetic inquiry include: awareness of cultural style particularly in issues of behavior and cognition, instructional methodology that accommodates style, and centering
students so that they are able to relate socially and psychologically to other cultural perspectives. Goals for the creation of task formats that reflect infusion competency have been outlined in this chapter.

Ambience in aesthetic inquiry gives emphasis to the way in which the environmental flux envelops the task itself and forms the backdrop for learning. A learning environment that is constructive and supportive is needed in order that a community of inquiry may exist. Major concerns in setting the ambience for aesthetic inquiry include: setting a climate that is humanistic in its orientation; awareness of a teacher's own belief system as contributing to the climate; instilling, imbuing and inspiring of connective human relatedness in the classroom through infusion methodology; the influence of learned cultural social interaction principles on classroom performance; the bicultural aspects of socialization in the classroom; and equalization of educational outcomes through the education and reeducation of teachers. Goals for the creation of ambience in aesthetic inquiry that reflect infusion competencies have been outlined in this chapter.

The final chapter of this study is devoted to a summary. A review of the purpose, procedures, summary of results of this study along with the conclusions, implications and recommendations follows.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to develop a personal theory that would bring a meaningful direction to the process of centering for African American children that I teach. Centering has been defined as a perspective that involves locating students within the context of their own cultural references so that they can relate socially and psychologically to other cultural perspectives. Bringing my own perspective to my talk about schools and curriculum was an endeavor in which I engaged in the hopes that there would be some productive influence on my thinking about curriculum. The process of theorizing was undertaken in order that I could establish the conditions conducive to the concept of centering for aesthetic inquiry curriculum planning. In addition this process provided a space where I have been able to reflect on what is important and what resources are of value to me in aesthetic inquiry curriculum planning and implementation.
In reflecting on exactly what my own perspective has been, embracing an Afrocentric philosophy has changed the scope and breath of how the concept of personal theory is defined in this study. This has involved a commitment to understanding the issue of race and aesthetics not only in personal terms, but within and beyond the African American community of which I am a part. The concept of curricular ecology has provided a framework for the development of this personal theory. Two entities were introduced here:

1) the concept of cultural representational form and symbol systems and their function within-

2) my theory of aesthetic negation systems which move us closer to an understanding of Padeia, the ways in which historical processes form human character, ideals and action.

Generating a theory of aesthetic negation gave voice and form to concerns that I have had as a teacher of fourteen years in the field of art education. Aesthetic negation systems thrive when inquiry is posed, but critical consciousness is simultaneously stifled. Critical consciousness is exercised when during the course of events or opportunities participants are encouraged to analyze their reality, become more aware of the constraints on their lives and, take action to change their situation.
Three key components of aesthetic negation that were explored in this study are;

1) the historical artificial constructs of Africanness and Whiteness

2) absence of a cohesive decoding system that would promote understanding of these constructs: and

3) the propagation of assimilation as a vehicle for minority culture compliance with dominant culture. These tenets work to assure the viability of aesthetic negation systems within educational frameworks and contexts.

The study is also seen as being of benefit to others who may be interested in developing an increased understanding of factors that give variation to the way in which images and forms can convey consonance with our cultural surroundings and events, a dissonance with aspects of the culture we live in, the conditions and quality of our surroundings, and a resonance with cultures other than our own.

Art educators who choose to facilitate aesthetic inquiry that is not weighted down by aesthetic negation are supported in this study in meeting three distinct challenges. One challenge that has been addressed in this study is how teachers may go about the practice of culturally relevant teaching as opposed to teaching that validates aesthetic negation systems. A second challenge has been the identification of a conceptual framework that may serve as a basis for culturally relevant teaching and its incorporation into an aesthetic
inquiry curriculum. The final challenge explored in this study has to do with the cultural learning style of African Americans. The study in its entirety has been directed toward contributing to aesthetic inquiry models that support curriculum development, design, and instruction.

In developing this personal theory three key issues were investigated:

1) the historical significance of aesthetic negation systems;

2) the identification of key conceptual strands of African-centered aesthetic theory; and,

3) development of a framework for aesthetic inquiry that is responsive to the experiences of African Americans.

Procedures

This interdisciplinary study incorporates concepts from the fields of philosophy, social cognitive theory, Afrocentric psychology, and curriculum inquiry in its focus on the process of aesthetic inquiry. The organizing methodology for the study is drawn from the category of personal theorizing which comes out of critical curriculum theory. Personal theorizing is concerned with the internal and existential experiences as a way of understanding the nature of the educational experience. Theorizing within this study has been a continuous process of questioning and interpreting which has brought about a deeper level of understanding regarding the depth of the African and African
American experience. In addition, the process of theorizing has afforded an opportunity to develop a framework for curricular strategies relative to infusing cultural perspectives with the tradition of aesthetic inquiry.

The methodological process for this study involved several phases which include: reflecting on what the past has been; contemplation of the future; analysis of what has been uncovered in the first two phases which is intuitive in its nature, and a synthetical stage where choices are made about future curriculum directions. The Afrocentric optimal theoretical concept of self -whereby self is multidimensional encompassing the ancestors, those yet unborn, nature and community-expanded the concept of self in regard to personal theory methodology. This required that in the course of reflecting about "self", there is consideration for the impact of curriculum and its underlying ideologies on the past, present and future of the African American community.

Issues of external validity have been addressed by including both emic and etic perspectives. As there were aspects of the study that borrowed from aesthetic anthropology, cultural and interpretive validity became important to this process of theorizing. Hermeneutics, as part of the methodological process, stresses awareness on the part of the researcher that they are constructing a reality on the basis of their
interpretation of things cherished and valued within a culture. The idea of bringing a canonical perspective that is reflective of its believing community is contributed in the interfacing of hermeneutical methodology with personal theory.

Other issues were raised regarding ecological validity and are reflected in the portion of the study that spoke to cultural styles within African American culture. Cultural ecological concerns are addressed in this study regarding culturally defined instrumental competencies shaped by child rearing techniques and culturally defined approaches for meeting societal needs.

**Summary of Results**

In exploring the relationship between aesthetics and race, it is clear that there are historically aspects that lie outside of what has been the social and ideological context of aesthetics in art education. As outlined in the goals of curricular ecology, a critical examination of the ecology in which curriculum is played out may decrease instances of cultural chauvinism and psychoideological hegemony. Although there are particular contexts for the use of the term aesthetics in art and art education, results from this study indicate there have also been since the 1800's established cultural categories distinguishing those with and
without what was deemed to be aesthetic superiority. These cultural
categories, designed to preserve, nurture and extend the cultural history
and values of a particular people, exist often at the psychological
expense of African Americans.

Social cognition emphasizes the process of extracting meaning
from behavior. Classrooms are in a sense, points of intersection where
social cognitive processes can be affirmed or challenged as curriculum
content serves in directly and indirectly assisting students in making
attributions for events that have occurred, inferring characteristics of
people associated with those events and constructing social reality.

In reviewing social cognitive studies relative to the ideas of
aesthetics and race, primary newspaper accounts from the 1800's, and
curriculum guides that came from African American institutions at the
beginning of the twentieth century, it appears that this specific
cognition has historically and contemporarily had a central role in
determining the degree to which inter- and intra-cultural
understanding can occur.

The phenomenon of negation, relative to the ideas embodied in
aesthetics, can be sustained or dismantled in the process involving
social cognition. Race as a component of aesthetic ideologies has
typically been communicated through a carefully established
relationship between visual image and text.
It is clear that at the beginning of the twentieth century various aspects of the visual appeared to be bracketed by agendas directed at maintaining and sustaining a particular cognition that in turn promoted a particular kind of social order. Subjective meaning has been found in this study to have defined the group status of African Americans.

The construction of artificial designations for Africa are evident contemporarily in views, assumptions, readings, and misreadings that accompany Eurocentric learning about African people. This is amplified when the study explored the diasporan tradition regarding aesthetics. The common denominator throughout the African diaspora appears to be self-definition whereby a cultural frame of reference tied to the African American’s health and well being is evident in the process of creating art forms.

In understanding that culture teaches people to recognize phenomena and respect certain logical relations amongst phenomena, there is a progression of thought in the African American community that is discernible in this regard. While initially having little control in defining their own self-relevant imagery, the African American community in the beginning of the twentieth century began to separate itself from the notion of aesthetic accommodation to explore its own self actualization. This has not been without difficulty,
sometimes manifested in the identity development process for African American children. The historical overview in this study supports the idea that as sub-optimal systems of consciousness, the earliest dialogue about the worth and value of African American physical beauty reflected a state of confusion, alienation and dysfunction.

As is evidenced in contemporary culture, the various studies reviewed here suggest that identity formation for minorities can be confounded by issues of skin color, behavioral distinctions, language differences, physical features, and longstanding, although unaddressed stereotypes. African American children are still tied to nineteenth and early twentieth century ideas regarding the visual in negotiating their existence in contemporary society.

Educational programs that focuses on the visual in the teaching of concepts and values have an obligation to make sure that they are designing and presenting curriculum that reflects cultural competence. The concern in this study has been the creation of curriculum that has cultural integrity in a way that does not exclude, but rather builds on the process of infusing as to provide opportunities for greater numbers of students to assent to learn. Children make a greater investment in the process of learning something if there is a basis for investing and learning the content.
In expressing the importance of art education, Dr. Rosalind Jeffries (1991) cogently expresses the need in these turbulent times to create and work with the inner and outer self. Inter-cultural understanding is supported in Dr. Jeffries's idea that the commonality that binds all people together, regardless of race or creed, is a love for art. In advocating art education, Jeffries (1991) suggests that we should teach the value of creating and making, as it relates to the human mind itself. Creativity is defined by Dr. Kariamu Welsh-Asante (1993) as one of the material manifestations of spirit and rhythm. The focus of art education should be directed at what creativity does for the human soul and the human spirit,

We want to create a people who can make because of the urgency and the need to express. Expression can be therapeutic, but it can also be just purely satisfying. And we want to lead people into these experiences so that they will know about visualization, so that they will know about "seership" in this the artistic sense and discipline. So that they will know about projection of themselves, so that they will know about imagination. We're teaching imagination, we're teaching virtuosity, we're teaching ingenuity, we're teaching integrity, we're teaching talent and gifts. For we know that the best geniuses in art were those that were able to work from that element that has to do with truth (Jeffries, NAEA Conference presentation, 1991).

The second portion of the study addressed the identification of a conceptual framework for an African-centered aesthetic that can be used to help create a community of dialogue where students are
encouraged to examine and explain why they think as they do about issues being discussed. In providing an analysis with regard to a philosophical foundation for an African-centered aesthetic, three propositions were presented and supported:

1) an African centered aesthetic is based on an African worldview;

2) the person who is at the center of a culture is better able to utilize all the elements of that culture for the creative production of an idea;

3) an African-centered theory of aesthetics would conceptualize and embrace variations within the African diasporan visual arts tradition as residuals relative to an African heritage as opposed to unnegotiated dichotomies that devalue the sum total of their existence;

An African worldview has been explicated in terms of time, space, causality, and purpose. The study has illuminated the way in which this African worldview is manifested in at least nine distinctive dimensions of African American culture delineated in this study as: spirituality, harmony, movement, verve, affect, communalism, expressive individualism, oral tradition, and social time perspective. An African centered aesthetic is given order through these culturally deep structures. These culturally deep structures were illuminated in the discussion regarding seven aspects of an African centered aesthetic which are used in the production of a work of art: meaning, ethos, motif, mode, function, method/technique, and form. In addition, three African
centered schools of thought and aesthetic senses that can be used in developing a foundation for inquiry that infuses what the African American artistic heritage has been.

The third portion of the study developed an infusion competency model for aesthetic inquiry that can be used to promote inter-cultural and inter-cultural understanding. The design of the model is intended to support strategies that have been outlined for curriculum change by presenting a detailed analysis of how task definition, task format and ambience can be infused within the practice of aesthetic inquiry.

**Conclusions**

Based on the results of the study, there are many aspects of the African American experience (in terms of artistic heritage) for which my undergraduate teacher training had not prepared me. My understanding of Africa centered artistic heritage evident in African American culture has been developed largely outside of the formal structures of art education. This investigation has given me the opportunity to look at what are often unacknowledged dimensions of the African American experience that factor into the everyday activity that occurs in my classroom. The critical examination of cognitive style, and
behavior as well as psychological issues have therefore been focused on here.

Although I was fortunate to have a professor in my undergraduate art education studies who included the art of African Americans and their contribution to art to some degree, this study indicates that there are other dimensions that are important in preparing a teacher for the profession of art education. African American children deserve to be able to have their possible selves nurtured through the presentation of self-relevant imagery and discussion that affirms their heritage.

The curricular ecology of disciplines such as aesthetics has not benefited from any large scale African American critical praxis that reflects an emic perspective. It would appear from the review of literature on psychological processes for African American children in the classroom, that teachers have not been afforded the space to look at what has and has not worked for African American children and subsequent planning that can facilitate culturally competent outcomes.

The centrality of aesthetics as a source of strength and sustaining power for African Americans remains obscured from the concerns of this discipline. In an African worldview there is the understanding that all being is organically interrelated and interdependent (Richards, 1990). Aesthetic inquiry is an exciting discipline in art education that
affords opportunity for critical dialogue regarding concepts generated about the nature of art. Without the commitment to infusion competencies, the language that is used to describe and facilitate what happens in inquiry carries a set of assumptions:

1) all children carry through analysis in the same way therefore performance can always be equated with competence;

2) while traditional inquiry is supported in the other disciplines in art education, superficial overviews that come out of etic perspectives suffice investigation of other cultures;

3) there is only one avenue to aesthetic experience. Experience derived from affinity and identity cannot be accommodated within aesthetic inquiry;

4) what is proposed in inquiry has no relationship to ideologies that promote aesthetic negation;

5) African American art has no basis for judgment and therefore inquiry should always be grounded in European tradition;

6) As inquiry is structured presently, there is a clear distinction between content and method;

7) race has no relationship to aesthetic ideologies in this country;

8) Inquiry models do not need to provide exemplars for cultural aesthetics;

9) language should remain consistent when viewing works of African American artists regarding western derived categories of fine art and folk art;

10) There is a fixed body of imagery from which inquiry can be focused on with regularity. Cultural relevant imagery need
not be included when conveying a sense of tradition in the discipline of aesthetics;

11) Affect has no place in inquiry;

12) The environment for inquiry can only be analytical, social dimensions are inappropriate;

13) Inquiry into other cultural aesthetics is only valuable to minority populations.

Implications

Inquiry that is relevant to the experiences of any cultural group can be enriched if the teacher begins with an honest accounting of where he or she is in his/her own stage of identity. African American children may optimally be served if the facilitator of aesthetic inquiry sets a tone for dialogue with a level of awareness with regard to the recurrent non-complimentary images that effect African American women. In addition, self knowledge for African American children, moreover all children, in the course of their identity development is crucial. Jewell (1993) asserts that the cultural images impact the degree to which African Americans benefit from policies and have access to societal resources. African American children need to be able to understand the significance of this in their lives.

As such, curriculum delivery occurs within environments that move both teacher and students through the identity process intentionally and unintentionally. Optimal systems of thought can be
nourished when there is an atmosphere that fosters a respect for self knowledge as well as inter-personal relationships. Because a teacher has a well established repository of African American visual art works and/ or, a well written curriculum, this does not guarantee that their perceptions which mediate interactions and gauge the degree to which self knowledge for children of color is generated will reflect an optimal conceptual system. The teacher operating from an optimal conceptual system will engage in curriculum that is, "Designed to structure consciousness such that perceptions, thoughts, feelings, behavior, and experience provide the basis for developing and cultivating giftedness in all human beings" (Myers, 1990, p.13). The teacher operating from a sub-optimal conceptual framework "disallows such an opportunity because there is a lack of cohesive, systematic methodology that has the potential to enhance the strengths of all people" (Myers, 1990, p. 13).

The most optimal condition for promoting inter- and intra-cultural understanding is to provide: in the construction of the task definition an opportunity to examine multiple aesthetic systems in a critical cultural manner, whereby the task format is attentive to varied and consistent cognitions that empower students to operate in and outside of the context of their culture, and is set in an atmosphere that nurtures infusion as normalcy.
There are many ways of knowing things. One of the things that has been affirming for me in generating this personal theory is gaining a deeper understanding of the centrality of aesthetics in the lives of African Americans. This study scratches the surface of issues regarding the connection of mental health and aesthetic experience as it is culturally defined. An African-centered aesthetic theory in the visual arts brings a lexicon to aesthetic inquiry that enriches the dialogue. Until we are able to step out of the constrictive ideologies that deny us exploration into how this language does that, we will always remain in the aesthetic mode of negation.

**Recommendations**

1) The rationale for aesthetic inquiry should be broadened to include the concept of cultural competency. Cultural competency becomes central to the goals and aims of aesthetic inquiry as an atmosphere is created in which all cultures are held in high esteem. Infusion competencies outlined in this study can be utilized in examining African American aesthetic traditions. Such competencies promote optimal forms of identity development as self-knowledge and a sense of interconnectedness is instilled in students through the development
of the ability to engage in perspective shifting.

2) In my own practice of teaching, bringing a sense of normalcy to the practice of infusion- developing my strengths in attending to task definition, task format and ambience in aesthetic inquiry in a manner that is culturally competent. Developing inter-personal relationships between students, emphasizing the essence of creativity, focusing teaching around the idea that engaging in creativity is nurturing to the human soul and the human spirit are goals I have set for myself. This requires that I have the capacity to act as teacher/researcher in maintaining a cultural critical approach to meeting the needs of the student population.

3) Pre-service art education programs need to develop cultural critical examinations of the African American aesthetic traditions in ways that empower teachers. Strategies for developing resources when sources may not be readily available is critical with regard to the presentation of self relevant images. Teachers need to be assisted in developing approaches to working in school communities that are at various points in the curriculum development process. Engendering inter-cultural understanding calls for the teacher being able to put into place effective aesthetic inquiry that while assuring a comfort level for
participants, does not deny students the opportunity to critically examine the world in which they live. Networking with community artists is essential. Most importantly is the idea of developing an awareness of identity development both on the part of the pre-service teacher and the children that they will service. Self reflection as a component of teacher training is important.

4) Further research regarding the African American experience, relative to an Pan African Aesthetic, in art education needs to be supported. Critical examination of the curricular ecology of art education suggests that art education does operate in a vacuum. There are issues and concerns that affect the African American community that we can indeed be responsive to. One area of research that is relative to aesthetics addresses the psychological aspects of cultural aesthetic practices that are African American gender specific. Deeper levels of understanding are required regarding African culture and the continuity and discontinuity with African American culture. Critical examinations of aesthetic accommodation and subjugation as a phenomena of the African American experience and the implications for curriculum development may yield insights into the role of assent in learning. Cultural specific research should always serve as the foundation of curriculum that
seeks to convey a regard for cultural perspectives. An atmosphere that is conducive to such research would make available funding that would allow primary documentation and examination of the non traditional aspects of aesthetic practices relative to African American culture.
FOOTNOTES

1. Chapter One schools are schools that have high populations of children who are at or below the poverty level and subsequently receive a certain amount of federal or state government funding.

2. May (1992) elucidates the stance of traditional philosophers who felt that the art of philosophy was restricted to the realm of philosophers who have necessary gifts. In reflecting on this, May (1992) concludes that doing philosophy is calling into question. Additionally she makes the point that we wouldn't raise questions if we weren't interested in something and couldn't imagine others with whom we wish to engage in dialogue (May, p.229, 1992).

   Hence, it is reasonable to conclude the concept of African American cultural philosophy would concern itself in generating a set of questions that direct themselves at this very purpose.

3. Myers (1988) identifies six stages of moral development which progress from the ego centered structure at stage one to a reasoning pattern at stage six which is based on universal principles of justice and love. (p.56). Myers (1988) also cites the work of Fowler (1981) who defines faith as an individual's orientation to an ultimate environment or what the individual feels to be the most important part of his or her life. Fowler (1981) defines six stages of faith development which include locus of authority, symbolic and conceptual reasoning, role raking, and extensiveness of identification, and the prototypical challenges with which faith must deal. The progression from stage one of a faith development where dependence on and deference to parents, surrogates, or family moves through to stage six where the individual becomes aware of the ultimate context of life and seeks to incorporate his or her own being with a sense of the cosmic (Myers, p.57, 1988).
4. According to Myers (1988), ntuology refers to the process of achieving self knowledge whereby the highest value is in interpersonal relationships. In this diunitial logic all sets are interrelated and interconnected through human and spiritual networks.

5. Race memory is referred to in Larry Neal's definition of a Black aesthetic. He sees rhythm as an expression of race memory. Its mythology can be located in spirit worship, Orishas, Ancestors, African Gods, Jesus as somebody you might know (like a personal deity). Some formal manifestations in African and African /American culture include the samba, Calypso, Batucada, Cha-Cha, juba, gospel songs, jubilees, work song, spirituals.

6. Smith and Green (1984) define the Just World concept as an area explored by social psychologists. This concept involves the idea that merit and fate are closely aligned along with the idea that justice and fairness inevitably prevail in human affairs. In this study data from a probability sample of adults to ascertain the degree of association between the belief in a just world and perceived social inequality, evaluated social inequality, the work ethic, several social identity variables, and political preference.

7. Santayana (1955) in The Sense of Beauty refers to the philosophy of beauty as the study of values. p.12

8. Oyebede (1990)cites the work of Keto who says that the Africa-centered perspective of history rests on the premise that it is valid to posit Africa as a geographical and cultural starting base in the study of people of African Descent. p.1.

9. Lankford's (1992) questions include: can an ethnically or culturally referenced aesthetic be based on shared historical and sociological circumstances, and on values and convictions concerning art, that do not in themselves prescribe aesthetic criteria or artistic subject matter and style? ; does a spirit of community constitute an aesthetic: what type and degree of variation is possible within an aesthetic? What degree of overlap between two or more aesthetics is tolerable before their claims of singularity become untenable?
10. In a discussion of assimilation as a cognition that comprises the etiology of racism raises issues about cognitive dissonance and the developing identity of European American children, Skillings and Dobbins (1991) define assimilation as the incorporation of incoming data into one's existing cognitive structures which is used interpret and respond to one's environment. Accommodation is the alteration of cognitive structures in response to environmental data.

They make the point that organization of schemata is often organized in a way that require minimal efforts of mental effort, hence effecting the quality of life, moreover ability to survive -when individuals experience consciously or unconsciously an incongruence with their cognitive structures and information they are receiving about the environment, they are likely to experience some compulsion to change the information processing system to restore a sense that they are seeing the world clearly (Skillings and Dobbins, 1991). The juror who when viewing the Rodney King video tape, declared that King was in control of the brutal beating that he received illuminates the point Skillings and Dobbins make about cognitive dissonance as it is particular to racism.

In the case of cognitive dissonance, children are faced with two opposing ideals which emerge as schema. Racism and ideals of equality are examples of such opposing ideals. On one hand children are taught that equality is an American ideal while simultaneously inundated with ways in which higher status is accorded to European Americans in contrast to minority groups who may receive lesser status. Cognitive dissonance created by racism may be granted the assumed status of non existent in the interpretive cognitive process that largely comprises aesthetic inquiry. European Americans learn to overlook the content of data from or about people of color to preserve other cognitive structures that they need to order their world (Skillings, Dobbins, 1991, p.209).

11. Boime (1990) suggests that as early as 1837 a negative association had been made regarding the color black by the diplomat and historian Frederic Portal, whose book on color symbolism carried great influence. Boime further suggests that painters like Manet (1863) made conventional Black and White racial divisions in terms of the painters palette. Boime felt that artists made contributions to the racial mythologies built around differences in skin color and physical features of subordinate peoples (p. 13). Boime goes on to develop a focus on how power and privileged enjoyed almost exclusively by whites was rationalized by a wide range of Western artists in their images of Blacks.
12. According to Sodowsky, Wai Ming Lai, & Plake (1991) the acculturation process at the individual level has traditionally been seen as a unidirectional process involving the relinquishing of cultural values, customs, beliefs, and behaviors of the minority culture and the adoption of those of the majority culture. More recently researchers have looked at acculturation as a bidirectional adjustment process whereby the acculturation of a minority person can be measured in two dimensions: the degree of assimilation to the majority culture and the degree of retention of the minority culture.

13. The cultural competency model, originally developed by Cross, Brazon, Dennis and Isaacs (1989), was developed in the field of mental health to provide training that would outline effective services for minority children who were severely emotionally disturbed.

14. Nobles (1989) defines cultural values as a complex pattern of attitudes, beliefs, and ideas which give order and direction to human conduct.

15. Numerous art educators have written about the importance of cross cultural understanding in art education. Smith (1992) advocates a theory of art education that keeps the values of the Western cultural tradition alive while giving acknowledgment to the need to study non-Western cultural traditions. Smith (1992) suggest that once students have explored the world of aesthetic qualities, acquired perceptual skills and a sense of art history they are then prepared for cross-cultural comparisons. Recommended to take place only when one gets to grade eleven, the appreciation of artistic excellence is best accomplished through comparisons of works of art of greater and lesser quality in the same or similar style.

In a survey of value bases in art, Tomhave (1992) describes the cultural understanding approach as having its origins in reaction to the cry for justice from immigrant minorities in the schools- its newer form is described as multiculturalism. Tomhave relates that the underlying value in the cultural understanding approach has to do with maintaining what he sees as the stability of the present democratic educational system, while accommodating the concerns of various ethnic groups. In addition this approach advocates that appreciation, respect, and acceptance of another's right to be different is balanced with uniformity and consensus. Tomhave sights some of the major proponents of this position as including Allison (1987), Best (1986),

16. A question arises as to the extent that this is understood in art education. For example, Acculturation/ Assimilation is interpreted by Tomhave (1992) as the first approach to multiculturalism in the United States precipitated by mainstream educators who targeted immigrants for enculturation or assimilation into mainstream society. Tomhave goes on to make the observation that some people of color who would be disposed to this concept, value equal access to the ideals of Western society as a way to have the opportunity to achieve on an equal basis within mainstream society. Chapter two of this study has devoted a portion of its discussion of aesthetic negation to what the realities of assimilation mean for the African American community.

While Torrance (1990) in his empirical study of African Americans and the American ethos would agree with Tomhave (1992) to the extent that African Americans do support the ideals of economic individualism in American society- moreover democratic inclusion, it may not be for the reasons he suggested. It is interesting to note that Torrance (1990) found that those who displayed high levels of African American consciousness and high awareness of discrimination also had strong belief in equality of opportunity. For a further discussion see Torrance (1990).

17. This concept of spirituality is adapted from a discussion by L.J. Myers, Speight, Highlen, Cox, Reynolds, Adams, and Hanley (1991) on identity development and worldview.

18. According to L.J. Myers, Speight, Highlen, Cox, Reynolds, Adams, and Hanley (1991) the self-identity process for oppressed people is ever expanding and thereby would include progressive levels starting at sub-optimal levels and ending and optimal levels:

1) Individuation- the world is the way it is. Individuals lack awareness of any view of self other than the one to which they are initially introduced and rarely assign particular meaning or value to any aspect of their identity.

2) Dissonance- Individuals affectly explore those aspects of self that may be devalued by others. This experience triggers conflict between what individuals believe they are and a false image of self that would be inferior. Consciously or unconsciously
internalization of sociocultural values that hold the negative view of the self may occur.

3) I focus my energy on people like me. Individuals fully embrace others like themselves who are devalued. This acceptance enables people to learn about and appreciate the devalued aspects of themselves. A sense of belonging may occur.

4) I feel good about who I am. Individuals have effectively incorporated feelings of worth associated with the salient aspects of self resulting in an increased sense of security. The salient part of self is recognized as just one of many components of self identity.

5) With my deeper understanding of myself I am changing my assumptions about the world. Individuals' sense of self has developed to a stronger place of inner security so that relationships and perceptions of others reflect this degree of inner peace. Individuals sense of community has deepened and expanded as a result of a connection to more people because criteria of acceptance go beyond appearance. Individuals are beginning to understand the true nature of oppression as reflecting the value of one's worldview: All people can oppress and or be oppressed depending on one's assumptions about one's self and relationships to others.

6) It is I. The self is refined toward a sense of personhood that includes the ancestors, those yet unborn, nature, and community. People experience shift in worldviews based on the realization of the interrelatedness and interdependence of all things and are empowered to define their reality based on spiritual awareness rather than external circumstance. It is at the highest level of identity development that a holistic understanding and appreciation of culture and history can occur.

19. protocol is used in this sense to mean a code of ceremonial forms and courtesies of precedence, etc. accepted as proper and correct (Websters, p.1143, 1972)
APPENDIX A

STAGES OF RACIAL IDENTITY AND ELEMENTS OF WORLDVIEW
Table 1.1 White Racial Identity and Cultural Values

CARTER AND HELMS (1990)

WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL VALUES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACIAL IDENTITY PHASE</th>
<th>VALUE ORIENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Person/Nature Orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Contact</td>
<td>mastery over nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>master of ones fate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Disintegration</td>
<td>feeling of subjugation to others will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reintegration</td>
<td>complex view of one’s social world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>resulting in negative attitudes toward Blacks and idealization of whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pseudo-Independent</td>
<td>mastery over nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>initial commitment to resolve racial conflict and belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Autonomy Attitudes</td>
<td>subjugation to nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>realization that racial environment is beyond his or her control</td>
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</table>
Table 1.1  (continued)

CARTER AND HELMS  
(1990)  
WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY  
AND  
CULTURAL VALUES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACIAL IDENTITY PHASE</th>
<th>VALUE ORIENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II. Time/Sense Orientation</td>
<td>belief in past time orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Contact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reintegration</td>
<td>{ past alternative } adherence to tradition and time honored customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>both stages have in common a lack of acceptance of racial differences and similarities as they currently exist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>individuals may believe in time honored traditions and customs to justify their racial attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rely on past experience and events to interpret present circumstance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Disintegration</td>
<td>{ future alternative } temporal focus that is based on explanation for events that might occur; self threatened stage in which the individual becomes aware herself/himself as a racial being and the social norms regarding race for the first time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1.1  White Racial Identity and Cultural Values

CARTER AND HELMS
(1990)
WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY
AND
CULTURAL VALUES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACIAL IDENTITY PHASE</th>
<th>VALUE ORIENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II. Time/Sense Orientation</td>
<td>discovery and confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Disintegration</td>
<td>value for time in future when things might be different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high levels of disintegration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>attitudes may focus primarily on potential future events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rather than life as it was or is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Activity Orientation</td>
<td>{ concern for one's views about the; being, being-in-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- contact</td>
<td>becoming, and doing }</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>individual acknowledges no racial constraints on his or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>her behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>being : belief in spontaneous expression of one's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>being and becoming : sy. exp. of integrated personality</td>
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</table>
CARTER AND HELMS
(1990)
WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY
AND
CULTURAL VALUES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACIAL IDENTITY PHASE</th>
<th>VALUE ORIENTATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III. Activity Orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- contact</td>
<td>doing : activity evaluated by external criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reintegration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>need for social approval</td>
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</table>
Table 1.2  Tatum (1992) Stages of Racial Identity Awareness

**Tatum (1992) Stages of Racial Identity Awareness**

**People of Color**

**Preencounter**: the African American has absorbed many of the beliefs and values of the dominant White culture. Unconscious internalization of negative Black stereotypes become the terms for assimilation and acceptance by whites. De-emphasis of one's racial group membership as a way of maintaining thinking that race has not been or will not be a relevant factor in one's own achievement.

**Encounter**: an event or series of events forces the individual to acknowledge the impact of racism in one's life.

**Immersion/Emersion**: simultaneous desire to surround oneself with visible symbols of one's racial identity and active avoidance of symbols of whiteness. Focus is on exploring aspects of their own history and culture with the support of peers from their own racial background. Anger toward whites dissipates as a emerging security in a newly defined and affirmed sense of self.

**Internalization**: as views change there is less desire to expose a "Blacker than thou" attitude. Cultural identity becomes more expansive and open rather than defensive. Strong sense of self enables individual to maintain connections with Black peers and willingness to establish meaningful relationships with whites who acknowledge and are respectful of his or her self definition. Can establish proactive relationships with other oppressed groups.
Table 1.2 (continued)

**European Americans**

**Contact stage**: lack of awareness of cultural and institutional racism, and of one's own white privilege. Naive curiosity about or fear of people of color, based on stereotypes learned from friends, family, or the media. Limited interaction with people of color in tandem with lack of awareness of racial issues may keep person in this stage until this changes.

**Disintegration stage**: increased interaction with people of color or exposure to new information about racism. Guilt shame, anger are some emotions that may arise in recognizing one's own advantage and how the system of advantage is maintained.

**Reintegration**: possible for whites to become stuck at this stage if avoidance of Black people is possible. The individual at this stage begins to question racism when a catalyst provides opportunities for deeper understanding (i.e. racism course).

**Pseudo independent**: individual abandons beliefs in White superiority, but may continue to engage in behaviors that perpetuate the system. One may experience a sense of alienation from other Whites who have not yet begun to examine their own racism. In addition they may experience rejection from Blacks who may be skeptical about their intentions.

**Immersion**: in search of a new and comfortable way to identify one's self. There is an effort in this stage to confront myths and stereotypes and replace them with truths about what it is like to be White in this country.

**Internalization**: self acceptance of new level of awareness that allows individual to confront racism. Alliances with people of color accessible in embracing antiracist behavior. Ongoing process where new information and new ways of thinking about racial and cultural variables is possible.
Based upon the philosophical assumptions and principles serving as the foundation of the world view of ancient Africans, a conceptual system has been identified designed toward the achievement of everlasting peace and happiness. It may be described as optimal, if one values such an aim. Most of us in the West have been socialized into a world view undergirded by a conceptual system that is less than optimal, yielding racism, sexism, classism, and so on; one that is sub-optimal. Briefly described below you will find the differences between the two conceptual systems and subsequent world views delineated in terms of structure. If utilized, the optimal conceptual system orders one's thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and actions so as to yield maximum positivity in experience. Optimal psychology is realized through reason which is the unity that contains and transcends all opposites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumptions</th>
<th>Optimal</th>
<th>Sub-optimal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontology (nature of reality)</td>
<td>Spiritual (known in an extrasensory fashion and material (known through the five senses). as one</td>
<td>Material with possible spiritual aspect that is separate and secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology (nature of knowledge)</td>
<td>Self-knowledge known through symbolic imagery and rhythm</td>
<td>External knowledge known through counting and measuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axiology (nature of value)</td>
<td>Highest value in positive interpersonal relationships among people</td>
<td>Highest value in objects or acquisition of objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic (reason)</td>
<td>Diunital—emphasize union of opposites (both/and conclusions)</td>
<td>Dichotomous—emphasize duality (either/or conclusions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Ntuology—all sets are interrelated through human and spiritual networks</td>
<td>Technology—all sets are repeatable and reproducible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Extended self, multi-dimensional</td>
<td>Individual form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-worth</td>
<td>Intrinsic in being</td>
<td>Based on external criteria or materialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values guiding behavior</td>
<td>Spiritualism, oneness with nature, communalism</td>
<td>Materialism, competition, individualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of well-being</td>
<td>Positively consistent despite appearances due to relationship with source</td>
<td>In constant flux and struggle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life—space</td>
<td>Infinite and unlimited (spirit manifesting)</td>
<td>Finite and limited (beginning with birth and ending with death)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 1.3**  (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumptions</th>
<th>Optimal</th>
<th>Sub-optimal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Holistic/onestness</td>
<td>Segmented, fragmented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace, happiness</td>
<td>Eternal</td>
<td>Temporal (temporary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation</td>
<td>Carefree</td>
<td>Continual confrontation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress, anxiety</td>
<td>Unconditional (see beyond to truth)</td>
<td>Conditional (focus on appearance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation</td>
<td>Manifestation of sharing spiritual union</td>
<td>Manifestation of material attraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love orientation</td>
<td>Unity through ideology</td>
<td>Unity through common goals or specific aim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix

Markstrom and Adams (1990)
Prevention and Intervention Efforts to
Enhance Identity Formation among Ethnic Minorities

1. Methods should be proposed to keep minority youth in school and academically oriented since their lack of education continues to serve as a condition that virtually guarantees a life course of socioeconomic disadvantage.

Economically disadvantaged minority youth perform less well on standardized achievement tests, in credits earned toward graduation, or in grade point averages when compared with their non-minority peers (Gibbs & Huang, 1989, p.18). Problems and controversy remain about the inappropriate use of tests with minority youth (Samuda, 1975). In addition, minority youth are frequently "token" members of groups that produce prestige and promote competence in them and their parents (Gibbs & Huang, 1989). Often, these experiences are compromised by a lack of acculturation (Matute-Bianchi, 1986). On the other hand, the extreme stress placed on Sansei children by their Nisei parents may undermine academic performance for some Japanese youth (Nagaata, 1989, p. 76). Fordham and Ogbu (1986) suggest that bright black youth may behave in ways to avoid perceptions of "acting white" or being seen as "brianiacs." Similar patterns have been noted by Matute-Bianchi (1986) for Mexican-American youth.

2. Efforts are required to heighten health consciousness (chronic health problems confound identity processes). Several strategies have been found to be effective for promoting the utilization of mental health services. For example, a friendly style (called personalismo by Hispanics) has been found to defuse anxiety and establish rapport (Gibbs & Huang, 1989). Clinicians are encouraged to offer a brief explanation of therapy and to point out its link to the familiar role of healer in the minority culture (e.g., curando, medicine man) (Gibbs & Haung, 1989, p.23). Although the general health of Americans has improved, the physical health of African American (Carter, 1983), Mexican American (Solis, 1983), and American Indian (Brown & Hernassy, 1983) continues to lag behind.
3. The importance of constructive social networks and support systems should be affirmed. Minority families differ widely in the quality and breadth of social support. For lower income African Americans the church, although important, is not viewed as an important resource for child rearing (Spencer, in press). Extended kin networks often provide an alternative and temporary source of support for African Americans (McAdoo, 1981). However, reinforced mutual assistance may also serve as a source of stress. Extended kin in rural areas often afford a respite for troubled teens and their families (Gibbs, 1989). For American Indians, uncles and aunts are important teachers who share wisdom and important values (LaFromboise & Low, 1989).

4. Methods should be proposed to support parenting efforts as cultural transmitters. Families vary greatly in their ability to serve as cultural transmitters. Findings for African American youth suggest that parents do not emphasize cultural values (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Spencer, 1983). For Mexican American families, the cultural transmission emphasis may vary by level of acculturation and the family’s immigration history (Ramirez, 1989), and for Japanese families, family structure (e.g., generational changes and out-marriages) would affect the content and form of cultural transmission. In addition the Japanese internment (generally not discussed) resulted in many parents opting to raise their children to be as "American" as possible (Nagata, 1989, p. 82).

5. Proposals are needed to offer a compensatory (media focused) cultural emphasis that affirms group identity for all youth and thus enhances ego-identity processes and group pride. The process of changing images may be less straightforward for specific groups. Filipino Americans experience a mixture of stereotypes. Although thought of as hospitable, neat hard working, patient, docile, and bright, they are also stereotyped as sneaky, dishonest lazy, and social climbers (Santos, 1983, p.138). The stereotype of Japanese-American youth as "model Americans" is also stress producing. The negative stereotypes associated with African Americans, Mexican Americans, and American Indians are persuasive and often linked to color connotations and long-standing social stereotypes.

6. Methods to promote the teaching in schools of native languages and cultures (particularly for American Indian tribes that appear most at risk of losing their heritage) are needed. Creativity will be required to encourage biculturalism while preserving (identity linked) cultural traditions.
7. Providing a mechanism for the special training of teachers of ethnic minority students is critical. This would include sensitizing teachers to the customs, traditions, communication patterns, and sometimes, the language of ethnic minorities. Teacher accountability should be built into the process.

8. Child rearing support by way of teaching parenting skills that promote the parents' sense of ethnic pride and enhance "home school partnership bonds" is essential. The Yale-New Haven Primary Prevention Program (Comer, 1985) provides an important model. Serving children and families from kindergarten through the fourth grade, the program is based on an ecological model and focuses on creating a desirable climate or social environment in schools through application of mental health principles in a way that effects a coordinated management, curriculum and staff development" (p. 155).

9. Improved methods of training for mental health workers who specifically serve an ethnic minority population should be required.
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