
ESSAY

Afterword: "Miami's Nappy Edges: Finding Black Miami, Sin Fronteras"

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A reflection on the 'Mapping Creole Miami: Black Intellectual and Artistic Trajectories' symposium; pursuing coarse, loose(ned), twisted, and braided strands of relation that can create and maintain more possible Black futures.

Keywords: Place; Narrative; Blackness; Difference

"All discourse is 'placed', and the heart has its reasons"
—Stuart Hall

"Le lieu est incontournable" (place is unavoidable)
—Édouard Glissant

"Don't Stop! Get it, Get it!"
—Uncle Luke/Luke Skywalker

The *reasoned* heart—both 'emplaced' and moving across town and across national and state borders—is vividly evident in the essays that compose this special issue, "Looking for Black Miami." Each essay invokes what Kevin Quashie would call Black "aliveness"—the constitutive triumphs, traumas, sounds, textures, and visual representations of everyday Blacknesses, even amid mourning, and sober reflection on current vulnerabilities and challenges. All narrate remarkable—and remarkably commonplace—choices that families make to try to set the conditions—or at least hedge bets and mitigate vulnerabilities—for their children to lead a better life. Here, we query these personal narratives for their insight into larger formations. The fact that Edda Fields-Black, N.D.B. Connolly, Tera Hunter, Anthony Jack, Jemima Pierre, Kevin Quashie, and Juana Valdes each currently live outside South Florida, and Donette Francis has spent most of her life in and identifying as a New Yorker who immigrated from the Caribbean, may be read as validation of Eric B and Rakim, remixed by Paul Gilroy: "it ain't where you're from, it's where you're at."² Still, this critical engagement nonetheless forcefully reinscribes Glissant's famous line "*... le lieu est incontournable*" (place is unavoidable), which is a key element to his larger project of the *poetics of relation*.³ It is, after all, relation that we are after here. We pursue the tight, coarse, loose(ned), twisted, and braided strands of Black relation in this issue—looking also for intellectual, political and affective connection that can create and maintain more possible futures—*after* our colonial, enslaved, enclosed becomings.

Donette Francis organized the 'Mapping Creole Miami: Black Intellectual and Artistic Trajectories' symposium in April 2018, alongside the composition of a University of Miami interdisciplinary research team

¹ Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford, Lawrence & Wishart, 1990, pp. 222–37.

² Rakim offers: "So much to say, but I still flow slow/I come correct, and I won't look back/Cause it ain't where you're from, it's where you're at. See Eric B and Rakim's "In the Ghetto." *Let the Rhythm Hit 'Em*, MCA, 1990. See also Gilroy, Paul. "It Ain't where you're from, it's where you're at...The dialectics of diasporic identification." *Third Text*, vol. 5, no. 13, 1991, pp. 3–16.

³ Glissant, Édouard. *Poetics of Relation*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2010 (1997).

across University of Miami campuses, which sought to initiate a conversation, and begin to 'map' multiple dimensions of Black Miami.⁴ "The Reproduction of Race in Miami" research project team sought to find "how to best conceptualize a multidimensional ecological framework for understanding subjects' intersectional experiences of health and wellbeing, cultural belonging, and equal access to institutions and the built and natural environments." One way to enter this open field of big questions is through personal narratives of scholarly, artistic, and personal trajectories. Francis' preliminary question to the authors in this volume invited both individual expertise and disciplinary training: "How has Miami and its educational, social and cultural institutions shaped your racial/ethnic identities and intellectual formations?"⁵ Each panelist responded brilliantly, from a place that is at once personal and incisive. The transdisciplinary "ethnographic sensibility" evinced in this issue and reflected in this short Afterword owe precisely to Donette Francis' framing and invitation to share and analyze these narratives *juxtapositionally*, and in conversation. The essays collected in this special issue, therefore, not only contribute to a fuller understanding of Miami and greater South Florida, but also can provide a critical and methodological framework for Black Studies, Caribbean, and Hemispheric American studies.

Nathan Connolly, whose monograph, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida*, has made its own important contribution to the study of Black Miami, names the high conceptual and material stakes of this work of collective imagination that Donette Francis has inaugurated:⁶ "But how different might our respective disciplines be, how different might our hometown be, if rather than real estate developers, international bankers, and various empire builders, *we* did the speculating for a change?" Further, calling out "the racism of multiculturalism" in the US academy, he shows the inarguable parallels between financial speculation in the real estate market, art market, and the academic market, via the cautionary tale of the work of the late artist Purvis Young. His admonition against capitulation to the "paymaster" (of the neoliberal university); "speculative acquisition" and manufactured scarcity dares us: what are we going to do, now? As an answer, Francis offers this collaborative beginning—the curation of a crucial conversation—"Looking for Black Miami" across South Florida geographies, and across boundaries of neighborhood, class, language, sexuality, gender, nationality, and generation. Miami is special (though I will spend much of this essay arguing against seeing it as "exceptional.") Its geography—the natural and built environment and the way folks inhabit it—is unique in the US and it is changing at a fast pace. Natural disaster and everyday natural "ruination"—hurricane and/or flooding and/or mold and/or the natural environment and decay in Miami—points out the precarity that nature presents for all of us, especially for those folks with less resources who are thrown most immediately in harm's way of not-so-natural ecological environmental racism and dumping.⁷

The April 2018 symposium conjured this specialness through inevitable invocations of vulnerabilities to storms; illuminating lampposts as curfew signals; Bahama Yards; hot sticky days; languid walks; car travel

⁴ In our unsuccessful bid for funding by the university's interdisciplinary research initiative, U-LINK, we proposed to initiate preliminary historical, ethnographic, and literary research; and the development of a common interdisciplinary "language" and critical framing, toward subsequent individual and group research, and community engagement in Miami and Greater South Florida. Reproduction of Race in Miami (Jafari Allen; Germane Barnes; Sophia George; Donette Francis; Ta-Shana Taylor; Laura Kohn-Wood). "The Program in Africana Studies composed a research team from the fields of sociocultural anthropology, community psychology, molecular genetics and translational cancer biology, cultural history, geology and environmental science, architecture and urban studies; to map multiple dimensions of what we conceive of as intersectional and 'sedimented' Black experiences in Miami." (ulink.miami.edu/fellows/index.html).

⁵ The other questions were: "To the extent that you remember (whether these institutions still exist or not), can you provide the following information: schools, churches, community centers, social clubs, and athletic organizations?; If you were born in Miami, which hospital?; In which neighborhood/s were you raised, and what was its racial/ethnic composition?; Years lived in Miami (starting and ending dates)?; Where are your parents/grandparents from—state or country?; Do family members still live in Miami, and if so, where?" It was remarkable that the University of Miami— perhaps the most prestigious institution of higher education in the state—had such little significance in shaping the trajectories of these top scholars and artist. UM was cited only as a familiar playground for one scholar whose father attended the law school, and the place of an early racist exclusion by another.

⁶ Connolly, N D. B. *A World More Concrete*. Univ. of Chicago Press, 2014. Also see other sterling works, such as the watershed history of Black Miami: Dunn, Marvin. *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*. University Press of Florida, 1997; and Rose, Chanelle N. *The Struggle for Black Freedom in Miami: Civil Rights and America's Tourist Paradise, 1896–1968*. Louisiana State University Press, 2015.

⁷ See Cliff, Michele. "Caliban's Daughter." *Journal of Caribbean Literatures*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2003, pp. 157–160. "Ruininate, the adjective, and ruination, the noun, are Jamaican inventions. Each word signifies the reclamation of land, the disruption of cultivation, civilization, by the uncontrolled, uncontrollable forest. When a landscape becomes ruinate, carefully designed aisles of cane are envined, strangled, the order of empire is replaced by the chaotic forest. The word ruination (especially) signifies this immediately; it contains both the word ruin, and nation. A landscape in ruination means one in which the imposed nation is overcome by the naturalness of ruin. As individuals in this landscape, we, the colonized, are also subject to ruination, to the self reverting to the wildness of the forest" (157).

facilitated by highways that have slashed Black communities; and implicit Apartheids, for example. The panelists' bodies in fact constituted another aspect of the local "natural environment" with only limited mutability. How to show up in Miami as a fat femme Black boy struggling to present the right accent and idiom; or a Black girl with or without her hair pressed, weaved, in place; how impossible it is to not show up outsized in people's imaginations, as a 6'4" Black boy or man. Each individual's personal and familial negotiation of space through Miami's environment as represented by these fine essays is key to this analysis. In the short appreciation that follows, I will perhaps re-stage the conversation, begun in April 2018 and chronicled in this issue; focusing on what Connolly might call "Black Power Analytics"; Black affect, and concepts of Black socialities, space/place, frontiers, edges/boundaries; difference, and change; toward further development of Black Miami research and community engagement.

Becoming Blacknesses

Blackness was born in the crucible of trade. Nevertheless, these are places made home through many generations of our aliveness. Miami could not have become what it has—or any of the things it is imagined to be or aspires to today—without many generations of Black folks' aliveness in this space, from the moment of pirates and privateers, and slave traders bringing kidnapped Africans to these swampy shores that were stolen from the Tequesta and other Indian nations. Miami is, of course, much more than an "interchangeable representative of an American dream" (Adams et al 5). Scholars must begin to do the work of combing through the knots of actual historical and lived experience, which cannot be adequately captured in nationality (or only vis a vis race, gender, or class). This is precisely not to claim exceptionality or authenticity of Miami, but to insist on historic particularity, specificity, and attention to the processes of creolization and (paradigmatic limits of) Black agency. To put a finer point on this, which scholars have eloquently and incisively shown recently, the experience of Black folks (African-descended folks, whether arriving in 1419 or 2019) is incommensurable with other experiences of "the imperatives of property ownership, mass consumption, migration, and the elusive lure of multicultural opportunity" (Adams et al 5).

Let us be clear and say it plainly: there is always already heterogeneity in Blackness, wherever one finds it—including among American English speaking urban folks whose ancestors raised themselves "up from slavery" in the US.⁸ Edda Fields-Black, "The great-granddaughter of immigrants and the granddaughter of migrants," who were described by common Miami "fighting words" as "a Geechee and a 'Sau,'" puts it very well, in the South Florida context of Black relationality. She incisively reads: "(s)ometimes Blacks who disembarked slaving vessels in different ports and at different moments in time have trouble seeing themselves and each other." My students who hail from this ancestry often shadily name themselves "just Black" to confront the valuation of lesser cultural heritage that they face. While Black US folks continue to be erroneously cast as easily knowable, unchanging, primordial, and un-cultural—perhaps awaiting an *ethnic* intervention by Caribbean or South American Black folks to be seen beyond well-known stereotypes—Kevin Quashie's attention to "Blackness not marking difference, but difference in Blackness," and Tera Hunter's invocation of polyglot Blackness, powerfully name aspects of the understudied everyday cosmopolitanism of Black folks and Black communities. We must, therefore, not capitulate to the facile collapsing of Miami with/into the Caribbean, which the narratives in this issue complexify and push against. Still, the opening lines of Michel-Rolph Trouillot's "The Caribbean Region: An Open Frontier in Anthropological Theory" seems to anticipate a few of the preoccupations and challenges of the Black Miami research project this special issue inaugurates. Trouillot provides a useful interpretation of how processes of creolization are (mis)understood, writing "... the Caribbean would not conform within the ... divisions of Western academies. With a predominantly nonwhite population, it was not 'Western' enough to fit the concerns of sociologists. Yet it was not 'native' enough to fit fully into the Savage slot where anthropologists found their preferred subjects ... The inescapable fact of Caribbean heterogeneity poses fundamental questions for ... theory that most ... have chosen to ignore" (20, 25).⁹ The great Haitian anthropologist-historian and theorist could not have predicted, however,

⁸ Consider Gomez, Michael A. *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South*. University of North Carolina Press, 1998; Fields-Black, Edda L. *Deep Roots: Rice Farmers in West Africa and the African Diaspora*. Indiana University Press, 2014.

⁹ There is much more to say about how his concept of the "Savage Slot" articulates to questions of "multiculturalism" and "diversity" in hiring, promotion, and retention in US institutions of higher learning and culture. South Florida universities and museums might be a potent case to follow in this regard. As Connolly quips in his essay "we call this so-called capital of the Caribbean home, but, Lord, if Miami's 'Diversity' ain't been one of the biggest bait-and-switches in our sun-drenched history of selling points, swindles, and snake-oil." (Connolly, this issue).

the explosion of a sort of *heterogeneity industry* that seems to have colored race and ethnicity discourses in predicable anti-Black ways. Trouillot offers, "[b]ecause Afro-Caribbean cultures were not meant to exist, many observers came to believe that they did not exist, in spite of all evidence to the contrary" ("Culture" 10). Unfortunately, this remains true in the realm of culture and ethnicity as it pertains to US Blacks. Today, we often face an enervating false dichotomy between heterogeneity, which is seen to come from the Caribbean, Africa, Europe, and South America and precisely not from a by now mechanically reproduced and severely limited understanding of what John Langston Gwaltney called "core (US) Black culture."¹⁰

Trouillot argued that "This region where boundaries are notoriously fuzzy has long been the open frontier ... neither center nor periphery, but a sort of no man's land where pioneers get lost..." ("The Caribbean" 19). Pushing further today—the truth is that while perhaps fuzzily interpreted, boundaries and borders (*fronteras*) throughout the Americas are perhaps only "fuzzy" on one side; that is the direction through which those in power enter social-cultural spaces of those with less power (perhaps to take more). On the other side of that boundary, the poorest and darkest and least proximate to global white supremacy among us face increasing and in fact "intersectional" expanses of barbed wire in their attempts to perhaps *thief a bit of sugar* for themselves, their families, and communities, through border-crossing—except as servants and entertainers.¹¹ In another essay, "Culture on the Edges: Creolization in the Plantation Context," Trouillot asserts:

This ability to stretch margins and circumvent borderlines remains the most amazing aspect of Afro-American cultural practices. It encapsulates their inherent resistance. Afro-American cultures are cultures of combat in the strongest possible sense ... they were born resisting ... The heroism of the creolization process is foremost the heroism of anonymous men, women, and—too often forgotten—children going about the business of daily life ... Afro-American cultural practices emerged on the edges of the plantations, ... against the expectation of the masters. It was an imposed context ... but one within which they managed their most formidable accomplishments, that of creating what has indeed become a New World (18–19).

There is richness and heterogeneity at the creative edges of societies and cultural spaces, yes. This does not make boundary-crossing any less fraught with epistemic violence and material danger. Neither the concept of diaspora, nor the current disciplinary divisions of academe are capacious enough to hold all of this.¹² The incipient insights and provocations of the essays collected in this special issue leave us reaching for more capacious theoretical models—or at least for a supplement to 'diaspora.' For example, while we might join Black diaspora scholarship in seeking to correct scholarly and popular narratives that find Black US subjects singularly insular, and, therefore, ineligible for mobility; at the same time, the narratives reveal that mobility is not necessarily liberatory. On close inspection, the movements we witness in these narratives refer no less to conditions of emplacement, (dis)identification, and varying degrees of precarity and vulnerability in or of one place across time, as it does to physical movement and dispersal. Stillness (I wonder, Kevin, is this also a sort of *sovereign quiet*?) should not imply non-awareness of or non-participation in transnational flows or 'scapes' of individuals, information, objects, or capital. And movement certainly does not signify 'nowhereness.'¹³

Recalling the funeral of her father, The Reverend Delanot Pierre, Jemima Pierre begins her auto-ethnographic narration of Black becoming; "(t)hinking back on that Saturday morning in April 2013, as the limo raced down the Palmetto Expressway, I now realize that my father's death represents the death of an era and the foreseeable death of a geography ... The building that housed our first church is now a Ducati showroom." The social-cultural anthropologist's peregrinations from Gros Morne, Haiti to Little Haiti and to points North and West "... allowed ... the (re)making of a Miami community that was trans-Caribbean and proudly Black." She may not have had access to this if she had not left her family's home. After all, she tells us:

¹⁰ See Gwaltney, John Langston. *Drylongso: A Portrait of Black America*. Random House, 1980.

¹¹ See Brand, Dionne. *In Another Place, Not Here*. First Grove Press, 1996. "GRACE, IS GRACE, YES. And I take it, quiet, quiet, like thieving sugar. From the word she speak to me and the sweat running down she in that sun, one afternoon as I look up saying to myself, how many more days these poor feet of mine can take this field, these blades of cane like razor, this sun like coal pot. Long as you have to eat, girl. I look up. That woman like a drink of cool water" (3).

¹² I pursue this in my forthcoming book *There's a Disco Ball Between Us: A Theory of Black Gay Life*. Duke University Press, 2021.

¹³ See Quashie, Kevin. *The Sovereignty of Quiet: Beyond Resistance in Black Culture*. Rutgers University Press, 2012; Allen, Jafari Sinclair. *There's a Disco Ball Between Us: A Theory of Black Gay Life*. Duke University Press, 2021.

...what we (recently arrived Haitians) thought we knew of African Americans was from the stockpile of racist stereotypes prominent throughout the 1980s: African Americans were presented as violent, drug-dealers who were not concerned with education. This was the era of the crack cocaine epidemic and the rise of popular TV shows such as "Miami Vice." And these were our references to the Black American community. We, newly arrived Black migrants, were quickly caught up in the convergence of significant events during a turbulent Miami in the early 1980s: the discovery of HIV/AIDS and the crisis that it generated; the large scale migration of Haitian asylum seekers (derisively labeled "boat people") to South Florida; the Mariel boatlift that brought 10,000 Cuban migrants to Miami; the 1980 protests of the Black community in the Overtown and Liberty City neighborhoods after the acquittal of four white police officers who murdered 33 year old Arthur McDuffie.

Beyond physical geographies, Pierre reveals that she traversed Caribbean communities that became another home to her. Like the narratives of Edda Fields-Black and Kevin Quashie, who also mark gender and sexuality as sites of controversy, Pierre shows the push and pull of "community" that can become an impediment to one's *becoming*. Analysis of contested space here show her parent's Haitian church and its extended network as a place of respite and refuge; language preserved and practiced; and at once a patriarchal sexist homophobic space that pushes out some of its own.

Work outside of home spaces—in Jemima's case, at 163rd Street Mall; the cash registers at McDonalds with quick-witted Black girls for Kevin Quashie, and in Juana Valdes' case, Bramen Cadillac, which introduced her to new classes of folks outside of her neighborhood and outside of the Bohemian art spaces and clubs she haunted before the "development" of Miami nightlife—were turning points toward freedoms and responsibilities that had not been afforded to them prior. Through service at home and in school, Kevin had learned well *how to be* in each space, and who/what behaviors are allowed in each or (not) celebrated. He cultivated silence and service at home and adhered to his known geographies on his walk to work, and McDonald's socially enforced borders of the fry station and the cash register. It was in or near the liminal space of the walk-in refrigerator that the errant, now unknowable phrase that resonates with "pig meat" affirmed his flesh and his own embodied desire.

Kevin Quashie's narration remains within the bounds of community. He implores his reader, "[l]et me tell the story again," and it is good that he has repeated it, since this intricate triptych of queer becoming, "looking toward history large and local for a voice, my voice," is a singular migration story: "I am a bookish, girlish, introverted Black boy, a migratory subject in a city of migratory subjects. I am almost fourteen and am grappling with what kind of male being I am and can become." It is also a story of becoming a (certain type of) Black man in the company of (a variety of different kinds of) Black men—(a father), a kind teacher, a sexy swaggering fry-guy, and a sweetly remembered lover. It insists that we not only recognize how queer Black folks participate in Miami Blacknesses, but also how queer Miami Blacknesses are—perhaps always off-center, hanging onto the edge of the North American mainland, reaching toward the Caribbean and the US South, listening, serving, singing, teaching, loving: working.

One observes a number of differences between narratives of Black sociality and what Kevin aptly names "erotic education" in the essays, and scholars are, perhaps, not used to thinking disparate Black socialities and erotic educations together. But they should. The fact is that whether explicit or just below the surface of the narrative, this is clearly important for each of the writers. Think, not only about the brown stew chicken of Jemima's high school Sundays at Candy's house—a true refuge and place of deep and often wordless care; Juana and Kevin partying in clubs and among friends—attentive to the style and verve, beats and soaring crystalline vocals of Black culture; but also for N.D.B. Connolly, traveling to Liberty City for just the right, authentic DJ for his college party—DJ Uncle Al, who was an innovator of Black Miami pirate radio. These essays traverse gay nightclubs, sorority balls, and cotillions, playing tonk and spades on porches; the right way to make pork sous; and the risks and rewards of having enough brown stew chicken in one's pots to feed those who may not be expected but to whom an invitation of care must be extended, nonetheless. The Blackfulness of this *care work* and *care play* is central, and instructive. There was and is an educative function of sets, limes, parties, bars and clubs. As Juana teasingly teaches, one does not necessarily have to go backpacking in Europe to find oneself, but could do so much more economically, in clubs and bars on one side of town or another.

Edda Fields-Black received more schooling in exclusion (which we must read as distinct from 'insulation') as well as exception, at the elite Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart in Coconut Grove, surrounded by the growing Latin nouveau riche. But these lessons were not unfamiliar. While scholars must begin to pursue the particularities of navigating the anti-Black terrain of *whitino* hegemony in Miami; we must

also recognize that anti-Blackness was and is the lingua franca of Miami communities and throughout the Americas. "Colorism in Latinx cultures was reminiscent of my own family," Fields-Black writes, "I remember feeling dark and ugly every day going to school at Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart in Coconut Grove ... Learning ... the value put on blond hair and blue eyes in Latinx cultures was one of my first memories of school." Still, she explains: "My classmates and teachers at Carrollton told me I was different, special, and more than Black, not like 'el negro rabioso' or the poor Black people who rioted in Brownsville, Liberty City, and Overtown in the 1980s. Until I left Miami and went to college, I believed them." Of course, she did. Not only is ethnic exception part of the common sense of immigrants and (the aspiring) Black middle-class and elites, as we have seen in a few of the narratives in this collection, but also Ogbu and Fordham's unfortunate, damaging, yet widely held oversimplification of "the burden of acting white" was beginning to gain saliency in scholarly and popular discourses at the time, giving scholarly credence to it. Jemima Pierre has already argued, in her "Black Immigrants in the United States and the 'Cultural Narratives' of Ethnicity" that "... the social science discourse of 'Black ethnicity' continues, in the tradition of 'culture of poverty' thesis, to propagate culturally deterministic notions of Black identity formation that ultimately work to reinforce the negative racialization and subordination of all Blacks—immigrants and United States-born alike" (149). Edda Fields-Black would certainly agree, as she has studied this in her scholarship, and like Jemima, lived through this. "The most dangerous downfall of the smallness of identity," Edda writes in her essay, "... is that racial exceptionalism keeps us from seeing ourselves, as well as from seeing each other."

However, a special program at Miami-Dade College's New World Campus schooled young Edda. An "African-American girl, my liberator ... comfortable in her own skin ... gave me the tools to be confident whether other Black kids in my social groups or my Latinx classmates felt I fit in or not." This is significant for a few reasons, and not least because of the formative adolescent experiences that carry into adulthood. The Killian student/Edda's Liberator understood that mastering the culturally important art of rhetorical flair—not dismissing but engaging her detractors—was crucial to showing respect for popular Black social practices. The Killian High School student—"someone like me," Edda reports—succeeded in stemming the tide of adolescent teasing by demonstrating facility with "the dozens." Their biting taunts called for a response that would be more rhetorically dexterous and "colder" than their initial lob. "She stood up for herself, lobbing a retort for every accusation," the Carnegie-Mellon University professor remembers. While the utterance of Edda's Liberator can also be read as egregiously elitist, it is her performance that is most significant here. Her rapier *clap-back*, that she spoke the way she did "because she was well educated and would one day be their boss" must have "killed them" with its "coldness"—that is, the response to her was likely an explosion of raucous approbation that in another cultural idiom could be translated as "touché!" or "well-played!" Edda's friend therefore showed her what scholar of education Prudence Carter has proven apropos of the falsely dichotomous, unnuanced "acting white" discourse that suggests that working class Black and Latinx children do not value education as much as others, and that they see academic achievement as "acting white."¹⁴ After all, as Carter reminds us, "Black and Latinx students often deploy culture to gain status... Many appreciate who they are as cultural beings, their differences in speech, interactions, and social tastes; they intentionally seek distinction, not sameness, to maintain active sociocultural boundaries" (vii). In other words, Black culture—even that of adolescent working-class Black kids who are reified in popular, scholarly, and policy discourses as part of the core "tangle of pathology"—is not burdensome, and does not reflect lesser educational values. Rather, their sophomoric behavior (certainly also personally hurtful, in this case) should be understood on what Carter calls "a continuum of cultural attachments" (vi). That is, what Black kids may see as "acting white" is an affront to their own sensibilities.

Edda Fields-Black's reflection on what one can see and cannot see at certain points in time and from particular vantages reminds us that one does not move outside of boundaries/edges and on to new frontiers without sustaining deep and painful scrapes. At the panel, Juana began her story with the trauma of migration—not something that happened once, but reiterative traumatic removal and arrival. What sort of traumas can we speak about having survived? And how? I am thinking certainly of the inaugural trauma of the Middle Passage, but also a number of other traumas are heaped on top—*sedimenting*, in Donette's framing, and "accretive" in Vanessa Agard-Joneses language of toxic endurance.¹⁵ With all of this pressure, what is created at the bottom? Donette talks about the winds of change that blow in and through (the lives of those who can at least reach air) and the shifting currents of seas and rivers, bayous and lakes. But what about the heavily pressured bottom? What is being created underneath in the heat and pressure?

¹⁴ Carter, Prudence L. *Keepin' It Real: School Success Beyond Black and White*. Oxford University Press, 2005.

¹⁵ Agard-Jones, Vanessa. "Bodies in the System." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 17, no. 3, 2013, pp. 182–192.

As one whose introduction to visiting Miami in the early 1990s included Kevin Quashie's haunt, Sugar's, and The Waterfront, which was a more deeply 'hood-adjacent gay club; I could not resist the opportunity to add Uncle Luke's (aka Luke Skywalker of 2-Live Crew) Blackful entreaty "Don't stop. Get it, Get it!" to form a poetic triptych in the epigram of this Afterword with two titans of Caribbean and Black diaspora studies. Before he popularized the ineffably Miami exhortation in his controversial and portentous 1992 rap, "I Wanna Rock," "Don't stop. Get it, Get it!" could be heard at any party in South Florida and over the "pirated" radio airwaves that inventive Black (and) Latinx Miami DJs commandeered, circumventing rules of the FCC (Federal Communications Commission)—not only *putting Miami on the map* in the forefront of the most popular music of the day (rap), but also mapping an enduring Miami aesthetic onto rap music and popular culture. To be sure, while crusaders for decency and against sexual objectification saw themselves as working for the protection of children; they very likely had not considered the fact that it was the improvised dancefloor call and response and chants of children themselves who had invented or "written" much of (what sufficed as) the lyrics. They were of course ribald, coarse, sophomoric, silly (and perhaps also, therefore, irresistibly naughty). Moreover, following the huge success of 2 Live Crew's 1986 "Throw the D," whose title and lyrics emerge directly from these Miami dances floors full of middle school and high school kids at places like Sunshine Skateway North, and Pac Man Teen Disco (which was owned by Luke himself), this became self-reproducing. The elements of Miami Bass, which can now be heard everywhere (and called by many other names) not only include call and response and chants, but the Caribbean *dutty wine* sped up to hip and ass popping tempos, and utter disregard for copyright infringement of samples and mixes. Black feminist critic Michelle Wallace, following bell hooks who had been a central voice attempting to make good Black feminist sense of the complex problem of sexism in rap, called it "a necessary evil" in her 1990 New York Times article, written at the height of the debate on rap lyrics and (in)decency. She said "... rap is a welcome articulation of the economic and social frustrations of Black youth ... offering the release of creative expression and historical continuity..." but also warned that "...with the failure of our urban public schools, rappers have taken education into their own hands; these are oral lessons ... (a)nd it should come as no surprise that the end result emphasizes innovations in style and rhythm over ethics and morality ... rap lyrics can be brutal, raw and, where women are the subject, glaringly sexist." She quotes hooks, whom she says "sees the roots of rap as a youth rebellion against all attempts to control Black masculinity, both in the streets and in the home."¹⁶ This is a messy and controversial story—which is part of what makes it important to add to the conversation—and one whose complexity falls outside of the purview of this essay. Still, hear "Don't stop. Get it, Get it!" both as an incitement to travel, to move, and to work hard to make your mark at home or *where you stay*, as many Black Miamians do in a larger sense—metaphorically; and literally—feel the bass beat and the imperative shout, referencing the specific context of dancing and shaking at the club, in the streets, in the backyard, and poolside.¹⁷ In both senses, re-invoking Trouillot's "edges," Luke's Miami aesthetic thus "emerges on the edges ... against the expectation of the masters," (19) but also against the standards of the community—at least of middle-class Black leaders and gatekeepers, community elders, and Black feminists. It is here that the former political strategy of respectability gave way to the mandates of gendered racial capitalism, which we can see as a powerful instantiation of what scholars had called "the imperatives of property ownership, mass consumption, migration, and the elusive lure of multicultural opportunity" (Adams et al 6) Perhaps we can read the reproduction of the sexual objectification of young women by adolescent young male entertainers and entrepreneurs as one sort of "imposed context" on the edge of the plantation that Trouillot invokes. Still, it also owes to that infectious Miami bass beat. After all, beside the pleasure of the music and the movement—as fellow partiers encourage "don't stop, get it, get it"—there is a promise, perhaps, of momentary escape from the political-economic exigencies of the difficult times.

Black Cuban visual artist Juana Valdes holds that "there's a Southern soul to Miami ... Miami had (in the eighties) that rural South feel to it. It was just a collection of small communities dispersed between the ocean and the swamp." But, edges also often converge and bleed—both into each other, and at the sharp edge of difference and trauma that sometimes preclude blending or crossing. She tells Allison Harris

¹⁶ See especially hooks, bell. *Yearning: Race, Gender, Cultural Politics*. South End Press, 1990.

¹⁷ Uncle Luke's 1992 "I Wanna Rock" video constitutes a rich (Miami) archive of a certain sort of rap aesthetic that is now hegemonic – poolside bikini clad Latinas and racially ambiguous women's asses objectified, straight and crinkly hair flowing, and unvarnished sex talk (no metaphors!). Recall that it is 2 Live Crew that became a nationwide lightning-rod apropos of changing community standards of legal "obscenity." This aesthetic that had been enjoyed in back regions, low bars, and adult Black working-class spaces was suddenly brought to the national "center stage" including images of women's sexual availability (or pleasure) and perhaps licentiousness (or freedom). www.youtube.com/watch?v=890eP4NBvuA&list=WL&index=243&t=7s.

(m)y mom opted to stay, even if at the edge, in the (largely structurally white or mestizo) Cuban community rather than moving completely into the African American community, partially because she never had the opportunity to learn the (English) language ... We were part of that Cuban community. But we were literally at the edge of the edge of the edge ... So, we grew up surrounded predominantly by white people, inside but outside of the Cuban neighborhood.

Even the timing of Juana Valdes' family's departure from Cuba was at an edge—on one of the last "Freedom flights" to Miami, not via Mariel. Juana confides, "(m)y parents could never see themselves within the African American community ... Holding on to their Spanish and their cultural practices was one of the last ways to maintain their ties to Cuba. For them to take on this other identity would have deprived them of everything left." She narrates her experience and analysis that "with each new influx of immigrants, economic segregation becomes further entrenched. Each group arrives and is forced to take over the worst jobs in the market. As each generation acclimates, they move up the labor force ladder to better paying jobs." But this is not the way US Black Miamians have seen the *succeeding* generations (emphatically meant in both senses of the word) of immigrants who arrive after them. One hears, rather, the "further entrenchment of economic segregation" that Juana correctly cites, reckoned through an understanding of Black US folks occupying a permanent or paradigmatic place at the bottom of socio-economic indicators. Recent social science supports this community *common sense*.¹⁸ Further, the following data point of the "The Color of Wealth in Miami" study seems to corroborate João Vargas' insistence on a shift from "people of color" and anti-racist frameworks that liberal and progressive scholars and politicians have promoted since the late 1970s, toward the recognition of the persistence of anti-Blackness, and toward a conceptualization of categories of 'Black' or 'non-Black' (rather than 'White' or 'People of color') which seem to more accurately reflect everyday experience, despite Miami narratives of national and ethnic diversity as virtue. They report:

(A)ncestral origin played a much smaller role in determining socioeconomic outcomes among those who self-identified as racially black. U.S. black and Caribbean descendants (primarily Haitians, Jamaicans, Trinidadians and Tobagonians, and blacks with Latinx heritage) were more economically similar than Latinx respondents of various ancestral origin who self-identify as white as opposed to black. In other words, Miami respondents who self-identified as racially black but varied by ethnic or ancestral origin were much more economically similar than Latinx respondents whose racial self-identification varied, with black Latinx individuals faring worse (Aja et al. 10).

Reading Blacknesses juxtapositionally—even within a short historical frame, from the 1970s to 1990s, Princeton University Historian Tera Hunter offered:

Both of my parents migrated from the rural South, from small towns in northeast Georgia. Like many African Americans, eager to escape small towns for a better life, they were a part of the late years of the Great Migration. By the time I was two or three, they bought a house in Allapattah, two blocks away from the Elementary School that I attended. My dad at the time was a longshoreman and would later become the Vice President of the Union. My mother, during my early years was a stay at home mom, but would return to school to finish her degree and become a teacher.

When Tera was a girl, skilled workers like her Longshoreman father were able to buy their way in to solidly middle-class neighborhoods where white flight was creating "a microcosm of Black Miami ... in a still very racially segregated city" in which dentists, business owners, chefs, teachers, nurses or nurse aids, and blue collar (workers) of various kinds lived together. By the time "work disappears" in urban centers this is no longer possible—increasing in dead-end jobs for the "working poor" class and promoting an "underclass" that understands the strict limitations and lack of mobility of their social and political economic positions. Tera Hunter's narrative demonstrates the educative and facilitating functions of Black churches and other key social and cultural institutions that nurture, train and engender leadership, outside of public and private schools. Her access to a tennis court and access to swimming pools, for example, promoted 'soft skills' which

¹⁸ Aja, Alan A., et al. "The Color of Wealth in Miami." A Joint Publication of: *The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University, The Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity at Duke University, and The Insight Center for Community Economic Development*, 2019. //kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/The-Color-of-Wealth-in-Miami-Metro.pdf.

facilitate folks' ability to inhabit spaces of privilege with a bit of social-cultural fluency. Her "loving brilliant Black teachers" in Allapattah nurtured her intellectual ability and expected that she would do well. Where were these teachers ten years later? Tera's family moved from that first house in Allapattah, to El Portal—nestled between Little Haiti and upper middle-class Miami Shores—by the time she was in high school. She attended Edison High School which was already "in transition ... (having) become predominantly African American, but still [having] a significant minority of white kids." However, as Jemima Pierre reports, less than ten years later, Edison had lost this significant minority. The shift, Jemima reports "... came with a broad set problematic changes that were structural, cultural, and political ... Of course, for many, local government disinvestment (in public education in general, and Black public education more specifically) was not seen as the culprit—the character of the schools' populations was blamed." Edison—by that time "Haiti High"—was, therefore, off-limits for her aspiring Haitian parents, who left Little Haiti.

Like Tera Hunter's narrative, Edda Field-Black underscores the educative function of Black churches and civic groups in her essay. Moreover, she emphasizes a unique form of Black bourgeois insularity in her family's Bahama yard. While they regularly attended social functions within their class and religious confines, and her family centrally participated in the life of Black Miami (notably her mother, Dr. Dorothy Jenkins-Fields, founded the Black Archives History and Research Foundation of South Florida in 1977); "my sister and I were insulated and isolated in Brownsville," she says. "We never attended neighborhood schools, did not have any friends in the neighborhood, and rarely left the 'yard' unless escorted by our parents or another relative ... We were isolated in our Bahamian yard, but not insulated from the city around us." As if to provide a dramatic cinematic coda, Fields-Black's insular Black middle-class upbringing was (literally) interrupted by a riot. The 1980 Sigma Gamma Rho "Buds of Spring" cotillion likely started as it had since its founding in 1962 (and ongoing). Just a year or two earlier, Tera Hunter had been presented at the important social event, punctuated, I imagine, by yards and yards of crinoline and bridal satin. White gloves and starched white jackets. 1980 was, however, the beginning of the end of a certain Black Miami geography. Edda writes:

My sister's "Buds of Spring" cotillion was cut short by an announcement that motorcyclist Arthur McDuffie had been killed ...the music went off just as my favorite song, "Special Lady" by Ray, Goodman & Brown played and the "Buds of Spring" regaled the audience with a dance routine... everyone had to go home immediately. My mother drove as we cautiously made our way back from Bayfront Park home to Brownsville ... At the end of the day, the posts on our canopy beds were black with soot even though we never opened the windows. The burning of Norton Tire Company and other businesses accelerated Brownsville's decline into a ghetto.

White gloves, crinoline, and "finer womanhood," it seems, will not save the Black middle-class. The lace canopy on your four-poster bed will be sullied by the soot of accretive Black rage, from the bottom.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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