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Fellow Travelers: The Artist-Researchers of the Rosenwald Fellowship, 1928-1948

By

Claire Ittner

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History of Art

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Lauren Kroiz, chair
Professor Anneka Lenssen
Professor Leigh Raiford
Professor Julia Bryan-Wilson

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Abstract

Fellow Travelers: The Artist-Researchers of the Rosenwald Fellowship, 1928-1948

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Claire Ittner

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Professor Lauren Kroiz, Chair

In the short span of its existence, between 1928 and 1948, the Julius Rosenwald Fund Fellowship Program became one of the most important sources of funding for African American artists in the United States—supporting some of the twentieth century's most significant works of Black art, and furthering the careers of a generation of Black artists. This dissertation narrates the history of this idiosyncratic program—examining its singular impact on the field of Black art, as well as its role in forging notions of artistic expertise, discipline, and research that would circulate widely across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. At the same time, it examines the work of specific Rosenwald artist-fellows, and the creative, sometimes unexpected ways they used its support—making visible new definitions of artistic "research" in the process.

Engaging critically with the Rosenwald's institutional archive, I examine the social mission and meritocratic ideals that governed its Fellowship Program, along with the bureaucratic procedures of evaluation it implemented to determine what art received funding—helping to explain broader processes at work in U.S. arts patronage, especially as non-profit funding rose to greater prominence across the twentieth century. Ultimately, I argue that the Rosenwald Fund acted as a disciplinary body, working in powerful ways to anticipate, shape, and direct artist-fellows' decisions. I closely detail the system of value that it created, which rewarded artistic projects that were methodical, oriented to a discrete social question, and deeply researched—often involving a component of directed travel and on-site investigation akin to social scientific fieldwork.

Moving from the institutional to the individual, the dissertation's chapters follow three artist-fellows—Jacob Lawrence, Eldzier Cortor, and Rose Piper—on their fellowship journeys, tracking both their physical movement and their evolving relationship with the Rosenwald. Examining these artists' initial attempts to shape themselves and their art into "fellowship material," each chapter attends to the ways these artist-fellows engaged with notions of research forwarded by their patron, especially with social scientific thought and methodology. I consider how the mandate of research set these artists' movement apart from that of other travelers, like tourists or migrants, examining how the specificities of research travel inflected their aesthetic choices—from the size and kind of materials available while on the road, to the ways their artworks negotiated the barriers erected between a researcher and her subjects. At the same time, the chapters consider how the contingencies of travel could delay or reroute these artists' carefully-planned research itineraries, attending especially to the risks that even the prestige of a

Rosenwald Fellowship could not alleviate for Black travelers in the twentieth century—especially within the American South, where Lawrence, Cortor, and Piper each traveled on their fellowships, following a pattern that obtained among all Rosenwald fellows. Examining the encounters that these artists had in the South—with the hostilities of Jim Crow, but also with the strategies of survival and creativity that Black Southerners had devised in response—I track not only the subsequent deviations in their original research itineraries, but also the ways their understanding of research itself, its aims and purpose, shifted and transformed as a result.

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Introduction

> This is really the first time in my life that I have had time and opportunity to just do sculpture and painting. To find out the things I have taken in over a period of years, sort them out in my mind and decide for myself which are important to me and which I want to discard. I am positive that I am doing the most creative work that I ever did in my life. Any success that I may have will certainly be greatly due to this opportunity of a year to working given me by the Rosenwald Fund.[1]

So wrote African American artist Elizabeth Catlett in January of 1946, reflecting on the previous several months of her artistic career—by her own description, a period of transformation and creative growth with a clear point of origin. The previous year, Catlett had won a Fellowship from the Julius Rosenwald Fund (JRF), a non-profit organization with an established record of effort in service of Black education and race relations; perhaps its best-known program by the mid-1940s, the Rosenwald's Fellowship Program had earned a reputation for supporting the work of exceptional Black scholars, writers, and artists. The support the Rosenwald offered to these individuals was financial; in Catlett's case, it came with the Rosenwald's standard, fifteen-hundred-dollar stipend, to be used over the course of a twelve-month period. As Catlett's letter implies, however, a Rosenwald Fellowship often meant much more to those who won it. Enabling a renovation in the way that they utilized their time, energy, and attention, it allowed them to work not only in different, but in seemingly more "creative" ways.

Catlett was certainly not the first to think so. Established in 1928 with the explicit aim of assisting promising individuals "during their creative periods," by the time Catlett was applying, the Rosenwald's "Negro Fellowship Program"[2] had indeed supported hundreds of young Black scholars, artists, and writers—its funding linked to important medical discoveries, groundbreaking social scientific studies, and award-winning works of literature and music.[3] Its record within African American visual arts was no different; Catlett's predecessors included some of the most established and illustrious Black artists of the early twentieth century, like Aaron Douglas, Richmond Barthé, Augusta Savage, or Hale Woodruff—as well as talented members of a new generation, like Jacob Lawrence, Eldzier Cortor, or Catlett's husband at the

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[1] Elizabeth Catlett to Vandi Haygood, January 3, 1946, Box 400, Folder 7, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[2] The Rosenwald also maintained a smaller, separate Fellowship Program for "White Southerners," developed based on the larger, better-funded "Negro Fellowship" program. While my focus in this dissertation will be on the latter, I will at moments gesture to the White Southerner program, especially in order to track the ways that race was understood within the Rosenwald, and the ways it figured within the system of artistic value that it inaugurated. While I base my description of fellows' racial positioning on their own self-identification within their applications, I also hope, across this dissertation, to elaborate the ways that this kind of self-identification was often both immensely reductive, and imperative for individual artists' survival. (In order to qualify for funding, candidates had to affirm—by checking one of two available boxes—their identification as either "Negro" or "White Southerner.") Acknowledging the inadequacy of such monolithic categories to describe the nuances of complex, intersectional identities, my interest in focusing on the "Negro Fellowship Program" is thus not to reiterate the Rosenwald's essentializations, but to examine the ways that specific artist-fellows navigated their patron's demands for racial legibility, mediated in new, bureaucratized forms. In place of the term "Negro," I will most often utilize the term "Black," along with "African American," and will utilize where possible additional, at times more specific descriptors of individual identities.

[3] "Minutes, Conference of Trustees and Guests, Julius Rosenwald Fund," April 29, 1928, Box 57, Folder 1, Julius Rosenwald Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago, 13.

time, Charles White. By the time the program came to a close in 1948, at the time of the Rosenwald Fund's planned end, it had supported a striking number of works now considered touchstones of African American art, from Augusta Savage's *Gamin* (1929) to Jacob Lawrence's *The Migration Series* (1940-1941), Gordon Parks's *Ella Watson* photographs (1942) to Catlett's own *I am the Negro Woman* print series (1946-1947). Whatever the specifics of its support, in other words, it seemed to have an important import for artists—unlocking some of their most important, or in Catlett's terminology, "most creative work."

There is another way of looking at this history, however—even a different way of looking at Catlett's own, seemingly unambiguous statement. Placed in their original context—the letter that Catlett sent to the Rosenwald Fund, in which the artist launched a larger appeal for a renewal of her Fellowship—Catlett's words appear somewhat more shaded, and certainly more loaded, than they might on first glance. Making the case for her work's marked progress, the demonstrable difference that the Fellowship had made to her creativity, was a way for Catlett to affirm the soundness of her patron's original investment, her continued responsibility and worthiness as a Fellow, and the promise of the work she had yet to complete—a set of arguments tantamount to securing her livelihood for another year.

Catlett would later describe the importance of Rosenwald support more generally; as she put it in 1993, "when I was coming along, the only grant you could get was a Rosenwald Fellowship. And there weren't any places to show your art except at a university or a church."[4] Gesturing to the singular position that the Rosenwald occupied within the field of patronage for Black visual art, and within a wider art world rife with exclusion and racism, she cast light on the stakes of her own bid for (continued) Rosenwald funding in 1946. But she also contextualized the Rosenwald Fellowship Program's remarkable record within Black art—its seemingly magical ability to unlock, entice, or enable exceptional creative work. Paired with an awareness of the surprisingly *low* number of Black artists who won Rosenwald Fellowships, despite its impressive alumni roster—only twenty-five of some eight-hundred sixty-two total fellows funded over the program's twenty-year span—Catlett's words paint a somewhat different backstory for Rosenwald-funded art. Less a reflection of the Rosenwald's particular effect on creativity, the achievements of this group reflect instead the striking ambition and ability of Rosenwald artist-fellows themselves, finally granted the measure of support otherwise difficult or impossible to secure.

This dissertation, *Fellow Travelers: The Artist-Researchers of the Rosenwald Fellowship, 1928-1948*, examines this history from both angles. In seeking to narrate a history of the Julius Rosenwald Fund Fellowship Program and its impact on Black art during its tenure, I will examine the relatively new form of funding that its Fellowship Program chartered—considering what kind of meaningful links might be found between creative work and the upfront financial resources, dedicated free time, and measure of prestige that a fellowship offered. At the same time, I will highlight the particular conditions that a Fellowship Program like the Rosenwald placed on artmaking, the exacting demands it could make of artists, and the ways it made funding contingent on new criteria, skills, or labor—whether the standards of research, rigor, or expertise it helped to establish for artistic work, or the form of self-assessment or posture of gratitude it seemed to expect of fellows like Catlett. In outlining the influence the Rosenwald had on Black art, in other words, this project seeks less to turn attention towards it as an institution, than to understand the new obstacles or resources, burdens or boons, it created for Black artists seeking to support themselves in the first half of the twentieth century.

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[4] Dena Merriam, "All History's Children: The Art of Elizabeth Catlett," *Sculpture Review*, quarter 1993, 6.

The Rosenwald Fund and the Expanded Field of Patronage for Black Art

The majority of this project's attention will be focused on Rosenwald artist-fellows—the ways that they utilized the Rosenwald's resources, interpreted its conditions and directives, and forged paths of their own in the process. The chapters that follow, in short, narrate the ways that Rosenwald artist-fellows navigated a specific patronage landscape. At the same time, they also seek to understand the ways that this landscape was defined, in large part, by the Rosenwald. In part an institutional history, then, it attends to the aims and motivations of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, the origins and evolutions of its Fellowship Program, and its increasingly prominent position within the field of patronage for Black art across the 1930s and 1940s. Despite this position, and existing literature on other forms of support for Black art in this period—from the Harmon Foundation to the publicly-funded arts programs of the Works Progress Administration—the Rosenwald has not yet been the subject of similar kinds of dedicated scholarly attention.[5] This dissertation seeks to redress this gap, providing an account of an important chapter in Black art, while also shedding light on the growing role that the non-profit, or "third," sector has played in U.S. arts patronage across the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. As such, it explains systems for the creation of value—and elision—that continue to characterize the art world today.

In approaching the art of this period through the lens of patronage, this project seeks to respond to broad calls for art historians of the United States to examine the relationship between art and the forces of the economy—to consider the ways that patronage functions as what art historian John Ott has called a "precondition of art making."[6] Such calls have been answered in various ways by those working both within art history and beyond it—within the burgeoning scholarly subfield dedicated to the study of the art market, for example, or in myriad investigations into the relationships between private patrons and major Black cultural figures.[7] Without reifying the idea of its insulation from either private or public realms, this project seeks to expand such studies into the arena of the non-profit sector, attending closely to the different set of motivations, institutional shape, and regulations underpinning it—as well as the role that art has played in its ethical and humanitarian claims. This project is thus particularly indebted to

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[5] Gary A. Reynolds and Beryl J. Wright, eds., *Against the Odds: African-American Artists and the Harmon Foundation* (Newark, N.J.: Newark Museum, 1989); "The Harmon Foundation, Its Influence and Critics," *International Review of African American Art* 20, no. 1 (January 2005): 28–28; Tobias Wofford, "The Black Cosmopolitans," in *Postwar: Art Between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945-1965*, ed. Okwui Enwezor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes (Munich, New York: Haus der Kunst, Prestel, 2016), 574–79; Mary Ann Calo, *African American Artists and the New Deal Art Programs: Opportunity, Access, and Community* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2023).

[6] John Ott, "Patrons, Collectors, and Markets," in *A Companion to American Art*, ed. John Davis, Jennifer A. Greenhill, and Jason D. LaFountain (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 533. See also John Ott, "Art and Economics: An Introduction," *American Art* 33, no. 3 (Fall 2019): 2–3.

[7] A. Deirdre Robson, *Prestige, Profit, and Pleasure: The Market for Modern Art in New York in the 1940s and 1950s* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995); Natasha Degen, ed., *The Market* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013); Olav Velthuis and Stefano Baia Curioni, eds., *Cosmopolitan Canvases: The Globalization of Markets for Contemporary Art* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Titia Hulst, *A History of the Western Art Market: A Sourcebook of Writings on Artists, Dealers, and Markets* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017); Véronique Chagnon-Burke, Kathryn Brown, and Caterina Toschi, *Women Art Dealers: Creating Markets for Modern Art, 1940–1990* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2024); Carla Kaplan, *Miss Anne in Harlem: The White Women of the Black Renaissance* (New York: Harper Collins, 2013); Emily Bernard, *Carl Van Vechten and the Harlem Renaissance: A Portrait in Black and White* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Emily Bernard, "His Ways with White Folks: Langston Hughes and Literary Patronage," in *Langston Hughes in Context*, eds. Anthony Reed and Vera M. Kutzinski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 33–41.

critical studies of philanthropy, the history of charity, and other non-profit organizations, like universities or museums.[8]

This project is not the first to approach the realm of Black art through the history of its patronage. It is in dialogue with scholarly and curatorial efforts to shed light on the individual and institutional sources of support for Black art across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries—including studies that take up the role of historically Black colleges and universities; recent curatorial insight into specific art world figures and the spaces they created, from Edith Halpert's Downtown Gallery to Linda Goode Bryant's Just Above Midtown; or investigations into the role that museums played in granting or withholding Black art a platform.[9] My own project is particularly indebted to previous studies of the Rosenwald Fund and its Fellowship Program, especially those by education historian Jane Beilke, art historians Lindsay Twa and Daniel Schulman, and historian E. Masghati; it is also in close dialogue with studies of the Rosenwald's contemporary and partner institutions within the field of Black arts patronage—the Harmon Foundation and the Federal Arts Project, the arts branch of the Works Progress Administration.[10] Like many of these studies, this project seeks to work against a temporal

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[8] Scholarship that was directly relevant to my research includes: Kathleen D. McCarthy, *Noblesse Oblige: Charity and Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago, 1849-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); John H. Stanfield, *Philanthropy and Jim Crow in American Social Science*, 82 (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1985); George Stocking, "Philanthropoids and Vanishing Cultures: The Rockefeller Funding and the End of the Museum Era in Anglo-American Anthropology," in *The Ethnographer's Magic and Other Essays in the History of Anthropology* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 178–211; Judith Sealander, *Private Wealth & Public Life: Foundation Philanthropy and the Reshaping of American Social Policy from the Progressive Era to the New Deal* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Judith Sealander, "Curing Evils at Their Source: The Arrival of Scientific Giving," in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, ed. Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 217–40; Lawrence J. Friedman, "Philanthropy in America: Historicism and Its Discontents," in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, ed. Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1–22; William J. Buxton et al., *Patronizing the Public: American Philanthropy's Transformation of Culture, Communication, and the Humanities* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009); John J. Donohue, James J. Heckman, and Petra E. Todd, "The Schooling of Southern Blacks: The Roles of Legal Activism and Private Philanthropy, 1910-1960," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 117, no. 1 (2002): 225–68. My thinking about the Rosenwald Fund was also shaped by more recent turns in critical philanthropy and non-profit studies, including Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Tiffany Willoughby-Herard, *Waste of a White Skin: The Carnegie Corporation and the Racial Logic of White Vulnerability* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015); Rob Reich, *Just Giving: Why Philanthropy Is Failing Democracy and How It Can Do Better* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020); Maribel Morey, *White Philanthropy: Carnegie Corporation's An American Dilemma and the Making of a White World Order* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

[9] Richard J. Powell and Jock Reynolds, *To Conserve a Legacy: American Art from Historically Black Colleges and Universities* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999); Wofford, "The Black Cosmopolitans"; Lindsay Pollock, *The Girl with the Gallery: Edith Gregor Halpert and the Making of the Modern Art Market* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007); Rebecca Shaykin, *Edith Halpert, the Downtown Gallery, and the Rise of American Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2019); Thomas J. Lax, Lilia Rocio Taboada, and Linda Goode-Bryant, *Just Above Midtown: Changing Spaces* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2022); Darby English and Charlotte Barat, *Among Others: Blackness at MoMA* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2019).

[10] Jayne R. Beilke, "The Changing Emphasis of the Rosenwald Fellowship Program, 1928-1948," *The Journal of Negro Education* 66, no. 1 (1997): 3–15; Lindsay J. Twa, "Artists' Statements at Work: Visual Artists and the Julius Rosenwald Fund," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 48, no. 4 (October 1, 2012): 421–36; Daniel Schulman, ed., *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (Chicago: Spertus Museum, 2009); E. Masghati, "The Patronage Dilemma: Allison Davis's Odyssey from Fellow to Faculty," *History of Education Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (November 2020): 581–610; Reynolds and Wright, *Against the Odds: African-American Artists and the Harmon Foundation*; David C. Driskell, "Mary Beattie Brady and the Administration of the Harmon

unevenness within scholarship on Black art, where attention has tended to center either on the New Negro period of the 1920s or the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s.

By attending to the major patron of its moment, then, this project seeks to shed light on an under-studied period in African American art—expanding narratives about Black art in the 1940s in particular, which tend to focus on individual artists' marginalization within the institutions and networks of the consolidating U.S. art world.[11] Without disputing the fact of this exclusion, or ascribing a false commonality to the artists working against it, this project offers an account of Black art at midcentury untethered from any single artist's biography—one both less siloed and less siloing. Placing Rosenwald fellows alongside each other, this account also highlights their place within larger networks of support, criticism, and training, and attends to the varied resources that they drew on as they created—financial ones made available by institutions like the Rosenwald Fund, but also those of community, friendship, or mentorship that bolstered and motivated their work. This project thus considers patronage in an expanded sense—seeking to make visible the structures of support and care that made artmaking sustainable, as well as the labor and creativity of specific artists as they supported themselves.

"For the Well-Being of Mankind": The Rosenwald and the Social Purpose of Art

Within this expanded field of patronage, the Rosenwald served as a single, if particularly important, source of support for Black artists. It provided, foremost, a critical form of financial funding, in the form of fellowship stipends; as for Catlett, these were usually between $1,500 and $2,000, what would equate today to between $25,000 and $35,000. This was meant to cover fellows' expenses for twelve months—a period that was then left free for artists to dedicate themselves to their art, without the necessity of working day jobs or night shifts, and further "free from monetary worries," as Rosenwald hopeful Beauford Delaney put in his 1948 application.[12] Artist-fellows utilized these resources of time, money, and energy in a variety of ways: to pursue long-awaited training opportunities, as Augusta Savage or William E. Artis did; to learn new techniques or develop their styles in significant ways, like Catlett or Rose Piper; or to create dedicated, time-consuming projects, as did Jacob Lawrence or Charles Alston. Most commonly, they used their fellowships to travel—to places like Haiti, Mexico, Peru, France, as well as various parts of the American South.

What the Rosenwald offered, in short, was more than the sum of money that fellows actually received; it was often experienced as a form of freedom or flexibility—in fellows' physical movement, in the ways they utilized their time, in the direction and intensity of their attention. The Rosenwald was, indeed, a program with nominally few restrictions, meant to support work by Black scholars, artists, and professionals across all disciplines and fields of

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Foundation," in *Against the Odds: African-American Artists and the Harmon Foundation* (Newark, NJ: Newark Museum, 1989), 65–67; "The Harmon Foundation, Its Influence and Critics"; Wofford, "The Black Cosmopolitans"; Calo, *African American Artists and the New Deal Art Programs: Opportunity, Access, and Community*.

[11] Much scholarship on Black art of the 1940s focuses on the individual experiences of figures like Norman Lewis, Hale Woodruff, or Romare Bearden—pointing out the forms of marginalization each artist faced, and working to restore them to their place within the histories of Abstract Expressionism, the Downtown New York art scene, or midcentury abstraction. See Norman L. Kleeblatt et al., *From the Margins: Lee Krasner, Norman Lewis, 1945-1952* (New York: The Jewish Museum, 2014); Kobena Mercer, "Romare Bearden: African American Modernism at Mid-Century," in *The Romare Bearden Reader*, ed. Robert G. O'Meally (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 217–35; John Ott, "Hale Woodruff's Antiprimitivist History of Abstract Art," *The Art Bulletin* 100, no. 1 (2018): 124–45.

[12] Beauford Delaney, "Application for Julius Rosenwald Fellowship," 1948, Box 481, Folder 6, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

interest. While candidates did have to meet basic age and experience criteria—to be between the ages of 24 and 35, for example, and possess credentials attesting to their advancement in their fields—the details of their proposed work, studies, or travel were left entirely in their hands.

As other institutional sources of funding dwindled across the 1940s, Black artists increasingly saw in the Rosenwald an offer of another form of freedom, too: to create work outside the pressures of the market that was consolidating in the same moment. Without a gallerist or dealer's demands for a steady stream of singular, finished "products," artists had the ability to work in different ways—to create ambitious, year-long projects; to experiment with new techniques or styles; or to work at a slower pace. As Catlett would describe it, her Rosenwald period was important not in terms of its "productivity," but instead in the form of "aesthetic clarification" that it had allowed—the space it cleared for a kind of mental "sorting out," without the pressure of finishing or finalizing works.[13]

For some artists, this freedom was seen to extend to the content or orientation of the work they made, as well; as Marion Perkins put it in 1947, "I haven't been able to express my social views through my art yet, but I expect to. That's why I keep trying for a Rosenwald fellowship."[14] Perkins did not elaborate what had prevented him from expressing such views until that point, but his words implicate a wider arts landscape unreceptive to work with a fundamentally social basis—in line with broader shifts toward purportedly detached, self-reflexive, and often abstract work that many art historians have linked to the workings of the art market at midcentury.[15] Whether or not Perkins knew of the Rosenwald Fund's stated humanitarian mission—"the well-being of mankind"—or connected this mission to the type of art it supported, he sketched a picture of the Rosenwald as a kind of anomalous space apart, harboring a unique place for art with "social views."

This picture certainly rhymed with the one the Rosenwald had of itself. Founded in 1917 by Sears, Roebuck and Co. president Julius Rosenwald (or JR, as he was known to most), the Rosenwald Fund had been shaped by the Chicago businessman's views about philanthropy and its unique role in American life. Although staunchly opposed to what he called "perpetuities"—charitable organizations founded without a clear end-point, whose endowments were preserved to ensure the organization's own endurance, rather than put to immediate use—JR did believe strongly that wealthy individuals should "give while they live," funding ambitious philanthropic efforts.[16] An example of the scale such projects might take on: beginning in the 1910s, the Rosenwald Fund undertook a massive school-building campaign across the American South, in coordination with JR's friend and advisor Booker T. Washington, bent on increasing and improving the educational facilities of African American schoolchildren. By the time the school-building campaign came to an end in 1932, it had helped to construct over 5,000 school structures, colloquially known as "Rosenwald Schools," across fifteen states.

JR believed that it was this kind of robust philanthropic sector, working in close coordination with public authorities and local communities, that had the opportunity and the

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[13] Elizabeth Catlett, "Report of Progress and Plan of Work for Renewal Under a Julius Rosenwald Fellowship," 1946, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University; Catlett to Haygood, January 3, 1946.

[14] "Self-Taught Week-End Sculptor Seeks Chance for Full Time Art," *The Chicago Defender*, October 18, 1947.

[15] See Eva Cockcroft, "Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War," *Artforum* 15, no. 10 (June 1974): 39–41; Ann Eden Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

[16] See Julius Rosenwald, "Principles of Public Giving," *The Atlantic*, May 1, 1929, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1929/05/principles-of-public-giving/649166/; Julius Rosenwald, "The Burden of Wealth," *The Saturday Evening Post*, January 5, 1929.

responsibility to effect meaningful social change—although, as a true progressive, he also saw the importance of institutional organization in achieving these goals. While the Rosenwald Fund had, for the initial ten years of its existence, operated largely as a vehicle for JR's personal philanthropy, then, as its programmatic ambitions grew, JR became increasingly convinced of the need for a more formal institution governing its programs. In 1928, the Rosenwald Fund was reorganized, with a new set of officers and trustees, formalized procedures for review, and a broad mission to "better mankind"—along with a mandate, set by JR, that it spend the entirety of its endowment within twenty-five years of his death.

This reorganization was a major inflection-point for the Rosenwald Fund, a moment in which its leadership turned over, its organization became more bureaucratic, and its priorities shifted dramatically. Scaling back initiatives, like the school-building program, that had served as its flagships, in 1928 the JRF turned instead to new endeavors, like the Fellowship Program—reflecting a wider institutional turn to focus on the most exceptional, talented Black thinkers and creators, rather than in educational opportunities available more broadly (to African American schoolchildren writ large, for example). Coincident with the waning of Booker T. Washington's personal influence on the Rosenwald Fund, this shift indeed indexes what might be understood as a near-reversal in its governing philosophy of race and social change—a new belief that resources were best spent on a "talented tenth," rather than distributed more widely. But it also reflected broader changes in the landscapes of higher education, academia, and the arts, as well as emerging ideas about technocratic leadership—each of which influenced the Rosenwald Fellowship Program over the course of its twenty-year existence. One of the first programs that the newly-reorganized Fund piloted, the Fellowship Program would indeed go on to be among its longest-running, operating for the full twenty years of the Fund's remaining tenure—until it came to a planned end in 1948, in accordance with JR's wishes. (A more detailed account of the Rosenwald Fund's institutional evolution, its definition of talent and racial progress, and the ways these ideas shaped its Fellowship Program, appears in Appendix A).

Despite these shifts, however, many of JR's founding views continued to govern the Rosenwald in its later iteration—including his belief in philanthropy's unique capacity to effect positive social change. Echoing this belief, the Fund's leadership often tied its capacity to advance mankind's well-being to its position within the non-profit, or "third sector," the inheritor of the robust philanthropic sphere envisioned by JR—whose situation between the public and private sectors insulated it from the constraints of either and granted it unique capabilities. As JRF president Edwin R. Embree put it, "foundations have a special opportunity" to address the most urgent social problems—not only because "they have funds," but also because they have "freedom of operation…they do not have to cater to a standardized constituency by doing popularly accepted things."[17] The Rosenwald did utilize this unique position to forward programs many found controversial—as in its advocacy for Black higher education in the South, which gained it the ire of many White politicians there; in its quiet but determined efforts to integrate the faculties of American universities; and in its campaign to end segregation in Washington, D.C.. Such actions contributed to a broader view of the Rosenwald as politically and socially progressive, if not radical—so much so that many of its officers, Embree included, had come under increasing scrutiny during the 1940s for the proximity of their views to

[17] Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (New York: Harper, 1949), 218.

Communist ideas.[18] This perceived "redness" extended to the Rosenwald's Fellowship Program, too—sustained, in part, by the Rosenwald's willingness to offer funding to individuals, like Elizabeth Catlett, perceived to have Marxist views or links to the Communist party.[19] It is possible, in fact, that Marion Perkins's description of the Rosenwald indexed a similar set of assumptions the artist, himself a committed Marxist, had made—the submerged sense that the JRF harbored space for leftist artists, as well as art with "social views."

This dissertation examines the conditions that an institution like the Rosenwald created for artmaking, taking seriously the ways that they were different from those operating outside of it, including within the art market. Without, again, disputing the non-profit sphere's entanglement in the workings of a wider capitalist system, it contemplates what it meant to create art within the "third sector"—what it meant for art to emerge in a space in which it was not primarily understood as a commodity. How did the humanitarian claims of non-profit patrons, like the Rosenwald, influence the work of those artists working under its auspices? To what extent did this context shape or shift their existing ideas about the social or political dimension of their work?

This dissertation works to open, rather than fully resolve these questions—while arguing definitively that the non-profit sphere played a significant and under-considered part in American art of the 1930s and 1940s. More narrowly, it contends that the Rosenwald sustained the commitments that many artists made to make politically- or socially-oriented art, of a kind usually bracketed within the 1930s or by the span of the public arts programs of the Works Progress Administration—a moment characterized by wide-scale artistic attention to the American scene, the representation of everyday people and their struggles, and questions of democracy. This dissertation thus joins other scholarship contemplating the "afterlives" of these commitments—studies that dispute their dissolution after the end of the WPA's arts programs, or their succumbing to a kind of inevitable turn art took in the 1940s away from social, political, or representational projects.[20] Indeed, in its examination of art that spanned a variety of formal and aesthetic modes—including many that experimented with different forms and levels of abstraction, without abandoning the figurative—it offers a case study of artistic work that understood abstraction as an important tool rather than a teleological end, one wielded in service of projects that remained committed to wider social aims. While deeply invested in the formal and aesthetic innovation of their moment, in other words, Rosenwald artists often sought to balance these interests with others related to their works' reception outside of insular high-art circles. As Catlett described her goal as a Rosenwald Fellow, "I was trying to arrive at a means of expression that would reach the people for whom I was painting. My eventual (and partial)

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[18] See Alfred Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree: The Julius Rosenwald Fund, Foundation Philanthropy, and American Race Relations* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011), 244–48, 264-265.

[19] Catlett won her first Rosenwald while still employed at Harlem's George Washington Carver School, investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee in mid-1940s because of the alleged Communism of its leadership.

[20] This scholarly turn includes recent reexaminations of figures like Alice Neel or Ben Shahn (see Kelly Baum and Randall Griffey, *Alice Neel: People Come First* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2021); Frances K. Pohl, *Ben Shahn: New Deal Artist in a Cold War Climate, 1947-1954* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989); Diana L. Linden, "Modern? American? Jew? Museums and Exhibitions of Ben Shahn's Late Paintings," in *The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times*, ed. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Jonathan Karp (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 197–207, 412–15; Laura Katzman, "Source Matters: Ben Shahn and the Archive," *Archives of American Art Journal* 54, no. 2 (2015): 4–33); as well as broader investigations of the 1940s, including Jody Patterson, *What About American Art and Democracy?* (forthcoming).

solution was…to try to combine elements of form recognizable to the majority of people, with principles of form based on the modern approach to art, and in which I firmly believe."[21]

Of course, Catlett's invocation of a broad audience for visual art resonates not only with the social realist projects of the previous decade; it also gestures to a longer history of African American art, especially to notions about its representational responsibilities to the Black community. This dissertation will argue that the Rosenwald sustained such assumptions about Black art's fundamentally social "purpose," as well as its essentially racial character. It argues, further, that the Rosenwald's support of only the most "exceptional," "talented," or "genius" individuals built on, and maintained, a key logic at work within these ideas about art's role in a project of racial uplift—namely, that artists, like other members of the "talented tenth," had a fundamental duty to "represent" their community.[22] For artists, the "burden of representation," as art historian Kobena Mercer has described it, was twofold: entailing duties not only to excel—serving themselves as models of their race's ability—but also to provide images that would represent their community in a "positive" light, both to themselves and to outside viewers.[23]

If the Rosenwald acted to sustain many of these earlier ideas about socially-oriented art, however, it also transformed them in important ways. Its focus on only the most elite thinkers and makers, for one thing, largely disallowed any sense that they were participating in a widespread or democratic social project, like the one at the heart of much WPA arts funding; the Rosenwald positioned its fellows, rather, as members of an elite group, whose combined powers of intellect and creativity would help to drive positive social change. As such, it did not function solely as a kind of scaled-up demonstration project, as some scholars have argued. [24] If Black excellence and achievement remained at its center, the Fellowship Program saw these qualities as having utility *beyond* their demonstration of Black ability—to the extent that they allowed Black individuals to contribute to wider efforts to solve large-scale and highly complex social problems. Another way of saying this might be: the Rosenwald played a major role in reshaping what Black excellence and achievement looked like in the 1930s and 1940s, forwarding new standards of expertise, research, and discipline by which scholars, writers, and artists would be measured in the decades that followed.

Fellowship Material: Preparing the Ground for Artistic Expertise, Research, and Discipline

This project narrates the ways that these ideas of expertise, research, and discipline took hold institutionally within the Rosenwald, as well as its evolving practices for evaluating and encouraging them among its fellows. Shaped by the social scientists among its leadership—foremost among them Edwin R. Embree, the JRF's president from the moment of its reorganization in 1928 until its close in 1948, and Charles S. Johnson, Embree's closest advisor

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[21] Catlett, "Report of Progress and Plan of Work for Renewal Under a Julius Rosenwald Fellowship."

[22] See W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," in *The Negro Problem: A Series of Articles by Representative American Negroes of Today*, ed. Booker T. Washington (New York: James Pott & Company, 1903), 31–75.

[23] Kobena Mercer, "Black Art and the Burden of Representation," *Third Text* 4, no. 10 (March 1, 1990): 61–78; see also Michele Wallace, "Negative/Positive Images," in *Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory* (New York: Verso, 1990), 1–5.

[24] Historian Alfred Perkins, for example, argues that the Fellowship Program functioned as a "great demonstration project…intended to show that, in spite of handicaps imposed by racism, given a reasonable chance African Americans could produce and achieve as well as those of European ancestry. Its fundamental purpose, in short, was to make evident that there was nothing inferior about black people, except the opportunities available to them." Alfred Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree: The Julius Rosenwald Fund, Foundation Philanthropy, and American Race Relations* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011), 106.

and a key Rosenwald officer—these ideas correspond strongly with the norms and practices consolidating within the social sciences, and especially the Black social sciences, at midcentury. Within the field of Black sociology closely associated with Johnson, for example, emphasis was placed on empirical methodologies of first-hand field research, data-collection, and rigorous fact-based analysis—an orientation that Johnson brought from his training at the famed Chicago School of Sociology, to the (Rosenwald-backed) Social Science Institute at Fisk University which he founded and directed.[25] Johnson also brought it to his ongoing work with the Rosenwald Fund, where he served as an officer, trustee, and Fellowship Committee member; along with self-styled sociologist Embree, in fact, Johnson was one of only a few figures who sat on this Committee for the entirety of the Fellowship Program's duration, influencing both its original framing and its evolving direction over the course of its twenty-year existence.

The social scientific bent of the Rosenwald's leadership also influenced the selection of fellows. Sociology itself was among the best-represented of the forty-eight disciplines and professional arenas that the Fellowship Program supported; for a high number of these sociology fellows, moreover, their fellowships went to support graduate work at the Social Science Institute at Fisk—either with Johnson himself, in other words, or under the auspices of his Institute.[26] Even more importantly, though, was the way that the social sciences seemed to provide a kind of model for Fellowship work across disciplines—shaping not just the implicit and explicit standards used to measure candidates, but the very idea of what kind of work was seen as "fellowship material."

In the earliest years of the Fellowship Program, this shaping was quite direct; the handful of fellows funded each year were frequently closely linked to the Rosenwald's leadership, who reviewed and selected candidates on an informal basis. Around 1936, however, the JRF recommitted to the Fellowship Program, implementing a more formalized set of procedures for reviewing candidates, and funding far more every year. In this more bureaucratic phase, the standard for rigorous, disciplined Fellowship work, modeled on social scientific research, remained in place—although it was mediated, in this stage, by a robust, multi-step application process that the Rosenwald developed for screening Fellowship hopefuls.

As a key site where these standards were articulated—and where a kind of prospective disciplining of artist-candidates' work took place—the Rosenwald's application materials are a recurrent focus of the chapters that follow. Engaging substantially with these materials, held for the most part within the institutional archives of the Rosenwald Fund itself, I argue that they should be understood neither as dry, neutral, or merely functional documents—essentially bureaucratic paperwork—nor as straightforward registrations of an artist-applicant's experience, work, or desired direction. Rather, I treat these application forms as complex documents, shaped as much by the Rosenwald's standards as by applicants' visions for their Fellowships—the product of what scholar Ebony Coletu has termed "biographic mediation," the relay between the solicitation and disclosure of personal information that takes place within quotidian documents

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[25] See Patrick J. Gilpin and Marybeth Gasman, *Charles S. Johnson: Leadership Beyond the Veil in the Age of Jim Crow* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003); Martin Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology: Institutionalization, Diversity, and the Rise of Sociological Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/C/bo5961517.html; Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[26] Fellowships of this kind—to study Sociology with Johnson at Fisk—were even separated out as a special subcategory within the Fellowship Program at various times during its tenure.

like tax forms or employment applications.[27] Following Coletu's assertion that such "taken-for-granted media" perform critical work within institutions, bureaucracies, and politics, often working to determine how critical resources are allocated, I argue that the Rosenwald's application forms offer insights into the system of value operating within it—the ways this system worked to shore up the JRF's own institutional authority, while also creating differentiated access to its resources.[28] In focusing much of my attention on this bureaucratic phase in the Rosenwald's institutional history, in a broader sense I aim to shed light on procedures for evaluation and judgment that continue to structure arts funding today, which often demand disclosure and constrain expression in similar ways.

Each of the chapters that follow will thus deal in a substantial way with the various stages in the Rosenwald's application process, along with the concrete forms by which an applicant took on a profile within the JRF—most tangibly, by filling out its standard forms, thereby textualizing both their personal experience and their artistic work. To become legible as a candidate at all, in other words, hopefuls had to render themselves and their work on paper, within predetermined matrices set out by the Rosenwald in these application materials—to self-identify within the set of racial, age, and disciplinary parameters provided in the standard application form, for example. Perhaps even more critically, candidates were required to describe the precise contours of the work they planned to complete on their Fellowships, in a required "Plan of Work" essay, and to articulate its temporal scope and the budgetary needs—to propose a discrete *project*, in other words, with a methodology and delimited scope carefully determined in advance. In addition to these documents, the applicant was expected to solicit letters of recommendation, retrieve transcripts and other certifying records of their training, and, if invited, to submit samples of their work for review; this portfolio, submitted by the Rosenwald's standard, January 1st deadline, would represent the candidate and her work as it passed, over the following several months, through multiple rounds of review and elimination by the Rosenwald's Fellowship Committee and subsidiary juries.

Importantly, the application process required not only the textualization of an artist's experience or work, but also its disciplining—specifically, the invocation of vocabularies and methodologies used in the hard and social sciences. Much about the Rosenwald's application materials were primed for projects in these disciplines, betraying the wider ways that its standards were set by the social scientists among its leadership. The standard application form betrayed the expectation that applicants be academically-trained students or scholars, for one thing; it provided spaces—for candidates' undergraduate and graduate work, their institutional affiliations, the authorities who would supervise their proposed work, and their publication histories—more easily filled by graduate students in anthropology or biology than by visual artists. The application's required budget and schedule also assumed a form of foresight thinkable within the sciences and social sciences, where experiments and fieldwork were often planned in advance; it was far more difficult, if not impossible, to describe the potentially intuitive or improvisatory processes that could drive creative work in these spaces. Fieldwork, of the kind often undertaken by advanced graduate students in sociology or anthropology, indeed

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[27] See Ebony Coletu, "Biographic Mediation: On the Uses of Personal Disclosure in Bureaucracy and Politics," *Biography* 42, no. 3 (2019): 465–85; Ebony Coletu, "Biographic Mediation," *A/b: Auto/Biography Studies* 32, no. 2 (May 4, 2017): 384–85, https://doi.org/10.1080/08989575.2017.1289018; Ebony E. A. Coletu, "Funding the American Dream: On the Biographic Mediation of Aid and Institutional Change in Horatio Alger Scholarship Narratives," *Auto/Biography Studies* 33, no. 1 (2018): 83–108, https://doi.org/10.1080/08989575.2018.1389841.
[28] Coletu, "Introduction Biographic Mediation," 468.

seemed to have functioned as a kind of template for Rosenwald Fellowship projects. Not only did the Rosenwald's standard twelve-month timeframe correspond with consolidating expectations about the extensive-but-still-delimited period of social scientific field research—but at times the Rosenwald explicitly asked candidates about their plans to conduct on-site investigation (one form asked candidates, "Will any time be spent in field work?"). The required "Plan of Work" essay, meanwhile, betrayed assumptions that candidates' work would have singular focus, delimited scope, and explicit disciplinary significance—the kind of defined, capstone project often expected from graduate students and researchers in academic settings. Even within its purportedly neutral, bureaucratic application forms, in other words, the Rosenwald worked to prepare the ground for a very specific kind of art—making it difficult for art without the shape, stakes, and scope of projects in the social sciences to become legible at all.

For the most part, the Rosenwald did not advertise these criteria explicitly—preferring to index them indirectly, as in its application forms, or to air them internally, within its closed-door selection processes. Across the chapters that follow, however, I surface the most important standards that consolidated within the Rosenwald—not only by tracking the evolving form of its application materials, but also through close examination of the archival traces of its selection processes, as well as a steady look at the artists and proposals that it rejected. What emerges from these investigations is a sense of what kind of artistic work the Rosenwald deemed "fellowship material": art that was *predictable* enough, for example, to be described in advance; artistic projects with a focus and scope deemed *feasible* to accomplish within the fellowship's year-long timeframe; artistic work that *addressed itself to a current social problem*, ideally engaging directly in a "field." Equally important, here, are the markers of what kind of artistic or creative work the Rosenwald consistently rejected: projects that insisted on flexibility or the fellow's prerogative to change plans at will (as in Zora Neale Hurston's case); that claimed too many or overly ambitious goals for their fellowship period (as in Robert Blackburn's proposal); or that were explicitly literary, historical, or otherwise "bookish" (as in the proposed work by artists Romare Bearden or Henry Bannarn).[29] Such work was derided within the Rosenwald; seen as "vague," "conflicting," "uncertain," unfeasible, or out of touch, it was regularly denied support,

[29] The story of Zora Neale Hurston's contentious encounter with the Rosenwald is detailed in chapter 3. Robert Blackburn's application outlined five separate goals for his fellowship period; personal correspondence of Rosenwald Fellowship Committee members reveal that the Rosenwald became concerned with the "feasibility" of similar projects. See Arna Bontemps to Roi Ottley, March 23, 1943, Box 4, Folder 22, Arna Bontemps Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University. Bearden's proposed project was for a series of paintings based on the poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca, while Bannarn's was of a series of sculptural "portraits and figures of Negro historical figures"—a project that a Rosenwald Fellowship Committee member dismissed as "sculptures of dead heroes made from photographs." Romare H. Bearden, "Plan of Work," 1946, Box 471, Folder 12, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University; Henry Bannarn, "Plan of Work," 1946, Box 470, Folder 28, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University; "Notes on Henry Bannarn Application," c 1946, Box 373, Folder 6. While there are no equally revelatory notes from the review of Bearden's application, the Rosenwald's general derision of bookish projects, and emphasis on time spent "in the field," seems relevant here. This was evidently common-enough knowledge within Black artistic circles to lead to some anxiety about the perceived "literariness" of their projects; Jacob Lawrence added an addendum his initial, 1940 application to the program, detailing such an anxiety: "Since writing the enclosed plan of work I have considered the fact that its wide scope may seem too broad and literary to someone not familiar with my work." Jacob Lawrence, "Addendum to Rosenwald Fellowship Plan of Work," 1940, Box 429, Folder 1, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

and exists today only in shadow form—preserved in the speculative descriptions of rejected Rosenwald applications.[30]

Despite the measure of freedom and flexibility that a Rosenwald Fellowship was understood to offer, then, it was not without its own set of expectations and demands. While taking seriously the Fellowship Program's importance for artists, especially Black artists, this dissertation argues that the Rosenwald's increasingly solitary position as a supporter gave it outsize influence to anticipate, shape, and direct their decisions. It surfaces the indirect, but powerful ways it exercised this influence, including through the kind of ground-preparation outlined briefly above. But it also uncovers instances of direct oversight, surveillance, and micromanagement of fellows' careers—disputing any ideas about the non-conditional nature of its Fellowships, or more general conceptions about the disinterested nature of the non-profit sector's investment in the arts. Across its chapters, rather, this project examines the ways that the Rosenwald encouraged specific ideas about what art, and especially Black art, should do and look like, as well as about how Black artists themselves should work and behave—highlighting especially emerging conceptions of discipline, research, and expertise, and the ways these translated to the context of art and artmaking.

This project thus positions the Rosenwald not just as an important patron for Black artists, but as a critical disciplinary force at work in Black art. In the 1930s and 1940s, it acted as a prominent determinant of what art historian Darby English has elsewhere described as "Black representational space," the representational terrain available for Black art and visual production.[31] For English, Black representational space is defined by its delimited terms, both the result of and the means for policing the creative expression of Black artists. Finding some kinds of art worthwhile, important, and adequately "Black," while deeming others failures, it works to reinforce norms for representation—mapping onto the imperative for Black artists to create "positive," and legibly figurative, images of Black subjects. While English's focus is on the broad-scale effects of this delimitation—the ways that Black representational space works to foreclose the horizon of expression for Black artists—this project turns to examine its boundaries themselves, arguing especially for the major role that patrons and patronage bodies have played as its gatekeepers and policemen. In the case of the Rosenwald, the institution had the power to determine which artists received recognition and what art received financial funding—decisions that, within the landscape of Black art in the 1930s and 1940s, were often tantamount to determining what kind of art got made.

Fellow Travelers: The Artist-Fellows of the Rosenwald Fellowship

This project, then, positions the Rosenwald as a disciplinary body within the history Black art. Its aim, however, is not to prove its power as total, exhaustive, or finally determinative; nor does it approach the work of Rosenwald artist-fellows as simple enactments of the Rosenwald's criteria. Rather, it attends closely to the different ways that specific artist-fellows—Jacob Lawrence, Eldzier Cortor, and Rose Piper—responded to their patron's demands, engaging with them earnestly as well as critically. Across its case study chapters, it examines the

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[30] See Edwin R. Embree's annotation of Aaron Douglas, "Digest Sheet" (1937), Box 408, Folder 13, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University; Edwin R. Embree to Franz Boas, March 26, 1935, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University; Bontemps to Ottley, March 23, 1943; "Notes on Henry Bannarn Application."

[31] Darby English, *How to See a Work of Art in Total Darkness* (MIT Press, 2010), especially "Beyond Black Representational Space," 27-70.

generative ways that these three artist-fellows engaged with the ideas and methodologies of the social sciences championed by the Rosenwald—the diverse ways they translated the framework of "field research" for artistic work, or adopted the position of the ethnographer—but it also attends to the ways they shifted and transformed these ideas, often in response to their narrowness or inadequacy. It surfaces instances in which fellows rejected outright the Rosenwald's attempt to direct or surveil their work, refusing the conditions of personal or professional discipline with which its funding was offered. But it also examines situations in which the fellows' responses were less explicitly or straightforwardly resistant—instances when fellows claimed certain parts of the framework of research or expertise, even as they found ways to circumvent or disidentify with others.

There was, in short, no single way that artist-fellows responded to the conditions that came with a Rosenwald fellowship. Despite the power the JRF held, artists were also able to negotiate their position as fellows, showing up on the Rosenwald's ground in many different ways—taking advantage of the areas of looseness within their relationship to their patron, especially the prerogative that their status as "experts" granted them to shape their experiences as fellows. While it highlights common strategies that some fellows utilized, then, this project does not argue for the existence of a "Rosenwald school" or "fellowship style." Rather, it describes Rosenwald fellows as "fellow travelers"—aligned by their position, rather than unified by their formal, stylistic, or professional choices. It thus preserves, and indeed works to highlight, the differences between the paths artist-fellows chose to take—the diversity of the aesthetic and professional strategies they implemented as they negotiated their positions. If it works to shed light on an underexamined chapter in Black art, then, it emphatically rejects the idea that this chapter is coherent, its art monolithic—working against the tendency to collapse differences within histories of Black art.

Of course, Rosenwald artist-fellows took different paths not just metaphorically—they also literally traveled different routes, using their fellowships to visit places within Europe, South America, and the Caribbean, as well as a variety of locations within the American South. Following Lawrence, Cortor, and Piper on their diverse research itineraries, then, is in part a way of spotlighting their agency, the different ways that they interpreted the Rosenwald's conditions—especially its incentive toward "research travel." Examining this category carefully, the project argues that it set artists-fellows' movement apart from that of others, like migrants or tourists—considering the different temporality, degree of planning, and focus of attention implied within the idea of research travel, as well as the conceptions of authority, remove, or expertise assumed of the traveling researcher. In dialogue with scholars of social science who have historicized norms of fieldwork and interrogated the persona of the ethnographer, this project considers the translation of these methodologies within the realm of art—including the ways that they might shape an art object's construction, form, or making process.[32] In its attention to artist-fellows, like Piper, who used their Rosenwald funding to travel and study in their familial homeplaces within the American South, it also adds to an ongoing conversation

[32] James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Authority," *Representations*, no. 2 (Spring 1983): 118–46; Arjun Appadurai, "Putting Hierarchy in Its Place," *Cultural Anthropology* 3, no. 1 (1988): 36–49; Mary Louise Pratt, "Fieldwork in Common Places," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1986), 27–50; James Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1986), 1–26; James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997).

about the possibilities of autoethnography within African American art, literature, and scholarship.[33]

While it is invested in uncovering the ways that a research orientation shaped and directed travel, *Fellow Travelers* also examines the ways that the physical realities of travel could impact research—rerouting a carefully-planned research itinerary, for example, or redirecting the focus of a researcher's attention. It examines the ways that artist-fellows crossed paths with other streams of movement in their travel, and the shifts and deviations that resulted—considering how their encounters with others on the road, both planned and unexpected, affected the direction of their research. In conversation with other art historical examinations of the materiality and visuality of movement, it also examines artists' choices of scale, construction, and material made in response to the physical realities of travel—the ways their work indexed a need for portability, the availability of certain materials, or the contingencies of shipping or transportation systems.[34] Finally, it considers the effect of travel on artist-fellows themselves, including their personal safety while on the road—paying particularly close attention to the risks and hostilities that even the credential of a Rosenwald Fellowship could not prevent for Black travelers, especially in the American South.

Much of the following three case study chapters take place, in fact, in various parts of the American South, which supplies one thread tying their disparate explorations together. An interest in the region was indeed a commonality for many Rosenwald Fellows, those in visual art but also beyond it; while fellows had the prerogative to craft their own projects and research itineraries, and indeed used their funding to visit and study in many places beyond the borders of the United States, a high percentage chose to direct their travels to the South. If in part a function of historical contingency (the world war that made international travel difficult for many of the program's most robust years) or of strategic maneuvering (fellows' acting on common knowledge of the Rosenwald's longtime institutional investments in the South), the fact remains unchanged: that the Rosenwald supported a generation of new scholarship and creative expression on the region.

Together, then, Rosenwald fellowship projects amount to an important archive of Black views on the South in the first half of the twentieth century. My choice of artist-fellows reflects my desire to make this archive visible, while also surfacing the diversity of expression and viewpoint across it; I center the fellowship experiences of Lawrence, Cortor, and Piper, who traveled different routes to very different locations within the South: from the urban metropolis of New Orleans, to deep Black belt of Georgia, to the remote creole communities of the Carolina Sea Islands. Each utilized their own aesthetic or formal approach in their artistic responses to these experiences—Lawrence's bright, patterned series different from Piper's experiments in

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[33] Françoise Lionnet-McCumber, "Autoethnography: The An-Archic Style of Dust Tracks on a Road," in *Zora Neale Hurston: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and K.A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993); Layla D. Brown-Vincent, "Seeing It for Wearing It: Autoethnography as Black Feminist Methodology," *Communications on Stochastic Analysis* 18, no. 1 (September 19, 2019), https://doi.org/10.31390/taboo.18.1.08; Jillian Hernandez, *Aesthetics of Excess: The Art and Politics of Black and Latina Embodiment* (Duke University Press, 2020); Aisha Durham et al., "The Future of Autoethnography Is Black," *Journal of Autoethnography* 1, no. 3 (July 27, 2020): 289–96, https://doi.org/10.1525/joae.2020.1.3.289.

[34] Jennifer L. Roberts, *Transporting Visions: The Movement of Images in Early America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014); T. J. Demos, *The Migrant Image: The Art and Politics of Documentary during Global Crisis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013); Niko Vicario, *Hemispheric Integration: Materiality, Mobility, and the Making of Latin American Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2020).

geometric abstraction different from Cortor's eerie, surrealist dreamscapes—revealing, in another way, the many Souths that emerge across their projects.

Expertise, Credentialing, and Originality: The Rosenwald and Black Southern "Folk" Culture

Despite this variety, however, Lawrence, Cortor, and Piper did share a commonality beyond the geographic scope of their fellowship travel; all three engaged deeply with the creative expression of poor, Black, and Southern communities, what was understood at the time as Black "folk" culture. If this was, in part, a function of the combined Southern and social scientific orientation of the Rosenwald Fund, and its adjacency to fields of ethnography and folklore emerging around the same moment, it also reflected what scholars have described as a wider regionalization of ethnicity within ideas about American culture, whereby Blackness and its culture were discursively "located" within the American South.[35] This localization, moreover, likely rhymed with the Rosenwald's at times explicit encouragement for its visual artist-fellows to seek out a "racial" aesthetic within their work—an idea that had already been connected to vernacular forms of African American folk expression by the time the Rosenwald Fund began its Fellowship Program.[36] Alain Locke, one major proponent of ideas about a "racial idiom," and the role of folk forms within it, was a key friend and advisor to the Rosenwald—but these ideas were also taken up by many of its other key figures, at times emerging as an explicit directive to fellows.[37] In 1929, for example, Fellowship Program director George R. Arthur urged Augusta Savage, the first Rosenwald fellow in the visual arts, not to allow the academic training she was completing in Paris, and the resulting "European standards of technique," to dissipate the "other something…something original, born out of a deep spirituality that you, as a Negro woman, must feel."[38]

While polite in her responses to Arthur, Savage continued to develop the direction of her training in sculpture, creating classically-inspired work (insisting, in a response to Arthur, that "whatever else may be said, it <u>is</u> original."[39]) Many of those artist-fellows who would follow, however, engaged more directly with vernacular or folk forms, even experimenting with self-consciously direct styles in the vein of self-taught artists. Those that did, however, often faced misunderstanding within the mainstream art world; labeled "modern primitives" or "naïves," their artistic choices were often reduced to a kind of surfacing of racial essence.[40] Jacob

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[35] Susan Hegeman, *Patterns for America: Modernism and the Concept of Culture* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1999).

[36] See Mary Ann Calo, "'Seeing' The Harlem Renaissance: Observations on the Position of the Visual Arts in Harlem Renaissance Studies," *Prospects* 27 (2002): 427–49; Jacqueline Francis, *Making Race: Modernism and "Racial Art" in America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012).

[37] See Alain Locke, *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (A. and C. Boni, 1925); Alain Locke, "The Contribution of Race to Culture," *Student World* 23 (1930): 349–53; Alain Locke, "The Negro in Art," *Christian Education* 15, no. 2 (1931): 98–103; Alain Locke, "The American Negro as Artist," *The American Magazine of Art* 23, no. 3 (1931): 210–20; Alain Locke, "The Negro's Contribution to American Culture," *The Journal of Negro Education* 8, no. 3 (1939): 521–29, https://doi.org/10.2307/2292648. On Locke's view of African American "folk culture" and its relationship to fine art, see Mary Ann Calo, "Alain Locke and American Art Criticism," *American Art* 18, no. 1 (March 2004): 88–97, https://doi.org/10.1086/421311; Kobena Mercer, *Alain Locke and the Visual Arts* (Yale University Press, 2022).

[38] George R. Arthur to Augusta Savage, May 28, 1930, Box 445, Folder 12, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[39] Augusta Savage to George R. Arthur, June 15, 1930, Box 445, Folder 12, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[40] Alfred Barr, "Preface and Acknowledgement," in *Masters of Popular Painting: Modern Primitives of Europe and America* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1938), 9–11; Sidney Janis, *They Taught Themselves: American*

Lawrence, for example, had seen his work described in terms that emphasized its "crude" or "kindergarten" visual sensibility, or reduced its sophisticated compositional arrangements to the "Negro's instinct for rhythm."[41] What the Rosenwald offered, within this landscape, was a means to explore poor, working-class, and Southern Black culture, within a program that nevertheless affirmed artists' training and expertise—indeed, within a program that arguably functioned as a kind of credential in and of itself. It thus offered a kind of third path for those navigating what scholar Cornel West has described as the Black artist's "catch-22 dilemma"—offering access to both racial "originality" or "authenticity," as well as valuable credentialling.[42]

Of course, this credential, and the expertise so central to the Rosenwald Fellowship Program, raised questions about the relationship between artist-researchers and their subjects. The money and prestige that accompanied a Rosenwald fellowship was itself enough to separate many fellows from the communities they studied (within)—added to which were frequent differences of gender, class, and educational background. While this project argues for the important body of Black work on the American South that Rosenwald supported, then, it is important to note that its perspective was almost entirely of those visiting the region from elsewhere, most often the metropolitan centers of New York and Chicago—and thus should not be understood as views of the Black South "from within." In many ways, in fact, the position of Rosenwald researchers was not unlike that of other ethnographers and folklorists of this moment, whose interest and investments in their subjects was in part rooted in their perceived difference. The broader framework that the search for a racial aesthetic gave to Rosenwald artistic research, moreover, raises questions about the degree to which artists were engaging in a kind of aesthetic "mining" at work in other ethnographic projects.

This project contemplates these questions, considering, alongside many others, the limits of ethnography as a means for translation across difference. It examines the ways that Rosenwald artist-fellows brought reductive, at times patronizing ethnographic concepts to their projects: the outdated form of physical anthropology that Eldzier Cortor used to frame his typological project in the Sea Islands, for example, or the remnants of a "salvage ethnography" mindset within Rose Piper's initial goals for her Blues-collection research. At the same time, however, it also works to nuance our understanding of the position that many Rosenwald researchers occupied. While most had grown up in northern cities, many retained deep connections to the American South, and indeed chose to base their Rosenwald "fieldwork" around familial homeplaces—as did Rose Piper, who based her research around her grandparents' home in Forsyth, Georgia, or Haywood "Bill" Rivers, who returned to his own hometown of Morven, North Carolina during his fellowship work. As a result, it is impossible to characterize Rosenwald fellows as simple "outsiders" to their subjects, despite their status as researchers or fellows. Rather, they occupied a kind of in-between position—neither insider nor outsider, native nor stranger.

Without insulating artist-fellows from the possibility of charges made of other ethnographers, this project argues that this in-between status made a difference to their aims and motivations for their research. It argues that many artist-fellows shifted *away* from the reductive frameworks that had initially characterized their approaches, a shift catalyzed by their encounters with their research "subjects." By the end of her project, for example, Piper had come to

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Primitive Painters of the 20th Century (New York: The Dial Press, 1942); James A. Porter, *Modern Negro Art* (New York: Dryden Press, 1943).

[41] Maude Riley, "Effective Protest by Lawrence of Harlem," *Art Digest*, May 15, 1943; Henry McBride, "The Migration of the Negro: Review," *New York Sun*, November 8, 1941.

[42] Cornel West, *Keeping Faith: Philosophy and Race in America* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 59.

understand the Blues as an important and active resource for understanding Black life in the contemporary moment; her research worked not to preserve the Blues as a discrete, collectible quantity, but instead to engage with it as a set of active practices, which might provide insight into the complexity of living within structures of racism. Lawrence, for his part, found inspiration for his own flat patterning and bright color juxtapositions in the textiles found in working-class Black homes, utilizing these formal devices in works that celebrated the innovations of these communities; others utilized their Rosenwald fellowships to study such forms more closely. Even Cortor, whose stated aims at the start of his fellowship were most clearly in line with a preservation project, shifted away from this framework during his time in the Sea Islands—turning, by his fellowship's end, to focus on the survival tactics, both material and immaterial, of the Gullah people he lived with there.

In broad terms, in short, these artist-fellows treated their subjects as dynamic communities, whose creative expression was a valuable and dynamic part of their ongoing vibrancy. While not necessarily unified, systematized, or formalized, even for the artists themselves, the approaches they took were ultimately in line with contemporary shifts in ethnographic practice and social scientific thought—especially with relativist turns within anthropology associated with Franz Boas, whose conceptualization of culture as a set of living practices revolutionized earlier frameworks.[43] Rosenwald projects were also—perhaps unsurprisingly—aligned with the orientation of Black social science consolidating around the same time (with significant Rosenwald support); with a broadly activist rather than preservationist mandate, the Black social sciences understood research to have direct, and urgent, social utility.[44]

Ultimately, this project argues that the lessons that Rosenwald artist-fellows learned from the communities they studied were formal, aesthetic, and material—but also, at the same, much more than these. They had to do with how to survive; how to work collaboratively for a communal good; how to exist, and resist, within structures of racism, inequity, and limitation—lessons for living, in other words, as well as for making.

Chapter Overviews

The chapters in this dissertation each focus around one artist-fellow, and are arranged chronologically according to the year each won their fellowship(s)—although the chapters also open onto discussion of other figures within the Rosenwald's orbit, including other fellows, officers, and advisors. Across this examination, I treat moments from the Fellowship Program's founding, in 1928, until the planned end of the Fund, in 1948—but the majority of my focus will be on fellowships won after 1936, when the Fellowship Program entered its most robust phase.

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[43] On Franz Boas's model of cultural anthropology and it influence in the early twentieth century United States, see Franz Boas, *Race, Language, and Culture* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940); Franz Boas, *A Franz Boas Reader: The Shaping of American Anthropology, 1883-1911* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Marshall Hyatt, *Franz Boas, Social Activist: The Dynamics of Ethnicity* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1990); Regna Darnell, *History of Theory and Method in Anthropology*, 1st ed. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2022), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2fq5815.

[44] On Black social sciences, see W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Study of the Negro Problems," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 11 (1898): 1–23; W. E. B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1940); Earl Wright II and Thomas C. Calhoun, "Jim Crow Sociology: Toward an Understanding of the Origin and Principles of Black Sociology via the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory," *Sociological Focus*, no. 1 (2006): 1–18; Aldon D. Morris, *The Scholar Denied: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015).

Leaving behind the holding pattern that it had entered during the Great Depression, which had followed an early stage of cautious experimentation, around 1936 the Rosenwald recommitted to the Fellowship Program in full—funding it more robustly than it had before; formalizing its procedures for application, review, and selection of fellows; and funding more individuals across a broader swath of disciplines and artistic fields. This was the moment that the Rosenwald Fellowship Program entered not only its final iteration, but its most modern form; indeed, many of the bureaucratic procedures and meritocratic ideals it took up during this period continue to characterize arts funding today. Because my interest is in the ways that artists interact with these kinds of bureaucratized systems, I have chosen to focus on artists who won fellowships during this phase of the Rosenwald's tenure; most of my discussion will center on the 1940s. I hope that by focusing my examination here, I will help to explain systems of power and wealth that continue to structure the art world to the present moment—while also, in examining of specific artistic practices, shed light on the innovative tactics artists have devised in the face of these structures.

My study begins in 1940, the year that a twenty-three-year-old Jacob Lawrence won the first of three Rosenwald Fellowships. Often held up as a model Rosenwald fellow, who created the kind of deeply researched, sociologically cogent art the JRF sought to support, Lawrence and his work offer an apt place to begin an examination of its system of value. The chapter focuses on the ways this system was shaped by the social scientists among the Rosenwald's leadership, considering the ways that emerging norms in sociology in particular shaped the Rosenwald's expectations for fellows across disciplines, including art. Even more broadly, though, it argues that the Rosenwald's extensive support for the Black social sciences allowed it to help define what it meant to conduct "research" on Black life in the 1930s and 1940s, as well as the terms available to those who proposed to do so, including artists like Lawrence. In multiple ways, then, it argues that Lawrence's relationship with the Rosenwald was much more substantial, and sustained, than is usually understood.

The chapter considers the ways that Lawrence engaged with a sociological framework in the bodies of work he created on each of his three consecutive Rosenwald fellowships: the 1940-1941 series *The Migration Series*, 1941-1942's *The Life of John Brown*, and 1942-1943's *This is Harlem,* in addition to other singular paintings he created in this period—nearly all small-scale tempera or gouache paintings on panel or board. Taking seriously his engagement with contemporary social scientific thought and methodology, it argues that they were a major force in his understanding of the social during the 1940s, and examines the new directions that this dialogue opened in his work. At the same time, however, it argues that a sociological framework for his art, first forwarded by the Rosenwald, has been overemphasized in critical, scholarly, and curatorial interpretations—leading to a neatened, often simplified view of its meaning, as well as an under-examination of its formal workings. By focusing on its formal register as well as its wide-ranging, multi-disciplinary source materials, this chapter argues that Lawrence's "research products" incorporate, but also exceed the methodologies and patterns of thought characteristic of the social sciences of his moment.

By all measures, Lawrence was among the most successful of all Rosenwald artist-fellows; the work he completed on his first fellowship, *The Migration Series*, was greeted with near-instant acclaim by the New York art world, followed by a number of other markers of his secure place within its fold—and of the Rosenwald's prescience in recognizing his talent. The other artists I consider were similarly singled out as having "extraordinary promise," "exceptional talent," or even a kind of "genius"—but they did not attain the same level of

security, fame, or financial success that Lawrence did. In the chapters dedicated to these artists, I endeavor, in part, to explain why.

In the case of Eldzier Cortor, the subject of my second case study chapter, the reasoning had much to do with the limitations of Rosenwald support within a wider arts landscape often indifferent, if not hostile to Black artists. This chapter examines Cortor's efforts to follow through on his research plan for his fellowship, which he'd framed as a form of artistic ethnography based in the Gullah communities of the South Carolina Sea Islands—already the subject of a significant social scientific interest by the time he began his fellowship in 1944. Cortor described his proposed work in the Sea Islands in much the same language as this earlier research; emphasizing its goal of collecting a range of racial "types" in the Sea Islands, as well as the importance of deep, continuous co-dwelling to achieving this goal, his fellowship project had neatly fit the Rosenwald's desire for fellowship work that was focused, feasible, and modeled on social scientific fieldwork. Despite this stated desire, and the dedicated time and energy that Rosenwald funding was supposed to make available for such work, Cortor found his attention repeatedly interrupted while in the Sea Islands—as he dealt with the deceit of numerous bad actors within the art market, and attempted to regain control over his work that was circulating within it. Launching a lawsuit against a former gallerist, while also taking over the labor of his own professional representation during this period, Cortor was compelled to leave the Sea Islands repeatedly, to redirect his attention to correspondence and paperwork related to his disputes, and to attend to the physical and administrative details involved in shipping, transporting, and safeguarding his work.

Narrating this history for the first time, this chapter does not contend, however, that Cortor's research aims were abandoned as a result. Rather, these experiences redirected and refined Cortor's focus in the Sea Islands—shifting it away from the physical "types" he had arrived to collect, and turning it towards Black Sea Islanders' practices of collective action and land ownership, forged in response to a long history of physical and financial oppression. Such practices of collective survival and resistance shaped Cortor's Sea Islands paintings—a set of oil and watercolor paintings that reflected the lifeways and material culture of the Gullah people in both their content and material dimensions. But they also influenced the way that Cortor chose to navigate his ongoing struggle to assert agency and control over his work and career. Highlighting the disproportionate labor of resource-finding that Black artists undertook during the twentieth century, this chapter positions the Rosenwald as an important, but woefully inadequate resource within an otherwise scarce patronage landscape—arguing, in fact, that it often worked to reinforce a wider, market-based system of value. In his Sea Islands paintings, Cortor sought an alternative to this system—a way of researching that bent demands for singular focus or neatly-delimited timeframes, and research that resisted imperatives to render its subjects in clear, ethnographic terms—instead delivering complex, mysterious, visually and materially dense images.

Like Cortor, Rose Piper, the subject of my final case study chapter, faced difficulty in establishing herself in the art world, although for different reasons—including many that originated within, rather than beyond the Rosenwald Fund. This chapter focuses on the criteria of "discipline" central to the Rosenwald's system of value, examining the ways that it was wielded with particular frequency and vehemence in relation to Black women-fellows' projects and persons. Elaborating the dual professional and personal meanings that "discipline" took on within the JRF, the chapter outlines the institutional anxiety it exhibited in regard to Black women-fellows—and the ways this anxiety manifested in heightened structures of oversight and

surveillance for their work, demands regarding their personal comportment and demeanor, as well as explicit efforts to direct or coopt their career choices.

The chapter also examines the effect these efforts had on fellows—including the important processes of self-disciplining that many undertook in order to win funding, as Piper did after she was rejected from the program in 1944. It tracks the shifts in the language she used to describe her work, along with the different aims, scope, pacing, and stakes she claimed for it following this rejection; and it examines the folkloric project, focused on the Blues and other Black folk song traditions, that finally won her a fellowship in 1945. Following Piper on her travels to Georgia to investigate these traditions, however, it also tracks the changes to her project that her research journey effected. Focusing her attention especially on Black women Blues singers, Piper came to realize the similarities between her own position and theirs—the similar risks and hostilities they faced as they traveled through the American South, but also the wider ways that infrastructural barriers of racism and sexism had the power to redirect their movement, taking away their agency over their bodies or careers. Pushing Piper to engage with the Blues as a repertoire, rather than an archive of records, this experience allowed her to understand it in a new, more active way—as a set of lessons in the complexity and difficulty of living within multiple, overlapping systems of oppression. The chapter argues that Piper reflected these Blues lessons in the paintings that resulted from her fellowship—a set of oil-on-canvas paintings she collectively titled "Blues and Negro Folk Songs"—as well as in her subsequent application for renewal funding from the Rosenwald, which insisted on her prerogative to work without conditions or supervision. Placing her within a wider cohort of willful Black women, including both her Blues models and previous Rosenwald fellows who had seen their funding withdrawn or curtailed, the chapter argues that Piper's work helps to manifest a wider practice of "undiscipline"—a concept of refusal that it elaborates in dialogue with theorizations of critical failure, indiscipline, genre-transgression, and errancy.[45]

A final, brief concluding chapter considers the afterlives of the Rosenwald Fellowship Program, including in the contemporary arts patronage landscape. Following this conclusion are a number of additional resources, in the form of six appendices. The first, Appendix A, provides a history of the Rosenwald Fund, covering its leadership and institutional evolution, with particular attention to its Fellowship Program, along with a "group portrait" of Rosenwald Fellows themselves. Appendix B and C provide closer detail of these fellows, offering indices to all eight hundred sixty-two Rosenwald fellows, and to the twenty-five African American visual arts fellows that are the focus of this dissertation, respectively. The following three appendices provide similar detail about Rosenwald officers, offering indices to its Fellowship Committee members (Appendix D), Art Jury members (Appendix E), and Fellowship Program directors (Appendix F). Compiled through cross-reference of the Rosenwald's internal documents, preserved in various institutional archives, much this information has not previously been published in full; my interest in doing so is to work against institutional opacity cultivated around meritocratic funding, offering entry into the Rosenwald's history for future scholars.

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[45] Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Minor Compositions, 2013); Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016); Saidiya V. Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*, First edition. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019).

Chapter One
Jacob Lawrence's Rosenwald Works: Exceeding the Sociological

In January of 1940, Jacob Lawrence's career was at an inflection point. His scholarship to the American Artists School, the left-leaning arts school where he had studied since 1937, had ended in the spring of the previous year. He was also nearing the close of his allotted eighteen months on the Federal Arts Project, the arts branch of the Works Progress Administration—a year and a half period that had solidified the twenty-three-year-old's desire to make artmaking his career. How to do just that, however, was becoming an increasingly pressing question. It was at this point that Lawrence made a savvy move: submitting, in the first month of the new decade, an application to the Fellowship Program of the Julius Rosenwald Fund (JRF), a small but dedicated non-profit foundation that supported Black artists with single, one-year grants.

The story of what happened next is usually told as a kind of inevitability: the Rosenwald, recognizing Lawrence's talent, granted him a fellowship in the spring of 1940, enabling him to complete *The Migration Series* over the following year. The debut of *The Migration Series*—a sweeping, sixty-panel series of tempera paintings on the migration of southern African Americans to urban centers in the north—was met with near-instant acclaim, marking Lawrence's arrival in the New York art world. What followed continued the snowballing momentum: two more consecutive Rosenwalds, in 1941 and 1942; representation by the prestigious Downtown Gallery; a Guggenheim fellowship; a nation-wide exhibition tour ending at the Museum of Modern Art; acquisitions by museums equally prestigious. Perhaps most critically, the decade that followed Lawrence's application to the Rosenwald is remembered as the period in which he was working out the artistic commitments that would sustain the following roughly fifty years of his artmaking career, even as they set him apart from many of his contemporaries in the New York art world—establishing his art as carefully planned and researched, committed to a figurative vocabulary, and explicit in its orientation to the social world, particularly the history and lived realities of Black Americans.

If this narrative gets some parts of Lawrence's work right, it distorts others—arguably over-emphasizing the period of the 1940s in examinations of Lawrence's decades-long career. I want to focus, however, on the at-once over- and under-exaggeration of the Rosenwald's role in this story: the way it positions the JRF as a crucial early funder, whose support made possible Lawrence's "breakout" work and thus started the snowball of his career in motion—but whose impact was limited to a kind of acceleration of Lawrence's career, over which it had no further influence after its initial, no-strings-attached grant. This chapter seeks to correct this view, tracking what I reveal to be a *sustained* relationship between Lawrence and the Rosenwald, which continued to echo long after Lawrence's first fellowship period—and one with implications not only for whether Lawrence could make art, but also what kind. I examine the opportunities that the Rosenwald offered Lawrence at various points in this period, taking seriously the difference it made: extending him a lifeline at a critical moment in his career, the chance to create art without financial anxiety, as well as the respect associated with winning a prestigious fellowship. Not least, it offered Lawrence the dedicated time (and the means to secure a physical space) to create at least three bodies of works—the *John Brown* series and *Harlem* theme, in addition to *The Migration Series*. Each of these required a significant level of research and planning—certainly beyond what the market, with its pressure to create a continuous stream of single, salable "products," was beginning to demand of artists at this moment.

As the previous chapter hinted, however, a Rosenwald fellowship was not without its own set of demands and obligations. This chapter focuses on the role of the social sciences, especially sociology, within the Rosenwald Fund, and the way that sociological legibility became a criterium for Rosenwald fellowship projects—not just for those in the social sciences, but for artistic work like Lawrence's. I examine what difference this condition and framework made for Lawrence's work and its reception, as well as the institutional shifts within the JRF that made disciplinary specialization and expertise necessary—especially its attempted transformation, in the late 1930s and 1940s, from charity into a kind of think tank. And I consider what it meant for Lawrence to be folded into such an organization—to receive special support, beyond the financial, and to move into a position of "expert" within its ranks.

The chapter contends that it was the Rosenwald Fund that largely shaped Lawrence's engagement with sociology, both as a field of content and as a set of methodologies, during the 1940s. I do not argue for a simply causal relationship; the Rosenwald never explicitly demanded that artist-fellows engage with the social sciences. Nor do I want to imply that Lawrence's engagement with sociology was a function of his shapeshifting into an ideal fellowship candidate. Rather, I argue that the Rosenwald was one of a number of institutional bodies redefining American social science in the 1940s, albeit one with outsize influence in the study of Black American life; the Rosenwald and its leadership helped to shape contemporary understanding of precisely those phenomena—race, migration, social conflict—that Lawrence treated in his work. At the same time, as an increasingly solitary funding body offering sustained support to Black artists in the 1940s, the JRF wielded a similar influence in the visual arts—what I described in my introductory chapter as its power to shape Black representational space. This chapter will thus examine the ways that the JRF prepared the ground for art, like Lawrence's, that had sociological cogency—not only in the spaces it provided within its application documents, which Lawrence then filled in, but also in its close connections with American social science, and especially Black social science, which was reformulating what it meant to study Black life in precisely the way Lawrence proposed.

Examining this moment of Lawrence's proximity to figures, texts, and institutions of sociology will help to counteract the problematic tendency in much Lawrence scholarship that I flagged earlier—the overemphasis on the 1940s in estimations of his career. Arguing that this was a period in which a specific form of sociology anchored Lawrence's way of approaching the social world, I argue that the 1940s should be considered a distinct phase in his career. At the same time, examining Lawrence's three Rosenwald fellowships allows us to better understand this specific period, and precisely how Lawrence engaged with sociology during it—nuancing, in other words, the frequent scholarly and curatorial assertions about his works' function and value as sociological statements. This was a frequent framework for understanding Lawrence's work during the 1940s, when his work was first called a form of "sociological study," "social documents," works with a "sociological foundation," or even statements of "fact."[1] But this early framing has also carried through more recent takes on his 1940s work, which often focus on the artist's commitment to historical fact and social reality. Most often, these interpretations seek entry to Lawrence's work through thorough historical contextualization, or an examination of the works' relationship to an existing social landscape—whether the in-depth historical context given to each panel of *The Migration Series* in the 2015 reunion exhibition *One Way Ticket* (and its

[1] See "Artist in Harlem," *Vogue*, September 15, 1943; Howard Devree, "From a Reviewer's Notebook," May 16, 1943; "Paintings of 24-Year-Old Depict 'Migration of the Negro,'" *Kansas City Call* 23, no. 30 (November 14, 1941): 20; Mayer Symason, "Canvas and Film, " *New Masses*, June 8, 1943, 29.

accompanying catalogue), to the "thick context" sought by scholarly works like Patricia Hills' *Painting Harlem Modern*.[2] Lawrence emerges, in these interpretations, as a "delineator," "historian," or "chronicler," whose work is treated as a kind of document—examined for what it can tell us about life in the 1940s.[3]

I want to build on a body of scholarship that has pushed the Lawrence-as-delineator, historian, or social artist a step further—by examining the way specific figures, texts, and institutions mediated his access to historical fact and social reality. This work includes close examinations of Lawrence's research process—from art historian Deborah Willis's investigation of the 135th Street New York Public Library (NYPL) in the early twentieth century, to more recent work on the artist's textual sources for his later *Struggle* series.[4] I will argue that Lawrence's close association with major figures and institutions of Black social science was a similarly influential force shaping his approach and access to his objects of study—particularly important to an understanding of what it meant to do "research" in the field of Black life at that moment.

I am aware, at the same time, that the focus on the relay between Lawrence's work and its "sources" has perpetuated a tendency to view his work solely in terms of its "content," to the exclusion of its formal qualities. Lawrence's powers as a storyteller only play into this slant—often leading to an undue emphasis on the story he tells, rather than the way he tells it. Recent shifts in this trend, including scholarly and curatorial work by Lowery Stokes Sims, Richard J. Powell, and Julie Levin Caro, have proven what kinds of insights become possible with a focus on the visual in Lawrence's work—insights not only about the "purely" formal innovations Lawrence made during his career, but also about how he deployed these innovations to the

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[2] See Jodi Roberts, "Notes on The Migration Series Panels 1-60," in *Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series*, ed. Leah Dickerman and Elsa Smithgall (New York and Washington, D.C.: The Museum of Modern Art and The Phillips Collection, 2015), 46–167; see also the similar contextualization in essays in the same catalogue, especially Leah Dickerman, "Fighting Blues," in *Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series*, ed. Leah Dickerman and Elsa Smithgall (New York and Washington, D.C.: The Museum of Modern Art and The Phillips Collection, 2015), 10–31. Hills describes her own book as an effort to weave a "complexly layered, thick context" around Lawrence's work; Patricia Hills, *Painting Harlem Modern: The Art of Jacob Lawrence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 5.

[3] See Leslie King-Hammond, "Inside-Outside, Uptown-Downtown: Jacob Lawrence and the Aesthetic Ethos of the Harlem Working-Class Community," in *Over the Line: The Art and Life of Jacob Lawrence*, eds. Peter T. Nesbett and Michelle Dubois (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 77; Lonnie G. Bunch III and Spencer R. Crew, "The Historian's Eye: Jacob Lawrence, Historical Reality, and the Migration Series," in *Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series*, ed. Elizabeth Hutton Turner (Washington, D.C: Rappahannock Press and The Phillips Collection, 1993), 23–32; Dickerman, "Fighting Blues," 16; Elizabeth Hutton Turner, "Reading History: Recovering Jacob Lawrence's Lost American Narrative," in *Jacob Lawrence: The American Struggle*, eds. Elizabeth Hutton Turner and Austen Barron Bailly (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 24.

[4] See Deborah Willis, "The Schomburg Collection: A Rich Resource for Jacob Lawrence," in *Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series*, ed. Elizabeth Hutton Turner (Washington, D.C.: Rappahannock Press and The Phillips Collection, 1993), 33–39; Austen Barron Bailly, Lydia Gordon, and Elizabeth Hutton Turner, "Jacob Lawrence's Research for the Struggle Series," in *Jacob Lawrence: The American Struggle*, eds. Elizabeth Hutton Turner and Austen Barron Bailly (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 162; Austen Barron Bailly, Lydia Gordon, and Elizabeth Hutton Turner, "Lawrence's Sources for the Struggle Series," in *Jacob Lawrence: The American Struggle*, eds. Elizabeth Hutton Turner and Austen Barron Bailly (Salem, Massachusetts and Seattle, Washington: Peabody Essex Museum and University of Washington Press, 2019), 163; Austen Barron Bailly, Lydia Gordon, and Elizabeth Hutton Turner, "Sources for Lawrence's Struggle Title Captions and Subjects," in *Jacob Lawrence: The American Struggle*, eds. Elizabeth Hutton Turner and Austen Barron Bailly (Salem, Massachusetts and Seattle, Washington: Peabody Essex Museum and University of Washington Press, 2019), 163–66, and Hills's section titled "Lawrence's Research for the *Migration* Series" in *Painting Harlem Modern*, 98-100.

furtherance of his more recognizably social messages.[5] I seek to answer, then, Powell's recent call to bring more careful formal attention to Lawrence's work—even within a study that seeks a better understanding of the sociological valences of his work.[6]

Indeed, this chapter argues that even as Lawrence engaged with sociological fact, and molded himself in the style of a social scientific researcher, it was in its specifically formal qualities that his work managed also to exceed a solely sociological framework—one that I position as ultimately flattening to his art. The formal workings of his Rosenwald works are vital, in other words, to understanding this move—one which meant that Lawrence not only engaged or challenged, but ultimately pushed beyond existing frameworks for what constituted social scientific knowledge, objects of study, or methodology. Examining how Lawrence managed this—by articulating different disciplinary languages and bodies of knowledge in *The Migration Series*, for example, or through his use of color in the *This is Harlem* theme—helps us to reevaluate stubborn assertions about his work as sociological statements. It also sheds light on a model other than resistance through which Black artists responded to the conditions placed on their creative expression—a model in which these conditions are challenged in the very fullness with which they are met.

Preparing the Ground for Sociological Art: Lawrence's Rosenwald Fellowship Application

Jacob Lawrence's formal relationship with the Julius Rosenwald Fund began, as many other fellows' did, with his application to the JRF's Fellowship Program—a package of forms, letters, and statements formally submitted, in his case, in January of 1940. It was on these mostly-textual materials that the Fellowship Committee would base almost all of its evaluation of Lawrence—from the exceptionality of his talent attested by his letters of recommendation, to the feasibility of his project promised by his budget and proposed schedule. A great deal of Lawrence's standing as a candidate, in other words, depended on the willingness and skill he exhibited in describing his work in words, within the spaces that the Rosenwald delineated within its application materials—how, and how fully, his project occupied the ground that the Rosenwald had prepared.

This was ground that was, as I've implied, almost exclusively textual; even in the part of the selection process when Lawrence's art itself appeared, on its own terms, it was flattened almost to the status of a document. After surviving two rounds of elimination, Fellowship finalists in the visual arts were asked to send samples of their work—unframed, to facilitate ease of transport—to W. S. Budworth & Son, an art packer and shipper in New York City's midtown. There, a small "Art Jury" met for a few days in late March, examining the artworks against the testimony provided in each applicant's written application—before dispatching the art back to the candidates, and their evaluations on to the larger Fellowship Committee. Although the Art

[5] See Lowery Stokes Sims, "The Structure of Narrative: Form and Content in Jacob Lawrence's Builders Paintings, 1946-1998," in *Over the Line: The Art and Life of Jacob Lawrence*, eds. Peter T. Nesbett and Michelle DuBois (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 201–28; Richard J. Powell, "Harmonizer of Chaos: Jacob Lawrence at Midcentury," in *Over the Line: The Art and Life of Jacob Lawrence*, eds. Peter T. Nesbett and Michelle DuBois (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 147–74; Julie Levin Caro, "Jacob Lawrence: Between Form and Content," in *Between Form and Content: Perspectives on Jacob Lawrence + Black Mountain College*, eds. Julie Levin Caro and Jeff Arnal (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 48–83.

[6] Richard J. Powell, "2: Jacob Lawrence's Viridian" (Lecture, A.W. Mellon Lecture in the Fine Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., March 27, 2022).

Jury dealt with physical artworks, then, its deliberations came to resemble the rest of the application process—the last stage in a long, bureaucratic shuffle of paperwork.[7]

The ground that the Rosenwald prepared for fellowship candidates was also, and at the same time, social scientific; assuming and encouraging the scope, methodology, and stakes of a social scientific project, the Rosenwald's application created the space for this kind of work, specifically, to take on form and value. The application form itself (fig. 1.1), for example, provided a space for an applicant's publications as part of the evidence of her position within her field—a space more easily filled by an anthropologist or biologist than by an artist like Lawrence (who, in a characteristically savvy move, used this space to list his exhibition history). The application's required budget and schedule, meant to measure the feasibility and predictability of the candidate's proposed project, also assumed a kind of foresight thinkable within the sciences and the social sciences, where experiments and field research were often planned in advance; it was far more difficult, if not impossible, to describe the more-intuitive or improvisatory processes that sometimes drove artistic work. Even that candidates propose a "project," with a discrete and coherent focus, indexed significant assumptions about the pace and scope of artistic work—a fact that Lawrence later acknowledged:

> Many of us wanted monies to work, and I think that was the first reason [for applying], not *The Migration Series.* I had to give a purpose for applying, and there was no better purpose than to give a project…these foundations ask for a project, and I gave *The Migration Series* as a project.[8]

For the Rosenwald, moreover, these projects had stakes that were similar to those assumed in the social sciences. It asked applicants, in the required "Plan of Work" essay, to delineate both the social and disciplinary significance of their projects, and to make explicit the ways that their projects would address an existing "problem"—thus echoing the framing of much of sociological work in the 1930s and 1940s, which frequently addressed itself to the conflicts and tensions in the social fabric.[9]

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[7] Like the other programs and initiatives of the Rosenwald, the Fellowship Program's application process depended on the creation, duplication, and movement of paperwork: official application forms, transcripts, and letters of recommendation; transcriptions and duplications of these documents; correspondence between committee and jury members; financial records of the fellowships' payments; acceptance and rejection letters. The documents related to the Fellowship Program are preserved in full in the Special Collections and Archives of Fisk University. I discuss the flattening effect that this textualization had on visual art elsewhere in my dissertation, drawing on Michel Foucault's arguments about the central role of such textualization to procedures of discipline in other contexts. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 192.

[8] Jacob Lawrence, Interview with Jacob Lawrence, interview by Elizabeth Hutton Turner, October 3, 1992, The Phillips Collection Archives, https://lawrencemigration.phillipscollection.org/sites/default/files/Jacob-Lawrence-1992-interview-transcript.pdf.

[9] While the Chicago School's social ecology treated conflict as a natural byproduct and stage in the working of larger social forces, which were its true objects of study, a great deal of its sociological work was catalyzed by a major conflict or event; Charles S. Johnson's *The Negro in Chicago,* for example, was an attempt to explain the 1919 Chicago Race Riots. Other major works of sociology were similarly closely linked to perceived "problems;" W.E.B. Du Bois's 1899 study of the Seventh Ward of Philadelphia, for example, was commissioned by the University of Pennsylvania in order to identify the causes of the neighborhood's crime, poverty, and illiteracy; as he put it in the book's preface, it was a "study of the Negro problems;" see W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1899), iii; Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot in 1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922).

For Lawrence, the Plan of Work was a critical part of the application, a chance to describe his project in his own words—within a space framed by the Rosenwald's prompts, but relatively less limited in spatial or thematic scope (fig. 1.2).[10] Even more than the application form, the Plan of Work was where Lawrence's efforts to appear on the ground prepared by the Rosenwald become clear—-where he began to describe and frame a project of both artistic and social scientific import. What Lawrence proposed to do, as he put it in his Plan of Work, was "to interpret in a sufficient number of panels…the great Negro migration during the World War."[11] He thus not only described his project as dedicated to a discrete historical subject, but also framed it within recognizably sociological interest in population movements at the time, which held that "any group migration is in itself interesting," and thus justified his own choice of the Great Migration as a subject.[12] He went on to describe the eight-part structure that his series would take, beginning with the "causes of the Migration"—thus pointing to his direct engagement of a hotly-debated question within sociological studies of Black migration.[13] The highly detailed structure of his proposed project, meanwhile, reflected the organization of many social scientific texts; each section would treat a separate aspect of the migration—"public opinion regarding the migration" distinct from "efforts to check the migration," for example—rather than following a visually-propelled coherence, or even a narrative arc.[14] Indeed,

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[10] Although earlier versions of the application had limited the Plan of Work essay to three hundred words, or to a half-page size box within the application blank, in 1940 there were no such limitations. Candidates submitted their Plan of Work as a separate document that summarized their project in their own words. There were, however, specific prompts: applicants were expected to describe their project fully, including its "character, scope, and significance;" to explicate plans for its completion precisely, from its present state to its expected end form; to name an institution or place that it would be completed, as well as the "authority" under which it would be done; and to position it within a candidate's longer career plans.

[11] Jacob Lawrence, "Plan of Work," 1940, Box 429, Folder 1, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[12] Jacob Lawrence, "Plan of Work," 1940.

[13] Jacob Lawrence, "Plan of Work," 1940. A short survey of the major figures in this debate would include William O. Scroggs, a social scientist and professor at Louisiana State University, whose 1917 text "Interstate Migration of Negro Population" argued that the migration was due in part to economic opportunity that "pulled" migrants North, and in part to a quasi-essential "tendency to migrate" somehow inherent to Blackness. Scroggs was emphatic about the fact that social oppression was not a factor in "pushing" Black southerners out, insisting (speciously) that lynching and other forms of oppression had been decreasing in the first decades of the twentieth century. See William O. Scroggs, "Interstate Migration of Negro Population," *Journal of Political Economy* 25, no. 10 (1917): 1034–43. Scroggs' article was cited by other influential texts, like Louis Venable Kennedy's 1930 *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward*; see Louise Venable Kennedy, *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward: Effects of Recent Migrations to Northern Centers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930). Sociologists like Du Bois took a more nuanced approach, analyzing both the "push" and the "pull" that resulted in migration, W. E. B. Du Bois, "Migration of Negroes," *The Crisis* 14, no. 2 (June 1917): 63–66. Emmett Scott, with the assistance of then-researchers John Hope and Charles S. Johnson, took a similar approach in his 1920 *Negro Migration During the War*, paying particularly close attention to the interconnection of social factors, including racism in the North, and the economic opportunities that became available to Black southerners; Emmett J. Scott, *Negro Migration During the War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1920). John William Fanning's 1930 "Negro Migration," funded by a Phelps-Stokes Fellowship in sociology at the University of Georgia, returned to a straight economic analysis, leaving all other factors outside of the scope of its consideration; see John William Fanning, "Negro Migration: A Study of the Exodus of the Negroes between 1920 and 1924 from Middle Georgia Counties as That Exodus Was Influenced or Determined by Existing Economic Conditions," *Bulletin of the University of Georgia* 30 (June 1930. For a deeper analysis of the divides between the approaches and conclusions of Black and White sociologists studying the Great Migration, see Michael Schwartz, "The Great Migration in Myth and Reality," *Quaderni Di Sociologia* LXIV, no. 83 (December 1, 2020): 67–99, https://doi.org/10.4000/qds.4074.

[14] Lawrence, "Plan of Work," 1940.

Lawrence's description of his series mentioned no single individual, but instead large groups of people ("labor agents," "ministers," "Negro leaders"), in much the same way that sociologists used populations or communities as their units of study—in a marked departure from his previous series, which had been centered on the biographical narratives of single figures like Harriet Tubman or Frederick Douglass.[15] Lawrence also described his own working process in terms similar to those used in the social sciences; he would begin with an initial phase of "research," a substantial six months, only after which would he move on to preparing and painting his panels.

Not least, Lawrence located the stakes of his project in larger social and social scientific realms, in addition to the sphere of visual art. As he put it in his plan of work, his project would focus on a major, if understudied stage in the "evolution of America," helping to better understand the current state of the nation—betraying a set of beliefs similar to the then-influential Chicago School of sociology, which held that migrations were evidence of the workings of large-scale social forces.[16] Lawrence went on to frame his series' significance in other contexts, too; it would have further "educational value" in its efforts to "lay before the Negroes themselves a little of what part they have played in the History of the United States," in addition to teaching "the whole of America…some of the History of this particular minority group, of which they know very little."[17] What's important is that the project's artistic stakes (his series' ability to "lay [out]," or make visible, an otherwise overlooked passage of history) are coextensive both with its social stakes (the educating of a diverse audience of Americans about their shared history), and its sociological ones (the greater understanding of a major social force within the tectonic "evolution" of the nation).

In the echoes of a Chicago School-style, ecological sociology within Lawrence's plan of work, we can glimpse another, even broader way that the Rosenwald Fund had "prepared the ground" for Lawrence's project—in its support for, and participation in, the development of Black social science throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s. Much of the social science that the Rosenwald supported drew directly on the Chicago School, in fact—in large part due to the efforts of Charles S. Johnson, a Chicago-educated sociologist considered one of the founding figures of Black sociology, and a hugely influential figure at the Rosenwald Fund for the duration of its existence. A close associate of JRF President and self-styled sociologist Edwin R. Embree, Johnson also founded and directed the Social Science Institute at Fisk University, which brought the Chicago School's rigorous empiricism and quantitative data-collection

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[15] Jacob Lawrence, "Plan of Work," 1940.

[16] Jacob Lawrence, "Plan of Work," 1940. The height of the Chicago School is usually dated to the period between 1915 and 1935, and often linked to the tenure of its major proponents, including W.I. Thomas and Robert E. Park, both of whom taught at the University of Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s; its ideas, however, continued to influence major Black sociologists, like Charles S. Johnson and E. Franklin Frazier, well into the 1940s. The Chicago School is credited with effecting an empirical turn in sociology, promoting the importance of first-hand field research, and for the application of sociological research to urban centers in particular. Although its emphasis on empiricism was a direct turn away from a purely-theoretical sociology of ideas—Parks, as its major founding figure, never articulated an overarching theoretical program—it did have a particular understanding of the social world, distinct from, and at times in conflict with, other sociological schools of thought. On a broad level, it conceptualized the social sphere in ecological terms—defined by the interaction of large-scale forces, rather than individual, genetic, or biological causes. The application of Chicago-style thought in the work of Park and his student, Charles S. Johnson, held that migration was one aspect of a cycle that moved through specific stages: competition, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation. See Gilpin and Gasman, *Charles S. Johnson*; Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology*; O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History*.

[17] Jacob Lawrence, "Plan of Work," 1940.

methodologies to the American South, and to bear specifically on the conditions of Black Americans living within it. Much of the Social Science Institute's research was subsidized by the JRF, which also circulated its findings, provided fellowships for its graduate students, and at times funded its faculty's salaries—the JRF, in fact, increasingly saw itself as a kind of agency of social research and monitoring in its own right, a kind of "think tank" working in connection to the Social Science Institute.[18] As a result, the shifts in the sociological thinking about Black life that can be credited to Johnson, Fisk, or the Social Science Institute, are inextricably tied to the Rosenwald, as well. A great deal of what it meant to engage with the sociological, and specifically the study of Black life, had already been shaped by the workings of the Rosenwald Fund, in short, by the time that Lawrence was applying to its Fellowship Program.

It's relevant, moreover, that Embree and Johnson were early architects of the Fellowship Program at the Rosenwald, and occupied two of the three non-rotating seats on its Fellowship Committee—administrative details, to be sure, but ones that nevertheless help to make tangible the intertwining of the Rosenwald's interests in developing Black social science (through programs at Fisk and elsewhere) and in developing Black talent (through the Fellowship Program). Certainly, we know that Embree and Johnson would have seen and evaluated Lawrence's application, and even can be credited with his ultimate selection; while Lawrence's work was also evaluated by the separate, subsidiary Art Jury, it was the core Fellowship Committee that held the power to make all selections, preliminary and final. The Committee members' investment in the social sciences, in short, helps to clarify the way the Fellowship Program was conceived—as a program that would deliver "rich dividends in the solution of social and economic problems," as the JRF described it internally—as well as the way fellowship applications were read and evaluated—according to the degree they made themselves legible in predominantly social scientific language.[19]

It wasn't just the Committee's makeup, though, that likely foregrounded the sociological register of Lawrence's project; this was also a matter of the Rosenwald's institutional priorities. At around the time that Lawrence was applying, for example, the question of Black migration was becoming an increasingly important organization-wide interest and subject of study—driven especially by the sociologists who were among its leaders. Johnson, for example, had been studying migration for at least two decades, during which time he had conducted research on both Black migrant communities in Northern urban centers and on conditions for African Americans in the South. This interest continued to shape the work he did as the director of the Social Science Institute at Fisk, which undertook large-scale social surveys and other research that cast light on population change and economic conditions in the South.

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[18] The intertwining of the Rosenwald and the Fisk Social Science Institute is so close as to be difficult to enumerate fully; the Rosenwald at various times subsidized Johnson's salary, supported specific research projects of the Institute, and connected its leaders with other social scientific efforts on a national scale. The Rosenwald Fellowship Program became a primary supporter of graduate research and development within the Institute, with a high number of fellows in sociology studying at Fisk. The Rosenwald circulated Johnson and his students' research in short publications, and began to subsidize a monthly journal, the *Monthly Summary*, beginning in 1943, which Johnson edited and which frequently featured the research of the Institute. At different times, it was clarified that the Rosenwald's support allowed it primary access to the Institute's "services." See Edwin R. Embree to Charles S. Johnson, November 23, 1942, Box 16, Folder 4, Charles S. Johnson Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[19] Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Fellowship Program," ca. 1948, Box 72, Folder 1, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

Often, the Social Science Institute's research provided the basis for short, pithy publications that the Rosenwald periodically published on topics in which it had vested interests. Such was the case for a text, titled "Negro Population Movements Since 1920," that Embree wrote sometime between 1939 and 1941—at just the time that Lawrence was applying to the Fellowship Program. "Negro Population Movements" largely recapitulates the findings of contemporary sociological research, summarizing its complex statistical analyses into simpler terms and articulating a clear bottom-line; like other Rosenwald publications, it seemed intended for wide circulation, to help recalibrate the conversation in a subject the JRF had made a priority. It helps to make clear, in other words, that migration was a key focus of both Johnson and Embree in the late 1930s and early 1940s—becoming one of the JRF's research priorities as it transformed itself, under the guidance of the same two men, into an organization of research and policy-making.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given Johnson and Embree's central influence in the JRF's direction, this focus on migration is also reflected in the fellowship projects funded in these years. The list of fellows for 1940, for example, includes not only Lawrence, but also Charles Alston—another Harlem artist whose proposed project, as he put it, "might be called an aspect of the great migration."[20] Also funded in 1940 was Lyonel Florant, a student at the University of Chicago's renowned sociology department, who outlined in his application his desire to study "recent population movements among Negroes of the United States," using a primarily statistics-based quantitative analysis.[21] Tellingly, Embree, Johnson, and Florant were each involved, albeit to different degrees, in a wider social scientific project underway at this moment—the monumental series of studies on Black life in the United States, directed by Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal and eventually published in 1944 as *An American Dilemma*. The project arguably drove a wider turn across the social sciences towards renewed interest in African American migration; Florant, for example, began as a research assistant for the project's investigation of migration, and his experience spurred him to pursue study of the subject at the graduate level.[22] Florant's trajectory, however, is just one example of the close intertwining of the JRF and the *Dilemma* project—whose investigators included many current or former Rosenwald fellows, from Allison Davis to E. Franklin Frazier, Ralph Bunche to Charles S. Johnson himself.

Within this context, then, it's possible to add to, or nuance, our understanding of Lawrence's application to the Rosenwald. Far more than a simple appeal for funding, or even the savvy effort on the part of a skilled resource-finder, Lawrence's application was a first step onto ground that had been prepared, in multiple ways, by the Rosenwald—not only in the carefully prescribed spaces that it provided for Lawrence to describe his work, but also in its shaping of the very terms available for him to do so. Importantly, I argue, this was a ground against which only projects in line with the social sciences could come into view—those that were discrete and textually describable, logical and predictable, and addressed to a social "problem." And to the extent that its circumscribed borders index the interests, priorities, and biases of the Rosenwald itself, this ground also helps to shed light on the way that the Rosenwald understood artistic

[20] Charles Alston, "Plan of Work," 1940, Box 389, Folder 4, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[21] Lyonel Charles Florant, "Application for Julius Rosenwald Fund Fellowship Program," 1940, Box 382, Folder 3, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[22] Florant's Rosenwald-supported graduate studies at Chicago drew and elaborated this work, eventually allowing him to co-author a study (titled "Negro Population Movements, 1860 to 1940: In Relation to Social and Economic Factors") that was incorporated into *An American Dilemma*.

work, and Lawrence's more specifically—an indication that its value, in the JRF's view, arose from its relationship to other social scientific research on Black migration.

Occupying Sociological Ground

Bringing attention to the importance of the social sciences within the JRF might seem to imply that the sociological was a kind of lens that it used to understand Lawrence's project—applied to his work on account of the Rosenwald's internal predilections, rather than a naturally occurring element within it. It's clear, though, that the sociological was an important way that Lawrence's work was seen outside of the JRF, too, and that it continues to shape scholarly and curatorial thinking about the function and value of his art. When Lawrence's works began to receive critical attention in the early 1940s, for example, they were described as "social documents," "factual report[s]," "sociological panorama," and works with a "sociological foundation;" the series that he completed on his first Rosenwald fellowship, *The Migration Series*, was specifically labeled a "set of illustrations which constitute a sociological study of an important aspect of American Negro life."[23] As the Museum of Modern Art's Bulletin put it on the occasion of the exhibition of *The Migration Series* in 1944, "Lawrence paints facts."[24] Art historians and curators writing on the series have continued to highlight the anthropological or sociological tenor of the series—pointing to the sociological register of the paintings' accompanying text, for example, or the series' similarity in format to ethnographic image-texts created by writers and photographers working for the Farm Security Administration in the 1930s.[25]

The extent and endurance of this line of interpretation, then, might seem to signal that the Rosenwald's lens has been widely taken up, helping to shape the way that Lawrence's work has been seen ever since the 1940s. If this is partly true, I would argue that art historical scholarship on Lawrence has also shed light on key ways that the artist actively engaged with contemporary sociological thinking—the ways that sociology was not just a lens applied to his art, but also supplied a key source for it. Following Deborah Willis's pioneering essay on Lawrence and the Schomburg Collection, many of these analyses focus on Lawrence's extended research process, especially the way that his research at the 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library (now the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture) brought him into proximity with key texts on migration, many sociological—texts like Carter Woodson's *A Century of Negro Migration*, Emmett J. Scott's *Negro Migration During the War*, Alain Locke's *The New Negro*, as well as the research files of the Writers' Program of the Works Progress Administration.[26] Scholars have argued that these texts shaped Lawrence's own interpretation of the Great Migration in a fundamental way—that he largely adopted its perspectives and interpretations, including its weaknesses (like the over-exaggeration of the role that labor agents played in the

[23] Devree, "From a Reviewer's Notebook"; "Artist in Harlem"; "Paintings of 24-Year-Old Depict 'Migration of the Negro'"; Symason, "Canvas and Film."
[24] "Jacob Lawrence," *Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* XII, no. 2 (November 1944): 11.
[25] See Patricia Hills, "Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series: Weavings of Pictures and Texts," in *Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series*, ed. Elizabeth Hutton Turner (Washington, D.C.: Rappahannock Press and The Phillips Collection, 1993), 141–54; Jeffrey C. Stewart, "(Un)Locke(Ing) Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series," in *Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series*, ed. Elizabeth Hutton Turner (Washington, D.C.: Rappahannock Press and The Phillips Collection, 1993), 41–51.
[26] Willis, "The Schomburg Collection: A Rich Resource for Jacob Lawrence."

migration).[27] Art historian Patricia Hills even argues that Lawrence lifted his eight-part structure directly from the chapter headings in Scott's *Negro Migration.*[28]

These arguments seem to affirm the JRF's impulse to read Lawrence's work for its sociological import; far from an arbitrary lens applied to his art, it would seem that sociology shaped Lawrence's own way of seeing and understanding the migration as a phenomenon. This view, however, also comes close to making Lawrence's work into a kind of social scientific illustration—sociological studies supplying almost directly the perspective and interpretation of the migration that Lawrence then, essentially, pictured in his series. If one takes account of the visual as well as the textual register of *The Migration Series*, however, it becomes clear that Lawrence was not just citing but engaging, and at times challenging, many of his sources—albeit in his own language. Panel 58 of the series (fig. 1.3), for example, can be read as a direct refutation of the many sociological studies dedicated to the "retardation" of migrant children published in the 1920s and 1930s; by picturing the children beginning their lesson not at 1, but at 2, Lawrence arguably emphasizes their quick learning, even their advancement (we should remember here that Lawrence was himself a child of migrants).[29] In a similar way, Panels 46, 47, 48, and 55, all focused on housing, could be seen to dialogue with studies that blamed high rates of disease and death in migrant communities on migrants' "ignorance" and bad hygiene habits—instead focusing closely on the inadequate housing that they were "forced," by virtue of discriminatory housing practices, to inhabit (fig. 1.4).[30]

It is clear, then, that Lawrence engaged critically with the sociological material he read while studying the Great Migration—a reminder that the sociological cogency of his work was something he actively co-created. Lawrence fully occupied the ground that the Rosenwald had prepared—not only in his application, where he transcribed his project into words and filled in the spaces the Rosenwald provided, but also in his work itself, which displayed a deep familiarity with current sociological literature. In its challenge to contemporary sociological thinking, in fact, *The Migration Series* moves beyond simply illustrating the social science sources that Lawrence drew from—insisting, instead, on being seen as a work of sociology in its own right.

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[27] This argument was being made, in fact, almost at the same time that Lawrence was working. Sociologist Lyonel C. Florant, Rosenwald fellow the same year as Lawrence, wrote an analysis of the Great Migration in 1942, in which he argued that the importance of labor agents as a "causal" factor had been exaggerated, positioning itself as an explicit correction to Scott's earlier text. See Lyonel Charles Florant, "Negro Migration: 1860-1940," 1942, Sc-Micro R-6534, Reel 4, Carnegie-Myrdal Study of the Negro in America research memoranda, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (revised draft of memorandum prepared for the Carnegie Corporation's Study of the Negro in America).

[28] Patricia Hills rightly notes that in Lawrence's 1940 Plan of Work, six of his project's proposed sections quote verbatim from Scott's chapter headings. She also argues that his subheadings "follow…the development of Scott's analysis," not differing substantially from it, but rather adding "a positive spin" on his arguments. See Hills, 300-301, fn. 12. We might note, in addition to these points, the fact that Lawrence devoted separate panels to different demographic sectors of the Migration—one for "the African American Professionals," for example, another for "female workers"—in a way similar to many sociological texts of the 1930s. His account also echoes the systematic approach familiar from texts like Louise Venable Kennedy's *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward*, which examined the Great Migration's effects on migrants in the realms of healthcare, education, housing, and labor in turn—categories which also form the basis for Lawrence's treatment of the same subject.

[29] See Kennedy, *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward: Effects of Recent Migrations to Northern Centers*, 197. Kennedy notes the way that "the prevalence of retardation" is often used as "conclusive evidence" of Black children's "mental inferiority"—without herself affirming these ideas.

[30] Kennedy attributes the high rate of illness in migrant communities, for example, to the migrants' own "ignorance of disease, of sanitation, of means of securing help in a large city." See Kennedy, 178.

Exceeding the Sociological: The Migration Series' Multi-Disciplinary Movement

The challenge that I've highlighted thus far—the way that Lawrence's work incorporated and critiqued existing interpretations of Black migrants—remains squarely within the norms of social scientific scholarship. Offering a new, but equally cogent explanation for the sociological problem of disease, Lawrence participates in the disciplinary process of discussion, debate, and reinterpretation—but does not necessarily challenge those processes, or the premises of sociological thinking itself. With *The Migration Series*, then, Lawrence would seem to have ascended to precisely the level of expertise and competence that the Rosenwald sought to enable for its fellows—the highest level, but one that was nevertheless still circumscribed by discipline.

Lawrence's work manages to achieve this level of expertise, incorporating and dialoguing with contemporary sociological thought—but also, and at the same time, to exceed the kind of disciplinary circumscription that I laid out above. This is due, I would argue, to the fact that Lawrence's engagement with sociological knowledge or methodologies did not prevent him from engaging vocabularies and bodies of knowledge other than the social scientific—and this multi-disciplinarity allowed him to achieve a dimension beyond what the Rosenwald's flattened sociological ground could capture or comprehend.

Surfacing this dimension requires a closer look at Lawrence's research process, which the Rosenwald likely saw as a guarantee of his potential as a kind of social scientist—but which, in fact, involved deep, sustained reading of texts not just of sociology or anthropology, but from different disciplinary perspectives, and across genres. As art historian Deborah Willis has noted, Lawrence's research involved a process of "engulfing himself" in many kinds of material—books, of course, but also "newspapers, magazines, prints, and photographs."[31] Added to these sources were the lessons of history that Lawrence absorbed orally—by attending lectures on African history at the 135th Street YMCA, listening to street orators in Harlem, or participating in "Negro History" clubs that were popular in at the 135th Street NYPL during the 1930s. It was these sources that Lawrence would later cite as the catalysts behind his interest in the Great Migration, and in African American history more generally.[32] When making *The Migration Series*, then, Lawrence drew on a variety of sources—informal and formal; primary and secondary; written, visual, and oral; and from a range of different disciplines.

The Migration Series itself makes no attempt to distill out or systematize this multi-disciplinary research, instead making it central to the series' meditation on movement and migration. The varied sources of Lawrence's study materials, for example, appear without disguise throughout the series. The text that accompanies each panel reads at moments like a chapter heading in a sociological study ("For migrants, the church was the center of life")—but at others like a line of verse ("And the migrants kept coming"), and still others like sentences lifted from a historical textbook ("The migrants, having moved suddenly into a crowded and unhealthy environment, soon contracted tuberculosis. The death rate rose.").

Visually, the series works in a similar way, working not so much to blend together figuration and abstraction—still understood at this moment to be starkly divided aesthetic

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[31] Willis, 36.

[32] See Hills, 1. Lawrence frequently repeated that his historical series were "motivated by historical events as told to us by the adults of our community…the black community. The relating of these events, for many of us, was not only very informative but also most exciting. To us, the men and women of these stories were strong, daring, and heroic; and therefore we could and did relate to these heroes by means of poetry, song and paint." Lawrence, May 10, 1978, quoted in *The Legend of John Brown* (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1978), 14.

modes—as much as alternating between them. The relatively direct rendering of a night train in Panel 5 (fig. 1.5), for example—depicted from the side with bold, clear strokes of paint, its smoke billowing, beam of powerful light clearing its path forward—gives over, two panels later, to a far more abstracted mode. Streaks of flickering cadmium orange, yellow ochre, and earth-brown lick upward across Panel 7 (fig. 1.6), between braids of veridian, leaf-like forms: the blurred image of crop rows seen from a train window, perhaps, or a more elliptical depiction of the way that the migrants' lives were deeply intertwined with the land. The intervening panel, number 6 (fig. 1.7), exists somewhere between these two visual modes; its seemingly straightforward depiction of a crowded train car also appears as a tightly organized composition, the repeated geometry created by the train seats broken by bright bursts of color on either side of the central aisle.

Sub-plots of this kind weave their way throughout the series, creating currents and eddies at various points along the way. It is not just the text's stated "topic" that motivates these tides, moreover; the recurrence of color and form sends the viewer backward and forward, looping, skipping, and tying the panels together. The arc of steel in panel 37 (fig. 1.8) matches up with the arc of the railroad in the panel 38 (fig. 1.9), uniting two industries and the labor of their workers, for example. The color of panel 9's cotton bolls (fig. 1.10) recurs on clothes and textiles across the series, highlighting the ways that Black agricultural workers in the South were linked to a national system of trade even before they left for the North. The perspective in each panel moves in and out, sometimes with a film-like close-up (panel 44's still-life of salt pork and a loaf of bread (fig. 1.11)), sometimes with a wider view (panel 31's Piet Mondrian-like rendering of the apartment buildings of the urban North (fig. 1.12)). The series not only tracks the movement of the migrants it depicts, in others words; it also asks its viewers to move, to adjust to new cadences and sudden departures and unfamiliar scenes, as it shifts between different representational registers.

If this movement begins to seem complex, multi-channel, this is precisely Lawrence's aim. His series mitigates against the possibility of reading in a singular or unidirectional way, just as it works to complicate a "one-way ticket" notion of the Great Migration. Instead of ending the series with the migrants' triumphant arrival in the North, for example, Lawrence intersperses scenes of the North and South, refusing to label either region as the migrants' final departure or arrival point. The close attention to what travels *between* the two regions—letters, railroad tracks, labor agents, newspapers, stories—in fact depicts an oscillation more than an exodus, reminding us that bonds of economy, culture, and affect continued to link as much as divide the regions.

Especially important, here, is the way that this movement acknowledges but also moves beyond contemporary sociological takes on the Great Migration. Lawrence offers multiple answers, for example, to the question that vexed sociologists in his own moment, Johnson and Embree among them: what motivated the greatest demographic shift in the history of the United States? Was the Great Migration at base an economically-driven movement, caused by agricultural decline in the South? Was it an effect of the industrialization of the nation, attracting workers to the higher-paying jobs in the more industrial North? Or was it social, caused by the sanctioned terror and daily oppression inflicted by lynchings and Jim Crow laws in southern states?

For both Johnson and Embree, these questions demanded a singular answer—usually framed as the choice between explanations emphasizing the "push" of Southern social oppression, or the "pull" of Northern economic opportunity. Over the course of his decades of

research into African American migration, for example, Johnson had become a leading proponent of the view of migration that understood it primarily in economic terms; as he put it in 1927, "in my opinion, migrations are very largely economic."[33] In the case of the Great Migration specifically, Johnson repeatedly made the argument that "the economic force was greater than the lynching force"—rejecting, in other words, the idea that of discrimination and racial terror played a prevailing role in "pushing" the migrants out of the South.[34] Embree's "Negro Population Movements Since 1920," similarly locates the main impetus for the migration in the economic sphere, dwelling on agricultural changes in the South and the shift in the position of Black skilled labor—and explicitly dismissing social causes as "of secondary rather than primary importance" to the Migration.[35]

Lawrence made no such definitive statement. Instead of forwarding any single one of these interpretations, as Johnson and Embree had, he chose to include all of them in his *Migration Series*: Panel 2 offers an economic cause, written from a labor perspective; panel 5 is more historically specific, attending to the technical way that migrants' travel was facilitated; and panels 14 and 15 offer legal and social motivations for the migrants' desire to leave the South. Refusing to limit his interpretation to a single, discipline-specific logic, in other words, Lawrence gives up the certainty of a unified "rationale" for the Great Migration. Instead he forwards the possibility that many of these explanations could be at work at the same time: it might be true that labor agents provided the train fare for many Black migrants, for example, without this fact mitigating the enormously significant expression of will that their departures signified. Rather than distilling his research in many fields into a single interpretation or argument, in other words, Lawrence uses it to multiply the ways we understand the migrants, depicting them as friends, worshipers, mourners, parents, students, voters, as well as intrepid travelers and dedicated workers. He insists on a frame that shifts, highlighting different aspects of the migrants as it zooms in, out, and over—forwarding what Kobena Mercer has called an "anti-essentialist understanding of black identity."[36] Including the sociological without limiting himself to it, moreover, Lawrence also implicitly resists any disciplinary claim to universal authority—the idea that the whole world could be translated into sociological language, submitted to a sociological matrix, or made legible to its worldview.

Interestingly, this resistance to disciplinary thinking—of the kind that drove the Rosenwald Fund itself—was arguably made possible by Lawrence's Rosenwald fellowship. *The Migration Series*'s multidirectional movement is in marked contrast to Lawrence's previous series, which had followed a single heroic figure—Harriet Tubman, Toussaint L'Ouverture—in a biographical narrative, proceeding from birth through major life events to death. What Lawrence seems to have gained through his work on *The Migration Series* is a kind of over-all perspective, which allowed him the ability to plot rhizomatic connections and resonances among the panels, rather than stringing each scene along, one-by-one. Arguably, this is the perspective that Lawrence's studio enabled—the first art studio that was Lawrence's own, a small but brightly-lit room on 125th Street that he rented with funds from his Rosenwald Fellowship in the spring of 1940. There, he spread the panels of his series around the floor and on improvised worktables,

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[33] "Negro Problems Conference - Report," 1927, 54, Series 3: Appropriations, Interracial Relations, Subseries 3_08, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial records, Rockefeller Archives Center.
[34] "Negro Problems Conference - Report," 54.
[35] Edwin R. Embree, "Negro Population Movements Since 1920: Prospects for Future Negro Mass Movements," ca. 1939-1941, 4, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[36] Kobena Mercer, "Romare Bearden, 1964: Collage as Kunstwollen," in *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*, ed. Kobena Mercer (London and Cambridge, MA: Institute of International Visual Arts and MIT University Press, 2005), 126.

using the space that the studio allowed to work in an idiosyncratic way—applying colors one at a time, across all the panels, a method that ensured that a visual coherence obtained across the series.

Returning to the scene of this studio, I would argue, not only highlights what Rosenwald resources made possible for Lawrence, but also encourages a different reading of the series that he completed there—in contrast those narratives that figure the "place" of *The Migration Series* to be the two museums that eventually acquired it.[37] Indeed, the studio scene's decidedly non-linear, spread-out, even slightly jumbled character helps to work against the presentation that the two acquiring institutions have repeatedly insisted upon in their installation of *The Migration Series*. MoMA, in its exhibition of the works in 1944, as well as the tour it organized in 2015, installed the panels in a single, linear row (fig. 1.13); the Phillips Collection did the same in the reunion tour it led in 1993. This is not necessarily the only way that the series has been displayed; archival photos show that Edith Halpert installed the works in multiple bands, staggered on the wall, in the original 1941 hanging of the works at the Downtown Gallery (fig. 1.14)—a pattern that was picked up by the 1941 *Fortune* printing of some of the panels, which interspersed selected panels with an essay on the Great Migration. The point is not that any installation is the "correct" one, but rather that the rigid linearity of the modernist museum's interpretation has had a narrowing effect on the way that we understand the series' movement.

As one example: it is often assumed that the text accompanying each panel is a simple "caption" for the image that appears in paint. Close examination, however, reveals that the series' visually-propelled movement does not necessarily match up with its textual register, creating potential for both harmony and dissonance. At times text and image work closely, even illustratively, while at others the two seem only elliptically related. What relationship does the clipped text, "After a lynching the migration quickened.", have to do with the twisted, angular grief of the figure in panel 16 (fig. 1.15), for example? The text seems curiously removed from the fraught situation the panel's imagery depicts: the sense of peril that the bowl, balanced precariously at the edge of the table, creates, or the emptiness of the table, rendered in thinned, bone-dry paint. And yet, the spareness of the text also opens space for us to fold other information into our interpretation of the scene—to consider, for example, the potential movement of the hunched figure in panel 15 (fig. 1.16) into the next frame, and the persistence of their grief across the panels' divide. Reading even further backwards along that vector, might we also blame the injustice of the courts described in panel 14 (fig. 1.17) for both figures' pain? Either way, the oblique text in panel 16 allows us to consider the comingling and compounding of grief borne by southern Black families, communities, and individuals. Is the figure in panel 16 mourning a loved one who has just been murdered extra-judiciously? A son who has fled the South as a result? Perhaps, we realize, both at once?

The Migration Series makes the case that reading, and ultimately understanding, is a matter of precisely this kind of movement, rather than of static contemplation. The series pictures the halt of movement, in fact, not as the journey's end, its rightful conclusion, or even a welcome rest along the way. The story begins in medias res, like the "2-3-4" of the arithmetic lesson in panel 58, and it ends on a note just as open-ended: on yet another railroad platform, the migrants paused, but not halted, in anticipation of the next stage of their journey (fig. 1.18). In those moments that truly *do* feel still, moreover, the suspension of movement often seems ominous.

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[37] See Elsa Smithgall, "One Series, Two Places: Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series at The Museum of Modern Art and The Phillips Collection," in *Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series,* eds. Leah Dickerman and Elsa Smithgall (New York and Washington, D.C.: Museum of Modern Art and The Phillips Collection, 2015), 33–45.

The text for panel 42 (fig. 1.19) notes that such halts were often caused by southern authorities seeking explicitly to interrupt the migration's movement: "To make it difficult for the migrants to leave, they were *arrested* en masse. They often missed their trains." (emphasis mine). Although the text makes no mention of who did the arresting, the panel's imagery is more than clear on this point; in the panel, a White police officer's elongated body forms a massive X—legs flung wide in a swaggering, hold-ground stance, arms stretched up to grasp the ends of long, framing yellow bars. Behind the officer's obstructing body, the center of the work features a complicated matrix of boxes and bars—inside those the policeman holds in place is a dark-green frame, within which is another, drab-brown box. It is here that the migrant figures appear, heads downcast, so far at a distance that we can't make out much about their features. We also don't know for sure what each of the boxes or frames represents—are we looking through the window of a jail? at the doorway to a traincar?— but the effect is the same: the migrants are boxed in, contained. Their way out of the South is blocked, cut off by the same figure who impedes our visual access to the scene.

Massive as he is, the police officer cannot reach the widest and final framing device in panel 42: the earth-brown frame that Lawrence painted around the perimeter of each panel. The frames have the effect of binding the series together; like the panels' uniform palette and regular size, they unify, making clear that the disparate scenes belong together. On a material level, though, Lawrence's painted borders also have another effect: they make actual, physical frames unnecessary. To this end, they serve as reminders that the series itself, as a set of objects, was meant to move, to remain portable and mobile rather than fixed in a given place on a wall—recalling the status of the works in the Rosenwald juries, unframed in the Budworth showroom. Combined with the fact that they hold together a series that crosses many disciplinary terrains, the painted frames might be said to index Lawrence's desire to have his work travel, and travel widely: not just in circuits prescribed by his race or by discipline, but across such spheres. His mixing of different aesthetic and disciplinary languages both realizes and invites this border-crossing, asking his viewers to resist the desire to stay in one place, or to hold onto a singular perspective. It becomes important to remember here that Lawrence could have painted a series on the Great Migration based solely on personal experience; his mother and father had left their respective homes in Virginia and South Carolina in the 1910s to join the stream of migrants sweeping northward along the eastern seaboard, to cities like New York and Pittsburgh. Despite the deep intimacy with the realities of migration that this familial connection allowed Lawrence, he chose to approach the Great Migration *also* from his carrel at the 135th Street library, through his particular, interdisciplinary research process. As he described it, however, this research was as a way not to dispense with his personal experience, but to amplify or add to it:

> I went to the Schomburg Library and selected events from South and North. I think that the series alternates from South to North. I just got into it. I didn't separate it—I wasn't looking at it from the inside out or the outside in. This was just a part of my life…Of course, I was doing research at the time. I guess it was both emotional and intellectual.[38]

Rejecting the sense that his research made him an "outsider," Lawrence also insisted that he wasn't painting solely from the perspective of one "on the inside." He refused, in other words,

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[38] Jacob Lawrence, quoted in Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "New Negroes, Migration, and Cultural Exchange," in *Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series,* ed. Elizabeth Hutton Turner (Washington, D.C.: The Phillips Collection, 1993), 20.

the idea that any of the positions he occupied—as a racial subject, a son of migrants, a researcher, an artist, or a Rosenwald fellow—necessarily meant that he embodied, or could encapsulate, a single, unified position on the Great Migration. He insisted on his prerogative to move among multiple and coexistent positions, in much the same way that the migrants he depicted did (even if his movement was, for the time being, more metaphorical than theirs). Such movement blurred the coherence associated with more singular or definitive sociological analyses; Lawrence, however, insisted that a kind of meaning might nevertheless emerge from it.

Following Lawrence thus far, we begin to recognize that the coherence at work in *The Migration Series* is not quite the sociological cogency that it was first valued for, and that it is often still ascribed. The series, as we have already established, refuses to name a stable beginning or end-point to the journeys it tracks; it likewise avoids adopting a single disciplinary perspective, and does not hitch itself to the fate of a single character. Rather, it moves back and forth between places, protagonists, and perspectives, asking its viewers to move with it as it shifts—sometimes jarringly, often rhythmically—between textual registers, aesthetic modes, and disciplinary perspectives. The series, in other words, *articulates* disciplinary knowledges, historical sources, and artistic traditions, in the dual sense that Stuart Hall gives to the term: both making these knowledges heard distinctly, as separate entities, and putting them into relation, linking them together.[39] What emerges from this process of articulation is a visual equivalent of what Hall calls a "complex structure": text and image related but irreducible to each other, sociological and poetic voices woven together without allowing for any assumption of perfect correspondence or transparency between them.[40] Joining these registers while retaining the crucial interval between them, Lawrence creates a kind of roving center within his series—one that emerges as much from the movement between the panels as from within any single one.

This is not to argue that seeing *The Migration Series* as the Rosenwald would have, for its sociological statement, is wrong—but rather, that it is not enough. If Lawrence deployed the language of social science, parts of its methodology and its organizational logic, he did so not just to meet the standards of the Rosenwald, limiting himself to these conditions in the process. Rather, he used these conditions as starting-points—meeting, but also exceeding them. He did not just replicate or illustrate the knowledge created by social scientific studies; he put sociological knowledge into circulation with other ways of knowing—creating, in this movement, something entirely new.

Lawrence's Second Rosenwald Fellowship: History as "Setting"

In February of 1941, as he was painting *The Migration Series* panels, Lawrence submitted an application to the Rosenwald Fund for a second year of funding. The renewal application form was shorter than the regular one, but many of the components it asked for were the same—a plan of work, budget, letters of recommendation, samples of work for the Art Jury. In his 1941 Plan of Work essay, Lawrence laid out a proposal for a discrete, thematically-unified "project," in much the same way that he had for *The Migration Series*; this time, he wanted to create a historical cycle on John Brown, the White abolitionist famous for leading an armed siege

[39] Hall describes the ambiguity of the word "articulation" in English: "it can mean both 'joining up' (as in the limbs of the body, or an anatomical structure) and 'giving expression to'." Stuart Hall, "Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance," in *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism* (Paris: UNESCO, 1980), 328.
[40] As Hall describes it, articulation joins together parts which are not homologous, and which retain their difference even as they are articulated, forming a "complex structure": "a structure in which things are related, as much through their differences as through their similarities." Hall, 325.

of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Similar to the biographical series Lawrence had created before winning his first fellowship, the series would follow Brown's life story across a number of panels—but it would be created using the same methodical process of research as he used during his previous Rosenwald, and would be organized with the same unity. There was one significant difference between this project and the previous one, though; prompted, perhaps, by one of the renewal application's questions—"where and how do you propose to spend your time?"—Lawrence proposed to create the series "partly in New York City where I will do research…and partly in travel."[41] Although he does not specify where this travel will be, he made clear that it is "for the purpose of studying and improving [his] craftsmanship."[42]

Renewals were granted less frequently than first-time fellowships—made, according to official policy, only in "exceptional cases."[43] *The Migration Series*, moreover, was itself months away from completion, let alone the acclaim that would follow its debut; the Rosenwald would have had no hard evidence to testify to the quality of Lawrence's fellowship work. Nevertheless, it granted Lawrence a second fellowship in April of 1941, albeit for a smaller amount than his previous award—some $1,200. His application alone had apparently been enough to convince the JRF; like his first, it made itself legible according to Rosenwald's conditions, arguably even underscoring its urgency by including a travel component for the purpose of providing additional training. Perhaps because he had already begun research on John Brown by the time he was awarded the renewal, Lawrence spent only a few months in New York, departing for New Orleans in July of 1941—along with his new wife, Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence, who he had married earlier the same month.[44]

The renewal offers a first indication that the Rosenwald took particular interest in Lawrence—that it was thinking of him as part of a group even more elite than the group of "exceptional individuals" who made up the larger fellow cohort. A few months after the Lawrences arrived in New Orleans, around the time that Lawrence's *Migration Series* was beginning to attract notice, there was further evidence to this end. Mary Beattie Brady, director of the Harmon Foundation and friend of the Rosenwald, wrote a letter to Embree about Lawrence; noting the educational value of *The Migration Series*, she suggested that Lawrence be brought still further into the fold of the Rosenwald—proposing, specifically, that he collaborate with Charles S. Johnson. Lawrence's work, Brady suggested, had something to offer the sociologist, and vice-versa; together they might produce "a socially useful result," as Brady put it, offering confirmation that Lawrence's work was seen to register on the level of the sociological.[45] In Brady's formulation, moreover, Lawrence and Johnson's work together would be a "project of collaboration"—suggesting the two were, in her mind at least, positioned somewhat equally on the same field.[46]

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[41] Jacob Lawrence, "Plan of Work" 1941, Box 429, Folder 1, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[42] Lawrence, "Plan of Work," 1941.
[43] "Fellowships," April 1938, Box 373, Folder 3, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[44] Although it is difficult to know whether this was a conscious tactic on Lawrence's part, he frequently applied to fellowships for projects for which he had already begun research; this head-start often allowed him to complete his proposed project in less time than he was granted. This not only gave him a kind of cushion to deal with any unexpected delays in his process, but also was what was responsible for the "excess" time that allowed him to go off-script.
[45] Mary Beattie Brady to Edwin R. Embree, October 8, 1941, Box 429, Folder 1, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[46] Brady to Embree, October 8, 1941.

Embree's response to the suggestion was enthusiastic, and he quickly forwarded it on to Johnson, who was at work on a survey of conditions within Louisiana's public schools. Johnson was, for that project, already directing a number of Rosenwald fellows, enrolled in sociology or related fields in Fisk's Social Science Institute; for that reason, perhaps, the suggestion of working with another Rosenwald fellow might not have seemed out of the ordinary. More generally, however, Embree and Johnson's receptivity to Brady's idea reflected the wider transformations within the Rosenwald that had been underway for several years—its gradual movement, over the course of the 1930s, away from the structure and aims of a charity, and toward those more closely associated with a think tank or research organization. This had to do with a larger shift away from the personal philanthropy in the early twentieth century, as well as with the death of its founder, Julius Rosenwald, in 1932, which started the countdown toward the Fund's own end—its bylaws stipulating that it had to close within twenty-five years of Rosenwald's death. But it was also a matter of a new sense of the complexity of social issues inaugurated during the Depression, as well as a sobering confrontation with the Rosenwald's limited means during the same period (the Carnegie Corporation and Rockefeller's General Education Board had to bail it out in 1932).[47] To accomplish something meaningful with its not-infinite means, and particularly during its limited lifespan, the Rosenwald would have to be strategic in its aims. It could not afford to simply dispense funds to those who came calling, as Julius Rosenwald had—nor even to execute broad-scale programs in perpetuity, as larger foundations did. Instead, it increasingly focused on innovating solutions and spearheading new programs that it could pass on to other authorities—on the research, assessment, and monitoring of the social and political spheres, the innovation of new strategies and ideas for the amelioration of a variety of social ills.

These transformations brought with them shifts not only in the Rosenwald's aims, but also in its structure; while at its incorporation in 1928, it had resembled a corporation—complete with a Board of Trustees made up largely of tycoons of industry—increasingly during the 1930s and into the 1940s, the Rosenwald began to staff itself (and its Board) with scientists, scholars, and experts in a variety of fields.[48] These specialists were responsible for a number of tasks that, until that point, would have made more sense in a university than a charitable organization: undertaking research and survey work, convening conferences and symposia, and publishing the findings of their studies. Notably, these were scholars and scientists imagined equal in their expertise—members of what Embree repeatedly called a "creative minority" who would bring

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[47] On the shift from personal philanthropy to "scientific charity" in the first several decades of the twentieth century, see Friedman, "Philanthropy in America: Historicism and Its Discontents"; Sealander, "Curing Evils at Their Source: The Arrival of Scientific Giving"; McCarthy, *Noblesse Oblige*. When the Stock Market crashed, the Rosenwald found itself in a difficult position not only because it had made ambitious, multi-year commitments during its first year (1928), but also because its funds were almost entirely held in Sears stock, whose value plummeted drastically. In order to stave off defaulting on commitments without expending the entirety of its funds, then, Embree made personal appeals to the heads of the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations (the latter particularly embarrassing, given his recent departure from its ranks). The Carnegie ultimately covered portions of Rosenwald commitments to its Library Service program in the American South; the General Education Board did the same for Rosenwald pledges to institutions of higher education. For a fuller examination of the Rosenwald's institutional evolution, see Appendix A.

[48] Scholars of education John J. Coss and Charles H. Judd both joined the board in 1933, the same year as physicist Leonard M. Rieser; sociologist Charles S. Johnson and legal scholar Charles H. Houston joined in 1934; sociologist Howard Odum in 1937. Officers of the Fund included Johnson; Michael M. Davis, sociologist and scholar of public health; George I. Sanchez, pioneering scholar of education, economist C. Rufus Rorem, and Franklin McLean, physician and pharmacology scholar.

their respective knowledge together, under the aegis of the Rosenwald, to solve the large, complex problems of the twentieth century.[49] Many of those who joined this league of experts, either as official employees of the JRF or as some variety of consultant, were former Rosenwald fellows; many had—like Lawrence—enjoyed the sustained attention of the Rosenwald as *repeat* fellows. It's not just that there was frequent exchange between Rosenwald officers and fellows, though; the logic governing the Fellowship Program also began to elide with that of the organization itself. The JRF, itself in the process of legitimizing itself as a cadre of elite researchers and scientists, could easily see the value in funding a program aimed at cultivating precisely these kinds of specialists.

In short, then: the Rosenwald's movement towards a horizontal, think tank-like structure made the Lawrence-Johnson collaboration thinkable. What made it feasible, meanwhile, was the project that Johnson was in the midst of completing: a systematic study of the Louisiana public school system, and specifically its treatment of African American students. Like the many others Johnson and his students conducted, the survey was meant less to track trends historically or even to provide detailed analysis, but rather to provide a broad-scale, cross-sectional snapshot of the present conditions of public education for Louisiana's Black schoolchildren; the survey's results would provide the evidence, it was hoped, for policy changes at the state level. The project meant that Johnson was traveling frequently across the state; responding to the letter in which Embree first put forward the idea of his collaboration with Lawrence, Johnson noted that he was frequently in the vicinity of the New Orleans, where Lawrence was at work on the *John Brown* series, and stated that he would try to stop to discuss the prospect with Lawrence on his next trip. Johnson went a step further, in fact, suggesting that Lawrence might be enticed to join the Louisiana education study, which already involved the collaboration of a number of other Rosenwald fellows; "perhaps," Johnson mused, "he could be interested in any of the rich scenes that are the setting of our present studies."[50] At any rate, such a project would be a better use of his time, in Johnson's view, than the work that Lawrence was at that moment doing; as he put it in his letter to Embree, "I have been wondering what John Brown material he is running across in New Orleans. The best sources that I know about are, or at least were, in Vermont."[51]

The last comment appears minor, with the air of a passing remark made between friends. But it also confirms that Johnson was holding Lawrence to the standards he himself held for research—standards that dictated that research be focused and logically unified, that work be done in proximity to one's object of study (whether historical or ethnographic). To Johnson's mind, it seems that art that followed these exacting standards would be something like visual documentation, and certainly would make itself useful to the demands of a larger sociological project; he seems to come close to imagining that Lawrence would illustrate the environment or local conditions—"the setting of our present studies"—thus helping to ground the findings of Johnson's survey across the state.

To a certain extent, Johnson was right in his implied critique of Lawrence. There *was* a kind of mismatch in Lawrence's narrowly-defined object of study—John Brown—and his location; whatever else he was doing, he was definitely not running across any John Brown "material" during his time in New Orleans. This is not to say that Lawrence's work had no relationship to New Orleans or Louisiana, however. Indeed, I want to argue that Johnson's

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[49] Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, 218–19.
[50] Charles S. Johnson to Edwin R. Embree, November 30, 1940, Box 409, Folder 10, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[51] Johnson to Embree, November 30, 1940.

comments reveal less about the limitations of Lawrence's method than the limitations of Johnson's own way of seeing—his way of seeing Lawrence's project and art's value as social statement, but also his way of seeing his own discipline of sociology, its capacity to absorb different kinds of knowledge. And while Johnson did not fully represent the Rosenwald or its perspective, I want to point to the ways that his disciplined, regimented understanding of the world coincides with the Rosenwald's conception of disciplinary expertise—the ways that his view of Lawrence's work extends those constraints first imposed by the Rosenwald application's small, narrow boxes.

For one thing, Johnson took for granted that Lawrence was working, and working exclusively, on the project he had outlined in his application, the *John Brown* series; just as the application had no space for artistic work that could not be described as a logical, unified "project," so did Johnson fail to see any of the work that fell outside of Lawrence's neat proposal. Had he looked closer, he might have seen the ways Lawrence was, in fact, going "off-script" at just this moment—deciding, for one thing, to make a number of paintings ostensibly unrelated to the *Brown* series. These were paintings directly related to New Orleans, not unlike his previous paintings of the residents and routines of Harlem—works like *Rampart Street* (fig. 1.20), for example, or *Bar and Grill* (fig. 1.21). In many ways, these paintings seem like Lawrence's straightforward attempts to grasp the specificity of New Orleans, its particular architecture and culture—the blustery facades and crowded sidewalks of *Rampart Street*, the iron grillwork and bricked levies of *Bus* (fig. 1.22) and *The Wall* (fig. 1.23), the tangible signs of the city's deeply religious past in *Catholic New Orleans* (fig. 1.24). It's easier, with this view, to forgive some of Johnson's ignorance; seen as minor works, an artist's way of processing his new surroundings, the New Orleans paintings don't seem to rise to the level of significant artistic (or social) statement. This is certainly the way that they have been received by the art world—as singular, one-off works, tied causally to Lawrence's travel in New Orleans, rather than to any more deliberate motive.

I want to argue, however, that this view is a function of the frame placed around these works more than any inherent social value—the kind of frame that elevates logically unified projects (like the *John Brown* series) as social statements, while rendering scattered or "minor" works like the New Orleans paintings. Had Johnson been able to see the New Orleans works at all, for example, he might have discovered the relationship to the place that they were made—likely close enough to satisfy his standards for proximity to an object of study. Had he been able to see them, further, as a *related* set of images—something close to what Lawrence sometimes called a "theme," with a loose, non-linear, but still discernable coherence—he might have seen that they had something specific to say about New Orleans and about the South, even if they did so without the premeditation that the Rosenwald's Fellowship required.[52] He might have seen, for one thing, a preoccupation with barriers emerge across the works: in the foreboding massiveness of *The Wall*, hanging like doom over the family that hurries past (or is it under?) it; or in the divider in *Bar and Grill*, which separates not just the bar's White and Black patrons, but its space, even its air. He might have seen a kind of negative-barrier, a barrier by absence,

[52] Lawrence developed his own vocabulary to refer to his work; a "series," like the *Migration Series*, was usually a well-planned set of images, with a tight, often narrative, and at times sequential progression. A "theme," while still a related a related set of paintings, held together more loosely, without a linear arc. See quotations in Ellen Harkins Wheat, *Jacob Lawrence, American Painter* (Seattle: University of Washington Press in association with the Seattle Art Museum, 1986), 143; and transcript of interview by Peter Nesbett and Michelle DuBois, June 7, 1999, 1-2, quoted in Sims, "The Structure of Narrative: Form and Content in Jacob Lawrence's Builders Paintings, 1946-1998," fn. 35, 215.

implied in the empty windows separating the airy front and crowded rear of the vehicle in *Bus*, too; or way the Black gambler in *The Green Table* (fig. 1.25) seems hemmed-in by the betting-rings on the table before him, which spell out "Do" and "Don't," in a way the White gambler across from him is not.

Had he begun looking this way, in fact, Johnson might have started to feel his eyesight adjust—beginning to discern, perhaps, the way color and design worked like a kind of language in these paintings, allowing them to do more than simply illustrate or reflect the conditions they represent. He might have examined *The Wall* more intently, for example, noting the way that the two adult figures' dark faces get lost in the dark blue of the sidewalk—an effect that is repeated with the crush of Black figures at the back of the vehicle in *Bus*, whose blank, generic faces mark a sharp contrast to the defined features of the White figures at the bus's front. Taken in the context of Lawrence's keen sensitivity to color and the potentialities of its contrast, Johnson may have seen these elisions as more than mistakes on the artist's part, his failures to define his figures properly—but instead Lawrence's indictment of the generalizing, de-individuating effects of Jim Crow.

Perhaps Johnson would have been drawn in by the compositional rhythm of *Rampart Street*, the way that the façade's flattened, drab-colored boxes are relieved by the bright yellow of the globular streetlights which play across it—together with the organic shapes of the crowd in the street, providing an element of almost musical rhythm to the scene. Maybe he would have even made the connection between Lawrence's preoccupation with signage and that of other modernist artists; comparison with a work like Stuart Davis's *New York Under Gaslight* (fig. 1.26), painted the same year as *Rampart Street*, might have revealed similar interest in utilizing the graphic quality of signage within wider meditations on the city. At the same time, though, such comparison would also likely have underscored the difference in the kind of sign that Lawrence pictures; rather than Davis's barber shops and tobacco stands, those in Lawrence's painting advertise, again and again, "LIBERAL LOANS", "LOANS—JEWELRY—CLOTHES––GUNS", "LOANS." Together with the street's narrowness—the figures have only about the lower righthand quarter of the painting to move around in—the signs' repetition may have begun to feel part of a larger constriction of space, a narrowing of options. Perhaps Johnson would have looked back at the façade in *Rampart Street* with a somewhat different interpretation: seeing in its flatness a kind of painted condemnation of exploitative lending practices—which, although advertised as "liberal" in story-high letters, ultimately proved to be little more than a front.

Perhaps, too, Johnson would have noticed the particular perspective of *Bar and Grill*, the way it takes up a place behind the bar, even behind the White bartender—a position Lawrence himself certainly would not have been able to assume. He might have noticed what becomes visible from this privileged position—the differences between the two sides of the bar, from the fan that cools the White side, to the plates and cups that signal that its patrons have been more attentively served. But he may also have noticed that this position affords a view of what unites the two sides, too—the ceiling's band of yellow or the ochre-red bar, which run across the bar's divider, or the windows that repeat on each side. Even the patrons seem mostly the same from this angle, save for their color—on both sides suited and hatted, drinking and smoking. What the view reveals, in fact, is the way that both sides suffer the detriments of the bar's division. While the Black patrons have less service and less air, they do have space—enough to gesture, or perhaps even dance, and certainly far more than the White patrons, crowded several deep, are afforded. Johnson may have begun to see, in other words, the way that *Bar and Grill*'s composition allows not just the unnecessary, but also the absurd nature of White southerners'

commitment to racial segregation to come into view; allowing us to see that, like the bartender who reads a paper that is a mirror of himself, the insistence on sameness makes one ridiculous.

Perhaps Johnson would have turned back, with this understanding, to the other places that Jim Crow divisions appear in the paintings—to examine not just that they picture these divisions, but *how* they do so. He might have appreciated, for example, the compositional daring of *The Wall*, the way it gives over almost the entire composition to the wall's utter flatness—or, further, the way that Lawrence harnesses the implied infinity of the modernist grid to further the impression of the wall's dominance, the never-endingness of Jim Crow. He might have looked more closely at the middle windows of *Bus*, too, to notice the way that though unpeopled, they are far from empty or transparent—painted with opaque cerulean and sky blue, they make dense and solid the space between the White and the Black, the front and the back of the Bus.

Johnson might have seen, in short, Lawrence's decided interest in the physical manifestation of racism, its concretization in the space of the city. He might have seen the way that Lawrence was in some ways already fulfilling the task Johnson had imagined for the artist, picturing the "setting" of Black life in the South—the way Lawrence's paintings worked visually to make a case for Jim Crow *as* setting, as so deeply built into the landscape as to become a kind of structuring background. He might even have been able to see a "caste" analysis of race in these works—Lawrence's emphasis on the ways that Black Americans were kept in an impermeable and rigidly-defined inferior social stratum because of their race, through the strictures of segregation and discrimination. In so doing, Johnson would have seen Lawrence's work as not just relevant to his own sociological work, but in conversation with it—not just picturing its findings, but actively engaging in its debates. He might have seen his own work, which understood Black people as an exploited but still mobile social "class," challenged by the caste argument made by Lawrence's paintings, focused on the barriers set by Jim Crow and on the way these barriers impeded Black Americans' movement. Seeing all this, he might also have seen a real relationship between Lawrence's work and the questions at that moment engaging many other social scientists at work on the *American Dilemma* project, which made the caste-class debate its central tension—seeing Lawrence, in other words, as engaged in the same broad inquiry that was occupying many Rosenwald fellows and former fellows, himself included.

But Johnson saw none of these things. The proposed collaboration between the two men never came to pass—a fact that, I would argue, speaks to the difficulty the Rosenwald had in integrating kinds of knowledge that were not logically unified, that exceeded its criteria in some way. Despite its fantasy of a horizontal "assembly of minds," collaborating across discipline, it continued to privilege social scientific frameworks for knowledge—often to the detriment of artistic work, whose social commentary was missed because of the narrowness of these frameworks. The "extra" works of Lawrence's second Rosenwald fellowship, the New Orleans paintings, had specific, trenchant, and sociologically current things to say about the ways race and racism existed in the United States—but these comments went unheard and unseen, largely because they existed outside the bounds of Lawrence's stated "project."

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In making these arguments for the importance of the New Orleans paintings, however, I am not seeking to "elevate" them to the level of the sociologically legible or logical. Nor am I calling attention to them as an overlooked "series" in Lawrence's oeuvre—on par with the *John Brown* series, for example—whose significance as social statement is in direct proportion to this

newfound coherence as a series. Lawrence himself frequently described his way of working in *both* series and themes, defending his right to work in both logical, premeditated *and* looser, more associative formats.[53] In keeping with this idea, then, I want to propose that there is a more complicated dynamic at work here—one that runs across both the New Orleans and *John Brown* works, upending the possibility of separating them into distinct projects. It's only in considering them together, as connected by something beyond the sociological's logic or coherence, that the fullness of Lawrence's social commentary comes into view.

We might begin by noting that, of course, the two sets of work were made at the same time and in the same place—in many ways, under the same conditions. Although less visibly than in the New Orleans works, so directly reflective of the city's distinctive architecture and urban space, New Orleans did make a difference to the *John Brown* series—the way it was painted and the way it appeared. It affected, for one thing, the space, both literal and figurative, that Lawrence had to work. Jacob and Gwen Lawrence were struck in New Orleans by their first encounter with Jim Crow laws and Southern racism; as Lawrence put it in 1944, "for the first time I really *felt* it."[54] As a result the couple spent much of their time in the safety of the house on Bienville Avenue where they had rented rooms from a local New Orleanian.[55] It was within these rooms that Lawrence would complete the *John Brown* series—twenty-two gouache-on-paper paintings that he painted not simultaneously, as he had *The Migration Series*, but instead (likely for lack of space) separately.[56] It is also likely the need to carry all his materials with him that explains Lawrence's choice to paint on paper, and to make his own gouache—a mixture of ground pigment, rabbit-skin glue, and water that, as Lawrence would later discover, flaked terribly over time.[57]

On a formal and iconographical level, too, there are resonances between the *John Brown* and New Orleans works. Other critics have rightly pointed to the pronounced emphasis Lawrence placed on Brown's religious fanaticism, beginning with the stark crucifix that opens the series (fig. 1.27)—echoing those he repeated in *Catholic New Orleans*, itself an exploration of religious zeal.[58] There are other passages to note: the silhouetted guns that appear behind Brown in panel 13 (fig. 1.28), which also appear in an arcade in *Rampart Street*, or the elongated drape of Brown's hanged body in the final panel (fig. 1.29), eerily echoed by the suit for sale in *Rampart Street*. Similar passages of "pure" abstraction appear across the works, too—in the symbols and lines that make up Brown's map in Panel 13, the Joan Miró-like placemat in *Two Men in a Bar* (fig. 1.30), or even the betting-board in *Rampart Street* (fig. 1.31).

The ties between the John Brown and New Orleans works are not merely visual, though––but indeed, lead onto the contemplation of other kinds of connections. Lawrence's choice to

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[53] See Wheat, 143.

[54] Aline B. Louchheim, "Lawrence: Quiet Spokesman," *ArtNews*, October 15, 1944.

[55] Ellen Harkins Wheat describes the way that the Lawrences' experience of Jim Crow affected the way they moved through the city: "This was the Lawrences' first trip to the South and their first experience with Jim Crowism as a constant reality. They learned not to go into restaurants or stores, and to remain wary and uninvolved. Because of the color bar in public accommodations, they found rooms to rent in a private home through the Urban League." Wheat, 65.

[56] See Ellen Sharp, "The Legend of John Brown and the Series by Jacob Lawrence," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 67, no. 4 (1993): 22.

[57] This flaking is one reason that the series is rarely exhibited and that its current holder, the Detroit Institute of Arts, commissioned Lawrence to create a set of silkscreens based on the paintings in 1974). See Wheat, *Jacob Lawrence, American Painter*, 65; Nancy Sojka, "Jacob Lawrence, The Legend of John Brown, 1941," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 1, no. 4 (2012): 31.

[58] See Sharp, "The Legend of John Brown and the Series by Jacob Lawrence," 23.

visualize Brown's siege on Harpers Ferry through the image of the barricade (fig. 1.32), for example, allows us to imagine a similarly impassioned assault on the barriers pictured in works like *The Wall* or *Bar and Grill*—what it would mean to apply the force of Brown's conviction to the divisions of Jim Crow segregation. I would argue, in fact, that the sharply critical New Orleans works help to clarify the stakes of the *John Brown* series—which is, in Lawrence's handling, not merely an overlooked passage of history, but a story loaded with messianic power. Lawrence concludes his series with Brown's death and apparent failure, for example, but does not in so doing close the book on Brown's story; rather, Lawrence bends his series into a circle, making Brown's hanging echo the crucifixion with which he began it. In the process, he opens the possibility that Brown's story, like a Christ-figure's, might be understood as ongoing, that his failure was only apparent—and that it has an urgent connection to the present moment.

Lawrence's series, in other words, deploys less historical than a kind of biblical time, in which the history does not just shape the present, but is active within it—charging it with the expectation of final redemption, a revelatory event that would fulfill past prophesies and reward the faith of those in wait. This is not dissimilar, notably, to the temporality that scholars have identified in African American oral traditions, which often functioned as sites of memory outside of or resistant to hegemonic historical narratives—traditions which, as Lawrence repeatedly avowed, played a major role in shaping his sense of the historical.[59] Understanding this, I would argue, allows us to see the system of Jim Crow laws, institutionalized segregation, and exploitative economic practices pictured in the New Orleans works as more than the conditions of the South, which Lawrence merely documented in his paintings. These were, rather, aspects of a contemporary slavery, as Lawrence in fact himself described it—as urgent as the one that Brown took it upon himself to destroy.[60] Put otherwise, we might say that Lawrence focuses, in his New Orleans works, on a contemporary manifestation of the same force that had enabled and sustained slavery—the kind of anti-Blackness that had precipitated itself in what scholar Christina Sharpe calls the "singularity" of slavery, but is not confined to that institution. Lawrence's focus on racism as setting, as a structuring element in his paintings as in the lives of

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[59] See Hills, *Painting Harlem Modern*, 1. Writing about the role of spirituals, or "sorrow songs," in African American culture, W.E.B. Du Bois insisted that they were not just an expression of sorrow or loss, but also fostered a critical "hope—a faith in the ultimate justice of things. The minor cadences of despair change often to triumph and calm confidence. Sometimes it is faith in life, sometimes faith in death, sometimes assurance of boundless justice in some fair world beyond. But whichever it is, the meaning is always clear: that sometime, somewhere, men will judge men by their souls and not by their skins." Du Bois goes on, immediately, to make such hope the grounds on which he challenges the "arrogance of peoples irreverent toward Time" as well as reigning "sociological knowledge," both of which insist not just on a rigidly chronological conception of time, but on a mapping of the world's people on a chronological, evolutionary timeline. Using the differently shaped temporality of the sorrow songs, then, Du Bois challenges the conception that African American people are consigned to an obsolete past, insisting on the possibility, if not inevitability, of a future in which "American shall rend the veil and the prisoned shall go free." See W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007 [1903]), 176.

[60] Speaking about his choice to paint Haiti's struggle for liberation in the *Toussaint L'Ouverture* series, Lawrence explained that he painted scenes from the past not "just as a historical thing, but because I believe these things tie up the Negro today. We don't have a physical slavery, but an economic slavery." He goes on to make clear that he sees real lessons, if not actual blueprints, for action in the present moment within such historical narratives: "If these people…could conquer their slavery, we certainly can do the same thing. They had to liberate themselves without any education. Today we can't go about it in the same way…How will it come about? I don't know. I'm not a politician." Lawrence, quoted in Harmon Foundation press release, November 12, 1940, quoted in Wheat, *Jacob Lawrence, American Painter*, 39–40.

those he paints, indeed recalls Sharpe's formulation of anti-Blackness as "the weather"—"the very ground on which we stand," "the totality of our environments…the total climate."[61]

One point here is that our understanding of these two sets of works is enriched by their consideration together; the New Orleans works sharpen the contemporary import of the *John Brown* series, while the *Brown* works allow us to consider of the role of revolutionary action in the quest for a liberation still not complete. Seeing these resonances requires us to attend to the visual coherence of Lawrence's work, rather than their logical or narrative coherence—perhaps counterintuitively, in other words, appreciating the fullness of his social commentary demands that we loosen our insistence on seeing his work through its subject matter, attending more closely to its formal qualities.

Perhaps more important for my larger consideration of the Rosenwald, however, these works allow us to see how Lawrence's sense of the historical reshaped the sociological—the way he pointed to the long durée of anti-Blackness, for example, its overflow of the temporal scope of sociological surveys like Johnson's Louisiana study, so focused on canvassing and surveying the immediate present. Lawrence reworked, in the process, the idea of social or sociological relevance—which could be measured not by the physical proximity of an artist to his object of study, or a project's integration into a wider disciplinary inquiry, but instead by its ability to make visible the forces that ran through everyday people's lives.

Lawrence's Third Rosenwald Fellowship: The Black City in Color

Lawrence was still in New Orleans when he submitted another renewal application to the Rosenwald, seeking a third fellowship. In the plan of work that he submitted with the renewal form, he acknowledged that he had already completed the *John Brown* series, only about eight months into his fellowship—and that he had been creating New Orleans works during the same period. Cannily, though, he discusses this "excess" not as a diversion from his original schedule or plan of work, but instead as the first phase of a two-pronged research plan on the American South: "I have been doing research and paintings concerning the urban life of the southern Negro. For the next months I plan to go to some rural community. There I plan to do some paintings about the life of Negroes in the rural community."[62] (This he would do, traveling in February to Lenexa, Virginia, where he and Gwen would stay for some three months with his mother's relatives.)

In describing what he would do with the extra time he had on his second fellowship, though, Lawrence was also making a case for his third: he argued that his experience in the South had clarified his understanding of the North, preparing him to do the study of Harlem that he proposed for his next Rosenwald fellowship. "After having lived in the South," he writes, "I find some things in Harlem clearer—the added experience in the South has made me better qualified to do a deeper study of Harlem"—emphasizing the continuity between his fellowships, the natural evolution of his interests.[63] He goes even further to highlight the coherence of his narrative as a fellow, in fact—describing his proposed series on Harlem as a "sequel to the Migration Series," which would cover the period "since the Negro Migration North during the

[61] Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 6, 104.
[62] Jacob Lawrence, "Plan of Work," 1942, Box 429, Folder 1, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[63] Jacob Lawrence, "Plan of Work," 1942.

World War"—and thus a project that would allow him to "complete" what he had begun on his first Rosenwald fellowship.[64]

In his statement, Lawrence acknowledged his existing knowledge of Harlem, that he had "lived in Harlem nearly all [his] life" and had "done quite a number of paintings about Harlem and its people" already.[65] Although he was proposing, then, to return home on his third Rosenwald fellowship, this would be a return with a difference: his project was to be a systematic "study" of Harlem, one that—although on a more contemporary subject—would involve the same level of research and preparation as *The Migration Series* or *The Life of John Brown*. Like these earlier series, he would conduct research on Harlem at the 135th Street NYPL; like them, too, the series that would result would have clear and logical internal structure ("divided into two parts" covering the "Boom Period" as well as the "Depression Period").[66] But it wasn't just archival research that Lawrence proposed; perhaps prompted by the language of the Rosenwald's renewal form, Lawrence also proposed a kind of "field work" in Harlem—framing his series, at least rhetorically, as a kind of social scientific project, one that would provide a "deeper" look at "the largest Negro community in the world."[67]

In framing his proposed project in this way, Lawrence once again placed his work in conversation with an established area of social scientific study. As in *The Migration Series*, Lawrence would prove himself aware of much of this research, as well as its effect on other contemporary artists and writers. As in his earlier series, too, he would by turns engage and challenge the conclusions of this research, particularly the view of Black urban space as "problematic" that had hardened into accepted truth within social scientific circles. Perhaps even more dramatically than in *The Migration Series*, however, in his third Rosenwald series—which he would later title *This is Harlem*—Lawrence exceeded the visual and epistemological frameworks central to social scientific research. Specifically, his deliberate, yet exuberant use of color insisted on the full dimensionality of the Black city—a vibrance and shadedness that the binary thinking and greyscale perspective of social scientific studies often muted, blanched, or flattened.

Over many decades of development, the study of Black urban space had evolved into a veritable subfield within the social sciences, especially sociology. Black communities in the urban North had been the subject of social scientific interest since at least the late nineteenth century—an interest that only deepened as these communities grew during the Great Migration. Early efforts to understand these new cities-within-cities often grew out of progressive reform movements and other White philanthropic efforts, often with an explicit aim of ordering and "improving" them. [68] While they lacked the training, commitment to rigorous research methods, and apolitical stance of later sociologists, many of these early movements established what

[64] Jacob Lawrence, "Plan of Work," 1942.
[65] Jacob Lawrence, "Plan of Work," 1942.
[66] Jacob Lawrence, "Plan of Work," 1942.
[67] Jacob Lawrence, "Plan of Work," 1942; see also Renewal application blank, Box 382, Folder 7, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University, Nashville, TN.
[68] See Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology*, especially chapter five, "Sociology, the Social Survey Movement, and *The Negro in Chicago*;" Vicky M. MacLean and Joyce E. Williams, "'Ghosts of Sociologies Past:' Settlement Sociology in the Progressive Era at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy," *The American Sociologist* 43, no. 3 (2012): 235–63.

would become a pattern within social scientific research on Black cities—taking as its premise the problematic nature of urban Black space, its need for diagnosis, improvement, and reform.[69]

Even those studies conducted by academically trained sociologists, which brought attention to the structural inequities in opportunity and social services within cities, were undergirded by their fundamental address to the acknowledged "problematic" nature of Black urban space. Sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois's 1899 study of the Seventh Ward of Philadelphia, for example, was commissioned by the University of Pennsylvania in order to identify the causes of the neighborhood's crime, poverty, and illiteracy; as he put it in the book's preface, it was at base a "study of the Negro problems."[70] Based on his exhaustive survey of the neighborhood, for which he conducted over five thousand interviews, *The Philadelphia Negro* is now considered a classic of sociological description, groundbreaking in its application of statistical analysis and the graphic display of data.[71] While it argued that many of the Seventh Ward's social issues, like poverty, were a function of systematically denied opportunities, it nevertheless was framed in terms of cultural deprivation in a way that pathologized many of its residents.

Importantly, this pathologizing took place not only in the study's premises or even its conclusions, but also in the form that it presented its data—not least, in the visual representation of its statistical findings. Specifically, it was a matter of the way these representations diminished and reduced the Seventh Ward's residents: not so much by insisting on their inherent pathology or criminality, as by imposing limited spectra—pathology/health, or criminality/lawfulness—as the fundamental framework within which their lives were lived. As theorist Saidiya Hartman has argued, the residents' representation in tables, charts, and maps muted their voices and flattened their experience, preventing them from affirming their existence as more than data points; as she puts it, "nothing in the statistical tables asserted *me too* or risked being mistaken for an autobiographical example."[72]

I would point, further, to the consistent greyscale of these representations—which, while certainly a function of the printing technology available at the time the study was published, also had the effect of compounding the flattening that occurred in other levels in the study. The often-assumed continuity of black, grey, and white, specifically, had the effect of reducing the realm of possible expression to a limited range within the sociological categories Du Bois had selected.[73] A graphic depicting the "conjugal condition" of Black domestics in Philadelphia, for example, slot individuals into different relationship statuses, represented by white ("single") and black ("married"); the implication is that the only other possible options—primarily widowhood or divorce, represented by varying shades of grey—lay somewhere between these two possibilities (fig. 1.33). In short, there is no way for a relationship to appear outside of the metric of legal marriage within Du Bois's graphic—no color that implied life with a kind of ungraded

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[69] Bulmer makes clear that Chicago School sociologists positioned themselves explicitly apart from the more reform-oriented Social Survey movement; despite differences in their academic credentials, commitment to political neutrality or "objectivity," and research program, however, they shared with earlier reformers the assumption of the Black city's problematic nature.

[70] Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, iii.

[71] Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology*, 66.

[72] Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*, 96.

[73] This is in marked contrast to the vibrant, colorful, and innovative diagrams Du Bois created with students at Atlanta University, which were exhibited at the 1900 Atlanta Exposition, and thus were not subject to publication's insistent greyscale. These diagrams make it likely that the compounded flattening of *The Philadelphia Negro*'s black-and-white graphics are due as much to the apparatus of publication and circulation as to Du Bois's own perspective as a sociologist. See Britt Rusert and Whitney Battle-Baptiste, *W. E. B. Du Bois's Data Portraits: Visualizing Black America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Architectural Press, 2018).

dimension, like the artistry or personal and sexual innovation of the figures that Hartman animates. As if in recognition of the representational restrictions of this range, in other graphics Du Bois opted to use words instead of shades of black, grey, or white; even in these instances, however, as in the quasi-cartogram on page 308 (fig. 1.34), descriptive range is limited to a specific set of sociological criteria ("number of inhabitants," "width of sidewalk," "cleanliness"). Moreover, in the single instance in the study where color does appear—the large, fold-out map of the Seventh Ward at the center of the book—it follows the pattern set by other social scientific cartograms in linking the darkest shade, black, with the least positive characteristic—in its case, the "Vicious and Criminal Classes" (fig. 1.35).[74] While its diagrams and tables de-couple visual black and white from racial color—in a way that some scholars argue allows for the consideration of structural oppression—they nevertheless uphold in areas the tendency to pair the darkest shade in a spectrum with the most undesirable social element.[75]

Sociological studies like Du Bois's continued to be understood as useful tools in analyzing the pathology of new Black neighborhoods in urban centers—notably, not only those in the North, but also those in the South that absorbed migrants from more rural areas. In 1912-1913, for example, the Phelps-Stokes Fund funded a series of fellowships at the University of Georgia, specifically to enable sociology students to conduct studies of changing conditions in the South; several in the resulting series focused on Southern urban centers and their Black residents, sanitary conditions, education, and housing. The first study in the series, for example—Thomas Jackson Woofter, Jr.'s "The Negroes of Athens, Georgia"—explains the shift in sociological attention away from rural areas as a necessity, engendered by "the problems increasing in significance on account of the constant trend of negroes townwards."[76] The remainder of the study reveals the ways that its collection and organization of data worked to subtly elide the city's "problems" with its Black residents; the included survey given to Black residents, for example, included questions—like "why do your children not attend school?"—that anticipate, if not fully predict, the subject's "deviance."[77] Although sociological schedules and questionnaires were provided to both Black and White residents of Athens on the subject of domestic labor, moreover, the study includes the responses only of selected White housekeepers—the vast majority of which evidence what Woofter concludes is "one of the most important and engrossing of the negro problems:" the difficulty of White housekeepers in procuring dependable, honest, and clean servants.[78] The use of photographic materials within the study, meanwhile, compounds this erasure of Black voice and subjectivity; photographs displaying the "common type of privy" or "the worst type of negro house" cannot attend to the expressions, or internal lives, of the blurred Black figures they inadvertently capture (figs. 1.36, 1.37).

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[74] H. Gray Funkhouser, a historian of statistical graphics, described this trend in cartographic representations, and the way it departed from the use of dark shades to indicate density of population or other demographic concentration: "'the darker the shade the greater the frequency of the phenomena' has been standard practice since the first use of cartograms, although occasionally authors have introduced variations, the most common being the assignment of darker tints to the unfavorable end of the scale regardless of whether it represented a greater concentration or the reverse, which it sometimes did." H. Gray Funkhouser, "Historical Development of the Graphical Representation of Statistical Data," *Osiris* 3 (1937): 327.

[75] See Alexander G. Weheliye, "Diagrammatics as Physiognomy: W. E. B. Du Bois's Graphic Modernities," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 15, no. 2 (2015): 23–58.

[76] Thomas Jackson Woofter, Jr., "Phelps-Stokes Fellowship Studies, No; 1: The Negroes of Athens, Georgia," *Bulletin of the University of Georgia* XIV, no. 4 (December 1913): 5.

[77] Woofter, Jr., 58.

[78] Woofter, Jr., 43.

While it distanced itself from the reform orientation of earlier survey movements, including the Phelps-Stokes Fund studies, the Chicago School of Sociology which emerged in the 1920s sustained the interest in Black urban space that had begun with them. Studies like *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot*, published in 1922 and now widely attributed to Charles S. Johnson, applied the Chicago School's self-consciously scientistic, detached approach, and aimed to penetrate deeper beneath the surface of the Black city than earlier surveys had.[79] Commissioned after the 1919 Chicago Race Riots, however, it too was an attempt to deploy the methods of social science in order to explain a particular "problem" attendant on the presence of Black people in urban space—in its case, racial violence. As historians of sociology have argued, moreover, the Chicago School's overarching theory of social ecology—which held, among other things, that assimilation was not just inevitable, but salutary, in a wider social system—ultimately dismissed or even pathologized Black poor and working-class culture.[80] Although a work like *The Negro in Chicago* deployed photographs in addition to tables and maps, then, its graphics did not work to add dimension to the citydwellers it described. The majority of its photographs, in fact, were documentary in nature, used to ground the study in specific, documented "problems": whether the scene of the riot as documented in the book's frontispiece (fig. 1.38); the riot's violence, as documented in a shocking series of photographs of a Black man's mob murder; or other social ills, like inadequate working conditions, evidenced by reform-style photographs of factory interiors (fig. 1.39).[81]

Sociological studies of Black urban space continued through the 1930s under the aegis of the Chicago School, as well as Johnson's Chicago-style approach at Fisk—resulting in such works as E. Franklin Frazier's *The Negro Family in Chicago* (1932) and later, *The Negro Family in the United States* (1939). Anthropologist St. Clair Drake and sociologist Horace Cayton were at work on their seminal *Black Metropolis* (1945), based on W.P.A. fieldwork in the Chicago area, at the very moment that Lawrence was applying to conduct his study of Harlem, too. Although there are salient differences among these studies, they largely shared as a starting-point the problematic nature of the Black city in much the same way that Johnson's and Du Bois's works had. Frazier, for example, condemned what he saw as an exacerbation of "vice," "decay," and "deterioration" in social relations that took place in certain kinds of Black urban spaces—alleys and porches, night clubs, cabarets, gambling places; his work, in particular, has been associated with the sociological tendency to pathologize matriarchal families, and the urban communities seen to encourage them, as inherently "disorganized."[82] Cayton and Drake adopted a different tone than Frazier, and arguably their more structural approach affected the way they used shading in their graphics; in the maps and diagrams of *Black Metropolis*, darker shades imply increased density, rather than being assigned to less favorable social conditions (fig. 1.40). Nevertheless, the assumption and starting-point of pathology limited the impact this shift had;

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[79] Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology*, 76.

[80] See O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History*, 74–98.

[81] Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot in 1919*.

[82] E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), especially 100-103; E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939). On the influence of Frazier's theories of Black matriarchy, see Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: Pantheon, 1997); Joyce Ladner, *Tomorrow's Tomorrow: The Black Woman* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1972); Robert Staples, "The Myth of Black Matriarchy," in *The Black Family: Essays and Studies*, ed. Robert Staples (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1997), 149–59.

black, as indicator of the density only of social ills, remains yoked to the least undesirable social conditions. That the areas of greatest density converge with the neighborhoods that Drake and Cayton term the "Black Ghetto" only furthers the conflation of visual blackness, racial Blackness, and social ills like poverty and disorganization.

There are parallels between Lawrence's work and these other sociological takes on the Black city, most trenchant in a common attention to the "problems" prevalent in Black urban communities. Lawrence is blunt about the poverty, overcrowding, and poor housing in Harlem, for example, making these conditions the center of several of his works (like *Most of the People Are Very Poor Rent is High Food is High* (fig. 1.41), *They Live in Old and Dirty Tenement Houses* (fig. 1.42), *They Live in Fire Traps* (fig. 1.43)). He acknowledges the existence of what Du Bois identified as the "the drink habit" repeatedly—from the bootleggers of *You Can Buy Bootleg Whiskey for Twenty-Five Cents a Quart* (fig. 1.44) to the slumped figure in *The Rooftops Seem to Stretch for Miles* (fig. 1.45).[83] Another work's title—*There is an Average of Four Bars to Every Block* (fig. 1.46)—reads like a statistic explaining the presence of this vice. Some compositions even invoke iconic social reform photographs the early twentieth century, synonymous with the dangers of overcrowded New York tenements; both *Often Three Families Share One Toilet* (fig. 1.47) and *They Live in Old and Dirty Tenement Houses* take a view that captures the tenement's low-slung ceiling, in a way reminiscent of Jacob Riis's *"The Ship" in Hamilton Street* (fig. 1.48) or *Flat in Hell's Kitchen* (fig. 1.49).

But Lawrence's Harlem works also go beyond many sociological accounts of Black urban spaces. This has to do, in part, with *how* they depict the "problems" of Harlem—the way that they use color, especially, to layer meaning in excess of the problem they document. *The Undertakers Do a Good Business* (fig. 1.50) for example, is on its face a depiction of a funeral-in-process, and more generally an allusion to the high death rate in Harlem. But the bright spray of flowers that Lawrence paints across the casket also manages to capture something beyond the fact or prevalence of death—pointing to the unique expressive culture around funeral practices in Black culture. In a similar way, *If The Family Can Afford It, Their Baby is Sent to One of the Few Day Nurseries Available* (fig. 1.51) departs from the dry, reportorial tone of its title and its description of inadequate childcare, instead delivering a whimsical, almost surrealistic scene: six diapered children playing with balls, blocks, and animate-seeming animals in a roiling ground of electric blue, vermilion, and white. Interiors in the *Harlem* works are at times the nightmarish scene of *They Live in Fire Traps*, scorched and smoke-filled; but they are at others bright, light-filled places of music and instruction, where *Mothers and Fathers Work Hard to Educate Their Children* (fig. 1.52).

Even as they identify and condemn social ills, in other words, Lawrence's paintings refuse to reduce Harlem or its residents to these "problems." In this sense, they more closely resemble a quasi-sociological text like James Weldon Johnson's *Black Manhattan*, which takes as its starting-point the "miracle" of Harlem, rather than its pathology—or Richard Wright's *12 Million Black Voices*, which insists on the resilience of Black city-dwellers and new arrivals, even in the midst of "death on city pavements."[84] *12 Million Black Voices*, published just the year

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[83] See Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro,* 269–86. The discussion of "the habit of drink" appears in a larger section on "pauperism and alcoholism," among others that deal with the vices of the Seventh Ward, like crime or poverty.
[84] James Weldon Johnson, *Black Manhattan* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1991 [1930]), 4. On the very first page of his text, Johnson makes clear this starting-point: "So here we have Harlem—not merely a colony or a community or a settlement—not at all a "quarter" of a slum or a fringe—but a black city, located in the heart of white Manhattan, and containing more Negroes to the square mile than any other spot on earth. It strikes the uninformed observer as a

before Lawrence began work on the *Harlem* works, may have been of particular interest to Lawrence: it centers images in a way that departed from other sociological accounts, creating a text-image counterpoint that resonates with the one Lawrence frequently employed. Lawrence may have been drawn to the structural nature of Wright's argument, too, its condemnation of the forces that create the systems of inequity in Black cities—from the "Bosses of Buildings" who demand exorbitant rent for tiny, subdivided apartments, to the "gangster-politicians" who manipulate Black voters with fear and empty promises.[85] Lawrence's theme strikes a similar note, albeit less stridently—tying the existence of poverty to the fact that "rent is high" and "food is high," for example, rather than to any essential fault of Harlem's residents. As art historian Tanya Sheehan has noted, some of Lawrence's compositions even echo those in *12 Million Black Voices*; *Often Three Families Share One Toilet* shows the same dilapidation as an image of a tenement toilet in *Black Voices* (fig. 1.53)—the same detached toilet seat, the same cracked plaster and exposed wood, the same sense of constriction and narrowness.[86] Lawrence's title echoes the text on the same page as this image in *Black Voices*, too—where Wright condemns the "kitchenette, with its filth and foul air, with its one toilet for thirty or more tenants."[87]

Wright's text, however, accompanies photographs taken by White WPA photographers during the 1930s and selected by photographer Edwin Rosskam—black-and-white photographs that hamper, or at best condition, his attempt to tell the story of Black migrants anew. Scholars have noted the way that Wright's text sits uneasily beside the photographs, refusing to acknowledge them directly in any way; indeed, in his very first line, he seems to try to cast doubt on the authority of the documentary gaze that they employ: "Each day when you see us black folk upon the dusty land of the farms or upon the hard pavement of the city streets, you usually…think you know us, but our history is far stranger than what you suspect, and we are not what we seem."[88]

Lawrence is perhaps better positioned, in other words, to achieve what Wright seeks in his text—the revelation of layers of meaning beyond those parts of Black life that immediately meet the eye. It is his use of color, again, that achieves this end, secreting meaning beyond the documentary—even in those works that seem focused on documenting a social problem. A work like *There is an Average of Four Bars to Every Block*, for example, depicts far more than the ubiquity of watering-holes in Harlem. A more intricately patterned work than the other *Harlem* works, it pictures a lively, colorful crowd, dressed in bright, contrasting hues and patterns that seem to vibrate—all overlaid with elegant curly-cues of bluish cigarette smoke. And if color calls attention to the vibrancy of the scene in the bar, the elegance and self-conscious style of its patrons, it also highlights something else—the presence of *people* of different colors within it, that it allows those of all different skin tones space to meet, talk, have a drink. It's not that color redeems the scene of the bar, or the fact of alcohol's pervasiveness in Harlem, then—but it does call attention to the presence of something beyond this fact, in excess of bare sociological statement.

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phenomenon, a miracle straight out of the skies." Richard Wright and Edwin Rosskam, *12 Million Black Voices* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1988), 91.

[85] Wright and Rosskam, *12 Million Black Voices*, 26, 120-123.

[86] Tanya Sheehan, "Confronting Taboo: Photography and the Art of Jacob Lawrence," *American Art* 28, no. 3 (2014): 28–51. Sheehan discusses Lawrence's relationship to the documentary aims of other FSA photographers in this article, as well.

[87] Wright and Rosskam, *12 Million Black Voices*, 106.

[88] Wright and Rosskam, 10.

Lawrence's departure from the sociological also makes itself felt in *what* he chose to depict in his urban works. He pictured parts of Black cities that, as Hartman has pointed out, were often left out of sociological accounts: hallways and staircases, balconies and fire escapes, rooftops and sidewalks.[89] In Lawrence's account, these were not merely marginal spaces occupied by necessity because of overcrowding; they were also sites of intimacy, mourning, childrearing, play, worship, release, exchange—in short, places where life of complexity and specificity took place. The room of *Interior* (fig. 1.54), for example, is low-ceilinged, with peeling wallpaper and crowded furniture—but it is also filled with the stuff of a particular life: a broken-tooth comb, a wall-calendar, a set of portrait cameos. And the scene that is glimpsed out of the open balcony door is not one of deprivation, but of care: a mother cradling her child gently, her face close to his—just as the female figure in *This is a Family in Harlem* (fig. 1.55) does at the kitchen table. Similarly, the rooftops in *Harlem Street Scene* (fig. 1.56), *Harlem* (fig. 1.57), and *The Rooftops Seem to Spread for Miles* are sites not just where drinking or gambling could take place out of sight—but also where laundry could be dried, a cool breeze could be caught, children could play and even pets could run free. The sense is less of life contained by the narrowness of the spaces given to it, in other words, than of life overflowing these conditions: spilling out onto the sidewalks, where evangelists preach (fig. 1.58), peddlers hawk (fig. 1.59) and children chalk pictures (fig. 1.60); into the parks, where lovers lounge and children skate wildly (fig. 1.61); into libraries (fig. 1.62) and poolhalls (fig. 1.63) and storefront churches (fig. 1.64), where all kinds of living take place.

What becomes noticeable, here, is the *Harlem* works' unabashed celebration of Black working-class culture; like Wright's *12 Million Black Voices* or Weldon Johnson's *Black Manhattan*, they deploy sociological knowledge, but notably without the tendency to pathologize Black poor and working-class communities common even among Black sociologists of this period. Like Wright's text, they focus attention on the structural reasons for social ills like poverty, rather than blaming the poor themselves—pointing to high rent and high food prices, for example, or the dilapidated conditions of housing. And they attend to the tactics that Harlemites had innovated to respond to these conditions, even from a position of lesser power and greater exploitation—depicting, in one image, two figures carrying large "RENT STRIKE" placards, united in their protest of "high rents and unfit conditions" (fig. 1.65).

In the vibrancy of the color with which these scenes are painted, in fact, we might see another of these tactics, a way of refusing the conditions of scarcity through an insistence on ornament—along the lines of the "will to adorn" that Zora Neale Hurston identified as a key element of African American expression.[90] Rich, saturated hues and intricate patterns enliven even the humblest scenes—the jagged shapes of the storefront church's stained glass windows (fig. 1.64), or clashing colors of *Apartment*'s many rugs (fig. 1.66).[91] And Lawrence doesn't just

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[89] Hartman writes, "the hallway, bedroom, stoop, rooftop, airshaft, and kitchenette provided the space of experiment. The tenement and the rooming house furnished the social laboratory of the black working class and poor. The bedroom was a domain of thought in deed and a site for enacting exceeding, undoing, and remaking relations of power." Later she describes the way many of these spaces, and the modes of intimacy that Black women forged in them, went "not seen" by sociologists like W.E.B. DuBois, whose discipline and methods anticipated and shaped how he would see the Black quarter of Philadelphia he studied. See Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*, 61, 95.

[90] Zora Neale Hurston, "Characteristics of Negro Expression," in *Negro: An Anthology*, ed. Nancy Cunard (London: Wishart & Co., 1934), 39.

[91] Although Harlem is what Lawrence called a "theme"—more loose in association than the "series" he also created—*Interior*, *Apartment* and *Ironers* are not usually considered part of its official group of paintings. Given the

reflect the aesthetic of the poor Harlemites he depicts—he also claims it himself, deploying it across these works, which pulsate with electric hues and all-over patterns. The workers in *Ironers* (fig. 1.67) don't just work *on* brightly patterned textiles, but seemingly within one—the cool blue of their dresses like a repeated motif that stands against the tangerine-orange, red, and deeper blue behind them. In *And Harlem Society Looks On* (fig. 1.68), similarly, the matching hues of the curtains and rug become like bands at the composition's top and bottom, flattening the scene even while it sets off the movement of the figures at its center. We're reminded, here, of the fact that Lawrence frequently cited the rugs in his mother's apartment as early influences on his art; as he put it in interviews, he was fascinated by "the brightly colored 'Oriental' rugs covering the floors at home…their configurations and their repetitions…their geometry, and the diversity of their colors."[92]

If Lawrence's color becomes a way he claims this working class aesthetic as his own, then, it's important that he uses it not sociologically—that is, as a means of more accurately describing the environments of working-class Harlemites. Instead, Lawrence deploys this bright, patterned color across his series—to picture the upper crust of Harlem as well as its poor, its visitors as well as new arrivals. His use of color becomes a refutation of contemporary sociology's repeated pathologization of the Black poor and working class, a way of insisting that its culture had meaning and value. And it points, further, to the ways that the Black city always existed in shades and dimensions beyond those that sociologists, for all their exhaustive surveys, hard analysis, and rigorous attention to social problems, could perceive—the ways its color always exceeded the view of those who would see it in black and white.

After the Fellowships: The Creative Minority and the "Universal"

By the time that Lawrence was nearing the end of his final fellowship, in the summer of 1943, he was already an anomaly among its fellows. One of very few to receive three consecutive fellowships, he was arguably among the select of its already self-consciously elite group of artists, writers, and scholars. It was in this kind of "exceptional" fellow that the Rosenwald occasionally took an expanded interest: connecting them with advisors, recommending them for other fellowships, advocating for their positions at institutions and universities—even, as I implied earlier, inviting them to participate in the workings of the JRF itself. While beyond the official scope of the Fellowship Program, this kind of support fit within its guiding principles—helping to develop the talents of outstanding individuals, cultivating a cohort who would ascend to the highest ranks of leadership across a range of disciplines and industries.

Lawrence was the recipient of a number of these forms of support, even from the time he was still a fellow. The joint sale of Lawrence's *Migration of the Negro* to the Phillips Collection and the Museum of Modern Art was facilitated, for example, in part by continued Rosenwald support; MoMA's portion was a donation by Julius Rosenwald's daughter Adele Rosenwald Levy, an active and longstanding JRF Trustee, whose interest in the series was piqued in part by Lawrence's status as a Fellow. Lawrence also had a small exhibition at Columbia University in

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continuity of their subject matter and closeness in the date of their creation, however, I include them here as part of Lawrence's larger meditation on the Black city. *Apartment*, especially, should be considered part of the group that Lawrence referred to in his Rosenwald renewal application as works that helped to prepare him to do the *Harlem* them.

[92] Quoted in Sims, "The Structure of Narrative: Form and Content in Jacob Lawrence's Builders Paintings, 1946-1998," 202. Quotation from Charles Alan, unpublished manuscript, ca. 1973, courtesy Harry N. Abrams, New York.

the fall of 1940, organized by Frank Mechau—Columbia faculty member and Rosenwald art jurist, who reached out to Lawrence after seeing his work in the 1940 jury exhibition (Mechau would go on to serve on the Art Jury in subsequent years, including all of those that Lawrence won fellowships—his interest in Lawrence apparently did not raise any concerns of a conflict of interest).[93]

The Rosenwald's influence continued to echo in Lawrence's career after his fellowships ended, too. Lawrence's appointment as a faculty member of the Black Mountain College in the summer of 1946 was underwritten by the JRF, which paid his salary—part of a larger integration program, adopted by the JRF around 1944, to support the hiring of the Black faculty at a select number of historically-White institutions, including Black Mountain College.[94] This situation was replicated in 1947, when Hale Woodruff was hired by New York University's Art department, on the condition that the Rosenwald Fund pay his salary for three years. And Lawrence, like Woodruff, became a juror for visual arts applicants for the Rosenwald Fellowship Program—helping to choose recipients for the 1948 cycle, just five years after the end of his last fellowship.

Unsurprisingly, then, Lawrence is mentioned by name in a final summary report that JRF president Edwin R. Embree wrote in 1948, on the occasion of the JRF's end—among a small group of exemplary fellows, whose stories Embree uses to explicate the import of the Fellowship Program more generally. Embree describes Lawrence as one of the "celebrated painters" whose careers were fostered by the Rosenwald, as well as among a select number who integrated predominantly-White universities, thus working to "establish and encourage the trend of university administrators to appoint able scholars and teachers on their individual merits regardless of race."[95] Embree's repeated emphasis across the report, in fact, is on the broad, universal impact of Rosenwald fellows' discoveries and developments, their implications for people across nationality, experience, and especially race—where it becomes clear, in other words, that he imagined the Rosenwald fellows as united in a pursuit of a kind of "universal" knowledge. He began his report by quoting Charles R. Drew, a 1931 Fellow in medicine, who outlined his desire to "add some new thought" or "discover some new process" that might be added to a larger body of scientific understanding—who was motivated, in short, by the pursuit of knowledge itself. [96] That this knowledge should be understood as universal, neutral, and

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[93] See Frank Mechau to Jacob Lawrence, September 23, 1940, Box 1, Folder 3, Jacob Lawrence Papers, Special Collections Library, Syracuse University; "Openings of the Week," *The New York Times*, November 24, 1940.
[94] That Black Mountain College (BMC) was chosen as one of about six such institutions was in part due to the efforts of Clark Foreman, sociology professor at BMC and former Rosenwald Fund officer from 1935-1943, who was a leader in pushing for integration at BMC in the 1940s. In total, the Rosenwald spent $3400 in funding to support this program of integration, which supported both undergraduate scholarships that allowed Black students to attend BMC, along with funds to cover the salaries of Black faculty like Lawrence, Roland Hayes, and others. Interestingly, the Rosenwald had a direct hand not just in funding but in selecting the first Black student that attended BMC, Alma Stone Williams. Williams, a recent graduate of Spelman College and recently hired faculty at Fort Valley State College, wanted to attend Julliard to continue her studies, and applied for a Rosenwald fellowship in 1944 for that purpose. As Williams later recalled it, "Upon application to the Rosenwald Fund for financial support, I learned that the Fund and President Horace Mann Bond of Fort Valley would approve the fellowship if I chose to attend Black Mountain College instead. I put plans for Juilliard on hold and applied for the 1944 Music Institute at Black Mountain." Alma Stone Williams, "My Black Mountain Summer: A Personal Account," *Appalachian Journal* 44/45 (2017): 584; see also Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, 276.
[95] Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, 142, 136.
[96] Embree and Waxman, 133–34.

especially *unraced* is proven, in Embree's account, by Drew's success; his fellowship contributed to his development of a groundbreaking new method for storing blood plasma, which Embree described as a technology "developed by a Negro for the benefit of all mankind," used to save the lives of Black and White soldiers alike on the battlefields of World War II.[97]

Embree went on to narrate the story of Ralph J. Bunche, political scientist and diplomat, who eventually won the Nobel Peace Prize for his work as a United Nations mediator during the late 1940s. Embree noted Bunche's leadership within the ranks of civil service as well as international diplomacy: "When the Second World War came," Embree states with typical dramatic relish, "and his country needed a specialist…he was called."[98] Bunche's service, in this line of argumentation, reflected the growing participation of Black Americans in national as well as international affairs—"not as Negro leaders but as specialists and citizens of the world."[99] The path toward global citizenship, unqualified by any marker, lay through the gate of expertise, Embree implied. Becoming a specialist would accord a new kind of status, membership in a group—what Embree elsewhere called the "creative minority"—that would transcend nation as well as race.[100] Thus recuperating the idea of the "minority" as a vanguard rather than an excluded group, Embree also framed its creation as effecting, if not dependent on, the elimination of race itself—which is implicitly positioned as a social division and a barrier to the pursuit of knowledge that can be understood as "universal."

The creative minority idea thus helps to explain the Rosenwald's outsize efforts on behalf of select fellows like Lawrence. At the same time, it also sheds light on the limitations that the Rosenwald's beliefs built into its conception of social change. The JRF drastically overestimated, for one thing, the power of the creative minority—assuming that institutions, recognizing the universal truths that this vanguard would reveal, would naturally and easily fall into line. We know, of course, that this was not always the case: that after Rosenwald Levy donated one portion of *The Migration Series* to MoMA, for example, the museum largely resumed a policy of meager attention to Black artists, as Charlotte Barat and Darby English have recently illuminated—entering a period in which outside donations of the kind that brought Lawrence's work to MoMA largely substituted for a strong and consistent acquisition policy for the work of Black artists.[101] We also know that the only Black faculty (and students) at Black Mountain College in the 1940s were supported by Rosenwald funding, and that its integration efforts largely ended by the late 1940s. The JRF, then, arguably created conditions of dependence that constrained these institutions' efforts toward addressing the systemic inequities at their cores.

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[97] Embree and Waxman, 134.
[98] Embree and Waxman, 143.
[99] Embree and Waxman, 142.
[100] Embree and Waxman, 218.
[101] Barat and English describe the period in which MoMA acquired *The Migration Series* as inflected also by wartime exigencies, leading to a contradictory need to condemn segregationist policies broadly, even if these policies were followed in practice within the museum. Despite these ironies, the wartime years saw "an engagement—at the levels of advocacy, exhibition, and acquisition—with black artists and the fraught conditions of racial blackness that would not recur until the late 1960s." The longer history that Barat and English uncover also illuminates the way that Lawrence's work functioned, even decades later, as a kind of substitute for more vital engagements with Blackness and Black artists; around the time of the re-exhibition of Lawrence's series in 1995, MoMA rejected opportunities to forge meaningful and long-term relationships with the Black communities that it had historically sidelined, in favor of an "approach focused wholly on drumming up enthusiasm about the Lawrence show and other 'black content' it might have to offer." See Darby English and Charlotte Barat, "Blackness at MoMA: A Legacy of Deficit," in *Among Others: Blackness at MoMA*, ed. Darby English and Charlotte Barat (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2019), 38–41, 42, 87.

Allowing institutions to defer their desegregation programs, the financial restructuring and social reckoning they would entail, the Fund also implicitly sanctioned the idea that a "third party"—a kind of third sector supplement—should be responsible for "resolving" issues of institutional racism.[102]

The vision of the world that would be built by the creative minority, moreover, fell victim to the same flawed logic that many critics and scholars have identified with other post-racial utopias. Rather than seeing race as an organizing logic at the very foundation of institutions and social lives, the JRF understood it as a kind of elective category of identity, saw struggles against racism as able to be resolved seemingly in an instant, and framed cultural engagement with racial identity evidence of an outdated, or even dangerous, attachment to the divisiveness of racial difference.[103] Discernible in these ideas is the Chicago-school social ecology of Charles S. Johnson, which held that assimilation was a sociological inevitability; Black culture would naturally dissolve into the implicitly White mainstream through the workings of many large-scale, organic processes. This dissolution, moreover, was not just fact but goal—an idea that implicitly sanctioned the assumption that the White mainstream was a cultural ideal.

Of course, these were not necessarily convictions shared by all the Rosenwald's officers, and certainly not by all its fellows. Lawrence, for his part, was developing a decidedly different set of views about the relationship of Black experience and art over the course of the 1940s; although positioned as a member of the "creative minority," in other words, he was nevertheless not contained by it or its implied role. He insisted, rather, that his task was to "paint the things I know about and the things I have experienced…to paint the American Negro working class"—to spotlight the truths that emerged from the specificity of Black lives, and especially from the working-class Black experience, rather than to try somehow to transcend or dissolve them into a "greater" human experience.[104]

Notably, Lawrence used precisely the same vocabulary that the Rosenwald did to describe his set of ideas—claiming that deep and broad illumination of Black life was what gave it "universality." Reflecting specifically on *The Migration Series*, Lawrence wrote in 2000, "I painted the Great Migration Series when I was a young man…I know now, from decades of further experiences, that these paintings tell an even larger, universal story. This is important because, for me, a painting should have three things: universality, clarity, and strength. Clarity and strength so that it may be aesthetically good. Universality so that it may be understood by all

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[102] Historian E. Masghati has made a similar argument in her examination of the role of the Rosenwald Fund in the career of anthropologist Allison Davis, who, with Rosenwald backing, integrated the University of Chicago's faculty in 1942. Masghati points out the fact that the Rosenwald's desegregation campaign allowed universities to outsource their integration efforts, and sanctioned the idea that such programs required little to no financial commitment. As one consequence of this idea: "most African American scholars hired in the late 1940s at majority white universities held temporary appointments, some only for a single semester or even a single class"—even at a moment when tenure-track jobs were becoming the norm in academic hiring. See E. Masghati, "The Patronage Dilemma: Allison Davis's Odyssey from Fellow to Faculty," *History of Education Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (November 2020): 581–610, especially 608-609.

[103] See Derek Conrad Murray, "Post Post-Black: Some Politically Incorrect Thoughts on the Reception and Contemplation of African-American Art," *Art Journal* 66, no. 4 (2007): 112–14; Ta-Nehisi Coates, "There Is No Post-Racial America," *The Atlantic*, June 23, 2015, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/07/post-racial-society-distant-dream/395255/; Jessica L. Horton and Cherise Smith, "The Particulars of Postidentity," *American Art* 28, no. 1 (2014): 2–8.

[104] Jacob Lawrence, "My Opinion About Painting," *A.L.A. [Artists League of America] News*, no. 2 (1946): [2].

men."[105] Elsewhere he rejected the idea that racial difference was irreconcilable with this kind of universality: "If I can speak, and if my paintings have to make a statement dealing with all mankind I think it has to be done from the Negro point of view."[106] He insisted, in other words, on Blackness as a way of experiencing and knowing the world that was vital in itself—not something that would be left behind as a creative minority pursued an exit path of excellence, expertise, or "universal" truth. At the same time, he held on to the term "universal," as a way of insisting on the Black experience's cogency within many contexts. In much the same way that his work met but also pushed beyond the Rosenwald's criteria for its artist-fellows, Lawrence managed to enrich the meaning of "the universal"—not by dispensing with it, but by expanding it from within.

Conclusion

When asked about his Rosenwald fellowships later in his life, Lawrence was always clear about their impact on his career—not just that he would not have been able to make work like *The Migration Series* without Rosenwald support, but that he likely would not have been able to pursue artmaking as a profession. As he put it in 1992, "if you don't get this kind of support (except those artists who are fortunate to have a patronage outside of a foundation), if you don't get this kind of support then most of us are forced to do other kinds of work in order to support our art."[107] As I hope to have shown, the Rosenwald provided Lawrence with financial resources at a critical point in his career—precisely the period that the JRF hoped to target in its fellows' journeys, in which it could make "the difference between giving up and going on."[108] Rosenwald fellowships made it possible for Lawrence to rent his first studio, to travel to the American South for the first time in his life, to complete three planned series and several other themes. It made a number of other kinds of resources available to Lawrence, too—facilitating the collection of his works by a major museum and his hiring by an important institution of modern art. The close working relationship between the JRF and the Guggenheim Foundation even sheds light on the continued success Lawrence found in securing non-profit funding, including the Guggenheim fellowship he won in 1945. Not least, of course, the representational space that the Rosenwald helped to create for Black art in the 1940s brought Lawrence's work into focus—highlighting especially its grounding in research and its clear relevance to an existing social context.

Such a path might seem to shore up the idea, in circulation since the JRF itself claimed it in 1948, that Lawrence was one of the exemplars of its Fellowship Program—whose art could be looked to a model of what kind of work the Rosenwald supported and fostered. As I hope to have shown, however, this idea is both true and not-quite-true—it captures only half the story. While Lawrence certainly fulfilled the various expectations and demands for Rosenwald fellows—filling out its application successfully (three times), completing distinct "projects" within its year-long timeframe, conducting careful research and (at least once) traveling to conduct "fieldwork"—he also went beyond these expectations, exceeding the JRF's demands in various

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[105] Jacob Lawrence to Jane Lang, May 12, 2000, Jacob Lawrence and Gwendolyn Knight Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

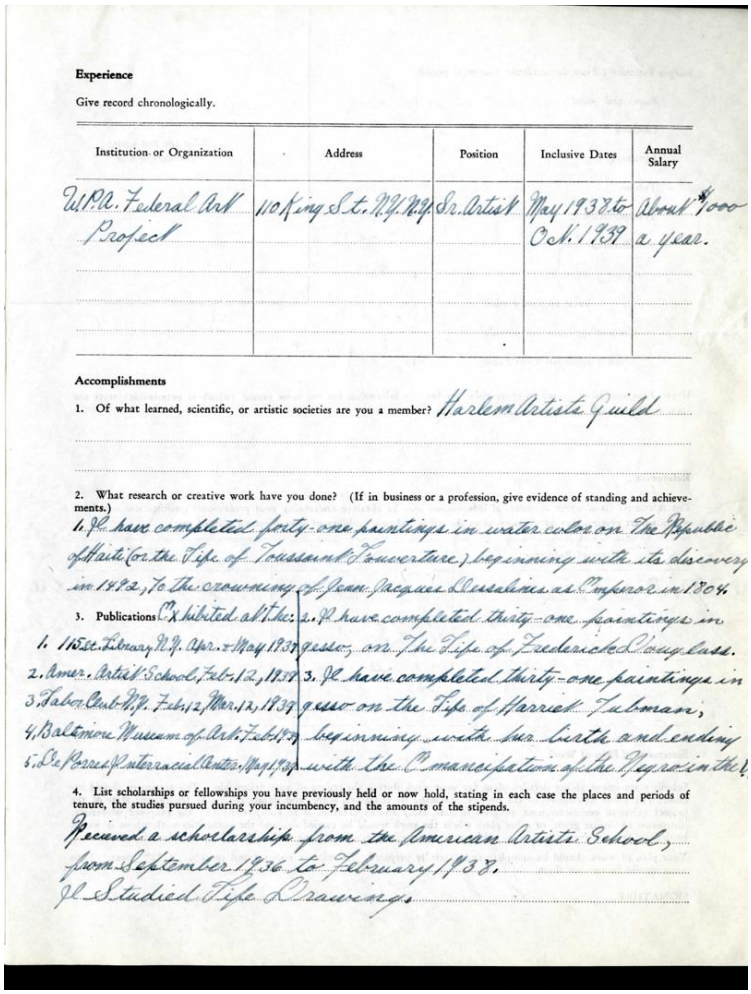
[106] Jacob Lawrence, Interview with Jacob Lawrence, interview by Carroll Greene, October 26, 1968, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-jacob-lawrence-11490#transcript..

[107] Lawrence, Interview with Jacob Lawrence, October 3, 1992.

[108] See Embree and Waxman, 154, and early discussions of the Fellowship Program, in which the targeting of artists' "creative periods" was discussed: "Docket of Business, Conference of Trustees and Guests," April 29, 1928, Julius Rosenwald Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago.

ways. In so doing, he proved less willing to be contained by the Rosenwald's representational space than we might expect of an "exemplar" of its Fellowship Program—and, moreover, demonstrated a means by which its narrowness and conditioning could be resisted without rejecting it entirely, by a kind of expansion-from-within. His Rosenwald story, in other words, is not just a lesson in what we can learn from considering his work through the lens of non-profit funding generally, or the JRF specifically—what new light seeing Lawrence as a fellow casts on his work. His work also allows a lens through which we can examine the JRF itself more closely—its aspirations as well as its limitations, its idealistic promise as well as the areas where its ambitions fell short. We're able to see, most importantly, the work of many of its fellows not as products of its discipline or direction, but instead as rewritings of it from within—reinterpretations of its remit that have the capacity to overflow the space that had been imagined for it.

Chapter One Figures



Experience

Give record chronologically.

Institution or Organization	Address	Position	Inclusive Dates	Annual Salary
W.P.A. Federal Art Project	110 King St. N.Y.N.Y.	Sr. Artist	May 1938 to Oct. 1939	About $1000 a year.

Accomplishments

1. Of what learned, scientific, or artistic societies are you a member? Harlem Artists Guild

2. What research or creative work have you done? (If in business or a profession, give evidence of standing and achievements.)

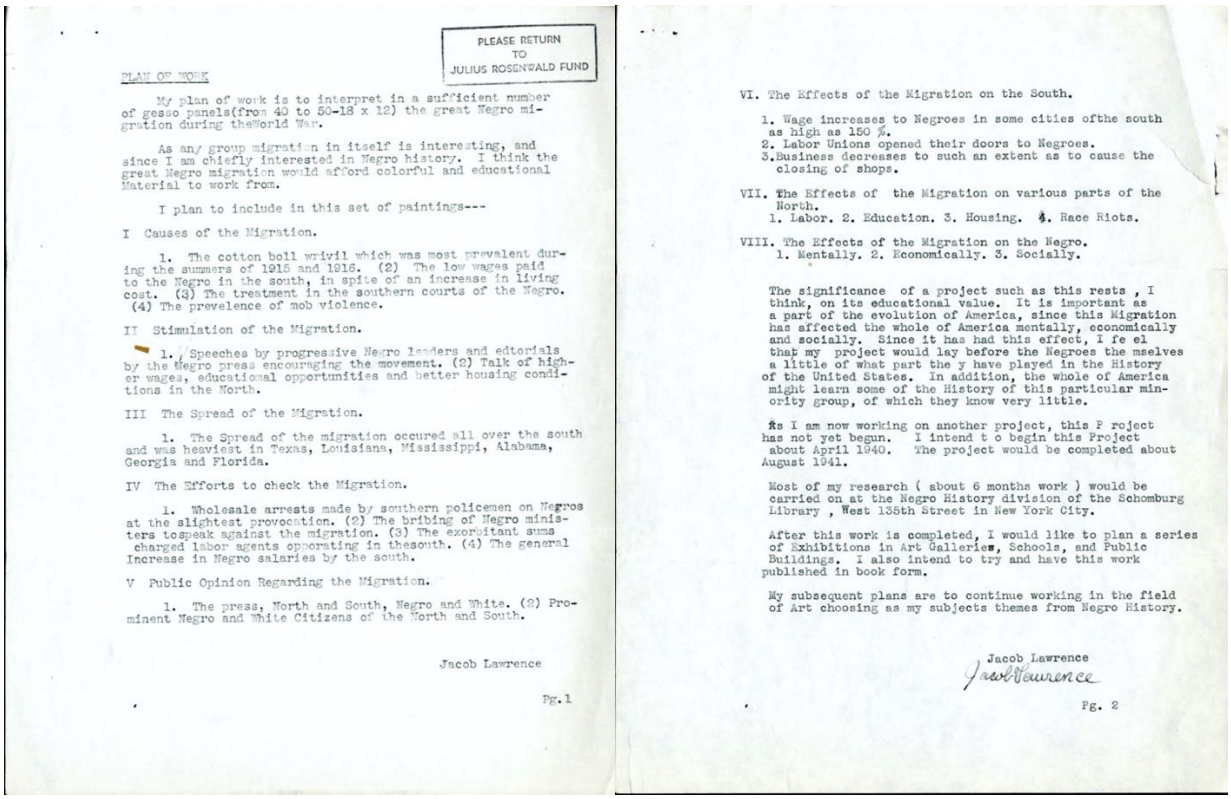
I. Ø have completed forty-one paintings in water color on The Republic of Haiti (or the Life of Toussaint Louverture) beginning with its discovery in 1492, to the crowning of Jean Jacques Dessalines as Emperor in 1804.

3. Publications (X hibited at the: 2. Ø have completed thirty-one paintings in
1. 135th. Library N.Y. Apr. 7 May 1939 gesso on The Life of Frederick Douglass.
2. Amer. Artist School, Feb. 1-2, 1939 3. Ø have completed thirty-one paintings in
3. Tabor Club N.Y. Feb. 12 Mar. 12, 1939 gesso on the Life of Harriet Tubman,
4. Baltimore Museum of Art. Feb. 19 beginning with her birth and ending
5. De Porres Interracial Center, May 1939 with the Emancipation of the Negro in the

4. List scholarships or fellowships you have previously held or now hold, stating in each case the places and periods of tenure, the studies pursued during your incumbency, and the amounts of the stipends.

Received a scholarship from the American Artists School, from September 1936 to February 1938.
Ø Studied Life Drawings.

Fig. 1.1
Page from Jacob Lawrence's 1940 Rosenwald Fellowship Application Blank.
Box 429, Folder 1, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archives, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University, Nashville, TN.



PLEASE RETURN
TO
JULIUS ROSENWALD FUND

PLAN OF WORK

My plan of work is to interpret in a sufficient number of gesso panels(from 40 to 50-18 x 12) the great Negro migration during theWorld War.

As any group migration in itself is interesting, and since I am chiefly interested in Negro history. I think the great Negro migration would afford colorful and educational Material to work from.

I plan to include in this set of paintings---

I Causes of the Migration.

1. The cotton boll wrivil which was most prevalent during the summers of 1915 and 1916. (2) The low wages paid to the Negro in the south, in spite of an increase in living cost. (3) The treatment in the southern courts of the Negro. (4) The prevelence of mob violence.

II Stimulation of the Migration.

1. Speeches by progressive Negro leaders and edtorials by the Negro press encouraging the movement. (2) Talk of higher wages, educational opportunities and better housing conditions in the North.

III The Spread of the Migration.

1. The Spread of the migration occured all over the south and was heaviest in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and Florida.

IV The Efforts to check the Migration.

1. Wholesale arrests made by southern policemen on Negros at the slightest provocation. (2) The bribing of Negro ministers tospeak against the migration. (3) The exorbitant sums charged labor agents opporating in thesouth. (4) The general Increase in Negro salaries by the south.

V Public Opinion Regarding the Migration.

1. The press, North and South, Negro and White. (2) Prominent Negro and White Citizens of the North and South.

Jacob Lawrence

Pg.1

VI. The Effects of the Migration on the South.

1. Wage increases to Negroes in some cities ofthe south as high as 150 %.
2. Labor Unions opened their doors to Negroes.
3. Business decreases to such an extent as to cause the closing of shops.

VII. The Effects of the Migration on various parts of the North.
1. Labor. 2. Education. 3. Housing. 4. Race Riots.

VIII. The Effects of the Migration on the Negro.
1. Mentally. 2. Economically. 3. Socially.

The significance of a project such as this rests , I think, on its educational value. It is important as a part of the evolution of America, since this Migration has affected the whole of America mentally, economically and socially. Since it has had this effect, I fe el that my project would lay before the Negroes the mselves a little of what part the y have played in the History of the United States. In addition, the whole of America might learn some of the History of this particular minority group, of which they know very little.

As I am now working on another project, this P roject has not yet begun. I intend t o begin this Project about April 1940. The project would be completed about August 1941.

Most of my research (about 6 months work) would be carried on at the Negro History division of the Schomburg Library , West 135th Street in New York City.

After this work is completed, I would like to plan a series of Exhibitions in Art Galleries, Schools, and Public Buildings. I also intend to try and have this work published in book form.

My subsequent plans are to continue working in the field of Art choosing as my subjects themes from Negro History.

Jacob Lawrence
Jacob Lawrence

Pg. 2

Fig. 1.2
Jacob Lawrence's "Plan of Work." Box 429, Folder 1, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archives, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University, Nashville, TN.



Fig. 1.3
Jacob Lawrence, *In the North the African American had more educational opportunities.*
(*The Migration Series*, panel 58 of 60),
1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 12 x 18 inches.
The Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy, New York, NY.



Fig. 1.4
Jacob Lawrence, *As the migrant population grew, good housing became scarce. Workers were forced to live in overcrowded and dilapidated tenement houses.* (*The Migration Series,* panel 47 of 60), 1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 18 x 12 inches. The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 1.5
Jacob Lawrence, *Migrants were advanced passage on the railroads, paid for by northern industry. Northern industry was to be repaid by the migrants out of their future wages.* (*The Migration Series*, panel 5 of 60), 1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 12 x 18 inches. The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

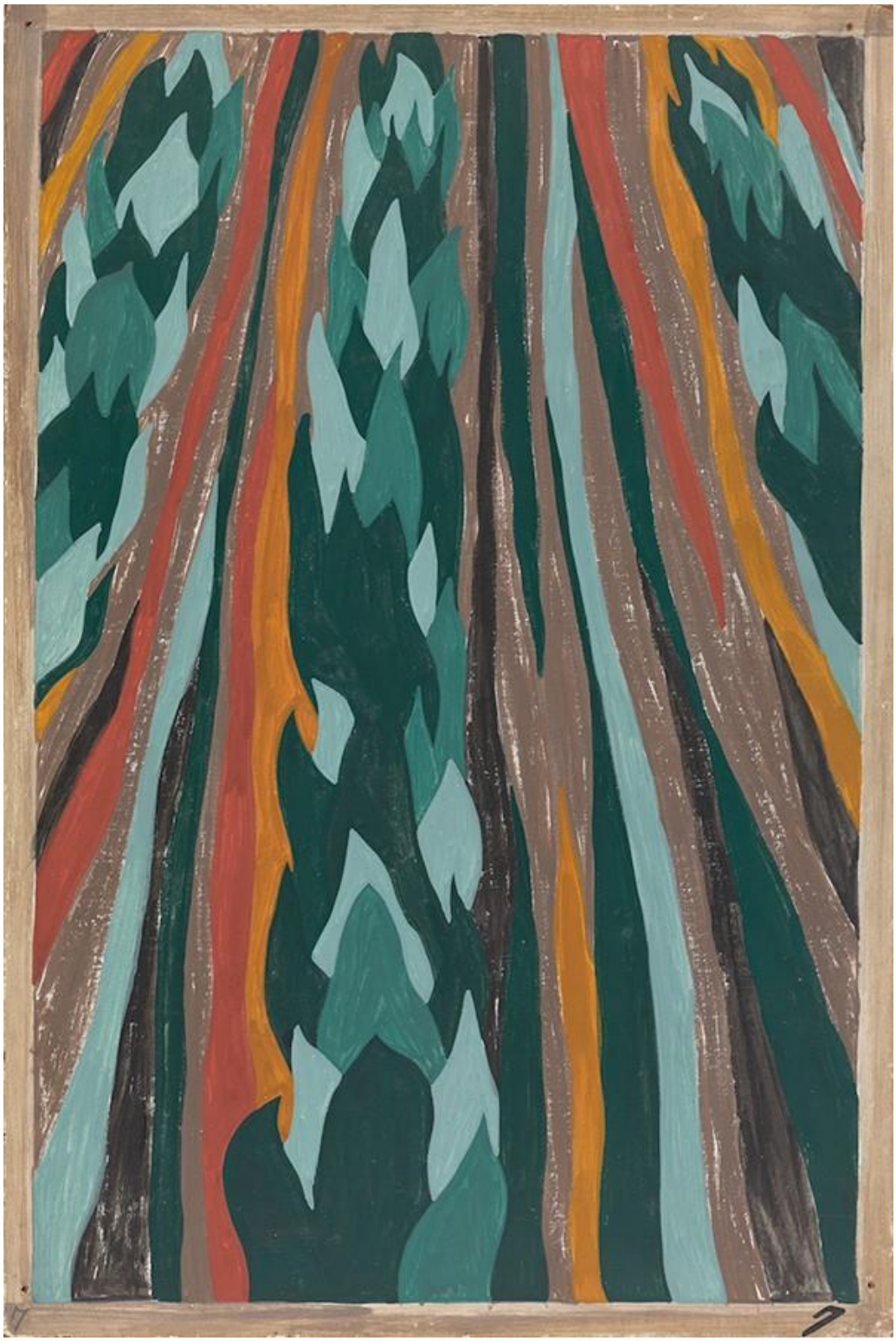


Fig. 1.6
Jacob Lawrence, *The migrant, whose life had been rural and nurtured by the earth, was now moving to urban life dependent on industrial machinery.*
(*The Migration Series*, panel 7 of 60), 1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 18 x 12 inches.
The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 1.7
Jacob Lawrence, *The trains were crowded with migrants.* (*The Migration Series*, panel 6 of 60), 1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 18 x 12 inches.
The Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy, New York, NY.



Fig. 1.8
Jacob Lawrence, *Many migrants found work in the steel industry*.
(*The Migration Series*, panel 37 of 60), 1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 18 x 12 inches.
The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 1.9
Jacob Lawrence, *They also worked on the railroads.* (*The Migration Series*, panel 38 of 60), 1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 12 x 18 inches.
The Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy, New York, NY.



Fig. 1.10
Jacob Lawrence, *They left because the boll weevil had ravaged the cotton crop.* (*The Migration Series*, panel 9 of 60), 1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 18 x 12 inches. The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 1.11
Jacob Lawrence, *But living conditions were better in the North.*
(*The Migration Series*, panel 44 of 60),
1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 12 x 18 inches.
The Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy, New York, NY.



Fig. 1.12
Jacob Lawrence, *The migrants found improved housing when they arrived north.*
(*The Migration Series*, panel 31 of 60), 1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 12 x 18 inches.
The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 1.13
Installation view of "One-Way Ticket: Jacob Lawrence's *Migration Series* and Other Visions of the Great Movement North," The Museum of Modern Art, April 3, 2015-September 7, 2016. IN2318.18. Photograph by Jonathan Muzikar.



Fig. 1.14
Installation of *The Migration Series* at the Downtown Gallery, New York, in December 1941.
Harmon Foundation Collection, National Archives and Records Administration,
College Park, Maryland.



Fig. 1.15
Jacob Lawrence, *After a lynching the migration quickened.*
(*The Migration Series*, panel 16 of 60),
1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 18 x 12 inches.
The Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy, New York, NY.

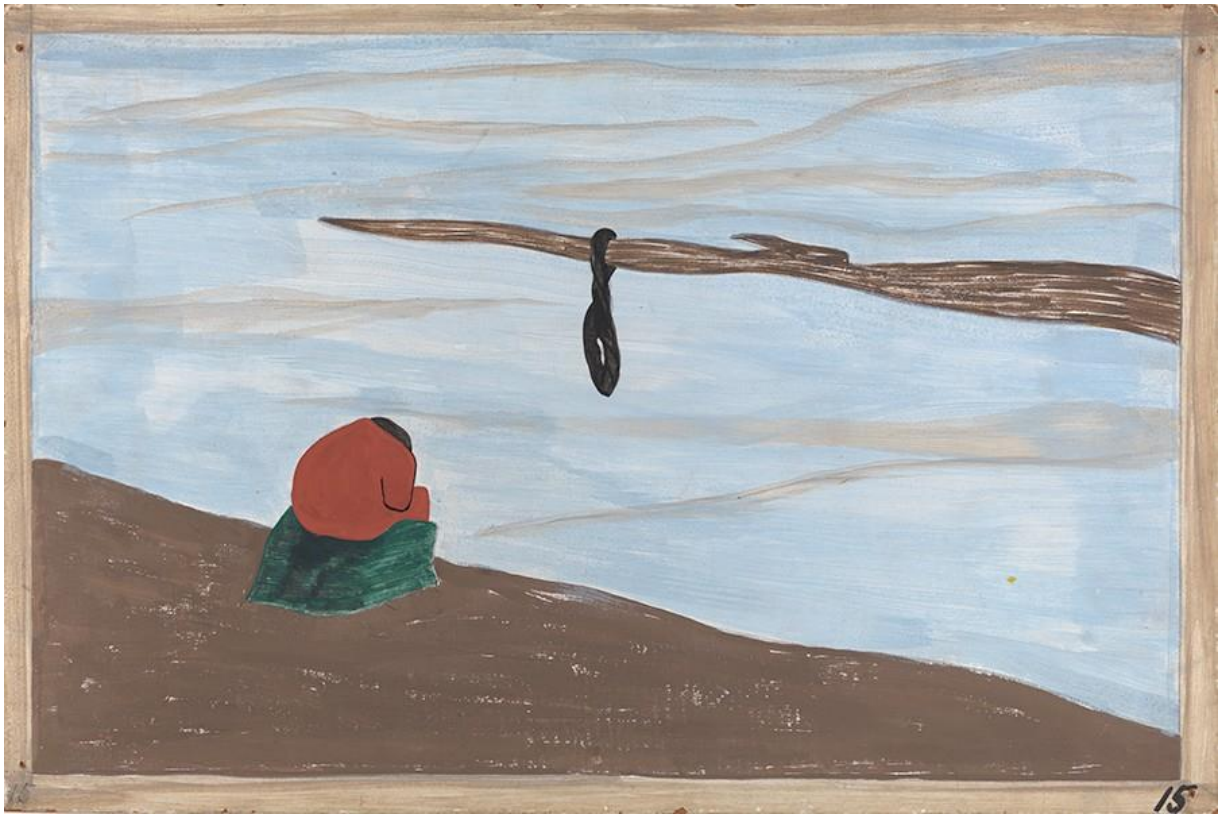


Fig. 1.16
Jacob Lawrence, *There were lynchings.* (*The Migration Series*, panel 15 of 60),
1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 12 x 18 inches.
The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

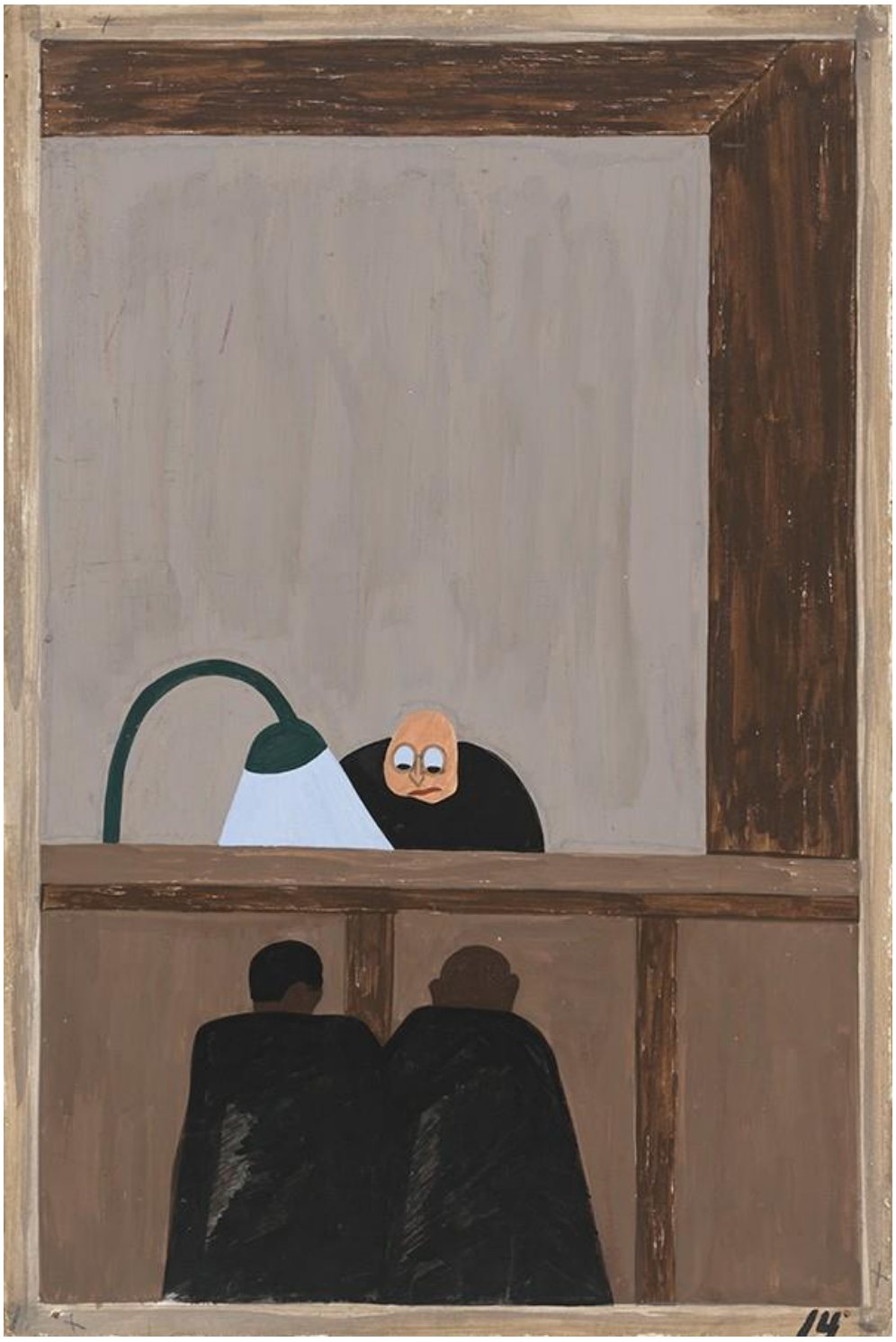


Fig. 1.17
Jacob Lawrence, *For African Americans there was no justice in southern courts.*
(*The Migration Series*, panel 14 of 60),
1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 18 x 12 inches.
The Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy, New York, NY.



Fig. 1.18
Jacob Lawrence, *And the migrants kept coming.* (*The Migration Series*, panel 60 of 60), 1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 12 x 18 inches.
The Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy, New York, NY.



Fig. 1.19
Jacob Lawrence, *To make it difficult for the migrants to leave, they were arrested en masse. They often missed their trains.* (*The Migration Series*, panel 42 of 60),
1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 18 x 12 inches.
The Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy, New York, NY.



Fig. 1.20
Jacob Lawrence, *Rampart Street*, 1941, gouache on paper, 22 11/16 x 17 inches.
Portland Art Museum, Gift of Jan de Graaff, 51.264, Portland, OR.



Fig. 1.21
Jacob Lawrence, *Bar and Grill*, 1941, gouache on paper, 16 ¾ x 22 ¾ inches. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Bequest of Henry Ward Ranger through the National Academy of Design, 2010.52, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 1.22
Jacob Lawrence, *Bus*, 1941, gouache on paper, 18 5/16 x 21 7/8 inches.
Private collection.



Fig. 1.23
Jacob Lawrence, *The Wall*, 1941, gouache on paper, 22 ½ x 18 inches.
Private collection.



Fig. 1.24
Jacob Lawrence, *Catholic New Orleans*, 1941, tempera on paper, 28 ¼ x 34 ¼ inches. University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Purchased with the aid of funds from the National Endowment for the Arts (Selected by the Committee for the Acquisition of Afro-American Art), 1971.22, Berkeley, CA.



Fig. 1.25
Jacob Lawrence, *The Green Table*, 1941, gouache on composition board, 22 ½ x 16 ½ inches. Private collection.

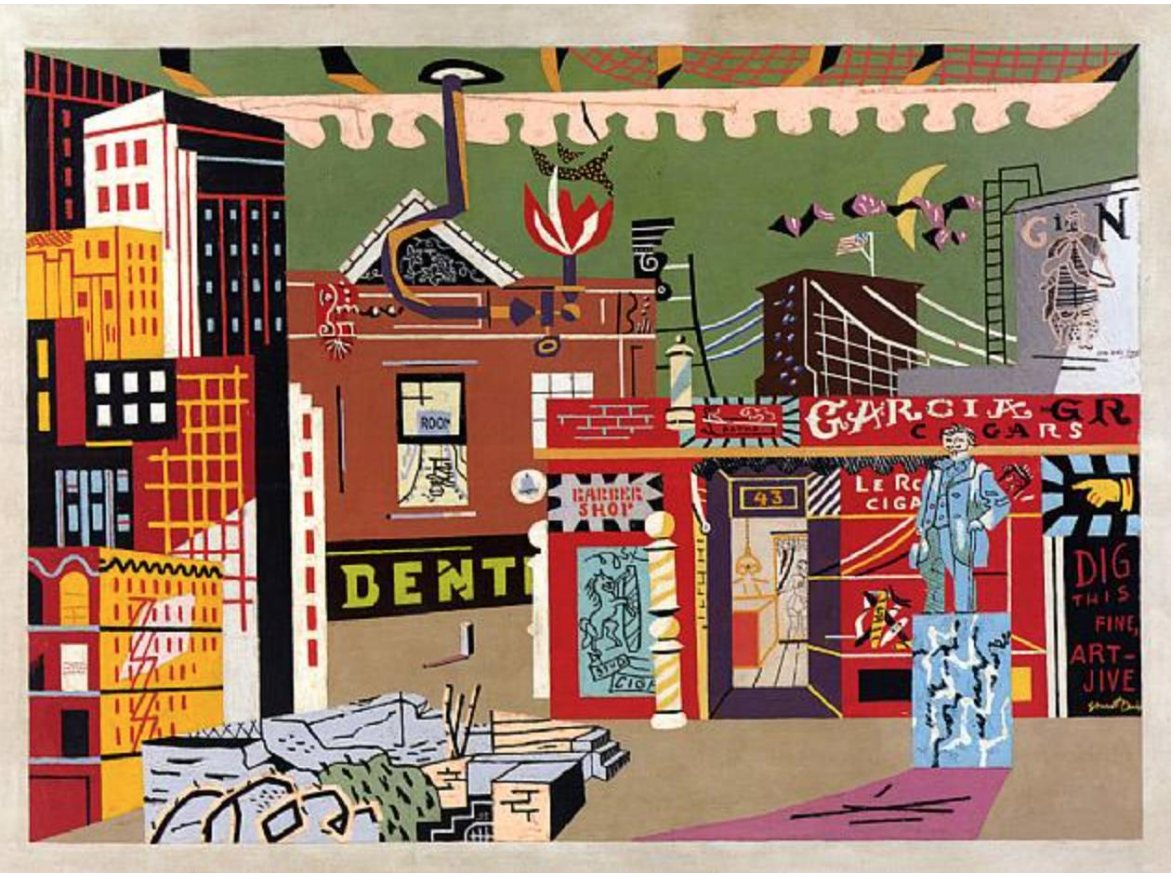


Fig. 1.26
Stuart Davis, *New York Under Gaslight*, 1941, oil on canvas, 81 x 115 centimeters.
The Israel Museum, Gift of Mrs. Rebecca Shulman, B55.05.2603, Jerusalem, Israel.



Fig. 1.27
Jacob Lawrence, *John Brown, a man who had a fanatical belief that he was chosen by God to overthrow black slavery in America* (*The Legend of John Brown*, panel 1 of 22),
1941, gouache on white wove paper, 19 ¾ x 13 11/6 inches (overall).
Detroit Institute of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Lowenthal, 55.354.1, Detroit, MI.



Fig. 1.28
Jacob Lawrence, *John Brown, after long meditation, planned to fortify himself somewhere in the mountains of Virginia or Tennessee and there make raids on the surrounding plantations, freeing slaves* (*The Legend of John Brown*, panel 13 of 22),
1941, gouache on white wove paper, 13 5/8 x 19 ¾ inches (sheet).
Detroit Institute of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Lowenthal, 55.354.13, Detroit, MI.

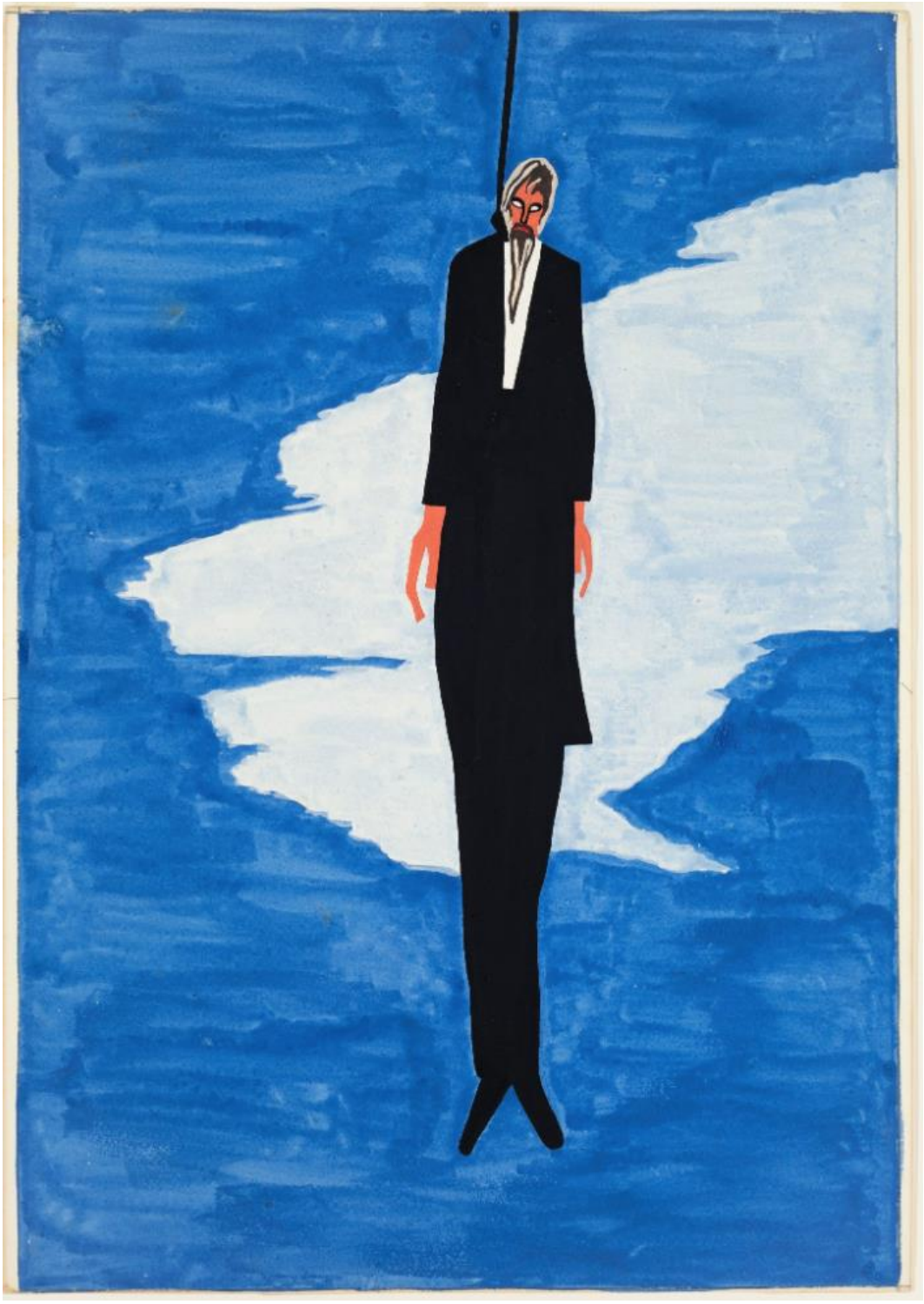


Fig. 1.29
Jacob Lawrence, *John Brown was found "guilty of treason and murder in the first degree" and was hanged in Charles Town, Virginia on December 2, 1859*
(*The Legend of John Brown*, panel 22 of 22),
1941, gouache on white wove paper, 19 13/16 x 13 5/8 inches (overall).
Detroit Institute of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Lowenthal, 55.354.22, Detroit, MI.



Fig. 1.30
Jacob Lawrence, *Untitled (Two Men in a Bar)*, 1941,
gouache and graphite (poster paint) on paper, 14 ¾ x 25 inches.
Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Jay Leyda, 87.192, New York, NY.



Fig. 1.31
Jacob Lawrence, *Rampart Street* (detail), 1941.



Fig. 1.32
Jacob Lawrence, *Sunday, October 16, 1859, John Brown with a company of 21 men, white and black, marched on Harpers Ferry* (*The Legend of John Brown*, panel 19 of 22), 1941, gouache on white wove paper, 13 5/8 x 19 ¾ inches (overall). Detroit Institute of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Lowenthal, 55.354,19, Detroit, MI.

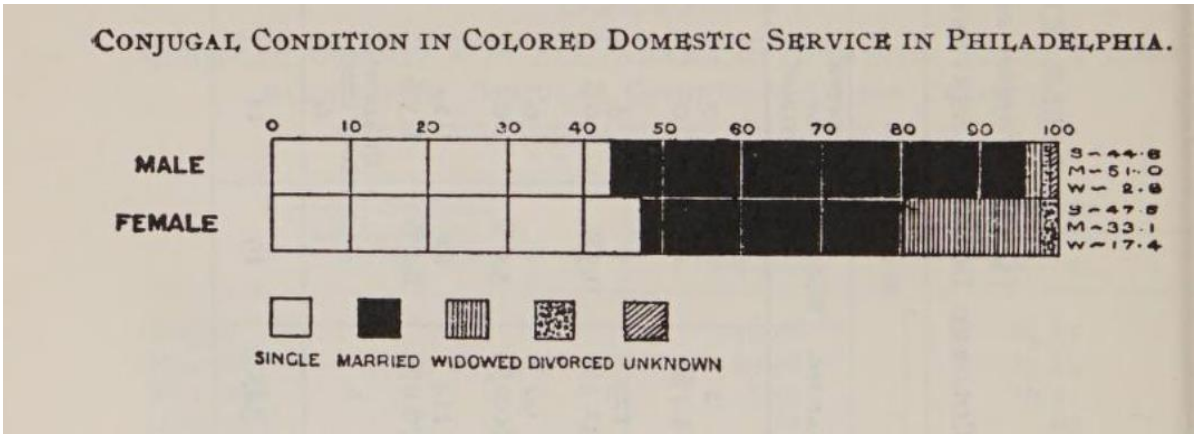


Fig. 1.33
W.E.B. Du Bois, Graphic representing "Conjugal Condition in Colored Domestic Service in Philadelphia," from *The Philadelphia Negro*
(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1899), 492.

Some of the present characteristics of the chief alleys where Negroes live are given in the following table:

SOME ALLEYS WHERE NEGROES LIVE.

	Govett's Court.	Hines' Court.	Allen's Court.	Horstman's Court.	Lombard Row.	Turner's Court.	Alley off Carver Street.	McCann's Court.	Cross Alley.
General Character	Poor.	Poor.	Very Poor.	Squalid.	Fair.	Wretched.	Fair.	Poor.	Bad.
Width, in feet	3	3-6.	6	12	9	3-12	6	12	12
Paved with	Bricks.	Bricks.	Bricks.	Bricks.	Bricks.	Bricks.	Bricks.	Bricks.	Asphalt.
Character of Dwelling . . .	Poor.	Back Yard Tenements	Back Yard Tenements	Back Yard Tenements	Fair.	Old Wooden Houses.	Old Brick Tenements	Old Brick Tenements	Wood and Brick.
Number of Stories in Houses	3	3	3	2 and 3.	3	1 to 3.	3	2 to 3.	2 to 3.
Inhabitants	All Negroes.	All Negroes.	All Negroes.	All Negroes.	Negroes and Jews.	All Negroes.	Jews and Negroes.	All Negroes.	Jews and Negroes.
Cleanliness, etc.	Fair.	Fair.	Dirty.	Dirty.	Fair.	Fair.	Fair.	Fair.	Dirty.
Width of Sidewalk . . feet.	4	5	6	None.	None.	None.	None.	None.	None.
Lighted by	No Lights.	No Lights.	No Lights.	1 Gas Lamp.	1 Gas Lamp.	1 Gas Lamp.	1 Gas Lamp.	1 Gas Lamp.	No Lights.
Privies in Common or Private	Common.	2 for whole Alley.	½ for each House.	5 in open Court.	Private.	Common.	Common.	Common.	Common.
Remarks.		Emigrants from 5th Ward slums.	Poor and Doubtful Characters.	Very Poor People.	Respectable Homes mingled with Gamblers and Prostitutes.	Many Empty Houses; Poor and Doubtful People.	"Blind" Alley; Fairly Respectable.	Poor People and some Questionable.	Some Bad Characters.

Fig. 1.34
W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*
(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1899), 308.

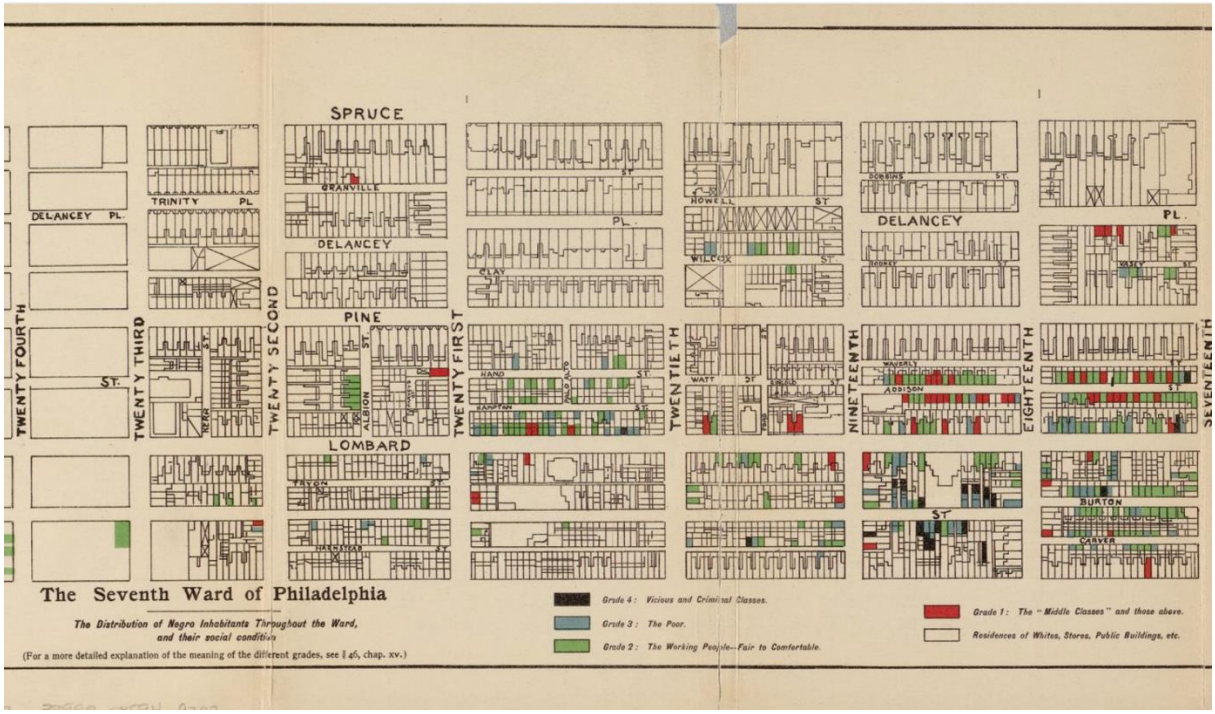
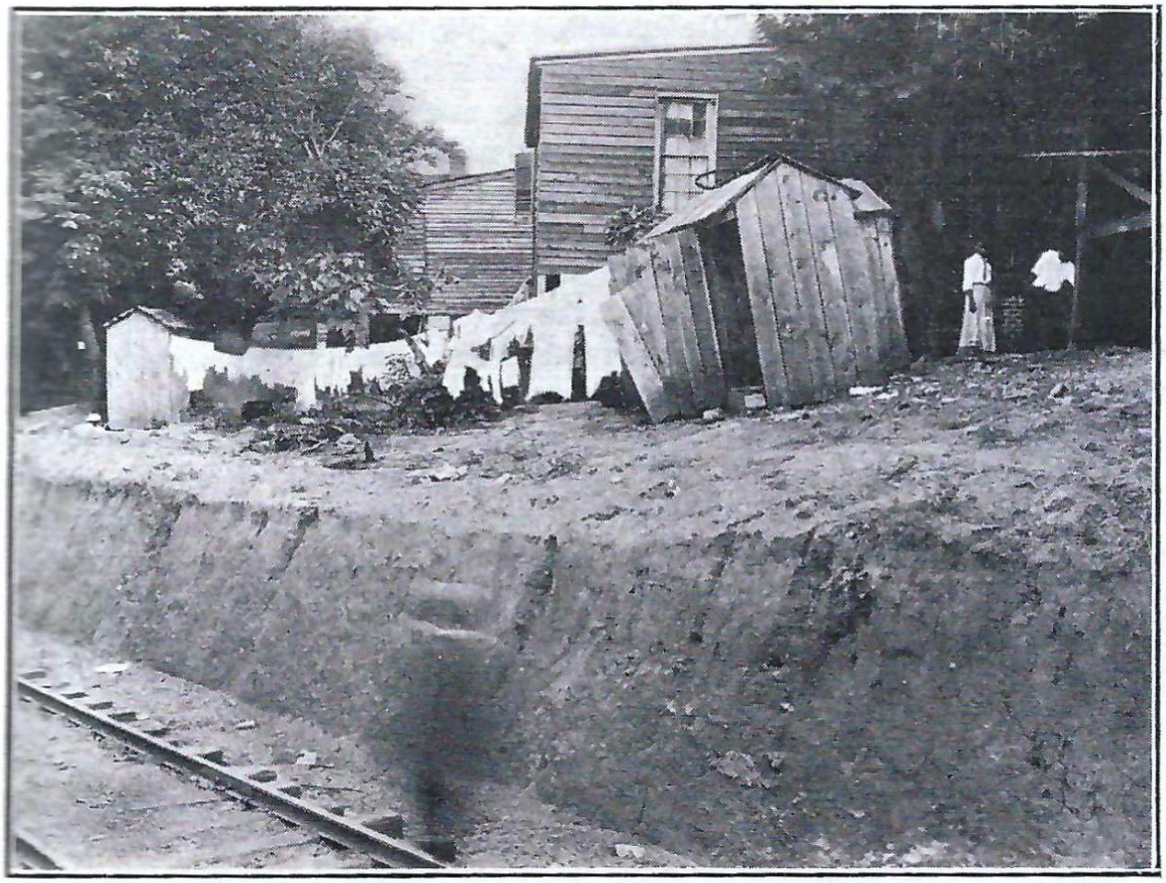
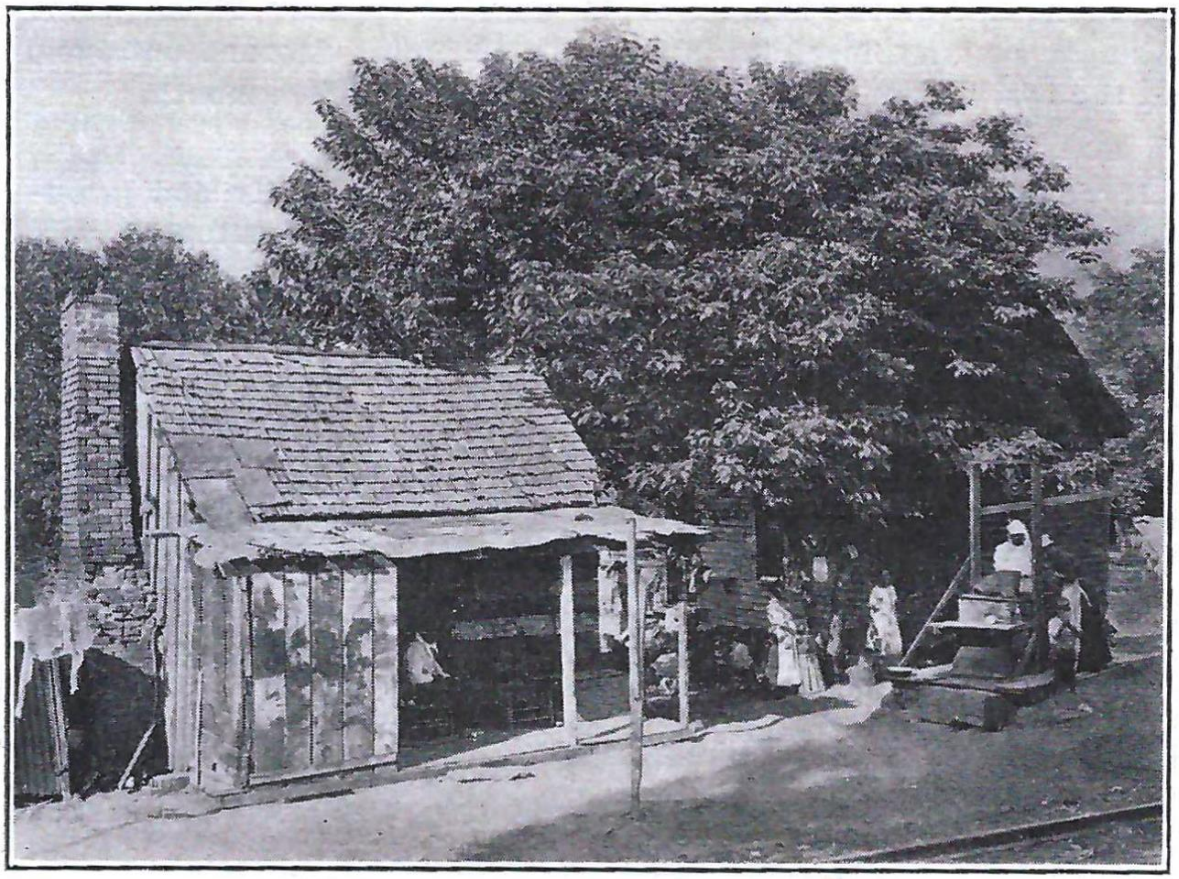


Fig. 1.35
Map of The Seventh Ward of Philadelphia (detail), frontispiece from W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1899).



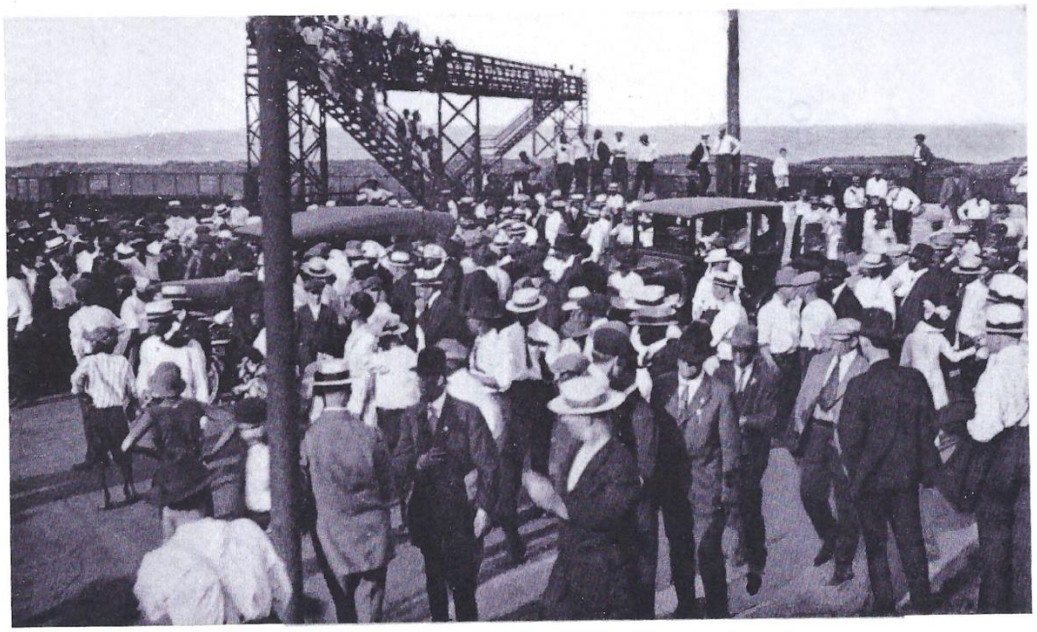
Showing the common type of privy.

Fig. 1.36
Photograph captioned “Showing the common type of privy,” from T.J. Woofter, Jr., “Phelps-Stokes Fellowship Studies, No. 1: The Negroes of Athens, Georgia,” *Bulletin of the University of Georgia* XIV, no. 4 (December, 1913), 19.



The worst type of negro house.

Fig. 1.37
Photograph captioned “The worst type of negro house.,” from T.J. Woofter, Jr., “Phelps-Stokes Fellowship Studies, No. 1: The Negroes of Athens, Georgia,” *Bulletin of the University of Georgia* XIV, no. 4 (December, 1913), 14.



CHICAGO RACE RIOT—BEGINNING OF THE RIOT

WHITES AND NEGROES LEAVING TWENTY-NINTH STREET BEACH AFTER THE DROWNING OF EUGENE WILLIAMS

Fig. 1.38
Frontispiece from *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922).



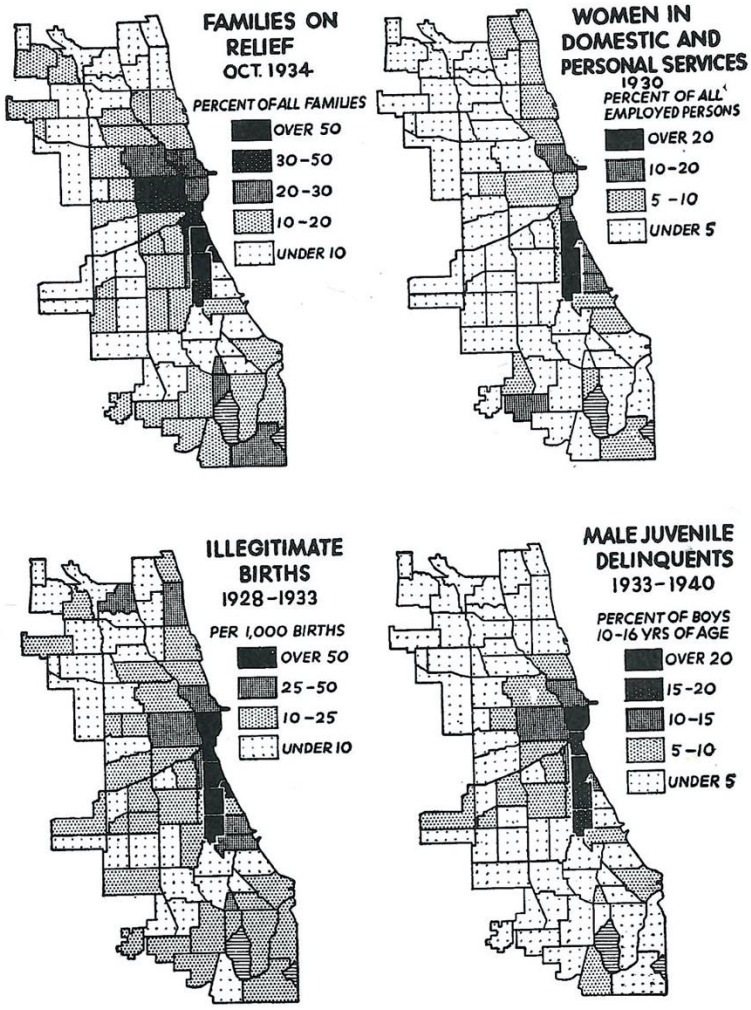
NEGRO WOMEN AND GIRLS IN A LARGE HAT-MAKING CONCERN

This shop has been partitioned for the accommodation of Negro women workers. The workshop is unattractive and the lighting extremely poor for the character of work required.

Fig. 1.39
"Negro Women and Girls in a Large Hatmaking Concern," from *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922), 384.

Figure 8

POVERTY AND SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION



The rates for families on relief and for women employed in domestic service are from Wirth and Furez, *Local Community Fact Book*. Insanity rates are from Faris and Dunham, *Mental Disorders in Urban Areas* and juvenile delinquency rates were compiled by the Institute for Juvenile Research. (The Black Belt community areas are those outlined in white.)

Fig. 1.40
Figure 8 from St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton,
Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City
(New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1970 [1945]), 203.

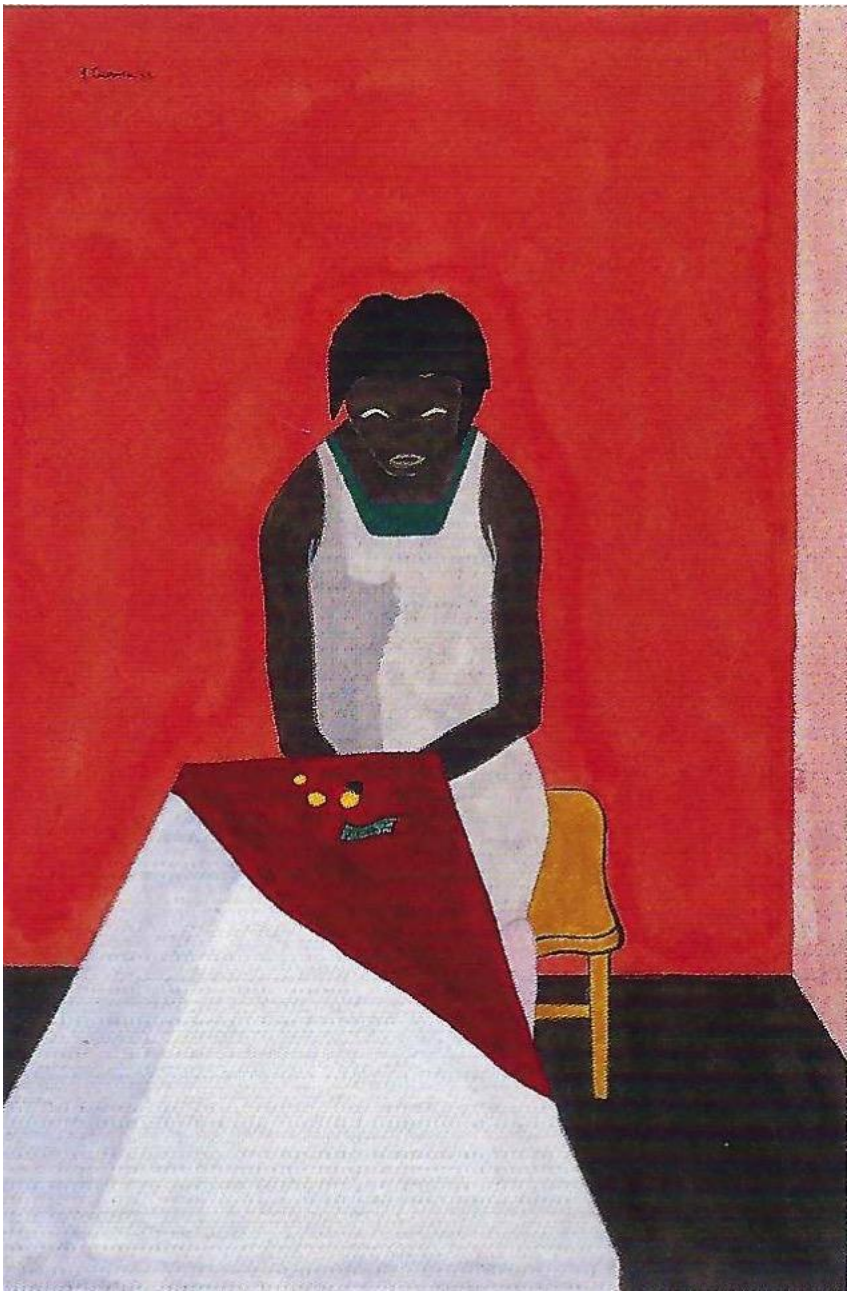


Fig. 1.41
Jacob Lawrence, *Most of the People Are Very Poor Rent is High Food is High*, 1943, gouache on paper, 22 ¾ x 15 ¼ inches.
Private collection.



Fig. 1.42
Jacob Lawrence, *They Live in Old and Dirty Tenement Houses*,
1943, gouache on paper, 21 3/8 x 14 3/8 inches (image). Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund, 43.9.1, Portland, OR.



Fig. 1.43
Jacob Lawrence, *They Live in Fire Traps*, 1943,
opaque watercolor over graphite on medium thick, textured, off-white paper, 22 11/16 x 15 ½ inches (sheet). Worcester Art Museum, Museum Purchase, 1943.14, Worcester, MA.



Fig. 1.44
Jacob Lawrence, *You Can Buy Bootleg Whiskey for Twenty-Five Cents a Quart*, 1943, gouache on paper, 14 3/8 x 21 ½ inches (image). Portland Museum of Art, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund, 43.9.2, Portland, OR.

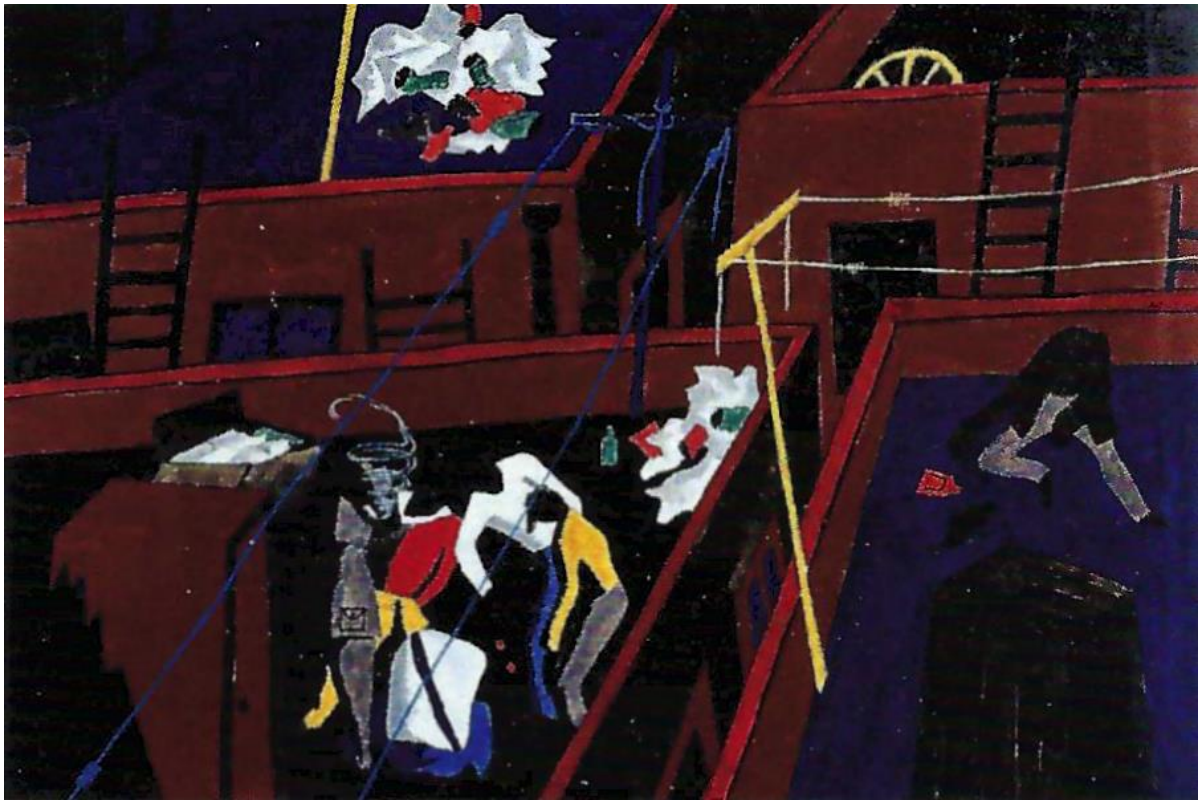


Fig. 1.45
Jacob Lawrence, *The Rooftops Seem to Spread for Miles*, 1943,
gouache on paper, 14 x 21 ¾ inches. Fisk University Art Galleries, 1991.2104, Nashville, TN.



Fig. 1.46
Jacob Lawrence, *There is an Average of Four Bars to Every Block*,
1943, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper, 15 5/8 x 22 5/8 inches.
Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Mary B. Jackson Fund, 43.565, Providence, RI.



Fig. 1.47
Jacob Lawrence, *Often Three Families Share One Toilet*, 1943,
watercolor and gouache on paper, 21 ¼ x 14 ¼ inches.
Colby College Museum of Art, The Lunder Collection, Waterville, ME.



Fig. 1.48
Jacob Riis, *"The Ship" in Hamilton Street*, 1895, modern gelatin print.
Published as "More Like the Hold of a Ship than a House on Land," in "Where Santa Claus Will Not Go," *New York Morning Journal*, Dec 22, 1895, 6.



Fig. 1.49
Jacob Riis, *Flat in Hell's Kitchen,* 1889, photographic print.
Lot 6300, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 1.50
Jacob Lawrence, *The Undertakers Do a Good Business*,
1943, gouache on paper, 21 ½ x 14 ¼ inches (image). Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund, 43.9.5, Portland, OR.



Fig. 1.51
Jacob Lawrence, *If The Family Can Afford It, Their Baby is Sent to One of the Few Day Nurseries Available*, 1943, gouache on paper, 13 ½ x 21 ½ inches.
Private collection.



Fig. 1.52
Jacob Lawrence, *Mothers and Fathers Work Hard to Educate Their Children*, 1943, gouache on paper. New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, NJ.



The kitchenette is our prison, our death sentence without a trial, the new form of mob violence that assaults not only the lone individual, but all of us, in its ceaseless attacks.

The kitchenette, with its filth and foul air, with its one toilet for thirty or more tenants, kills our black babies so fast that in many cities twice as many of them die as white babies.

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Fig. 1.53
Richard Wright and Edwin Rosskam, *12 Million Black Voices*
(New York: Viking Press, 1941), 106.
Photograph: Russell Lee, Toilet in "kitchenette" apartment house, Chicago, Ill.,
Farm Security Administration.



Fig. 1.54
Jacob Lawrence, *Interior*, 1942, gouache on ivory wove paper, 22 1/16 x 23 inches. Art Institute of Chicago, Mary and Earle Ludgin Collection, 1981.1182, Chicago, IL.

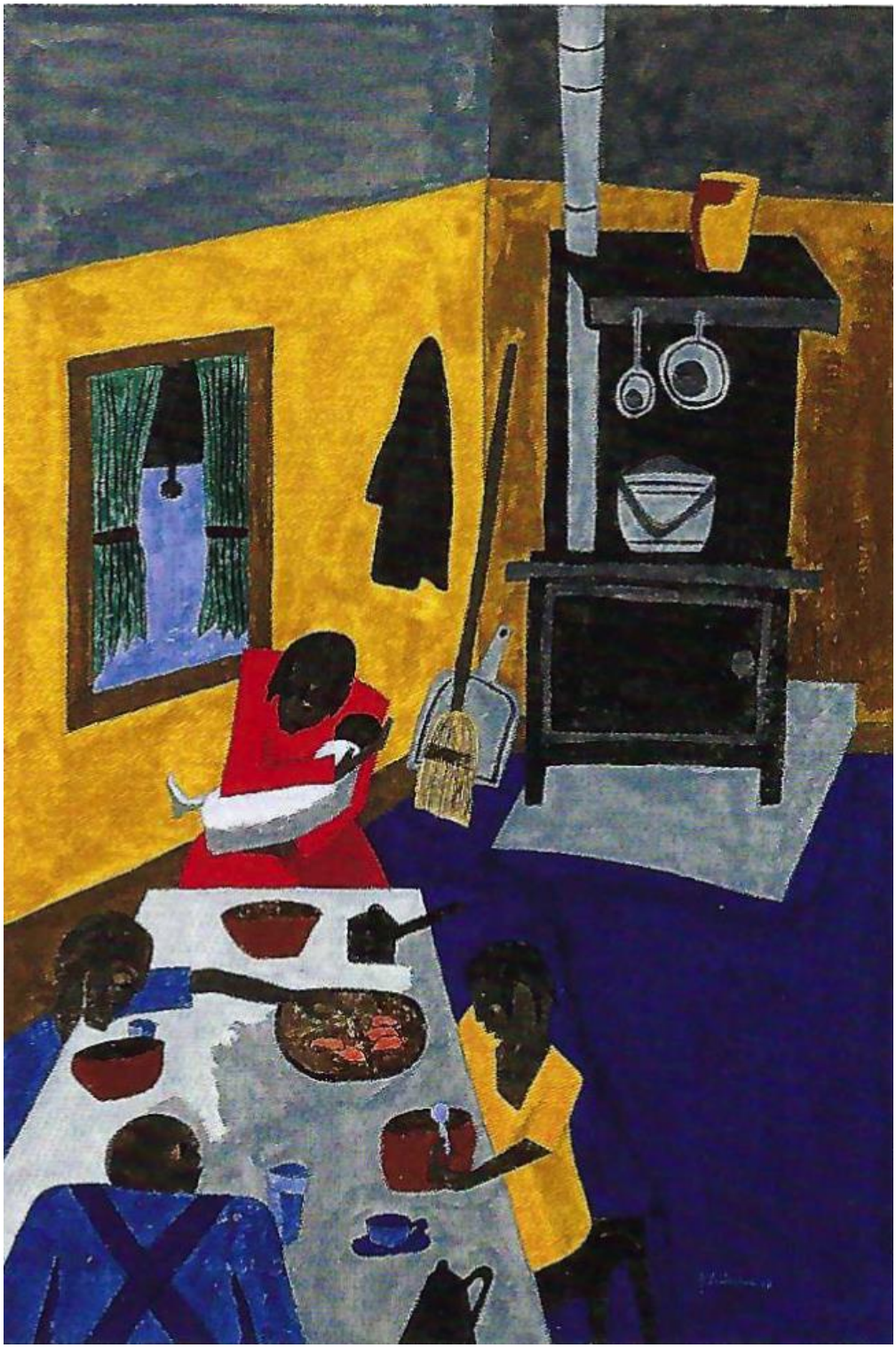


Fig. 1.55
Jacob Lawrence, *This is a Family Living in Harlem* (or *A Family*),
1943, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper, 22 5/8 x 15 5/8 inches.
The Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Mrs. Maurice Blin, 684.1971, New York, NY.



Fig. 1.56
Jacob Lawrence, *Harlem Street Scene*, 1942, gouache on paper, 21 x 20 ¾ inches.
Private collection.



Fig. 1.57
Jacob Lawrence, *Harlem*, 1942, gouache on composition board, 21 ¾ x 29 ¾ inches.
Private collection.

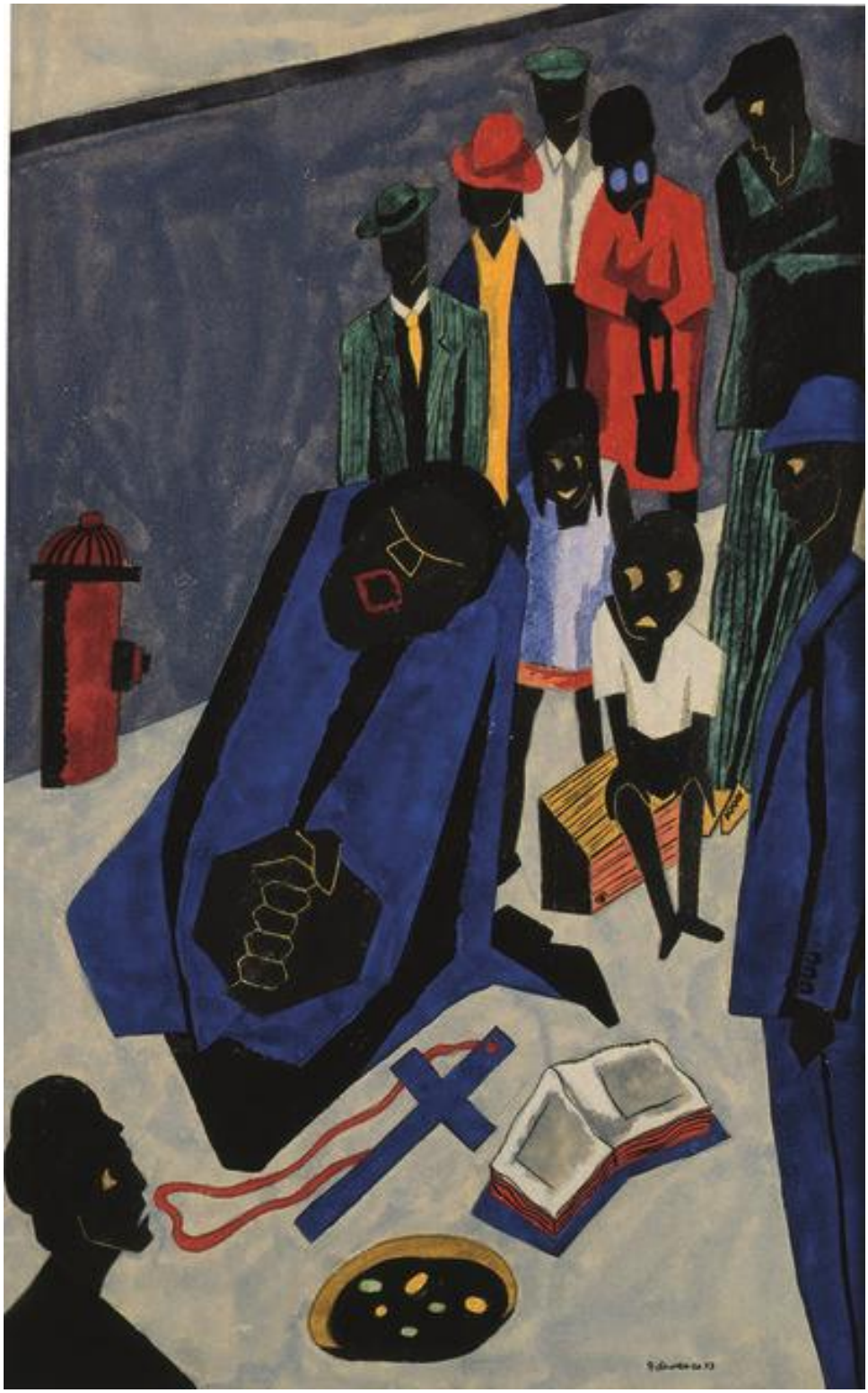


Fig. 1.58
Jacob Lawrence, *In the Evening Evangelists Preach and Sing on Street Corners*, 1943, gouache on paper, 25 x 17 inches.
Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, State University of New York, Gift of Roy R. Neuberger, 1975.16.25, Purchase, NY.



Fig. 1.59
Jacob Lawrence, *Peddlers Reduce Their Prices in the Evening to Get Rid of Their Perishables*, 1943, gouache on paper. Hampton University Museum, Hampton, VA.

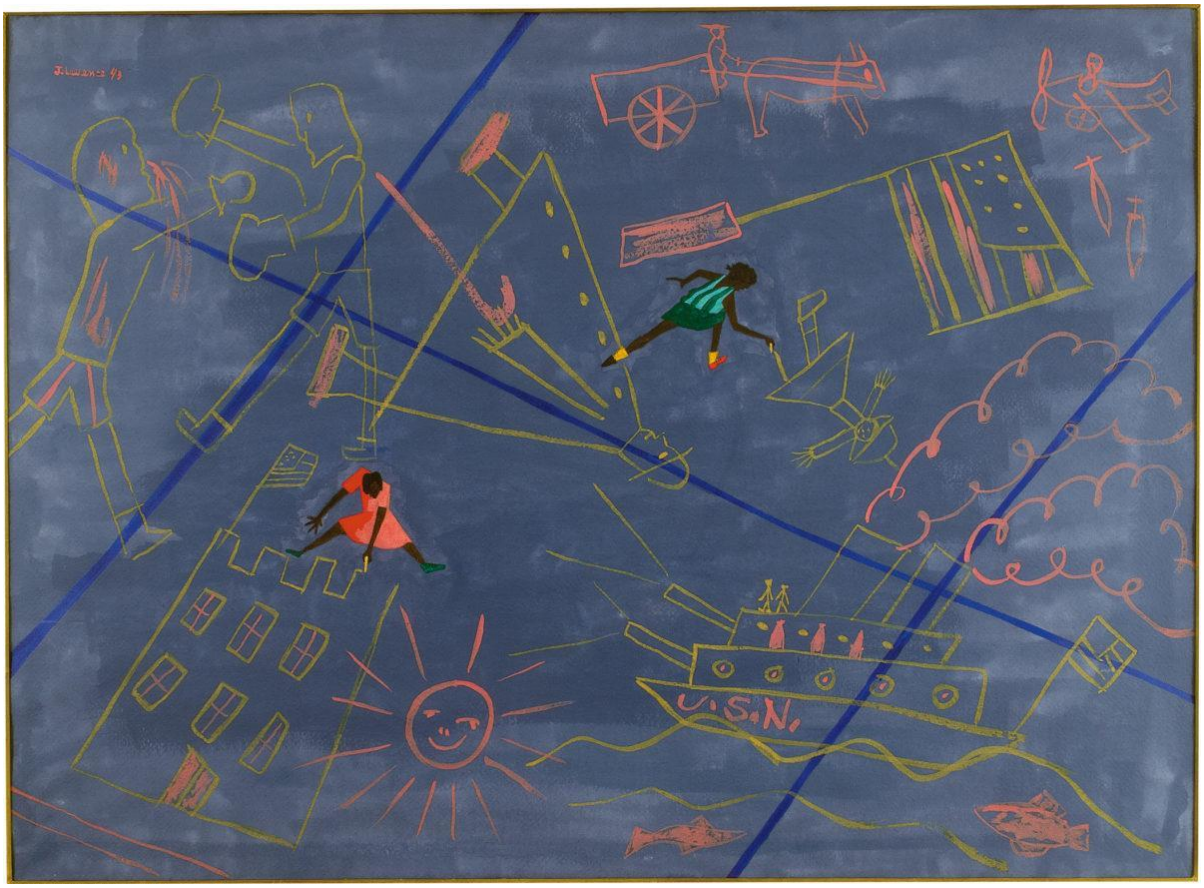


Fig. 1.60
Jacob Lawrence, *Sidewalk Drawings*, 1943, gouache on paper, 22 3/8 x 29 ½ inches.
Collection of Shahara Ahmad-Llewellyn.



Fig. 1.61
Jacob Lawrence, *When It Is Warm the Parks are Filled with People*, 1943,
opaque watercolor and graphite pencil on paper, 22 7/16 x 15 9/16 inches.
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966, 66.2922,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 1.62
Jacob Lawrence, *The Libraries Are Appreciated*, 1943,
opaque watercolor over graphite on textured cream wove paper, 13 9/16 x 20 15/16 inches.
Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Louis E. Stern Collection, 1963, 1963-181-40,
Philadelphia, PA.



Fig. 1.63
Jacob Lawrence, *At Times It Is Hard to Get a Table in a Pool Room*, 1943,
gouache and graphite on paper, 21 ½ x 14 ½ inches.
Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts, Stanford University, Gift of Dr. Herbert J. Kayden and Family in memory of Dr. Gabrielle H. Reem, 2013.92, Stanford, CA.

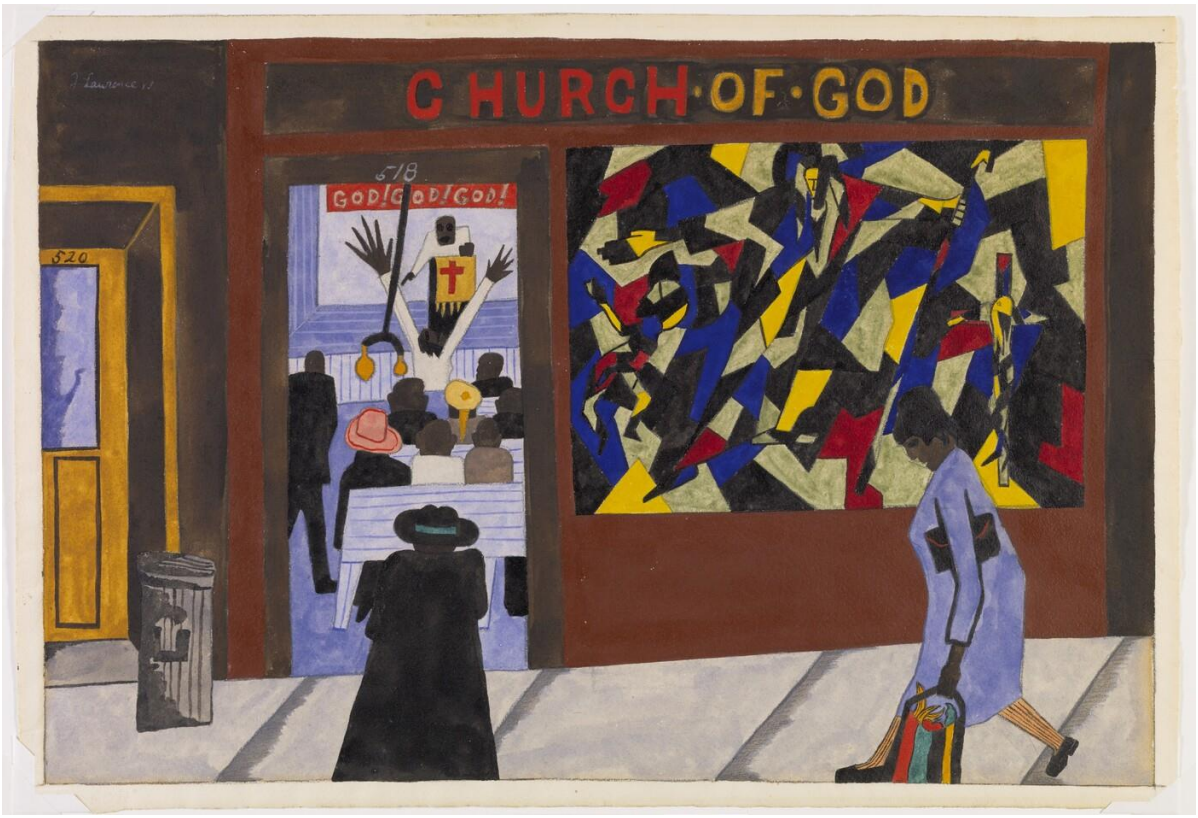


Fig. 1.64
Jacob Lawrence, *There are Many Churches in Harlem The People Are Very Religious*, 1943, transparent and opaque watercolor and tempera over graphite on paper, 15 ½ x 22 ½ inches. Amon Carter Museum of American Art, 1987.94, Fort Worth, TX.



Fig. 1.65
Jacob Lawrence, *Because of High Rents and Unfit Conditions Rent Strikes Are Becoming More Frequent*, 1942, gouache on paper, 14 x 21 inches (image).
Location unknown.



Fig. 1.66
Jacob Lawrence, *Apartment*, 1943, gouache on paper, 21 ¼ x 29 ¼ inches.
Hunter Museum of American Art, Museum purchase with funds provided by the Benwood Foundation and the 1982 Collectors' Group, 1982.10, Chattanooga, TN.



Fig. 1.67
Jacob Lawrence, *Ironers*, 1943, gouache on paper, 21 3/8 x 29 ½ inches.
Private collection.



Fig. 1.68
Jacob Lawrence, *And Harlem Society Looks On*, 1943,
gouache on paper, 15 x 21 ½ inches (image).
Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund, 43.9.3, Portland, OR.

Chapter Two
Off Track, Off the Page: Eldzier Cortor's Rerouted Rosenwald Journey

In the early months of 1946, Eldzier Cortor was at work on the canvas that would become *Americana* (fig. 2.1). In its center, in the midst of a crowded, but modestly-furnished room, stands a single Black female figure—caught at the moment she steps into, or out of, a bath. Stark in both the nudity of her body and her bold, unabashed stare, the figure acts as a focus for the room, dense with the detail of what appears to be a rural, largely unresourced, yet richly textured life. Above her head, a bundle of multicolored corn hangs to dry, while a chicken stands at her feet—signs that the figure's way of life, outside this room, is likely agricultural. Arrayed around her, meanwhile, are the accoutrements of her bath—simple wooden washtub, chipped pitcher, potbelly stove—while behind her, tattered, peeling newsprint, pasted into a jumbled collage, forms a noisy wallpaper. Although framed, even somewhat surrounded by these varied and variously-worn materials, the figure does not seem contained or overwhelmed by them; projecting a forceful presence from within her humble surroundings, the figure provides both focus and foil to what seems to be the painting's wider aim—a fine-grained accounting of life lived without modern luxury, comfort, or power.

This kind of accounting was certainly among Cortor's aims when he set out, some two years earlier, on the project that would lead to *Americana*'s creation. One of what the artist sometimes termed his "Sea Islands works," *Americana* was painted after Cortor had spent a lengthy period in the heavily rural, primarily agricultural, and almost exclusively Black community of St. Helena Island—part of the coastal region of Georgia and South Carolina collectively called the "Sea Islands." Attracted by the region's geographic remoteness, and the related perception of its cultural isolation, Cortor's goal on St. Helena had been to observe and record the particularity of life there—to create what he elsewhere called a "graphic documentary study" of the "Gullah people," using a term for Black Sea Islanders borrowed from the creolized blend of English and West and Central African languages they speak.[1] For Cortor, such a study required a particular kind of research—beyond reading about, or even merely observing, Gullah culture. As the artist put it in an application to the Julius Rosenwald Fund Fellowship Program, which financed his project, he would need to spend an extended period of time in the Sea Islands—months that he would dedicate to "living among" those he studied, "assimilat[ing] their background and mode of living."[2] If such extended co-dwelling and immersive participant-observation seems akin to ethnographic fieldwork, this was a link that Cortor claimed explicitly, making the case, later in his application, that his work would resonate with established social scientific interest in the Sea Islands—a set of images that would have both "artistic merit" and anthropological "authenticity."[3]

Cortor would later describe *Americana* as the consummate result of this extensive (field)work; the result of "months and months" if not "years" of "research," it was, in his telling, *the* "summary product" of his Sea Islands period.[4] In many ways, it's easy to see how this was the case. The painting's fine-grained, close-up detail certainly seems to index a familiarity borne

[1] Eldzier Cortor, "Report of Progress and Plan of Work," February 1945, Box 404, Folder 8, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University; Eldzier Cortor, "Plan of Work," 1944, Box 404, Folder 8, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[2] Cortor, "Plan of Work," 1944.
[3] Cortor, "Plan of Work," 1944.
[4] Eldzier Cortor to Homer Saint-Gaudens, September 20, 1947, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

of the kind of extended co-dwelling that Cortor had conducted; its careful rendering of peeling, yellowed newspaper, repurposed as decorative insulation, even calls up photographic representations of the Sea Islands taken within previous ethnographically-inflected projects, for example (figs. 2.2, 2.3). Its focus on the figure, meanwhile, reflects the particular, physiological bent of Cortor's ethnographic interest: the "racial types" that he had positioned in his Rosenwald application as his project's true focus, the "physical and racial characteristics" that he promised to render in a kind of serialized typology.[5] Focusing on the figure's singular, bare form in the way that previous typological images had—while simultaneously placing her in an environment full of carefully-rendered descriptive detail—*Americana* indeed seems to "summarize" the goals Cortor had set out for his work in the Sea Islands.

Americana was painted, however, not on St. Helena, but in a small studio-apartment on Cherry Street, in New York City's Lower East Side. Cortor moved there in August of 1945, in the middle of what was supposed to be his first year of fieldwork in the Sea Islands; it was in the Cherry Street apartment, in fact, where he would conduct the careful compositional planning and material execution of many, if not most, of the Sea Islands works. If difficult to reconcile with Cortor's original plan for an extended period of deep, immersive participant-observation, this move was in other ways representative of Cortor's Sea Islands periods—just one of several shifts, interruptions, and re-routings that had characterized his research journey. Despite the discrete, typological project he had initially proposed to the Rosenwald, and the clear outline he had provided for the research that would enable him to create it, by 1946 Cortor had seen his plans for his fellowship go off-track and off-script—stretched from a proposed one-year project into something much longer (Cortor himself included works spanning from 1944 to 1949 in the Sea Islands group), while also involving travel not only between Chicago and his field-site on St. Helena, but multiple journeys from the Sea Islands to Washington, D.C. and New York City.

In this chapter, I track these windings, delays, and re-routings, inserting them for the first time into the art historical record regarding Cortor's work in the 1940s. I do so not to re-locate his Sea Islands works, dislodging them from St. Helena and re-situating them in New York—although attention to Cortor's travels does allow us to recover some of his cosmopolitanism, the connections he managed to maintain across Chicago, New York, and D.C. art worlds during the 1940s. More important, however, is the way that attention to Cortor's travels allows us to nuance our understanding of *how* his paintings relate to the Sea Islands, its people, culture, and history. Specifically, I will argue, it allows us to revise the conventional view of his work as the "summary products" of a typological collection project, or even traditional ethnographic fieldwork. Today firmly entrenched in scholarship on Cortor, this view is rooted not just in specific turns within art history—the interest in the "artist as ethnographer" or in African "retentions" within African diasporic communities, both of which date to the 1990s—but also, and even more concretely, in Cortor's own description of his project in his Rosenwald application, widely cited across curatorial and scholarly work on his oeuvre.[6]

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[5] Cortor, "Plan of Work," 1944.

[6] Cortor's 1944 Rosenwald "Plan of Work" is cited almost universally in both extended and cursory discussions of his work in the 1940s; see Ralph M. Pearson, *The Modern Renaissance in American Art; Presenting the Work and Philosophy of 54 Distinguished Artists* (New York: Harper, 1954), 169; Elsa Honig Fine, *The Afro-American Artist: A Search for Identity* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), 168; Corinne Jennings, "Eldzier Cortor: The Long Consistent Road," in *Three Masters: Eldzier Cortor, Hughie Lee-Smith, Archibald John Motley, Jr.* (New York: Kenkeleba House, 1988), 15; Matthew Backer, "Black Spirit: Works on Paper by Eldzier Cortor" (Bloomington: Indiana University Art Museum, 2006); Twa, "Artists' Statements at Work," 427. Often, this citation is utilized to support a reading of Cortor's paintings as typological, or as delivering on the physiological focus

As I hope to demonstrate, however, this description was not a definite predictor of Cortor's research journey. Like art historian Lindsay J. Twa, I view Cortor's "plan of work" as a complex document, written before his travels and to fulfill multiple strategic goals—one that necessarily cannot, moreover, capture changes that took place *during* his fellowship period.[7] I will argue that as such changes took place within Cortor's research itinerary, they also transformed his goals for his research in the Sea Islands; by the end of his time there, his object had evolved significantly, shifting markedly away the compendium of "racial types" that he had originally promised to deliver. Influenced by his own, rerouted travel journey, Cortor in fact moved toward a critique of the reductive, essentializing nature of such typological projects. Rather than attempting to record, capture, or visually render the "physical and racial characteristics" of the Gullah people, in other words, Cortor's efforts in the Sea Islands turned elsewhere—towards an engagement with the oral traditions, material lifeways, and cooperative community practices that Black Sea Islanders had developed over centuries, in resistance to multiple forms of social, legal, and political oppression they faced.

These new interests marked a significant change to Cortor's original research plans, but they did not necessarily constitute a departure from anthropology or its ethnographic methods, so much as a shift in their aims and focus—away from physical anthropology's focus on collecting and documenting culture as a set of physical records, and towards a form of cultural anthropology, bent on engaging with culture as a set of living practices. I will argue that these shifts manifested in a different kind of ethnographic image, too. Mysterious and quasi-surrealist, compositionally complex and both visually and materially dense, Cortor's paintings are far from the type drawings or racial science photographs that had emerged as key modes for depicting so-called "racial types" across the nineteenth century. As I will demonstrate, Cortor in fact employed elements from these genres—but he did so in order to articulate his distance from the

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expressed in the 1944 Rosenwald application. This reading is in keeping with the wider shorthand view of Cortor, described most often as a painter of Black female nudes; often, the Sea Islands works are positioned as the origin-point for this career-long interest. See here Backer, "Black Spirit: Works on Paper by Eldzier Cortor"; Fine, *The Afro-American Artist: A Search for Identity*, 168; Harry Rand, *The Martha Jackson Memorial Collection* (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985), 2; M. Franklin Sirmans, "Eldzier Cortor," in *St. James Guide to Black Artists*, ed. Thomas Riggs (Detroit: St. James Press, in association with the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 1997), 121; Patricia Hills and Melissa Renn, *Syncopated Rhythms: 20th-Century African American Art from the George and Joyce Wein Collection* (Boston and Seattle: Boston University Art Gallery and University of Washington Press, 2005), 36. In its influential *Masterworks* exhibitions and catalogues of the 1990s and early 2000s, Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, which worked with Cortor in the last few decades of his life, repeatedly summarized the significance of Cortor's Sea Islands experience this way: "In 1944 and 1945, Cortor received Rosenwald Grants which enabled him to travel to St. Helena Island where he discovered the long-necked "Gullah" women, who often populate his realist paintings." See *African-American Art, 20th Century Masterworks, VI* (New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 1999); *African-American Art: 20th Century Masterworks, IV* (New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 1997); *African-American Art: 20th Century Masterworks, IX* (New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 2002). Other scholarship, including important work by Lisa Gail Collins, attends more critically to Cortor's engagement with anthropological thought, positioning him as an early investigator into the "Africanisms" that had begun to preoccupy art historians in the moment Collins was writing; see Lisa Gail Collins, *The Art of History: African American Women Artists Engage the Past* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 79–82; Collins's discussion of "Africanisms" draws heavily on the work of Robert Farris Thompson, citing his 1984 *Flash of the Spirit* along with his scholarship-in-progress at the time, Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African & Afro-American Art & Philosophy* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1984). See also Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer?," in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, eds. George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1995), 302–9.

[7] Twa, "Artists' Statements at Work."

flattening and reductive view of Black life that they articulated, as well as the systems of inscription and documentation they both required and instantiated. As in *Americana*—whose powerful, full-bodied figure cuts across varied efforts at representation within the newsprint behind her—Black life for Cortor is both more fulsome and more complicated than can be rendered on paper, documented in words, or fit into preexisting categories.

I will argue, in fact, that a substantial part of these paintings' critique of dominant modes for organizing knowledge takes place in their description of paper—a marked new interest that emerged in Cortor's Sea Islands works. I approach this preoccupation with paper with a purposefully broad lens—considering it as a metonym for Cortor's encounter with broader processes of inscription, documentation, and written representation that have characterized legal, political, and financial systems within the modern United States. Although it emerged decades before a similar preoccupation with paper among artists of the 1960s and 1970s, I will argue that Cortor saw it, too, as a critical substrate of much wider institutional systems of administration and power—and detected, in a way that many of these artists would later exploit, its simultaneous weightiness and vulnerability.[8]

Indeed, I will argue that Cortor employed what can only be called a kind of creativity in his deployment of paper in his Sea Islands period—although much of this creativity is recorded not in his artwork, but in the archives related to his professional struggles in this period. Part of my aim, then, is to bring the story of these struggles, what might otherwise be bracketed in scholarship, to bear on his artwork, and the related interest in describing paper within it—to experiment, in other words, with the possibility of broadening the scope of art historical attention. Specifically, I will work to link Cortor's new interest in paper to the professional travails that he was weathering in this period—his efforts to regain control of his artwork from various bad actors in the art world, including an eventual lawsuit against a former gallerist—tracking his increasingly ambivalent relationship with paper as he sought to wield it to his advantage in these disputes. Reflecting Cortor's growing disillusion with the art market, this ambivalence surfaces, in part, in his new preoccupation with paper in his work—as well as in his efforts to navigate the market as a self-represented artist.

My argument here is not merely biographical; I attend to this history not in order to constrict our understanding of Cortor's work in the 1940s, tethering it narrowly to his professional struggles, or to displace investigations of its ethnographic aims. While they occupied more and more of his time in the Sea Islands, and even necessitated much of the travel off of St. Helena that I described above, Cortor's disputes were not a mere "distraction" from his ethnographic fieldwork there. Rather, these experiences were a key motivation in the shift in his ethnographic focus that took place during his fellowship period—sharpening it especially to Sea Islanders' similar struggles with legal, political, and financial systems structured to disenfranchise them, including their own innovative (mis)uses of paper documents and written language. This experience, in turn, helped Cortor to contextualize his own, individual disputes within a wider historical context—and allowed him to create works with stakes equally broad. No longer confined to an accounting of the Sea Islands' "racial types," Cortor's works instead broached issues of Southern history, regional and national patterns of dispossession, and the federal responsibility for protecting Black civil rights—themes that I discuss at length in the chapter that follows.

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[8] On the importance of text, documents, and paper to turns towards institutional critique and conceptual art, see Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October* 55 (1990): 105–43.

While a critical—and until now entirely unknown—part of the artist's Sea Islands period, Cortor's legal and professional disputes were only one instance in which paper mediated the artist's struggle to assert agency within the many decades of his career, the vast majority he spent without professional representation. Narrating this history, then, becomes a way to grapple with the degree to which unequal, racist systems of representation have characterized not just legal, political, or financial, but also cultural systems in the United States—structuring especially the art market of the mid-twentieth century United States. Fellowships like the Rosenwald were imagined as a kind of reprieve or alternative to this system; funded by the nonprofit, or "third," sector, figured as separate from private or public spheres, they were seen to allow artists dedicated time to focus on their art, freed from concerns about sales, marketing, even transportation or shipment—a period that artists were able to spend in the kind of concentrated, immersive form of research that Cortor had, in fact, proposed to conduct on his own fellowship. His actual fellowship experience—diverted and rerouted, in part by his struggles with a racist art market—demonstrates that this was not always the case in practice; the kind of concentrated focus that the Rosenwald imagined for its fellows was difficult, if not impossible, for Cortor to achieve, even with the financial support it provided. Indeed, as I will argue, parts of the Rosenwald's system of value reaffirmed the reductions and essentializations of the wider art market, ultimately providing less an alternative than a supplement to it.

The Rosenwald could not provide Cortor space or time truly "freed" from the concerns of the market, in other words. This is not to say, however, that his fellowship research was a wash, a failure, or without meaningful import. The lessons he learned in the Sea Islands, rather, would prove critical for his work—not only as the start of career-long interests, including investigations into the cultural practices of African diasporic communities across the Americas and ongoing experiments with ethnographic methodologies, but also for the attitude he would adopt as he moved through the art world throughout his long career. Fiercely independent, unswayed by market-driven trends or shifts in favor, for decades Cortor remained committed to what he began in the Sea Islands—the depiction of a full, rich, and complex Black life.

Cortor's Rosenwald Project on Paper: The Constrictions of the Textual and Ethnographic

Cortor's Rosenwald application is, as I described above, cited frequently across curatorial and scholarly work on his art of the 1940s—understood to provide not only a clear, concise summary of the Cortor's plans for his fellowship, but a critical view of his wider artistic aims and objectives from his own perspective. While written in Cortor's own words, however, I would argue that this application was not a straightforward expression of his hopes or ambitions; as a set of documents that had been carefully prepared before Cortor ever began writing, rather, the Rosenwald's application forms worked in various ways to prescribe what appeared within them—including Cortor's individual project. A composite document shaped as much by the fields the Rosenwald created as by the way Cortor filled them in, then, this application helps us to understand the constructedness, and I would argue the constrictedness, of Cortor's project as rendered on paper. In this section, I examine the flattened, narrowed form this project had to take in order to appear within the application.

Cortor's Rosenwald application laid out a project with a discrete focus, a clearly articulated temporal scope, and dual artistic and social scientific stakes. Its focus would be the "racial types" that served as a wider interest across Cortor's work, and specifically those to be found among the "Gullah people" of the Sea Islands—an area appropriate for this kind of investigation given its geographic and cultural isolation, which had allowed Gullah culture to

remain "only slightly influenced by whites."[9] The range of these types Cortor promised to render in a discrete "series of pictures," focused specifically on the "particular physical and racial characteristics" of the Gullah people.[10] To accomplish this end, it would be necessary to work in a particular way—to "paint these pictures while living among the Gullahs," an experience that would facilitate what Cortor called "the assimilation of their background and mode of living," necessary for the creation of work that had both "authenticity" and "artistic value."[11] Importantly, this was not imagined as a temporary visit, but as an extended form of co-living; Cortor estimated that the project in total would require twelve months.

This crisp, delimited project, along with the social scientific vocabulary used to articulate it, emerged not only within the various fields of this application, but in direct response to their framing—in active dialogue with the spaces the application provided for candidates to describe their work, the prompts it gave them, and the assumptions this framing registered about fellowship work. The narrow focus that Cortor's plan claims, for example, could be understood to relate to the application's demand, on the very first page of the application form, for candidates to provide a "concise statement of plan of work" for their fellowship period; Cortor's discrete focus on racial types slots easily into this field, which provided room for a few words or a sentence at most.[12] This abridgement facilitated the wider replication and comparison that undergirded the selection process, too; from their application, applicant's "concise statement of plan of work" would be copied onto an even-more-condensed "digest sheet" that the Fellowship Committee reviewed as it made decisions.

In a broader sense, having work that could be described *as* a project—with a singular focus and limited scope—was necessary to become legible for the Rosenwald, and not only in order to fit within the delimited spaces of its application; those that described many different foci for a project, described aims that fell beyond what was likely to be accomplished within the fellowship's timeframe, or implied that applicants would pursue other kinds of employment, were liable to be deemed "vague," "conflicting," "uncertain"—subject to scrutiny under the Rosenwald's key criteria of either "feasibility" or "dedication."[13] The clearly-articulated duration of the project, meanwhile, responded to another field in the form, which asked for the precise dates within which it would be undertaken—its bounded scope further delineated in response to the area provided for a proposed budget, which required an itemized breakdown of the funds requested, organized by category.

Even the area arguably least constricted within the application—the required "Plan of Work" essay, where Cortor had the space to describe his project in his own words—was shaped significantly by the Rosenwald's assumptions and demands. According to the essay prompts it provided, Cortor was expected to describe his project "fully," including an account of its "character, scope, and significance" as well as an overview of its current state. He was also asked to provide its projected completion-point, a description of its finished form—even how it would fit within his wider career plans. If Cortor largely complied with these demands—describing the

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[9] Cortor, "Plan of Work," 1944.
[10] Cortor, "Plan of Work," 1944.
[11] Cortor, "Plan of Work," 1944.
[12] Cortor, "Plan of Work," 1944.
[13] Annotations, internal memos, and correspondence by Rosenwald officers reveal these to be criteria of evaluation for applicants; see Edwin R. Embree's annotation of Aaron Douglas, "Digest Sheet, "1937, Box 408, Folder 13, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University; Embree to Boas, March 26, 1935; Bontemps to Ottley, March 23, 1943; William Haygood to Registrar, November 21, 1946, Box 471, Folder 26, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

significance of Gullah culture, his intended focus on the physical characteristics of its residents, and the typological form his series of pictures would take—at moments he seemed to balk at the level of detail they required; as he put it near the end of the essay, as if exhausted from the exercise, "It is very difficult for an artist to know the direction…his creative talent will develop."[14] An artist who later repeatedly rejected calls to explain his work, he likely had reservations about the wider imperative of the application, to translate his art into words or describe it on paper—but he also seemed to detect the prescriptive nature of the Plan of Work essay in particular, the way its level of detail was aimed in part at tethering candidates to a specific set of actions while on their fellowships. As if in resistance to this aspect of the essay, Cortor remained purposefully vague about the number or specific subject matter of the paintings he would complete, claiming space for his project to evolve. But he also stated that he would provide these details, if the Rosenwald deemed such clarification necessary—and ultimately, he seemed to accept that the products of his research would largely be determined by his patron. As he put it, "so far as the disposition of the paintings is concerned I should naturally like to have some voice in the matter but would be willing to accept whatever plan the Foundation might contemplate."[15]

Many of the demands represented by these various application fields and their framing index the wider way the Rosenwald Fellowship program had been modeled on research in the sciences and social sciences. Expectations for discrete, singularly-focused projects recall the limited scope of experiments in the sciences, for example; the assumed tempo for fellowship work similarly fit the rhythm and structure of social scientific research—in which a theory or framework for a research project is elaborated first, only after which a period of concentrated data collection or experimentation takes place, followed by the processing of the data and the creation of a final research product. While rarely a matter of direct demands or instructions—the Rosenwald did not mandate that artists utilize social scientific methods or language explicitly—at times this molding was more explicit, often coming in the form of leading questions posed on its application forms ("Will any time be spent in fieldwork?," for example).

Cortor's choice to frame his project in anthropological terms comes into clearer view with this context—a response, in part, to the encouragement the application gave him to shape his project in the model of ethnographic fieldwork. In a broader sense, too, the dual anthropological-artistic framework Cortor claimed was likely shaped by what he knew of the Rosenwald Fund. By the mid-1940s, the Rosenwald's social scientific bent was common knowledge within Black literary, artistic, and scholarly communities; prospective fellows like Cortor often knew that its leadership was primarily made up of social scientists, for example, or that its Fellowship Program often supported projects addressed to a specific social problem. Cortor knew a number of former Rosenwald fellows, and even Rosenwald advisors, from his connections at the Art Institute of Chicago and the South Side Community Art Center—including Horace Cayton, a prominent sociologist, former Rosenwald fellow, and active advisor on many of its programs.[16] Cortor got to know Cayton well during the early 1940s, even painting a portrait of his sister and mother, and he later credited Cayton with sparking his interest in the Sea

[14] Cortor, "Plan of Work," 1944.
[15] Cortor, "Plan of Work," 1944.
[16] Cortor would have known of the Rosenwald from those in his Chicago circle, like Charles White, who had won it a few years before he applied; others that he knew well, including Elizabeth Catlett, Willard Motley, and Charles Sebree, went on to apply and win shortly after his fellowship period.

Islands.[17] Cayton was in the process of creating a bibliography of literature on Black artists as part of the W.P.A. Writers Project, and had drawn Cortor's attention to research on the particular, creolized dialect in the Sea Islands, and on the area's other cultural links to Africa.[18] Cortor followed up this initial nudge with research at Chicago's Newberry Library—where it's likely he came across evidence of the burgeoning anthropological interest in the area, and especially the African inflections of Gullah culture.[19] Given his established interest in African art, fostered through trips to the Field Museum as a student at the Art Institute of Chicago, it would make sense for such research to excite Cortor—and for his eventual framing for his own project to replicate many of the premises of the social scientific studies he was reading at the time.

It's important to note, however, that while it positioned itself in relation to an active field of anthropological research on the Sea Islands, in other ways Cortor's plan of work was not entirely up to date with current disciplinary thought or methodology. The cultural isolation Cortor claimed as justification for his project, for instance, seemed entirely in keeping with contemporary anthropological trends, replicating a spatialized understanding of culture central to relativist, comparative strains of anthropological thinking associated with figures like Franz Boas and Melville Herskovits—the latter, notably, a key figure in directing anthropological attention to the Sea Islands.[20] At the same time, however, Cortor's stated interest in racial types hearkens back to the physical anthropology that such comparative models had largely supplanted by the 1920s and 1930s—his focus on the "particular physical and racial characteristics of the Gullahs," especially, calling up the essentializing theories of race, racial hierarchy, and evolutionary development closely associated with physical anthropology. It is possible that Cortor utilized this language without intending its essentializing effect; perhaps he was thinking of the importance that "types" had played in the Rosenwald work of fellow Chicagoan William Edouard Scott, for example, engaging with the subtle nuance that, as art historian Krista A. Thompson has illuminated, Scott gave to the type in his paintings.[21] If this was the case, however, this nuanced dimension did not emerge in his project as rendered on paper—which seemed to blend anthropological ideas at once old and new, current and outdated, progressive and regressive.

Beyond the Racial Type: Materiality, Dimension, and Cortor's Black Female Figures

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[17] Eldzier Cortor, "An Interview with Eldzier Cortor," interview by Liesl Olson.

[18] Romare Bearden and Harry Henderson, *A History of African-American Artists: From 1792 to the Present*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 275. Bearden and Henderson state that Cayton pointed specifically to two items within his W.P.A. bibliography: an 1891 issue of the *Journal of American Folklore*, and Guy B. Johnson's 1930 *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina*.

[19] In an interview conducted by Liesl Olson in 2015, Cortor described doing research at Chicago's Newberry Library in preparation for his time in the Sea Islands. See Eldzier Cortor, "An Interview with Eldzier Cortor," interview by Liesl Olson. Work he may have come across during this research includes Melville Herskovits's discussion of the Sea Islands in *Myth of the Negro Past* or William Bascom's anthropological research from the early 1940s; through Cayton, he likely also became aware of the fieldwork being conducted by linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner at the same time. See Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, Beacon Paperback, no. 69 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958); William R. Bascom, "Acculturation Among the Gullah Negroes*," *American Anthropologist* 43, no. 1 (1941): 43–50.

[20] Cortor, "Plan of Work," 1944. On the spatialization of culture associated with Boasian cultural anthropology, see Lauren Kroiz, *Creative Composites: Modernism, Race, and the Stieglitz Circle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 145–46; Susan Hegeman, *Patterns for America: Modernism and the Concept of Culture* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1999).

[21] Krista A. Thompson, "Preoccupied with Haiti: The Dream of Diaspora in African American Art, 1915–1942," *American Art* 21, no. 3 (September 2007): 74–97.

If Cortor had flattened and reshaped his work to fit the Rosenwald's expectations, and to fit into the spaces of its application, however, his actual fellowship experience in the Sea Islands was lived in three dimensions—and it quickly expanded beyond the narrow promise to document the region's "racial types." Indeed, Cortor's images seemed to swell and expand the very category of the "type"—in so doing, critiquing the reductive, essentializing understanding of race at the heart of typological projects, and within racial pseudoscience more broadly. This was not a wholesale rejection of type imagery, however, which Cortor in fact frequently cited in his paintings. *Sea of Time* (fig. 2.4), for example, is focused on a single figure, centered within the frame, in the same way that subjects appear in nineteenth and early twentieth-century racial science photography—including the daguerreotypes of enslaved subjects taken not far from the Sea Islands, near Columbia, South Carolina, for polygenist and Harvard professor of science Louis Agassiz in the mid-nineteenth century.[22] As in these photographs, too, *Sea of Time*'s subject appears in a state of undress, her dress folded back in a way that likens her especially to the photographs of enslaved women Drana and Delia (figs. 2.5 and 2.6), the garments they had been forced to take off captured within the photographic frame. With a single breast revealed, indeed, *Sea of Time*'s figure calls up a long visual history of Black female bodies subjected to what art historian Sarah Elizabeth Lewis has called "forcible disclosure"—undertaken in the interest of "revealing" the physiological difference that eugenicist pseudoscience posited divided races.[23]

Unlike Drana or Delia, however, *Sea of Time*'s subject is not isolated within the image, nor does her posture seem the result of anything beyond her own will. Rather, she appears as the central authority within an environment thick with detail—herself rendered with this kind of density, in fact, her body described with a thick impasto that allows her to stand out from the rest of the painting (fig. 2.7). This dimension furthers the sense of the figure's substantiality, her gravity, her calm but complete command—the way she directs the constellation of things that surround her, from the mockingbird she appears to have just released from her outstretched finger, to the tattered lace netting whose ends she uses to delicately frame her nipple, to the seashell whose placement obstructs the limp, moldering newspaper beneath it. Against these torn, bent, and fraying materials, in fact, the figure's smooth skin and angular, dimensional face stand out even more dramatically—elements of her stoic countenance that, along with her vibrant blue dress, have elicited comparisons with Madonna figures of European painting.[24] Affirmed by the three-quarter-angle position of her body and the Renaissance-style window she is set within, this position only further distances her from racial type photography, with its emphatically frontal or profile perspective. At the same time, the volume and dimension of the figure calls up the form of the African masks that likely functioned as referents for Cortor, as art historian Lisa Gail Collins has argued.[25] Cortor indeed cited multiple streams of influence in his knowledge of art history—the knowledge of canonical European art garnered as a student of art historian Helen Gardner at the Art Institute of Chicago; the introduction to African sculpture at the Field Museum provided in artist Kathleen Blackshear's class; continuous museum-going throughout

[22] These photographs were taken by Columbia, S.C.-based photographer Joseph T. Zealy.
[23] Sarah Elizabeth Lewis, "The Insistent Reveal: Louis Agassiz, Joseph T. Zealy, Carrie Mae Weems, and the Politics of Undress in the Photography of Racial Science," in *To Make Their Own Way in the World: The Enduring Legacy of the Zealy Daguerreotypes*, ed. Ilisa Barbash, Molly Rogers, and Deborah Willis (New York: Aperture, 2020), 312.
[24] Jennings, "Eldzier Cortor: The Long Consistent Road," 15.
[25] Collins, *The Art of History*, 80.

his life—even the insights into technical aspects of Old Master paintings provided by lectures by French conservator Jacques Maroger.[26]

Despite its citation of the visual strategies of racial typology, in other words, *Sea of Time* gives shape to a dramatically different picture of a Black female subject—drawing on multiple strands of art historical training in its description of a figure at once spiritually potent and materially substantial. Importantly, if this figure works against the flattened, constricted image of Black subjects that appear in racial science photography, it also manages to indict the twin-antithesis of this image—the image and conceptualization of depth, substance, and subjectivity that evolved in concert with race and racial science. The material substance of *Sea of Time*'s central figure, indeed, is set against not just the typological images it calls up—but also against the flattened and miniaturized figures that appear in other parts of the painting, not least of which is the face (apparently White) within the newspaper before her (fig. 2.8). For all the extent of text around it, this figure appears blurred, miniscule, almost obscured entirely by the spiky conch shell that is placed on top of it; comparably, the central figure appears less constricted, possessed of a weight and a solidity that the figure in the newspaper is not. Cortor seems to dismiss, here, the Enlightenment-born idea that written language was what guaranteed a subject depth or dimension—the kind of dimension that anti-literacy laws, like those in antebellum South Carolina, had historically denied Black subjects.[27] Importantly, though, this indictment comes not in the image of a conventionally dimensional Black figure—one who had proved her depth through the attainment of literacy or skillful use of the written word (we could think here of the iconic image of Phillis Wheatley at her desk, pen in hand (fig. 2.9)). Instead, in his attention to what theorist Fred Moten might call the "topographical richness" of the surface, Cortor suggests that another kind of dimensionality entirely might exist—rooted not in the mastery of language or the wielding of the written word, but in something like bodily presence.[28]

The connection between race and perceived depth or dimension is central also to *Skin Deep* (fig. 2.10), painted the year after *Sea of Time*. It, too, focuses on a central Black female figure, head and shoulders set against a dramatic expanse of sky, who stares meditatively into a shard of mirror she holds in front of her—its reflection revealing a fraction of a face seemingly much lighter in skin tone than the figure's. The difference might be a simple optical trick, a function of the way the mirror has picked up light—one that speaks, however, to the mutability of race and the instability of systems structured by it, including those that undergirded typological projects like the one Cortor had arrived in the Sea Islands to create. Cortor's decision to focus on the figure's head and neck takes on new weight here—placing the painting into dialogue with one specific sub-category of racial pseudoscience, phrenology, which purported that qualities like intelligence could be determined by the shape of a person's head, and was used

[26] See Cortor, An Interview with Eldzier Cortor; Eldzier Cortor, Oral History Project: Eldzier Cortor by Terry Carbone, June 21, 2016, https://bombmagazine.org/articles/eldzier-cortor/; Elizabeth Catlett to Eldzier Cortor, December 2, 1969, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Eldzier Cortor to Harry Rand, July 25, 1984, Box 2, Folder 3, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

[27] See Henry Louis Gates, "Editor's Introduction: Writing 'Race' and the Difference It Makes," *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (1985): 1–20.

[28] Fred Moten, Fred Moten and Bob O'Meally on Chris Ofili's Othello, February 4, 2022, https://suchsweetthunder.columbia.edu/resource/fred-moten-and-bob-omeally-on-chris-ofilis-othello/; Fred Moten, *Black and Blur* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).

to forward theories of Black inferiority.[29] While seeming to set up a distinctly phrenological viewing scenario—positioning the figure in full profile, believed necessary for comparison and measurement—Cortor in fact fails to deliver its subject. Instead of carefully rendering the specificities of an individual's head, he seems to have modeled the figure's profile on a Baule or other West African-style mask (fig. 2.11), with its perfectly rounded arched eyebrows, long, planar cheeks, tiny, pointed mouth, and almost nonexistent chin. A send-up of the assumptions and fallacies built into the optics of race and racial science, *Skin Deep* seems to resist even as it exposes this way of seeing—offering the possibility that the single eye and light skin in the mirror is not the woman's reflection, but the viewer's. But this reflection, and the superficial way of seeing it stands for, seems poised to disappear with a single shift in the figure's wrist; like the fading, miniature figure within *Sea of Time*'s newspaper, its flatness is ultimately demonstrated by the overwhelming dimension of what surrounds it—the woman's thick, branch-like hair, barely contained by the scarf around her head, whose volumetric rendering links her to the tree in the work's background.

The Room (fig. 2.12) similarly invokes the perspective of many phrenological images—even more forcefully foregrounding its figure's head, in fact, while positioning it in a fully frontal view. Its figure also appears less agential or aware than the figures in *Skin Deep* or *Sea of Time*—less able to command her surroundings, she indeed seems to close her eyes to the bare, shabby room that surrounds her, which pushes up to the very edge of her face. While the painting's composition establishes the pressures the figure faces from her surroundings, however, its material dimension also gestures towards the bulwark she possesses against them. The dense impasto of her hair, for example, grants her a dimension and a substance that contrasts with the thin, disintegrating paper just beside her face—further highlighting the volumetric nature of her face and neck, as dimensional as the magnolia flower in her hair.

Importantly, the paper that Cortor includes in the background of these images is not a mere visual device—a way of highlighting the contrasting dimension, substance, or fullness of the figures he depicts. Rather, paper becomes a cipher for the wider circulation of the racist essentializations articulated within typologies and other racial pseudoscience. Indeed, works like *Americana* make clear that such ideas had penetrated deeply into American culture—their spread made possible by print media's broad reach. At first, this might not seem obvious; the wall of paper that Cortor depicts behind *Americana*'s figure appears, on first glance, to be nothing more than the flotsam of a burgeoning mass print culture—newspapers, magazine covers, posters, comics, even crossword puzzles, randomly selected and randomly arrayed. Certainly, its subject matter—ads for diet or exercise regimes, movie posters, non-contemporaneous news stories—seems innocuous, if not emphatically superficial, a sense heightened by the flatness of its visual rendering into a kind of print media collage. Upon close inspection, however, is becomes clear that this collage is not randomly or haphazardly arrayed—but indeed dialogues closely with the central figure's body. A printed image of a pair of legs appears directly next to her larger ones (fig. 2.13), for example, and the military figure's face that appears on a magazine cover is placed on the same compositional plane as her own (fig. 2.14). This dialogue—and the contrast that it sets up—allows us to grasp the fact that there is a deeper logic organizing the print media, running through its apparent randomness—its clear and overwhelming Whiteness. That so much of it takes up the subject of the measuring, policing, improving, and disciplining of bodies (fig.

[29] See Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (1986): 3–64, https://doi.org/10.2307/778312; Brian Wallis, "Black Bodies, White Science: Louis Agassiz's Slave Daguerreotypes," *American Art* 9, no. 2 (1995): 39–61.

2.15) clarifies, moreover, that this popular print media is neither superficial, nor far removed from racial science; it, too, seems premised on the existence of a "normal" body, its inherent Whiteness, and the necessity of disciplining and regulating all those that fall outside that norm.

While *Americana* clarifies the ways that typology's logic had penetrated beyond scientific circles, it also works to articulate an alternative to this logic, in the form of its central figure. The dialogue set up between the figure's body and the print media around her, for example, most often articulates a contrast; her right leg is much straighter than the two that appear in miniature just beside it (see fig. 2.13); her face larger and less obstructed than that of the military leader to its left (fig. 2.14); her body unimpeded by the measuring and disciplining regimes depicted in the various exercise and before-and-after images around it (fig. 2.15)—and certainly stronger and more visceral than those of the fighters in the boxing images behind her shoulder (fig. 2.16). Indeed, her monumental form cuts across the paper's busy details, further obstructing access to both text and images; her bold, confident posture, meanwhile, makes the various images of beauty regimes, Hollywood stars, and military figures that appear around her seem small, even comical, in comparison.

Perhaps most importantly, the figure's volumetric form also seems to stand out and apart from the flyaway paper itself. Rendered with the same concentrated impasto used in *Sea of Time, Skin Deep,* and *The Room,* the figure in *Americana* seems to insist even more forcefully on the materiality of her embodiment—the thickness of her hair, the fleshy density of her nipples—a material presence we register, in part, because of the contrast it marks with the flimsy paper behind her. At the same time, this impasto links the figure to the physical reality of the room she occupies—the corn that hangs beside her head, the pipe of the stove that bends upward in the painting's foreground, the bath she stands in—all of which include passages of the same raised impasto that occurs on her body. This variation in paint handling is not merely a way of delineating space; what is marked by the impasto seems, rather, directly oppositional to the paper—the bath's steam, the stove's heat, and the figure's stark, singular form seemingly all at work in its interruption and disintegration.

In the Sea Islands works, in short, Cortor depicted powerful, commanding, dimensional figures, far different from the "racial types" he had described on paper before he embarked on his fellowship journey—indeed, figures that distanced and even critiqued the reductive logics that had undergirded this original project. Arguably, this change reflected the shift from two- to three-dimensions, from prospective speculation to on-the-ground encounter, that he had navigated in January of 1945, when he finally arrived on St. Helena. Very shortly after this arrival, in fact, his language and framework for his work there shifted considerably, reflecting a new nuance in the ways he described his neighbors in particular. In a progress report he submitted to the Rosenwald in February or March of 1945, for example, Cortor shifted conspicuously away from the focus on physiognomic or physiological difference that had been at the heart of his original plan of work.[30] He also dropped some of the anthropological descriptors he'd previously used the Black community of the Sea Islands—forsaking the term "Gullah" for the more neutral "Sea Islands Negro," for example, because, as he described it later, his neighbors didn't "like the term [Gullah] among them."[31] Although he did not cite any specific individual in the report, in other correspondence he seemed to note the particular influence of Viola Chaplin, the local woman who acted as his host while he was in the Sea Islands; a graduate of and teacher at the influential

[30] Cortor, "Report of Progress and Plan of Work," 1945.
[31] Cortor, "Report of Progress and Plan of Work," 1945; Cortor, Oral History Project: Eldzier Cortor by Terry Carbone.

Penn School on St. Helena—which often acted to coordinate the visits of donors, scholars, and other visitors to the Sea Islands—Chaplin apparently extended these lessons to Cortor, who would acknowledge the debt he and his work owed to her.[32]

The reality of these three-dimensional Sea Islanders would have another effect for Cortor's fellowship work—posing obstacles, in particular, for the smooth, seamless "assimilation" of the Gullah "background and way of life" that he had assumed would result from his living there. As he described it in his progress report, many Sea Islanders were "resentful of strangers, considering them outsiders," which meant he'd had to pivot his plan, investing a significant portion of his time in "w[inning] their friendship."[33] This was not just a matter of gaining his neighbors' trust, but also literally being able to communicate with them; Cortor later attested that he was unable to understand the creolized Gullah dialect at first, but made efforts to learn it while he was there.[34]

Although these obstacles seemed to force Cortor to shift his plans in significant ways, they did so without threatening his authority as an ethnographer; indeed, his narrative of overcoming initial barriers of skepticism or difficult communication could be seen to validate his skills as a participant-observer, dramatizing the cultural distance he was able to transcend as he immersed himself in Gullah culture. (It's notable, for example, that Cortor did not mention Chaplin or the Penn School in his progress report—perhaps because acknowledging their roles in directing the Sea Islands' regular stream of visitors would undermine his description of the Sea Islanders' "resentment of strangers.") With a narrative arc that mirrored those of many other ethnographic journeys, moreover, his shift towards relationship-building and language-learning also brought his work into alignment with the methods employed in contemporary forms of cultural anthropology.

This framing is important, given the function of this progress report—which Cortor submitted alongside an application for a renewal of his Rosenwald fellowship in March of 1945, just a few months after he'd arrived in the Sea Islands. It served, in other words, not just as an update on his progress, but also as a justification for his application for a second year of funding—providing an ethnographically-valid set of reasons for the revised timeline for his project. A document as constructed as his original application materials, then, it nevertheless also registers how that Cortor's experience in the Sea Islands had swelled and expanded beyond the terms he'd originally outlined for it; in addition to the ways his work had pushed beyond the racial type, its temporal scope had also been dragged out, pushed beyond the neat, year-long timeframe he'd originally proposed. As I'll argue in the next section, this expansion was the result not solely of Cortor's shift in ethnographic methodology, but also of professional issues that arose during this period—issues that, if unforeseen and unwanted, nevertheless also index the parts of artistic labor not captured within the neat spaces of a fellowship application.

Paper's Weight: Eldzier Cortor, David Porter, and the Failures of Gallery Representation

Ironically, applying for a renewal only furthered the delay in Cortor's planned fellowship fieldwork; he had to repeat the same processes of flattening, transcription, and reshaping that I described in the first section of this chapter—filling out the same forms, checking the same boxes. If made especially glaring by the framing of his fieldwork as focused, concentrated, and

[32] Eldzier Cortor to Vandi Haygood, February 5, 1945, Box 404, Folder 8, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[33] Cortor, "Report of Progress and Plan of Work," 1945.
[34] Cortor, Oral History Project: Eldzier Cortor by Terry Carbone.

immersive, however, this tension had been building for some time for Cortor, as he sought to balance the administrative, financial, and intellectual labor involved in managing his work, with the time and energy devoted to the various material and aesthetic processes of its creation. By the time he was preparing to depart for his Rosenwald fellowship research, Cortor had already tried several different solutions to this problem, in proportion to his rising status in the art world. For a period in the early to mid-1940s, for example, he relied on his wife, Felicia, to help him with "the business [side of] things."[35] Whether Felicia eventually protested, finding the burden too heavy, or Cortor decided he wanted a professional representative, by 1942 he was looking for a gallerist to work with, taking advice from mentors at the Art Institute of Chicago and making contact with figures in New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C..[36] Despite this interest, and offers from figures as prominent as Edith Halpert of New York's Downtown Gallery, Cortor didn't commit to any gallerist for several years; wary of a still-consolidating art market, dominated almost entirely by White powerbrokers, he apparently felt more comfortable entrusting his work to someone close to him, or else handling it himself.[37]

This wariness notwithstanding, Cortor was aware of the advantages of gallery representation—perhaps especially during a period of travel and concentrated fieldwork, of the kind he was preparing to conduct in 1945. Before he left for the Sea Islands, in fact, he had arrived at a plan that would allow him to take advantage of the benefits of professional representation, arranging to work with dealers in multiple locations, in part as a way of mitigating the risk of entrusting his work to a single one.[38] Among these was David Porter, an economist and art enthusiast who had recently inaugurated a career in art dealing by co-founding the G Place Gallery in Washington, D.C., with whom Cortor arranged a non-exclusive

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[35] "$300 Institute Award: Wins National Art Prize," *The Chicago Defender*, March 30, 1946.

[36] Cortor's correspondence with Lester Bridaham, a close advisor and officer at the Art Institute of Chicago, shows that he was weighing relationships with various representatives in New York in the early 1940s. Lester Bridaham to Eldzier Cortor, undated, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

[37] Correspondence among Cortor, Halpert, and Peter Pollack of the South Side Community Art Center, who acted as a go-between for Chicago artists and Halpert, reveals that Halpert not only wanted to include Cortor in the landmark 1941 exhibition "American Negro Art," but also invited him to join the Downtown Gallery in late 1941 or early 1942. See Edith Halpert to Eldzier Cortor, January 20, 1942, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Peter Pollack to Eldzier Cortor, March 20, 1942, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Correspondence between Pollack and Alain Locke, meanwhile, reveals a potential reason why Cortor never took Halpert up on this offer. In anticipation of competing New York exhibitions on Black art in 1941—one the Downtown Gallery's "American Negro Art," spearheaded by Halpert and Locke, the other planned by the MacMillan Gallery—rumors began spreading within the Black art community of Chicago about the motivations and potential duplicity of the different gallerists. Cortor seems to have been sufficiently concerned by these rumors that he sent Halpert a kind of contract meant, as he put it, as a "safeguard" for his rights, before agreeing to exhibit in "American Negro Art"—but he also hedged his bets and exhibited in MacMillan's concurrent show. Whether or not these decisions created bad feelings between Halpert and Cortor, Cortor never joined Downtown in the early 1940s, leaving open his representation in New York for at least five years. See Eldzier Cortor to Edith Halpert, October 9, 1941, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Alain Locke to Peter Pollack, Undated, Box 164-78, Folder 4, Alain Locke Papers, Howard University; Peter Pollack to Alain Locke, undated, Box 164-78, Folder 4, Alain Locke Papers, Howard University; Peter Pollack to Alain Locke, July 25, 1941, Box 164-78, Folder 5, Alain Locke Papers, Howard University; Peter Pollack to Alain Locke, August 4, 1941, Box 164-78, Folder 5, Alain Locke Papers, Howard University; Peter Pollack to Alain Locke, October 24, 1941, Box 164-78, Folder 5, Alain Locke Papers, Howard University.

[38] Eldzier Cortor, "Memo," ca. 1945, 3, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

relationship.[39] Although initially skeptical of the inexperienced Porter, Cortor ultimately conceded to his somewhat pushy sales pitch; the sale-on-consignment arrangement and financial proposition Porter put forward, moreover—for a 66/33% split, conventional in this period, which would allow Cortor to keep two-thirds of any sales Porter made—seemed beneficial to the artist, allowing him a measure of profit while preserving the agency and relative freedom that an exclusive contract would have taken away.[40] Certainly there was also a buzz about Porter, whose G Place Gallery was co-founded and operated by Caresse Crosby—herself an established figure in the art world, recently returned from Paris, where she'd published *Portfolio* magazine and built relationships with avant-garde artists and writers. For Cortor, then, an alliance with Porter likely appeared to promise to increase his public profile, and his sales, while also streamlining the actual process of selling his work—a prospect increasingly important as Cortor prepared his application for a Rosenwald, and the extended travel he proposed to do on it, around the same moment.

Ultimately, however, this plan would never be realized; in a terrible validation of Cortor's initial wariness, Porter would prove to be dishonest and duplicitous—withholding Cortor's profits, lying to him about sales, and evading and misdirecting his efforts to pursue justice. Cortor's relationship with the gallerist, in fact, ended up being an administrative burden in and of itself, added to the one that Porter was supposed to take on for the artist—the paperwork regarding shipment and framing, labor of negotiating sales and setting up exhibition schedules, as well as the broader interpretive work involved in representing an artist to various publics. The story of this dispute can be tracked, in fact, in the growing preoccupation with paper and its depiction in the Sea Islands works, which register Cortor's ambivalence about this system of representation and his own participation in it. As a note: to tell this story, I rely heavily on a contemporaneous memo Cortor wrote detailing his relationship with Porter, apparently as part of his later lawsuit against the gallerist. I recognize that this document is as "constructed" as others I have examined, recounting only Cortor's side of the story; at least some of its details are validated by legal records, however, while its broader claims about Porter's duplicity find confirmation in the archived experiences of those around Porter and Cortor, including Alain Locke, Caresse Crosby, Peter Pollack, Richmond Barthé, and Mary Beattie Brady.

The beginnings of this preoccupation can be felt in *The Night Letter* (fig. 2.17), one of the earliest of the Sea Islands works, which depicts a young woman seated at a small table, her head in her hand, gazing past a letter she seems to have just opened and read. Although it continues in the direction of Cortor's previous work—which had often focused on single figures engaged in everyday activity, using rough, scumbled paintstrokes across the entire composition, as in *(Girl) Washing Her Hair* (fig. 2.18)—*The Night Letter* takes on a different, arguably more enigmatic or somber tone. Dark, nocturnal shadows heighten the sense of mystery created by the visible-yet-illegible letter, as inaccessible to us as the thoughts that absorb her. Unlike others in this art historical subgenre, from Johannes Vermeer's *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window* (fig. 2.19) to Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *Woman Reading* (fig. 2.20), Cortor's correspondent is depicted not in the midst of reading, bathed in the light that a letter can bring. Instead, she's

[39] Porter made this pitch in person, when he visited Cortor's Chicago studio in late 1943.

[40] Cortor, "Memo," 1. Art historian A. Deirdre Robson describes the 66/33 split as a general rule for sale-on-consignment arrangements within the New York art market of the 1940s. The alternative system widely used, in which artists and gallerists formed contractual, usually exclusive relationships, provided more early security for artists, but also allowed them less control, potential profit, and freedom. The arrangement Cortor entered into, in other words, preserved some measure of agency for himself, even as it accorded him relatively less security. See Robson, *Prestige, Profit, and Pleasure*, 77–78.

shown in the moments just after; her slumped, languid posture telegraphing the preoccupation that, like the shadows around her, has already begun to envelop her—as if the letter's light is evaporating as quickly as the smoke of the recently-extinguished match. Cortor's painting focuses, in other words, not on the joy or connection, but instead the haltingness, even the sense of impotence, built into correspondence—the stretches of time and uncertainty that accompany being at a remove, no matter how closely one attempts to keep in touch.

While *The Night Letter* studiously avoids overdetermined or over-specifying detail—about the contents of the letter, the location of the figure, or the significance of the correspondence—the painting's date makes it easy to imagine that its subject is enduring the particularly fraught, painful waiting associated with wartime correspondence. At the same time, though, it seems likely that Cortor's thinking was also shaped by his own experience as a correspondent around the same moment, and specifically the uncertainty and haltingness that characterized his letters to and about Porter. These had been a necessity almost from the moment their relationship began, although at first for fairly minor reasons—Cortor wrote to correct Porter's seeming confusion about works' sale prices, or to press Porter to follow through on promised reimbursement for shipment. Soon, however, the issues needing clarification or correction ballooned. Porter began selling Cortor's work without informing the artist, for one thing; Cortor only learned of the sales later, through correspondence with friends or collectors, and certainly did not receive his promised two-thirds portion. This was true even for those sales Cortor did know about, however; Porter withheld payment, or any details about its transfer, for months on end. He also lied directly about sale prices, leading Cortor to believe his work had sold for less than what a collector had paid, in order to justify paying Cortor a lower percentage.[41]

Learning of many of these issues from his home in Chicago, where he was preparing to leave for his fellowship travel in the Sea Islands in late 1944, Cortor attempted to remedy the situation through a series of increasingly-distressed letters—but he found that Porter's responses only muddied the waters further. Rather than continue the back-and-forth, Cortor ultimately decided to reroute his trip south through Washington, where he hoped to work out the issues directly with Porter—allowing him, ideally, to smooth out this friction before beginning his year of research.[42] Once in Washington, however, Cortor found it difficult to meet with Porter directly. The gallerist put him off again and again; Cortor even missed his train south in his effort to pin Porter down. When he was finally able to see Porter face-to-face, Cortor managed to extract three checks from the gallerist, before racing off to make the next train. Once he had arrived on St. Helena, he sent the checks to Felicia, still in Chicago. Soon after she deposited the checks, however, it became clear that they were bad; Felicia found herself needing to cover an overdraft as well as fees imposed by the bank—making it possible to imagine her as the sitter in *The Night Letter*, its looming darkness not only that of foiled communication, but also of financial worry. The frustration registered in the scene, however, was Cortor's as well; having made every effort to prepare for his journey, to settle his affairs with Porter, and ensure that his family would be provided for during his absence, Cortor found this new crisis deeply upsetting—especially given the remove at which he was then positioned, which made righting the scenario even more difficult.

Nevertheless, Cortor resolved to remedy the situation using whatever he had available—most importantly, paper—beginning a series of increasingly-creative efforts to wield it to his

[41] Cortor, "Memo," 3–4.
[42] Cortor, "Memo," 4.

advantage in the dispute. Writing to friends in D.C.—chief among them Selden Rodman, a White collector and amateur art historian, who had informed Cortor of the mischaracterized sale prices after making purchases with Porter—Cortor recruited intermediaries to act on his behalf, directing them to speak directly with the gallerist. He hoped the social pressure exacted on Porter would make him come to the table—and specifically, would induce him to return the works of Cortor's he still had in his possession. At the center of the dispute were several key paintings, including *Southern Landscape (Southern Flood)* (fig. 2.21), *Southern Gate* (fig. 2.22), and *The Bathers* (fig. 2.23); Cortor was learning details about these works' sale, and whereabouts, piecemeal throughout this period.

Alongside his efforts to marshal social pressure through his correspondence, Cortor wrote repeatedly to Porter directly, with increasingly urgency. These efforts having failed, however, in early April Cortor sent Porter yet another letter, officially severing ties with the gallerist and demanding the return of his remaining work. This letter, though, was arguably made weightier by being both registered and notarized—a degree of formality that had likely required Cortor to leave St. Helena and travel to mainland South Carolina. Having received no response to this paper-pressure campaign, Cortor then "set out to uncover any evidence [he] could," spending the next two months writing to other artists, collectors, and curators—anyone who might shed light on the gallerist's actions.[43] Eventually, he compiled a portfolio of letters, checks, and other documents that demonstrated Porter's pattern of duplicity; this portfolio he sent to Rodman, who "got all [the] papers together" and held them for Cortor in a safe.[44] At that time, they were imagined as a kind of collateral, evidence that might succeed, in Rodman's terms, in "mak[ing] Porter disgorge."[45]

Beginning almost the moment he arrived in the Sea Islands, in other words, Cortor had been wrapped up in the dispute, and in his creative and increasingly more nuanced efforts to load paper with different kinds of weight—from the veneer of legality that a registered, notarized letter possessed, to the accumulated evidentiary power of a hefty portfolio of documents. Throughout this process, and certainly over the many months he spent "writing for his paintings," he was thinking about whether these paper-efforts would be enough to result in the return of his artworks—the possibility for paper to be what divided or restored the body of his work.[46] A similar question seems to be at the heart of *Southern Souvenir (Eclipse) No. II* (fig. 2.24), a painting he began working on in this period and completed sometime between 1946 and 1948. It depicts a nude female figure remarkably similar to the ones in both *Southern Gate* and *The Bathers*, so central to his dispute with Porter—but in this case, the figure is violently fragmented, dismembered, even compositionally beheaded. Notably, the split that occurs between the figure's vertically-oriented lower half and her horizontal torso is enacted by the sheaf of papers at the work's center. Crumpled together and positioned at the torso's lower half, the papers appear almost like a skirt, their folds calling up pleats or ruffles—speaking to the pliability and mutability of paper, the ease with which it is wrinkled, creased, or crushed. At the same time, though, the papers' creases also create a perverse formal rhyme between their serrated edges and the jagged ends of the figure's arms—as if the papers are what has enacted the

[43] Cortor, "Memo," 4.
[44] Selden Rodman to Eldzier Cortor, May 4, 1945, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Selden Rodman to Eldzier Cortor, June 23, 1945, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
[45] Rodman to Cortor, May 4, 1945.
[46] Cortor, "Memo," 5.

violence still visible on the figure's body. While the larger painting is certainly a reflection on the legacy of compounded physical and sexual violence that Black women have faced, particularly in the South, the compositional importance that paper is given is also an index of the lessons Cortor had been learning through his professional dispute. It's only if one understands the weight of documentary evidence, the power of a paper trail, the rigidity of a legal decree, that it becomes possible to understand how paper is figured here—how it might become stiff or sharp enough to divide a composition, dislocate a figure, or fragment a body of work.

The careful and continued paper-pressure campaign that Cortor waged for the first half of 1945, however, saw few results; ultimately, in fact, Cortor decided his only recourse was to a face-to-face interaction, and in July he interrupted his fellowship work to travel to Washington, in the hopes he might achieve what his correspondence could not. Many of the Sea Islands paintings seem to reflect the growing disillusion with paper indexed by this decision, dwelling insistently on paper's material vulnerabilities—the disturbing capacity it had to go limp or lose its power when he most needed it to remain sharp. In works like *The Room* (fig. 2.12), *Southern Theme (The Room) No. III* (fig. 2.25), or *Southern Souvenier (Eclipse) #4* (fig. 2.26), for example, paper peels, tatters, and deteriorates; whatever words or images are printed on it are rendered illegible by this disintegration. It grows thin and full of holes, as in *The Room*, where the collaged newspapers—only recognizable as such from their columnar organization of text, which itself remains unreadable—shrink across the wall, revealing bare wood planks in the areas where its edges have been eaten away. In *Southern Theme (The Room) No. III*, the emphasis on bareness is even more forceful. The room's back wall is almost entirely empty, save for a few tattered papers scattered randomly across it, despite the fact that there are unused pages sitting on the table—as if the room's occupants had given up filling in the holes, accepting the deterioration that has already begun to work on the printed wallpaper on the scene's right.

Cortor's trip to Washington—itself made necessary by the ineffectiveness of his written efforts to resolve his dispute—would clarify the mutability and manipulability of paper anew. Upon his arrival, Cortor first learned of Porter's wider pattern of duplicitous behavior through conversations with Caresse Crosby—who had broken with Porter over, among other things, her suspicions of his financial dishonesty—an account that confirmed the testimonies of other artists who had experienced similar behavior first-hand. Cortor also met with the lawyer Crosby had retained in her own dealings with Porter—over the course of the several days of these meetings, also learning that Porter had been discussing the dispute with Cortor publicly, mischaracterizing the disagreement and spreading damaging lies about Cortor himself. Not only did Porter drastically undersell his debt to the artist, but he also claimed publicly that Cortor was "emotionally unsound."[47]

With the additional evidence these conversations had provided him, Cortor went to see Porter himself, taking advantage of the long-awaited opportunity to lay out his litany of complaints. The meeting was tense and only partially satisfactory for the artist. Given the detailed evidence Cortor brought with him, Porter was forced to admit that he had drastically understated the amount he owed Cortor, essentially withholding hundreds of dollars of the artist's rightful profits—deceit that Porter excused as the result of bookkeeping errors (an ironic excuse for an economist). When Cortor confronted Porter about obfuscating the final sale price of some of the artist's works, or sending him a portion far less than his two-thirds due, the gallerist insisted that he was in the right—specifically, that he owed Cortor a portion only of the minimum sale price the artist had agreed to, not what the works actually sold for. Cortor left the

[47] Cortor, "Memo," 6.

gallery without this issue being resolved, although consultation with other gallerists later clarified that Porter was in the wrong. The artist also left without the works that he'd hoped to recover from Porter, none of which were actually at the gallery.[48] Porter further informed Cortor that he was leaving on vacation, dismissing the artist and patronizingly deferring their business until he returned—although, as Cortor later recalled, he "never heard from David Porter again."[49]

During his visit to D.C., then, Cortor continued to confront misdirection and evasion from Porter, while deepening his experience with the malleability and insubstantiality of paper—in particular, the ways these qualities made it easy to misuse, as demonstrated by the easy manipulation of Porter's books. Cortor seemed interested in this convergence of vulnerabilities—paper's material flimsiness, alongside the frequent superficiality of its truth claims, the ease with which the information it bears can be manipulated, the fragility of the power it can carry—considering this convergence specifically in works like *Americana*. Paper's capacity to inform or connect is highlighted in the work's painted wall-paper, whose description is highly detailed—exact enough that viewers can detect newspaper mastheads (fig. 2.27) and the covers of popular magazines (fig. 2.28), even precise issues or articles, among what appears to be posters (fig. 2.29), comics (fig. 2.30), and crosswords (fig. 2.31). In each case, though, there is never enough detail to read the story in full; papers are inverted and overlapped, their text cut short by tears—often in ways that, unlike similar visual puns utilized by Cubist artists, seem to frustrate rather than invite viewers' efforts to fill in the blanks. It is not just that the figure's form obstructs or fragments the pages, as I argued earlier; examining the wallpaper more closely, it becomes clear that Cortor uses it as an opportunity to cast doubt on its materials themselves, their trustworthiness and the weight they should be given. Their promises to deliver the "True Stor[y]" (fig. 32) wither and fade, ultimately no more substantial than the paper they are inscribed on.

Taken together, Cortor's Sea Islands works might seem to contradict each other, forwarding diametrically opposed views of paper and its weight; the emphasis on its flimsiness or corruptibility in *Americana*, for example, exists in tension with the serrated power it wields in *Southern Souvenir (Eclipse) No. II*. I would argue, though, that this ambivalence is in fact precisely what we should take from these paintings—precisely what was engendered by Cortor's sustained engagement with paper in this period. Despite his many creative attempts to wield it to his advantage, he ultimately could not manage the crisis with Porter through correspondence alone—but neither did he manage to resolve their issues in person. Both measures having failed, in late 1945, Cortor decided to pursue a lawsuit—handing over the portfolio of evidence he had earlier compiled to lawyers at Harte and Natanson, the firm that pursued the suit on his behalf.[50] Although Cortor would go on to win the case, he found that trading one system of representation for another ultimately did not secure the reparations he'd imagined. The artist recouped only a portion of his original monetary claim, and never recovered all of the works that had been in Porter's control. The process had also acquainted him with the paperwork and clerical labor that exacted its own cost, interrupting and overwriting his fellowship period in the Sea Islands—

[48] According to Cortor's memo, some of these works were on the West Coast, where they were being exhibited in touring exhibitions, while others were at a framer's, where Cortor could only retrieve them if he paid the cost of the framing (which he found itself superfluous).

[49] Cortor, "Memo," 6.

[50] Municipal Court of the City of New York, "Summons: Eldzier Cortor Against David Porter," ca. 1946, Reel N70-28, Edwin David Porter Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; David Porter, "Affidavit," 1, ca. 1946, Reel N70-28, Municipal Court of the City of New York, Borough of Manhattan: Second District, Edwin David Porter Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. The charges against Porter were for "conversion"—a version of theft used in civil suits—of both profits due the artist and of actual artworks.

indeed, Cortor left the Sea Islands for New York just months after returning from D.C., in late August of 1945. Although he never explicitly stated the reasons for this move, he hinted that it allowed him to pursue the lawsuit against Porter, who had himself moved to New York—and certainly, it went against his stated intention to create his fellowship works while "living among" his subjects. As I described at the start of this chapter, many of his Sea Islands works would be painted in his small apartment on Cherry Street, where he continued his efforts to track down and reclaim the paintings he'd entrusted to Porter.[51]

While a rare instance of a Black artist utilizing the legal system to reclaim agency and control over his work, in other words, the story of Cortor's dispute with Porter also illuminates, in glaring light, the power differentials dividing artists and art world middlemen—which only compounded structural racial inequities built into the art market. Cortor had had to endure a seemingly-unending litany of injustices, inconveniences, insults, and evasions, and to go to extreme lengths to remedy them—often only gaining traction through the intervention of White proxies. Porter's actions, meanwhile, demonstrate the ways that art world middlemen could take advantage of structural imbalances in power, and of the lesser recourse that they expected Black artists to have in instances of injustice—while also demonstrating that Black art was not only ignored or neglected, but often actively mishandled or exploited, within the emerging art market. The risks of participating in this market were similarly skewed; although Porter effectively went bankrupt, defrauding an untold number of clients, partners, and vendors in the process, he walked away from the dispute with relatively little damage. Although he left the art world when he left D.C., his dishonorable departure did not prevent him from beginning a successful career in—in a fitting turn—the burgeoning New York advertising industry.

The ambivalence about paper we detect in Cortor's paintings becomes, against this background, easier to understand—less a function of irresolution or inconsistency in his artistic vision, than a canny reflection of the real fickleness Cortor observed in paper and the systems of value it arbitrated. To the extent that his works depict paper in paint, moreover, they might also be seen as Cortor's efforts to claim, within the controlled realm of his artwork, the power that often eluded him outside of them—to determine which side of the page to show, how weighty, flighty, powerful, or flimsy paper ultimately was.

Reconstruction Drafts: The Port Royal Experiment and its Wake in Cortor's Sea Islands Works

Cortor's dispute with Porter, in short, provided him intensive, first-hand experience with paper's varying weight; his experience in the Sea Islands would help him to contextualize this experience. Indeed, St. Helena was an especially apt location from which to make sense of both the power and the flimsiness of paper, the racial valences of this variability as well as its stakes; as the site of national experiments in emancipation and land distribution in the period following the Civil War, the Sea Islands had been remade many times over by documents of varying kinds, from military field orders to deeds of sale. Cortor's presence there allowed him to position his own struggles within a broader historical arc, likely confirming, if not heightening the sense of ambivalence that his personal experience had engendered—even as this experience shaped and sharpened his attention to his surroundings. Although it took up more and more of his time while he was there, in fact, Cortor's legal and professional disputes did not function solely as a distraction from the Sea Islands. Rather, they served to redirect his attention there—away from

[51] Cortor recounts the difficulty he had in reclaiming his works, even when he located them; museums at times responded to his letters that they had conflicting instructions from Porter and that they were unable to act without clarification of the situation. See Cortor, "Memo," 7.

his original anthropological interest in the area's perceived cultural purity or racial types, and towards its central role in ongoing struggles for Black sovereignty, self-definition, and land ownership.

There is evidence that this shift began not long after Cortor's arrival in the Sea Islands—at just the moment that his dispute with Porter, and its administrative labor, began intensifying. This is the moment when Cortor wrote the progress report I described earlier, which reframed and repositioned his project—moving away from terms like "Gullah," for instance, and dropping a focus on ideas of physiognomy. Notably, this was not a wholesale shift, and Cortor did retain some essentializing elements of his earlier ethnographic framework—noting, for example, his enduring interest in the "folklore and exoticisms of the islanders."[52] These differences, however, he did not attribute simply to cultural or geographic isolation. Instead, he pointed to the "workable form of self-government" that Sea Islanders had innovated, the unique history of Black landownership in the region, and the practices of cooperation that had enabled the community's survival.[53] He drew a connection, moreover, between these particularities and the Sea Islands' important position during the Civil War and Reconstruction periods—focusing in particular on the monumental significance of Special Field Orders No. 15, which had, as he put it, "authoriz[ed] Negro refugees following the army to take possession of the islands."[54]

In focusing on the Special Field Orders, Cortor evidences an interest in a passage of history in which the power and fickleness of paper documents was cast in particularly harsh light—their real-world consequences, as well as the influence of race in their weighting, placed in stark relief. Issued in January 1865 by the Union general William Tecumseh Sherman, Special Field Orders No. 15 had, in the broadest sense, claimed the land along the coast of Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida that Sherman and his troops had recently marched through—requisitioning it from Confederate landowners, and designating it for the sole use and benefit of formerly enslaved people. In the months following its issue, the Special Field Orders were the effective law in the Sea Islands; recently liberated people took possession of the land, some on the very site of their previous enslavement. With a few pages of handwritten text, then, the Special Field Orders enacted a radical new reality, redefining ideas of property that had held in the area for hundreds of years.

The Special Field Orders were momentous, but they did not mark the first instance of Black landownership in the Sea Islands; indeed, part of their significance arose from the bold intervention they made into what had become, by 1865, a high contentious debate over land in the Sea Islands region. Northern agents, missionaries, and military officials had been trying to reserve parts of the area for its freedpeople ever since the Sea Islands had come under Union rule early in the war, in 1861; from that point forward, the area had become a kind of experimental staging-ground for how Reconstruction might take place on a wider scale after the war ended. Land became a critical question within the competing theories of how this Reconstruction might occur—and, by extension, a critical question within the "Port Royal Experiment," as the Sea Islands area became known during this period. Those who believed that freedpeople were entitled to the land that they had worked to cultivate for hundreds of years advocated for the government to grant them land directly, or to offer it at minimal cost. This camp had had moderate success in the early years of the Port Royal Experiment; parts of the land seized by the government was reserved for freedpeople's purchase, and in some cases, freedpeople managed to

[52] Cortor, "Report of Progress and Plan of Work," 1945.
[53] Cortor, "Report of Progress and Plan of Work," 1945.
[54] Cortor, "Report of Progress and Plan of Work," 1945.

buy entire plantations at tax sales. But these successes were limited by competing interests among Northern figures, and policy reversals had seen some freedpeople dispossessed of the land they thought they had secured, their certificates of sale thrown out or invalidated. What land freedpeople did manage to purchase in this period ultimately was a function more of their cooperative action than of consistent or wide-scale policies of land distribution.

While the federal land policy of the Port Royal Experiment was murky and disputed, it did have one clear effect: consolidating Black Sea Islanders' belief in the importance of landownership. It was this conviction, in fact, that was in part responsible for the sweeping, decisive vision that the Special Field Orders later put forward—a function of the clear emphasis on land ownership that leaders of the Black community had forwarded when they met with Sherman in early January of 1865. What resulted from this meeting was the Special Field Orders, with its broad scope and unambiguous wording—a document that imagined the area along the coastline of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida as an entirely Black area:

> The islands from Charleston south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. John's River, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the negroes now made free by the acts of war and the [Emancipation] proclamation of the President of the United States…on the islands, and in the settlements hereafter to be established, no white person whatever, unless military officers and soldiers detailed for duty, will be permitted to reside; and the sole and exclusive management of affairs will be left to the freed people themselves, subject only to the United States military authority, and the acts of Congress.[55]

Although this vision was arguably more expansive than was possible to enact in reality—the Field Orders only had the capacity to distribute "abandoned" land in the Sea Islands, and had no bearing on land that had already been sold or remained under federal control—it did have real, tangible effect. Thousands of recently-freed people claimed land, and were granted "possessory titles" that testified to their status as land owners, in the months that followed its issue.

Because of the way it closely linked emancipation with the economic empowerment that accompanied land ownership, the Special Field Orders No. 15 have been remembered as an important early draft of Reconstruction—what W. E. B. Du Bois called an "epoch-making" vision of how the tenets of emancipation and independence might be enacted postwar.[56] While it never progressed past a nascent stage of development, then, the Port Royal Experiment was by all accounts a radical one, certainly from the perspective of Reconstruction's later failures—an early recognition of the fact that land, as Du Bois argued, was an "absolutely and essential thing to any real emancipation of the slaves."[57] Perhaps most importantly, from Cortor's perspective, its most radical components had been effected in one fell swoop, by the Special Field Orders: a document like any other, which had nevertheless wielded the power to enact incredible change—

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[55] William Tecumseh Sherman, "Special Field Orders No. 15," January 16, 1865, Vol. 16, Entry 159 (Z), Papers and Books of General William T. Sherman; General's Paper's and Books, 1830-1884; Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1762-1984, Record Group 94, National Archives and Records Administration.
[56] W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 73.
[57] Du Bois, 601.

to claim land, redraw borders, and endow those so recently considered property with land of their own.

Cortor seems to consider the significance of this experiment in several of the Sea Islands paintings, many of which seem to occupy the bold vision set out in the Special Field Orders. Paintings like *Interior* (fig. 2.33) and *Southern Souvenier* (fig. 2.34), for example, picture Black figures occupying what appear to be stately antebellum homes, complete with stone fireplaces, elaborate rugs, brickwork, iron balustrades, and grandfather clocks. While the figures' positions, in both these paintings, appear in some ways provisional—the figure in *Interior* sits on a blanket on the floor, rather than on furniture, while the rightmost one in *Southern Souvenier*, set against a door with only a rope for a handle, occupies a threshold—there is also evidence of their sustained dwelling in these spaces. A houseplant appears at the center of *Southern Souvenier*, for example, signaling the life that animates its interior—as do the lamps that the two figures hold, which cause shadows to dance across the walls. The impeccably-dressed figure in *Interior*, meanwhile, sits beside a phonograph player—a sign of the way she has claimed the interior sonically, transforming it into a space of leisure for herself. Without directly reflecting the violence or deliberate destruction that characterized the initial response of some formerly enslaved people in the Sea Islands towards the property of their former enslavers, these paintings do picture a mode of resistance, one we might group with those "iconoclastic acts," to use art historian Jennifer Van Horn's term.[58] Theirs is a resistance through dwelling, through occupation—a claiming of space enacted in their very presence within it.

The tone of these images is not simply defiant, however—and neither is it entirely optimistic. Indeed, they are largely dark and moody paintings, some with a marked sense of foreboding—perhaps reflective of Cortor's knowledge about the fate of the Special Field Orders and the wider Port Royal Experiment, cut short before it had fully developed. In some ways, this failure was a function of the provisional, contingent nature of the Port Royal venture—an "experiment" defined as much by the shifting circumstances of war as any fully-developed plan for Reconstruction.[59] The Special Field Orders themselves—for all the boldness of their vision for land distribution—were in many ways a response to a wartime exigency. For Sherman, certainly, they were understood to resolve what was becoming an increasingly pressing issue: how to respond to the recently-freed people who had attached themselves to his troops, following in increasing numbers as the Union army marched through the South—reaching as many as 17,000 by the time the Special Field Orders were finally issued. Earlier in the war, these people had been deemed "contraband" by the Union army, a categorization that sustained the idea of their status as property, rather than people—and scholars have noted that this uncertainty about the status of the enslaved, or their "readiness" for freedom, structured much of the federal government's shifting policies during the war.[60] Careful consideration reveals that this prejudice also structured the Special Field Orders; while it opened the land in the Sea Islands to freedpeople, and reserved it for their settlement alone, it insisted on the "supervision" of the

[58] Jennifer Van Horn, "'The Dark Iconoclast': African Americans' Artistic Resistance in the Civil War South," *The Art Bulletin* 99, no. 4 (October 2, 2017): 133.

[59] Historian Willie Lee Rose ascribes the ultimate dissolution of the Port Royal Experiment—its failure to act as a model for Reconstruction nation-wide—to the provisional ground that it was built upon, as a wartime venture. See Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 190-199.

[60] See Du Bois, 59-60; Rose, 167, 187, 199-200.

Union Army and the federal government—understood as essential overseers for the freedpeople within the transition-phase it was understood to inaugurate.[61]

The end of the Civil War cast doubt on the fate of this inchoate experiment, as it did on the continued viability of the Special Field Orders themselves—which, as military orders, were dependent on the special "emergency" status of wartime. It was this uncertainty that ultimately allowed President Andrew Johnson to effectively vacate the Special Field Orders in the fall of 1865, with the issue of an executive order—restoring the property of former Confederate landowners, along with older concepts of ownership itself, and collapsing the incipient ones that had begun to be sketched out at Port Royal.[62] Justified as an action necessary for reconciliation between North and South, Executive Order 145 effectively sacrificed the rights of the nation's newest citizens in the name of national "unity"—one revealed, ultimately, to rest on the foundation of White property. This would not be the last time this kind of bargain would be made; as scholars from Ta Nehisi-Coates to Richard Rothstein have argued, harm to Black communities has repeatedly been federally sanctioned in the name of a "greater" national good.[63]

Arguably freighted with the weight of later betrayals that Black Americans endured as the nation abandoned Reconstruction, the Sea Islands clarifies as the site on which competing visions of a postwar United States took on substantial, if embryonic form. It was the location, in other words, not only of the Port Royal Experiment and its first-draft form of Reconstruction, but also of another kind of experiment: a sketching-out of the logic by which these promises would be consistently undermined, sabotaged, and betrayed over the course of the following decades. Importantly, these were not merely ideas battled out in legislation or in the halls of Washington; rather, they had material form. It was the Black community of the Sea Islands, specifically, that experienced the stakes of these various bargains and experiments first-hand—the land they occupied shifting rapidly in status as these drafts were written and rewritten.

In many ways, in fact, these shifts had been matters of actual drafted documents: the four pages of handwritten script that added up to the Special Field Orders No. 15 and its radical new order; the few sentences of Johnson's Executive Order that translated to a mass dispossession of those so recently endowed with land-rights. Possibly no pair of documents more effectively demonstrate the ironic yet undeniable duality of paper documents: the power they have to endow or dispossess, to redraw borders and distribute land—and their simultaneous vulnerability, the seeming ease with which they can be thrown out or replaced. Perhaps even more forcefully, they make clear that this variability is not random, or even a function of paper itself; instead, it is closely linked with the power and position of the persons wielding it, and the ability this gives to these individuals to load or divest paper of political or legal weight.

It seems likely that Cortor was reflecting on these realities as he was learning about the Special Field Orders in the early period of his fellowship, but the same is not necessarily clear

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[61] Sherman, "Special Field Orders No. 15."

[62] Executive Order 145, issued October 9, 1865, treated the "possessory titles" that freedpeople had been granted under the Special Field Orders no. 15 as non-binding, allowing for former Confederate landowners to assert the validity of their earlier title to the land, and placing authority over settling disputes in the hands of the federal government. As part of a wider program of executive action that restored the property of former Confederates, the Executive Order effectively dispossessed the vast majority of freedpeople who had gained land under the Special Field Orders No. 15. See United States House of Representatives, *House Documents* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1866), 6.

[63] See Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015), especially 102-103; Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, First edition (New York and London: Liveright, 2017).

for his neighbors in St. Helena—many of whom could not read or write, and may not have thought about the paper or textual form of these orders and laws at all.[64] Even if they never connected the rapid shifts of Reconstruction with the physical documents of the Field Orders, though, Black Sea Islanders had felt the simultaneous power and flimsiness of paper first-hand—in the form of the "possessory titles" that they had been given under the Special Field Orders, for example, which had first granted them right to land, but were later dismissed as less "absolute" than the land deeds of former Confederate landowners.[65] Even those Black Sea Islanders with relatively more secure title to their land—those who had deeds of sale from tax sales, rather than "possessory titles" issued under the Special Field Orders—saw their ownership rights attacked in the years following the end of the Civil War, often through lawsuits brought by White southerners seeking a way to regain possession of the land. These suits often hinged on clerical details, which often disadvantaged the less-literate Black community—bolstering both their distrust of the legal system, and the sense of paper's importance, the critical role it played in either defending or forfeiting the land-right that was tantamount to their freedom.[66] Black Sea Islanders' awareness of paper's power arguably preceded Reconstruction, in fact, and existed regardless of their literacy level; as one contemporaneous observer put it, "They had seen the magic of a scrap of writing sent from a master to an overseer, and they were eager to share such power if there were any chance."[67] Seizing this power in the form of possessory titles and certificates of sale, they also wielded it to defend the land these papers granted them, when threatened. The Black community on Edisto Island, for example, gathered in mid-October 1865 to draft a letter in protest to Johnson's recently-issued Executive Order—one that, although it betrayed the drafters' only-recently gained literacy, nevertheless insisted on the importance of Black landownership in clear and vehement terms.[68]

This history, then, gives new import to the preoccupation with paper that appears in Cortor's Sea Islands paintings. Clarifying the stakes of a work like *Southern Souvenir (Eclipse) No. II* (fig. 2.24) and its reflection on the serrated power paper could take on, for example, it positions this reflection within a wider meditation on racial violence in the South—a context

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[64] During the era of the Port Royal Experiment, new laws, proclamations, and executive orders were often read aloud at large gatherings, testifying to the fact that most Sea Islanders would have learned of any changes they enacted orally. Contemporaneous accounts also document the communal song that was often part of Black Sea Islanders' response at these gatherings. See Laura M. Towne, *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne; Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884*, ed. Rupert Sargent Holland (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1912), 98–99; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal, Written at the Time of the Civil War* (Boston: W. B. Clarke Company, 1906), 244.

[65] In the words of Oliver Otis Howard, commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, the freedmen had "no absolute title but [were] simply occupying the homesteads." O. O. Howard, *Autobiography of Oliver Otis Howard, Major-General, United States Army* (New York: Baker & Taylor, 1908), 239.

[66] Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 396–97.

[67] William Channing Gannett and Edward Everett Hale, "The Education of the Freedmen," *North American Review*, October 1865, 533.

[68] Similar letters were sent to General O. O. Howard, commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau at the time, and to Andrew Johnson himself. See Henry Bram, Ishmael Moultrie, and Yates Sampson to President Andrew Johnson, October 28, 1865, B-53 and P-27 1865, Letters Received, series 15, Washington Headquarters, Record Group 105, National Archives and Records Administration; Henry Bram, Moultrie, and Yates Sampson to O. O. Howard, October 20, 1865, B-53 and p-27 1865, Letters Received, series 15, Washington Headquarters, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, & Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105, National Archives and Records Administration. W. E. B. Du Bois calls the letter an "illiterate petition" due to the letter's spelling and grammatical errors, but also points to the importance of its drafting as a collective act of protest against Johnson's policies. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, 603.

referenced not only by the work's title, but also by the deep-South locations legible in the mastheads of the crumpled paper. There are other indications that the reference is specifically to the antebellum South: the jagged ends of a switch-like branch, which spreads menacingly across the figure's torso, or the hooked ring that hovers above her neck, like those that might have secured chains; even the aperture in the wallpaper beneath the figure's groin seems an allusion to the kind of sexual violence that historian and theorist Saidiya Hartman has called "the ruling principle of the social relations of racial slavery."[69] Paper's particular power is not minimized by this wider meditation; positioned at the painting's center, at the threshold between its sections and the different parts of the figure's body, paper remains the key to the fragmentation of both. It is, however, clearly positioned *among* other tools of antebellum-era violence—a co-conspirator, or perhaps an inheritor, of their legacy of physical brutality and dislocation.

A Song (fig. 2.35) takes up similar questions, reflecting on postbellum efforts to dislocate and alienate Black subjects, which persisted alongside agricultural practices associated with enslavement. Two figures occupy the painting's ambiguous, deep blue background, where they appear to be engaged in gathering cotton, symbolized by the middle figure's heavy sack—likely gesturing to the staple crop of the Sea Islands during the antebellum period, deeply dependent on the labor of enslaved people. At the same time, though, the painting likely also references later efforts, after the reversal of the Special Field Orders, to force freedpeople in the area to return to work for their former owners—to take up essentially the same place they had occupied as enslaved people, within a cotton-based plantation system. Positioning the workers behind a barbed-wire fence, the painting gestures to the violence with which this separation had occurred—a separation not only of the people from the land they believed they had the right to own, but also from each other, as indicated by the foregrounded figure who gazes across the painting's barbed barrier.

Other paintings come into clearer focus, too—including those, like *Interior* (fig. 2.33) and *Southern Souvenier* (fig. 2.34), that had seemed to inhabit the bold vision of the Special Field Orders. Even as they depict Black figures within stately and elaborate Southern houses, close inspection reveals that each painting also carefully describes the disrepair of those structures: the peeling wallpaper of *Interior*, crumbling stucco of *Southern Souvenier*, the broken shutters in both. The dilapidation appears even more advanced, and pervasive, in *Environment* (fig. 2.36); not only have holes eaten into the roof's wooden shingles and the tarpaper that attempts to patch them—even seemingly structural elements, like the stone or concrete beam at the composition's left, are crumbling and broken. While these elements clearly mark the passage of time, they do not therefore celebrate the postbellum moment they seem to inhabit—or even admit that this period enjoyed any material difference to its antebellum counterpart. Instead, they serve to indict the continued state of neglect and economic disenfranchisement that followed emancipation—identifying these as part of the continual remaking of the conditions of slavery, what scholar Christina Sharpe would call its "wake."[70] Laying bare the poverty that the people of the Sea Islands, in particular, faced after the end of the Port Royal Experiment, the paintings also expose the wider legacy of Reconstruction: describing it as an abandoned or poorly-maintained project—one that, without the allocation of resources and deliberate attention, fell apart as surely and as steadily as a neglected structure, leaving exposed those it was meant to shelter and protect.

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[69] Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 83.
[70] Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

Undecided Zone: The Sea Islands, Southern Exceptionalism, and the "Race Question" in the 1940s

Cortor might have left his engagement with the Sea Islands here, at an indictment of the nation's abandonment of its principles of democracy and equality, and a revelation of the state in which this abandonment left its Black citizens. Certainly many other visitors had made similar conclusions, reading in the area's poverty a kind of tragic fatedness—one that, whether the South's regressive policies or the freedmen's supposed irresponsibility were to blame, essentially consigned the Sea Islands, like much of the rest of the South, to a state of backwardness or even ruin.[71] Such fatalist narratives helped to justify the withdrawal of federal interest and investment from the South, even as they shored up ideas about the South's exceptionalism—the idea that it was a distinct region, with its own set of customs, traditions, climate, and laws—shared by many White southerners.[72] Such an interpretation would have allowed Cortor to maintain at least some of the intellectual framework with which he had begun his project, too, including the spatialized understanding of difference that he inherited from current strains of anthropology: seeing the Sea Islands as a place whose isolation allowed and secured its cultural, and racial, particularity.

Cortor did not prove content with this interpretation, however. While his paintings share a close attention to the tangible effects of long-term neglect or decay, they do not necessarily dismiss the fate of the Sea Islands, or the South more generally, as one of certain ruin. Nor do they insist on the Sea Islands' essential isolation; despite the language he had used to describe his project, Cortor's paintings evidence an intense interest in the circuits that linked the Sea Islands to other parts of the South, the nation, and even the world. This reflected the lessons he may have learned during his travel into and out of the region as he pursued his case with Porter, or through his many trips to the post office as he kept up with correspondence about the case—but it also should be seen in dialogue with the increasingly broad stakes that Black leaders claimed for the "race question" during the 1940s, the way they began to frame of the plight of Black southerners within national and even international contexts. While his works do engage directly with the imaginary of Southern difference that began to emerge in the years after Reconstruction, then, they do so to unsettle and disrupt the grammar and logic of this imaginary—forwarding the possibility that the South was a region whose fate, still undecided, would have ramifications for broader struggles against racism, hatred, and discrimination.

I am arguing that many of Cortor's Sea Islands works situate themselves directly in the context of the Civil War and its aftermath—engaging, in the process, one of the most important components within narratives of Southern exceptionalism. Rather than securing a singular, unified image of the South, as in these narratives, however, the Civil War in Cortor's paintings is a deeply uncertain, if looming presence in the region—its meaning not yet fully emerged. A work like *The Wall* (fig. 2.37), for example, clearly references a moment still marked by conflict, as indicated by the overhanging cannon and what seems to be a recently-snapped rope—but it does not make clear what will follow. Its figure occupies a strange and doubly-liminal space,

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[71] Historian Willie Lee Rose notes that Northern visitors to the Sea Islands, and the wider press coverage of the South in the 1870s, tended to focus on the region's decay and stagnation—states that remained consistent in the treatment of the South, even as blame for them varied. See Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 380, 389.

[72] For the way that this image of a "ruined South" was naturalized and circulated beginning in the 1870s, and its function within a wider national culture, see Jennifer Rae Greeson, *Our South: Geographic Fantasy and the Rise of National Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), especially chapter 10, "The Glory of Disaster, " 252-272. See also Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino, eds., *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

both at the edge of the painting and at a kind of threshold at the convergence of a wall, an iron fence, and a wooden door.

Southern Theme (Magnolia) No. II (fig. 2.38) also makes reference to the long shadow that the Civil War cast in the South, similarly describing this drawn-out postwar period as one of suspension and uncertainty. It more clearly clarifies the stakes of such an interpretation, however, especially the degree to which it breaks with another prevailing image of the South—one that, while similarly anchored in the region's Civil War past, sought to consolidate a single and definitive narrative about the region's fundamental gentility, nobility, and military prowess.[73] The painting acknowledges the visual language with which this "Lost Cause" narrative was often articulated—in the form of Confederate monuments, like the one that appears in its background, or in the romanticized rendering of Southern landscape, often focused by iconographic details like the magnolia flower and Spanish moss. *Southern Theme (Magnolia) No. II*'s title, along with its inclusion of a rising moon behind the Spanish moss, might gesture to a central logic within Lost Cause mythology, in fact: what is sometimes referred to as the "magnolia legend," or "moonlight and magnolias" idea, named for the aestheticization of the antebellum South as a realm of beauty, romance, and enchantment—and the accompanying erasure of the violences of slavery.[74] Cortor was likely aware of the central place that the Carolina Lowcountry played in this romanticized image of the South, and may even have been thinking of the repackaging of a nearby site—Magnolia Plantation—into a tourist destination, known for its gardens, in the early twentieth century.[75] Although codes of segregation would have prevented Cortor from visiting Magnolia Plantation himself, he might have seen images of it circulated in the impressionist paintings of artists like William Posey Silva (figs. 2.39 and 2.40)—in which the slave past of the plantation is literally covered over, pushed into a hazy background by colorful blooms and gauzy, moss-dripping trees.

Even as it acknowledges the varied forms and iconographies of the Lost Cause narrative, though, *Southern Theme (Magnolia) No. II* also disrupts their grammar. Refusing to cede pictorial domain to the mounted Confederate figure, for example, the painting counterposes it with another: a striking Black female figure, whose stark foregrounding, forceful verticality, and dense impasto—a familiar formula for Cortor's powerful female figures—make her seem as impassable as the brick of the wall just beside her. Positioning her as the painting's repoussoir, the painting also slyly inverts the usual syntax of romanticized Southern landscapes, like Silva's paintings; rather than serving to frame the antebellum scene and naturalize its racial logic, the repoussoir *is* the Black figure—a position that allows her to dwarf the comparably spindly, miniscule monument. Her presence also shifts the significance of the other symbols of the South within the painting—the magnolia flower or Spanish moss that seem to change in meaning, detaching from the domain of the Confederate monument or its romanticized image of the South. It is the Black figure, in fact, who holds the magnolia branch in her hand—a branch that, while it

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[73] On the role of Lost Cause mythology in consolidating a singular narrative and image of the South, see Scott Romine, "God and the MoonPie: Consumption, Disenchantment, and the Reliably Lost Cause," in *Creating and Consuming the American South: Borderlands and Transnationalism in the United States and Canada*, ed. Martyn Bone, Brian Ward, and William A. Link (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2015), 49–71.

[74] See Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 360; Tara McPherson, *Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender, and Nostalgia in the Imagined South* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

[75] On Magnolia Plantation and the role that its representation, including by artists like Silva, played in its establishment as a tourist destination, see Connor Hamm, "Inventing the South: Regional Tourism After the Civil War" (Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2023), 16–69.

bears an exquisite bloom, also ends in bare, jagged spikes, some of which fall across the monument itself, pinning it compositionally into place.

If *Southern Theme (Magnolia) No. II* reclaims existing symbols of the South from a Lost Cause imaginary, and clearly centers Black figures within this reclamation effort, however, it is less clear about what new meanings these symbols might take on in an alternative imaginary—instead seeming to insist on their as-yet-undetermined status. Cortor's concern seems to be with unsettling the singular claim the Lost Cause had over the imagining of the South and its past, and challenging especially the constricted place held for Black subjects within this imaginary—in short, holding open the question of Black Americans' civil status that had been essentially abandoned at the end of Reconstruction, and forwarding the South as the site of a continued fight for racial equality. Cortor joins, here, many other thinkers, scholars, and writers of his moment, from Mary McCleod Bethune to A. Philip Randolph, who sought to press the urgency of the unresolved "race question" within the United States in the 1940s—stressing that the de facto resolution that had followed the end of Reconstruction, especially the South's erection of a caste system via Jim Crow legislation, should not be understood as the question's definitive end.[76] Cortor might be understood to join the thinking of some—both Black and White—who held that the South necessarily would be the site on which this question would be answered; as scholar and Rosenwald fellow Sterling Brown put it in 1944, "It goes without saying that what happens to the Negro in the South has great bearing on what participation the Negro will attain in American democracy."[77]

At the same time, though, Cortor steers clear of positioning the question of Black civil rights as a *solely* regional one, as if race were a matter of the South's exclusive concern—a version of the exceptionalism argument whose logic could be used to justify Jim Crow legislation and federal inaction to protect Black civil rights.[78] Cortor's paintings avoid this sense of regional insularity, repeatedly focusing on the imbrication between the Sea Islands, the South, the wider United States—and even broader, international arenas. The newspapers, magazines, and letters that appear across many of the paintings, for example, reference the transportation and communications systems that connected the Sea Islands to the wider nation—placing the figures within the context of wider regional, national, or even international issues, like war or natural disaster. The figure of *Americana*, for example, is positioned before a backdrop of print materials far ranging not only in type, but in origin: newspapers from the immediate area (the *Beaufort Times*) as well as the wider South (the *Birmingham News*), as well as Hollywood posters and national publications (*Life*)—some of which reference even broader contexts, like all-caps

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[76] Many Black activists, scholars, and thinkers sought to leverage the international fight against fascism to refocus on the issue of racism and racial inequity within the nation, in what the *Pittsburgh Courier* dubbed the "Double V" Campaign against fascism and racism. Many scholars date the beginning of the modern civil rights movement in the United States to this period in the early to mid 1940s, when new organizations and strategies to address entrenched racial apartheid began to emerge, many national in scale. See Joyce Ann Hanson, *Mary McLeod Bethune & Black Women's Political Activism* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2003); David Welky, *Marching across the Color Line: A. Philip Randolph and Civil Rights in the World War II Era*, Critical Historical Encounters (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Rawn James, *The Double V: How Wars, Protest, and Harry Truman Desegregated America's Military* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013); Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree: The Julius Rosenwald Fund, Foundation Philanthropy, and American Race Relations*.

[77] Sterling A. Brown, "Count Us In," printed in *Sterling A. Brown's A Negro Looks at the South*, eds. Mark A. Sanders and John Edgar Tidwell (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 324.

[78] Eric Foner describes the close link between "states rights" arguments and the erection of legislative racial apartheid in the South, beginning in the very early moments of Reconstruction; see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 199.

declaration of "PEACE" that seems to reference the end of the second World War. Richly framed, if not contained or dominated, by these materials, the central figure seems bound by them to an emerging national culture, whose mediation via print allows it to penetrate even the most rural and isolated of areas. Lest the impression be that this cultural flow moves only in a single direction, from North to South, Cortor elsewhere includes indications otherwise: the Coca-Cola symbol, even at this moment closely associated with an emerging "mass" American culture, in *Southern Souvenier (Eclipse) #4* (fig. 2.26) reminds us that this culture has deep roots in the South. Both paintings point, in other words, to the inseparability of the South from any conception of the nation or its culture—the fact that, despite pretensions to regional independence or insularity, the South has always been a key piece of the collage that makes up the United States.

We could see the message as even more pointed, in fact, and the painting's multiple scales more charged. The gestures to the South that appear throughout *Americana*'s collaged background might help to explain the overwhelming Whiteness of the figures that appear across its representation of wider American culture—a function of the fundamental parallels, rather than divergences, in regional and national attitudes towards Black citizens. The fact that Cortor includes a depiction of a 1943 cover of *Life* that pictured South African military leader—and White supremacist—Jan Smuts (see fig. 2.28) points to the even wider circulation he saw for these racist attitudes, linking segregation within the U.S. with emerging systems of racial apartheid on the African continent. Indeed, the entire collage of *Americana*'s backdrop seems to coalesce, with this revelation—its apparent randomness, disparate origins, and disjunctive dating belying what is a fundamental commonality, the assumption of Whiteness and its supremacy.

Importantly, *Americana* time-stamps the exclusions it finds within this Southern/American/International culture. Although others of the Sea Islands paintings make oblique reference to their temporal positioning—*Southern Theme (Magnolia) No. II*'s allusion to the Jim Crow South via the Confederate monument, *Southern Souvenier (Eclipse) #4*'s reference to Coke's modern advertising—few were specific; indeed, their depiction of oil lamps, phonographs, line-dried laundry, and transportation-via-horse, while ethnographically true to the reality of life in the 1940s Sea Islands, might also allow contemporary viewers to imagine that Cortor was depicting a moment in the region's past. *Americana* functions to dispel any such notion, firmly grounding its scene in the moment that Cortor was working—not only in its references to contemporary events, like the end of World War II, but in its *exact* replication of specific publications, which can be dated to the week or even the day (see figs. 2.27 and 2.28). If *Southern Theme (Magnolia) No. II* and *The Wall* had served to depict the post-Civil War moment as uncertain and undetermined, in other words, *Americana* makes clear that this uncertainty persisted until another postwar moment. Reflecting on the Sea Islands became, with this context, a way for Cortor to consider the unresolved state in which Black civil rights had languished in the period since the failure of the Port Royal Experiment and other drafts of Reconstruction—an irresolution which had allowed racial equality to persist as an open "question," as pressing in the context of World War II as it had been some eighty years earlier.

Coastal Cutting Edge: Cultural Anthropology and the Sea Islands as Alternative

Thus far, I have argued that Cortor shifted the direction of his attention in the Sea Islands—leaving behind an interest in racial types, to consider instead the region's unique position within longer struggles for Black economic sovereignty and the unfinished project of realizing Black civil rights. While this involved, as I argued above, a definite shift in his

ethnographic framework, away from its earlier proximity to physical anthropology, it did not necessarily mark a departure with ethnographic methods in general. I will argue here that Cortor revised his ethnographic methods while in the Sea Islands, turning them towards more contemporary forms of cultural anthropology; in line with his rejection of racial types following his encounter with his Sea Islands neighbors, this involved a new focus on lived cultural practices within the Black community of St. Helena—their oral traditions, cooperative land cultivation, and material resourcefulness, all of which allowed the community to survive over the decades of attempted dispossession outlined above. In the process, Cortor radically recast much of what made the Sea Islands significant for other social scientists—its rurality, poverty, liminal geographic position, and connections to African culture. Rejecting the idea that these marked the Sea Islands' essential pastness, primitivity, or marginality, Cortor instead claims them as the source of the region's potential power or critical edge—central to what he insists might be an alternative future built on the ways of life Sea Islanders had developed.

Cortor's paintings are forthright about what other social scientists had seen as the defining characteristics of the Sea Islands—its rural setting, for example, or the unindustrialized, agricultural work that many residents did to subsist. Many of these characteristics are indeed foregrounded in Cortor's paintings—as in *Americana*, where the washtub, rooster, gas lamp, coal stove, and ears of corn in the foreground all speak to an emphatically rural location, even a lack of industrial development. While these elements might seem to emphasize the figure's lack of power or resources, many also help to establish her connection to a strand of independence—even resistance—specific to the Sea Islands. The corn and the chicken both gesture, for example, to the small-scale farming practices that Black Sea Islanders turned to in the years after the dissolution of the Special Field Orders—a definitive form of protest against the pressure they faced to return to work for their former owners, within a cotton-based plantation system little changed since slavery.[79] Instead of acceding to this pressure, the Black community on St. Helena Island invested in the more environmentally- and communally- sustainable practice of growing subsistence crops, like corn. While out of step with a capitalist drive towards profit, even arguably with the region's industrialization or "progress," this downsized vision and choice of rurality also allowed a different model of community to emerge—one premised not on vast disparities of power, but on cooperation among many similarly-positioned individuals.

The remove at which this rurality positions *Americana*'s figure works similarly—to endow her with a counterintuitive form of power. The painting acknowledges that such a remove exists—highlighting, for example, the striking contrast between the rustic room and the cosmopolitan contexts referenced by the print materials on its back wall. Even if the painting seems to insist that the figure has some sort of access to these wider realms via print media, it is clear that this is not the same access that a subject in an urban city might enjoy; the vast differences in the newspapers' dates speak to the inevitable belatedness of her participation in a wider national culture—both a function and reminder of the marginality of the Sea Islands. The figure, moreover, seems potentially unaware of this belatedness, turning her back to the newspapers behind her with seeming indifference—echoing the way that earlier photographers, from Leigh Richmond Miner to Doris Ulmann, had depicted Sea Islanders' relationship with print media, in which its value is more for insulation than for information (figs. 2 and 3). In Cortor's painting, however, this position does not necessarily signal ignorance, weakness, or irrelevance; rather, it poses the possibility that the distance separating the figure from mainstream, mainland networks of American culture might be, instead, precisely what empowers

[79] See Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 313.

her, allowing her to rearrange it into a new, collaged form. Cortor's painting allows us to consider, in other words, the ways that Miner's and Ulmann's subjects were critically-engaged consumers of American culture, whose (mis)uses of paper—arranging it according to their physical needs or their individual sense of design—divested it of its previous import, allowing it to be rearranged in significant new ways.

That much of the print media that surrounds *Americana*'s figure originates from elsewhere takes on new meaning here—a reminder that the margin is also often a place of intersection, a contact-zone or site of "transnational convergence," as scholars of port cities, like art historian Prita Meier, have argued.[80] Cortor makes a similar case for the Sea Islands' potential significance as a critical margin—although he does so not by arguing for the Sea Islands' essential cosmopolitanism, as has Meier of other port cities.[81] By foregrounding its rurality, Cortor acknowledges that the Sea Islands never emerged as the capital of trade that some imagined, based on its status as one of the east coast's deepest-water ports. He does, however, point to the Sea Islands' position as a contact-zone of another kind, even more central to the development of American culture—that created by the transatlantic slave trade. *Americana* positions its figure as the survivor as well as inheritor of this contact: uniquely interpolated by the "F.O.B." ("free on board") stamp that appears behind her, she possesses keen insight into the different origins and sometimes-harsh juxtapositions that make up American culture.[82] With a distinct sense of the "elsewhere" from which she herself has come, and the insight which this perspective grants her, she is thus uniquely positioned within the critical margin—the cutting edge where the many pages of American culture could be productively torn up, reshuffled, and reorganized into a strikingly new order. Cortor is specific about what kind of subject would perform this kind of work, in other words: one who is at once rural, poor, female, and Black—the occupant of multiple margins, social as well as geographic.

Sea of Time (fig. 4) makes a similar case, focusing on a Black female figure possessed of a command that transcends the situation of decay that surrounds her. As in *Americana*, the depiction of disintegrating newsprint establishes her place outside, or behind, the normal flow of time; given the tattered state of her newspaper, her news appears definitely, even extremely out of date. She seems, however, entirely unperturbed by this situation; the conch shell placed on top of the limp newspaper might even imply that she has no interest in reading it—that it exists for her not for the contemporary information it conveys, but rather as part of the constellation of materials, objects, and beings that she seems to command. What meaning, specifically, the newspaper might hold for the figure is less clear; the painting remains enigmatic about the new order that the figure helps to orchestrate.[83] The work's title, however, does gesture to the fact that time is central to this reordering, and hints suggestively at the specificity of the alternative temporality the figure seems to occupy: one subject not to the linear, forward-progression of daily publication, but instead the cyclical movement of the oceans; one possessed of a deeper memory than the typical news cycle allows; one in which past, present, and future are not neatly separated, but mingle in a watery mix. Whatever the case, it is clear that the figure, while from

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[80] Prita Meier, *Swahili Port Cities: The Architecture of Elsewhere*, African Expressive Cultures (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 2.

[81] Meier, 11.

[82] F.O.B., or "Free on Board," is a shipping industry term used to designate the distribution of liability and cost for goods being transported.

[83] Art historian Lisa Gail Collins argues that reading the connections to West and Central African iconography allows us to see "behind these uses of seashells and old newspapers" to the painting's spiritual meaning. Collins, *The Art of History*, 81.

some perspectives certainly belated or out of date, is not therefore depicted as outside of time—but rather, in a sea of it.

Art historian Lisa Gail Collins describes the figure in *Sea of Time* as a version of the healer figure with connections to West and Central African belief systems.[84] Many other of Cortor's paintings share this attentiveness to the cultural influence of Africa in the Sea Islands—appearing in the iconographic details in the paintings, as Collins highlights, from birds to seashells.[85] While this interest links Cortor to the many other ethnographers and researchers who had visited the Sea Islands before him, from William Bascom to Lorenzo Dow Turner, Cortor's investment is also somewhat different. He is less interested in establishing fact of an enduring cultural connection to Africa, as had Turner, or in arguing for the value of the "creole" Gullah culture, as had Bascom—arguments that had both been premised on the separation and isolation of the Sea Islands, and the retentions that its undisturbed, unmodernized state preserved.[86] Cortor seems interested, by contrast, in the ways that African cultural and social practices as resources for Sea Islanders in the present—specifically, in resisting efforts to dispossess them that followed Reconstruction. He was fascinated, for example, by the tradition of cooperative action in the Sea Islands, making it the subject of at least one 1945 drawing, *Cooperative Meeting* (currently unlocated). In his 1945 Rosenwald progress report, he correctly connects this practice to the important fact of Black landownership in the Sea Islands—highlighting the way that Black freedpeople had pooled their resources to buy land offered at tax sales early in the Port Royal Experiment era, a move that effectively allowed them to circumvent the uncertainty and betrayals of later land promises made under Sherman's Special Field Orders. At the same time, Cortor is clear that this cooperation continued to structure life in the Sea Islands, pointing to the cooperative store that allowed Sea Islanders to exchange the products they had grown on their own land. Cortor even claimed to have joined this cooperative venture himself during his time in St. Helena, and to have contributed to the farming on the property he shared with Viola Chaplain, his host.[87]

Cortor also evidenced an interest in the oral traditions of the Sea Islands, including the specificity of the creolized Gullah language and the cultural function of song—each of which had been established as a primary locus of an enduring connection to African cultures. Some of his paintings' titles reflect his own absorption of Gullah while in the Sea Islands—*Day Clean* (fig. 2.41), for example, is likely a transcribed version of the Gullah word for "dawn" or "daybreak," *de klin*, which linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner traced to a Wolof origin.[88] In other paintings, oral traditions are more directly pictured—as in *A Song* (fig. 2.35), which depicts several figures in the midst of singing while they work. Gesturing to varied functionality of song in the Sea Islands—within residents' religious life or leisure moments, but also their communal decision-making—*A Song* points specifically to the use of song within agricultural work, where it often served to synchronize workers' movements as they worked side-by-side in a field.[89] Within the painting, it also works to unite figures separated by the barbed-wire barrier that cuts across its center—a barrier that, if understood to represent post-Reconstruction-era efforts to

[84] Collins, 80–81.
[85] Collins, 80.
[86] Lorenzo Dow Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1949); Bascom, "Acculturation Among the Gullah Negroes*."
[87] See Cortor to Haygood, February 5, 1945; Cortor, "Report of Progress and Plan of Work." 1945.
[88] Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, 232.
[89] Bascom, "Acculturation Among the Gullah Negroes*," 45.

dispossess Black Sea Islanders, also establishes the importance of song in the resistance of these efforts.

While it reflects a cultural practice specific to the Sea Islands, witnessed by Cortor in his capacity as an attentive ethnographic observer, *A Song* does not attempt to record this practice veristically—instead positioning figures in an ambiguous, seemingly groundless deep-blue field. Indeed, many of Cortor's paintings seem far removed from the documentary mode most closely associated with ethnographic observation at this point; rather than fix, record, and clarify, as much ethnographic photography sought to do, Cortor's paintings infuse their subjects with a dark, enigmatic tone.[90] This sense of mystery runs across many of his Sea Islands paintings—those that juxtapose figures with ambiguous, unclear relationships, for example; that position them in brooding, nocturnal environments; or that fragment bodies in unexpected, often unexplained ways. Although he never explicitly claimed the label of Surrealism, Cortor did seem to be drawing on the movement's aesthetic strategies in a deliberate way—perhaps reflecting the lessons of those he had exhibited alongside at the G Place Gallery in D.C., like Joan Miró, Pavel Tchelitchew, or Julia Thecla.[91] Even more important than the precise moment of Cortor's first contact with the movement, however, is the value Surrealism seemed to hold for the artist—as a set of aesthetic strategies, like fragmentation and juxtaposition, which help to unsettle any sense of normality, and to surface the potentiality of the unknown state that follows. Many of his paintings seem to occupy a similar in-between zone—positioning figures at thresholds, as in *Interior*, *The Wall*, or *Southern Souvenier*, or in the ambiguous moment between night and day, as in *Southern Theme (Magnolia) No. II*, *Day Clean*, or *Environment*. Perhaps none clarifies Cortor's interest in these moments more so than those that focus on eclipses—those periods, suffused by bizarre light, which are themselves created by the improbable scenario in which the moon blocks out the sun. Some of Cortor's most experimental compositions, paintings like *Southern Souvenier (Eclipse) No. II* or *Southern Souvenier (Eclipse) #4,* seem to insist on

[90] Photography's role within what anthropologists Elizabeth Edwards and Christopher Morton call the "highly visualized practice" of anthropology is the subject of a vast literature; it is at the center of a number of interrogations into the discipline's origins and foundational figures, and occupies a core place within the sub-field of visual anthropology. For a broad summary of the photography's uses within ethnography, and their evolution over time, see Christopher Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology*, Exposures (London: Reaktion Books, 2011); Melissa Banta, *From Site to Sight: Anthropology, Photography, and the Power of Imagery* (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum Press, 2017); see also John Collier, "Photography and Visual Anthropology," in *Photography and Visual Anthropology* (De Gruyter Mouton, 2012), 235–54; Elizabeth Edwards and Christopher Morton, *Photography, Anthropology and History: Expanding the Frame* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2009); Ira Jacknis, "Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson in Bali: Their Use of Photography and Film," *Cultural Anthropology* 3, no. 2 (1988): 160–77. Although the serialized, comparative approach to photography favored by physical anthropologists in the nineteenth century shifted with the advent of cultural anthropology in the early twentieth, scholars have noted that photography continued to serve the function of recording and clarifying cultural practices; see Jacknis, "Franz Boas and Photography."

[91] During the time that Porter's galleries were in operation in D.C., they became known as the center for "esthetic radicals" and those working in "abstraction, surrealism, and contemporary idioms," as a newspaper article put it in the 1940s. See clipping, ca. 1945, Reel N70-27, Edwin David Porter Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Porter had a close relationship with Peggy Guggenheim, collaborating with her on exhibitions and sharing information about artists, from Alice Paalen to Frida Kahlo. While Cortor's work was included in several group exhibitions, hanging alongside a broad range of artists—from Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee to Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Stuart Davis, Mark Rothko, and Charles Sebree—he may have taken particular note of the work of Miró, Thecla, and Tchelitchew. He wrote of his admiration for Miró in 1944; was in close contact with Thecla about David Porter; and later would write of a particular admiration for Tchelitchew's *Hide and Seek*, created in the early 1940s. See Eldzier Cortor to Selden Rodman, March 28, 1944, Box 2, Folder 16, Selden Rodman Papers #4259, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming; Cortor, "Memo," 5; Cortor, An Interview with Eldzier Cortor, 142.

eclipses as moments in which the normal rules of existence do not apply—moments rife with tension and the potential for change.

This, too, seems to rhyme with a wider Surrealist focus on the latent insurgency of the unknown—but it's important to note that Cortor's interest is less in the unconscious, than in the cultural practices of the Sea Islands people as this source of potential. Linking him to the somewhat distinct strain that anthropologist James Clifford has labeled "ethnographic surrealism," this interest helps to clarify the ways that Cortor's ethnographic investments shifted during his fellowship period—moving away from a search for examples of pre-established "type" categories, and towards an exploration of Sea Islands as the source of possibly turbulent or revolutionary difference, akin to the "irruption of otherness" sought by many ethnographic surrealists.[92] At the same time, however, Cortor shared some of the identity positionings of the "others" he studied, including the Sea Islanders' racialization—a fact that sets him apart from many other ethnographic surrealists, even as it hints at the potentially submerged political edge to his paintings. Within the context of the long struggle for racial justice sited in the Sea Islands, and his wider interest in the legacy of these struggles across his paintings, Cortor's focus on the surreality of the eclipse takes on new meaning—marking his interest in the rare, improbable, but undeniable possibility for normal scales of power to reverse, casting the world in stark and strange new light. It also returns us to the figures that this light illuminates—who move under and within it, through the painting's many thresholds and transition-zones. Serving as dimensional counter-images to the racial type, these figures also act as protagonists within these spaces—articulating alternative ways of being, that function within wider processes of reversal and unsettling by which this world-in-transition emerges.

Freighting the Canvas: Cortor's Paintings as Objects

Cortor's interest in these ways of being, and the alternative worlds they make possible to imagine, grew from his time living in St. Helena, but his powerful, dimensional figures body forth this alternative in a range of different contexts—not limited to the Sea Islands or the South. As objects that moved, his paintings of female figures traversed space and addressed multiple audiences, hanging on museum walls and displayed in gallery showrooms—and the bold proposition they make, of an insistent Black presence independent of systems premised on Whiteness, should be understood in relation to the Whiteness of these art world spaces. Importantly, in fact, the dimensionality that I have argued is critical to their presence, came to bear directly on their troubled movement through this world; narrating this trouble exposes the "friction" that its anti-Blackness created for Black artists attempting to navigate it. This dilemma returns us to the many different concerns that an artist like Cortor had to consider, and attempt to resolve within an artwork, and reminds us that these were often conflicting—the importance of impasto to his artistic and ethnographic goals, for example, could add to the cost and risk involved in managing their safe passage through the art world.

As I've already argued, Cortor's Sea Islands work indexed the artist's engagement with the material dimension of his paintings—especially the intensification of his experiments in sculptural impasto and its strategic concentration within his compositions. But the Sea Islands period also involved an intense engagement with the relationship between this materiality and his artworks' movement; as he took on the labor of managing his own work after officially leaving Porter, Cortor had to face the task—and the costs—of shipping his art to exhibitions, juries, and collectors. This was not just a matter of finances or clerical labor; each time he had to ship his

[92] James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Surrealism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 4 (1981): 562.

work, he was forced to calculate the weight of his paintings, to attempt their rolling or wrapping—to consider the way that the thickness of his impasto added directly to his paintings' object quality, their inertia, the difficulty and cost of their movement. It's clear that he thought with this lens, assessing the work in terms of its ability to be shipped; at the least, he decided to separate out the work that he sent from the Sea Islands to art juries and exhibitions, sending some by a normal postage rate, and others through parcel post.[93]

Cortor knew intimately, in other words, the pressure and benefit of creating light, portable, shippable works—works that could enter the art market's circulation as easily as possible. But he also knew, just as intensely, the risks associated with doing so—the theft, damage, and loss that could await a work in this circulation, what Jennifer Roberts has called the "friction of distance."[94] Placed into the position of managing his own career, Cortor was unable to ignore either side of this issue—unlike artists with gallery representation, he was not able to bracket the object-ness of his artwork, delegating its shipment or exhibition to a gallerist, in order to focus on its "solely" aesthetic or artistic properties.

Whether or not Cortor thought consciously about balancing the different dimensions of his work, his work's material freight would quickly come to bear directly on his efforts to navigate the market's risks. Specifically, the relationship between his paintings' impasto and the Black female bodies it described heightened the risk his paintings faced as objects, as they circulated within a market that revealed itself to be not only overwhelmingly White, but rife with racism. Almost as soon as Cortor sent it out for its first exhibition, for example, *Americana* was vandalized—not randomly, but in an act that made clear the specific convergence of racism and sexism undergirding it. According to a letter Cortor received from the Carnegie Institute, where the painting was being prepared to be installed for the 1947 Carnegie Invitational, *Americana* was "slashed" multiple times—once across "the belly with a knife," and the others in order to "knock the nipples off the breasts of" the figure.[95] The location of these attacks, on targeted areas of the figure's body, is enough to make clear the perpetrator's motivations—an act of vandalism against a Black artist that doubled as an act of violence against the painting's Black female subject. Whether or not it was the striking material presence, confident posture, nudity, or beauty of the figure that the vandal reacted to, correspondence around the incident sustained this sense that the vandalism was a kind of bodily attack; as Cortor put it, the painting had been "brutally treated," and the damage was repeatedly referred to in corporeal terms.[96]

It's easy to understand the ways this vandalism made real one of Cortor's worst nightmares. The desecration of a work he thought of as "the summary of the years [he] spent down south in the islands of South Carolina" and of "all the research [he] put into" the project, it also heightened his sensitivity to the risks of sending his work out into the world. Perhaps equally disheartening, though, was the way that the representatives of the Carnegie Invitational responded to the incident—their callousness likely confirming, if not increasing, his distrust of art world middlemen. In the very first letter Carnegie chairman Homer Saint-Gaudens sent to Cortor, he dismissed the prospect of investigating who had vandalized the painting; despite the clear implication that it had been a member of the Carnegie's own staff, because the galleries had

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[93] See Eldzier Cortor to Budworth & Son, April 4, 1945, Box 404, Folder 8, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[94] Jennifer L. Roberts, *Transporting Visions: The Movement of Images in Early America*, 2014, 1.
[95] Homer Saint-Gaudens to Eldzier Cortor, September 15, 1947, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
[96] Cortor to Saint-Gaudens, September 20, 1947; Saint-Gaudens to Cortor, September 15, 1947.

been closed to the public at the time, he insisted that "there is not a chance that we can find out who was guilty."[97] This letter was mailed, moreover, days after the incident had occurred; rather than soliciting Cortor's directions about how to respond, the letter informed the artist of the actions the museum had already undertaken, including repairs that had already begun. Saint-Gaudens and his staff were equally dismissive over the course of the following several months, despite many angry letters from Cortor—minimizing the damage, both emotional and financial, caused by the incident.[98]

Despite the clarity of the Carnegie's wrongdoing, ultimately Saint-Gaudens and his staff seemed to feel that they could get away with such dismissiveness; the Carnegie was a major venue, with the potential to elevate an artist's work on a national stage—as Cortor knew, having participated in its Invitational the previous year. Cortor, by comparison, was a minor player; without an attachment to a major gallerist or other art-world fixer, the Carnegie apparently felt emboldened to deal with him dismissively, without fear of repercussions.[99] While he initially took a direct and aggressive tone, insisting on an insurance claim for the full cost of the painting and pressing the Carnegie to launch an investigation to determine the identity of the vandal, ultimately Cortor relented on these calls—acceding to the Carnegie on many of his main issues, including the amount of the insurance claim. Whether or not these were strategic decisions, made for the sake of his career, they met with apparent return in the short-term; the (repaired) *Americana* did hang in the 1947 Invitational, even winning an Honorable Mention. The longer-term result, however, was a deepened feeling of distrust for art world middlemen, centered specifically around the physical safety of his paintings as they traveled through the market—a feeling that perhaps shaped the fragmented figure and indexes of physical violence of *Southern Souvenier (Eclipse) No. II*, a painting he continued to work on around the same moment.

The Carnegie vandalism made more urgent, and yet likely even more difficult, the search that Cortor had undertaken since leaving the Sea Islands: to find a replacement for David Porter, a gallerist who could represent Cortor, handle the business and administrative aspects of his career, and ideally ensure his works' safe passage through the many movements of the market. This is what Cortor hoped he had found when he joined New York's Niveau Gallery, led by Vladimiar de Margoulies, in mid-1946, after de Margoulies had expressed interest in a partnership. Although it isn't clear whether Cortor had a solo showing at Niveau, he was apparently established enough within its fold to have shipped most of his works to the gallery, where they were photographed in full in 1947. As was common practice at the time, these works remained in the gallery's storage areas when not on view, where they could be easily accessible and sold to collectors at will.

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[97] Saint-Gaudens to Cortor, September 15, 1947.

[98] See Saint-Gaudens to Cortor, September 15, 1947; Cortor to Saint-Gaudens, September 20, 1947; Homer Saint-Gaudens to Eldzier Cortor, October 8, 1947, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Homer Saint-Gaudens to Eldzier Cortor, October 13, 1947, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Eldzier Cortor to Homer Saint-Gaudens, October 17, 1947, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; John O'Connor to Eldzier Cortor, October 24, 1947, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Eldzier Cortor to John O'Connor, November 8, 1947, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; John O'Connor to Eldzier Cortor, November 15, 1947, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

[99] Cortor was briefly associated with the Associated American Artists Gallery in 1947, but had been dropped from the gallery's roster by the time the vandalism occurred.

At some point, however, it seems that at least some of these works began to pose an issue for de Margoulies; by December of 1946, he wrote to Cortor, alerting him that he could no longer represent the artist. The letter used bland, oblique language, citing only vague "personal reasons" for the termination; it was only through the inquiry of one of Cortor's friends and advisors, the White art historian and arts administrator Lester Bridaham, that the gallerist's real reasoning was found out.[100] As Bridaham related to Cortor in a letter in January of 1947, after Bridaham had been to the Niveau Gallery to speak with de Margoulies, "he seemed most bothered by the thick impasto of paint on the nipples of the breasts – that seemed to be the main reason he didn't want to handle your works."[101]

These stories cast harsh light on the realities of the emerging art market, and especially what it meant to navigate it as a Black artist in the mid-1940s. Artists' participation in the market always involved some risk, but Cortor's experiences helps to clarify that this risk was not shared equally; the overwhelming Whiteness of the art world—across the twentieth century and into the present day, as scholars like Bridget Cooks, Aruna d'Souza, Darby English, and Charlotte Barat have demonstrated—guaranteed that non-White artists bore the majority of this risk.[102] These experiences also help to illuminate the precise texture and depth of the racism that Black artists faced while navigating this world—which manifested not only in outright exclusion or willful oversight of Black artists' work, but also its deliberate mishandling. The compounding effect of structural racism, meanwhile, meant that artists whose work was at the greatest risk were also those least likely to have trustworthy or consistent professional support—to be in the position of attempting to create work while also shepherding it through the minefield of the market themselves.

While this story highlights the inequities that structured the art market for much of the twentieth century, though, it also clarifies the breadth of the self-managed artist's skill set, as well as the acuity of his attention to many parts of the artwork—material and financial as well as visual or compositional. These dimensions converged with particular freight in Cortor's case; as both the Carnegie and Niveau instances demonstrate, the distribution of impasto or the variation of his paint handling did not remain mere pictorial or aesthetic choices, but materially affected the movement of his work through the world. If this seems to add a new, extra-pictorial freight to Cortor's work and its materiality, however, this does not so much shift as intensify those meanings already established within its pictorial frame. The material dimension Cortor gives to *Americana*, for example, remains a way of granting its figure a degree of self-possession, independence, and presence—one that we might imagine to stand in opposition not only to the hyper-masculinity, spectacularized violence, or White beauty standards broadcast by the print media behind her, but also the aggression and violence that might have greeted her in the museums and galleries where the work was exhibited. That Cortor went on to paint other Black female figures with the same powerful presence and impastoed-description—even after the

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[100] V. de Margoulies to Eldzier Cortor, December 18, 1946, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

[101] Lester Bridaham to Eldzier Cortor, January 11, 1947, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Note that Bridaham dated this letter "Saturday, January 11, 1946." Based on context clues (and the fact that January 11 was a Friday in 1946), this was certainly a mistake on Bridaham's part, who meant to write 1947.

[102] See Bridget R. Cooks, *Exhibiting Blackness: African Americans and the American Art Museum* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011); Aruna D'Souza, Parker Bright, and Pastiche Lumumba, *Whitewalling: Art, Race & Protest in 3 Acts* (New York: Badlands Unlimited, 2018); Darby English and Charlotte Barat, *Among Others: Blackness at MoMA* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2019).

stakes of doing so had been clarified—only further highlights the way they act as figures of defiance in multiple dimensions at once.

Coda: The Eldzier Cortor Papers: Archives and the Long Legacy of Cortor's Self-Representation

In 1987, Eldzier Cortor completed a painting he'd been working on for over a decade (fig. 2.42). It depicts three rows of brassy metal mailboxes, set into a tiled wall and illuminated by a bare light bulb—a scene that might be the lobby of any busy, urban apartment building. Mail of various kinds is tucked into and around the boxes; various stamped envelopes and a red-bordered magazine spill out of the mailbox on the left of the topmost row, while a rolled-up newspaper, the latest issue of the Black publication *The Pittsburgh Courier*, hangs from another, and a bright, tropical postcard sends greetings from "Haiti Cherie" from where it's propped at the top of the tile. Not least is the issue of *Artist Digest* that pokes from a box on the second row, bearing what appears to be a version of Cortor's *Americana* on its cover—one that, while miniaturized and distorted slightly, is nevertheless vibrantly colored, with bright reds, rich browns, and flecks of blue, green, and yellow twinkling from the box where the magazine is tucked.

The painting's title, *Homage to 466 Cherry Street*, suggests that it was a reflection on a specific place, and moment, in the artist's life—the small studio-apartment that Cortor rented in late 1945, where he painted *Americana* and many others of the Sea Islands works. Cortor would live and work in 466 Cherry Street for the remainder of the 1940s and into the 1950s, but as the postcards and letters in *Homage* hint, the apartment was more of a home-base during this period—the place he returned to after trips to Haiti, Mexico, and Chicago. A reflection on this period in his own life and career, then, the painting paints a picture of Cortor as an artist in motion—better depicted as a network of connections he forged across many different places than as a physical presence. It also reaffirms *Americana*'s position as a product and participant of this movement—part of the circulation suggested by the mail's coming and going—as well as the central place it held for Cortor within his work of this period.

Homage to 466 Cherry Street occupied a similarly significant place for Cortor. His son, Michael Cortor, recalls the prolonged period over which the painting slowly emerged, as well as the particular strategy Cortor devised to enable him to work on a painting of its scale.[103] Painted in another New York city apartment, this one the two-bedroom, Lower East Side flat that Cortor shared with his family—Michael, his sister Mercedes, and their mother and Cortor's second wife, Sophia, beginning in the mid-1960s—*Homage* was larger than nearly any other that Cortor had painted until that point, and it stretched the bounds of the living room that doubled as Cortor's workspace. Working on it during the day, at night Cortor would turn it against the wall, tucking it into the narrow space and thus transforming the room back into the family's shared space. This was Cortor's near-daily practice for the more than ten years that he worked on the painting.

Understanding this process, I believe, expands the importance of *Homage to 466 Cherry Street*—a painting that allows us to understand not just the moment it purports to depict, in the 1940s, but the ways the events of that moment continued to echo, shaping Cortor's art and career for decades thereafter. This is true of the connections the painting itself highlights—including the one it draws between his time in the Sea Islands and his later travel to Haiti. It was in the Sea Islands that Cortor first expressed a wider interest in the Black diaspora, and articulated his desire to visit various Black communities across the Caribbean; this plan he would realize some

[103] Michael Cortor, "Chapter Four," n.d.

five years later, with the support of Guggenheim fellowship—won with an application modeled closely on those he had submitted to the Rosenwald Fund.[104]

But the echoing importance of the 1940s registers in *Homage* in another sense, too—in the enduring attunement to paper and correspondence that it registers, its sensitivity to the weighty work that paper can do within painting. The choice to paint a kind of portrait of himself, or at least of this period in his life, through letters, newspapers, magazines, postcards, and other print media is one kind of evidence here, speaking in part to the way that depictions of paper became a kind of signature of Cortor's painterly practice across his decades-long career. The careful selection of items that might together form this kind of portrait, meanwhile, is reminiscent of the method that he first worked out in *Americana*—papers rendered with the same meticulous detail and careful curation, belying the sense of their haphazard arrangement.

The papers depicted in *Homage* differ from those in Americana in one significant way, however. Unlike Americana's faithful rendering of specific issues of *Life* or *The Birmingham News*, *Homage*'s issue of *Artist Digest* is an imagined one. If a reflection on the real press attention that *Americana* did receive (around its prize in the Carnegie Invitational, for example), *Homage* seems to overstate its renown, making front-cover news of what was only ever a small-article story—a retrospective exaggeration enabled by the painting's carefully-curated view of the past.

I would argue, however, that placing the work into the context of Cortor's longer career—into the small slot along the living room wall that was its first background, but also against the wider set of systems Cortor devised to meet the challenges of navigating the art market—shifts this reading significantly. Cortor was a self-represented artist for the majority of the roughly seventy years that followed the late-1940s Sea Islands period. Although he was briefly a member of the AAA Gallery in 1947 and the Martha Jackson Gallery in 1953, and later enjoyed a productive working relationship with Corinne Jennings of Kenkeleba Gallery in the 1980s and the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery in the 1990s and 2000s, he did not have sustained representation on a professional basis for the majority of his career. Despite this fact, he remained deeply engaged in the art world; he taught at Pratt Institute in New York, was a memorable presence at Bob Blackburn's print studio throughout the 1970s, and joined fellow Black artists in protesting the 1971 "Contemporary Black Artists in America" Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Throughout this time, Cortor was not only creating art, but also managing his work and career—labor that, as years passed, expanded to include archival work: storing and preserving his art, maintaining his own records, archiving press coverage. This Cortor performed, with assiduous attention, until the end of his career—creating a meticulous hand-crafted inventory of all his work in the 2010s, and even implementing a program to donate work to various prestigious museum collections to ensure that it would be cared for after his death.

These acts testify to Cortor's enduring savviness and practiced hand in self-management, but they also index the institutional neglect of his work—neglect that left its own lasting impact in the form of a wariness that Cortor carried throughout his career. This wariness registered, in

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[104] See Eldzier Cortor, "Plan of Work, Guggenheim Fellowship," ca. 1949, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Eldzier Cortor to Alberto Barreto, April 12, 1945, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Alberto Barreto to Elie Garcia, April 24, 1945, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Fernando Romero to Eldzier Cortor, May 30, 1945, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

part, in an enduring ambivalence about paper, its power as well as potential misreading and misuse—an ambivalence that seemed to influence his later decisions about the archive of documents and papers related to his career. Although he had carefully held on to the documents related to his lawsuits and disputes—with Porter, Saint-Gaudens, and de Margoulies—until the 1970s, when the Archives of American Art documented them, the artist chose not to include them in the physical papers the AAA collected near the end of his life—likely destroying them, as he did almost all of his correspondence, just before he died.[105]

This ambivalence we might also read in *Homage*, helping to explain at least part of its fabricated arts press—in particular, the subtle but meaningful change it enacts to the title of the arts magazine it depicts, from the actual *Arts Digest*, published between 1926 and 1954, to the painting's *Artist Digest*. The shift, alongside the miniaturized version of *Americana* that appears on its cover—multiply contained within the magazine's bordered cover and the mailbox it is stuffed within—speaks to the various ways that artists' work was packaged and flattened by the art market, circulated and made "digestible" for it. We could think of the Rosenwald's summarizing "digest sheets" here, but the implication is certainly also wider: a reflection of the many ways that the art world—not just funding bodies like the Rosenwald, but also critics, gallerists, curators, and collectors—required that artist's work be rendered into simplified, easily-digestible terms.

Cortor was wrestling with this demand in the period that *Homage* memorializes—skeptical, especially, of the ability for art world middlemen to do the work of describing and interpreting artist's work. In 1951, he described the issues he saw with this trend—the "great void of incommunicability, and lack of understanding, purpose, and appreciation" that results from leaving too much interpretation to middlemen, who, as he put it "have only a facility with words," "look upon the artist as a docile person who shuts himself away in his ivory tower to paint," and "in proclaiming themselves authorities capitalize on both public and artist."[106] The alternative he saw was for the artist to leave this ivory tower, seizing the opportunity to take on "leadership in the art world," especially in acting as a "spokesman" for his art.[107] Cortor took up this suggestion himself, in multiple senses, beginning in roughly this period—representing himself and his work as it moved through the art world. As vehemently as he seemed to believe in the necessity of this work, however, he never grew comfortable with it; he repeatedly resisted describing or explaining his work in words, and preferred to leave room for viewers to make their own judgements about his work.

It's possible to read this resistance as responsible, in large part, for Cortor's marginal position within the art world for much of his career, or the still-obscure place he occupies in U.S. American art history. I prefer, however, to think of his reticence as part of his wider, self-directed, self-crafted approach to his career—one that rejected the available options when he found them inadequate, vowing to do the job himself—but to do it on his terms. Either way, it helps to contextualize the choice he made, in *Homage*, to conjure an issue of *Artist Digest*, and to paint himself onto its cover. Part of his wider practice of insisting on his identity as an artist, despite the neglect he faced, this choice is continuous with many others that he made throughout his career—to care for his art, to believe in its importance, and to preserve the story of its movement through the world. Taking advantage of the manipulability of paper in order to write

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[105] Michael Cortor, Interview with Author, August 9, 2023.
[106] Eldzier Cortor to Ralph Pearson, October 26, 1951, Reel N70-47, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
[107] Cortor to Pearson.

Cortor back into the narrative of art, *Homage* might be understood to tell, finally, the "true story."

Chapter Two Figures



Fig. 2.1
Eldzier Cortor, *Americana*, 1946, oil on canvas, 60 x 41 inches, destroyed (formerly collection of Felicia Ford). Black-and-white reproduction located in Eldzier Cortor Papers, Box 3, folder 10, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

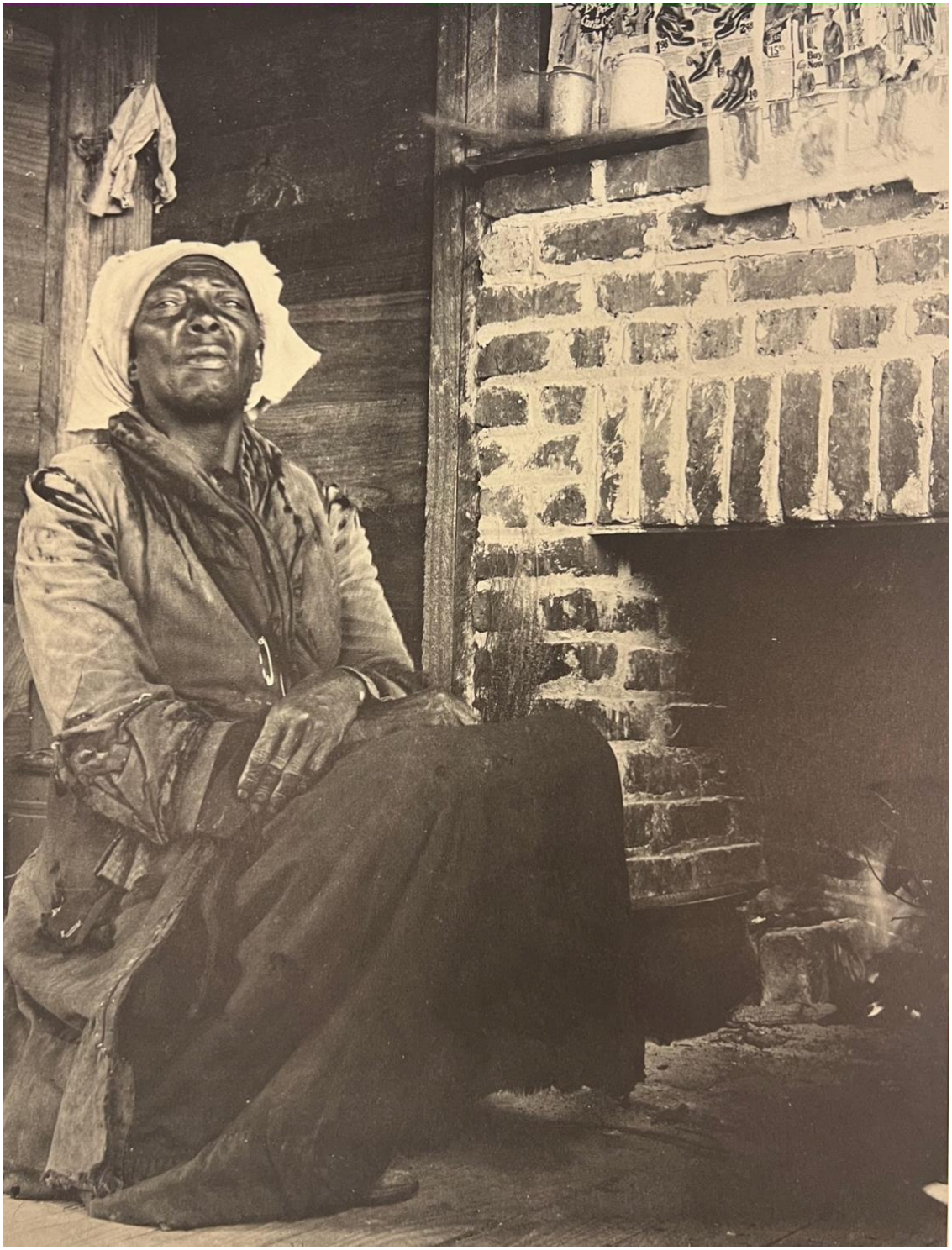


Fig. 2.2
Leigh Richmond Miner, ca. 1920s, printed in Edith M. Dabbs, *Face of an Island: Leigh Richmond Miner's Photographs of Saint Helena Island* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1971).



Fig. 2.3
Doris Ulmann, *Woman With Corncob Pipe*, 1930, photogravure, 5 x. 7 inches, originally printed in Julia Peterkin, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (New York: Robert O. Ballou, 1933), 247.



Fig. 2.4
Eldzier Cortor, *Sea of Time*, 1945, oil on canvas, 30 ¼ x 18 ¼ inches.
Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York, NY.



Fig. 2.5
Joseph T. Zealy, *Drana,* quarter-plate daguerreotype, 1850, commissioned by Louis Agassiz. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.



Fig. 2.6
Joseph T. Zealy, *Delia*, quarter-plate daguerreotype, 1850, commissioned by Louis Agassiz. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.



Fig. 2.7
Eldzier Cortor, *Sea of Time* (detail), 1945, oil on canvas, 30 ¼ x 18 ¼ inches.
Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York, NY.



Fig. 2.8
Eldzier Cortor, *Sea of Time* (detail), 1945, oil on canvas, 30 ¼ x 18 ¼ inches.
Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York, NY.



Fig. 2.9
After? Scipio Moorhead, *Phillis Wheatley*, published by Archibald Bell, 1773, engraving, 5 x 3 7/8 inches (oval sheet). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949, 49.40.24, New York, NY.



Fig. 2.10
Eldzier Cortor, *Skin Deep*, 1946, oil on canvas. Location unknown.
Black-and-white reproduction located in Eldzier Cortor Papers, Box 3, folder 10,
Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.



Fig. 2.11
Baule, *Mblo Portrait Mask*, late 19th-early 20th century, wood, pigment, 13 3/8 x 8 7/16 x 6 1/8 inches. Brooklyn Museum, The Adolph and Esther D. Gottlieb Collection, 1989.51.15, New York, NY.



Fig. 2.12
Eldzier Cortor, *The Room*, ca. 1949, oil on masonite, 7 7/8 x 9 7/8 inches.
The Studio Museum in Harlem, Gift of Katrina McCormick Barnes, 1971.1, New York, NY.



Fig. 2.13
Eldzier Cortor, *Americana* (detail), 1946.



Fig. 2.14
Eldzier Cortor, *Americana* (detail), 1946.



Fig. 2.15
Eldzier Cortor, *Americana* (detail), 1946.

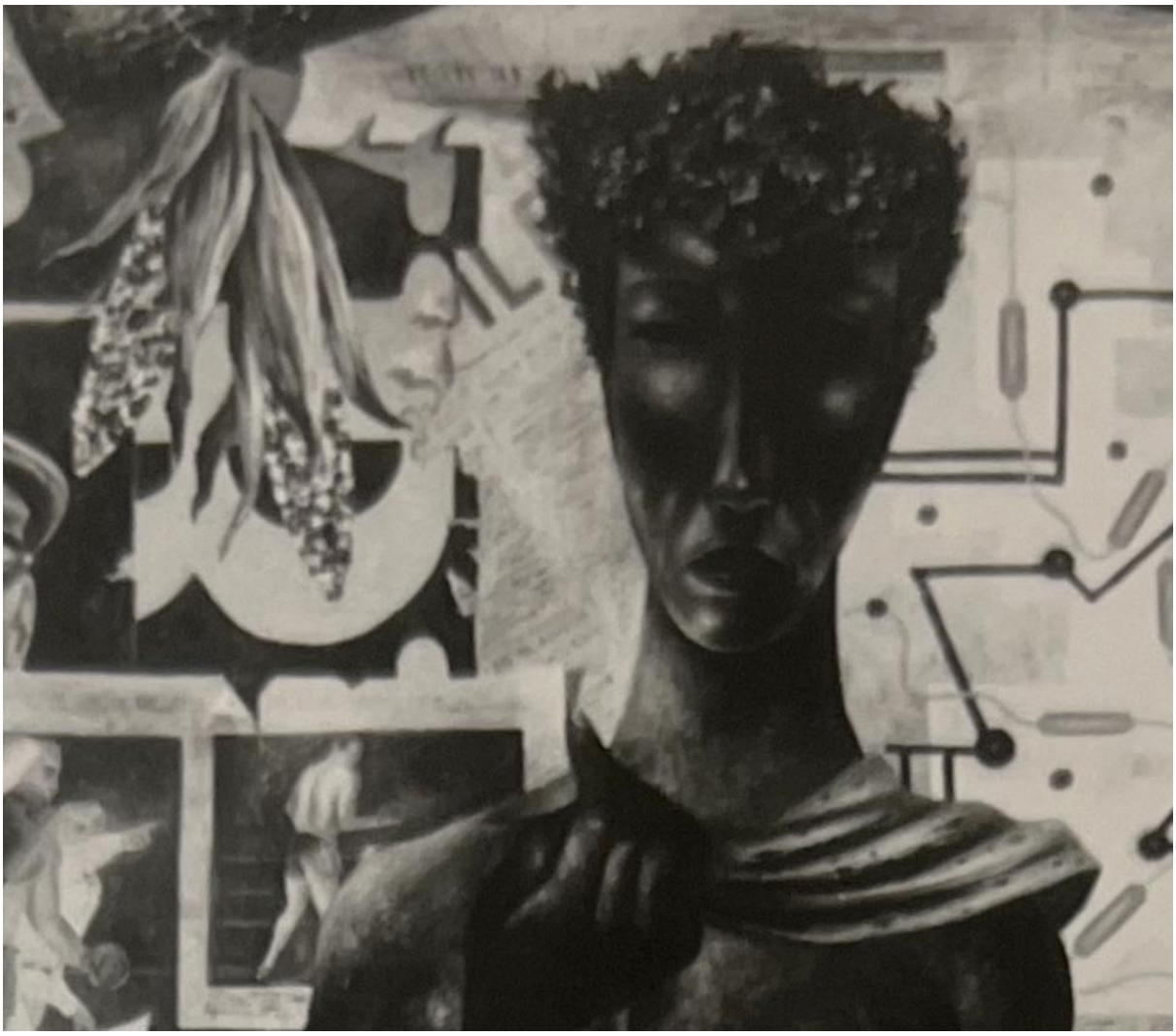


Fig. 2.16
Eldzier Cortor, *Americana* (detail), 1946.



Fig. 2.17
Eldzier Cortor, *The Night Letter*, 1945, oil on canvas, 11 ¼ x 23 ¼ inches.
Harriet and Harmon Kelley Foundation Collection.



Fig. 2.18
Eldzier Cortor, *(Girl) Washing Her Hair*, 1942, oil on masonite, 34 ¼ x 26 inches.
Private collection.



Fig. 2.19
Johannes Vermeer, *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window*, ca. 1657-1659, oil on canvas, 32 ¾ x 25 3/8 inches. Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, Germany.

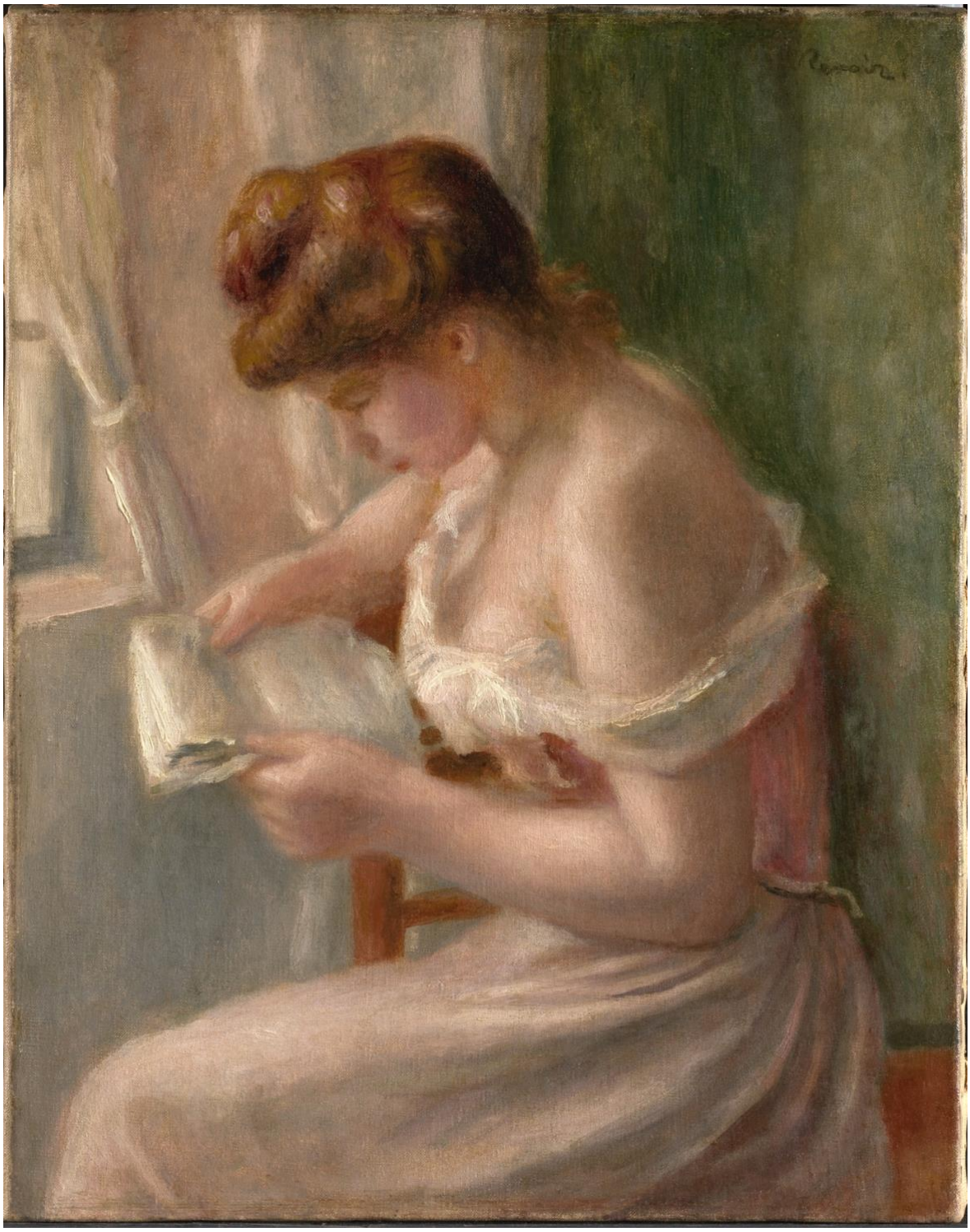


Fig. 2.20
Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Woman Reading*, c. 1895, oil on canvas, 16 3/8 x 12 7/8 inches. Clark Art Institute, Acquired by Sterling and Francine Clark before 1955, 1955.908, Williamstown, MA.



Fig. 2.21
Eldzier Cortor, *Southern Landscape (Southern Flood)*, ca. 1944-1945,
tempera and gesso on board, 20 x 34 inches. Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Adler and bequest of Laura L. Barnes, by exchange, 2006.2, New York, NY.



Fig. 2.22
Eldzier Cortor, *Southern Gate*, 1942-1943, oil on canvas, 46 ¼ x 22 inches.
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. David K. Anderson, Martha Jackson Memorial Collection, 1980.137.19, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 2.23
Eldzier Cortor, *The Bathers*, ca. 1943, location unknown.
Black-and-white reproduction printed in C.J. Bulliet, "Religious Trends Challenge Our Materialism in Chicago Annual," *The Art Digest* (November 1, 1945), 7.



Fig. 2.24
Eldzier Cortor, *Southern Souvenir (Eclipse) No. II*, ca. 1944-1948,
oil on board mounted on masonite on wood strainer, 21 x 50 inches.
Art Bridges Collection, AB.2017.3, Bentonville, AK.



Fig. 2.25
Eldzier Cortor, *Southern Theme (The Room) No. III*, 1947, oil and gesso on panel, 15 x 28 inches.
Private collection.

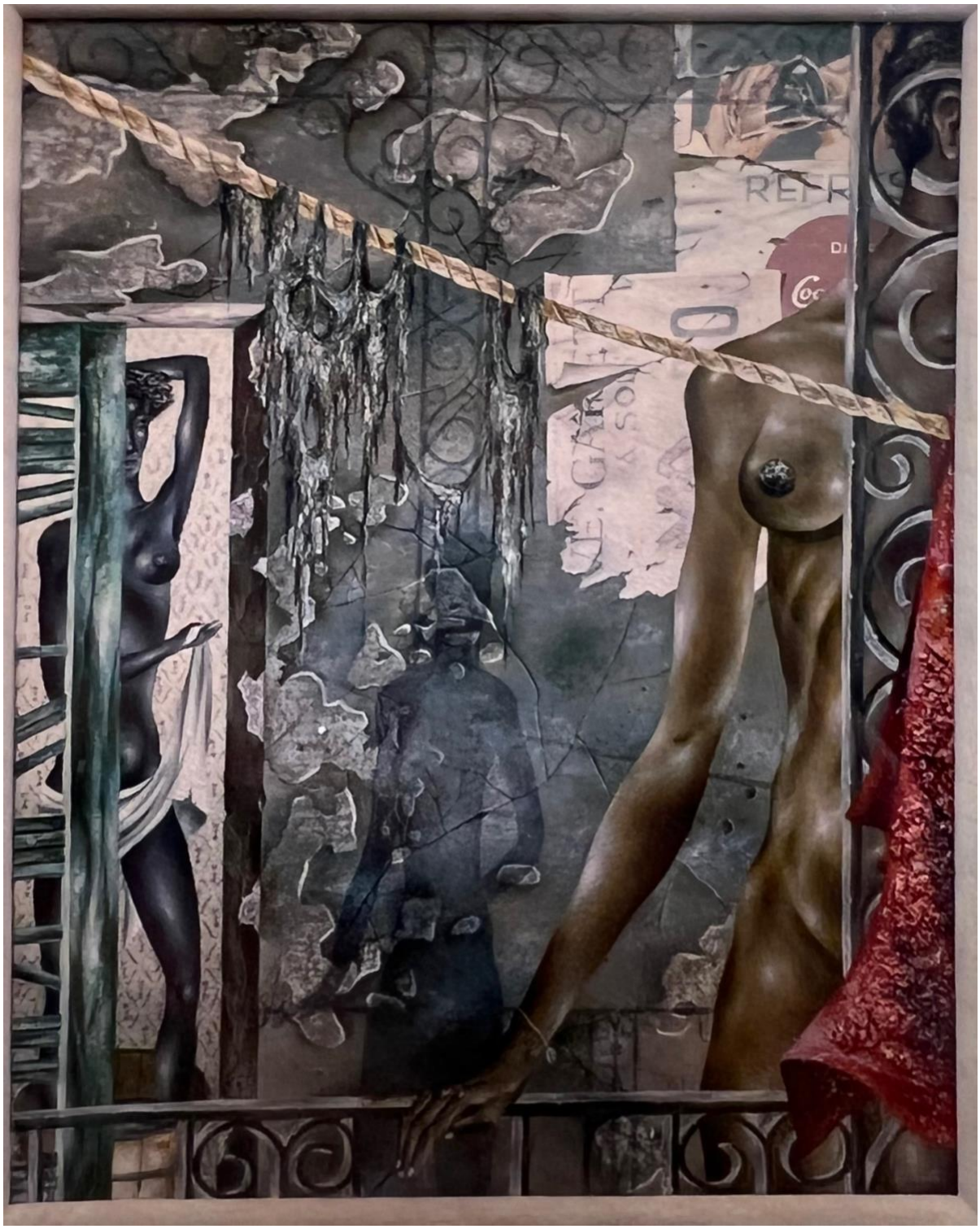


Fig. 2.26
Eldzier Cortor, *Southern Souvenier (Eclipse) #4*, 1948-1949, oil and gesso on panel, 20 x 35 inches. Reproduction located in Box 3, folder 11, Eldzier Cortor Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 2.27
(L) Eldzier Cortor, *Americana* (detail), 1946.
(R) *The Birmingham News*, June 19, 1946

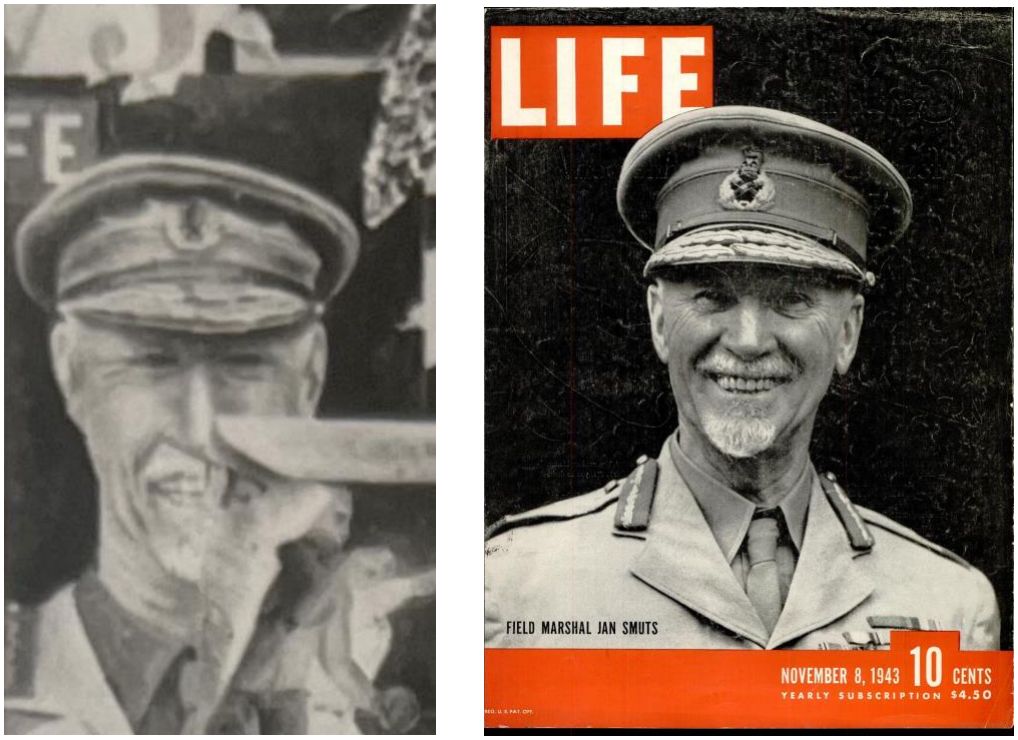


Fig. 2.28
(L) Eldzier Cortor, *Americana* (detail), 1946.
(R) *Life*, November 8, 1943



Fig. 2.29
Eldzier Cortor, *Americana* (detail), 1946.



Fig. 2.30
Eldzier Cortor, *Americana* (detail), 1946.



Fig. 2.31
Eldzier Cortor, *Americana* (detail), 1946.



Fig. 2.32
Eldzier Cortor, *Americana* (detail), 1946.

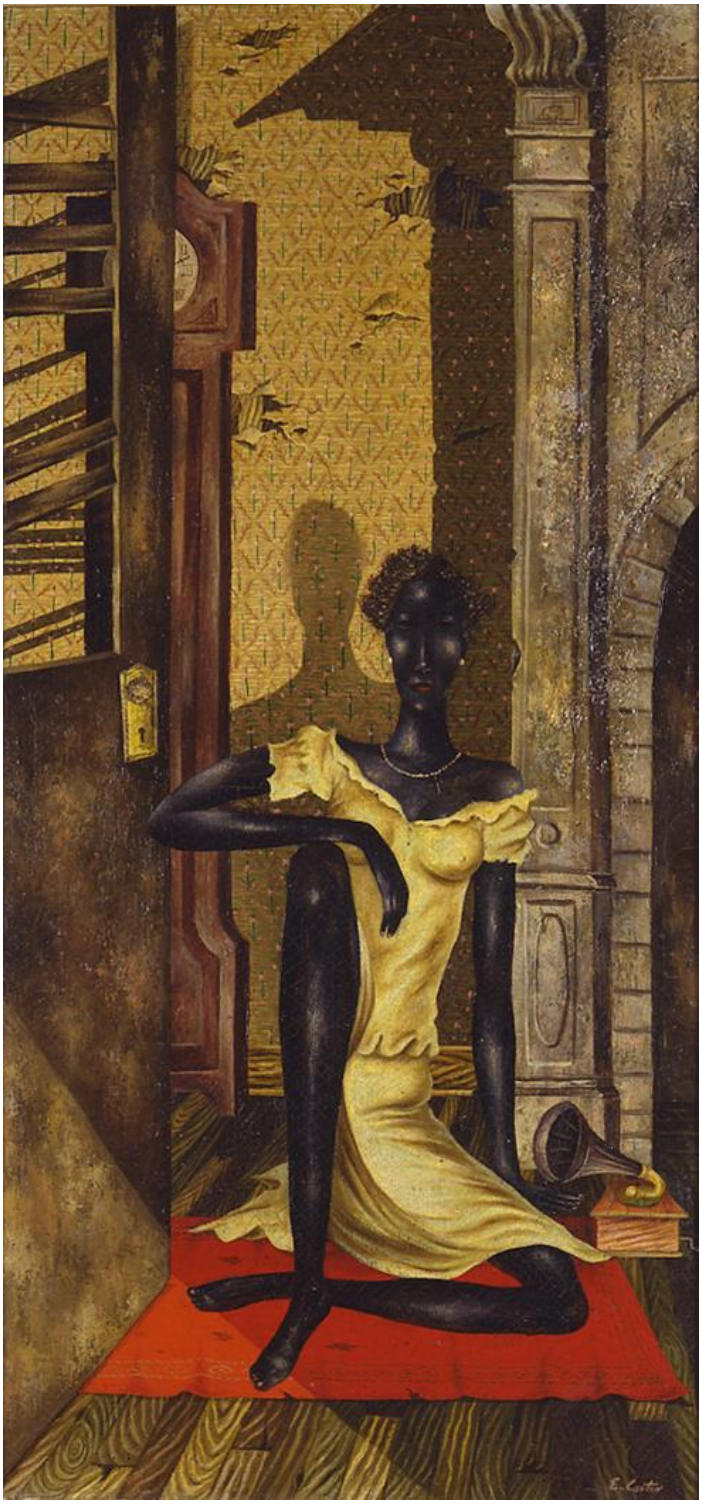


Fig. 2.33
Eldzier Cortor, *Interior*, ca. 1947, oil on canvas, 36 x 17 inches.
Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York, NY.



Fig. 2.34
Eldzier Cortor, *Southern Souvenier*, ca. 1944-1948, oil and tempera on masonite, 15 x 13 inches. Private collection, Cambridge, MA.

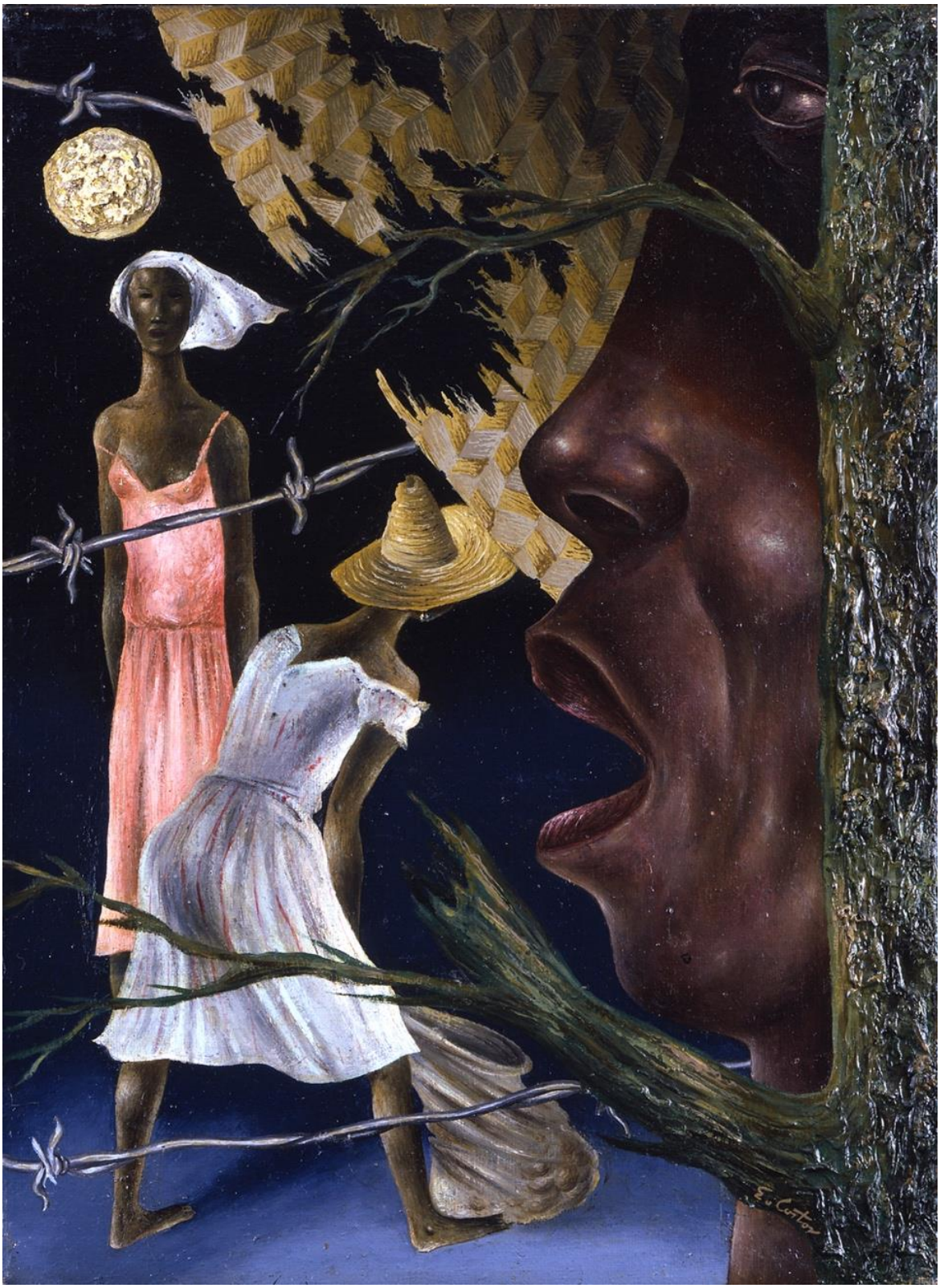


Fig. 2.35
Eldzier Cortor, *A Song*, 1946, oil on canvas, 15 ¼ x 11 inches.
Private collection, Brooklyn, NY.



Fig. 2.36
Eldzier Cortor, *Environment*, 1947, oil on board, 27 x 16 inches.
Museum of Fine Arts Boston, The John Axelrod Collection—Frank B. Bemis Fund, Charles H. Bayley Fund, and The Heritage Fund for a Diverse Collection, 2011.1822, Boston, MA.



Fig. 2.37
Eldzier Cortor, *The Wall*, ca. 1944-1948, oil on canvas mounted to Masonite, 28 ½ x 20 inches. Private collection.

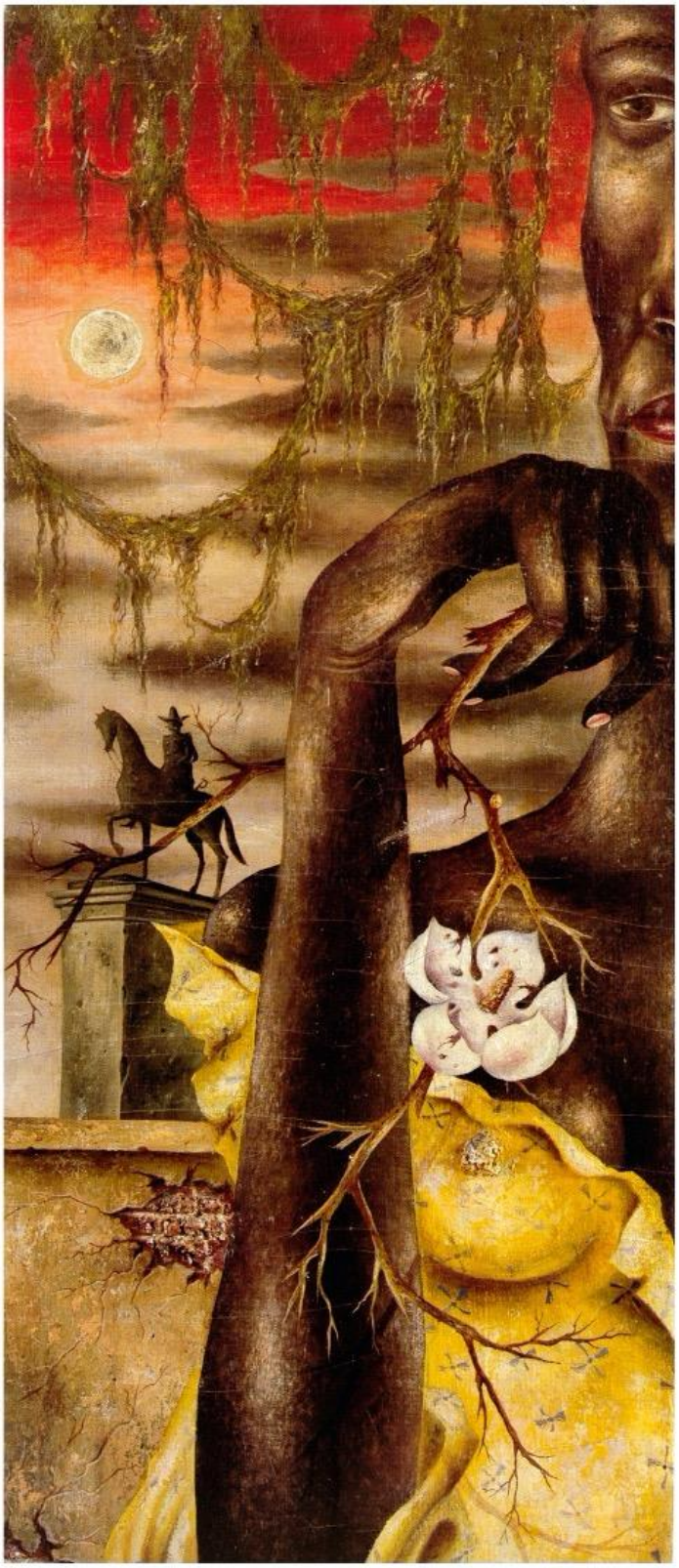


Fig. 2.38
Eldzier Cortor, *Southern Theme (Magnolia) No. II*, 1947, oil on canvas, 30 x 12 inches.
Camille O. and William H. Cosby Jr. Collection.



Fig. 2.39
William Posey Silva, *Little White Boat, Garden of Dreams (Magnolia Gardens, SC)*, 1928, oil on board, 12 x 15 inches.
Private collection.



Fig. 2.40
William Posey Silva, *Old Mill – Garden of Dreams*, oil on canvas, 11 x 14 inches.
Private collection.

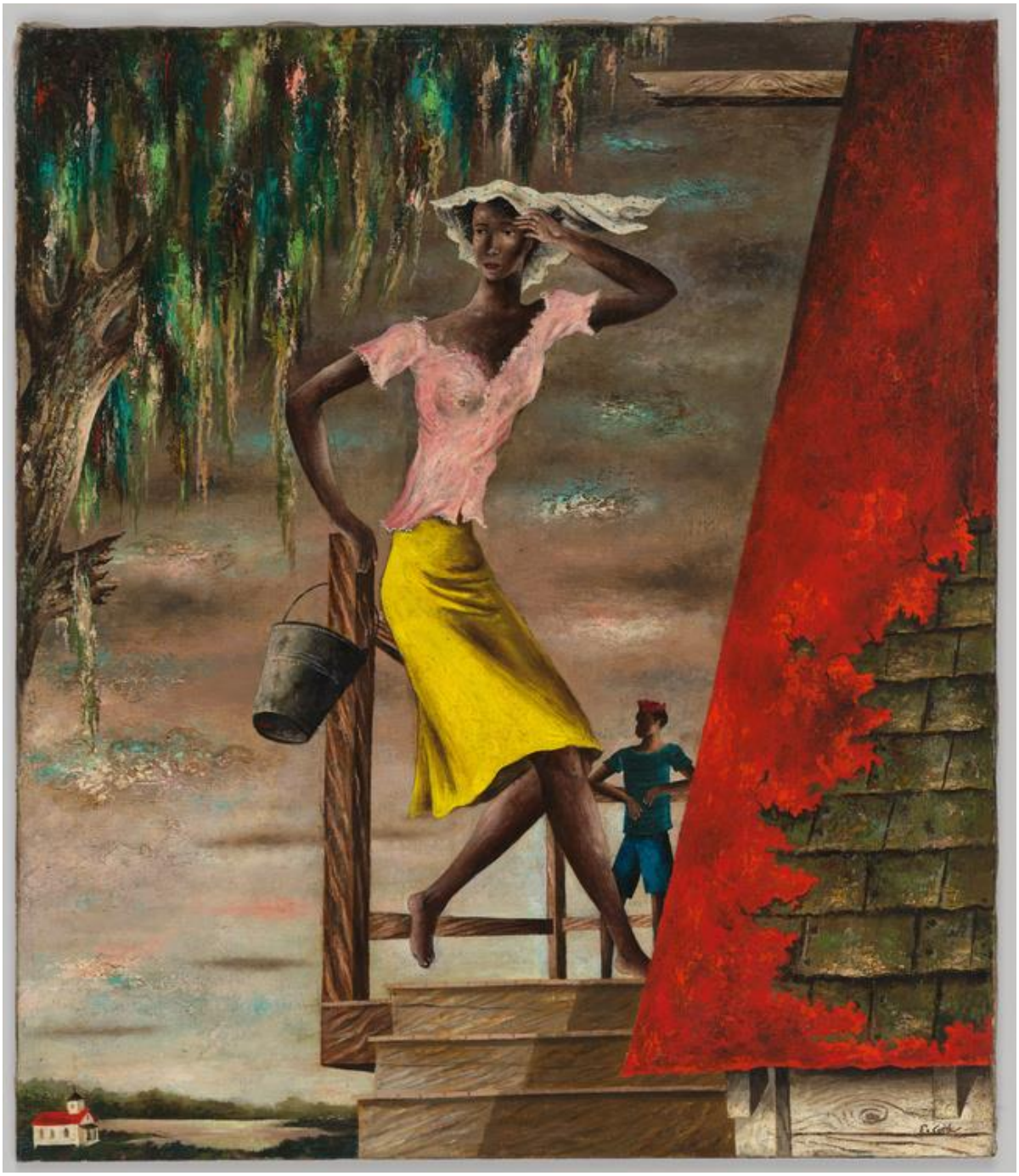


Fig. 2.41
Eldzier Cortor, *Day Clean*, 1945-1946, oil on linen, 35 1/8 x 30 30 1/8 inches (overall). Whitney Museum of American Art, gift of Elizabeth Hess in memory of Dr. George Ornstein, 2023.63, New York, NY.



Fig. 2.42
Eldzier Cortor, *Homage to 466 Cherry Street*, 1987, oil and canvas on Masonite, 42 x 52 inches.
Camille O. and William H. Cosby, Jr. Collection.

Chapter Three
The Practice of Undiscipline:
Rose Piper, Black Women Rosenwald Fellows, and the Stakes of Refusal

In April of 1945, Rose Piper received a letter from the Julius Rosenwald Fund (JRF), to which she had applied for a Fellowship four months earlier. "I am most sorry to inform you that you were not one of those selected for an award," the letter read, dashing the twenty-eight-year-old African American artist's hopes for a fellowship, which would have guaranteed her a fifteen-hundred-dollar stipend and a year's worth of relative freedom from financial anxiety.[1] These were important incentives for Piper, who was in the midst of a period of feverish artmaking, anxious to prove herself after a hiatus from the art world.

While she had majored in art at Hunter College, Piper had put aside her paintbrushes for several years after marrying in 1940 and having a child soon thereafter. When her husband was drafted into the navy in 1944, however, Piper saw an opening. Enlisting her mother's help in childcare, Piper used her newfound time to enroll in classes in New York's Art Students League, to rent an art studio in Greenwich Village—even to enjoy nights out with friends in Harlem and to begin a new romantic relationship.

A Rosenwald fellowship, in other words, offered Piper the resources to maintain structures she had already devised to make artmaking possible for herself. Even more important for the ambitious young artist, though, was the prestige that accompanied winning a Rosenwald––well-known by the mid-1940s as a highly competitive program, whose alumni included such established artists as Jacob Lawrence, Gordon Parks, Augusta Savage, and Richmond Barthé. While its larger programs focused on Black education and race relations in the U.S., including a major school-building program in the American South that had earned it a national reputation, the Julius Rosenwald Fund's Fellowship Program had become incredibly important for Black artists in the years since its inception in 1928. One of the only consistent sources of funding for their work, especially after federal New Deal funding for arts programs came to a close in the early 1940s, the Fellowship Program acted as a critical lifeline for many artists, allowing them to sustain ambitions to make artmaking their career.

The JRF's singularity within the landscape of Black arts patronage, however, also allowed it outsize influence—creating incentives for young artists like Piper to learn what kind of artistic projects it favored, and to shape their work, even their own self-presentation, to fit these criteria. This is precisely what Piper did upon receiving word of her rejection in April of 1945, immediately starting on a process of revision and adjustment in the months that followed; by the time she re-applied the following year, her project had narrowed, its thematic focus become more concrete and its scope more limited, and her tone more neutral, even scientific. This revised application ultimately helped Piper to win a fellowship, this second time around; the adjustments she made thus help to reveal the contours of the Rosenwald's demands—in particular, what constituted what it considered "disciplined" artistic work.

This chapter will argue that the criteria of "discipline" is particularly important to Piper's fellowship experience, as it was to other Black women fellows'—in part because of the frequency and weight with which it was wielded within the Rosenwald in relation to Black women's applications and fellowships. Placing Piper alongside other women fellows—including Augusta Savage, Zora Neale Hurston, and Katherine Dunham—this chapter will argue that their

[1] Vandi Haygood to Rose Piper, April 30, 1945, Box 440, Folder 20, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

relationships with the JRF surface its internal anxieties about Black women in particular, and will track the evolving techniques the JRF used to surveil, control, and discipline Black women fellows' projects, as well as their persons. The meaning the term took on as it circulated within the Rosenwald was, indeed, both professional and personal; in its exploration of the Rosenwald's disciplinary techniques, this chapter will thus draw on the formulation of discipline as proposed by Michel Foucault, but also on scholars who examine the history of academic disciplining, like Fred Moten, Stephano Harney, and Christina Sharpe, as well as those who attend to the history of policing Black women's bodies, like Saidiya Hartman.

The experiences of Savage, Hurston, and Dunham establish the Rosenwald's history with direct, explicit forms of discipline—oversight of their projects, condition-bound offers of support, micromanagement of their careers. In comparison, Piper's fellowship experience might appear unhindered and unsurveilled, free of the kinds of direct mandate or manipulation that her predecessors had faced. This chapter will argue, however, that her experience surfaces a form of self-disciplining that succeeded the JRF's earlier, more overt disciplinary techniques—a kind no less powerful in shaping fellows' artistic work or directing their behavior. Examining Piper's multiple applications to the Rosenwald allows us to track this self-disciplining in detail, and to illuminate the increasing role that the application itself took on as the Rosenwald shifted towards more indirect, bureaucratized forms of discipline.

Perhaps most importantly, Piper's experience concretizes the stakes of such (self-) disciplining—the financial and professional rewards that artists stood to gain through the process. Piper not only won a fellowship with her second, revised Rosenwald application—she also found ample affirmation of the disciplined work that she created during her fellowship year. The work that Piper created—a series of paintings she titled *Blues and Negro Folk Songs*—was exhibited to critical acclaim at the Roko Gallery in 1947 (fig. 3.1), making Piper the first Black woman to be the subject of a solo exhibition at a major New York gallery. This success would seem to further demonstrate the benefits of the discipline the Rosenwald encouraged—highlighting the compounding incentives that an artist like Piper had to continue along the disciplined trajectory first marked out by the Rosenwald.

Ultimately, however, Piper's path diverted from this trajectory. Her long relationship with the Rosenwald demonstrates not just the self-disciplining that won her a fellowship, but also a process of un-learning that discipline over the course of her fellowship's duration. While this unlearning ultimately brought Piper to a position at odds with her patron—a critical factor in her unsuccessful bid for a fellowship renewal in 1947—it brought her into even closer alignment with a cohort of her predecessors, especially Hurston, Savage, and Dunham, each of whom had fallen short by the standards of their patron. Thinking with queer theorizations of critical failure, as well as ideas of indiscipline, genre-transgression, and errancy that scholars have identified at the heart of Black radical practices, this chapter works to surface the critique at the heart of these supposed failures—what I will call a "practice of undiscipline" that unites their fellowship experiences.[2] A deliberate rejection of the neutrality, measuredness, and professionalism of personal discipline, as well as of professional discipline's strict adherence to disciplinary territory, this undiscipline was a willful act of refusal—but also one that preserved other ways of knowing and being in the process. Piper's Rosenwald work also makes a case for the ways this

[2] See Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 131; Saidiya V. Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019).

undiscipline might be *learned*—a kind of experiential training that I will contrast to the formal education and disciplinary formation that the Rosenwald encouraged.

Ultimately, this willful refusal of discipline relegated Piper to an historical and art historical obscurity. While this chapter will not attempt the kind of "critical fabulation" that Hartman has called for in the face of such obscurity, it does attempt to excavate the story of Piper's undiscipline *as* undiscipline, rather than as a measure of her lack or inadequacy. This story emerges in Piper's files, preserved in the JRF archives, but also across her fellowship works themselves—the set of oil paintings that Piper created as a result of her 1946 Rosenwald fellowship.[3] These paintings evidence not only the discipline that Piper did, initially, attempt to adopt, especially through her use of social scientific methods and frameworks for her research. They also evidence Piper's process of becoming undisciplined—a process informed by her own travel, as well as by her encounter with the Blues, Black women Blues performers, and what I'll describe as a wider Blues repertoire.

Failures of Discipline: Black Women Fellows and the Rosenwald Fellowship Program as Disciplinary Body

When Rose Piper first applied to the Rosenwald Fellowship program in 1945, she was twenty-eight years old. Her work hung in the showroom of W. S. Budworth & Son, in New York City's midtown, during the Rosenwald's Art Jury meeting in early April of that year, alongside that of Romare Bearden, Hale Woodruff, Eldzier Cortor, Robert Gwathmey, and Elizabeth Catlett—some of whom she would have known distantly from her classes at the Art Students League or from socializing in Harlem. Although slightly younger than most of the other applicants, and less experienced than many of them, Piper was fiercely determined to prove herself equal. Her goal was not just to become an artist, but to become one of the very best; as she put it, "I was absolutely sure I was going to make it."[4] Her application to the Rosenwald was thus not only aimed at securing funds for further training or the completion of a specific project; it was also, and more immediately, a bid for recognition. Winning a Rosenwald accorded a level of prestige that was worthwhile in itself—especially for an artist, like Piper, not yet fully enfolded in the milieu of Black art in New York.

This bid was, at least in 1945, unsuccessful; in April of that year, Piper received a rejection letter informing her that she would not receive a Rosenwald fellowship that year. Without records of the Art Jury's deliberations—only very unevenly documented—it is possible to entertain a number of plausible explanations for this outcome. Piper had received a lackluster review from one of her recommenders, sculptor Richmond Barthé, who she likely asked to write for her because of his connection to the Rosenwald as a former fellow. The move seems to have backfired, however, given Barthé's painfully honest description of their relationship, as well as his rather dismissive assessment of her work (and, implicitly, of her personality):

> The paintings were the usual classroom studies of models and I didn't think too well done. I got the impression that she had studied for just a short time. I thought that one little Negro head showed promise. It had a nice feeling. I honestly think she should do

[3] Piper exhibited a total fourteen paintings at the Roko Gallery in 1947; thus far, I have been able to locate, and will discuss, only five, with another two included in black-and-white reproduction. I hope that more about the works' location may come to light through greater attention to Piper and her career.

[4] As quoted in Ann Eden Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 112.

> some more studying before she starts out on any ambitious program…[But] I feel sure she won't take my advice…I would think that she may be better prepared in a year or more of study.[5]

Rhyming with Barthé's description of her willfulness, Piper's "Plan of Work" essay took up a strident tone—even folding some implied political critique into its rhetoric. In it, she stated boldly her intentions for her proposed project, which would "portray the Negro as he is today, a sceptical [sic], bewildered, defiant and hopeful person – willing to give his all for his country, but willing to do this only if his country lives up to its name. The name democracy."[6] She further described her work as aiming to "right the wrongs of the too-long humiliated minority groups throughout the world," and stated that she wanted her paintings to speak for these groups: "I want my paintings to say, 'Here we are, human beings. Look at us. See what you are doing to us. Give us what we need to make us decent citizens; proper homes, and jobs, and the civil rights that are due us.'"[7] Piper implied that the project of democracy has fallen short, or was at best unfinished; it was with democracy, in other words, that her project identified a "problem." She rejected outright "this so called 'Negro problem'"—or *any* formulation that identified her work as conditioned by her membership in a so-called "problem race."[8]

The Rosenwald might have heard, in these comments, a critique of its demand that fellows identify a specific "problem" to address in their projects. It might even have understood an implicit condemnation of its conception of the Fellowship Program more widely—whose goal of "refut[ing] the widespread belief in racial inferiority," achieved not through anti-racism campaigns or attacks on discrimination itself, but instead through the accomplishments of Black individuals themselves, implicitly sustained a "problem race" formulation.[9] Perhaps more important, it is likely that Piper's bold, confident tone and notes of political critique were seen as liabilities for her application; the Rosenwald had a history of connecting "serious" work with measured and apolitical speech, often coextensive with the neutral language of the social sciences.[10] Combined with Barthé's focus on her immaturity and headstrong personality, it seems

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[5] Richmond Barthé, "Confidential Report on Candidate for Fellowship," 1945, Box 440, Folder 20, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[6] Rose Piper, "Plan of Work," 1945, Box 440, Folder 20, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[7] Piper, "Plan of Work," 1945.
[8] Piper, "Plan of Work," 1945.
[9] Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (New York: Harper, 1949), 154.
[10] An emphasis on dispassion, neutrality, and social scientific language surfaced at all levels of the Rosenwald—not only as a requirement for its fellows, but also as a practice exercised by its leadership, and even a signal of its larger political orientation. Charles S. Johnson, for example, was known for his insistence on scientific detachment and objectivity, both in his own work and in his students'. As a professor at Fisk University, he reportedly advised Lewis Jones, then editor of the Fisk student newspaper, toward a more temperate tone in his writing, which would allow the facts to speak for themselves: "This piece says you are angry; that is not what you are after; you want to make other people angry." Quoted in Richard Robbins, "Charles S. Johnson," in *Black Sociologists: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. James E. Blackwell and Morris Janowitz (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 73. Embree, meanwhile, often emphasized Johnson's scientific credentials at moments when the JRF's White southern collaborators grew wary of Johnson's biases as a Black man—Johnson's status as a scientist was used, in other words, as a kind of assurance that he would not break the unspoken rules of racial caste. As an example: in 1941, the state of Louisiana partnered with the Julius Rosenwald Fund to conduct a survey of the state's schools. In putting forward Johnson as director of the survey of Black schools, Embree met with the survey commission's resistance; Embree proceeded to assure the commission's leader that no one "could take offense at

likely that Piper was deemed, on the whole, too green—not yet ready for a fellowship. Even those recommenders who did advocate for Piper may have inadvertently compounded this perception; the poet Countee Cullen, for example, focused especially on her youth, writing, "She is young; and youth and talent make a combination which should weigh heavily with you."[11] This theory would help to explain the note that accompanied her rejection, which invited her to reapply the following year—noting that the Art Jury had felt that her work showed "unusual promise," one of the Rosenwald's internal terms for a critical criterium for successful applicants, even if it was not *yet* worthy of support.[12]

Although there is no additional evidence that Piper's rejection, or evaluation, was shaped by expectations related to her gender, there were institutional precedents for additional levels of scrutiny that the Rosenwald brought to Black women's fellowships. The fellowship experiences of Piper's predecessors Augusta Savage, Zora Neale Hurston, and Katherine Dunham are instructive here, revealing the multiple ways that Black women fellows experienced fellowship support differently than their male counterparts. Not only were Black women less likely to receive support from the Rosenwald—rejected at higher rates than men, and making up only about one-third of total fellows—but once chosen, their work was also subject to heightened levels of oversight. This was, I will argue, a function of the JRF's anxiety about their possession of "discipline," a term that took on a particular dual-definition as it circulated within the Rosenwald, especially in relation to its female fellows; "discipline" for the JRF referred not only to a fellow's training, reflecting her mastery of an academic discipline's literature and methodologies, but also to a particular kind of personal comportment, her tempered, apolitical, and decorous way of moving through the world. Importantly, the Rosenwald's anxiety about both aspects of its female fellows' discipline led to additional conditions and constraints placed on their work, as well as increased oversight of their persons and personalities—a set of what Michel Foucault would call "disciplinary techniques," which clarify the JRF's position as much more than a benevolent, disinterested arts benefactor. It is the experiences of fellows like Savage, Hurston, and Dunham, each of whom saw their own discipline questioned by the JRF in some way, that most clearly reveal the Rosenwald as an institution of modern power—bent not just on identifying and funding "exceptional individuals," but on maintaining a standard of such "exceptionality," and on monitoring and correcting those individuals who did not measure up.

Augusta Savage was one of the first Rosenwald fellows in the visual arts, winning a fellowship in 1929, just a year after the JRF was reorganized and its Fellowship Program inaugurated. Her relationship with the Rosenwald was, from its start, reflective of the Fellowship Program's still limited, experimental status at this point—characterized less by the bureaucratic systems of administration that the Rosenwald would later set up for the Program, and more by personal interaction and correspondence with Rosenwald officials.[13] She was not exempt,

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studies or procedure under [Johnson's] direction," and that his reputation was secure even with conservative White southerners, attested to by the fact that he was "the first choice of the distinctly conservative trustees of Dillard University for the presidency of that college." See correspondence quoted in Phillip J. Johnson, "Confronting the Dilemma: Charles S. Johnson's Study of Louisiana's Black Schools," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 38, no. 2 (1997): 138.

[11] Countee Cullen, "Confidential Report on Candidate for Fellowship," 1945, Box 440, Folder 20, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[12] Haygood to Piper, April 30, 1945.

[13] Although Savage did eventually fill out an early version of an application blank, she first made her bid by writing Fellowship Program administrator George R. Arthur directly; her later renewal request was similarly made via

however, from the kind of stringent review that later Rosenwald applicants were. Although she had been encouraged to apply to the program, and personally recommended, by established leaders like Eugene Kinckle Jones, executive secretary of the National Urban League, and F.D. Keppel, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, she nevertheless was required to submit work that would prove her readiness for its support.[14] With little apparent warning, she scrambled to complete a work that would be satisfactory to submit, working to the best of her ability in the cramped New York apartment that she had recently opened to her family, who had fled from the aftermath of a major hurricane in her home state of Florida. Working through the night, with her nephew Ellis Ford sitting as a model, she completed a small plaster model that became *Gamin* (fig. 3.2)—a portrait of a young boy, looking out from under a jauntily-cocked hat. The work's title—the French word for an impish, streetwise child—may also have hinted at the use that Savage hoped to put a Rosenwald fellowship, to further her artistic training in the art academies of France.

This training was a long-held, and long-thwarted desire of Savage's; by the time she applied to the Rosenwald fellowship, she had already earned a place in a French arts institution twice before, but had seen her hopes dashed either by U.S. racism or financial difficulties. This delay meant that Savage was an established artist of thirty-seven years when she applied to the Rosenwald—but this advancement in her age and evident skill did not prevent Rosenwald officials from attempting to direct the progress of her training, even after she had begun studying with Felix Benneteau at the Académie de la Grand Chaumière. Fellowship Program administrator George R. Arthur, for example, wrote to Savage in Paris in 1930, expressing what he admitted was his "own personal feelings about art," but which, within a letter informing Savage of her funding status and remaining material the Rosenwald required, also served as an instiutitonal admonition about the direction of her art.[15] Arthur warned Savage specifically against adopting too closely what he described as "European standards of technique," which he believed had the potential to "kill the other something which in my opinion some Negro will eventually give to American art," and pushed her to "develop something original, born out of a deep spirituality which you, as a Negro woman, must feel in depicting modern Negro subjects."[16] Though in line with the opinion of many contemporary Black intellectuals—like those of Alain Locke, who had encouraged Black artists to develop a distinctly Black aesthetic—Arthur's views also implicitly forward a primitivist understanding of Black artistry, assumed to be the product of a deep, innate, and essentially racial "spirituality," rather than from the development of skill or technical mastery. In his insistence that the training Savage was completing posed a danger to the "originality" of her work, moreover, he refuted the possibility for Black artists to engage consciously with European precedents.[17] Perhaps most importantly, his letter makes clear the fact that the Rosenwald took up these New Negro-era ideas, repackaging them as standards for what constituted "original" Black art—and emphasizes that exhibiting such an aesthetic became necessary to win funding during the 1930s, even tantamount to an artist's survival.

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correspondence. Recommendations were similarly less formal than they would later become; rather than filling a set form for evaluating candidates, friends of the JRF Eugene Kinckle Jones and F.D. Keppel advised her to apply.

[14] See Augusta Savage to George R. Arthur, April 19, 1929, Box 445, Folder 12, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[15] George R. Arthur to Augusta Savage, May 28, 1930, Box 445, folder 12, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[16] Arthur to Savage, May 28, 1930.

[17] Augusta Savage to George R. Arthur, April 14, 1931, Box 445, Folder 12, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

Savage, for her part, worked to ensure and maintain Rosenwald support. She maintained correspondence with Rosenwald officials, including Arthur and JRF President Edwin R. Embree, during her time in Paris, repeatedly expressing her gratitude for her Fellowship (often elided with personal thanks to Arthur or Embree for their support).[18] Despite the Rosenwald's earlier assurance that her fellowship could be renewed for a second year, her bid to renew her fellowship in 1930 was in fact made contingent on Embree's personal review of her work (which she submitted via photographic copy). Even after the renewal was approved, moreover, the Rosenwald required letters from her instructors attesting to the progress she had made, and later the physical receipts from the French Salons that had admitted her work.

Savage seemed to accept this kind of continuous review, oversight, and attempted management at the hands of the Rosenwald—a kind of cost of the funding that finally allowed her to complete long-awaited study in Europe—but she did not necessarily always find the bargain worth it. In April of 1931, she wrote to Arthur that "my fellowship has been terribly inadequate for the kind of work that I am doing," and just a month later, she decided to utilize the entire remainder of her funds to cast two works in bronze, which allowed her to submit them to the Salon Printemps, but also left her with almost nothing to live on—foreshadowing the kind of choice that would haunt her for the remainder of her career.[19]

This decision also represented a departure in the intended use of her fellowship funds, meant to support her studies at the Academy—and indeed, it followed other such departures, including Savage's choice to stop attending classes at the Grande Chaumière, where she had found the instruction "not in sympathy" with her own interests.[20] This left Savage without the kind of supervision that the Rosenwald had assumed would be continuous—unable, for example, to supply the JRF the letters of review it required—and indeed, she claimed this freedom as her prerogative, just as she claimed the right to direct the course of her study and to utilize her fellowship funds as she saw fit. Sensing, but also rejecting that the JRF would deem these actions "unwise," she defended them as professionally imperative—and insisted that her penury was a function of her fellowship's inadequacy, rather than of any rash decision or unwillingness to economize on her part.[21] Indeed, she asked the Rosenwald to supply her with *further* funds—what she judged to be the necessary amount to complete the work she had set out to do in Paris. In perhaps a reflection of the Rosenwald's cool judgment of this set of decisions, Arthur made clear that it was only through his personal intervention on her behalf that she was granted this additional sum—an "extension" that allowed her to return to the United States some five months later than her original fellowship end-date.[22]

Savage's experience serves as an early case study in the kinds of direct intervention and continued oversight that would continue to characterize many fellows' interaction with the JRF—establishing its similarity, at least in its early years, to existing models of personal

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[18] See Augusta Savage to George R. Arthur, May 7, 1930, Box 445, Folder 12, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University; Augusta Savage to Julius Rosenwald Fund officers, March 23, 1931, Box 445, Folder 12, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University; Savage to Arthur, April 14, 1931.

[19] Savage to Arthur, April 14, 1931. See also Augusta Savage to Edwin R. Embree, May 1, 1931, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[20] Augusta Savage to George R. Arthur, June 13, 1930, Box 445, Folder 12, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[21] Savage to Embree, May 1, 1931; Savage to Arthur, April 14, 1931.

[22] George R. Arthur to Augusta Savage, May 18, 1931, Box 445, Folder 12, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

patronage. This would be further proven by the similar, if even more dramatic experience of Zora Neale Hurston, who applied to the Rosenwald Fellowship Program just a few years after Savage, in 1934—a moment when the selection of candidates, as well as their fellowship work, was still closely tied to the individual personalities at the heart of the Rosenwald's leadership, especially Embree and Fellowship Committee member Charles S. Johnson. Many of the fellows in the arts in this period, like Aaron Douglas or William Edouard Scott, had direct ties to Johnson, who had intimate knowledge of the Black art world in New York as former editor of *Opportunity*. This was true of Hurston, too; Johnson had published her work in *Opportunity* as early as 1924, and ten years later, he considered her a kind of mentee. At the time she was applying to the Rosenwald, in fact, Hurston was also contemplating an informal proposal to join the faculty of Fisk, where Johnson taught and had administrative sway. Her fate in the two opportunities was, in fact, closely entwined, reflecting not only a larger pattern for many Rosenwald fellows, but also a wider institutional intimacy between the Rosenwald Fund and Fisk University.[23]

Just before these opportunities presented themselves, Hurston was becoming well-known on a national stage, especially for work that spanned folklore, dramatic art, dance, and music. Having gained a reputation for her folkloric plays and concerts within Florida, where she was living at the time, in 1933 and 1934 she began to take these productions on the road; she was on her way to produce one of these plays in Chicago in late 1934, in fact, when she stopped at Fisk and began conversations about her potential future there. Hurston's biographer Robert Hemenway identifies this period in her career—between the fieldwork she conducted as an undergraduate at Barnard and the beginning of her graduate studies at Columbia in 1935—as one in which she moved away from scientific anthropology, largely because "the reportorial precision required of the scientific folklorist bored [her]."[24] Hurston turned instead to fiction, dance, and theater in this period; *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, Hurston's first book-length work of fiction, was published in 1934, for example—a year before *Mules and Men*, the anthropological text that summarized the findings of her fieldwork conducted almost six years earlier.

It was after attending the staging of her play, *Singing Steel*, in Chicago that officers of the Rosenwald Fund invited Hurston to apply for the Fellowship Program.[25] Her work had already been introduced by Johnson, who had vouched for Hurston as a protégée, and who may have first proposed that the Rosenwald help finance a faculty position for Hurston at Fisk.[26] The officers apparently had their own ideas, however; impressed by the production, they extended Hurston instead a personal invitation to apply for a fellowship. Significantly, and despite the fact that it was Hurston's play that had piqued their interest, they were clear that the fellowship would be in support of Hurston's graduate training in anthropology—not, in other words, for furtherance of her career as a creative writer, or (like the Fisk position) as a dramaturge. (It is worth noting that the Rosenwald offered fellowships in both creative writing and drama, although at the time Hurston was applying, only one woman had been awarded one of these fellowships; both fields remained majority, if not heavily, male throughout the Fellowship program's duration.

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[23] Douglas went on to teach at Fisk, as did Arna Bontemps and James Weldon Johnson, along with several Rosenwald fellows in sociology and anthropology.

[24] Robert E. Hemenway, *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 101–2.

[25] This kind of invitation was common, especially during the first phase of the Rosenwald Fellowship from 1928 to 1937, during which the application and selection process had not been fully formalized.

[26] In a 1935 letter, Charles S. Johnson describes Hurston as a "protégée." Charles S. Johnson to Edwin R. Embree, January 9, 1935, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

Anthropology would prove more equitably divided, although when Hurston applied, only male anthropologists had been awarded fellowships.)[27]

Hurston didn't need convincing. Despite the "boredom" with the exacting methods of the social sciences that Hemenway describes, she had not abandoned anthropology as a formal discipline. In the years since completing her fieldwork and studies at Barnard, Hurston maintained correspondence with a number of anthropologists—not only her former undergraduate advisor Franz Boas, but also Ruth Benedict and Melville Herskovits, often working through ideas for further research in this correspondence.[28] She became increasingly convinced that she could contribute to a new subdisciplinary focus on the folkways of African Americans—and, further, that its study could connect with that of other African-descended cultures throughout the diaspora.[29] A Rosenwald fellowship offered her the chance to gain professional standing in the field of anthropology—and, critically, the long-desired opportunity to travel to the Caribbean to conduct fieldwork.

The Rosenwald's insistence on its use for formal anthropological training, in other words, may have catalyzed Hurston's return to anthropology's fold, but it did not initiate it. She had applied to other fellowship programs, in fact, to study West African musical traditions, writing that she aimed to publish her eventual findings "scientifically."[30] Still, the turn back towards formal anthropology was not guaranteed; Hurston was contemplating a number of other options at the time she applied to the Rosenwald, including the position at Fisk—which would have involved Hurston's investment in playwriting and theater far more than anthropology or social science. The Fisk position, however, was becoming considerably less desirable given Hurston's rapidly cooling relationship with Fisk president Thomas E. Jones. By December of 1934, in fact, the opportunity was in considerable jeopardy; that month, Jones warned Hurston that "I am not perfectly certain that I am willing to endorse your candidacy, especially as it involves Fisk University, until we have a further conversation."[31]

It was against this background that Hurston began preparing an application for a Rosenwald in December of 1934. Although she had been specially invited to apply, Hurston followed the same steps as other candidates, beginning with the application blank: a standard form that asked for academic records, professional accomplishments, references, precise details

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[27] Out of 47 total fellows (both Black and White) in creative writing, 38 (81%) were men and 9 (19%) were women. Out of 5 total fellows (both Black and White) in drama, 3 (60%) were men and 2 (40%) were women. At the time that Hurston was applying, Anne Margaret Cooke was the only woman who had been awarded a fellowship in either field (her fellowship was in Drama, in 1930).

[28] This correspondence is documented in the archives of Northwestern University (Herskovits), Vassar College (Benedict), and the American Philosophical Society (Boas).

[29] See Mark Helbling, "'My Soul Was with the Gods and My Body in the Village': Zora Neale Hurston, Franz Boas, Melville Herskovits, and Ruth Benedict," *Prospects* 22 (October 1997): 285–322.

[30] Zora Neale Hurston, "Application," July 25, 1933, J.S. Guggenheim Foundation Archives.

[31] The full proposal for this position at Fisk involved a year of study at the Yale School of Drama, after which Hurston would return to Fisk to take up a position there. The year at Yale was imagined to be financed by a General Education Board Fellowship; Jones's sponsorship of Hurston's application would help to guarantee this funding. In his letter to Hurston in December, Jones implies that he will not write a favorable recommendation for the GEB fellowship—and casts doubt, by extension, on the likelihood that she will be accepted for the position at Fisk. Thomas E. Jones to Zora Neale Hurston, December 18, 1934, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University. For a discussion of the proposed position at Fisk, Hurston's relationship with Jones, and her larger encounter with the Rosenwald, see Hemenway, *Zora Neale Hurston*, 204–11; Deborah G. Plant, *Zora Neale Hurston: A Biography of the Spirit* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger Publishers, 2007), 51–53; Valerie Boyd, *Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston* (New York: Scribner, 2002), 263–70; Carla Kaplan, ed., *Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2003), 165–67.

about her proposed plan of work for the fellowship—but also for more personal biographical data, including a detailed medical history. The application blank thus worked to examine and reveal Hurston's person and history in exhaustive detail, as well as to textualize her, rendering her experience a set of data which could be compared to other candidates—situating her in a "field of documentation" akin to those created by the modern examination system in Foucault's description.[32] Although the Rosenwald's focus on identifying "exceptional" individuals seems to exist in contrast to the processes of normalization that Foucault argues are at work in modern disciplinary procedures, then, its application process reveals a fundamentally similar machinery—dependent on the measurement and quantification of individual bodies and histories; the transcription of individual experience into textual form; and the comparison among subjects thus rendered "cases."[33]

Even the least circumscribed part of the application, the "Plan of Work" essay, came with a set of prescriptions; it asked applicants to describe—in only five hundred words—the "major problem in [their] field," as well as the "reason for believing that additional training will enable [them] to solve that problem." If the question itself required applicants to place themselves into a specific "field" or discipline—in Hurston's case, furthering a push towards academic anthropology—Hurston found a way to argue for work that exists outside neat disciplinary bounds. While she stated that the major problem in her field was "the collection of Negro folk material in as thorough a manner as possible," and that to undertake this task she required "further training," "discipline," "great preparation," and "to make a more scholarly approach," she nevertheless argued that such collection could not be in service of the scientific community alone.[34] As she put it, "it is almost useless to collect material to lie upon the shelf of scientific societies. It should be used for the purpose to which it is best suited. The Negro material is eminently suited to drama and music."[35] She thus managed to make a case for her own need for disciplinary training, while also insisting that its purpose would not be constrained to the academy or to the discipline of anthropology—making clear that her intention was to continue the genre-bending path she had already set out for herself.

Despite her subtle resistance to the JRF's strictures advanced in her application, Hurston learned in mid-December of 1934 that she had been granted a Fellowship—not just for a single project or year of study, but for two years of tuition, along with funds for fieldwork in Haiti. The generosity of the offer—far beyond the program's stated scope of single-year grants—spoke in part to the promise the Rosenwald saw in her. She was, as Rosenwald president Embree put it, "certainly brilliant," an individual of "unquestioned ability"—precisely the kind of "exceptional" person, in other words, that the Rosenwald sought to support.[36]

There were, however, accompanying doubts in the Rosenwald leader's mind, even from the very moment of Hurston's application—perhaps specifically because of the manner in which she described her project. She was clearly brilliant, as Embree admitted—but "on the other hand she seems to have some rather conspicuous outs," and it "remained to be seen whether she could

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[32] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995 [1975]), 189.
[33] Foucault, 191.
[34] Zora Neale Hurston, "Plan of Work," December 14, 1934, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[35] Hurston, "Plan of Work," December 14, 1934.
[36] Embree to Boas, March 26, 1935; Edwin R. Embree to Charles S. Johnson, December 20, 1934, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

be turned into a serious student."[37] The core concern, as Embree described it, was that Hurston appeared "to need, very badly, further discipline both intellectually and personally"—a description that seems to link Hurston's genre-bending work with her personality, which her biographers have variously called "saucy," "spunky," "mouthy," "impudent," "high-spirited," and "outrageous."[38] What such a personality required, in Embree's mind, was "the tempering which comes from hard, even, routine study," which would turn the "crude iron" of Hurston's mind into "fine steel."[39] The dual meaning of "discipline" in Embree's usage makes clear that such study was expected to effect a transformation not only in the arena we might expect it to, in Hurston's intellectual work, but also "personally"—as if hard, routine study would round off the blunt edges of Hurston's personality, dampen her high-spiritedness, or dilute her "sauciness."

The Rosenwald prescribed Hurston this hard, routine study explicitly, making it a condition of her fellowship; her funding depended on her acceptance by a major university, and her work under the direction of its faculty. The Rosenwald also insisted that she embark on a *sustained* period of study, for a full two years—the time it deemed necessary for her to absorb the discipline that the university was thought to impart. The Rosenwald even attempted to choose Hurston's graduate program for her; as she recounted it, its officers pressured her to go to Harvard instead of Columbia, insisting that W. Lloyd Warner was the authority in anthropology.[40] (This insistence on Warner's preeminence betrayed the Rosenwald's own internal biases; Warner, who had overlapped with Embree at the Rockefeller Foundation in the late 1920s, was involved in other Rosenwald projects at the time, including serving on its Council for Rural Education beginning in 1934). Whatever the precise reason for its insistence on Warner, however, the Rosenwald ultimately relented to Hurston's insistence to return to Columbia to study with Franz Boas, under whom she had worked as an undergraduate at Barnard College.

It is only in Embree's correspondence with Boas, in fact, that a full picture of the restrictions that the Fund placed on Hurston's fellowship emerge. In early January 1935, Embree explained to Boas that Hurston's fellowship depended on "whether the anthropological faculty believes in her ability," as well as whether Boas was willing to undertake "the rather detailed direction of her studies."[41] The letter reveals the extent to which the fellowship was, in the Rosenwald's official view, conditional—despite the fact that an offer letter had already been extended to Hurston. Five days later, Boas responded with confidence about Hurston's studies, affirming that Columbia's faculty believed in Hurston's ability and that he would supervise her work. Boas also noted, however, his agreement that "what she needs particularly is discipline in scientific investigation," and on the whole it's difficult to ignore the correspondence's paternalistic tone—the fact that the correspondents are two White men deciding the professional fate, not to mention the livelihood, of a Black woman, who is not privy to their conversations.[42]

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[37] Embree to Johnson, December 20, 1934; Edwin R. Embree to Franz Boas, January 2, 1935, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[38] See Boyd, *Wrapped in Rainbows*, 27, 270; Plant, *Zora Neale Hurston*, 14; Alice Walker, "On Refusing to Be Humbled by Second Place in a Contest You Did Not Design: A Tradition by Now," in *I Love Myself When I Am Laughing…and Then Again When I Am Looking Mean and Impressive: A Zora Neale Hurston Reader*, ed. Alice Walker (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, the Graduate Center, 2020), 1.
[39] Embree to Johnson, December 20, 1934.
[40] Zora Neale Hurston to Ruth Benedict, March 6, 1935, Folder 30.3, Ruth Fulton Benedict Papers, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College.
[41] Embree to Boas, January 2, 1935.
[42] Franz Boas to Edwin R. Embree, January 7, 1935, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

It also makes clear that the Rosenwald took liberties in intervening into the advising of its fellows, and that it understood these relationships not only within the framework of the fellow's intellectual development, but also as important components within a larger oversight system (recall here the JRF's insistence that Savage's instructors in Paris dispatch assessments of her work during her fellowships). Even if the Rosenwald did not directly monitor each fellow and the progress of their project, then, it often depended on the advisorship relationship for observation—and, if necessary, what Foucault would call the "relay" of information up a hierarchical chain of command.[43]

While Hurston was unaware of the conversations happening between Boas and Embree privately, however, she did seem to have known what was being asked of her as a Rosenwald fellow. In a letter to Boas sent the same day that she submitted her Rosenwald application, she seemed to indicate that she had already discussed the need for "discipline" with Rosenwald officials, writing of her proposed project: "Now I realize that this is going to call for rigorous routine and discipline, which every body seems to feel that I need."[44] What's more, she insists that she was not opposed to this kind of work—not only did she "want to do it," but she had "always wanted to do it," insisting that "nobody will have any trouble about my applying myself."[45]

Hurston echoes here the argument she made in her Plan of Work essay, in which she repeats the need for "discipline" and "preparation," and she likely made the same case to the Rosenwald officers with whom she had discussed her project—apparently adequately enough to be accepted for a fellowship. She received her offer letter on December 19, 1934, and accepted it the same month. What happened in the following several weeks is a matter of considerable debate (detailed below); what is known that by the end of January, her Rosenwald Fellowship had been drastically curtailed—withdrawn from two years of tuition support to one semester, from around $3000 to just $700.[46] With it went Hurston's ability to sustain herself as a graduate student at Columbia, as well as the stability that—as Boas described it in a letter to the Rosenwald—was necessary for her continued study.[47] The flurry of letters in the following weeks—from Hurston to the Rosenwald, Boas to the Rosenwald, Rosenwald officers to each other, and back—attests to the distress Hurston experienced at the time. She had already enrolled in classes when she learned of her fellowship's withdrawal, and could not meet payments when they came due, causing a delay in the start of her study. Not to mention the emotional stress—as Hurston wrote at the time, she felt "puzzled and helpless," the shifts in plans and financial anxieties making her "half ill with worry."[48]

What happened in thirty-four days between Hurston's offer letter and its withdrawal? What could have caused the Rosenwald to conduct such an abrupt about-face—after having extended its offer, in a startling breach of faith (and contract)? What made it change its tone toward Hurston so drastically, answering her pleas for explanation disdainfully—and to risk its

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[43] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 174.
[44] Zora Neale Hurston to Franz Boas, December 14, 1934, Franz Boas Papers, Mss B B61, American Philosophical Society Library.
[45] Hurston to Boas, December 14, 1934.
[46] See Edwin R. Embree to Zora Neale Hurston, January 21, 1935, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[47] Franz Boas to Edwin R. Embree, March 20, 1935, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[48] Zora Neale Hurston to George R. Arthur, February 5, 1935, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

working relationship with Boas, who made repeated and sustained appeals on her behalf?

Officially, the explanation had to do with the provisional nature of Hurston's plan of work; in the letter that Embree wrote to Hurston alerting her to her fellowship's withdrawal, he wrote that the Rosenwald was not convinced that Hurston had a "permanent plan," even if her work at Columbia could be guaranteed for the "time being."[49] The reference was likely to a letter that Hurston had written to Embree two weeks earlier, after learning of her award, in which she proposed a change to her plan to work with Boas at Columbia:

> It seems there is very little here [at Columbia] to be taken that would lend directly to my special field. Most of the Anthropologists in America have specialized on Indians. The more reason I should be trained to do this work, seeing that there are so few courses in any American college on the Negro, but at the same time for the present it hampers me in getting my own self trained…Dr. Boas is considering shipping me back to Evanston to study under Dr. Herskovits for the semester approaching so that he can prepare me for Hayti [sic]. There is nothing at Columbia that would help me practically for that.[50]

The shift in plans were apparently seen as an affront, at least by Embree—in whose mind, again, the concreteness and rigidity of Hurston's course of "hard, even, routine" study were tantamount—enough of an affront to catalyze the withdrawal of most of her fellowship. As Embree described it to Boas, Hurston's "capacity for keeping her plans — and her friends and sponsors — in tumult," her rejection of the Rosenwald's core criteria of predictability, had made the withdrawal necessary.[51]

Hurston's biographers have put forward several other theories for the snub, adding to those Hurston herself advanced during her lifetime. Valerie Boyd, for example, points to a feature article on Hurston published in *The New York World-Telegram* in early 1935, titled "Author Plans to Upbraid Own Race," which mentioned that Hurston planned to use her Rosenwald to write a book "that would give her own people 'an awful going over,' particularly the ones who talk about the tragedy of being Negroes."[52] Embree, Boyd argues, would have been upset not only at Hurston's perceived self-promotion in the article, but also at the implication that her Rosenwald would be used in such a way—that it would reveal divisions within the African American community about the proper degree of racial pride.[53]

Hurston, for her part, privately maintained that the withdrawal was more personal, arising from her falling-out with Fisk president Thomas E. Jones in the months surrounding her Rosenwald application. As Hurston later wrote to Herskovits,

> Pres. Jones of Fisk who is an intimate friend of Dr. Embree did something to me which I still think was patronizing and contemptible. I told him immediately that I resented it and thought he ran his school like a Georgia plantation, with him as 'Mr. Charlie' and members of his faculty being 'good n******' by carrying tales on the others, and he ought to be above it. He evidently told Embree about it for he froze up on me at once,

[49] Embree to Hurston, January 21, 1935.
[50] Zora Neale Hurston to Edwin R. Embree, January 6, 1935, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[51] Embree to Boas, March 26, 1935.
[52] "Author Plans to Upbraid Own Race: Zorah Hurston Denies There Is 'Tragedy' in Being Negro," *The New York World-Telegram*, February 6, 1935.
[53] See Boyd, *Wrapped in Rainbows*, 270.

> proving to me that down in his heart he felt that n****** should stay in their places and not talk biggity to white folks no matter how justified the provocation.[54] (asterisks added)

Evidence from the archival collections at Fisk University suggests that Hurston wasn't far from the truth. Whatever other considerations the Rosenwald leadership was weighing in early January 1935, it is clear that Jones added to them. In late December, Jones sent Charles S. Johnson a memo expressing concerns about Hurston's personality and professionalism. He included a letter from a "Mrs. Garrett," apparently written on the occasion of Hurston's consideration for appointment at Fisk, which expressed reservations about her.[55] Although the Garrett letter itself has been lost, its contents can be gleaned from Jones and Johnson's glosses in their correspondence, which reference Garrett's "misgivings" and the possibility of "occasional violent reactions to her [Hurston's] personality."[56] Garrett's concerns were, Jones goes on to say, similar to those raised by certain Fisk Trustees; Minnie Lou Crosthwaite and Charles W. White, both Nashville natives and Black alumni of Fisk, were referenced by name.[57] Although these individuals' specific beliefs cannot be recovered, the correspondence indexes at the very least their sense of a proper social code, a kind of "decorum" required of faculty and students at Fisk, which Hurston clearly broached. That Jones forwarded the letters on to Johnson indicates the degree to which such sensitivities were weighted within Fisk, influencing hiring decisions—even as it proves Hurston's hunch about a pervasive system of surveillance at Fisk, its faculty who "carr[ied] tales on" each other.

In addition to these Trustee letters, Jones included a letter that he had received from Hurston in late December of 1934. In it, she responded to Jones's earlier letter regarding her increasingly-unlikely hiring at Fisk, in which Jones had insisted that he would not be willing to support the proposal (or an application to the General Education Board that accompanied it) until Hurston made a trip to Nashville to speak with him personally, at her own expense.[58] In Hurston's response, written just days after she had received word that she had been awarded a Rosenwald, Hurston used her fellowship to dismiss Jones and his previous, condition-bound offers. She wrote, rather gleefully,

> If you happen to come to New York during the next two years I shall be very glad to see you. I have a fellowship at Columbia University for that length of time under the Rosenwald. I shall be in residence during the school terms, but provisions have been made for foreign travel during the summer months. So you see, there would be no point in holding that application blank for me as the Board [the General Education Board] would hardly wait as long as it would have to before I could think of accepting anything there.[59]

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[54] Zora Neale Hurston to Melville J. Herskovits, April 6, 1937, Box 9, Folder 32, Melville J. Herskovits Papers, McCormick Library of Special Collections and University Archives, Northwestern University.
[55] Thomas E. Jones to Charles S. Johnson, "Memo," December 18, 1934, Box 35, Folder 5, Thomas E. Jones Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[56] Jones to Johnson; Charles S. Johnson to Thomas E. Jones, "Memo," December 21, 1934, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[57] Jones to Johnson, "Memo," December 18, 1934.
[58] While it is possible that Jones forwarded this correspondence to Johnson in relation to Hurston's potential hire at Fisk, it seems likely that it was also intended to question her candidacy as a Rosenwald Fellow.
[59] Zora Neale Hurston to Thomas E. Jones, December 29, 1934, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

It is easy to imagine Jones, insulted by the implication that Hurston was beyond his power, and specifically *because* of her Rosenwald—granted financial independence, the resources to stay in New York, at a prestigious Ivy League university—forwarded the letter on to Fellowship Committee member Johnson with the intent of meddling in this guarantee.

This is not to excuse Charles S. Johnson's part in the drama, which was not negligent. Despite his support for Hurston as a candidate both at Fisk and as a Rosenwald fellow, Johnson did not hesitate to send the Jones correspondence on to Embree. He seems to have tried to temper his earlier support for Hurston, moreover, after Embree and Jones began to express misgivings about her—insisting that Hurston was "a protegee, I admit, but one for whom I felt constrained to suggest a moderate discipline."[60] Johnson's tone is resigned, muted, as if he knows his opinion is not the last in the matter—hinting at his awareness of the limits of his own influence within the Rosenwald.[61] It is not irrelevant that Hurston's encounter with the Rosenwald coincided with a period in which the Fellowship program was without dedicated administrative support; at a moment when the Fund's larger resources were stretched thin, the Fellowship Program's future uncertain, this period of indefiniteness may help to explain the degree to which the individual—seemingly personal, if not mercurial—decisions of the Rosenwald's leaders seemed to elide with those taken by the wider institution.[62]

It seems likely that someone, at some point, filled Hurston in on the reasoning for the withdrawal of her original offer. By the summer of 1935, when she received a request from the Rosenwald write a report on her (shortened) fellowship period, she had stopped questioning its motive. In her report, she manages, with typically masterful prose, to indict the Rosenwald's decision to withdraw its support ("You would understand that I would not be able to do anything important towards a doctorate with a single semester of work"), and to gesture knowingly to the withdrawal's motivating cause ("Perhaps Dr. Jones <u>did</u> feel badly over my letter…").[63] She goes on to describe, pointedly, the shift in her work that the withdrawal had catalyzed, including her return to work that was more artistic-scientific than purely anthropological—as if to force the JRF's recognition that she ended up doing precisely the kind of work that it had hoped to steer her away from. Hurston does not, however, describe this work as a less worthwhile endeavor than strictly anthropological research; instead, she dwells on its success. "I did what could amount to something. I wrote two plays, both of which have a more than even chance of being reproduced in the full. I wrote the first draft of my next novel which has already been accepted by publishers."[64] It's not clear whether the novel Hurston references here is the acknowledged

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[60] Charles S. Johnson to Edwin R. Embree, January 9, 1936, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[61] Oddly, it seems that Johnson was not a part of the selection process for Hurston. When she was first awarded a fellowship, Johnson received a letter from Embree informing him of the Rosenwald's decision, almost as if Johnson were her personal sponsor rather than a regular member of the Fellowship Committee: "All of this I am writing because I know your interest in this person. You were her discoverer and must take a considerable share of the responsibility for her career. I only wish that we had been able to have your counsel as we were making our decisions." Embree to Johnson, December 20, 1934.

[62] Officially, the Fellowship program had no dedicated officer until it was officially designated a "Division" in 1936; however, George Arthur had, in his capacity as Associate for Negro Welfare, effectively filled this position until he left the Rosenwald in 1934. Internal documents reflect that the future of the Fellowship Program was in considerable question in 1934; see Hurston to Jones, December 29, 1934.

[63] Zora Neale Hurston to Edwin R. Embree, June 28, 1935, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[64] Hurston to Embree, June 28, 1935.

masterpiece *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.[65] Nevertheless, time and scholarship have largely affirmed the implied argument in the report: that Hurston did some of the most innovative creative work of her career in this period—work that can be attributed, in other words, less to Rosenwald support than to its withdrawal.

Despite her defiant tone, Hurston evidently continued to feel the hurt caused by the JRF's rejection long after 1934—still dwelling on it several years later. Her resentment was inflamed by what she perceived as her immediate replacement in the person of Katherine Dunham—even claiming, at one point, that Rosenwald officers "groomed" Dunham for this role.[66] Dunham began her association with the Rosenwald almost immediately after Hurston's shortened one, applying and winning a fellowship in early 1935. It wasn't just that Dunham was another young Black woman, applying to study anthropology at a major university, though; Hurston believed she had been accepted to complete Hurston's own project, based largely on Dunham's similar interest in the Caribbean and desire to carry out fieldwork there. Like Hurston, moreover, Dunham was known for "creative-scientific" work, her study of traditional African-diasporic dance as well as its incorporation into her original choreography. Whether or not Hurston knew as much, Dunham was also offered a substantial sum, $2,400, and two full years of support—putting the lie to Embree's testy reply to Hurston's pleas for increased support in February of 1935, in which he insisted that the (revised) sum of $700 that the Rosenwald offered Hurston was already "so much more than we usually give in fellowships that it is quite out of the question for us to consider any increase in this grant."[67]

There is no explicit evidence that Dunham was taken on as a kind of replacement for Hurston, however. Melville Herskovits, with whom Hurston corresponded at the time and who was advising Dunham during her study at Northwestern, insisted repeatedly that the projects were separate and unrelated.[68] Hurston might have noted that another young Black woman, Marian Minus, received a fellowship for graduate study in anthropology in 1935; like Hurston *and* Dunham, her work bridged creative and scientific fields, although she had no interest in the Caribbean—leading one to think the choice of each woman had more to do with the Rosenwald's institutional interests than with its desire to "replicate" Hurston's work specifically.

Still, Hurston may have been right to think of herself as "replaced." It is true that most women fellows were the only female representatives in their field for any given year (Minus and

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[65] *Their Eyes Were Watching God* occupies a central place within many discussions of Hurston's literary production, often referenced directly as a "masterpiece;" see Hemenway, *Zora Neale Hurston*, 215; Plant, *Zora Neale Hurston*, 59. On the novel's drastic shift in reputation and journey into the canon of American literature, see Cheryl A. Wall, "Introduction," in *Their Eyes Were Watching God: A Casebook*, ed. Cheryl A. Wall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3–16; Hazel V. Carby, "The Politics of Fiction, Anthropology, and the Folk: Zora Neale Hurston," in *New Essays on Their Eyes Were Watching God*, ed. Michael Awkward (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 71–90. Hurston later famously claimed to write *Their Eyes* in seven weeks in 1936, while on a Guggenheim fellowship.

[66] In letters to Herskovits, Hurston wrote: "By the grape vine from Fisk I heard that Charles S. Johnson…was grooming Catherine [sic] Dunham for the place," referencing her spot as a Rosenwald fellow. Writing from Jamaica in 1936, Hurston told Herskovits she had "found Catherine [sic] Dunham had been here last year carrying out the program that I had mapped out for the Rosenwald gang. I can afford to laugh at them, of course, but their littleness is astounding." Hurston to Herskovits, April 6, 1937; Zora Neale Hurston to Melville J. Herskovits, July 30, 1936, Box 9, Folder 32, Melville J. Herskovits Papers, McCormick Special Collections and Archives, Northwestern University.

[67] Edwin R. Embree to Zora Neale Hurston, February 8, 1935, Box 423, Folder 9, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[68] See Melville J. Herskovits to Zora Neale Hurston, September 28, 1936, Box 9, Folder 32, Melville J. Herskovits Papers, McCormick Special Collections and Archives, Northwestern University.

Dunham's 1935 fellowships notwithstanding). In some instances, other exceptions to this rule occur, but exclusively during the war years—in the field of art, for example, 1945 and 1946 were the only years that multiple women won fellowships. Especially in the case of second or third fellowships, men were far more likely candidates than women—and usually only one woman in a field was eligible for this kind of support at any given time.[69]

It is notable, moreover, that despite the good, even close professional relationship that Dunham maintained with the Rosenwald throughout her career, she was subject to a level of scrutiny and oversight similar to Hurston, and Savage before her. It is not to Hurston's "mouthiness" or "saucy" personality, in other words, that we can attribute this kind of heavy-handedness; it was used to micromanage the careers of *many* fellows, and particularly women fellows.[70] Like Hurston, Dunham saw her fellowship made contingent on the disciplining of her work—specifically her successful integration into the department of anthropology at Northwestern. Her advisor, Melville Herskovits, received a letter from Embree similar to the one that Boas had, outlining the fact that the Rosenwald's support was not guaranteed, but depended on his mentorship—even going so far as to assert that the Rosenwald "should not have been willing to consider a grant of this sort unless such a person as you were ready to stand sponsor and act as teacher and guide."[71] Herskovits and other White male scholars continued to be the Rosenwald's reference-points, providing what from the Fund's perspective were guarantees of the worthiness of Dunham's work—even later, when she had established herself as a preeminent choreographer and an expert in Haitian dance.

It was perhaps because Dunham left graduate school, never writing up the findings of her fieldwork in Haiti or earning her degree, that her expertise was not acknowledged by the Rosenwald. It is certainly clear that in the minds of the Rosenwald's officers, their investment had not entirely paid off—despite the international renown Dunham enjoyed later in her career. Importantly, it seems that it was specifically the return to a "solely" creative field that disappointed the Rosenwald. Writing in 1940, looking back at the history of the Rosenwald's support for Dunham's work, Charles S. Johnson wrote to Embree, "it might have paid to have given her another fellowship while she was turning…toward the anthropological field."[72] The implication is clear: that the payoff the Rosenwald was looking for was Dunham's "turn" toward the social sciences. As with Hurston, they seemed to have seen in her not a pathbreaking artist and creative ethnographer, but instead a potential scientist—who, in the end, erred from the disciplined path that might have brought her to prominence as an expert in her field.

The fellowship experiences of Augusta Savage, Zora Neale Hurston, and Katherine Dunham help us to understand the difference in the experience of Black women Rosenwald

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[69] Of the 194 fellows (Black and "white southern") granted at least one renewal, 72% were men. In those instances in which multiple women were granted renewals at the same time, the majority were in fields that saw a higher proportion of renewal grants overall—as in sociology. Sociology had overlapping repeat female fellows in two out of the twenty years of the Fellowship Program, in comparison to eight for men. In the eight years of overlapping repeat male fellows in sociology, there were usually more than two, and as many as four, of these "exceptional" fellows at a time.

[70] This level of oversight was not limited to female fellows, however; for an in-depth examination of the similar level of micromanagement in the career of anthropologist W. Allison Davis, see E. Masghati, "The Patronage Dilemma: Allison Davis's Odyssey from Fellow to Faculty," *History of Education Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (November 2020): 581–610.

[71] Edwin R. Embree to Melville J. Herskovits, February 15, 1935, Box 409, Folder 10, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[72] Charles S. Johnson to Edwin R. Embree, November 30, 1940, Box 409, Folder 10, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

fellows—not only a more difficult application process, but also increased scrutiny from a range of advisors and surveyors throughout their fellowships. While this scrutiny exists on a spectrum of oversight that fellows of all genders faced, its increased intensity for Black women fellows implies more than a simple experiential difference for fellows of different genders—the idea that women had to check in more frequently with their advisors, for example, but otherwise had similar fellowships to their male counterparts. I would argue that the Rosenwald's unstated policies towards women imply that it understood the *function* of women's fellowships differently; these fellowships were seen to be more insistently structured and instructive, as if they were the final part of women fellows' formal education. The Rosenwald saw it as its job to ensure—via increased oversight, the selection of institutional or personal advisors, and other conditions—that Black women *acquired* discipline on their fellowships; it was not assumed, as happened for male fellows, that women fellows already possessed it, or that their work needed only a lack of distractions to flourish.

The Rosenwald seems to have found confirmation of its fears in the careers of many Black women fellows, Savage, Hurston, and Dunham among them—enough to make necessary Hurston's rejection or the explicit direction of Savage's work, or to incite Johnson's rueful tone about the direction of Dunham's career. To put it more directly: Hurston, Dunham, and Savage each fell short by the Rosenwald's standards in some way. It is important not to gloss over the effect that this kind of failure had, especially in Hurston's case. Despite the canonical status that she now occupies in American letters, and the validation that this status gives to her defiant 1935 Rosenwald progress report, the years immediately following were difficult for her, both financially and personally; she died in 1960 in debt and largely forgotten by both scientific and literary communities. This fact, widely discussed and debated in Hurston scholarship, is certainly not exclusively the result of her loss of favor with the Rosenwald or the withdrawal of its financial support. It does shed light on the larger landscape of patronage for figures like Hurston, however, as well as on the increased power that the Rosenwald wielded given the paucity of alternative paths available to her. This reality also shaped the course of Augusta Savage's career, which tracked an arc similar to Hurston's, including what has been understood as a "withdrawal" from the New York art world following the difficulty of finding adequate support for her work. Although Savage was not considered, within the JRF, as dramatic a "failure" as Hurston, then, she was nevertheless subject to the larger forces of a patronage landscape with very few choices for Black women artists.

It is tempting to see Hurston's subsequent restoration to a now-established place within the history of American literature as the triumphant end to her story. I want to resist this urge, however, or any other to recuperate Hurston or her peers, or rescue their work from the category of Rosenwald "failures"—in part because doing so risks blunting the sharp edge of their choices, in a way that might mirror the tempering that the Rosenwald hoped its discipline would achieve. As cultural critic Jack Halberstam has argued, failure can be powerful, implying a conscious turn away from an expected or normative way of being or working, a "way of refusing to acquiesce to dominant logics of power and discipline," or even a "form of critique."[73] Halberstam's argument is especially important in shifting our understanding of an institution like the Rosenwald, which I have argued thus far exists squarely within the framework of modern disciplinary power. While allowing us to acknowledge the pervasiveness and inequity of this power, the idea of critical failure challenges the sense of its singularity or inevitability—allowing us to comprehend an "outside," if not a directly oppositional challenge, to its system of value.

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[73] Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 88.

We might think of Hurston's, Dunham's, or Savage's "failures," then, as their rejection of the constraining demands of the discipline that was continuously prescribed for them by the Rosenwald—in line with the "undisciplined" scholarly and artistic practices, the "indiscipline" and "unscientific methods," that scholar Christina Sharpe has recently called for in Black studies.[74] As Sharpe describes it, this "becoming undisciplined" involves a refusal of the "epistemic violence" involved in disciplinary thinking, a rejection especially of the expectation to "discard, discount, disregard, jettison, abandon, and measure" non-disciplinary ways of knowing—refusals that, in turn, make room for those kinds of knowledges that fall outside or between the bounds of discipline.[75] Viewing these encounters with the Rosenwald as versions of this indisciplined refusal, then, rather than a measure of their lack, raises the question of what ways of knowing they preserved or maintained in their creative-scientific, discipline-transgressing work—a question that also will also animate the story of Rose Piper's fellowship.

Wartime Innovations: Rose Piper's Early Career

To return from our own detour, then: we rejoin Rose Piper in April of 1945, Rosenwald rejection letter in hand—as the artist was absorbing a blow softened slightly by the invitation to reapply the following year. She determined, in that moment, to do just that—to spend the following months learning and improving, workshopping her paintings and rubbing elbows with Rosenwald alumni. She would hone her craft and her plan of work, take new classes and secure new recommenders—making sure that by the time the following April rolled around, she would be reading a different kind of letter.

Piper was the determined, resourceful type—she made things happen for herself. By the time she was applying for her first Rosenwald, in fact, she had already forged an entirely uncharted path for herself as an artist. Born Rose Theodora Sams in 1917, Piper grew up in the Bronx in New York City; there, her father, a teacher in the public school system, imbued in her a deep respect for education. She was by all accounts an excellent student, taking an especial interest in her art classes; after "majoring" in art at the Evander Childs School in the Bronx, she won a scholarship to continue her training at the Pratt Institute. Under pressure from her father to choose a more practical career, however, Piper declined the scholarship—settling for the University of Chicago, where she had also been accepted. Upon realizing that she could not afford the tuition, however, Piper reluctantly enrolled in Hunter College, where she initially planned to follow her father's guidance, working towards a degree in education. Instead of taking the required teaching courses, however, Piper took every available studio art class in her first two years; eventually she switched her major to art, with a minor in geometry.

Piper graduated from Hunter in 1940; later that same year, she married William "Billy" Piper, and had a son, Steven, just two years later. Piper quickly became a full-time mother and wife, putting aside her art to care for Steven and to make a home for her family in the apartment they shared on La Salle Street in Harlem. By the time Billy was drafted into the navy in 1944, Piper hadn't touched her paints for several years; it seemed as if she had left artmaking behind

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[74] Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 13, 131. Sharpe describes the way that Black scholars are subjected to "discipline" within the academy specifically: "Despite knowing otherwise, we are often disciplined into thinking through and along lines that reinscribe our own annihilation, reinforcing what Sylvia Wynter (1994, 70) has called our 'narratively condemned status.' We must become undisciplined. The work we do requires new modes and methods of research and teaching; new ways of entering and leaving the archives of slavery, of undoing the 'racial calculus and…political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago' (Hartman 2008, 6)."

[75] Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 13.

when she completed college, moving into a phase of her life when her work was her child, her husband, and her home.

Piper was never satisfied with these roles, however; even during this period she was itching to get back to making art. When Billy departed for service in World War II in 1944, then, she saw less a redoubling of her domestic duties—suddenly a single parent, with twice the responsibilities—than an opening, an opportunity to reexamine and reconfigure her role as a mother and homemaker. She enlisted the help of her mother in caring for Steven part-time—and with Billy gone, many other expectations for her time and energy were also lifted. The result was, in many senses, her emergence from the domestic sphere; she enrolled in classes at the Art Students League, where she workshopped with her teachers Yasuo Kuniyoshi and Charles Alston, and spent nights out with friends in Harlem. She even rented her own studio in Greenwich Village, on West 11th Street, where she had dedicated space to concentrate on her art. Piper was able, in other words, to achieve a remarkable feat: making early motherhood a period of concentrated artmaking.

These innovations were subtended by larger societal shifts in the expectations for women's labor; indeed, the changes in Piper's work mirror those of a range of other women, both Black and White. In part because of the resources already available to her because of her family and middle-class upbringing, Piper had been working as a mother and homemaker before the war; like many White women of the time, then, wartime shifts allowed her to move out of the domestic sphere and to take more direct control of her time, attention, and commitments. At the same time, though, Rose Piper shouldn't be confused with "Rosie the Riveter," the popular image of the American woman seizing the new opportunities opened to her doing wartime, which applies almost exclusively to the experience of White women. In many ways, Piper can be better understood to follow in the path of other Black women, many of whom were already in the workforce at the start of the war—and who, if still limited in the range of jobs available to them, took advantage of new opportunities in the defense industry.[76] Like women of all races, the shift in Piper's work involved moving into positions, both personal and professional, that had previously been occupied by men; Piper renewed her desire to make artmaking not just a hobby but a profession, a feat that almost only men had achieved at that point. Piper also began to enter new, sometimes predominantly-male social and professional spaces. She found new sources of vitality and support along the way—from the childcare support she received from her extended family network to the mentorship of artists like Alston and Kuniyoshi. And she claimed the independence to form new relationships, as she did with Myron O'Higgins, a young African American poet she met in the mid-1940s and quickly fell in love with.[77]

In short, Piper understood the wartime's exigencies and uncertainties as sanction to experiment with new ways of being a woman, a mother, and an artist. Importantly, these were considerations that Piper was making not only in her pursuit of artmaking as a career, but also

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[76] African American women's hiring in plants, shipyards, factories, and government administration increased especially after the passage of Executive Order 8802, which banned racial discrimination in the defense industry—in large part due to the activism of figures like Mary McLeod Bethune and A. Phillip Randolph. See Gregory S. Cookie, *Invisible Warriors* (Charlie Horse Productions, 2021); Maureen Honey, *Bitter Fruit: African American Women in World War II* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1999); Ellen Carol DuBois and Lynn Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents* (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005), 680.

[77] As quoted in Graham Lock, "Blues on the Brush: Rose Piper's Blues and Negro Folk Songs Paintings of the 1940s," in *The Hearing Eye: Jazz and Blues Influences in African American Visual Art*, eds. Graham Lock and David Murray (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 70.

within her art itself, at the level of its style, content, and aesthetic priorities. She became convinced, in this period, that artmaking was much more than a matter of personal expression or beauty—it could, as she put it in her first Rosenwald application, "erase segregation, ridicule, humiliation and violence," help people "to become more tolerant," and even "promote racial internationalism."[78] She later recalled the influence of her Art Students League instructor Yasuo Kuniyoshi on the formation of these convictions—especially the sense that art's mandate was not mitigated but in fact deepened by her position as a gendered and raced subject. One lesson in particular stuck in Piper's memory, in which Kuniyoshi was critiquing the work of a young Asian American woman: "[the student] painted a bird on a tree…Kuniyoshi cried: 'The war is on and you are painting a tree?'." Artmaking in wartime had great urgency, Kuniyoshi clearly believed––a need to address itself to the conditions of the moment that demanded artists bypass questions of beauty that otherwise might have been their concern. Importantly, no artist was exempt from this imperative; indeed, Piper seems to remember Kuniyoshi's lesson specifically through its presumed racial subtext—Kuniyoshi's admonition to his Asian American student made more acute by the internment of Japanese Americans occurring at the same moment.[79] Layered within this racial subtext is a gendered one, as well; Kuniyoshi's exhortation to put away paintings of birds and trees seems targeted at the notion of "feminine" artmaking, at the idea that women should make art that was decorative, delicate, or retiring. Kuniyoshi insisted, instead, that all artists should engage directly in the world—and should do so from the specificity of their positions as raced, gendered subjects. It is possible to hear his ideas echoed in Piper's bold, definitive assertion about her role as an artist in her second Rosenwald application: "I belong to one of the races of mankind that is jim-crowed, segregated and ghettoized…If through painting, people can be made to understand the Negro, and other minority groups and to become more tolerant, then my job is obvious…I will use all the technical and creative power that I can summon, in fighting injustice the best way I know – by putting it on canvas."[80]

When Piper applied to the Rosenwald, then, she had already formed many of the commitments that would guide her art, and had devised a way of working that allowed her the time and energy to create. The Rosenwald represented not an inaugural opportunity to devote herself to artmaking, even of a specific kind—but instead the resources to maintain those structures that allowed her to practice art, to continue those social and aesthetic commitments she had made in the preceding years. The Rosenwald remained, however, an important opportunity for Piper—perhaps even more so when she re-applied in January of 1946, just a month after the end of the second World War. With the impending return of her husband from the war, whether Piper would be able to continue her professional career became an increasingly pressing question. Within that context, the Rosenwald represented a holdover—a kind of supplement that would support her artmaking, even against the uncertainties of yet another alteration of her time and family structure.

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[78] Piper, "Plan of Work," 1945.

[79] In Piper's telling, the internment of Japanese Americans shadows this interaction: "I studied with Yasuo Kuniyoshi who was Japanese American, while other Japanese were being put into interment camps. He carried on and rightly so. An oriental girl in class painted a bird on a tree…Kuniyoshi cried: 'The war is on and you are painting a bird on a tree?'". As quoted in Megan Dohogne, "Rose Piper: New Discoveries" (M.A. Thesis, University of Missouri - Kansas City, 2016), 8.

[80] Rose Piper, "Plan of Work," 1946, Box 440, Folder 20, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

Objectivity, Authenticity, and Self-Discipline: Piper Emerges as Rosenwald Artist-Researcher

As I've argued above, Piper's formation as an artist in the years preceding her Rosenwald application involved innovations in the way she used her time, the role she played in her family, and in her aesthetic work—innovations that broke, in many ways, with previous expectations for her behavior as a young mother, a Black woman, and a woman artist. When it came time to apply for a fellowship, she seemed equally willing to adapt her work in the ways demanded by the Rosenwald—even when that meant further shifts to her priorities and aims in artmaking. And these shifts were indeed required; while the Rosenwald's established social science bent in many ways meshed with Piper's commitment to addressing contemporary social conditions, in other respects she had to adjust and focus her work to make it fit the fellowship's specifications. This process involved, in other words, less the form of direct instruction that had characterized the Rosenwald's efforts to discipline her predecessors Savage, Hurston, or Dunham—and more a process of self-disciplining attendant on the interaction with the Rosenwald's application itself.

We can track this self-disciplining most clearly in the differences between Piper's 1945 and 1946 Plan of Work essays. In 1946, she outlined a project that was narrower in scope than the one presented in her previous application; it had a single, coherently-delineated theme—"the folk Negro…as he comments on himself in his blues"—as opposed to 1945's vaguer, more dispersed plan to create "an account of the simple folk groups in America and South American countries."[81] Piper's contact with scholars like Sterling Brown, a former Rosenwald fellow and close advisor to the Fund, had likely alerted her to the overlapping interest in African American oral traditions among writers and ethnographers, allowing her the additional advantage of focusing her project on a topic legible to the social scientists on the Fellowship Committee. From her Art Students League teacher Charles Alston, another Rosenwald alumnus who would also act as one of Piper's recommenders, she may have learned that the Rosenwald favored projects that included a "fieldwork" component, and that it had particular interest in the American South; in 1946 she narrowed her proposed travel from the far-flung reaches of South America and Mexico to the American South. Perhaps newly aware of the value of a concrete and feasible plan for the fellowship period, she also reduced the time necessary to complete her project, from "two or three years" to a single one—coincidentally or not, the length of time standard for Rosenwald fellowships.[82] Not least, her 1946 Plan of Work muted the more strident tone present in the 1945 text, which had indicted the failures of American democracy and positioned artmaking as part of a fight for civil rights. In 1946, instead, she opted for the seemingly neutral language of the social sciences—calling the Blues "indispensable data," describing her process as "collecting material," and emphasizing that it is aimed at "learning the truth."[83]

What we observe in these changes, in short, is another of Piper's self-transformations—this time, from a socially-committed artist to an artist-researcher, whose work was predicated on disciplined, scientific research and observation. While this takes place first textually, in the space of the Rosenwald application, it is clear that Piper was committed to enacting a similar discipline in practice as well. She began her research on the Blues immediately upon receiving her fellowship in April; as she told it, "I ran out and all got all kinds of recordings and listened to them."[84] Her "research program" also included "reading in monographs and published

[81] Piper, "Plan of Work," 1946; Piper, "Plan of Work," 1945.
[82] Piper, "Plan of Work," 1946.
[83] Piper, "Plan of Work," 1946.
[84] As quoted in Lock, "Blues on the Brush: Rose Piper's Blues and Negro Folk Songs Paintings of the 1940s," 48.

collections and commentaries," along with consultations with Brown, a leading interpreter of Southern African American folklore, who continued to act as an informal mentor for Piper.[85]

Actually listening to the Blues, however, proved more difficult, in part because Piper was new to her subject—so new that, as she later described it, she "didn't know where to find authentic recordings."[86] Locating such records was not just a matter of combing through the "race record" section of Harlem record stores, as Piper eventually did; it also meant learning what would constitute an "authentic" Blues record—becoming versed in the questions that motivated other folklorists and ethnographers, Brown among them, for whom the "authenticity" of Black music was deeply tied to the place and conditions of its recording.[87]

Although new to this field, Piper seemed eager to learn. Even her emphasis on her novice status could be seen as an attempt to affirm that she was coming to the Blues without any foreknowledge or bias; as she put it, "I had to research the background for the Blues;" "I *worked* at it."[88] She stressed her own outsiderness, as if to shore up her credentials as a neutral, impartial party—to claim the objectivity that had, by that time, become synonymous with scientific authority. She was clear that it was *facts* that she was after—a kind of "data" that she believed would correct prevailing images of African Americans as either "happy, laughing, child-like" or else "great, ugly, gorilla-like."[89] It's here that it becomes possible to understand the particularity of Piper's interest in facts, data, and objectivity, which links her specifically to the Black social sciences consolidating at this moment—in which objectivity was not just a way to approximate the authority of the hard sciences, but operated as a hallmark of a specific social orientation, a commitment to correcting the inaccuracies that undergirded racist beliefs.[90] This interest also

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[85] Rose Piper, "Report of Progress Under Grant," 1947, Box 440, Folder 20, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[86] As quoted in Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism*, 112.

[87] Like other intellectuals of the New Negro era, Brown had previously written about the corrupting influence of the predominantly-White commercial recording industry on African American music. In Brown's *A Negro Looks at the South*, a set of essays he was drafting in the early 1940s, he framed the pursuit of a truly "authentic" form of African American folk music as one that necessarily bypassed the commercial record industry—most often through a kind of in-person, on-the-ground process of research and collection, of the kind he himself had conducted on a Rosenwald fellowship in the early 1940s. For a discussion of the ways Brown's aversion to jazz, as a corrupted commercial form of African American music, influenced his poetry of the 1930s, see James Edward Smethurst, *The New Red Negro: The Literary Left and African American Poetry, 1930-1946* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 74–77.

[88] Quoted in Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism*, 111; Rose Piper, interview by Ann Eden Gibson, New York City, June 8, 1989; as quoted in Lock, "Blues on the Brush: Rose Piper's Blues and Negro Folk Songs Paintings of the 1940s," 48.

[89] Piper, "Plan of Work," 1946.

[90] W. E. B. Du Bois, for example, commonly acknowledged as one of the founders of "Black Sociology," described sociological research in 1898 as "the first effective step toward the solving of the Negro question," and framed his own approach to sociology as an attempt to "put science into sociology." His commitment to "study the facts any and all facts concerning the American Negro…and by measurement and comparison and research, work up to any valid generalization" is a critical first formulation of the principles of Black sociology. See W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Study of the Negro Problems," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 11 (1898): 22; W. E. B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 26. See also recent reconsiderations of Du Bois's sociological work, including Aldon D. Morris, *The Scholar Denied: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015). Earl Wright II and Thomas C. Calhoun define "Black Sociology" apart from the race of the sociologist herself, and instead describe it as a form of sociology "focused on eliminating Blacks from social oppression through objective scientific investigations into their social, economic and physical condition." Earl Wright II and Thomas C. Calhoun,

further confirms Piper's emergence as a Rosenwald researcher; a significant supporter of Black social science, the Rosenwald largely saw its mission as coextensive with these emerging fields, and framed its encouragement of disciplined, deeply researched fellowship work as part of the same fight against the ignorance within racism.

Importantly, racist beliefs, and the images they perpetuated, were precisely what Piper would have encountered in her record-store research. Wading through the years of "race records" produced by record companies like Columbia or Okeh, Piper would have been come face to face with the racist, stereotyped images of African American life that record companies frequently used to market these records: the caricatured features of the figure who leaps from his bed in Columbia's advertisement for Bessie Smith's "Mean Old Bed Bug Blues" (fig. 3.3), the minstrel-mask used on the cover of a Okeh Records Race Record catalogue (fig. 3.4), or the bandanaed, mammy-like figure at the center of another advertisement for Bessie Smith's "Backwater Blues" (fig. 3.5). The initial, record-finding phase of Piper's research, in other words, did not function as a simple encounter with her "primary sources," but instead acquainted her with the depth of the Blues's mischaracterization within popular culture—and with the image she would seek to counter in her own response to it.

"Backwater Blues," in fact, would serve as a referent for Piper's *Back Water* (fig. 3.6), one of the earliest of her Rosenwald works, which helps to illuminate the different approach she sought to bring to the Blues. In contrast to the clownish, mammy-like figure of Columbia's ad, Piper presents a somber picture of a single Black woman, with nothing left to hold onto but herself, in a muted palette reminiscent of her Art Students League teacher Yasuo Kuniyoshi's work. *Back Water* was, in fact, a painting that Piper later admitted she painted before she left for her fieldwork, at the Art Students League; it has marked resonances with works like Kuniyoshi's *Look! It Flies* (fig. 3.7), not only in its the similar composition, but also in its use of tertiary colors, and the parallel note of surreality that they grant to her scene. At the same time, Piper's choice to focus the painting on a central figure—making her facial expression and bodily posture critical to its reflection on the shock and devastation left in the wake of natural disaster, at least as important as the disaster's literal rendering in the background—recall the work of another of her Art Students League teachers, Charles Alston. It is possible that Piper had seen the sober, careful portraits of Southern Black subjects that had resulted from Alston's own Rosenwald-funded travels through the South (fig. 3.8), or had talked with him about the best way to acknowledge misfortune while also dignifying the figures who experience it (fig. 3.9)—perhaps using these lessons in her own balance between foreground figure and background scene. Whatever the exact circumstances of her mentoring, Piper created a painting that adds shadedness and dimension to its subject—striking a marked difference with the two-dimensional way it had been previously rendered in popular visual culture.

Sidetracked: Redirecting Fieldwork in the Jim Crow South

For Piper, then, *Back Water* represented a first attempt to create a more "objective" picture of the Blues than the one created by the commercial record industry, in line with the fact-based approach of both the Rosenwald Fund and the Black social science it supported. This attempt would be furthered in the next phase of her project, what she described as a form of ethnographic fieldwork—a chance to observe, first-hand, the "atmosphere" that produced the Blues. The methods Piper used were similar to those of other ethnographers, too, focused while

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"Jim Crow Sociology: Toward an Understanding of the Origin and Principles of Black Sociology via the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory," *Sociological Focus*, no. 1 (2006): 16.

in the field on taking notes; for Piper as an artist, this meant she devoted her time less to painting than to what she described as "limited sketching" and, even more importantly, a process of "imbib[ing]...the sights and sounds" of the South.[91] It was only later, when she returned to New York, that she would begin to analyze this experience, in much the same way that other ethnographers "worked up" their notes once they had returned from the field.

In many ways, however, Piper's fieldwork journey departed from the one imagined for the ideal ethnographer. This was a matter of the actual obstacles to her movement through the South, especially those posed by the barriers of Jim Crow. But it was also a function of the hindrances that this side-tracked movement created for her ethnographic research, whose ideals—of objectivity; a detached, authoritative perspective; and the delivery of definitive ethnographic insight—all depended on a specific idea of ethnographic mobility. Historians of anthropology have tracked how this mobility emerged as a central assumption of ethnographic fieldwork over the course of the twentieth century, when, as anthropologist James Clifford has argued, disciplinary norms led many anthropologists to downplay what were perceived to be less "objective" aspects of their research—whether the role that their emotions played in their relationships with their subjects, or their experiences of gender, race, or class.[92] Despite, or indeed perhaps because of the fact that ethnographic fieldwork is predicated on the subjective, sensory experience of the ethnographer, in fact, anthropology demanded a difficult countervailing move on the part of its practitioners—as theorist Mary Louise Pratt puts it, "the absolute effacement of the speaking and experiencing subject."[93] Through this effacement, the ethnographer morphed into a detached, "quasi-invisible" observational force, able to move throughout a field, without encountering any of the hindrances an actual body would.[94] The sense of the ethnographer's free and unlimited movement meshes with other parts of what anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has called anthropology's "localization strategies," which work to "confine" or "imprison" its subjects in a particular, delimited space—and make movement the purview of the ethnographer alone.[95]

Critically, this idea of ethnographic mobility is tied closely to a specific idea of ethnographic sight. As many scholars have noted, the effacement of personal, somatic, or other "subjective" experience pushes the ethnographer into a peculiar observational position—in Pratt's formulation, "looking in and/or down upon what is other," or in writer and folklorist Zora Neale Hurston's, wielding the "spyglass of anthropology."[96] Sometimes likened to that of floating, detached "observing eye," this perspective is often tied to the medium of photography,

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[91] Piper, "Report of Progress Under Grant."
[92] James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 70.
[93] Mary Louise Pratt, "Fieldwork in Common Places," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1986), 32.
[94] James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Authority," *Representations*, no. 2 (Spring 1983): 132.
[95] Arjun Appadurai, "Putting Hierarchy in Its Place," *Cultural Anthropology* 3, no. 1 (1988): 39. As Bronislaw Malinowski, one of the earliest practitioners of modern fieldwork, described it, this near-panoptic gaze was greeted by his subjects with a kind of resignation: "as they knew I would thrust my nose into everything, even where a well-mannered native would not dream of intruding, they finished by regarding me as part and parcel of their life." Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1922), 8.
[96] Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1990 [1935]), 1.

the way the camera can work to further the fantasy of a disembodied observational force.[97] The image that results literally and rhetorically positions its subjects as fixed in place—their rootedness what lends the photograph its authenticity. We might think, here, of the photographs of Alan Lomax, the White folklore collector who traveled through the American South on trips like Piper's, in search of "authentic" American folk songs (the recordings that Lomax created on these trips, indeed, would have fallen into Sterling Brown's category of "authentic" Blues records, of the kind Piper had been searching for in Harlem record stores). The photographs that accompany these recordings document Lomax's easy movement into spaces across the South, in a way that validates his authority as being able to go and see everywhere, while also fixing his subjects into place within a delimited "field"—perpetuating an image of the Blues, in particular, as created in rural corners of the South (fig. 3.10).

That a Black woman like Piper could become this kind of invisible, disembodied presence, however, was structurally an impossibility; marked not only by her race, but also by her sex, she was at a double-remove from the purportedly neutral, unmarked position that objectivity assumed. It is important that this marking takes place, as feminist and critical race scholars have taught us, at the level of the body—whether the reach of her skin on which the "epidermal schema" of race is written, or her female body's sexual objectification.[98] In both cases, her experience was structurally bounded by her specific embodiment, grounded and anchored by it—making it impossible, in other words, for it to be sublimated into the position of a weightless, body-less floating eye. It becomes easier to understand, with this perspective, what feminist scholars have written about scientific objectivity or dispassion: that despite its purported neutrality, it assumes and requires a viewer who is both White and male.[99]

Added to this was another factor undermining Piper's access to objectivity: her personal connection to her "fieldsite." Piper chose to locate her fieldwork in two places where she had extended family—Forsyth and Augusta, Georgia, where she had spent childhood summers visiting her grandparents. When she traveled to Georgia on her Rosenwald Fellowship, then, she was retracing a path she had traveled before—a fact that separated her still further from the ideal ethnographic journey, which, as Pratt has argued, always begins with an "arrival scene" in which the ethnographer arrives at a new and wholly foreign place, a trope that establishes her outsiderness.[100]

There were practical reasons Piper chose to locate her fieldwork in Forsyth and Augusta, though. Her previous journeys would have acquainted her with the discomforts as well as real dangers of Black travel in the Jim Crow South, rarely a matter of the free, easy movement imagined for the ideal ethnographer. The "vagaries of Jim Crow," as critic George Schuyler described them, often meant that Black travelers either side-tracked or *were* side-tracked, taking

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[97] James Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1986), 12.
[98] See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 84; Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (October 1, 1975): 6–18.
[99] See Imani Perry, *Vexy Thing: On Gender and Liberation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 55; Michele Wallace, "Variations on Negation and the Heresy of Black Feminist Creativity," in *Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory* (New York and London: Verso, 2016), 218–42; Alison M. Jaggar, "Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology," *Inquiry* 32, no. 2 (January 1, 1989): 151–76. Clifford makes a similar argument in his discussion of the ideal-typical ethnographer—whose kind of unencumbered observation, even if directed towards understanding and collaboration rather than exploitation, is often guaranteed because of his "white skin privilege" and "a history of prior punitive expeditions and policing." Clifford, *Routes*, 65.
[100] Pratt, "Fieldwork in Common Places," 35.

circuitous routes or disjointed itineraries on the way to their destinations; if not delayed or detained by Southern authorities, they often took detours to avoid "sundown towns" or areas with a history of anti-Black violence.[101] When Piper's mentor Sterling Brown traveled through the South his Rosenwald research just a few years before her, he had been denied a bus ticket because of his race while traveling near Macon, Georgia—not far from Forsyth—and had repeatedly been driven off the road by White motorists.[102]

The vulnerability and potential indignity of these journeys would certainly have galled the strong-minded Piper, who had so recently worked to establish her independence as a woman and as a professional artist. At the same time, however, she was likely weighing the added risk and discomfort that accompanied traveling as a single Black woman in the South—risks and discomforts which her initial trip from New York to Georgia would have amply acquainted her with. Even assuming the most direct and unhindered route for Piper, these were numerous: if traveling by train, after a four-hour journey from New York's Penn Station to Washington, D.C., before passing into Virginia Piper would have had to move to the Jim Crow car, at the front of the train (or to the "Negro section" of a segregated car). She would have had a seat, rather than a berth, for the remaining twelve hours of the journey, likely passing the night with her bag at her feet, rather than in a luggage compartment. When she arrived in Atlanta the next morning, she would have transferred to the Central of Georgia (CofG) line, which ran through Forsyth on its way to Macon. Just a year before it upgraded to steel, diesel-powered trains, in 1946 CofG was still operating old, wooden, un-air-conditioned cars, and the summer Georgia heat would have made the trip stifling; if Piper opened a window to let a breeze in, though, she may also have allowed steam or flying embers from the nearby engine to stream into the car.

Neither the money nor the prestige that came with Piper's fellowship would have mattered to those operating the trains she might have traveled on (CofG was in fact the last in the country to desegregate, decades after this moment). Notably, she did not ask the Rosenwald for a letter of introduction, as did other fellows, who carried these as kinds of "passports" that could explain their travel to inquirers. Piper may have known that the name "Rosenwald" was anathema for many White Georgians, and that a letter bearing its imprimatur may have caused her more trouble than help; a campaign song for Eugene Talmadge, the White supremacist governor elected to a fourth term in November of the year that Piper was traveling in the state, even mentioned the Rosenwald by name (the lyrics read, "Gene saved our college system/From all the Rosenwalds/Who sought to end traditions/Which we know are dear to all"). While a

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[101] George S. Schuyler, "Traveling Jim Crow," *American Mercury* 20, no. 80 (August 1930): 430. Schuyler details the "annoyances," delays, and dangers that accompanied all kinds and stages of travel for Black Americans, from acquiring a train ticket to determining where to get on a public bus, finding a taxi to driving (or even storing) their own cars. For a description of the ways Jim Crow affected road travel, as well as innovations—like the famed "Green Book"—made by Black travelers to protect themselves while on the road, see Candacy Taylor, *Overground Railroad: The Green Book and the Roots of Black Travel in America* (New York: Abrams, 2020); Michael Ra-Shon Hall, "The Negro Traveller's Guide to a Jim Crow South: Negotiating Racialized Landscapes During a Dark Period in United States Cultural History, 1936-1967," *Postcolonial Studies* 17, no. 3 (July 3, 2014): 307–19; James Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: The New Press, 2005); Paul Gilroy, "Driving While Black," in *Car Cultures*, ed. Daniel Miller (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 81–104. Discussions of other kinds of Black travel in this period include Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Random House, 2010); Mia Bay, *Traveling Black: A Story of Race and Resistance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021); Anke Ortlepp, *Jim Crow Terminals: The Desegregation of American Airports* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2016).

[102] John Edgar Tidwell and Mark A. Sanders, *Sterling A. Brown's A Negro Looks at the South* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 128.

reference to the Rosenwald Fund's school-building and advocacy for Black education across the South—including a concentrated effort around Forsyth—the song testifies to the way "Rosenwald" had become a shorthand for all perceived assaults on Southern "traditions" of racism and segregation.

This context helps to clarify the paradox built into Rosenwald research—the way that the "objectivity" fellows often claimed in their applications became difficult, if not impossible, to achieve in the field. Piper was not alone in facing this dilemma; nearly all fellows who used their funds to travel to the South dealt with the question of their movement and safety, often devising their own workarounds that would allow them to follow through on their plans. Some, like Jacob Lawrence, chose to keep close to Black neighborhoods within the places they visited. Others, like Piper's mentor Charles Alston, traveled with a White companion, in Alston's case also an inspector for the Farm Security Administration—a strategy that, as he later attested, allowed him entrée into more parts of the South than he might otherwise access.[103]

While Piper's decision to "sidetrack" her journey in the South, directing it to places she knew would offer her certain welcome, appears part of this pattern, it was also different in important ways. Notably, it did not aim for, or achieve, the approximation of White ethnographic movement that Alston's workaround did. Neither did Piper excise this journey, or its perils, from her research, in the way expected of conventional ethnography; indeed, she made the dangers of Southern travel for Black women specifically the central theme of one of her paintings, *The Death of Bessie Smith* (fig. 3.11), which pictures the Blues singer in the last moments of her life, bleeding and alone on a desolate southern road. Notable for being the only work in Piper's series to depict a specific historical scene, rather than a theme inspired by a Blues or folk song, the painting was in part compelled by the deep connection that Piper felt to Smith, who the artist called her personal "symbol of an emancipated woman."[104] In the painting, however, Smith is laid low, quite literally—pictured at the moment that her free movement was abruptly curbed. In emphasizing the barrenness of the drab, geometric streets, Piper insisted on the version of the narrative that held that Smith's 1937 death after a car accident in Mississippi was not necessarily due to her injuries, but rather because she was refused treatment at the nearest hospital because of her race. Reflecting on the force that brought a powerful woman to such a death, then, the painting is also the artist's meditation on the risks she shared with Smith in traveling in the South, the crushing forces that she too confronted—the same forces that ended Smith's journey, and that had re-routed her own.

As *The Death of Bessie Smith* makes clear, Piper's side-tracking functioned as more than a temporary detour on her fieldwork journey; instead, it transformed the "main track" of her research. Recognizing the impossibility of moving in the way demanded in conventional ethnography, Piper did not seek a workaround, but instead shifted her work dramatically—challenging many of the premises for ethnographic work, and delivering an image of the Blues entirely unlike the one her disciplined plan of work had promised.

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[103] Alston traveled with Giles Hubert, inspector for the F.S.A., who offered both official imprimatur to his travels, alongside the safety of a White travel companion. As Alston put it, "I got into places—rural places—I couldn't possibly have gotten into" if traveling alone. As quoted in Romare Bearden and Harry Henderson, *A History of African-American Artists: From 1792 to the Present* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 264.
[104] Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism*, 111.

The Blues as Repertoire: Piper's Blues and Negro Folk Songs

In *The Death of Bessie Smith,* Piper broke with a central convention of ethnographic work at this time—allowing her own experience to shade into the picture she paints of her subjects. This was, however, only one of many ways Piper erred from the typical ethnography in her Rosenwald work—which ultimately didn't document her fieldsite in Georgia in the way we expect from "thick" anthropological description. Indeed, it's hard to locate where Piper's "field" appears in her work at all; instead of depicting a community rooted in place, she turns her attention to a people whose lives are in many ways defined by movement—by the racing of the traincar, as in *Slow Down Freight Train* (fig. 3.12); by individual flight, as in *Long, Long Time to Freedom* (fig. 3.13); even by a frustrated movement, as in *Empty Bed Blues* (fig. 3.14). If this depiction marked a contrast with the static, rooted nature of the ethnographically authentic field-image—Lomax's photographs, which fixed Blues musicians within the "field" of the rural South, for example—neither did it paint the Blues traveler as inherently restless, as some "race record" marketing materials tended to do (see fig. 3.15). Piper paints the Blues in a way that avoids the commercial record industry's tendency to essentializing caricature, but without reverting to the ethnography's confining visualization strategies—both of which ultimately flatten and fix their subjects, albeit in different ways. Indeed, I would argue that Piper's paintings evidence her engagement with the Blues not as a fixed, collectible quantity, as a record or an archive of records—but instead as what theorist Diana Taylor would call a "repertoire": "a set of seemingly ephemeral, individual acts" that nevertheless "replicate themselves through their own structures and codes," and, most importantly, "generate, record, and transmit knowledge."[105]

The Death of Bessie Smith seems to register Piper's understanding of this repertoire, and the central place that a certain kind of travel played within it—recognizing the ways that her own sidetracked travel, if it set her apart from other folklorists or ethnographers, brought her closer to another kind of traveler: touring Blues musicians. Like Piper, many of these musicians anchored their movement through the Jim Crow South in primarily-Black neighborhoods, cities, or towns––some in large cities, like Atlanta or Chicago, but also others that would be considered "backwater" in strictly population or geographical terms.[106] This was a matter of the audience for their performances, in part—the Black communities that, barred from White restaurants or music halls, created their own venues where the musicians performed—but it was also a matter of necessity, as well as personal safety, for the performers. The network linking these sites became known as the "Chitlin' Circuit," named for the concession sometimes available at the bars, restaurants, music halls, and more informal venues where musicians performed—although historians have pointed out that it was used, even co-created, by others, like Negro League baseball teams, who had similar needs for safe shelter on the road.[107]

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[105] Diana Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 20–21.

[106] Businessman Denver Ferguson, often ascribed a leading role in establishing the Chitlin' Circuit through a network of regional promoters, described these as "nondescript places"—not only the main street "stroll" in the Black neighborhoods of major cities, but also the bars, restaurants, nightclubs, and sometimes even barns, warehouses, or fraternal lodges, in small towns across the South, venues that Preston Lauterbach describes as existing "beyond the established entertainment syndicate." See Preston Lauterbach, *The Chitlin' Circuit: And the Road to Rock "n" Roll* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011), 11, 91, 88.

[107] See Bob Kendrick, "The Chitlin' Circuit and the Green Book," *Storied* podcast, 2021, https://open.spotify.com/show/1pNrOQXspHFbnRm3zr7dNC; Timothy M. Gay, *Satch, Dizzy, and Rapid Robert: The Wild Saga of Interracial Baseball Before Jackie Robinson* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010).

I do not want to argue that Piper consciously traveled along the Chitlin' Circuit as part of her research—although it is possible, even probable, that she visited one of its major venues, the Douglass Theater in Macon, while staying nearby in Forsyth. Even without definitive evidence of such a visit, though, it is possible to see her travels as bringing her parallel to musicians like Bessie Smith—her journey shaped by the same set of forces. I want to argue, in fact, that the work that resulted from these travels evidences Piper's engagement with those parts of the Blues foregrounded in performance, of the kind that took place in Chitlin' Circuit venues: the complexity, depth, and tension that Blues performers created within the simple, repeated formula of the Blues, using tone, inflection, and bodily movement to insinuate meaning in excess of their songs' lyrics, for example. Piper similarly worked to create and suspend tension in her paintings, even within seemingly simple compositions or spare, abstracted forms.

This tension often surfaces in the compositional play set up within the flat, planar version of geometric abstraction that Piper hit on after returning from her fieldwork, perhaps influenced by the thinking of Vaclav Vytlacil, with whom she began studying at the Art Students League. A proponent of Hans Hofmann's ideas of the "push and pull" created by the juxtaposition of color, Vytlacil's work often involves a play with figure and ground; a work like *Colorful Fish* (fig. 3.16), for example, refuses to spotlight its subject in the way expected by the still life, instead interleaving vibrantly colored planes that deconstruct the separation between subject and support, foreground and background.

Something similar is at work in Piper's carefully composed paintings—what Romare Bearden would later describe as her particular consideration of "the picture surface as a whole and not as a conglomerate of individual entities."[108] What's important, though, is the way Piper *used* these lessons, deploying them in order to set up tension between two, often opposing interpretations, or to complicate what appears on first glance to be the painting's subject. For example, the way she transformed Bessie Smith into a saint-like figure—notably, *not* by denying the indignity of Smith's death, which is arguably what's immediately apparent in the painting. Smith's supine body, outlined in electric-red rivulets of blood, is spread across almost the entire lower half of the painting; her head is raised only enough to bring it into line with the simplified gutter, surrounded by the spoked wheel of the car that ironically holds her in this immobile position. At the same time, though, Piper makes the car wheel—the very instrument of the singer's death—part of a kind of halo encircling Smith, its rounded form echoing both the acid-yellow corona at her head and its slightly-skewed mirror in front of her body (this latter, perhaps, representing the reflection of the corona in a puddle of water in the street, heightening the convergence of baseness and spirituality). Piper thus resists making divinity transcendent or ascendant—instead managing to depict the existence of a spiritual gravity in the very lowliness of Smith's death.

A work like *Slow Down Freight Train* (fig. 3.12), too, becomes about more than the departure described in the lyrics of Trixie Smith's *Freight Train Blues*, its inspiration. Piper's painting is also about the lines of longing that, like the wires in its background, continue to connect those separated by migration or travel. The central figure does not simply turn to look back at the landscape that recedes outside the train's open door—his *entire body* is taut. His neck ramrod straight and his knee thrust out, it is as if he is pulled physically by what is being left behind—even as he's pinned, almost rigidly, in place by the train's architecture: the wall that bisects his shoulder, the line of the floorboard that intersects even as it defines his body. Against

[108] Romare Bearden, "Letter of Reference for Rose Piper," 1946, Box 440, Folder 20, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

these sharp, penetrative lines, in fact, the organic, guitar-like shape of his body seems to resonate with longing. Piper composes here a portrait of the complex set of emotions that accompanied the decision to uproot oneself—a departure with none of the simple nonchalance sometimes assumed of those who "hopped trains" or "skipped town." Refusing to simplify the story, Piper builds dimension into her paintings' flat planes of color in much the same way that Blues performers found ways to secret layers of meaning into even the plainest of lyrics.

Piper, in other words, created images that are more complex than they might originally seem—and, even more importantly, that the way she did so was modeled on the way Blues performers continuously added new meanings to their songs. Trixie Smith's *Freight Train Blues* is one example of this addition: over the many years she performed this song, Smith shifted the meaning significantly, even while retaining many of the same lyrics and imagery. In a 1924 recording, the song reflects the narrator's desire for a freight train to carry her away from a bad relationship—for travel to "wear" her lover "off her mind." A 1938 recording had a vastly different meaning, this version focused on a narrator's desire to catch a train in order to be *reunited* with her partner, who she promises to "love until…the day he die[s]." Maybe even more important is the way that Smith's revised lyrics, and skillful vocalization, shift the tone of the song in the very last line, when its lament gives way to an image of hope: "the sun's gonna shine in my back door some day."

There is evidence that Piper was not only aware of these shifts in meaning, but wanted to claim a similar kind of improvisatory freedom for herself. In correspondence, Piper stated that *Slow Down Freight Train* responded to a song about "the misery of the women who had been left behind by men who hopped freight trains to the north"—a likely indication that she was thinking of Smith's 1938 re-recording of the song.[109] Piper's painting, however, pictures neither a broken-hearted, left-behind woman, nor a cold-hearted, train-riding man; instead she chooses to imagine the wrenching, conflicted experience of one who leaves. As other scholars have noted, then, Piper chose to paint *from* the perspective of the female narrator, who watches her lover depart, even as she centers *his* experience of grief—complicating both the gender dynamics of Smith's song and the presumed internal state of those leaving and those left behind.[110] Added to this complexity, too, is the fact that Piper would later tie her painting specifically to the 1924 version of the song—in which it is the female singer who travels.[111] While Piper clearly listened to recordings of Trixie Smith's song, in other words, she was not narrowly focused on the "original" form of the song. Instead she used the formulation proposed—travel on a freight train that separates a couple—much as Smith herself did, as an opportunity to meditate on the complex set of emotions involved, rather than a strict script to be followed.

Piper's attunement to this kind of Blues "versioning" is particularly striking, in fact, given the contrasting interpretation of Black "folk" music common in anthropological circles of the time. These tended to focus on the Blues as representative of an isolated and unchanged culture in the South, bounded by race; alongside spirituals, work, and prison songs, the Blues formed a larger Black folk musical tradition, whose straightforward or repetitive structure was seen to link it to African antecedents, or otherwise to affirm its "primitive" nature.[112] As music

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[109] Rose Piper to Charles Millard, 1990, Rose Piper file, Ackland Art Museum archives.
[110] See Lock, "Blues on the Brush: Rose Piper's Blues and Negro Folk Songs Paintings of the 1940s," 52.
[111] Rose Piper, interview by Sarah Schroth, October 20, 1991, Rose Piper file, Ackland Art Museum Archives.
[112] Arguments about Black spirituals' ties to "primitive" African musical traditions often highlighted their simple, three-chord harmony; similar arguments about the Blues focus on its repeated twelve-bar structure, 4/4 rhythm, and pentatonic scale. See Columbia Records catalogue, June 1920, 3, Warshaw Collection, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. Karl Hagstrom Miller describes the way that the discourse of cultural

historian Karl Hagstrom Miller has argued, folklorists brought expectations about the supposed simplicity, primitivism, and stasis of this culture to their collecting projects, often demanding Black musicians perform songs that conformed with their predetermined ideas about "race music."[113] The value of the Blues for folklorists and early ethnomusicologists, in short, was as a kind of folk artifact—whose authenticity was tied *not* to its versioning or creative re-interpretation, nor to its capacity to speak to the tensions inherent in modern life, but instead to the degree to which it hewed to a supposedly original form. The resonances with ethnography's visualization strategies, described earlier, are apparent—both work to confine subjects to a field or form pre-determined by the ethnographer.

Piper's interpretation, then, departed significantly from those of many other anthropologists, just as her research journey had deviated from the path followed by other ethnographers. Her engagement with the Blues, in fact, resembles that of more contemporary scholars and music historians, who focus less on its musical structure or transcribed or recorded form, and more on Blues performance—what we might position within a wider Blues repertoire. These analyses focus on the way that Blues performers are able to add—through intonation and inflection, rhythm or instrumentation—nuance and depth to its simple musical structure.[114] As writer and critic Ralph Ellison described it, at the center of the Blues is the performer's ability to make listeners aware "of the meanings which shimmer just beyond the limits of the lyrics."[115]

Perhaps the best-known example of this performative nuance is the sexual innuendo in many Blues songs—the way that an earthy trombone and Bessie Smith's quavering contralto make clear that the "cabbage" or "coffee-grinder" referenced in "Empty Bed Blues" have

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isolationism spread from academic folklore and anthropology to the commercial record industry, beginning with debates about Black spirituals and gradually shaping both scholarly and popular views of the Blues. Karl Hagstrom Miller, *Segregating Sound: Inventing Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow*, Refiguring American Music (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 215–27. Miller argues that folklorists helped to "naturalize segregation" through their focus on isolated and racially-bounded cultures; importantly, however, a focus on cultural isolation was pervasive among anthropologists and folklorists of various political persuasions, including even those, like Franz Boas or John Lomax, who understood their work to work against racist beliefs or laws. Miller, 119; see also Franz Boas, "The Limitations of the Comparative Method of Anthropology," *Science* 4, no. 103 (1896): 901–8; John Lomax, *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* (New York: Sturgis & Walton Company, 1910). On Blues and "folk authenticity," see also Guthrie P. Ramsey, *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2004), 44–75; Ann Ducille, "Blues Notes on Black Sexuality: Sex and the Texts of Jessie Fauset and Nella Larsen," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3, no. 3 (1993): 418–19; Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "Rethinking Vernacular Culture: Black Religion and Race Records in the 1920s and 1940s," in *The House That Race Built: Black Americans, U.S. Terrain*, ed. Wahneema Lubiano (New York: Pantheon, 1997), 157–77.

[113] Miller describes the ways that "collectors of African American folk songs sought music that their informants were no longer interested in singing and then held up these outdated ditties as representative of culture and consciousness," creating categorizations that "sever[ed] black folk music from the contemporary African American population." Miller, *Segregating Sound*, 110. Folklorists like John Lomax are exemplary of this practice and its potential distortions; Miller has highlighted Lomax's heavy-handedness in asking informants for songs that conformed with his idea of Black folk music, his willful avoidance of any musical material that might represent interracial interchange or collaboration, and the ways his choice of recording site—in prisons, for example—elided any view of Black middle- or upper-class life. See Miller, 241–74.

[114] See Daphne Brooks, *Liner Notes for the Revolution: The Intellectual Life of Black Feminist Sound* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021); Angela Y. Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998). In the realm of the visual, see also Richard J. Powell's engagement with the "mutability" of what he calls a "Blues aesthetic" in Richard J. Powell, *The Blues Aesthetic: Black Culture and Modernism* (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Project for the Arts, 1989), 23.

[115] Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act* (New York: Random House, 1964), 245–46.

additional meanings. But this layering is also at work in songs about grinding poverty or natural disaster that, through instrumentation, rhythm, or the inflection of the singer's voice, take on a comic edge. It is this both-and-ness that many scholars argue is at the heart of the Blues, and that serves as its most important lesson; as philosopher Fred Moten argues, the Blues teaches about the entanglement of joy and pain, tragedy and comedy—the way these supposed-antonyms "blur [and] can't be separated from each other"—as well as about the arbitrariness of the generic divisions that separate them.[116] I want to suggest that Piper's series became a place for her to hold space for a similar kind of multiplicity—to improvise on the script that Blues songs and their lyrics provided, in the same way that Blues performers did.

Piper proved willing, in *Slow Down Freight Train*, to complicate the "script" of the Blues song she responds to—further expanding this willingness in *Grievin' Hearted* (fig. 3.17). Like *Slow Down Freight Train*, it responds to a song popularized by a well-known Blues musician, Gertrude "Ma" Rainey's *Grievin' Hearted Blues*—a powerful, plaintive song that gives voice to a female narrator's perspective. Piper's painting, however, makes a male figure's body the vehicle of this intense depiction of grief—his curved, sagging shoulders telegraphing the weight of anguish, his limp fingers and toes signaling defeatedness. The solid, weighty triangular forms that recur throughout the painting set off its only movement, which comes from the golden-robed female figure in its middle ground—who, while less clearly defined as the male figure, is clearly depicted as she walks out of the frame. Piper thus makes the female figure who coldly, impassively leaves, and the male figure who is, as Rainey sings it, "throwed away," "refused," left with "those grievin' hearted blues." At the same time, however, Piper's shift is not a simple gender reversal; in Rainey's song, it is the female figure who cries out, "I wants my ticket, show me my train"—grief, in this instance, motivating rather than immobilizing movement.

That Piper would later identify her own experience with the male figure in *Grievin' Hearted*, then, only further complicates the dynamic that she set up in the painting. As she put it in an interview in 1998, "It was me being broken hearted, grievin' hearted…I was that man."[117] She had recently separated from her lover, the poet Myron O'Higgins, with whom she had fallen deeply in love—and with whom she had begun to study the Blues in depth. Historian of music Graham Lock argues that certain paintings of Piper's *Blues and Negro Folk Songs* were shaped by O'Higgins's poetry, in fact—a painting like *The Death of Bessie Smith* responding to O'Higgins's poem "Blues for Bessie," which concludes with an image similar to the one Piper painted.[118] The grief she suffered when their relationship ended was monumental, and by her own account shaped the painting that became *Grievin' Hearted*.

But this period saw another, if related, source of heartache for Piper. Her relationship with O'Higgins coincided with the return of her husband from World War II—but the couple did not reconcile or resume the life that they had begun years before. By the time she reapplied for a fellowship in January 1947, she and Billy had separated finally enough for her to note her marital status as "divorced."[119] The timing of their separation, closely linked to her painting of *Grievin' Hearted*, complicates a reading of Piper as the painting's grieving (male) figure. If she herself

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[116] "Fred Moten and Bob O'Meally on Chris Ofili's Othello," February 4, 2022, https://suchsweetthunder.columbia.edu/resource/fred-moten-and-bob-omeally-on-chris-ofilis-othello/.
[117] Quoted in Kirsten Mullen, "Rose Piper," in *To Conserve a Legacy: American Art from Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, eds. Richard J. Powell and Jock Reynolds (Andover and New York: Addison Gallery of American Art and the Studio Museum in Harlem, 1999), 220.
[118] See Lock, "Blues on the Brush: Rose Piper's Blues and Negro Folk Songs Paintings of the 1940s," 58.
[119] "Rose Piper Digest Sheet," 1947, Box 440, Folder 20, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

was suffering the heartbreak of being left behind, she was also contemplating the fact of her own departure from a significant relationship, placing her in two positions at once—aligned with both the male and the female figure, the grieved and the grieving.

Piper saw and heard a similar multiplicity, a similar ability to occupy many different positions, particularly in women Blues singers; they sang of "rural backgrounds and abuse," as she put it, but they were also strong, powerful, even unapologetically glitzy. She identified with these musicians' heartache, but also with what she called their "rebelliousness."[120] In admitting to her attraction to this particular image of Blues women—their glamour, their unapologetic glitziness, their travel to and popularity in the urban North—Piper seems to be signaling her abandonment of any concept of "authenticity" based in cultural isolation.

At the same time, she gestures to what we might recognize as a Black feminist position, even if she may not have been able to articulate it as such at the time. Her series places Black women at its center—not just in the figures that it pictures, but also in the kinds of knowledge and experience that it draws on to do so. It centers Black female experience in more ways than one, in other words—a process of reclamation similar to the one that artist and critic Lorraine O'Grady has described as a centerpiece of Black feminist practice.[121] What's more, Piper ends at a point very similar to one that O'Grady describes—at a tolerance for, or even an insistence on multiplicity, and specifically a conception of the individual self as containing "a multiplicity of centers," whose "boundaries are fluid."[122] Considering Black female experience, in short, necessitates not just the formation of another category of identity, but the reconsideration of the often narrow, category-bound modes we have for thinking about identity—and allows for a new, more expansive model to emerge. This concept of multiplicity and expansiveness repeats across Black feminist scholarship, becoming one of its touchstones; as Elizabeth Alexander puts it, "the self…comprised of multiple components within the self and evolved from multiple external sources [is] an African-American women's tradition or mythos."[123]

This is not to say, however, that Piper managed, or even attempted, to harmonize the many different positions she saw Blues women occupying—admitting readily, rather, that multiplicity often means conflict, tension, and contradiction (as O'Grady puts it, "this multi produces tensions."[124]). Indeed, it was the *difficulty* of multiplicity that seemed to interest Piper, and that lay at the heart of her examinations of Black women Blues singers—who, in Piper's paintings, struggle to maintain multiplicity, often against forces that seek to flatten or deny this many-sidedness. Bessie Smith, for example, was important to Piper specifically because of the way she combined a number of identities: a powerful, independent woman, a traveler, a sexually emancipated person, an artist and entrepreneur. Yet Piper chooses to examine her at the moment in which this multiplicity is denied, when Smith is reduced to her race—and fatally so.

In a similar way, Piper's painting *Empty Bed Blues* (fig. 3.14) made explicit reference to female sexuality, in what art historian Ann Eden Gibson has described as an unprecedented "refusal to maintain the 'proper' degree of feminine middle-class distance from erotic subject matter," and specifically "the taboo topic of female eroticism."[125] This lack of distance makes

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[120] Piper, interview by Schroth.
[121] Lorraine O'Grady, "Olympia's Maid: Reclaiming Black Female Subjectivity," in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Amelia Jones (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 174–87.
[122] O'Grady, 183.
[123] Elizabeth Alexander, "'Coming Out Blackened and Whole': Fragmentation and Reintegration in Audre Lorde's Zami and The Cancer Journals," *American Literary History* 6, no. 4 (December 1, 1994): 696.
[124] O'Grady, "Olympia's Maid: Reclaiming Black Female Subjectivity," 184.
[125] Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics*, 139.

itself felt quite literally, in fact; although the painting's central figure sits, seemingly demurely, at a table in the foreground, the bed that appears behind her is pushed impossibly close to her, as if to emphasize the way it looms in her thoughts. The Cubist-style depiction of the space—the bed and table depicted from above, the bed's headboard and the figure itself more frontally—allow the figure's head to overlap with the head of the bed, where it might lay if she was sleeping in it, in another playful echo of the sexual innuendo of Smith's song. Yet this compositional play serves not only to acknowledge female sexual desire, but also to emphasize its frustration: the bed and table are empty, the woman seems frozen between them in endless anticipation, while her hands—positioned suggestively just below her lap—are rendered a ball of frustrated energy.

If the Blues offered Piper an opportunity to explore female sexuality, then, her interest is not just about desire, but also about the way sexuality coexists with—or more often competes with—desires for independence and mobility. A work like *St. Louis Cyclone Blues* (fig. 3.18) dramatizes this tension, focusing on a female figure seemingly caught at the moment just before action—but not necessarily without capacity for it. Like the figures in *The Death of Bessie Smith* or *Slow Down Freight Train*, the figure in *Cyclone Blues* is in many ways held in place by the painting's composition; the sharp diagonal created by the illuminated bed meets that of a shaft of light from the left, creating interlocking planes that converge at the figure in the center foreground. They do so, however, not necessarily to immobilize her body—but rather to spotlight it as a locus of *potential* movement. We become aware of the figure's particular, rather awkward bodily position, for example: arms and legs are spread to signal her alertness, just as her upturned head, outlined in silhouette against a stark plane of red, makes clear she is listening—as if she is on the verge of jumping up, of making a move. The urgency of the moment is implied by the scene's surreal light, which illuminates a scene dominated by nocturnal shades of blue, violet, dark red, and deep black with an eerie, yellowish glow—lending a sense of ominousness that is heightened by the work's title and its implication of a descending disaster. Although we cannot see what lies beyond the starkly-illuminated windows on either side of the figure, it is clear that the stakes of her movement are monumental; as the narrator of Lonnie Johnson's "St. Louis Cyclone Blues," a likely referent for Piper's painting, puts it, "I thought the world was ending, I started in to cry."

If the painting's interlocking planes direct attention to the figure's body as the composition's site of potential movement, though, they also serve to highlight her femininity. Against the sharp, angular lines that make up the room's floorboards and shafts of light, the figure's rounded breasts, sweetheart-necked dress, and small waist appear almost like hyperbole. Unlike the more androgynous figures that appear in other *Blues and Negro Folk Songs* works, in other words, it is clear that this is a female figure (one reason, perhaps, that the work was at some point retitled "Young Woman's Blues"). That the figure's legs are splayed seems to present another possible visual indication of the way we are to read her—not as a girl but as a woman, not just as a gendered but as a sexual being.

In short, Piper chooses to foreground the woman's sexuality and femininity in the very same compositional space where she poses the question of the figure's potential action. This is a connection that, as Angela Davis and others have illuminated, lies at the heart of the Blues—which emerged in part to give voice to the experience of emancipation in the period immediately following the abolition of slavery. What's important, then, is that this emancipation was experienced not just as a new form of physical mobility, the ability to travel and to change locations—but also in the new forms of sexual choice and expression that became possible in this moment. As Davis puts it, sexuality indeed became "one of the most tangible domains in

which emancipation was acted upon and through which its meanings were expressed"—a powerful way that Black women, in particular, claimed independence and ways of being separate from prevailing social norms about femininity or domesticity.[126]

Returning to *Cyclone Blues*, then, we begin to see that whatever the figure might do in this critical moment—whether she will act in time to save herself, how she will survive—is inextricably linked to the fact of her femininity and her sexuality. She is not just a figure poised at the edge of imperative action, in the midst of an impending crisis—she is a *woman* in this precarious situation, which, in Piper's formulation at least, makes a difference. How we are to understand this difference—whether female sexuality will function as a liability or a resource at this moment of crisis—is less immediately clear. And ultimately, it's less important to answer those questions, than it is to note Piper's ability to raise so many in the first place—importantly, without granting any easy answer. From the perspective of a more disciplined researcher or more scientific ethnographer, this kind of suspension or multiplicity might look like irresolution: Piper failing to deliver a clear or definitive picture of her subjects, her inability to properly locate them in a field.

I would argue, however, that this irresolution reflects not a failure of discipline—but instead the culmination of its *unlearning*. Encouraged by the example of the Blues women she studied, their unapologetically complex identities as well as the multidimensional music they created—and the lessons in improvisation she gleaned from a wider Blues repertoire—Piper moved distinctly away from the data-collection project she had promised in her application, away from the detached position of the ideal ethnographer, away from the definitive image of the Blues that disciplined research was imagined to produce. Instead, she delivered images shot through by the tension, the complexity, even the contradiction found within the Blues itself—presenting us with the possibility of a low-down saintliness (*The Death of Bessie Smith*), a rigidity-in-movement (*Slow Down Freight Train)*, a being-in-two-places-at-once (*Grievin' Hearted*)—reflecting the movement between many different positions she herself was in the process of negotiating.

Undisciplined Ends: Piper's Anti-Plan of Work

When Piper applied for a renewal of her fellowship in 1947, she showed signs of these Blues lessons and their transformative effect. In this application, she exhibited none of the deference to social scientific research, ethnographic language, or personal discipline that she had in her application the year before—no mention of "authenticity," "data" or even "truth." Indeed, Piper seemed to chafe against a number of the Rosenwald's strictures; perhaps most notably, she rejected explicitly what she called the "discipline" demanded by the Rosenwald—especially the "limitations concerning subject material" and the "restrictions" implied by the single-theme project.[127]

This plan of work, in fact, became a rather remarkable refusal of the Rosenwald's demands, almost an anti-plan of work—full of discussions of what she would *not* do, what kinds of limitations she would *not* accept. In place of the insistent social scientific relevance the Rosenwald demanded, she repeated her claim for a "larger framework" for her work, its capacity to move into new contexts and to make meaning within them.[128] She made no mention of the

[126] Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, 4, 20.
[127] Rose Piper, "Plan of Work," 1947, Box 440, Folder 20, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[128] Rose Piper, "Plan of Work," 1947.

places she might travel, no plan for the work she might do over the course of the fellowship, except in a kind of perverse negative: "the paintings to come will bear no relationship to the present output, except as to provide an antithetical body of work."[129] They would provide, she goes on to say, a kind of antidote to the discipline that she had had to exact to create the *Blues* series—"compensatory in an emotional sense to those done within the restrictions made compulsory by my current task."[130]

The Rosenwald did not renew Piper's fellowship. It is impossible to know exactly why it made this choice, given the spotty archival record—but the fact stands that Piper's rejection came after an application that not only refused to fulfill many of the JRF's core demands, but brazenly called these demands out as obstacles to artistic work. The decision comes into starker relief against another that the JRF made in May 1947, based on Piper's personal appeal—granting her a short-term extension, in the order of $500, to allow her to finish the paintings of the *Blues and Negro Folk Songs* series. The Rosenwald confirmed, in other words, its support for the work that she had proposed in her earlier application, the discrete and legible project that she had defined there—but did not find her later proposal worthy of the same affirmation or backing.

The vision of a supported, but still undisciplined artmaking that Piper began to sketch out in her renewal application was not to be, in other words; instead, Piper pushed to finish the paintings in her original *Blues and Negro Folk Songs* series. These debuted at a solo exhibition at the Roko Gallery in September of 1947; the acclaim with which they were met would seem to affirm the value of the kind of work that the Rosenwald encouraged.[131] Reviewers noted the "strong," "sound" composition and "well disciplined organization" of the paintings, describing Piper's debut as "a success" and "a new and somewhat startling note in this field."[132] The *Blues* paintings would continue to earn Piper notice beyond this moment, too; *Grievin' Hearted* earned a first prize at the Atlanta University invitational in 1948, and two others from the series were included in a group exhibition held in 1948 at the Roko, where they were singled out by the press as "monumental" and "outstanding."[133]

In conventional readings of Piper's career, then, her choice to move away from the kind of disciplined work that the Rosenwald encouraged would seem a marked mistake. The rejection she received from her former backer, further, would seem to signal the beginning of the end—the first of a series of failures and bad luck that led her to give up her painting in the early 1950s. I want to recover, however, the conscious choice at the heart of this "failure," in order to reframe it as something more—as an explicit rejection of the constrictions and obligations of discipline, and a claim of freer, less foreseeable forms of movement. It's not irrelevant to mention what Piper did with her extension in 1947, for example—using it not just to complete the *Blues and Negro Folk Songs* series, but also to travel to Paris, where she used it to live for over five months in late 1947 and 1948. Whether or not she had originally imagined this travel for her second Rosenwald fellowship, her time in Paris made good on the kind of movement she had begun to describe in her 1947 (anti)plan of work. It inserted Piper into a rich artistic environment, where she sat in on classes at the École des Beaux-Arts and rubbed elbows with artists and musicians—

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[129] Rose Piper, "Plan of Work," 1947.
[130] Rose Piper, "Plan of Work," 1947.
[131] The exhibition ran from September 28 to October 23, 1947.
[132] A.L., "Rose Piper's Debut," *Art Digest*, 1947; "Among One-Man Shows," *The New York Times*, October 4, 1947; "Folk Songs Told in Paint & Canvas," n.d., Box 5, Folder 63, Roko Gallery Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
[133] E.K., "Reviews and Previews: Negro Artists," *Art News*, February 1, 1949; J.G., "Honoring Negro History," *Art Digest*, February 15, 1949.

and where she was not asked to ground herself in a sociological problem or subject otherwise defined by her race, but found room for her expansive "experience as a person." Perhaps even more importantly, her travel to Paris was made with funds from the Rosenwald, but nevertheless supported work done outside of—indeed in divergence from—any predetermined or officially-approved plan of work. It thus actualized Piper's claim of a movement that was improvisatory and unsupervised, intuitive rather than disciplined.

Piper returned to the United States in 1948 to tumult in her personal life. Her divorce from Billy Piper finalized in that year, she would soon marry and give birth again; although she left the city so that her new husband, Glenn Ransier, could complete his degree at Hobart College in Geneva, New York, she had to return shortly thereafter to care for her ailing father and declining mother. Glenn, too, began to show signs of traumatic stress from his service in the war, and soon left Piper and their newborn child entirely; in the span of just months, in other words, she became the sole breadwinner for a family of five. Without a way to make a solid enough living from her art, by the early 1950s she had withdrawn from the art world—focusing her energies on a greeting card business she began in this period, and later on a career in fashion. A number of her works from this period, moreover, were destroyed in yet another unfortunate turn of fate; as a result, there are very few extant paintings from this period of Piper's career.[134]

We have no examples, in other words, of the kind of work that might have resulted from the undisciplined artistic practice, the unplanned or improvisatory movement that Piper was working out at this time—what form it would have taken, what it might have looked like. This void is, in part, a measure of the cruel insufficiencies of the existing support systems for artists like Piper in the 1940s, not excluding the Rosenwald, which contributed to narrowing the available path for Black artists to a single tightrope of discipline. It is also, however, a chance to meditate on the boldness of Piper's choice—to claim it as a form of the genre- and discipline-transgression, a version of the "indiscipline" or "errancy," that scholars like Sharpe and Hartman have identified within Black radical scholarship, activism, and art. Piper's Rosenwald journey helps us to see, specifically, the ways an undisciplining might take place, the ways it might even be *learned*—not through the formal education and disciplinary formation the Rosenwald encouraged, but through the kind of embodied participation, the consorting with Blues women within a Blues repertoire, that Piper herself undertook during her fellowship. Perhaps most importantly, it clarifies the stakes of the refusal within undiscipline—and not just for Piper's career. If, as Sharpe has argued, "becoming undisciplined" involves a refusal that in turn makes room for those kinds of knowledges that fall outside or between the bounds of discipline—Piper's undiscipline might be seen not just as an act of rejection or refutation, but one that actively preserved and maintained a way of knowing, or way of being, within the Blues.[135]

I end, then, by proposing that we reconsider the absence that followed Piper's Rosenwald fellowship, thinking of it as a significant, meaning-making act on Piper's part—as important within her career as the *Blues* paintings she made on her Rosenwald fellowship. An insistence on her inability, or more precisely, her unwillingness to stay on track—to remain on the linear, disciplined path she had so many incentives to travel—this absence is a final measure of Piper's undisciplined rebellion: her choice to step off the tightrope, and into midair.

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[134] When Piper returned from her travels in Paris in 1948, she found that the person to whom she had sublet her apartment had destroyed almost all of her possessions—clothes, books, records. Many of the paintings that she had stored there had been painted over or destroyed.

[135] Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 13.

Chapter Three Figures

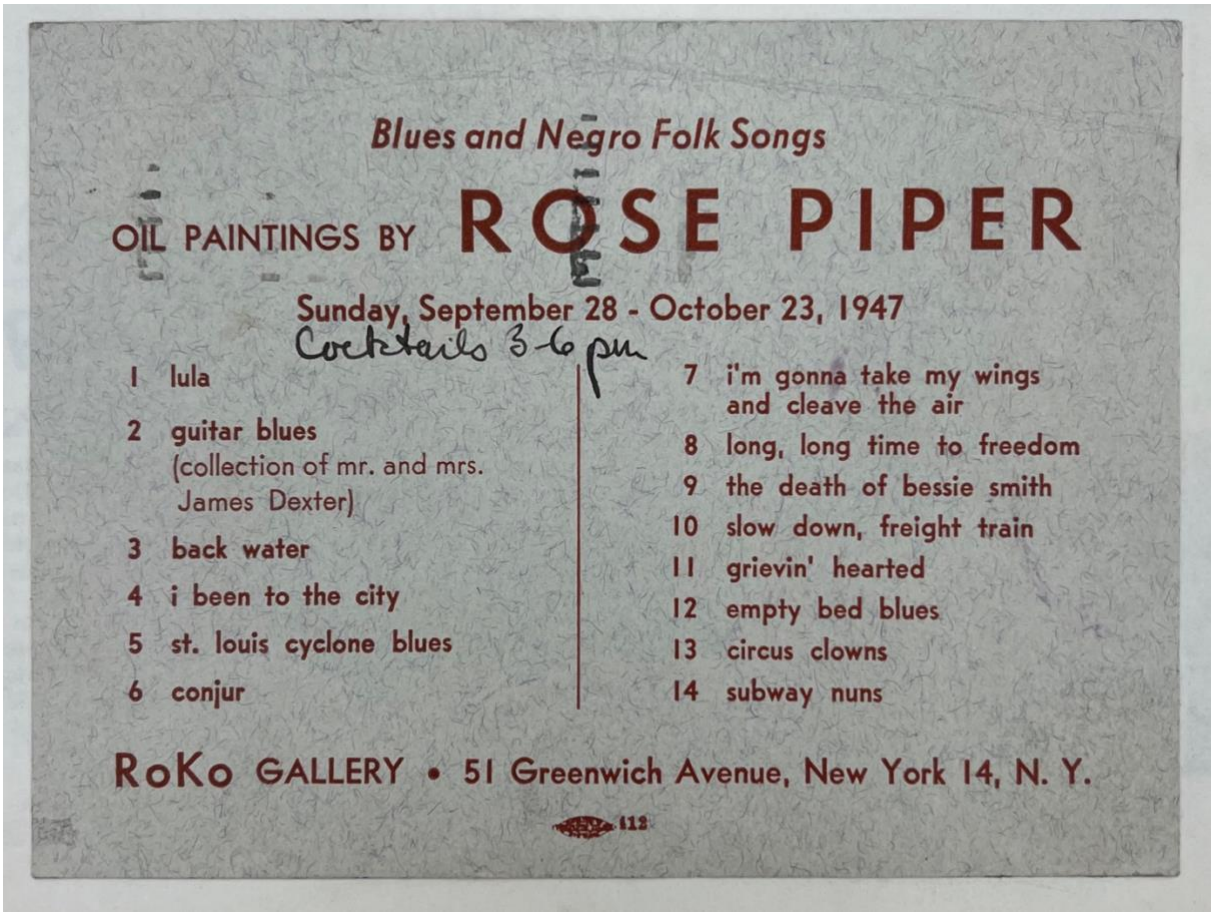


Fig. 3.1
Exhibition announcement for *Blues and Negro Folk Songs: Oil Paintings by Rose Piper*, Roko Gallery, 1947. Box 5, Folder 63, Roko Gallery Records, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

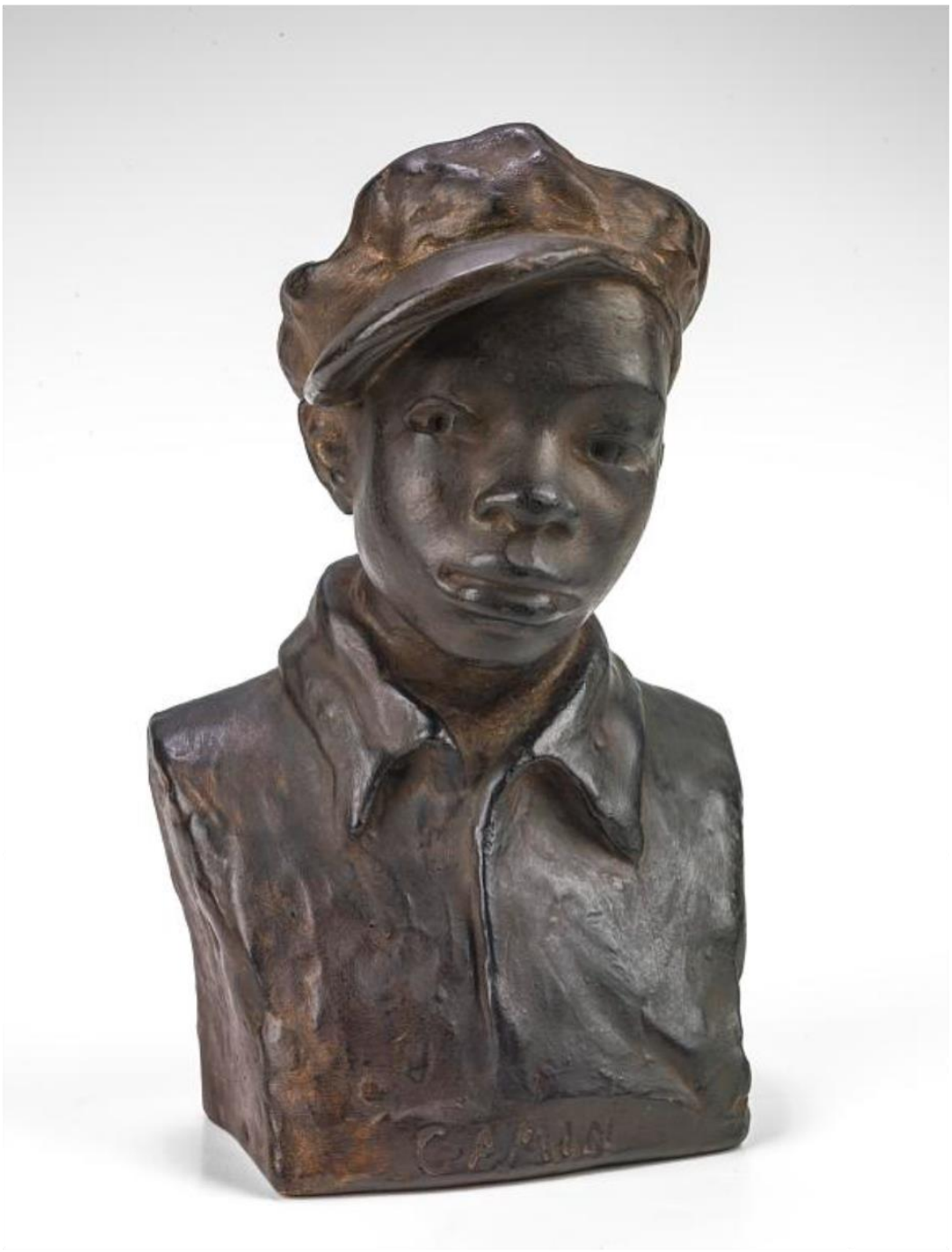


Fig. 3.2
Augusta Savage, *Gamin*, ca. 1929, painted plaster, 9 x 5 ¾ x 4 ¾ inches.
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Benjamin and Olya Margolin, 1988.57, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Display Ad 27 – No Title
The Chicago Defender (National edition) (1921-1967); Nov 19, 1927; ProQuest
pg. 7



"Mean Old Bed Bug Blues"

Sung by Bessie Smith

Plenty to be blue about, and how! Bessie Smith sure can be blue when she sets her heart on it.
"Mean Old Bed Bug Blues" has "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" for a coupling—There's a reason.

Record No. 14250-D, 10-inch, 75c

Mean Old Bed Bug Blues
A Good Man Is Hard to Find

Vocals—Bessie Smith

Columbia

Ask Your Dealer for Latest Race Record Catalog
Columbia Phonograph Company, 1819 Broadway, New York City

Columbia

NEW PROCESS RECORDS
Made the New Way - Electrically
Viva-tonal Recording - The Records without Scratch

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Fig. 3.3
Advertisement for Bessie Smith's "Mean Ole Bed Bug Blues,"
Columbia Phonograph Company. Printed in *The Chicago Defender* (November 19, 1927), 7.



Fig. 3.4
Cover page, Okeh Race Records catalogue,
Okeh Phonograph Corporation, ca. 1926-1930.
Library of Congress, *Okeh Race Records Form No. 2566*.



Fig. 3.5
Advertisement for Bessie Smith's 'Back-Water Blues,'
Columbia Phonograph Company, April 2. 1927.
Printed in Bill Dahl, *The Art of the Blues: A Visual Treasury of Black Music's Golden Age* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 45.

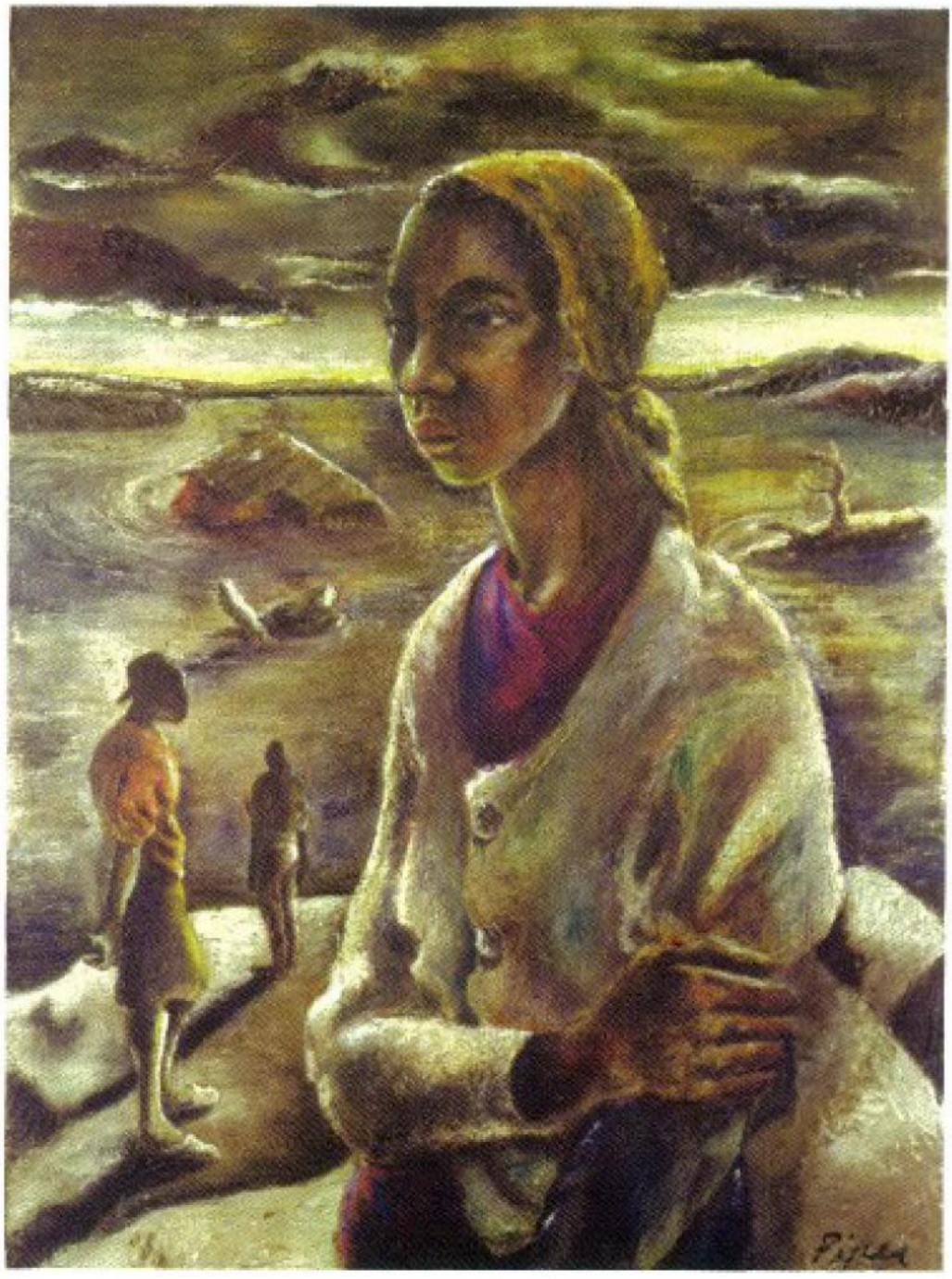


Fig. 3.6
Rose Piper, *Back Water*, 1946, oil on canvas, 30 x 22 inches. Rose Piper estate.



Fig. 3.7
Yasuo Kuniyoshi, *Look, It Flies!*, 1946, oil on canvas, 39 ¼ x 30 ⅜ inches.
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Gift of the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Foundation, 1966, 66.2856, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

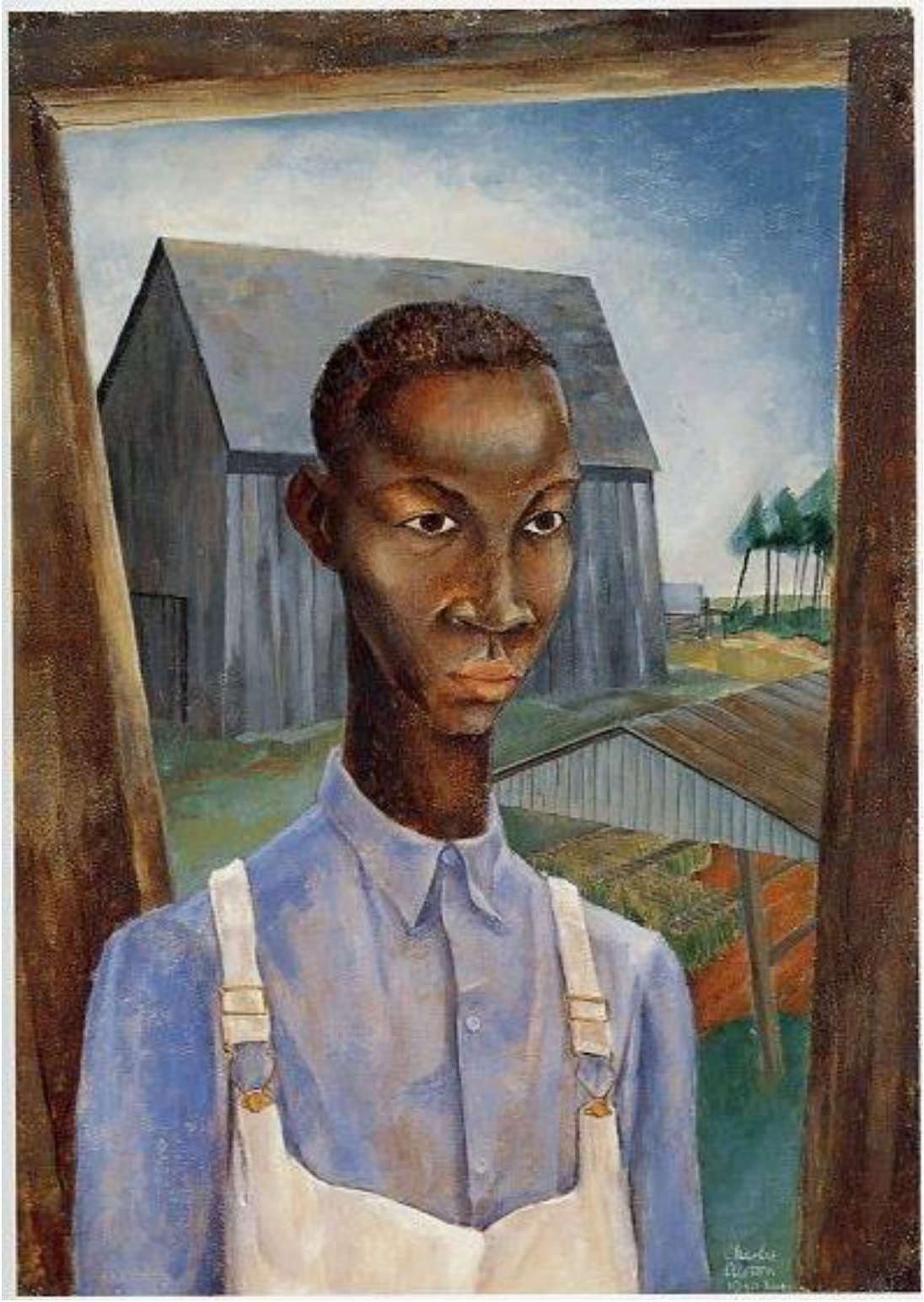


Fig. 3.8
Charles Alston, *Tobacco Farm Boy*, 1940, watercolor and gouache on paper, 21 x 15 inches. Private collection.



Fig. 3.9
Charles Alston, *Convict,* black and white photo reproduction of original painting, 1940.
Box 389, Folder 5, Rosenwald Fund Archives, Special Collections and Archives,
Fisk University, Nashville, TN.



Fig. 3.10
Alan Lomax, *Bill Tatnall, sitting, playing guitar, Frederica, Georgia*, 1935, black-and-white photographic print, Lomax Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

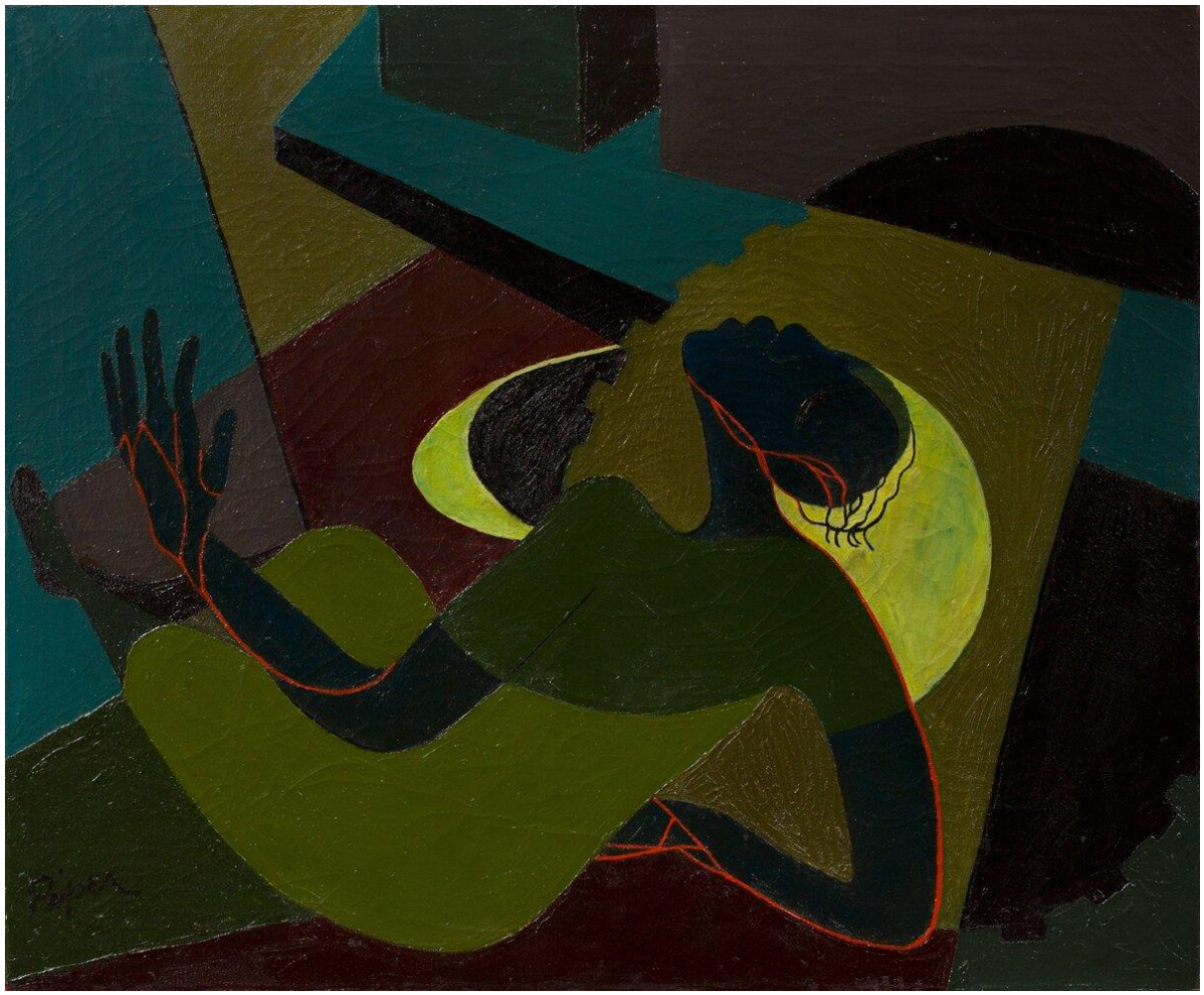


Fig. 3.11
Rose Piper, *The Death of Bessie Smith*, 1947, oil on canvas, 25 x 30 inches.
The John and Susan Horseman Foundation Collection.



Fig. 3.12
Rose Piper, *Slow Down Freight Train*, 1946-1947, oil on canvas,
29 1/8 x 23 1/8 inches. Ackland Art Museum, Ackland Fund, 91.8, Chapel Hill, NC.



Fig. 3.13
Rose Piper, *Long, Long Time to Freedom* (black and white reproduction), 1947, oil on canvas, 30 x 30 inches. Location unknown.



Fig. 3.14
Rose Piper, *Empty Bed Blues* (black and white reproduction), 1946, oil on canvas, 40 x 29 inches. Location unknown.



Fig. 3.15
Paramount Records, advertisement for Gertrude "Ma" Rainey's "Bessemer Bound Blues."
Printed in *The Chicago Defender* (August 14, 1926), 7.



Fig. 3.16
Vaclav Vytlacil, *Colorful Fish*, 1940, oil on board, 15 ¼ x 20 inches.
Private collection.



Fig. 3.17
Rose Piper, *Grievin' Hearted*, 1947, oil on canvas,
36 x 30 inches. Clark Atlanta University Art Museum, Atlanta, GA.



Fig. 3.18
Rose Piper, *St. Louis Cyclone Blues*, 1947, oil on canvas, 25 x 30 inches.
Private collection.

Conclusion

When the Julius Rosenwald Fund closed its doors in 1948, in accordance with Julius Rosenwald's wishes, its Fellowship Program had been in operation for two decades—becoming, in that time, one of the Fund's longest-running and best-known programs. The Fund's officers counted it among the JRF's most worthwhile endeavors, one that had achieved a number of goals the Fund had set out for it: enabling Black scholars, writers, and artists to demonstrate their ability across fields; refuting racist belief in Black inferiority; and developing leadership for Black institutions, as well as for a wider cohort of specialists at work on widespread social issues. Across these achievements, the Fellowship program had affirmed the "soundness of investing in young men and women of talent and ability"—a kind of aid still relatively experimental when the Rosenwald had inaugurated it twenty years before.[1]

Despite these varied successes, however, the Rosenwald's leadership did not consider the Fellowship's mandate fulfilled, or the field of support for talented individuals exhausted—indeed, quite the opposite. Having established both the feasibility and the promise of this kind of endeavor, the Rosenwald was anxious for the Fellowship Program to be continued—for others to "carry on" the work that it had begun, in its self-appointed role as a developer of pioneering, pilot social programs. Unlike others of its efforts, like its Southern school-building campaign, the Rosenwald did not see a necessary end to the Fellowship Program; its final report was, rather, full of "hope" for the Fellowship Program's future.[2]

Despite this hope, however, no other non-profit organization or governmental agency came forward to take up the Rosenwald Fellowship Program in the years following the Fund's closure. Today it is often remembered, if at all, as a short-lived and largely singular program—important within the lives of individual artists or scholars, but without lasting effect on the systems undergirding the creation of art, literature, or knowledge within the United States. Perhaps especially given its closure in the late 1940s, before organized movements for Civil Rights had emerged, it is easy to dismiss the Rosenwald Fund, and its Fellowship Program, as Jim Crow-era institutions, indices of a particular historical moment with limited import beyond it.[3] Rosenwald Schools have certainly been seen this way, as a remnant of the era of segregation; falling into disuse and often disrepair in the years following integration, many suffered both physical neglect and historical forgetting.

In the past several decades, however, Rosenwald Schools have been the subject of renewed attention in multiple registers—within local Southern communities and national heritage organizations, academic scholarship and public history. Bent on recovering the history of the Rosenwald Schools, their importance to the story of race and education on both regional

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[1] Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (New York: Harper, 1949), 156.

[2] Embree and Waxman, 156.

[3] The Rosenwald Fund itself—especially its school-building program—and a number of its leaders including Embree and Johnson, have been the subject of this kind of critique, usually centered around alleged complicity with segregationist policies in the South. Those arguing against these views often position the JRF and its leaders as "quiet" resistors of Jim Crow segregation, working with the kinds of resources—economic or scholarly, but not necessarily political—at their disposal. See Alfred Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree: The Julius Rosenwald Fund, Foundation Philanthropy, and American Race Relations* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011), 259; Joan Malczewski, *Building a New Educational State: Foundations, Schools, and the American South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 90; Richard Robbins, "Charles S. Johnson," in *Black Sociologists: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. James E. Blackwell and Morris Janowitz (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 58.

and national scales, these efforts have often also involved campaigns to restore the physical structures of specific Rosenwald Schools—redressing gaps within the landscape of historical memorial within the American South, in particular. These efforts are ongoing; while the National Trust for Historic Preservation listed Rosenwald Schools as among the "11 Most Endangered Historic Places" in 2002, in the subsequent decades it facilitated efforts to restore some seventeen Rosenwald Schools in coordination with local communities and nonprofit organizations—and in 2021, the Julius Rosenwald and Rosenwald Schools Study Act was signed into law, authorizing the study of Rosenwald School sites with a view toward creating a national historical park in their honor.[4] While knitting the Rosenwald Schools into this national landscape of memorial does not in itself challenge the JRF's historical bracketing as a Jim Crow institution, scholarship on the schools promises to push the conversation further—opening questions about the ongoing role of non-profit funding in national systems of education, its relationship to public responsibility, and its success in furthering equity.[5]

While focused on a different part of the Rosenwald's legacy, I see this project as in line with such efforts. Calling attention to an overlooked passage of Black history, it has worked to recover the story of the Rosenwald Fellowship Program, as well as parts of its physical archive. I hope, too, that it has made the case for the importance of the Rosenwald to multiple histories of art—the history of Black art, of modernisms at midcentury, of artists and patrons in the United States. In attending to the stories of artists often left out of these histories—despite being singled out in their time as exceptional "geniuses"—I also hope to have shed light on the historical contingency of artistic value, its imbrication with systems of patronage, and its mediation by powerful institutions.

At the same time, I hope to have begun to make visible the many ways that the Rosenwald Fellowship Program, although a product of its historical moment, has important contemporary resonance—especially to the meritocratic systems that continue to define much of the arts patronage landscape in the United States today. It is possible, in fact, to track the Rosenwald's influence on this patronage landscape quite directly—to plot the instances in which, true to its framers' wishes, it provided a kind of programmatic model for other grants and merit-based funding programs. Despite the fact that no other non-profit or governmental body explicitly took up its mandate after the JRF's close, many of its leaders went on to advise organizations, like the Ford Foundation, the John Hay Whitney Foundation, and the Social Science Research Council, which would operate longer-running fellowship programs across the twentieth century. While each of these fellowship programs had different ambits—none with the Rosenwald's explicit focus on Black scholars or artists—much of their selection processes, structure, scope, and standards were similar, echoing those the Rosenwald had worked out over its tenure. Situating these alongside the many other fellowship programs that emerged over the

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[4] See "America's Most Endangered Historic Places Listings by Year | National Trust for Historic Preservation," accessed April 18, 2024, https://savingplaces.org/11most-past-listings; Mary S. Hoffschwelle, "Preserving Rosenwald Schools" (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2012); Danny K. Davis, "Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Schools Act of 2020," Pub. L. No. H.R.3250 (2021), https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/3250/text.

[5] This might include Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2006); Malczewski, *Building a New Educational State*; Stephanie Deutsch, *You Need a Schoolhouse: Booker T. Washington, Julius Rosenwald, and the Building of Schools for the Segregated South* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011); Andrew Feiler, *A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools That Changed America* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2021).

course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the Rosenwald clarifies as an important early moment within the system of arts funding that obtains today. Within this landscape, artists are heavily dependent on an ad-hoc system of one-time grants and fellowships, each of which might require them to perform or disclose different aspects of their identities, to segment their work into discrete "projects," or to spend significant time making these projects legible to funding bodies—which only ever support specific aspects of their work, rather than their larger creative practice (let alone their livelihood). While this system cannot be reduced to any single funding body within it, it provides important context for the legacy of the Rosenwald as far more than a historical singularity.

That it is possible to chart connections between this funding landscape and certain strands of contemporary art only further clarifies the Rosenwald's position as historical precursor, rather than outlier. Much about Rosenwald artist-fellows' work—its frequent seriality; its explicit orientation to concrete social problems; its engagement with data, facts, and social scientific methodology; its framing as delimited "projects"—echoes the "research-based art" or "archival turn" that art historians like Claire Bishop or Hal Foster have identified within contemporary art since the 1990s.[6] While Bishop positions this turn within changes in art education, including the rise of doctoral programs for artists in Western institutions that dates to the early 1990s, I would argue that the resonances between contemporary research-based art and Rosenwald artistic research points to a longer historical continuity. As I hope to have demonstrated, accounting for this continuity requires acknowledging the capacity for patronage bodies to shape art in ways as critical as institutions of higher education—even as the two often work hand-in-hand, as the Rosenwald's history equally proves.

We might track one afterlife of the Rosenwald Fellowship Program, then, in the state of both arts funding and contemporary art today—just as we might connect the history of Rosenwald Schools with the current landscape of education in the U.S., as the efforts I outlined above have begun to do. At the same time, there are other, equally compelling ways we might understand the legacy of the Rosenwald Fund, which are important to hold alongside those that highlight its impact on contemporary arts patronage or education. The national stage on which the conversation about Rosenwald schools is taking place today is due, in large part, to grassroots efforts on the part of local Black communities in the South—whose deep investment in the schools as sites of community highlights a longer pattern of this kind of commitment and collective action. The schools themselves were built through similarly communal efforts; while the Rosenwald Fund provided an initial funding pledge, local Black communities worked to raise a matching amount—and often performed all of the physical labor involved in the school structure's construction.[7] Once constructed, the schools became critical gathering-sites and resource centers for Black communities across the South—used not just for the classroom instruction that the Rosenwald Fund intended, but for a variety of other social and religious purposes.[8] Today, this legacy continues, as communities partner with national organizations of

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[6] See Claire Bishop, "Information Overload," *Artforum*, April 1, 2023, https://www.artforum.com/features/claire-bishop-on-the-superabundance-of-research-based-art-252571/; Claire Bishop, *Disordered Attention: How We Look at Art and Performance Today* (New York: Verso Books, forthcoming); Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer?," in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, eds. George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1995), 302–9.

[7] Hoffschwelle, "Preserving Rosenwald Schools," 3; Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*.

[8] See Nick Tabor, "Rosenwald Schools," in *Encyclopedia Britannico*, February 7, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Rosenwald-schools; Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*.; Feiler, *A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools*

preservation and funding, like the National Trust, to revitalize the schools, often returning them to their roles as adaptive, multi-use community centers—where everything from family reunions to church events take place.[9] The story of the Rosenwald Schools, in short, is less a matter of what the resources of the Rosenwald Fund offered to Southern Black schoolchildren, but of the ways that Black communities claimed and used this support to create flexible spaces of education, community, and care.

I hope to have begun to sketch out a similar kind of legacy for the Rosenwald's Fellowship Program: to have outlined not only the organizational structure or institutional aims behind the program, but also the remarkable innovation of its artist-fellows, the creative uses to which they put its support. While made in response to the Rosenwald's conditions and criteria for Fellowship work, these uses were not entirely circumscribed by the institution or its aims; rather, artist-fellows put their fellowships to varied, sometimes unexpected ends—claiming the Rosenwald's resources to advance their own artistic and professional interests; to pursue travel, educational, or training opportunities; to work at their own pace, freed from the demands or pressures of other systems of labor; and to forge connections with communities both near to home and further afield. While similarly positioned, and at moments engaging the same set of questions—what the posture and process of "research" might mean to the visual artist, or how to navigate the contingencies of travel in their work—each artist-fellow articulated their own, idiosyncratic response. As I hope to have demonstrated, Jacob Lawrence's interpretation of "research" was very different from Rose Piper's, and still different from Eldzier Cortor's—just as each artist traveled their own path on their fellowship, even while moving alongside each other, as what I've termed "fellow travelers." In highlighting their particular routes, then, I hope not to have provided a full accounting of the Rosenwald Fellowship Program—but to have pulled out a few strands in the interwoven web that makes up its history, which emerges across the work and experiences of its many fellows.

That Changed America; Michael J. Solender, "Inside the Rosenwald Schools," *Smithsonian Magazine*, March 30, 2021.

[9] See U.S. National Park Service, "The Rosenwald Schools: Progressive Era Philanthropy in the Segregated South (Teaching with Historic Places)," accessed May 3, 2024, https://www.nps.gov/articles/the-rosenwald-schools-progressive-era-philanthropy-in-the-segregated-south-teaching-with-historic-places.htm. Other Rosenwald Schools have endured as museums, like the Noble Hill-Wheeler Memorial Center in Cassville, Georgia, or the Columbia Historical Museum in West Columbia, Texas.

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  - Elizabeth Catlett artist file
  - Jacob Lawrence artist file
  - Rose Piper artist file
  - Haywood "Bill" Rivers artist file

Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division
Augusta Savage Papers
Carnegie-Myrdal Study of the Negro in America research memoranda collection
Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division
Eldzier Cortor moving image collection

State Archives of North Carolina, Western Regional Archives, Asheville, North Carolina
North Carolina Museum of Art Black Mountain College Research Project Research Files
Theodore and Barbara Loines Dreier Black Mountain College Collection

Syracuse University, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse, New York
Arna Bontemps Papers
George S. Schuyler Papers
Jacob Lawrence Papers

Tuskegee University Archives, Tuskegee, Alabama
Booker T. Washington Papers
Robert Russa Moton Papers

University of Chicago, Hannah Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, Chicago, Illinois
Julius Rosenwald Papers

University of Wyoming, American Heritage Center, Laramie, Wyoming
Selden Rodman Papers

Vassar College, Archives and Special Collections Library, Poughkeepsie, New York
Ruth Fulton Benedict Papers

Yale University Library, Manuscripts and Archives, New Haven, Connecticut
Edwin Rogers Embree Papers

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Appendix A
An Institutional History of the Julius Rosenwald Fund and its Fellowship Program

When the Julius Rosenwald Fund Fellowship Program began in 1928, at the time of the Julius Rosenwald Fund's dedication as a formal non-profit organization, it was a small and experimental program.[1] Over the course of the following two decades, the Fellowship Program's scope and orientation would shift several times over, tacking closely to the changes of the Julius Rosenwald Fund (JRF) itself. Despite these changes, the Fellowship Program endured; one of the only programs maintained across the entire duration of the JRF's existence, it grew into a prestigious program, known across academia, governmental agencies, professional organizations, and the arts. Despite this renown, and the individual success of many of its Fellows in various disciplines, the Rosenwald Fellowship Program is less widely known today—due, in part, to the program's short duration, a function of the idiosyncratic structure of the wider JRF, which came to a planned end in 1948.

This appendix works to recover the story of the Rosenwald Fund Fellowship Program, examining its origins and evolutions, as well as its eventual influence across various sectors. Building on the work of previous chroniclers of the Rosenwald Fund and its leaders, especially education historian Jayne Beilke, philanthropy historian Alfred Perkins, and the Rosenwald's own leader Edwin R. Embree, it seeks to provide both an institutional history and a program history—elucidating the JRF's organizational idiosyncrasies, tracking the main phases of its existence, identifying its main players, and illuminating its guiding philosophies and aims.[2] Each of these is mirrored, in miniature, within the Fellowship Program; a clear picture of the JRF's history, therefore, allows us to better understand the shape that the Rosenwald Fellowship Program took on during its tenure.

While seeking to contextualize the Rosenwald Fund and its Fellowship Program broadly, however, in this appendix my focus will be on the Rosenwald's influence within the history of Black art in particular. I am indebted here to other art historians who have investigated various aspects of the Rosenwald's work in the arts, including Lindsay Twa's exploration of the rich archive of Rosenwald artists' fellowship statements, as well as Daniel Schulman's pioneering exhibition and catalogue, *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund,* the first systemic look at the Rosenwald and African American visual art and literature.[3] My goal here will be to build out from this scholarship—providing a comprehensive account of the sub-category of Rosenwald fellowships for "creative workers," as well as an examination of the Rosenwald's unique place in the field of Black arts patronage. Across this examination, however, my goal will not merely be to surface the ways that the JRF's social mission or

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[1] The Julius Rosenwald Fund was officially incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1917, when it was still closely tied to Julius Rosenwald's personal philanthropy; 1928 marked its reorganization into a formalized non-profit foundation.

[2] Jayne R. Beilke, "The Changing Emphasis of the Rosenwald Fellowship Program, 1928-1948," *The Journal of Negro Education* 66, no. 1 (1997): 3–15, https://doi.org/10.2307/2967247; Alfred Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree: The Julius Rosenwald Fund, Foundation Philanthropy, and American Race Relations* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011); Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (New York: Harper, 1949).

[3] Lindsay J. Twa, "Artists' Statements at Work: Visual Artists and the Julius Rosenwald Fund," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 48, no. 4 (October 1, 2012): 421–36; *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund,* ed. Daniel Schulman (Chicago: Spertus Museum, 2009).

organizational shape influenced its support for the arts from the top down—but to highlight the centrality of art to the Rosenwald's Fellowship Program from its very inception.

The history of the Rosenwald's Fellowship Program, however, is not solely a matter of the institutional priorities of the JRF or its officers; it is also, in a fundamental way, the history of the fellows themselves—how they interacted with the JRF, the ways they utilized its support, the interests they advanced in the process. While this dissertation's broad assumption has been that these interests were not monolithic—indeed, the preceding chapters have highlighted the differences in the ways individual fellows responded, even to the similar prescriptions of the Rosenwald as a patron—it is also alert to the history and power of textual assembly, especially for Black subjects. This appendix thus brings Rosenwald fellows together and attempts the beginnings of a retrospective group portrait—identifying key commonalities among their interests, work, and networks.

At the same time, though, I am sensitive to the tendency towards what literary scholar Brent Hayes Edwards calls the "framing of blackness" inherent in many such assemblies—the way they both presume and enact racial difference as an unchanging quantity, "marking off" Blackness and asserting its stability.[4] In order to allow future readers to bypass the stabilizing framework that my own "group portrait" will inevitably present, therefore, I include another gathering of Rosenwald fellows in the two appendices that follow this one; they offer, respectively, indices to all fellows, and to Black artist-fellows, the focus of this dissertation.

The Julius Rosenwald Fund Fellowship Program: The Promise of Talent

The Julius Rosenwald Fund Fellowship Program was "one of [the] most creative and rewarding efforts" of the wider Rosenwald Fund—one that helped to "develop" a generation of "leaders…young men and women of talent and ability" who, having been given "the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to do first-rate work in practically every field of human endeavor," went on to "open…opportunities in new areas," and "enrich...the national culture."[5] Thus wrote Edwin R. Embree, longtime President of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, on the occasion of the Fund's closure in 1948. By the time Embree was writing, the Fellowship Program had indeed become one of the most well-known of the JRF's activities over the course of the previous two decades. Among the nearly six hundred alumni of its primary Fellowship Program, dedicated to supporting promising young Black individuals, were respected scholars, awarded writers, well-known artists, governmental officers, and successful professionals—from biologist E.E. Just to diplomat Ralph Bunche; poets James Weldon Johnson and Arna Bontemps to novelist Ralph Ellison; scholar-choreographer Katherine Dunham to writer-historian W. E. B. Du Bois; anthropologist Allison Davis to sociologists Charles S. Johnson and E. Franklin Frazier. By its close, in other words, the Rosenwald had established itself not only as a funding body, but as a prescient identifier of talent, a source of both critical financial support and equally-important prestige, and a cohort of innovative thinkers and makers working across disciplines and fields.

Despite the impressive list of its alumni, and the sweeping tenor of Embree's description, however, the Rosenwald's Fellowship Program remained, for the entirety of its tenure, a small program, operating within a small and idiosyncratic non-profit. Although it grew steadily over the course of the Fund's two-decade tenure, becoming one of its flagship programs, it accounted for only about seven percent of the JRF's total budget, itself nowhere near the tens-to-hundreds

[4] Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 49, 45.
[5] Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, 156.

of millions that other major non-profit foundations wielded.[6] As a result of this position, the Rosenwald did not attempt to implement or maintain large-scale social programs, seeing its mandate as more targeted and focused—including within its Fellowship Program, which never attempted to support Black scholars and writers at a massive scale. This delimited scope, however, did not affect the respect the Rosenwald enjoyed across governmental agencies, academia, and creative circles; indeed, it was the program's selectivity that arguably became central to its public reputation—the perception that it was, as the Fund itself claimed, awarded only to individuals of "genius," "exceptional ability," "the highest promise," or "unusual talent."[7]

This dynamic is perhaps nowhere so apparent as in the arts. Considered together, the list of fellows in the visual arts include some of the leading Black artists of the 1930s and 1940s—from established older artists like Richmond Barthé, Augusta Savage, Hale Woodruff, William Edouard Scott, Charles Alston, or Aaron Douglas, to a new generation of innovative artists, like Jacob Lawrence, Charles White, Eldzier Cortor, or Elizabeth Catlett. Among the artistic projects the Rosenwald supported, moreover, are works today considered canonical within both American and African American art history—Jacob Lawrence's *The Migration Series*, Augusta Savage's *Gamin*, Gordon Parks's *Ella Watson* photographs, or Elizabeth Catlett's *I am the Negro Woman* print series. Despite this dizzying array, however, the Rosenwald in fact only supported twenty-five African American visual artists, out of five-hundred eighty-six Black fellows, and eight-hundred sixty-two total fellows, funded over the course of twenty years—the visual arts representing, in other words, only a miniscule portion of the wider Fellowship Program.

Despite this highly delimited field of support, the Rosenwald was not a marginal name within Black artistic circles, but was in fact well-known. If partly a function of its impressive alumni, this reputation was also the result of its singular position within the field of Black art patronage. Its tenure overlapped with that of other major sources of funding for Black artists, including the programs of the Federal Arts Project (FAP), the arts branch of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), as well as the Harmon Foundation, another non-profit foundation dedicated to Black art—indeed, the Rosenwald worked in cooperation with both organizations, especially during the 1930s. But the Rosenwald also differed in important ways from both the FAP and the Harmon. Unlike the FAP, known for its relatively equitable, democratic structure—which treated Black and White, established and little-known artists alike—the Rosenwald had a clearly hierarchical structure; it was dedicated to identifying and funding only the most promising talent, what the JRF sometimes referred to as "Negro men of genius," "persons of distinction or unusual promise," or "the ablest and most promising individuals."[8] It was also

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[6] According to the Fund's final report, expenditures for the Fellowship Program over the course of its twenty-year tenure totaled $1,655,911, out of a total budget of $22,244,174. See Embree and Waxman, 152, 262. Comparably, the Carnegie Corporation's founding endowment was around $125,000,000; the Rockefeller Foundation's was $50,000,000. In the years that the JRF was in operation (1928-1948), the Rockefeller's annual appropriations were regularly far greater than the entirety of the JRF's expenditures for its twenty-year existence.

[7] Embree and Waxman, 139; Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Fellowship Program," ca. 1946, 1, Box 76, Folder 10, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University; Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Docket of Business, Meeting of Trustees of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, May 15, 1936," May 15, 1936, 8, Box 3, Folder 10, Julius Rosenwald Fund Records, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University; Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Docket of Business, Executive Committee of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, June 25, 1929," June 25, 1929, 6, Box 1, Folder 2, Julius Rosenwald Fund Records, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

[8] See Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, 139; Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Docket of Business, Meeting of Trustees," November 7, 1931, Box 3, Folder 1, Julius Rosenwald Fund Records, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University; Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Fellowships," November 1937, 28, Box 373, Folder 2, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

explicitly opposed to WPA's need-based criteria for employment, the idea that what qualified one for employment was, in part, one's existing financial situation. The Rosenwald, by contrast, used a strictly merit-based evaluation system, with no consideration of need; as it put it in an internal document, "a few score superior persons thoroughly educated are likely to have more influence upon Negro progress and race relations than four or five time that number of average [individuals]…however 'worthy and indigent'."[9]

This emphasis on talent, and the creation of a highly competitive selection process, was also central to what set the Rosenwald apart from the Harmon Foundation. Indeed, although the two organizations were in many ways very similar—both non-profits funded by single philanthropists, run by mostly-White officers, and which took on gatekeeping roles within Black art—the Harmon and the Rosenwald had vastly different reputations. By the mid-1930s, many Black artists had come to view the Harmon as a hindrance to the development of Black art; its annual exhibitions of Black art, collecting practices, and annual prizes not only segregated art racially, but were seen to maintain lower standards for Black art, perpetuating ideas about its inferiority. As artist Romare Bearden put it in 1946, "the attitude of the [Harmon] Foundation was patronizing: it firmly established the pattern of segregated exhibits; it fostered artificial and arbitrary artistic standard, stemming from a sociological rather than aesthetic interest in the exhibitors' works."[10]

Although the Rosenwald's Fellowship Program was similarly racially-segregated, it likely came closer to Bearden's ideal. For one thing, it maintained a parallel, if smaller Fellowship Program for White candidates, who were held to the same standards as their Black counterparts: they had to fill out the same application materials and went through an equally rigorous selection process (although, as candidacy for this funding was dependent on long-term residency in the American South, White candidates in fact had to meet additional residency standards that Black candidates did not). The implication of this system was clear: talent, of the kind the Rosenwald was focused on, transcended distinctions of race.

The Rosenwald's selection process, meanwhile, furthered its distance from the Harmon Foundation—while also affirming that Black talent could stand up to the most rigorous scrutiny. Unlike the largely subjective process utilized for selecting the Harmon prizes—which reflected, in Bearden's view, "sociological" rather than "aesthetic" standards—the Rosenwald created a bureaucratic application process, which removed at least the appearance of partiality within their selection: candidates' work was separated out by field and evaluated by respective juries of experts.

Perhaps most notably, the Rosenwald was not a collecting body; unlike the FAP, which expected a set number of artworks in exchange for a monthly salary, or the Harmon, which collected artworks from its exhibitions, the Rosenwald did not maintain a collection of work that it funded. Although it intermittently asked candidates to fill out reports on their progress, and took a larger role in the careers of a select number of fellows, for the most part it did not monitor the "outcomes" of its funding. It was, in other words, a *prospective* funder, awarding fellowships based on proposals submitted by candidates, and testimony to their talent and preparation included in their applications—rather than on the delivery of a specific product. (The actual dispersal of funds was usually less front-loaded, however; although fellows technically secured funding—usually around $1,500—at their fellowship's start-date, the Rosenwald preferred to

[9] Fund, "Docket of Business, Meeting of Trustees," November 7, 1931.
[10] Romare Bearden, "The Negro Artist's Dilemma," *Critique: A Review of Contemporary Art*, November 1946, 19.

disperse funds in smaller allotments over the course of the fellowship's year-long timeframe, in much the same way that the FAP distributed salaries to artists bimonthly).

Combined with the relatively loose qualification criteria for proposed projects—without any thematic, methodological, or stylistic limitations—the prospective nature of Rosenwald fellowships meant that they granted artist-fellows a measure of creative freedom in their work. While the preceding chapters have established that the Rosenwald created and communicated certain expectations for fellows—about the sociological cogency of their art, their own personal and professional discipline, the feasibility and predictability of their projects—which encouraged commonalities in artist-fellows' projects, the Rosenwald did not make *explicit* demands about style, subject matter, or aesthetic approach. Certainly in comparison to private patrons, who often directly shaped the content and style of work they commissioned, the Rosenwald was non-prescriptive; but by the mid-1940s, Black artists also seemed to value the freedom it offered as an alternative to existing systems of support, including the art market. As artist Marion Perkins put it in 1947, "I haven't been able to express my social views through my art yet, but I expect to. That's why I keep trying for a Rosenwald fellowship."[11] Indeed, the visual art that the Rosenwald supported varied widely in terms of style, medium, and aesthetic orientation—spanning relatively academic approaches to landscape or portraiture, more experimental ventures into flat, geometric abstraction, and versions of surrealism, heroic muralism, and social realism.

No discernible "Rosenwald style" resulted from the JRF's two decades of Black art patronage, in other words—and indeed, this fact reflects the JRF's own priorities. Specific aesthetic questions—of realism versus abstraction, medium or subject matter—were of less concern to the Rosenwald than the perceived quality of fellows' work—that it be judged, by those within the art world, as the highest possible caliber. Achievement itself was the Fellowship Program's goal, writ large; for the Rosenwald, fellows' accomplishments were understood as an important demonstration of Black expertise, talent, and achievement—a demonstration important to changing broader public perception of African American ability, and the race more broadly. It was of a piece, in other words, with the wider programmatic goals of the Rosenwald Fund—which, despite the breadth of its stated mission ("to aid in the betterment of mankind"), and multiple reorientations over the course of its tenure (explored below), remained committed to an idea of "progress" specifically for Black Americans, as well as the improved race relations that this progress could enable. Importantly, the arts were singled out as an important venue in this mission; as early architects of the Fellowship Program, James Weldon Johnson and Charles S. Johnson, had argued, "expression in the arts is about the only thing that has made a favorable impression in the North to counteract in part the offense which many Northerners have taken of Southern migration of large numbers of Negroes into the Northern cities."[12]

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[11] "Self-Taught Week-End Sculptor Seeks Chance for Full Time Art," *The Chicago Defender*, October 18, 1947.

[12] This is a paraphrased summary attributed to Charles S. Johnson and James Weldon Johnson, described by Edwin R. Embree in a letter to Julius Rosenwald during the early stages of framing the Fellowship Program. This letter reveals the degree to which Embree depended on advisors, like Johnson and Johnson, in developing key programs of the Rosenwald in its early stages. A fuller excerpt of the letter reads: "Mr. Rosenwald: In the sheaf of suggestions that came to us from Dr. Stokes, attention was called by several writers including James Weldon Johnson and Charles Johnson to the recent brilliant work of Negroes in music, literature and the arts and the effect that this was having in making people realize that the Negro was capable of creative work of as high a quality as any one else. The Johnsons seemed to feel that this expression in the arts is about the only thing that has made a favorable impression in the North to counteract in part the offence [sic] which so many Northerners have taken at the Southern migration of large numbers of Negroes into Northern cities. James Weldon Johnson thinks something should be done to make it possible for these writers and musicians more properly to prepare themselves for their work and to enable them to devote some time to this work without too great difficulty and distraction." Edwin R. Embree to

Recognizable within the Fellowship Program's origins, in other words, are the hallmarks of the cultural politics of "racial uplift." In response to the pervasiveness of racist ideas about Black inferiority—akin to the "offense" that Johnson and Johnson identified as in need of correction—many Black leaders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries stressed the necessity of racial "progress," "betterment," or "uplift," an aim often aligned with the adoption of middle-class respectability and propriety.[13] Positioned at the forefront of this uplift project was an educated Black elite—what scholar W. E. B. Du Bois once called the "talented tenth"—who assumed a kind of moral duty to model these values.[14] Importantly, their duty was not just to behave respectably, but to excel—their accomplishments serving as representations not only of their own individual talent, but of the broader capabilities of their race.

The Rosenwald's emphasis on achievement for its own sake, and on the demonstration that this achievement would provide for a broader American public, replicates many of these ideas; certainly its focus on a "talented tenth"—or indeed, an even smaller selection of "Negro men of genius"—sustains the assumption that resources were best spent on a Black elite, rather than distributed more widely. Its imperative, then, was to enable this elite to come to its fullest potential—and specifically, to remove the financial barriers that often stood in the way of Black individuals' achievement. In practical terms, in fact, its focus was even narrower, addressed to the particular funding gap that often plagued advanced scholars, artists, and writers at critical moments in their careers—when, having completed the majority of their schooling and training, they were expected to produce a complete work of scholarship or creative accomplishment, which would enable them to emerge fully within their respective disciplines, professions, or fields. These projects—final research projects, dissertations, publications, or portfolios—often required dedicated time and energy; many young scholars and students were unable to complete such projects because of a need to support themselves.[15] The Fellowship Program was developed to address this specific need—to provide support at a narrow, if particularly important, inflection-point in individuals' careers; as Embree put it, the Fellowship program provided "budding careers…impetus at a critical moment."[16]

In its attempt to target such individuals, the Rosenwald developed a set of eligibility criteria idiosyncratic for its combination of both breadth and narrowness. In its attempt to target emerging talent, for example, it required applicants be within twenty-four and thirty-five years

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Julius Rosenwald, March 29, 1929, Box 104, Folder 32, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[13] On racial uplift, see Jacqueline M. Moore, *Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and the Struggle for Racial Uplift* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003); Amy Helene Kirschke, *Art in Crisis: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Struggle for African American Identity and Memory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007). On the ideas of racial uplift and the history of philanthropy, see Marybeth Gasman and Katherine V. Sedgwick, *Uplifting a People: African American Philanthropy and Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005); Tour F. Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity: The Urban League and the Politics of Racial Uplift, 1910-1950* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008). On the ways a doctrine of racial uplift intersected with African American art, see Kobena Mercer, "Black Art and the Burden of Representation," *Third Text* 4, no. 10 (March 1, 1990): 61–78; Darby English, *How to See a Work of Art in Total Darkness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007); Jacqueline Francis, *Making Race: Modernism and "Racial Art" in America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012); Mary Ann Calo, *Distinction and Denial: Race, Nation, and the Critical Construction of the African American Artist, 1920-40* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

[14] See W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," in *The Negro Problem: A Series of Articles by Representative American Negroes of Today*, ed. Booker T. Washington (New York: James Pott & Company, 1903), 31–75.

[15] Embree to Rosenwald, March 29, 1929.

[16] Edwin R. Embree, *Julius Rosenwald Fund Review for the Two-Year Period 1944-1946* (Chicago: Julius Rosenwald Fund, 1946), 21.

old—not too far advanced in their disciplines, in other words.[17] At the same time, however, it expected candidates to have achieved whatever credential or advanced training was available within their fields—to be poised at the point of accomplishing a major career goal.[18] Beyond these criteria, however, the program was open to candidates of all areas of interest and specialization—from highly academic professions, like philosophy or physics, to more technical vocations, like library science or nursing, to creative fields of all kinds, including fashion design, silversmithing, and photography. Talent, of the kind the Rosenwald made its key criterium and primary aim was believed to exist across such distinctions—a latent quantity, which only awaited detection and proper investment to come to its fullest potential.

Identifying Talent: The Rosenwald Fellowship's Framers, Selection Committee, and Application Process

Framing the Rosenwald Fellowship Program

In short, the Rosenwald made talent the key criterium of the Fellowship Program—and as a result, its primary task became the identification of that talent. Such a task was less simple than it might initially appear, and the means to achieving it shifted across the decades of the Fellowship Program's tenure—evolving from a relatively informal review of candidates by the JRF's officers in its initial years, to the highly regimented, multi-step application process in place by the program's close. Despite the aura of objectivity that accompanied this final, bureaucratized selection process, however, in fact the Rosenwald's process for selecting fellows was always tied closely to a small group of individuals—the leaders, officers, and early shapers of the Rosenwald Fund, along with its Fellowship Program specifically. Although aligned, each of these actors had different aspirations for the Fellowship Program, and varied ideas about the talent it was meant to identify and foster. Although never entirely reconciled, these ideas nevertheless each helped to shape the Rosenwald Fellowship Program—which should thus be understood as an initiative with no single author.

In existing literature on the Fellowship Program, however, Edwin R. Embree is the figure most often credited with its creation.[19] Embree oversaw the Fellowship Program's framing and implementation shortly after he assumed the role of President of the Rosenwald Fund in 1928; he also sat on the Fellowship Committee for the entirety of the program's duration, and authored its most comprehensive description. As Embree's biographer Alfred Perkins has noted, one seed for the Rosenwald Fellowship Program was likely planted during Embree's previous work at the Rockefeller Foundation, which had a record of supporting scholars and researchers with scholarships and other grants; as an officer of the Rockefeller in the late 1910s and 1920s,

[17] Twenty-three was the original age requirement for applying to the Rosenwald when such restrictions were enacted in 1936-1937; by the mid-1940s, however, it had been raised to twenty-four.

[18] The Rosenwald occasionally made exceptions to these age and credential requirements, especially in the early years of its program, when eligibility requirements were looser and selection of fellows more informal. For this reason, many older and more established scholars and writers—W. E. B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, Charles S. Johnson—became Rosenwald Fellows in the program's early years.

[19] Alfred Perkins attributes the creation of a fellowship program, and one that focused on the arts, to Embree, arguing against the idea that James Weldon Johnson or Charles S. Johnson first suggested it; see Alfred Perkins, "Investment in Talent: Edwin Rogers Embree and the Julius Rosenwald Fellowships," in *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, ed. Daniel Schulman (Chicago: Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies, 2009), 27–28.

Embree had had the chance to see, first-hand, the benefits of such funding for its recipients.[20] The idea of support dedicated to the elite meshed, moreover, with the eugenicist bent of Embree's thinking in the same period—his belief that wide-scale social progress would result from the innovations of the most intelligent and educated segment of society.[21] Whatever the precise origins of Embree's enthusiasm, it is clear that it was firmly established by the time he arrived at the Rosenwald; fellowships and scholarships were among Embree's first suggestions to the Rosenwald's new Board of Trustees in 1928.[22] In the years that followed, he would go on to advocate for the creation of a more concrete Fellowship Program, and would oversee its growth and major changes for the entirety of its twenty-year tenure.

If Embree was the Fellowship Program's consistent champion and most prominent interpreter, however, he was not its sole creator. Records demonstrate that James Weldon Johnson and Charles S. Johnson were equally important—and indeed earlier—advocates for its creation. Poet and writer James Weldon Johnson saw the program as an investment in a future cohort of artists and writers, and advocated specifically that a fellowship program include the arts—pointing to the investment of time and energy needed to create important artistic work, and the particular vulnerability of artists, writers, and musicians to "difficulty and distraction" at critical points in their career.[23] He had made the case for Black arts patronage, in fact, directly to Julius Rosenwald as early as 1927, arguing that demonstrated achievement in art and music would constitute a "vital force" which would "increase…national respect for the Negro not merely as a physical but as a spiritual being," and, above all, helping to "bring about a change in race conditions in America."[24]

Sociologist Charles S. Johnson was similarly aware of the wider social impact that artistic innovation could have—as well as of the importance of patronage to fostering the arts. As the editor of *Opportunity* magazine in the 1920s and 1930s, he had acted as an important cultural broker for Black writers and thinkers, making *Opportunity* into a premier publication venue for the emerging voices of the "New Negro" movement. Identifying the lack of stable patronage that hampered young Black writers, Johnson had also worked to bring them together with wealthy White patrons—but had, almost certainly, become aware of the downsides of such an arrangement, which left struggling artists at the whims of often-mercurial individual donors. For Johnson, then, a more stable institutional source of funding—even if short-term—would prove an important improvement on the existing patronage landscape.

It is likely due to Johnson's and Johnson's advocacy, then, that the Fellowship Program—from the very first moments of its framing—included funding for artists, writers, and musicians. Importantly, this idea of artistic fellowships was the template for the fully-developed form that the Fellowship Program took on in its later years, a fact not currently acknowledged in literature on the Rosenwald. In the early years of the Fellowship Program's development, "Assistance for

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[20] Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree: The Julius Rosenwald Fund, Foundation Philanthropy, and American Race Relations*, 104.

[21] On this period in Embree's life (and professional career), see Perkins, 50–54, as well as Embree's 1932 book *Prospecting for Heaven*, the fullest articulation Embree gave to his eugenicist vision, Edwin R. Embree, *Prospecting for Heaven: Some Conversations about Science and the Good Life* (New York: Viking Press, 1932).

[22] "Minutes, Conference of Trustees and Guests, Julius Rosenwald Fund," April 29, 1928, Box 57, Folder 1, Julius Rosenwald Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago.

[23] Embree to Rosenwald, March 29, 1929.

[24] Johnson wrote this in a letter to William C. Graves, Julius Rosenwald's personal secretary; the letter indicates that Johnson may also have made a similar appeal in person. James Weldon Johnson to William C. Graves, March 2, 1927, Box 52, Folder 11, Julius Rosenwald Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago.

Creative Workers" was held alongside, but separate from a scholarship program for Black undergraduates that the Rosenwald created; initially much larger than the artistic grants, the scholarship program was focused on developing teachers, librarians, and other "human resources" for the Fund's other programs.[25] As the Fellowship Program grew, however, the Rosenwald gradually decreased its investment in this scholarship program, and instead turned more to fellowships.[26] Conceived, initially, as support for advanced creative work on the part of artists, writers, and musicians, these fellowships later expanded to include scholars and specialists across fields.[27] Although the expectations for fellowship work would be shaped by the standards of social science, as I have argued across this dissertation, these early records thus also prove that the Rosenwald's Fellowship Program was first conceived and designed for artists—the kind of dedicated, distraction-free time it was understood to provide modeled on what was imagined as critical for creative work.

While James Weldon Johnson, Charles S. Johnson, and Edwin R. Embree were each critical to the early framing of the Fellowship Program, in practical fact, it owed much of its early form—literal and figurative—to the model provided by other extant "genius grants," most importantly the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Memorial Grant program. The Rosenwald used the Guggenheim grant's application materials as a model for its own, for example, closely replicating these in its own standard forms. Guggenheim Foundation President Henry Allen Moe served, more broadly, as an important consultant for the Rosenwald in its initial years, helping to shape the selection process—indeed, he sat on the Fellowship Committee itself between 1929 and 1941. Especially during the early years of its existence—when this committee consisted only of Moe, Embree, and Embree's closest advisors Charles S. Johnson and Will W. Alexander—Moe was a critical voice in the Rosenwald's process, helping to shape both the physical forms it used to collect information about candidates, and the Committee's ideas about what such a search should ultimately aim to find.

Measuring "Quality of Mind": The Rosenwald Application and the Myth of Genius

Moe brought to the Rosenwald fully-elaborated ideas about the specific qualities that this selection process should work to identify within a pool of candidates—the talent, genius, or, as Moe put it most often, "quality of mind" that they exhibited.[28] Moe asserted that these attributes were rare, but they existed across the superficial distinctions that otherwise divided individuals—like racial identification, personality, discipline or field of specialization. Unlike these accidentals, however, the desired "quality of mind" was difficult, if not impossible to quantify, or even to describe; as Moe put it, "I cannot define it in language; but I think I can recognize it."[29] This ineffability, for Moe, shifted responsibility to fellowship reviewers—as he implied,

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[25] Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Minutes, Special Meeting of Trustees of the Julius Rosenwald Fund," May 11, 1929, Box 57, Julius Rosenwald Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago; Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, 150.

[26] This shift is explored at greater length later in this chapter; for a fuller description, see Beilke, "The Changing Emphasis of the Rosenwald Fellowship Program, 1928-1948," 8.

[27] As noted in Trustee meeting minutes from 1929, "the Fund should not restrict its interest to those showing artistic ability, but should be ready at all times to consider individuals giving promise of distinguished achievement in any other field of activity." Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Report, Special Meeting of Trustees of the Julius Rosenwald Fund," May 11, 1929.

[28] Henry Allen Moe to Edwin R. Embree, June 24, 1931, Box 145, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[29] Moe to Embree, June 24, 1931.

identifying a candidate's quality of mind required its own, highly developed skill, requiring reviewers to "have a look at the man's mind" in as thorough and sensitive a way as possible.[30] For Moe at the Guggenheim Foundation, this meant conducting extensive in-person interviews with many of the Grant program's finalists—a policy that the Rosenwald also implemented (although never in as systematic a way).

Even applicants for whom an in-person interview was not possible, however, were subject to outside assessment, through the application's required letters of recommendation. Although a candidate was free to choose her recommenders, these letters were imagined to provide a neutral and "frank opinion" of the candidate and her work; as the standard recommendation form instructed, recommenders should discuss the applicant's "personal characteristics and qualifications," as well as provide an "appraisal of his [sic] plan of work and of his ability to make a noteworthy contribution in the field of study proposed."[31] Those best positioned to provide this kind of evaluation—not only of the candidate, but of her standing in a wider field—were individuals already well-established in their chosen professions or disciplines; and indeed, most Rosenwald recommenders were academics with institutional affiliation, awarded artists, recognized writers, or prominent industry professionals. In practical fact, many of these recommenders were well-known to the Rosenwald Fellowship Committee, and included former colleagues, close advisors, friends, as well as former Rosenwald fellows themselves. This last fact is a function not only of candidates' savviness—their perceptive guess that a recommendation from a former fellow might hold more weight with the Fellowship Committee—but also of the Rosenwald's active cultivation of a network of referral that included its former fellows. Having been singled out for their promise as fellows, as recommenders they joined a wider cohort of Rosenwald authorities—whose expertise in their respective fields was understood to transfer to their ability to identify talent.

Because of the Rosenwald's explicit focus on emerging scholars and creatives, the evaluation provided by letters of recommendation and outside experts were given especial weight within an application.[32] Nevertheless, the other parts of the application were also understood as important means of assessing their "promise" or "talent." Given the admitted ineffability of these qualities, however, it proved difficult to translate them into hard, concrete terms within the application, which in practical fact collected more easily measurable information: a candidate's training and preparation, attested by their transcripts from educational institutions, for example. The standard application form, meanwhile, provided fields for candidates' publications and other accomplishments, the learned or professional societies they belonged to, along with the institution and specific authority that would "supervise" their work—terms clearly meant to evaluate their disciplinary standing. The form also asked for a budget and a timeline, which would both help to make clear the feasibility of their project within the fellowship's standard timeframe and funding. These were further clarified in the required "Plan of Work" essay, which asked candidates to detail their proposed project, explain the ways it would address a pressing "problem" or question in their respective fields, and describe their future career plans.

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[30] Moe to Embree, June 24, 1931.

[31] See Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Confidential Report on Candidate for Fellowship," Box 429, Folder 1, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archives, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[32] As Moe put it, "when you are selecting lower down in the scale of accomplishment—as…for your grants—the record will tell you very little. Hence the direct getting of...the appraisal, becomes of the greatest importance." Moe to Embree, June 24, 1931.

Clearly prepared for projects that had the shape, scope, and stakes of research in academic disciplines (perhaps most clearly the hard or social sciences), these application materials at moments posed problems for visual artists, creative writers, and musicians—ironically, those individuals for whom the Rosenwald's Fellowship Program had been first imagined to support. The difficulty that many such individuals faced in making themselves and their work legible by these criteria—explored in various parts of the previous chapters—also made itself felt as artists' frustration with the application itself. Across the lines provided for applicants to list their institutional and disciplinary credentials (in answer to questions like "What course of study do you wish to take?", "In what institution do you wish to study?" "Under whose supervision?"), for example, artist Aaron Douglas wrote a single, wonderfully dismissive sentence: "The proposed study is of a creative nature and the plan for work as here outlined is not applicable to the fellowship sought."[33] With similar curtness, sculptor Selma Burke responded to the application's questions regarding the "degree" for which she proposed to work, "No degree is offered in this work."[34] Woody Guthrie, a "White southern" fellow in 1943, put it perhaps most plainly, when he wrote about the process of filling out the application form: "I had the feeling that I couldn't fit what I'm trying to do in those little squares."[35]

The larger point here is that on close inspection, it becomes clear that the Rosenwald's search for "talent," "genius," or "promise" broke down into an examination of various other criteria: a candidate's credentials, professional networks, facility with words, organizational skills, and familiarity with bureaucratic forms, among other qualities. Even the Fellowship Program's own framers admitted that the "quality of mind" it sought could not be quantified, its vagueness opening space for projections of various kinds. That its identification was imagined possible only by a miniscule and largely unchanging group of supposed "talent-experts," only heightened the probability for subjectivity and bias to work their way into the selection process. In short, the "talent," "genius," or "quality of mind" the Rosenwald sought to support ultimately proved a myth, not unlike others of inherent merit—a beautiful, if gauzy veil for qualities far more concrete.

The Selection Process

Rosenwald hopefuls were expected to submit the materials described above—their application form, plan of work essay, letters of recommendation, and transcripts—by the application deadline, usually the first of the year. Applications were first sorted by the Fellowship Program director (see Appendix F for a list of Fellowship Program directors by year), who gave the pile—which ranged from several hundred to over one thousand, depending on the year—an initial pass, eliminating about a third. Those applications that survived this first round of elimination then went through a process of condensation and summarization, each rendered into a single-page "Digest Sheet" that summarized the most essential information (an applicant's name, short biographical information, field of work, concise statement of plan of work, undergraduate and graduate work, condensed description of accomplishments, and a list of their references). These Digest Sheets were what the members of the Fellowship Committee received

[33] Aaron Douglas, "Application Form, Julius Rosenwald Fellowship Program," 1937, Box 382, Folder 2, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[34] Selma Burke, "Application Form, Rosenwald Fellowship Program," 1940, Box 382, Folder 1, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.
[35] Woodrow Wilson Guthrie, "Plan of Work," 1943, Box 417, Folder 3, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

in advance of their first meeting, usually in early or mid-March, at which they would further winnow the field of candidates.

The Fellowship Committee itself ranged from three to seven members (a full list of members, by year, is included in Appendix D). JRF officers Embree, Charles S. Johnson, and Will W. Alexander occupied three non-rotating seats, serving in these positions for the entirety of the program's two-decade tenure. The Fellowship Program director occupied another seat, although did not weigh in on final application decisions; other close consultants to the Rosenwald, including Guggenheim head Henry Allen Moe, economist Robert C. Weaver, poet and writer Arna Bontemps, journalist Gould Beech, and educational psychologist Charles H. Thompson, were invited to serve on the committee at various times—making it an interracial committee throughout its tenure. Although these committee members were figured as themselves experts in the process of identifying talented individuals, at a certain point, the Rosenwald acknowledged that evaluating candidates' advancement in specific disciplines required additional expertise. Beginning around 1940, it created subsidiary "juries"—consisting of practicing artists, writers, and musicians, professors at major universities, curators, and arts administrators—to evaluate finalists' work in creative writing, visual arts, and music.

Having survived the initial elimination round by the Fellowship Director, as well as the subsequent one by the Fellowship Committee, in mid- or late March a finalist in art would be invited to submit "samples" of her work for review by the Art Jury. These small, ephemeral exhibitions were usually held in one of two places: the storerooms of W. S. Budworth & Son, an art packer and shipper located in midtown Manhattan, or those of Newcomb-Macklin, a similar company in Chicago, near the Rosenwald Fund's headquarters.[36] Artists were asked to submit their works unframed, if possible, to facilitate ease of shipment; if it was not possible for a candidate to send actual works, the jury also accepted high-quality photographic reproductions. The two to three person Art Jury met for one or two days of evaluation, usually sometime in late March or early to mid-April. Its mandate was to evaluate the works in comparison with each other; although there is scarce documentation of the Art Jury's evaluation system, it seems to have utilized the "A-F" rating system also used in the wider Fellowship Committee's deliberations. Other clues about the evaluation criteria for artists can be gleaned from the membership of the Art Jury (a full list of jurists, by year, is included in Appendix E). The Rosenwald favored artist-jurists with institutional affiliation, asking the same three established, awarded artists (Frank Mechau, Oronzio Maldarelli, and Peppino Mangravite) to serve as jurists for the first six years of the Art Jury's tenure (all Guggenheim awardees, the three had likely been first suggested by Henry Allen Moe). In the last several years of the program, when art jurists began to rotate annually, this field of experts was diversified, to include figures like Chicago Art Institute director Daniel Catton Rich, curator and art historian Katharine Kuh, artist Max Kahn, and former artist-fellows Hale Woodruff and Jacob Lawrence.[37]

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[36] A single year—1948, the final year of selections—the Art Jury met at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, initially endowed by Julius Rosenwald.

[37] Scholar and curator Daniel Schulman has revealed the reason that the Rosenwald began rotating jurors late in its tenure: Daniel Catton Rich, appointed to the jury in 1947, resigned after a single year of service, in alignment with the principle in place at the Art Institute of Chicago, where no jurists were reappointed in order to limit the effect of personal bias or prejudice. Katherine Kuh, Rich's colleague, was appointed as Rich's replacement in 1948; Kuh asked the Rosenwald to replace Rich's two co-jurists as well, so that an entirely new jury would be in place that final year. Although Schulman notes that Embree originally judged Kuh's suggestions "crazy," he eventually was won over by the anti-bias logic of rotating juries. See Daniel Schulman, "African American Art and the Julius

The Art Jury, like those for creative writing and music, sent its evaluations on to the wider Fellowship Committee, which met for a final time in mid-April. While it took the juries' recommendations seriously, the wider Fellowship Committee was ultimately responsible, in this final meeting, for the selection of all Fellowship winners. Fellows were notified of their awards in mid- to late April or early May; fellowships, almost all a year in duration, usually began in the summer or the fall, roughly following the schedule of the academic year.

The internal workings of the Fellowship Committee remained mostly unseen. In public, the Rosenwald, like the Guggenheim—and indeed, most versions of "genius grant" programs—remained focused on the talent and accomplishments of its awardees. These glowing, ostensibly fellow-focused statements also cast light back on the Rosenwald itself, however—implicitly confirming its position as a vanguard "discoverer" of genius, and retrospectively validating the perceptive vision of its Committee members.[38] If the deliberations and technical machinations that went into this "discovery" remained undisclosed, this was because such disclosure was unnecessary; the fellows' achievements were evidence enough that the selection process was effective. In placing a mantle of "extraordinary talent" or "exceptional promise" on its fellows, in short, the Rosenwald also wrapped itself in genius's gauzy folds.

The Talent: Rosenwald Fellows

If telling the story of the Rosenwald Fellowship Program requires demystifying its selection process, as I attempt above, it is equally a matter of examining the Rosenwald fellows themselves, shedding light especially on the labor involved in becoming, and being, a Rosenwald fellow. The previous chapters attempt this examination on an individual level, attending closely to the tactics different artist-fellows devised to win and maintain Rosenwald support, without being contained by its value system. There are also lessons to be learned from considering Rosenwald fellows more widely, however—a consideration that surfaces broad tendencies in the selection process, how knowledge about the program was disseminated among fellowship hopefuls, and what kinds of projects were most likely to receive support. (A full list of Rosenwald Fellows appears in Appendix B; an excerpted list of its African American artists-fellows can be found in Appendix C).

Despite the Rosenwald's view of its selection process as impartial, clear commonalities exist among the cohort of fellows it selected, indexing the close relationship between the Rosenwald's larger institutional priorities and those of the Fellowship Program, as well as related overlaps in leadership. Although the Rosenwald was open to applicants of all fields, disciplines, and professions, for example, the distribution of fellowships was not even; it funded far more fellows in certain fields, like medicine, education, or sociology, than others, like engineering or religion. While in part a function of the number of applicants in these fields, this disproportion

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Rosenwald Fund," in *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, ed. Daniel Schulman (Chicago: Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies, 2009), 74.

[38] See, for example, Embree's discussion of the Fellowship Program in *Investment in People*, 132-161; or the regular press releases that the Fund sent to national newspapers to announce each year's fellowship winners, which regularly emphasized the selectivity of the program and its reservation for "persons of unusual achievement and promise; "ROSENWALD FUND MAKES 30 AWARDS: Fellowships for Year's Advance Study Given Outstanding Negro Students," *The New York Times*, May 1, 1937; Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Press Release: Fellowships," May 1948, Box 385, Folder 4, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University. Internally, the Rosenwald prided itself on its "discovery" of certain talented young individuals, like Jacob Lawrence. See Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Docket of Business, Meeting of Trustees of Julius Rosenwald Fund," April 17, 1943, 22, Box 4, Folder 10, Julius Rosenwald Fund Records, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

was also, in part, a function of the Rosenwald's instrumentalization of the Fellowship Program, especially in its initial years of implementation—the period, roughly spanning the program's start in 1928 and its formalization in 1936, that scholar Jane Beilke has described as its "instrumentalist stage."[39] During this period, the vast majority of fellows funded were in fields in which the JRF had larger programmatic interests; fellowships in education, for example, were understood to complement the Rosenwald's wider investment in educational infrastructure and teacher training for African American schoolchildren.

This early skewing of the number of fellowships towards certain disciplines also helps to shed light on another tendency among the pool of Rosenwald fellows—its gender disproportion. Less than one-third of total Rosenwald fellows were women, who were also more likely than men to be rejected from the program. The disproportion is rendered even more dramatic if the Rosenwald's early instrumental approach to the Fellowship Program is accounted for; during this period, many of the fields it focused on, like nursing or home economics, were figured almost exclusively as female. No fellowships were granted to men in these fields for the entire span of the Fellowship Program; combined with the Rosenwald's heavy investment in them in its early years, this fact means that women *are* represented in the Fellowship Program's larger numbers, although not equally across fields. Indeed, there were historically male-specific fields within the Rosenwald, just as there were those entirely women-specific. Among the cohort of Black fellows, no women are represented in the fields of law, agriculture, business administration, industrial arts, philosophy, engineering, or religion for the entire twenty years of the program's existence—despite the relatively high number of fellows in many of these fields. In several, there was a single, or just a few female fellows within a much larger field: one woman fellow in chemistry versus nineteen men; two women medical students versus forty-eight men. Those fields with higher representation of women include anthropology (50%), music (45%), and language and literature (41%). Art, in which the proportion of women was somewhere between a fourth and a third, existed somewhere in the middle—close to the gender-breakdown for fellows in social work or public health.

Among artist-fellows, another commonality also emerges: a geographical concentration among fellows, who tended to apply from bases in either New York or Chicago. In part a marker of the robustness of the Black art worlds in these cities, this tendency also reflects the geography of the Rosenwald itself; with headquarters in Chicago, it maintained connections to the art world there, while many of its officers and advisors had close ties to New York. Its Art Juries were also held in one of these two cities, where the majority of its jurists were also located; indeed, in those years in which the jurists were Chicago-affiliated, there tended to be more Chicago-based artists funded, and vice versa. This is not necessarily a matter of explicit bias; jurists deeply embedded in the art worlds of their respective cities would have had more opportunity to see and get to know the work of artists within their milieu. It certainly created oversights, however; conspicuously absent from the cohort of Black artist-fellows are any with close associations with the Black art world of Washington, D.C., for example.

Equally important to this tendency, however, was the way that knowledge about the Rosenwald was spread among fellowship hopefuls—including through word of mouth. This was not only a matter of knowledge-sharing within existing art circles, like the 306 Workshop in Harlem or Chicago's South Side Community Arts Center. It was also the official policy of the Rosenwald, which solicited former fellows' help in spreading the word about the program and "locat[ing] individuals who may be promising fellowship material"—effectively positioning

[39] Beilke, "The Changing Emphasis of the Rosenwald Fellowship Program, 1928-1948," 8.

them within a wider referral network.[40] (Select fellows, like Jacob Lawrence and Hale Woodruff, also became art jurists, serving in an official capacity as judges of their peers' work.) Unsurprisingly, then, relationships abound among the cohort of Black artist-fellows—from mentorship to friendship to romantic partnership.

Perhaps most striking within this geographical bias is the treatment of artists in the American South. Although the Rosenwald invested heavily in Hale Woodruff—known for building a robust art department at the Atlanta University Center, for mentoring scores of students there, even for effectively seeding an Atlanta-based artistic movement—its interest was individual, not institutional; none of Woodruff's students or colleagues within the Atlanta art world won fellowships, nor did many other artists based outside of New York and Chicago.[41] Woodruff's two Rosenwald fellowships, moreover, he used largely to spend time *outside* of the South; later, the Rosenwald lobbied for, and partially funded, Woodruff's position at New York University, effectively funding his long-desired departure from the South.

At the same time, however, the Rosenwald *did* fund artistic projects with investment and interest in the South—indeed, it arguably tended to favor such projects. This was true of its smaller, subsidiary White Fellowship Program, which had an explicit geographic restriction, eligible only to "White southerners" or those who committed to dedicating their careers to the South—but it was also true of the larger "Negro" Fellowship Program. Despite the fact that this program did not have geographic restrictions, most of the Black artists chosen for a Rosenwald articulated plans that had some connection to the region; the majority who traveled on their fellowships, for example, chose to travel to some part of the American South. They did so, however, as visitors, with journeys that began and ended in urban centers in the North; despite their frequent individual familial or personal connections to the places they visited, they did not live there permanently, nor were they involved in building an arts infrastructure there. If their works collectively form a significant archive of Black inquiry and reflection on the American South, then, it is important to understand the particular position from which much of this archive originated—neither that of the South's native sons nor its total strangers, it was rather that of those who sojourned there temporarily.

This was not an entirely idiosyncratic position; indeed, there was (and is) a robust literature within African American scholarship and letters, in which Black thinkers and writers recount or narrate their movement through Southern states.[42] Rosenwald artist-fellows and their work form a fascinating corollary to this work, expanding the subgenre into the field of visual art. Indeed, it is important to remember that artist-fellows often quite literally traveled parallel to contemporary literary peers, who often won funding from the Rosenwald with similarly Southern-oriented projects.[43] This larger trend only comes into full view with an understanding

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[40] William Haygood, "Form Letter to Former Fellows," November 12, 1941, Box 385, Folder 3, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[41] We could think here of Woodruff's student Hayward L. Oubre Jr.; Walter A. Simon, another Georgia-based artist-educator who Woodruff recommended; Samuel A. Countee and Calvin Burnett, two others who Woodruff recommended to the Rosenwald; Lois Mailou Jones, important Washington, D.C. artist; Houston A. Chandler, based in St. Louis, Missouri; Claude Clark or John Biggers, both of whom applied while living in Philadelphia; or Allan Rohan Crite, a well-known Boston artist.

[42] This group might include works like W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*, Jean Toomer's *Cane*, Zora Neale Hurston's *Mules and Men*, Sterling A. Brown's *A Negro Looks at the South*, Albert Murray's *South to a Very Old Place*, as well as more recent examples, like Imani Perry's 2022 *South to America*.

[43] Poet Langston Hughes used his 1931 Rosenwald to travel through the South, reading his poetry; the tour included a famous visit with the "Scottsboro Boys" in Alabama, and experience that shaped Hughes's collection *Scottsboro Limited*, published a year later. Sterling A. Brown used his 1942 Rosenwald to travel through the South, compiling

of the Rosenwald Fund's longer history, which had established an institutional interest in the South that would, despite structural changes within the Fund, never entirely disappear.

Early Origins: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and African American Education in the South

Much of what the Julius Rosenwald Fund would be remembered for—including its dedication to African American education and its particular interest in the American South—began with the personal philanthropy of its founder, Julius Rosenwald, or "JR" to those who knew him. Indeed, although the JRF's institutional origins are sometimes dated to its reorganization in 1928, it in fact had existed since 1917, when it was officially incorporated—in part to help organize what had been decades of JR's more informal philanthropic efforts. Although the Fellowship Program itself dates to the later, more bureaucratic form of the JRF and its leaders, who changed the organization's focus in sometimes dramatic ways, it bore the imprint of the Fund's earlier iteration, and of JR himself.

Julius Rosenwald's philanthropic career was not a distinct phase in his life; it began early, while the Chicago businessman was still the president of Sears, Roebuck and Co., and his approach to charitable giving remained closely linked to his professional identity. Already intimately involved with several charitable causes in the Chicago area, including the well-known settlement house Hull House, as well as various Jewish philanthropies, in 1910 Rosenwald expanded his philanthropic interests, to include causes specifically related to African American education and well-being. This shift had been catalyzed by two books that Rosenwald read that year; the first was John Graham Brooks's *An American Citizen: The Life of William Henry Baldwin, Jr.*, the second, Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery*.[44] The latter made alive for him the plight of African Americans for the first time, but it was the former—an account of a White philanthropist who, as JR put it, "made great study of the Negro problem along common sense, helpful lines"—that allowed JR to see *himself* implicated in the process of addressing that "problem."[45] The same year, Rosenwald pledged $25,000 to any city in the nation that would raise an additional $75,000 to devote to a YMCA specifically for Black Americans. That pledge eventually resulted in the construction of twenty-five new YMCAs—often the first, sometimes the only, welcome-centers for Black migrants who arrived in cities in the North as well as within the South. (Incidentally, it was likely Rosenwald's role in the construction of these YMCAs that led industrialist Henry Ford to lambaste Rosenwald in newspapers in 1923, blaming him for nothing short of the wave of Black migration during World War I.[46])

Rosenwald's sympathy with Black Americans may have been related to his own experience as a minority in the United States; the son of German Jewish immigrants who arrived in Baltimore, Maryland in the 1850s, Rosenwald had had his own experience of social exclusion because of his religion. While deeply committed to Jewish causes, however, Rosenwald often warned against the dangers of "put[ting] too much stress on matters of prejudice against the

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material for a collection of essays published posthumously as *A Negro Looks at the South*; poet Myron O'Higgins's fellowship travel also included time in the South.

[44] Peter Max Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald: The Man Who Built Sears, Roebuck and Advanced the Cause of Black Education in the American South* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 79.

[45] Ascoli, 79.

[46] See Neil Baldwin, *Henry Ford and the Jews: The Mass Production of Hate* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2001), 201–2. The February 10, 1923 issue of the *Dearborn Independent* argued Black southerners were "tempted" Rosenwald's promises of land and wealth should they move north, a migration that set off a "tide of white dispossession."

Jew."[47] Most often, too, he located his advocacy on the behalf of Black Americans not in a shared position of marginalization, but instead in a wider belief in democracy—in the conviction that African Americans deserved "a square deal;" that the United States would be made a "real nation" when "all belong[ed] to one another;" and that help to one race benefitted "our entire citizenship."[48]

Rosenwald's record of support for race-specific institutions—separate YMCAs for Black men, and later separate schools for Black students—suggests that his idea of democracy was more specifically one of pluralism, or indeed segregation, than of assimilation or integration. Without denying the complicity of Rosenwald's philanthropic programs with the idea that separate *could* be equal, it is important to note that such an idea was consistently paired with an ethics of responsibility that spanned race or religion. When asked, in 1911, why he exhibited such interest in the "colored race," Rosenwald replied shortly, "because of the white man": a kind of pragmatic acknowledgment of the way that the oppression of Black people was part of a structure of inequity with specific and systemic beneficiaries—White people.[49] And if Rosenwald's progressivist vision imagined that there *was* a way to even the playing field, balance the scales, find a middle-ground in which all racial groups could prosper without oppression of any single one, his consistent attention to the particulars of African American concerns made clear that such a democracy would not come about through some abstract power of the melting-pot. Democracy would be brought about, rather, by specific and intentional address to the issues faced by Black communities, investment in Black institutions, and sustained support for Black culture.

For JR, this address came most clearly through economic investment, driven by the discernment of concrete problems. JR was foremost a businessman, who had bought a major portion of Sears, Roebuck and Co. at a critical moment in its explosive growth. He had become known as an efficient manager, a cool-tempered and even-handed executive—never the genius marketer that his partner Richard Sears had been, but an executive who steered the company toward its eventual dependability, trustworthiness, and ubiquity. He detested redundancies and inefficiencies, and created systems that eliminated them; he had overseen the construction of the massive Sears plant in west Chicago, which centralized production, sorted orders and funneled them through the vast building complex, and had organized a labor force with pre-Taylorian rationality.[50] He sat on the board of the Bureau of Public Efficiency in Chicago, and had centralized Chicago's highly-divided orthodox and reform social organizations into the united Jewish Charities of Chicago. He later served as chairman of Woodrow Wilson's Committee on Supplies, responsible for facilitating trade agreements between the military and industry, during World War I. In each case, his mandate was to smooth out any kinks, drags, or unnecessary detours in a system that should, he believed, work in seamless loop. As his biographer Peter Ascoli has noted, JR belonged to a class of progressives who believed wholeheartedly in the power of order and reform to right social injustice—which is figured in this metaphor as a kind

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[47] As quoted in "Transcription of *Indianapolis News* Article of June 2, 1914, " June 1914, Box 52, Folder 2, Julius Rosenwald Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago.
[48] As quoted in Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 206; as quoted in "Julius Rosenwald: Biographical Sketch," undated, Box 34, Folder 4, Julius Rosenwald Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago.
[49] As quoted in D.C. Van Der Cook, draft of untitled article for *Association Men*, ca. 1920, 6, Box 32, Folder 15, Julius Rosenwald Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago.
[50] Construction on the Sears plant began in 1904 and was completed in 1906; Frederick Winslow Taylor published *The Principles of Scientific Management* in 1911.

of unevenness (rather than, say, a wound or original sin).[51] JR's image of the good world was that of a closed, well-connected, and excess-less system—a functioning factory, which could be scaled up or scaled down depending on the need.

As JR's wealth and philanthropic ambitions grew, they outpaced his ability to detect the problems deserving of his attention, and he came to rely more and more on the guidance of expert advisors. Booker T. Washington—author of the book that had so impressed JR—became the foremost of these advisors, a friend and collaborator whom JR formed a long and intimate relationship. The two men first met when Washington was in Chicago on one of his frequent fundraising tours; Washington was delivering speeches to raise money for Tuskegee Institute, the industrial school in Alabama he had founded and that had, by that time, become one of the best-known institutions of education dedicated to Black Americans. JR gave a luncheon for Washington, and, although impressed, demurred on Washington's immediate invitation to sit on the Board of Tuskegee until he was able to visit the campus himself. JR must have been more than somewhat confident in the kind of place that he would find at Tuskegee, however; he arranged to visit it for the first time, in 1911, with—quite literally—a trainful of wealthy and connected friends, including Judge Julian Mack and the eminent Chicago Rabbi Emil Hirsch.

JR was, by all accounts, greatly impressed with the reception he found at Tuskegee—which had gained repute in large part precisely because of its ability to perform its value in ways that would appeal to wealthy, White philanthropists like JR. Spectacle of the weekend visit aside, however, there was something of Washington's stern moral discipline and pedagogical model that JR understood and respected. Namely: Tuskegee was a tangible example of the functioning, self-sustaining economy that Washington claimed could—and would—spring up, should Black southerners heed his call to "cast down your buckets where you are." Built, physically, through the labor of its students, who learned technical skills through this work, Tuskegee was nothing so much as an efficient system—like the Sears factory or JR's model of a good world, without excess or unused parts.

JR quickly joined the Board of Tuskegee, and would remain one of its champions until well after Washington's death in 1915. The visit to Tuskegee could be seen as much as a vetting process of Washington as of the place itself, however—for Washington became, from that moment on, JR's advisor for the many appeals that he received for philanthropic support of causes relating to Black Americans. The philanthropic program most closely associated with Rosenwald—the rural school-building program—was in fact Washington's project, one he carefully piloted, reported on, and expanded with JR's continuous support. These were school buildings for the rural Black population of Southern states—first Alabama, but then North Carolina, and later Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.[52] Designed by Tuskegee architects, they implemented many of its principles: they were built by the Black communities they would serve, with material when possible from local Black businesses and with Black labor. When JR suggested to Washington that the schools be shipped, pre-fabricated, from Sears, Washington insisted on his vision—that the schools be buildings by and for the Black communities that would use them.

It was largely due to Rosenwald's influence, however, that the schools remain public. Always unwilling to act as the sole supporter of a cause he found worthy, he often used his grants as challenges, requiring the grantee to raise a matching amount—and such was the case

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[51] See Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 402.

[52] Ascoli, 151; Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, 51.

with the school-building project. Of the final $28,408,520 raised for the some 5,357 school buildings and related structures constructed under the auspices of the program, in fact, JR or his foundation were responsible for only $4,366,559—about 15.5 percent.[53] The rest was raised from Black communities themselves ($4,725,871, or 16.6 percent), from White communities ($1,211,975, or 4.3 percent), and from state support or tax funds ($18,104,115, or 63.7 percent). Once constructed, the schools became part of the county school system, although they continued to be called, colloquially, "Rosenwald schools." For JR himself, collaboration with state entities was essential; he wanted guarantee that the long-term responsibility for the schools would be assumed by the proper—i.e. public—authorities.

While such a fundraising structure in essence forced Southern states to take responsibility for educating their Black students for the first time, it also had the effect of taxing the Black population twice. Black southerners paid the same percentage of taxes as White southerners in the decades after the Civil War, and yet they saw a vastly different allocation of those resources to the education of their children. In 1915, in some parts of the South the state government spent six times as much on a White student as a Black student; Black teachers could expect to make less than half, at times as little as fifteen percent, of what those teaching in the White schools in the same county would make.[54] Thus the intervention of northern philanthropists like Rosenwald helped to improve conditions for Black school systems that direly needed assistance—but they did so often at the immediate expense of Black communities that had never received the state attention they were due. While the buy-in required of Black southern communities themselves did, in many cases, create a feeling of communal pride and ownership, the narratives of the penny-pinching, bake sales, and long-term sacrifices that they made to save for their schools read, today, like a story of injustice double-served.

The Julius Rosenwald Fund's Shifting Shape: From Personal Philanthropy to Technocratic Non-profit

1928-1932: Evaluation and Adjustment

In the years that JR's philanthropic giving remained relatively self-directed—dictated by his own discernment, his relationship with a handful of key advisors who he had vetted himself, and largely conducted through personal correspondence—the school-building program retained a central part of his attention. He had established the Julius Rosenwald Fund in 1917, incorporated as non-profit foundation modeled much on the example of the Rockefeller Foundation, where JR became a board member in the same year.[55] But the Fund remained more of a personal convenience than an organization with its own mandate or policy-making capacities, and there was almost no difference between JR's personal giving and the philanthropic interests of the Fund. As JR turned invested more and more of his efforts into philanthropy, however, especially after his retirement from Sears in 1924, he saw the need for greater structure and oversight of the programs associated with his name—in short, a kind of organizational manpower greater than what he and his informal group of administrators could handle. In 1928, the Fund underwent a

[53] Of these 5,357 structures, 4,977 were school buildings; the rest were teachers' homes or shop buildings.
[54] See Donald Lee Grant, *The Way It Was in the South: The Black Experience in Georgia* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 232–36; Joan Malczewski, *Building a New Educational State: Foundations, Schools, and the American South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 61–65.
[55] Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 216.

drastic reorganization—appointing a new director, creating a Board of Trustees, establishing bylaws, and setting dates for biannual meetings.

It was critical, however, to the new Fund's mission—and what would set it apart from existing foundations like the Rockefeller—that it remain flexible. Despite the formalization of its operations, JR remained wary of the possibility for ossification and conservatism that could follow bureaucratization. To counteract this potential fossilization, JR created the JRF with a particular mandate. A vocal and long-standing opponent of permanent endowments, or "perpetuities," Rosenwald insisted that the Fund have a time-limit. He believed money should be used to address current, immediate problems; the hoarding of the enormous wealth of the present for future—and to his mind, unknown—problems seemed to him an unethical as well as unnecessary act.[56]

JR was vehement but largely unsuccessful in convincing his peers to adopt this "give while you live" philosophy. But the Rosenwald Fund would, at least, make good on his idea of timely giving; he made it part of the organization's bylaws that the Fund pay out not only its interest but also its principle, expending the entirety of the roughly $20,000,000 first invested in it within twenty-five years of his death.[57] Beyond this stipulation, however, JR largely stepped back from the direct management of the Fund at this moment, maintaining a seat on the Board of Trustees but also accepting the eventual shift of attention away from what had been his personal projects. The Fund's official mandate—to advance the "well-being of mankind"—had a breadth that seemed to authorize ventures into new areas of investment, and the person hired as the Fund's President, Edwin R. Embree, had ambitious, far-reaching ideas about philanthropy's potential.[58] A former vice-president at the Rockefeller Foundation, where JR had met him while serving on its board, Embree was a member of an emerging new profession—the foundation consultant or development expert. He arrived at the Rosenwald Fund with energy as well as developed ideas for how the Fund might expand its programs, including one fully-fledged plan to expand its educational initiatives not only beyond the American South, but outside the boundaries of the United States.

Despite this ambition, however, the JRF would not immediately change the scope of its focus, geographic or otherwise. The decade following the Fund's reorganization was closer to a period of evaluation and adjustment than of dramatic change, when the Fund's new leadership found ways to work within the framework that JR had provided—not only financially or organizationally, but in the model created by his history of personal philanthropy.

As a first step, for example, the JRF's new board of directors elected to evaluate the Fund's existing programs from the ground up—not excepting its flagship school-building program. Instead of continuing a breakneck pace of construction of new school buildings, the JRF decided to conduct a review of the Rosenwald schools, sending a number of surveyors—a group of what the JRF called "explorers," including young people with "fresh thinking," as well as experienced teachers, and researchers—to conduct a deep and thorough investigation into the

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[56] See Julius Rosenwald, "Principles of Public Giving," *The Atlantic*, May 1, 1929, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1929/05/principles-of-public-giving/649166/; Julius Rosenwald, "The Burden of Wealth," *The Saturday Evening Post*, January 5, 1929.

[57] JR's contribution to the Fund, as of its first meeting of the Board of Trustees in April of 1928, was made in shares of stock in Sears, Roebuck and Co., and thus its value fluctuated according to market rates. Its initial value, in 1928, was estimated at approximately $20,000,000; by 1929 its value had risen to more than $35,000,000; and by 1930, after the stock market crash, it was valued at approximately $2,000,000.

[58] See Julius Rosenwald Fund, "By-Laws of the Julius Rosenwald Fund," n.d., Box 9, Folder 7, Julius Rosenwald Fund Records, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

teaching practices and day-to-day learning that took place in the schools.[59] The report back was scathing, full of accounts of rote learning and formal, disconnected curricula—the kind of formalization that Embree, especially, abhorred. The report led to a new, redirected set of programs: scholarships for teacher training at universities in the North and historically Black colleges and universities in the South; a library program that would circulate books relevant to students in different locations; and a new experiment with student bussing, the first of its kind in the South. Acknowledging the need for an infrastructure of support beyond the schoolhouse itself, the JRF was eventually responsible for the formulating an understanding of education as a system of networks, with constant exchange among books, teachers, students, and ideas.

The Fellowship Program was, in many ways, the product of this same kind of evolution-through-adjustment. As a form of support for higher education and training, the Fellowship Program in many ways built on JR's history of investment in Black education; at the same time, however, its investment in Black expertise shifted dramatically away from the gradualist underpinnings of the Southern school-building project. It also reflected the new interest in developing "human resources" over harder forms of infrastructure that was reshaping the Rosenwald's school-building program. It developed, moreover, with the same spirit of careful evaluation and gradual adjustment that had governed the slow reorientation of the Rosenwald Fund. Despite support for the program among the Board of Trustees, the Fellowship Program was funded, initially, only as an "experimental" program; the idea of fellowships to exceptional individuals, especially, was imagined as a case-by-case, rather than systematic or expansive, program, and the allocations made for the program remained modest in its first years.[60] Much larger, indeed, was the scholarship program that the Rosenwald decided to operate alongside its Fellowship Program; dedicated to supporting Black undergraduate students, and especially to furthering the training of those—like teachers, rural educators, and nurses—who might contribute to the Fund's wider programs, this program represented a less radical departure from the previous investments the Rosenwald had made.

1932-1936: A "New Era": Grappling with Limitations and the Solution of "Intellectual Leadership"

The allocations made for fellowships in the Fellowship Program's first several years were small compared to its later, far more robust form—but they were also limited in comparison to the larger expenditures that the JRF made for its other programs in its earliest years, like Southern school-building or teacher education. The costs of these early programs, along with the economic downturn of the Great Depression—especially its effect on the Fund's primary financial reserves, made up almost exclusively of Sears, Roebuck and Co. stock—created a

[59] See Julius Rosenwald Fund, "News Letter to Rural School Explorers," November 1934, Box 554, Folder 4, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University; Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, 68.

[60] The allocation for fellowships in the first year of the program (1928-1929) was a limited $10,000. The following two years, 1929-1930 and 1930-1931, were more ambitious, with $125,000 allocated each year (although this number included both scholarships and fellowships, most of which were dedicated to cultivating personnel for the Fund's wider programs, and thus should not be understood as entirely devoted to the Fellowship Program). In 1931-1932, allocations were reduced by over half, to $60,000, reached a low of $15,000 in 1935-1936. See "Report, Special Meeting of Trustees of the Julius Rosenwald Fund," May 11, 1929, 19; Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Docket of Business, Meeting of Trustees of the Julius Rosenwald Fund," November 14, 1930, 10, Box 2, Folder 11, Julius Rosenwald Fund Records, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University; Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Docket of Business, Meeting of Trustees," April 17, 1943, 18; Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Docket of Business, Meeting of Trustees of the Julius Rosenwald Fund," May 15, 1936, 8.

shortfall for the JRF in late 1931. Placing the Fund in the embarrassing situation of being unable to make good on its promises, this shortfall also forced Embree to return to his former employer, the Rockefeller Foundation, along with Carnegie Corporation, for a bailout.[61] As a result, the programs of the Rosenwald remained largely confined in the proceeding several years, including the Fellowship Program, which continued to operate on a very limited basis until around 1936.

This experience acted as a reminder of the limitations of the Rosenwald Fund's resources—one likely heightened by the clock that had begun ticking for the Fund with JR's passing in 1932. Forced to grapple with the question of the Fund's future—how to continue its mission of "bettering mankind," without ignoring its status as a relatively small and time-limited non-profit—Rosenwald leadership proposed a dramatic shift in the JRF's operations, what Embree called "a new era in the Fund's work."[62] Characterized by "intellectual leadership" rather than the implementation of broad-scale social welfare programs, like the school-building project, this new era would require "minimum expenditures" while allowing the Fund to continue to exert "an influence" within important spheres, like education and race relations.[63]

Ushering in this "new era" involved a broad shift in the vision for the JRF, as well as a new idea of how social good might be accomplished in the emerging non-profit, or "third" sector. Instead of following the existing model of broad-scale social programs that large foundations like the Rockefeller's General Education Board or the Carnegie Corporation had implemented, Embree argued for the importance of a kind of "thought leadership"—a form of influence untethered to a non-profit's size or the scale of its endowment. Indeed, Embree increasingly positioned the limited size of an organization like the Rosenwald size as part of its comparative advantage within the third sector. Recalling the skepticism of bureaucracy that JR had expressed, Embree positioned the Rosenwald as nimble and flexible—unlike better-resourced foundations like the Rockefeller or Carnegie, which Embree argued could become too large and lumbering to break new ground. Without these foundations' need to conserve or protect a funding base, moreover, the Rosenwald was comparably free to "mobilize all its resources—financial, intellectual, moral" in its "attack on specific problems."[64] In a similar way, without the imperative to remain in a single sector, it could experiment boldly, "cultivat[ing] fresh fields through studies, experiments, and demonstrations, [and] leaving to society the support of new procedures and new institutions once their value was shown."[65]

The Fellowship Program, still in a nascent stage of development, was greatly shaped by this reorientation in the Fund's outlook, taking on a far more definitive form as a result. While at its start, it had been the smaller and less certain of the Fund's new ventures into grant-giving—dwarfed by the larger, more robust scholarship program—the Fellowship Program became the larger priority during the JRF's "new era." The movement towards smaller, less expensive programs naturally fit with the logic of fellowships, more selective and narrowly focused than

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[61] Technically, the Rockefeller's General Education Board, along with the Carnegie Corporation, agreed to assume responsibility for the commitments the Rosenwald Fund had already made in the early 1930s—allowing the JRF to avoid the embarrassing situation of defaulting on its promises. In the meantime, the JRF drastically reduced its outlays. When the stock market recovered, it was able to resume many of its programs—although the price for Sears, Roebuck and Co. stock never again reached its pre-Depression highs, forcing the JRF to close sooner than its leaders had initially believed.

[62] Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Docket of Business, Meeting of Trustees of Julius Rosenwald Fund," November 12, 1932, 2, Box 3, Folder 3, Julius Rosenwald Fund Records, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

[63] "Docket of Business, Meeting of Trustees, " November 12, 1932, 5, 6.

[64] Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, 32.

[65] Embree and Waxman, 32.

the wider-scale scholarships, for example.[66] At the same time, expertise was becoming more central to the Rosenwald's own rationale and raison d'être—its movement toward "intellectual leadership" rhyming with a greater investment in a program imagined to foster specialized knowledge, expertise, and new thinking across fields.

1936-1948: The Third Sector, Technocracy, and the "Creative Minority"

The crises of the early 1930s, in short, pushed Rosenwald leadership to rethink the JRF's priorities. This reorientation was not merely institutional, however; within it were larger assumptions about the role that the third sector should play in a wider society. As the Rosenwald emerged in the late 1930s from the holding pattern of the Depression years, these assumptions came into fuller light—indexed by the position it staked out between public and private spheres, academia and the government. Not merely an apology for its limited resources or a justification for the reduction in its activities, these ideas about the mandate of the non-profit sector worked to shape the Rosenwald's programmatic priorities, organizational shape, and social philosophy across the 1940s—including the Fellowship Program that it recommitted to in the same period.

Perhaps most concisely, the Rosenwald began to imagine itself as a spearhead of the innovation—rather than execution—of the kinds of strategies and programs that could cure a variety of social ills. Its mandate was to identify problems, create and demonstrate their resolution through pilot programs, collect data about their effectiveness—handing their implementation and maintenance, however, on to public authorities. Naturally evolving Julius Rosenwald's commitment to cooperative philanthropy—his insistence on public-private partnership in the rural school building program, for example—this emerged as a framework for the third sector and its role, which acted between public and private spheres, and as a kind of vanguard leader of both. As Embree put it, the work of the Rosenwald Fund, and the wider non-profit sector, was in part to "stimulate the state," or to force "public authorities of government" to recognize and assume "their responsibility for maintaining decent human relations."[67]

The Rosenwald Fund indeed maintained close connections to public authorities, working in close conjunction with them on a number of programs, as well as in coordination with other non-profit foundations. Many of its officers brought experience working directly in government agencies, or with other non-profits, to the JRF; Embree's connections to the Rockefeller proved critical to its survival during the Depression, for example. Another key officer, Will W. Alexander, moved between philanthropic, public, and administrative spheres while occupying his position at the JRF; he served as president of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, a

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[66] The connection between an elite fellowship program and the specific size and shape of the Rosenwald Fund had been made earlier, in fact, at the moment the Fellowship Program was first proposed. As described in a Trustee Meeting in 1928, *only* an institution like the Rosenwald could take up a fellowship program for exceptional individuals: "A useful expenditure of relatively small sums is to enable individuals who have already demonstrated unusual ability in any field to carry on their work most effectively. The possibilities of such aid have been emphasized by many individuals, including George E. Vincent, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, Abraham Flexner, formerly with the General Education Board, and Raymond Pearl, Professor of Biology at Johns Hopkins University. Other American foundations are too large and too formal in their organization to attempt this kind of thing. The Julius Rosenwald Fund is still relatively free and flexible: it might perform unique service by supporting a few individuals during their creative periods." See Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Minutes, Meeting of Board of Trustees of Julius Rosenwald Fund," November 4, 1928, Box 8, Folder 6, Julius Rosenwald Fund Records, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University. The downsizing of ambitions that accompanied the Depression, then, ultimately led to the realization this initial vision—for a small-scale Fellowship Program, rather than a large-scale scholarship program.

[67] Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, 208, 176.

mostly-White, liberal Southern organization opposed to extreme forms of anti-Black violence, before his appointment to head President Franklin Roosevelt's Resettlement Administration in the mid-1930s. Figures like Alexander allowed the Rosenwald an institutional proximity to federal programs that at times shaped the experience of its fellows themselves. When photographer Gordon Parks applied for a fellowship in 1942, for example, the Rosenwald arranged for him to work under Roy Stryker, the director of the Farm Security Administration's Information Division, which became well-known for its project of documenting the social conditions of American life through photography. Parks's well-known *Ella Watson* series resulted from this experience; he joined the FSA as a regular employee following the end of his fellowship.

The Rosenwald also maintained close ties to academia. Shaped by the imbrication between philanthropy and the emerging social sciences that dated to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, its connection was especially close with the discipline of sociology—understood not only to help identify or predict problems in the social fabric, which the non-profit sector might work to address, but also to provide data to justify and validate the effectiveness of their methods. As with the JRF's connection with the public sector, this was not merely conceptual, but was also shaped critically by key leaders within the institution—perhaps most notably, the close bonds between it and sociologist Charles S. Johnson.

Johnson had first encountered the Rosenwald Fund as a new graduate from the University of Chicago's famed school of sociology; asked to spearhead sociological research into the 1919 Chicago Race Riots, the thorough and empirical study he completed (*The Negro in Chicago*) impressed Julius Rosenwald, who had been invited to sit on the interracial Commission on Race Relations formed after the conflict. Johnson would go on to leave the milieu of Chicago, spending nearly a decade in New York as editor of the Urban League's *Opportunity* magazine—a journal of sociology, which Johnson turned into a critical venue for Black writers and artists, as well as for new social scientific research on Black life. But he would reencounter the Rosenwald Fund in the late 1920s, when he attended a "Negro Problems Conference" sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, meeting and greatly impressing future JRF President Embree. As neophyte to the issues of race, discrimination, and migration that were at the heart of the conference, in fact, the meeting was in many ways an introduction for Embree; the pattern that it established, in which Johnson provided a key set of interpretations for these issues for him, would be repeated across much of the JRF's history. Even as Johnson left *Opportunity* to take up a position at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, founding the important Social Science Institute (SSI) there, he would continue to play a major role at the JRF, serving in multiple capacities; the first (and for a long time, the only) Black Trustee of the Fund, he also sat on the Fellowship Committee, served as the co-head of its Division of Race Relations beginning in 1942, and edited a journal on race relations published by the JRF, the *Monthly Survey*.

It is, in fact, difficult to separate Johnson's role as steward of the JRF from his role as recipient of its support. Throughout the time that he served as an officer and trustee, he also benefitted from its funding in various ways—in some cases quite literally, for example, as when the JRF subsidized his salary at Fisk. But the Social Science Institute that he founded at Fisk also benefitted in a broader way; the JRF supported specific research initiatives of the SSI, at times circulating the findings of this research in its own publications, including the *Monthly Survey* that Johnson himself edited. Not least, the Rosenwald's Fellowship Program was a key source of support for graduate research and development within the SSI, with a high number of fellows in sociology studying at Fisk—an unsurprising fact, given Johnson's consistent seat on the

Fellowship Committee responsible for selecting Fellows. Johnson himself was a Rosenwald fellow, in fact, in 1930, using the funding to help complete his well-known *The Negro in American Civilization*.

It isn't clear that Johnson or the Rosenwald viewed these intersecting roles as in any way conflicting; indeed, by its own logic, this close interconnection was not only reasonable, but indeed worked to move the JRF towards *greater* objectivity. The research created by the SSI was used to guide the Rosenwald's policies and areas of investment, providing a factual basis and records of data as justification and proof of effectiveness; no longer the function of the whims of a single magnate or donor, in other words, the Fund's aims were understood to be determined via the processes of science, its vision of the social good considered not personal but objective, rationally determined, and true. Increasingly viewing research as an integral part of its mandate, then, it treated the SSI almost as a branch of its own operation, at times clarifying that it viewed its extensive support for the SSI to guarantee access to the Institute's "services."[68] At the same time, the JRF transformed many of its own internal processes for creating and evaluating programs; considering itself an organization of research and knowledge-production working in conjunction with institutions like the SSI, it made its investments subject to formalized processes of survey and review, data collection, and reporting. Its social view rhymed with the aerial, expansive one of the sociologist—seeing society as something that could be diagnosed, reconfigured, and healed, if only properly studied and understood.

At the same time that it was investing heavily in the SSI, the JRF was also shifting its leadership and internal governance structures. While at its incorporation in 1928, it had resembled a corporation—complete with a Board of Trustees made up largely of tycoons of industry—increasingly during the 1930s and into the 1940s, the Rosenwald began to staff itself (and its Board) with scientists, scholars, and experts in a variety of fields.[69] These specialists were responsible for a number of tasks that resembled those of the SSI's scholars and students: undertaking research and survey work, convening conferences and symposia, and publishing the findings of their studies. Notably, these JRF officers were scholars and scientists imagined equal in their expertise—members of what Embree sometimes called a "creative minority," who would bring their respective knowledge together, under the aegis of the Rosenwald, to solve the large, complex problems of the twentieth century.[70] The organizational proximity between the JRF and the Fisk SSI was, in short, one part of wider institutional shifts that pushed the Rosenwald away from the personal philanthropy of its founder, as well as the corporate-model charity that it had been in 1928—and towards its final form as a horizontal, technocratic non-profit organization.

The Fellowship Program had endured through these transformations—its aim of aiding a Black elite remaining largely unchanged across the JRF's internal reorganizations. Arguably, in fact, the JRF's shift towards technocracy bolstered the Fellowship Program, which grew significantly beginning around 1936, when JRF leadership formalized and recommitted to the Program, funding it more generously and implementing more robust processes for candidates' selection. In part a function of the JRF's improving financials as the Depression waned, this

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[68] See Edwin R. Embree to Charles S. Johnson, November 23, 1942, Box 16, Folder 4, Charles S. Johnson Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

[69] Scholars of education John J. Coss and Charles H. Judd both joined the Board in 1933, the same year as physicist Leonard M. Rieser; sociologist Charles S. Johnson and legal scholar Charles H. Houston joined in 1934; sociologist Howard Odum in 1937. Officers of the Fund included Johnson; Michael M. Davis, sociologist and scholar of public health; George I. Sanchez, pioneering scholar of education, economist C. Rufus Rorem, and Franklin McLean, physician and pharmacology scholar.

[70] Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, 218–19.

expansion also indexed the perceived success of the Fellowship Program during its earlier, experimental phase, which had seen fellows—like composer Clarence Cameron White, medical student Charles R. Drew, writer James Weldon Johnson, and artist Augusta Savage—complete important and awarded works of music, art, and scholarship.

At the same time, though, the recommitment to the program also reflected an expanded vision for it, coextensive with the JRF's shift toward technocratic organization and the emergence of the "creative minority" concept. Staffed itself by a cohort of researchers and specialist scholars, the JRF increasingly saw its Fellowship Program as a means to cultivate future members of this minority; indeed, many former fellows later joined the JRF as officers, consultants, or jurists for its Fellowship Program, completing the circle that had been demonstrated by the example of Charles S. Johnson and his career.[71] Even those whose careers did not trace this tight arc, however, were imagined as potential members of the creative minority; as Embree described it, this minority was not limited to the Rosenwald Fund itself—but instead was imagined to encompass an emerging class of experts and specialists worldwide, responsible for a new era of global peace, prosperity and interconnection. Assembled under the aegis of non-profit foundations, these "keenest minds from all over the world" would together find ways to tackle the "problems that are urgent today," "serv[ing] at the frontiers of progress" and ensuring "the development of civilization."[72]

1948 and Beyond: The Afterlives of the Rosenwald and its Vision for Social Change

Embree's vision for the creative minority, penned in 1948, reflects the moment it was written, echoing wider aspirations for international cooperation that followed the end of World War II. It also reflects Embree's desires to shape the legacy of the Rosenwald Fund, which came to an end that year; by connecting the Rosenwald Fellowship Program to midcentury ideas about global citizenship and technocratic leadership, he discursively positioned it as an organization vanguard in its organization and vision for the future. Claiming an especially broad reach for its Fellowship Program, Embree also insisted that its recipients had contributed to knowledge universal in its import and application—the kind that had the ability to help transform the world for the better.[73]

Embree's publication in 1948 thus functioned as a kind of parting public relations act on the part of the Rosenwald Fund, while also summarizing the many institutional shifts that had remade the JRF during its brief tenure—converting it from personal philanthropy to modern, technocratic non-profit organization, for example. At the same time, though, it indexed deeper transformations to its governing ideas about race and the mandate for non-profits dedicated to it. Having moved far from its origins in Julius Rosenwald's school-building program and its

[71] There are other ways that this elision between the labor and expertise of fellows themselves, and the labor and expertise of Fellowship Committee members, was emphasized. In internal documents, for example, the Rosenwald emphasized that the process of seeking out and "uncovering" talented and promising individuals, and persuading them to apply to the Fellowship Program, required a great deal of "field work" on the part of Fellowship Committee members—not unlike the fieldwork that the Rosenwald encouraged its fellows to conduct. See Julius Rosenwald Fund, "Docket of Business, Meeting of Trustees of Julius Rosenwald Fund," April 29, 1939, 18, Box 4, Folder 3, Julius Rosenwald Fund Records, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

[72] Embree and Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund,* 218.

[73] Embree highlights, for example, the innovations of Dr. Charles Drew, 1931 fellow in medicine, whose discoveries related to blood plasma were to "the benefit of all mankind." He also devotes generous time to the career of Ralph Bunche, 1931 fellow in political science, whose diplomatic career, he argues, exemplifies the Black Americans' growing "participation in international affairs, not as Negro leaders but as specialists and citizens of the world." Embree and Waxman, 134, 142.

gradualist model of racial progress, the Rosenwald had transformed itself into one of the foremost proponents of opposing views about race leadership, the value of elite education, and the importance of a "talented tenth"—utilizing its Fellowship Program as a primary vehicle in this campaign to demonstrate Black achievement. As the creative minority idea implies, however, by its close, the Rosenwald had also begun to push past the idea of achievement circumscribed by race—insisting on the capacity for its Fellows to move into positions of "universal" leadership, on the import of their achievement as more than a demonstration of their race's ability. Accompanying this intellectual evolution was a programmatic commitment to integration; during the mid-1940s, the Rosenwald began to a determined, if limited effort to integrate the faculties of institutions of higher education, and eventually spearheaded a larger campaign to dismantle segregation in the nation's capital. The Fellowship Program again remained central in this phase of operation, fated to be the JRF's last; the handful of individuals it hand-picked for its university integration efforts were, invariably, former fellows, including anthropologist Allison Davis and artist Hale Woodruff.

These efforts were cut short by the Rosenwald's planned end in 1948—and in a wider way, they index the limitations attendant on the JRF's particularities as an institution. The commitment to partnership with public authorities that had grown from Julius Rosenwald's cooperative philanthropy, for example, had led the JRF to base its D.C. desegregation campaign in high-level meetings with federal authorities—figuring integration as a matter of top-down policy, rather than grassroots organizing. Such a view reflected, also, the elitism baked into the Rosenwald as an organization, as well as its ideas about race, which appeared in its assumptions about who should integrate university faculties—i.e. those exemplary members of the race that it had championed through its Fellowship Program. The narrow vision for this integration campaign—limited to elite universities, and in the later program to the nation's capital—betrays the constrictions built into the experimental, "vanguard" position that the Rosenwald had assumed for itself, as the spearhead rather than implementer of programs for social good. Rather than insisting on a widespread, national imperative for integration, it followed the model it had long adopted, convinced that demonstrating the possibility for integration on a small scale had to precede its implementation on a wider one; indeed, when it came to integration, the Rosenwald described its efforts in circumspect, minimizing terms—deliberate, but emphatically "quiet" and "factual" rather than overtly political.[74] The ultimate caution of this model reflects the stance of its leadership, which maintained a mostly-White, mostly-liberal majority throughout the entirety of the JRF's duration; indeed, its actual leadership, in the person of Edwin Embree, remained entirely unchanged during these twenty years.

Despite these shortcomings, during its tenure the Rosenwald Fund had proven a staunch advocate for Black education and training, a firm if moderate voice for integration, and a leading promoter of interracial cooperation. Perhaps most importantly, it had demonstrated a willingness to change, revising its ideas about race as well as its own work, despite its short lifespan—rejecting any view of Blackness as static or monolithic, it forwarded a view of race as important but also mutable, worthy of investment as well as continuous reevaluation.

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[74] Edwin R. Embree to Philleo Nash, June 21, 1946, Box 554, Folder 8, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University. See also the language utilized in correspondence between Hale Woodruff and Rosenwald Fund officers, in which his appointment at NYU is described as an "opening wedge" into segregationist policies (rather than a wholesale assault on them): Hale Woodruff to Vandi Haygood, April 26, 1945, Box 457, Folder 16, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archive, Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University.

Appendix B
Primary Fellowship Program ("Negro Fellowship" Program)[1]

Name	Field	Year(s)
Ackiss, Thelma Davis	Sociology	1943, 1944
Adams, Alger L.	Social Work	1932
Adams, Walter A.	Psychiatry	1931
Adamson, Garland Norman	Medicine	1930, 1931
Adkins, Annie Bell	Nursing	1940, 1942
Albritton, Eugenia	Nursing	1928
Alexander, Cornelius A.	Medicine	1930
Alexander, Joseph M.	Agriculture	1929
Alston, Charles Henry	Art, Painting	1940, 1941
Alsup, Fred W.	Biology	1938, 1939, 1940
Anderson, John Landon	Industrial Arts	1930
Anderson, Marian	Music, Voice	1930
Anderson, Walter Franklin	Music, Composition	1948
Andrews, Bertha C.	Economics	1930
Anthony, M. Kathryn	Home Economics	1929
Artis, Ruth	Library Science	1931
Artis, William Ellisworth	Art, Ceramics	1947
Attaway, William Alexander	Creative Writing	1940
Austin, Roger S.	Agriculture	1931
Averitte, Laura M.	Home Economics	1930
Bailey, Estelle R.	Accounting	1930
Bailey, Walter C.	Sociology	1947
Baker, Orestes Jeremiah	Library Science	1930
Baker, Percy Hayes	Biology	1937
Baldwin, James Arthur	Creative Writing	1948
Baltimore, Marjorie	Medical Social Work	1931
Banks, Arthur C., Jr.	Political Science	1947, 1948
Banks, William Franklin	Agriculture	1930
Barrow, Lucy Clay	Home Economics	1931
Barthe, Richmond	Art, Sculpture	1930, 1931
Battle, Wallace A.	Religion	1932
Beamon, Vivian Jones	Education	1948

[1] This list's organization reflects the distinction maintained by the Rosenwald Fund between its two Fellowship Programs according to race; the larger "Negro Fellowship" Program was always operated separately, but alongside, the smaller, "White Southerner Fellowship" program.

Beck, William A.	Medicine	1929, 1930, 1931
Belcher, Fannin S., Jr.	Drama	1938, 1939
Bell, Jasper Ralph	Music, Voice	1948
Bell, Velma	Education	1929
Bembry, Thomas Henry	Chemistry	1941
Bennett, Lowell Howard	Political Science Law	1939, 1940, 1946, 1947
Bennett, Raymond S.	Social Work	1930
Bernard, Vivian	Public Health	1942
Berry, Otis Holley	Music, Voice	1937
Betts, Velena	Library Science	1931
Bigham, Ethel M.	Hospital Administration	1930
Bing, Carroll Vincent	Agriculture	1930
Black, Beatrice Yvonne	Mathematics	1940
Black, Louise Marion	Social Work	1930, 1931
Blackburn, Cleo Walter	Sociology	1941
Blackwell, David Harold	Mathematics	1941
Blount, Mildred E.	Art, Fashion Design	1943
Blow, James H.	Business Administration	1930
Blue, Cecil	Education	1936
Bolden, Norman R.	Sociology	1928
Bolton, Wendell H.	Economics	1929
Bond, Horace Mann	Education	1931, 1932
Bond, J. Max	Sociology	1931, 1932, 1934
Bonds, Margaret	Music, Piano	1933
Bonner, Charles Davidson	Agriculture	1929, 1930
Bontemps, Arna W.	Creative Writing, Library Science	1938, 1942
Brooker, Walter Monroe	Biology	1941
Borders, Julia Pate	Language and Literature	1929
Borome, Joseph Alfred	History	1946, 1947
Boswell, Paul Prince	Medicine	1940
Bousfield, M. O.	Medicine	1931
Bowers, William James	Music, Voice	1934, 1941
Boyd, Evelyn	Mathematics	1946, 1947
Boyd, William Madison	Political Science	1942
Bragg, Eugene J.	Chemistry	1931
Braithwaite, William Stanley	Creative Writing	1930
Brandon, Gertrude	Clinical Management	1933
Brandon, Nancy Evelyn	Education	1945, 1947

Brannon, Maida S.	Nursing	1930
Branson, Herman Russell	Biology	1941
Braxton, James Sylvester	Public Administration	1946
Braye, Harriet	Rural Education	1944
Brazeal, Brailsford	Economics	1938, 1946
Brice, Edward Warner	Education	1947
Brooks, Alfred Russell	Language and Literature	1939
Brooks, Ulysses Simpson	Chemistry	1937
Brown, Aaron	Rural Education	1939, 1940, 1942
Brown, Ella Albert	Library Science	1931
Brown, Florence Rebekah Beatty	Sociology	1942
Brown, Ollie Lee	Library Science	1929
Brown, Roscoe C.	Public Health	1930, 1933
Brown, Roscoe Conklin, Jr.	Physical Education	1948
Brown, Sterling Allen	Creative Writing	1942
Brown, Winona Mason	Music, Voice	1931
Browning, James B.	History	1930
Bryant, Huldah	Home Economics	1931
Bryant, J. Edmond	Medicine	1929, 1931, 1944
Buggs, Charles W.	Biology	1931, 1932, 1933, 1942
Bullock, Roscoe C.	Medicine	1930, 1931
Bunche, Ralph J.	Political Science	1931
Burbridge, Charles	Medicine	1941
Burge, R. Louise	Music, Voice	1947
Burgess, John Philip	Agriculture	1929
Burgess, Letitia	Nursing	1929
Burke, Edmund S.	Agriculture	1929
Burke, Selma Hortense Geneva	Art, Sculpture	1940
Burrell, Herman Davis	Sociology	1948
Busby, Alan T.	Agriculture	1931
Bush, Margaret Elizabeth Burns	Education	1944
Butler, Henrietta H.	Hospital Administration	1935
Butler, Henry Rutherford Jr.	Medicine	1937
Calbert, Clarence	Public Health	1942
Caliver, Ambrose	Education	1932
Campbell, Everett W.	Medicine	1930
Campbell, Laura	Nursing	1928
Campbell, Mamie White	Library Science	1930

Cannon, David Wadsworth, Jr.	Education	1937
Cannon, George D.	Medicine	1931
Carr, Sally	Library Science	1931
Carroll, Richard Allen	Language and Literature	1937
Carter, John Hannibal	Language and Literature	1932
Carter, Percia	Language and Literature	1932
Carter, Robert Lee	Law	1940
Carter, Wilmoth Annette	Sociology	1946
Catchings, Mildred Woodward	Nursing	1939
Catlett, Alice Elizabeth	Art, Painting	1946, 1947
Cayton, Horace Roscoe	Sociology	1937, 1938
Certaine, Jeremiah	Mathematics	1940, 1941, 1942, 1943
Chambers, Lucille	Health Education	1935
Chandler, Frances Leo	Art, Commercial	1945
Chandler, Vera Adrienne	Sociology	1940
Charity, John L.	Agriculture	1930
Childress, Gladys Elizabeth	Music, Piano	1944
Childs, William	Religion	1932
Christian, Marcus Bruce	History	1943
Claridge, G. W.	Business Administration	1930
Clark, Kenneth Bancroft	Psychology	1940
Clark, Louis Phillips	Physics	1947
Clark, Mamie Phipps	Psychology	1940, 1941, 1942
Clark, William A.	Rural Education	1939
Clarke, Kathryn Ellen	Physics	1948
Claytor, Wm. Waldron Schieffelin	Mathematics	1937, 1938
Cleland, William A.	Medicine	1936
Clement, Emma Mills	Rural Education	1942
Cobb, William Montague	Biology	1941
Cochrane, Leila Green	Chemistry	1938, 1939, 1940
Cole, Lorenza J.	Music, Piano	1931
Coleman, Irma Leona	Home Economics	1930
Coleman, James E.	Medicine	1930, 1931
Coleman, Robert, Jr.	Education	1940
Collins, Elmer E.	Medicine	1931, 1932
Collins, Geneva S.	Hospital Administration	1931
Collins, Harvey E.	Education	1931
Collins, Janet Fay	Dancing	1945

Collins, Leslie Morgan	Language and Literature	1944
Cook, Will Mercer	Language and Literature	1931, 1937
Cooke, Anna Margaret	Drama	1930, 1938, 1939
Cooper, Esther Victoria	Sociology	1944
Cooper, Homer Percival	Medicine	1930
Cornely, Paul B.	Medicine	1930
Cortor, Eldzier	Art, Painting	1944, 1945
Coruthers, John M.	Agriculture	1931
Cousins, William James	Sociology	1948
Cowen, Georgia	Library Science	1936
Crawford, Floyd W.	Race Relations	1936
Crawford, Harold W.	Agriculture	1931
Creswell, Isaiah T.	Business Administration	1930
Crocker, Lawrence D.	Vocational Guidance	1931
Crosby, A. D.	Mathematics	1929
Crutcher, Benjamin H.	Agriculture	1930, 1931
Curtis, Mabel Byrd	Economics	1931
Curtis, Merrill H.	Medicine	1934
Cuthbert, Marion Vera	Education	1940
Daniel, V. E.	Sociology	1931
Dansby, Claude B.	Mathematics	1932
Daves, Joseph H.	Sociology	1936
Davis, Alonzo Joseph	Psychology	1939
Davis, Charles Twitchell	Language and Literature	1940, 1941
Davis, Ethel McGhee	Education	1930
Davis, Frances E.	Public Health	1929
Davis, Frank Marshall	Creative Writing	1937
Davis, John Aubrey	Political Science	1938, 1939, 1940
Davis, John P.	Social Work	1933
Davis, W. Allison	Anthropology	1932, 1939, 1940
Dean, William Henry, Jr.	Economics	1937, 1938, 1939
De Bose, Tourgee	Music, Piano	1931
DeCosta, Frank A.	Education	1942
Delaney, Joseph	Art, Painting	1942
Dempsey, Julian Wallace	Art, Fashion Design	1947
Dempsey, Maenelle Dixon	Education	1943
Dempsey, Richard W.	Art, Painting	1946
Dent, A. W.	Hospital Administration	1933
Dent, Jessie Covington	Music, Piano	1933

DeRamus, Anna Louise	Music, Piano	1943
Dickens, Helen O.	Medicine	1941
Dickson, David Watson Daly	Language and Literature	1942
Diggs, Mary Huff	Social Work	1942
Dillard, Clyde Ruffin	Chemistry	1947
Dixon, Annie Belle	Home Economics	1930
Dixon, (Charles) Dean	Music, Conducting	1945, 1946
Dixon, Russell A.	Medicine	1929, 1930
Dobbs, E. C.	Agriculture	1930
Dodson, Owen Vincent	Creative Writing	1942
Dorsey, Emmett Edward	Political Science	1942
Douglas, Aaron	Art, Painting	1937
Douglas, Joseph Henry	Sociology	1944
Drake, John Gibbs St. Clair	Anthropology	1935, 1936, 1937, 1946
Drew, Charles R.	Medicine	1931
Du Bois, W.E.B.	Creative Writing	1931, 1933, 1934
Dummett, Clifton Orrin, Sr.	Dentistry	1946
Duncan, Catherine J.	Rural Education	1937, 1942
Duncan, Dorinda	Rural Education	1942, 1944, 1945
Dunham, Albert M.	Philosophy	1932, 1934
Dunham, Katherine	Anthropology	1935, 1936
Dunlap, Mollie Ernestine	Library Science	1930, 1931
Easter, Vada Lee Parks	Music Education	1948
Edmonds, Edwin Richardson	Social Work	1947
Edmonds, Sheppard Randolph	Drama	1937
Edwards, Gilbert Franklin	Sociology	1940, 1941, 1947
Ellis, George Curtis	Medicine	1930
Ellis, Wade	Mathematics	1942
Ellison, Ralph Waldo	Creative Writing	1945
Elzy, Ruby	Music, Voice	1930, 1931
Ervin, Elberta J.	Home Economics	1930
Erwin, Herbert J.	Medicine	1942
Evans, Gloria B.	Rural Education	1945
Fairfax, Matthew Lawrence	Education	1940
Fairley, Eloise Violet	Education	1929
Farrell, Harold Alfred	Language and Literature	1940
Fax, Mark Oakland	Music, Composition	1946
Ferguson, Alma Catherine	Education	1929
Fisher, James Walter	History	1941

Fisher, Ruth Anne	Music, Voice	1931
Fitchett, E. Horace	Sociology	1938
Fitzgerald, Ruth S.	Education	1931
Florant, Lyonel Charles	Sociology	1940, 1941
Fontaine, William Thomas	Philosophy	1942
Forte, Maggie Y.	Rural Education	1941, 1942, 1944
Fowler, Manet Helen	Anthropology	1941, 1942
Franklin, John Hope	History	1937, 1938
Franklin, Marjorie	Physical Therapy	1939
Frazier, E. Franklin	Sociology	1944
Fullilove, R. E., Jr.	Medicine	1940
Garrett, Naomi Mills	Language and Literature	1944
Gathings, J. G.	Medicine	1942
Gibbs, James Albert, Jr.	Chemistry	1944
Gibson, Charles H., Jr.	Industrial Arts	1929
Giles, Roscoe C.	Medicine	1931
Goff, Marcellus H.	Medicine	1931, 1932
Golightly, Catherine Cater	Language and Literature	1943
Golightly, Cornelius Lacy	Philosophy	1941
Goodall, P. E.	Social Work	1931
Goode, Benjamin L.	Agriculture	1930, 1931
Graham, Shirley	Drama	1938, 1939
Granberry, E. J.	Education	1930
Grant, Edmonia White	Education	1941, 1942
Grant, Ernest A.	Agriculture	1929
Grant, Jason Clifton, Jr.	Language and Literature	1929
Grayson, Estella G.	Library Science	1930
Green, Harry James, Jr.	Chemistry	1941
Greene, Amber B. L.	Library Science	1929
Greene, Frank Theodore	Industrial Arts	1931
Greene, John	Music, Voice	1930, 1931
Greene, Lorenzo J.	History	1934, 1940
Greenwood, Mildred	Music, Piano	1931, 1932
Gregory, Francis A.	Physics	1931
Gregory, Yvonne (Perkins)	Creative Writing	1948
Griffey, William A.	Library Science	1931
Griffin, L'Tanya Bernice	Art, Fashion Design	1948
Griggs, Ethel Mae	Home Economics	1929
Grigsby, Lucy Lee Clemmons	Language and Literature	1948

Haley, Simon Alexander	Agriculture	1930
Hall, Frederic	Music Education	1929
Hall, James L.	Medicine	1930, 1931
Hall, Lorenzo E.	Agriculture	1929
Halliburton, Cecil D.	Social Work	1928
Hamilton, Grace Towns	Education	1947
Hamme, Richard Sylvester	Labor Education	1945
Hanna, Luella C.	Home Economics	1930
Harrell, Ella K.	Library Science	1930
Harriott, Frank	Creative Writing	1947
Harris, Abram L.	Economics	1929, 1939, 1945
Harris, Harriet A.	Home Economics	1930
Harris, H. L., Jr.	Medicine	1928, 1931, 1932
Harris, Harry C.	Medicine	1930, 1931
Harris, Henrietta Gwendolyn	Music, Voice	1948
Harris, Robert	Music, Piano	1945
Harris, William Oscar	Medicine	1931
Harrison, Elton C.	Rural Education	1945
Hayden, Robert E.	Creative Writing	1947
Haynes, George E.	Religion	1930
Henderson, N. A.	Medicine	1935
Henderson, Roland George	Mathematics	1940
Hewlett, Pauline R.	Nursing	1931
Hibbles, Myrtle T.	Home Economics	1930
Hill, Adelaide Cromwell	Sociology	1941, 1944
Hill, Carl M.	Chemistry	1937
Hill, Henry Aaron	Chemistry	1940, 1941
Hill Mozell C.	Sociology	1943, 1944, 1945
Hill, T. Arnold	Economics	1936
Hill, Virginia Lee	Rural Education	1937
Himes, Chester Bomar	Creative Writing	1944
Hinderas, Natalie Leota	Music, Piano	1946, 1948
Hogan, William	Social Work	1929
Holland, Charles Manuel	Music, Voice	1946
Holloman, Laynard L.	Medicine	1941
Holman, Moses Carl	Creative Writing	1945
Homes. D. O. W.	Education	1931
Holmes, James Welfred	Language and Literature	1943
Hope, John, II	Economics	1940, 1941

Horton, Logan Warren	Medicine	1935
Howard, Camilla	Language and Literature	1929, 1930
Hubbard, Alma L.	Music Education	1931
Hubert, Giles Alfred	Economics	1930, 1937
Hughes, (James) Langston	Creative Writing	1931, 1941
Hughes, Lloyd Harris	History	1941
Hulbert, James A.	Library Science	1931
Hunt, Henry A.	Agriculture	1931
Hunter, Mary E. V.	Home Economics	1930
Hunton, Margaret Reynolds	Library Science	1929, 1930, 1931
Hurston, Zora N.	Anthropology	1935
Jackson, Blyden	Language and Literature	1947
Jackson, Elizabeth Mae	History	1940
James, Henry M. L.	Library Science	1929
James, Joseph Henry	Music, Voice	1946
James, Ullmont Lenhardt	Education	1947
Jefferson, Bernard Samuel	Law	1941
Jenkins, Frederick Douglas	Mathematics	1941
Johnson, Carrie O'Rourke	Rural Education	1943, 1945
Johnson, Charles S.	Sociology	1930
Johnson, James Weldon	Creative Writing	1928, 1930, 1931
Johnson, Joseph L.	Medicine	1928, 1929, 1930
Johnson, Marie Beverly	Mathematics	1948
Johnson, Ozie Harold	Mathematics	1936
Jones, Butler Alfonso	History	1947
Jones, Clifton Ralph	Sociology	1931, 1932
Jones, D. Coaken	Agriculture	1929
Jones, Dewey R.	Sociology	1931, 1938
Jones, Grace C.	Psychology	1930, 1931
Jones, James R.	Education	1929
Jones, Lawrence A.	Rural Education	1941, 1945
Jones, Lewis W.	Sociology	1938
Jones, Maude C.	Library Science	1931
Jones, William M.	Medicine	1930, 1931, 1934
Jordan, Mamie Pearson	Rural Education	1942
Joseph, Ronald	Art, Painting	1948
Jourdain, Edwin Bush, Jr.	Political Science	1939
Julian, Percy L.	Chemistry	1934, 1935
Kay, Ulysses Simpson	Music, Composition	1947, 1948

Kelsey, George Dennis	Religion	1943
Kennedy, Melvin D.	History	1938
Kennon, Robert Bruce	Economics	1946
Kerr, Thomas Henderson, Jr.	Music, Composition	1942
King, Violet Helen	Education	1947
King, Willis J.	Religion	1929
Kirkland, Madelaine W.	Home Economics	1930
Kittrell, Flemmie	Home Economics	1929
Knox, Clinton Everett	History	1937, 1938
Lacy, Frederic J.	Industrial Arts	1930, 1931
Lafayette, Lenora Gwendolyn	Music, Voice	1948
Lane, David A.	Education	1931
Lanier, E. A.	Language and Language	1938, 1946
Lanier, Raphael O'Hara	Education	1931
Larsen, Pearl L. Byrd	Education	1945
Lawlah, Clyde A.	Medicine	1929, 1930
Lawlah, John W.	Medicine	1929, 1930, 1932
Lawrence, Charles Radford, Jr.	Sociology	1939, 1942
Lawrence, Jacob Armstead	Art, Painting	1940, 1941, 1942
Lawrence, Margaret Morgan	Medicine	1942
Laws, Enola Estelle	Music, Voice	1946
Lawson, James Raymond	Physics	1937, 1938
Lee, Daisy Parker	Rural Education	1942
Lee, Ulysses Grant, Jr.	Language and Literature	1940, 1941, 1942
Lewis, Elsie Mae	History	1945
Lewis, Hylan Garnet	Sociology	1939, 1940
Lewis, Romeo H.	Hospital Administration	1941
Lewis, Roscoe Edwin	History	1941, 1943
Lipford, Elizabeth Jane	Public Health	1945
Liston, Sara Margaret	Home Economics	1948
Lloyd, Birtill A.	Chemistry	1938, 1939
Lloyd, Robert	Engineering	1945
Lloyd, Ruth M. Smith	Biology	1938, 1939
Logan, Rayford W.	History	1944
Long, Herman Hodge	Psychology	1942
Lowrie, Richard R., Jr.	Social Work	1930, 1931
Lucas, Robert Henry	Creative Writing	1948
Lu Valle, James E.	Chemistry	1938, 1939
Lyells, Ruby Stubbs	Library Science	1929

McAfee, Walter Samuel	Physics	1946
McAllister, Winston Kermit	Philosophy	1940
McCane, C. Anthony	Physics	1928
McCracken, Kathryn	Social Work	1930, 1931
McCray, George Francis	Economics	1939
McCray, Booker Tanner	Economics	1937, 1938
McKay, Claude	Creative Writing	1935, 1943
McLemore, Roberta	Library Science	1929
McMillan, Marie	Home Economics	1931
Mabre, Beulah Lucile Stewart	Music Education	1929
Mack, Arthur P.	Industrial Arts	1930
Maddux, Walter H.	Medicine	1930
Margetson, Edward Henry	Music, Composition	1942
Martin, Robert E.	Political Science	1939, 1940, 1941, 1942
Mason, Henry J.	Sociology	1930
Mason, Winifred	Art, Silversmithing	1945
May, Elizabeth Cora	Home Economics	1929
Mayle, Bessie	Music Education	1931
Mays, Sadie G.	Social Work	1931
Mazique, Douglas Wilkerson	Medicine	1946
Menard, Edith, Jr.	Language and Literature	1943
Miller, Ida Louise	Language and Literature	1931, 1932
Miller, Kelly	Creative Writing	1934
Miller, Rita M.	Education	1930, 1931
Miller, W. E.	Medicine	1929, 1930, 1931
Minus, Marian	Anthropology	1935, 1936
Monroe, Clarence L. E.	Medicine	1929
Moore, Eugene Ralph	Agriculture	1930
Moron, Alonzo G.	Law	1944
Morton, Grace Sullivan	Home Economics	1931
Morton, Mary Adelaide	Psychology	1937
Motley, Willard Francis	Creative Writing	1946
Murray, Florence	Journalism	1943
Murray, Pauli	Law	1944
Myers, Samuel Lloyd	Economics	1948
Myers, Wesley	Agriculture	1930
Nelson, Sophia Phillips	Language and Literature	1948
Nichols, Charles Harold, Jr.	Language and Literature	1945, 1946
Nickerson, Camille L.	Music, Piano	1931

Norris, Ernest M.	Agriculture	1930
O'Higgins, Myron	Creative Writing	1946, 1947
Oliver, Clinton F.	Language and Literature	1941
Oliver, J. A.	Agriculture	1931
Olmstead, Gilbert Dwoyid	Photography	1946
Otis, J. R.	Agriculture	1930, 1932
Ottley, Roi	Journalism	1943
Overstreet, Mabel	Home Economics	1929
Owens, Nolan A.	Medicine	1930
Owens, S. Vincent	Social Work	1929, 1930
Palmer, Edward Nelson	Sociology	1939, 1941
Palmer, Viola B. Goin	Biology	1938
Parker, Albertine	Rural Education	1939, 1940
Parks, Gordon Alexander	Photography	1942
Parris, Guichard B.	History	1938
Patterson, Wilhelmina B.	Music Education	1929
Payne, Mynor Preston	Engineering	1945
Pearson, Ophelia	Home Economics	1929
Peebles, Eula Lucile	Home Economics	1929
Peggram, Reed E.	Language and Literature	1938
Pegues, Mattie E.	Home Economics	1931
Perkins, Marion	Art, Sculpture	1948
Perry, Benjamin L.	Agriculture	193
Peterson, Annie Mae	Rural Education	1945
Peterson, James Carlylse	Sociology	1940
Phelps, Pauline Edna	Music, Voice	1947, 1948
Piper, Rose Theodora	Art, painting	1946
Polk, alma Forrest	History	1942, 1943, 1947
Pope, Alonzo H.	Social Work	1929, 1932
Porter, Dorothy Burnett	Library Science	1930, 1931, 1944
Posey, Thomas Edward	Labor Education	1945
Potts, L. A.	Agriculture	1931
Powell, Eunice D.	Home Economics	1930
Powell, Mayme L.	Home Economics	1930
Primus, Pearl Eileene	Dancing	1948
Pritchard, Norman H.	Medicine	1930
Qualls, Youra T.	Language and Literature	1939, 1940, 1941, 1942
Quarles, Benjamin Arthur	History	1937, 1945
Ramsey, Edward W.	Economics	1936

Reddick, Lawrence Dunbar	History	1939, 1945
Reddix, Jacob Lorenzo	Economics	1939
Reed, Dorothy Margarette	Dentistry	1944
Reed, George Warren, Jr.	Chemistry	1946
Reedy, Hilda Lawson	Language and Literature	1937
Reid, Ira DeA.	Sociology	1938
Reid, Orleanis, Jr.	Agriculture	1931
Rhaney, Mahlon Clifton	Biology	1941, 1946
Rhoden, John Walter	Art, Sculpture	1947
Richards, M. Estelle	Home Economics	1929
Richardson, J. M.	Medicine	1941, 1942
Richie, Alberta K. F.	Rural Education	1942
Riddle, Geneva Estelle Massey	Nursing	1929, 1930
Riley, Collye L.	Library Science	1930
Ritchie, Oscar W.	Sociology	1948
Rivers, Haywood	Art, Painting	1948
Robbs, Mary Estella	Music, Voice	1947
Roberts, Harry W.	Sociology	1931, 1933
Roberts, Josie W.	Music Education	1929
Roberts, Thomas Nathaniel	Economics	1931, 1940, 1941
Rogers, Alpha S.	Library Science	1931
Rose, Alvin Walcott	Sociology	1946
Ross, Clarence S.	Agriculture	1930, 1931
Rush, Ruth G.	Education	1930
Sampson, H. T.	Rural Education	1945
Sanders, Dannetta M.	Rural Education	1940
Savage, Augusta	Art, Sculpture	1929, 1930, 1931
Scott, Clement	Public Health	1937
Scott, Estella Harris	Sociology	1940, 1941, 1942
Scott, Josephine	Rural Education	1945
Scott, William E.	Art, Design	1931
Scull, Ralph H.	Medicine	1930, 1931
Sebree, Charles Everett	Art, Painting	1945
Settle, John E., Jr.	Agriculture	1931
Shehee, Emily Webb Allen	Rural Education	1939, 1940
Shropshear, George, Jr.	Medicine	1929, 1930, 1931, 1942, 1944
Shute, Alfred W.	Agriculture	1930, 1931, 1932
Simmons, J. Andrew	Education	1945

Skinner, Daniel Thomas	Language and Literature	1947
Smith, James Lloyd	Music, Voice	1948
Smyles, Harry Milton	Music, Oboe	1948
Smythe, Hugh H.	Anthropology	1939, 1940
Smythe, Mabel Murphy	Economics	1941
Snowden, Frank M., Jr.	Language and Literature	1938
Spencer, Kenneth Lee	Music, Voice	1945
Steele, Edith	Nursing	1936, 1938, 1939, 1941
Steele, Julian D.	Social Work	1929, 1930
Stegall, Alma L.	Education	1948
Stephens, Clarence Francis	Mathematics	1942
Stewart, Zephyre Holman	Social Work	1930
Still, William Grant	Music, Composition	1939, 1940
Stone, Alma	Rural Education	1945
Stone, Percy H.	Agriculture	1930
Strickland, J. V.	Agriculture	1930, 1931
Sutler, Martin Randolph	Medicine	1945, 1946
Swanson, Howard W.	Music, Composition	1938, 1939
Tancil, Leon A.	Medicine	1930, 1932
Tate, Merze	Political Science	1939
Tate, William, Jr.	Medicine	1930, 1931
Taylor, Joseph T.	Sociology	1938
Taylor, Julius Henry	Physics	1943
Taylor, Onilda A.	Library Science	1929
Taylor, Pauline Byrd	Education	1947
Taylor, Thelma	Library Science	1941
Thomas, Arthur A.	Medicine	1939
Thomas, James Rector	Agriculture	1929
Thomasson, Maurice E.	Agriculture	1929
Thompson, Charles Henry	Education	1942
Thompson, Frances E.	Art, Education	1937
Toms, Charles M.	Social Work	1931
Touchstone, J. H.	Chemistry	1929
Townes, Charles Henry	Physics	1942
Towns, Myron B.	Chemistry	1938, 1939
Tenholm, H. Councill	Education	1937
Trent, William Johnson, Jr.	Economics	1940
Trigg, Edward Glass	Biology	1930
Troup, C. V.	Rural Education	1940, 1946

Turner, Arnena West	Rural Education	1941, 1945
Turner, Lorenzo Down	Language and Literature	1939, 1940, 1945
Turner, Victor C.	Agriculture	1930
Turpin, Water Edward	Creative Writing	1941
Valien, Bonita Golda H.	Sociology	1937, 1939
Valien, Preston	Sociology	1937, 1939
Venable, Howard P.	Medicine	1942, 1943
Walker, Dorothy L.	Nursing	1942
Walker, Harry Joseph	Sociology	1937, 1938, 1942
Walker, Margaret Abigail	Creative Writing	1944
Wallace, Phyllis Annie	Economics	1945
Washington, George L.	Industrial Arts	1929
Washington, James Aaron, Jr.	Law	1940
Watkins, Mark Hanna	Anthropology	1940
Watson, Parepa R.	Library Science	1929, 1930
Watson, Rufus S.	Law	1929
Weddington, Rachel Thomas	Education	1946
Weems, Camilla	Home Economics	1930
Weir, Charles Edward	Chemistry	1937, 1938
West, Harold D.	Chemistry	1929
Westerfield, Samuel Z., Jr.	Economics	1941
White, Charles Wilbert	Art, Painting	1942, 1943
White, Clarence Cameron	Music, Composition	1929, 1931
White, Kathryn M.	Nursing	1942
Whitehead, Genevieve C.	Education	1935
Wilkins, J. Ernest, Jr.	Mathematics	1942
Williams, Dorothy Gwendolyn	Library Science	1944, 1945
Williams, Eric	History	1940, 1942
Williams, Lottie	Rural Education	1945
Williams, Maceo	Public Health	1938
Williams, Ophelia	Home Economics	1930
Williams, Walter Bowie	Library Science	1930
Williamson, W. H.	Agriculture	1931
Wilson, Beatrice O. Green	Library Science	1929
Wilson, Henry Spence	Chemistry	1937
Winchester, Theodore Wilbur	Economics	1943, 1944
Winkfield, Clyde Julian	Music, Piano	1941
Winslow, Vernon L.	Industrial Arts	1946
Wood, Allen T.	Agriculture	1929

Woodard, Clarence S.	Industrial Arts	1929
Woodruff, Hale A.	Art, Painting	1943, 1944
Woodson, Harold William	Chemistry	1945
Woolridge, Nancy Bullock	Language and Literature	1941, 1942
Work, John W.	Music, Composition	1931, 1932
Work, Monroe N.	Education	1930
Wormley, Margaret Just	Language and Literature	1941, 1942
Wormley, Stanton L.	Language and Literature	1938
Wright, Leon Edward	Religion	1942, 1943
Wyche, Jessie M.	Education	1929
Yancey, Sadie Mae	Education	1948
Yerby, Alonzo Smythe	Public Health	1947

"White Southerner" Fellowship Program

Name	Field	Year(s)
Abernathy, Chess, Jr.	Journalism	1939
Adams, Paul Lieber	Sociology	1946
Albrizio, Conrad Alfred	Art, Painting	1945, 1946
Alexander, Franz	Psychiatry	1930, 1931, 1932
Alexander, W. R.	Rural Education	1941
Allen, John, Mr. & Mrs.	Journalism	1931
Anderson, Charles Roberts	Language and Literature	1938
Aswell, James Robert	Creative Writing	1940
Baker, Lamar	Art, Painting	1942
Baker, W. B.	Biology	1931
Banks, Eugene Pendleton	Anthropology	1948
Barfoot, James Lamar	Rural Education	1941, 1945
Barkalow, Frederick Schenck, Jr.	Biology	1941
Barnett, Das Kelley	Religion	1946
Bartlett, Marcus	Education	1939
Bassett, Gladys	Language and Literature	1930
Beard, Belle Boone	Sociology	1945
Beck, Lewis White	Philosophy	1937
Becker, Carl	Political Science	1930
Becker, John Harrison, Jr.	Race Relations	1945
Beech, Gould Means	Journalism	1937
Bell, Thomas Edward	Creative Writing	1942
Berry, James Brewton	Sociology	1943

Binford, Julian	Art, Painting	1943
Bingham, Herbert Jonas	Political Science	1940
Bjurberg, Richard Henry	History	1948
Black, John David	Biology	1938, 1939
Blatz, W. E.	Psychiatry	1930
Bolton, Ruth	Home Economics	1930
Bonds, Alfred Bryan, Jr.	Political Science	1940, 1941
Bonner, James Calvin	Rural Education	1939
Botkin, Benjamin Albert	Language and Literature	1937
Branscome, Gladiola	Art, Crafts	1940
Brearley, Harrington Cooper	Sociology	1937
Brickell, Henry Herschel	History	1939
Brogdon, Nettie	Rural Education	1939
Brown, Ina Corinne	Anthropology	1937
Brown, L. Paris	Sociology	1937
Brown, William Oscar	Sociology	1941, 1942
Burford, Byron Leslie, Jr.	Art, Painting	1947
Burgess, Robert Stone, Jr.	Library Science	1946
Burrows, Edward Flud	History	1947
Caldwell, Harmon White	Education	1937
Caldwell, John Tyler	Political Science	1937, 1938
Caldwell, Nathan Green	Journalism	1946
Carter, Albert Edwin	Journalism	1939, 1940
Cate, Wirt Armistead	History	1937
Caudill, Edith	Rural Education	1944, 1945
Clarke, Charles Morgan	Education	1948
Clonts, Jane	Rural Education	1941
Coles, Harry L., Jr.	History	1948
Collier, Edward Tarleton	Creative Writing	1940
Comfort, Richard Obee	Religion	1944
Cook, John H.	Rural Education	1945
Cooper, Edna Catherine	Sociology	1945, 1946
Copeland, Lewis Campbell	Sociology	1937, 1938, 1942
Corry, John P.	History	1931
Cotner, Robert Crawford	History	1939
Crawford, D. L.	Anthropology	1933
Creighton, Jermain	Chemistry	1934
Crumbo, Woodrow Wilson	Art, Painting	1945
Culbreth, Harry W.	Economics	1938

Culver, Dwight W.	Race Relations	1946
Cumbee, Carroll Fleming	Education	1945
Davis, Edwin Adams	History	1940
Day, Donald	Language and Literature	1939, 1940
Day, Esther Worden	Art, Painting	1942, 1943
Dewey, Malcolm H.	Art Education	1932
Dibner, Martin Lionel	Creative Writing	1947
Dollard, John	Psychiatry	1931
Dombrowski, James	Sociology	1937
Donovan, Elizabeth	Rural Education	1938, 1944
Downes, Katie	Rural Education	1937, 1944
Downes, Mary	Rural Education	1946
Downes, Walter	Rural Education	1938
Dreyer, Edward Peter	History	1939
Dublin, Louis I.	Public Health	1931
Dudley, Virginia Evelyn	Art, Painting	1943
Dushkin, David	Music Education	1931
Easterby, James Harold	History	1938
Edwards, Katherine	Art, Interior Decorating	1942
Ellison, Rhoda Coleman	Language and Literature	1944
England, James Merton	History	1940
Faris, Ellsworth	Sociology	1932
Farris, Charles Detyens	Political Science	1947
Faulk, John Henry	Language and Literature	1941, 1942
Fears, Coralice	Rural Education	1945
Fite, Bethel	Education	1943
Fleming, James Ernest	Sociology	1939
Ford, James Alfred	Anthropology	1940
Foreman, Clark	Education	1931
Foreman, Paul B.	Sociology	1938
Franklin, Mitchell	Law	1938
Franks, Ruth M.	Psychiatry	1930
Fryer, Gideon Willis	Education	1948
Gibbons, Robert Faucett	Creative Writing	1943
Goodwyn, Frank Eppse	Creative Writing	1942
Govan, Thomas Payne	History	1937
Griffin, J. D. M.	Psychiatry	1932
Griffin, John Ansley	Sociology	1947
Gunn, W. Fred	Rural Education	1939

Guthrie, Woodrow Wilson	Language and Literature	1943
Gwathmey, Robert	Art, Painting	1944
Hagood, Margaret Jarman	Sociology	1937
Ham, Thomas Byrd	Creative Writing	1942
Hardwick, Elizabeth Bruce	Creative Writing	1945
Harrell, Mary Sunlocks	Language and Literature	1941
Harris, Rufus Carrollton	Education	1938
Hart, Thomas A.	Biology	1941
Hartman, Vladimir Eugene	Religion	1946
Haskew, L. D.	Rural Education	1940
Hayden, Naomi	Labor Education	1947
Hayes, Wayland Jackson	Sociology	1945
Haygood, William Converse	Creative Writing	1947
Henderson, James Lewis	Economics	1945
Herr, Clarence	Education	1931
Hicks, Philip M.	Language and Literature	1931
Highsmith, William Edward	History	1948
Hill, Augustus Byron	Economics	1939
Hill, James Christian	Economics	1940
Hincks, C. M.	Psychiatry	1934
Hodges, Robert M.	Journalism	1939
Hogan, William Ransom	History	1940
Holden, Eddis	Rural Education	1942
Hollaway, Otto	Education	1942
Hollingsworth, Robert Edgar	Public Administration	1946
Hooper, Ernest Walter	History	1948
Howell, Claude Flynn	Art, Painting	1948
Humphrey, George Duke	Education	1938
Isley, Jeter Allen	History	1939, 1940
Ivey, Melville Fort Corbett	Sociology	1941
James, Margaret Caldwell	Sociology	1947
Jones, Dorothy	Rural Education	1944
Junker, Buford H.	Rural Education	1938
Justus, May	Creative Writing	1939
Kane, Harnett Thomas	History	1942, 1943
Kendrick, John Whitefield	Economics	1939
Killian, Lewis Martin	Sociology	1947
Kimbrough, Edward, Jr.	Creative Writing	1943
King, Morton B., Jr.	Sociology	1938

Kniffen, Fred B.	Anthropology	1938
Knight, Laurette MacDuffie	Creative Writing	1944
Knobbs, Pauline Dingle	Sociology	1943
Kytle, David Calvin	Creative Writing	1947
Lanning, John Tate	History	1946
Lasseter, Robert Caldwell, Jr.	Journalism	1945
Layman, Beverly Joseph	Language and Literature	1948
Lea, Tom	Art, Painting	1941
Leake, Marcelotte	Biology	1942
Ledet, Wilton Paul	History	1940, 1941
Leiper, Bartram Galbraith, Jr.	Creative Writing	1948
Levy, Edith	Photography	1947
Lewis, Edward E.	Economics	1931
Lines, Stiles Bailey	Religion	1946
Link, Arthur Stanley	History	1942, 1944
Lipscomb, John William	Political Science	1942
Loemker, Leroy E.	Philosophy	1938
Lomax, Elizabeth Harold	Creative Writing	1948
Lyle, John Newton	Economics	1939
McClain, Howard Gordon	Religion	1943
MacCurdy, Raymond Ralph Jr.	Language and Literature	1941
McDavid, Ravenloor, Jr.	Language and Literature	1941
McFadyen, Christiana	History	1941
McGehee, Edward Glenn	Creative Writing	1948
McGill, Ralph E.	Journalism	1937
MacLachlan, John	Sociology	1936
McLellan, Edward Arthur	Education	1941
Maddox, James Gray	Economics	1937
Markham, Jesse William	Economics	1937
Meade, Robert D.	History	1937
Mell, Mildred Rutherford	Sociology	1937
Mims, Thomas Puryear	Art, Sculpture	1939
Mitchell, Martha Carolyn	History	1945
Mitchell, William Alexander	Political Science	1942
Mobley, Mayor Dennis	Education	1940
Monroe, Margaret Elizabeth	Education	1948
Montgomery, James Elmer	Sociology	1942
Moon, Bucklin	Creative Writing	1945
Mooney, Chase C.	History	1938

Moore, Ida Lenore	Creative Writing	1941
Morris, Alton Chester	Language and Literature	1940
Nathanson, Jules L.	Language and Literature	1931
Naylor, A. D.	Rural Education	1945
Neff, Ellen Hull	Sociology	1942
Newman, Wiley Clifford	Religion	1939
Nixon, Clarence Herman	Political Science	1941
Okada, Dave Masato	Race Relations	1946
Owen, James Kimbrough	Political Science	1940, 1941
Page, Henry Allison, III	Political Science	1940
Palfi, Marion	Race Relations	1946
Pepinsky, Pauline Nichols	Psychology	1945
Peter, W. W.	Public Health	1934
Phelps, Ralph Arloe, Jr.	Education	1948
Phillips, Thomas Hal	Creative Writing	1947
Pierson, Donald	Sociology	1934
Pope, James Soule	Journalism	1937
Pope, Liston	Sociology	1948
Porter, Doris M.	Sociology	1938
Prothro, James Warren	Political Science	1947, 1948
Quillian, William Fletcher, Jr.	Religion	1940
Rabun, James Warren	History	1941
Rainey, Glenn Weddington	Political Science	1941
Ramsey, Robert	Creative Writing	1942
Rasom, Ellene	Language and Literature	1940
Record, Cy Wilson	Sociology	1946
Register, James Pipes	Creative Writing	1944
Rhodes, Jack Alvin	Public Administration	1944
Roberts, L. E.	Rural Education	1941
Robertson, D. B.	Religion	1944
Robinson, Emmett Edward	Drama	1948
Routh, James Edward, III	Art, Painting	1940
Rowe, William H.	Rural Education	1946
Rubinow, Raymond S.	Economics	1931
Sancton, Thomas	Creative Writing	1943, 1945, 1947
Seagraves, Wilda	Rural Education	1942
Sensabaugh, Leon Franklin	History	1941
Sewell, Walter Edwin	Education	1939, 1940
Shannon, Charles Eugene	Art, Painting	1938, 1939

Shock, M. W.	Biology	1930
Sitterson, Joseph Carlyle	History	1940
Smith, Anna Greene	Sociology	1944
Smith, Doris Buffington	Rural Education	1942
Smith, Evelyn	Rural Education	1945
Smith, Lillian Eugenia	Creative Writing	1939, 1940
Smith, Randolph Stewart	Religion	1946
Smith, T. Lynn	Sociology	1939
Snelling, Paula	Creative Writing	1939, 1940
Solomon, Edward Crawford	Sociology	1941
Southward, Shelby E.	History	1939
Spencer, Dwight	Education	1933
Spencer, Samuel Reid, Jr.	History	1948
Spivey, Herman E.	Language and Literature	1941
Stephenson, Kathryn	Rural Education	1945
Stoney, George Cashel	Photography	1947
Strode, Hudson	Creative Writing	1943
Suagee, Tennyson	Political Science	1941
Sutker, Solomon	Sociology	1947
Swint, Henry Lee	History	1940
Thedieck, Mary Cecilia	Language and Literature	1944
Thompson, Melvin Ernest	Education	1939
Tidwell, William Frederick	Education	1943
Tipton, James Harrison	Education	1944
Tisdale, Dorothy Hope	Sociology	1939
Tower, James Allen	Geography	1947
Traylor, Merrill	Rural Education	1943
Twitty, William Bradley	Sociology	1944
Vance, Rupert	Sociology	1945
Varnell, William Daniel	Education	1942
Vaughan, Elizabeth Head	Sociology	1946
Vining, Dan Rutledge	Economics	1939, 1940
Walton, Robert Petrie	Biology	1940
Ward, Madie Belle	Language and Literature	1944
Washburn, Carleton	Education	1930
Watson, Gordon	Rural Education	1937
Watson, LeRoy Wilbur, Jr.	Economics	1941
Weatherford, Willis Duke, Jr.	Economics	1943, 1946
West, Donald Lee	Education	1945

Westbrooke, Olive Elizabeth	Sociology	1944, 1945
White, Ann Carolyn	Sociology	1946
White, Goodrich Cook	Education	1937
White, Mary	Rural Education	1942
Wiley, Bell Irvin	History	1941
Wilkins, Josephine	Sociology	1936
Willey, Gordon Randolph	Anthropology	1941
Williams, Charlotte	Political Science	1943
Williams, Eleanor Kathleen	History	1948
Williams, Lloyd Pyron	Education	1947
Winn, Nell	Rural Education	1946
Woodward, C. Vann	History	1940
Yates, Comer	Rural Education	1946
Yates, Richard Edwin	Education	1939
Young, Edgar B.	Economics	1930
Young, Louise	Sociology	1943
Young, Marion Marshall	Medicine	1944
Zimmerman, Hilda Jane	History	1944, 1945
Zuber, Thomas Osburn	Rural Education	1947

Appendix C
African American Rosenwald Fellows in Art[1]

Name	Field	Year(s)
Alston, Charles Henry	Art, Painting	1940, 1941
Artis, William Ellisworth	Art, Ceramics	1947
Barthé, Richmond	Art, Sculpture	1930, 1931
Blount, Mildred E.	Art, Fashion Design	1943
Burke, Selma Hortense Geneva	Art, Sculpture	1940
Catlett, Alice Elizabeth	Art, Painting	1945, 1946
Chandler, Frances Leo	Art, Commercial	1945
Cortor, Eldzier	Art, Painting	1944, 1945
Delaney, Joseph	Art, Painting	1942
Dempsey, Julian Wallace	Art, Fashion Design	1947
Dempsey, Richard W.	Art, Painting	1946
Douglas, Aaron	Art, Painting	1937
Griffin, L'Tanya Bernice	Art, Fashion Design	1948
Joseph, Ronald	Art, Painting	1948
Lawrence, Jacob Armstead	Art, Painting	1940, 1941, 1942
Mason, Winifred	Art, Silversmithing	1945
Perkins, Marion	Art, Sculpture	1948
Piper, Rose Theodora	Art, painting	1946
Rhoden, John Walter	Art, Sculpture	1947
Rivers, Haywood	Art, Painting	1948
Savage, Augusta	Art, Sculpture	1929, 1930, 1931
Scott, William E.	Art, Design	1931
Sebree, Charles Everett	Art, Painting	1945
White, Charles Wilbert	Art, Painting	1942, 1943
Woodruff, Hale A.	Art, Painting	1943, 1944

[1] This list reflects the framing and terminology used within the Rosenwald application itself, as well as fellows' self-identification (in terms of both race and field of study) within this framework. To qualify for a Rosenwald fellowship, candidates had to self-identify as "Negro" (or "White Southern"), for example. Candidates had greater leeway in identifying their field of study; the Rosenwald Fund itself grouped the various kinds of work above—ranging from painting to commercial art—under the general category "Art," reflecting the diversity of process through the use of secondary qualifiers.

Appendix D
Fellowship Committee Members[1]

1929-1930[2]
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Henry Allen Moe

1930-1931
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Henry Allen Moe

1931-1932
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Henry Allen Moe

1932-1933
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Henry Allen Moe

1933-1934
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Henry Allen Moe

1934-1935
Edwin R. Embree

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[1] This list was compiled from internal records within the Julius Rosenwald Fund Archives (JRFA), Special Collections Library, Fisk University; the Julius Rosenwald Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago; Julius Rosenwald Fund Records, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University; correspondence between its leaders in various archives, including within the JRFA, the Charles S. Johnson Papers at Fisk University, and the Arna Bontemps Papers at Syracuse University; and published accounts of its programs, including Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (New York: Harper, 1949); Edwin R. Embree, *Julius Rosenwald Fund Review for the Two-Year Period 1944-1946* (Chicago: Julius Rosenwald Fund, 1946).

[2] In the first year of the Fund, 1928-1929, provisional programs for scholarships and fellowships were approved by the Board of Trustees and administered on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Committee of the Rosenwald Fund. Members of the Executive Committee during this time included: Julius Rosenwald, Edwin R. Embree, Alfred K. Stern, Harold B. Swift, and Frank Sulzberger.

Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Henry Allen Moe

1935-1936
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Henry Allen Moe

1936-1937
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Henry Allen Moe

1937-1938
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Henry Allen Moe

1938-1939
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Henry Allen Moe
Raymond R. Paty

1939-1940
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Henry Allen Moe
Raymond R. Paty

1940-1941
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Henry Allen Moe
Raymond R. Paty

1941-1942
Edwin R. Embree

Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Henry Allen Moe
Raymond R. Paty
Robert C. Weaver

1942-1943
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Raymond R. Paty
Robert C. Weaver

1943-1944
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Raymond R. Paty
Robert C. Weaver
Arna Bontemps

1944-1945
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Raymond R. Paty
Robert C. Weaver
Arna Bontemps

1945-1946
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Raymond R. Paty
Robert C. Weaver
Arna Bontemps

1946-1947
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Robert C. Weaver
Arna Bontemps
Gould Beech

1947-1948

Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Robert C. Weaver
Arna Bontemps
Gould Beech

1948-1949
Edwin R. Embree
Charles S. Johnson
W.W. Alexander
Robert C. Weaver
Arna Bontemps
Gould Beech
Charles H. Thompson

Appendix E
Rosenwald Fellowship Art Jury Members and Locations

1940[1] (W. S. Budworth and Son, NY)
Frank Mechau
Oronzio Maldarelli
Peppino Mangravite

1941 (W. S. Budworth and Son, NY)
Frank Mechau
Oronzio Maldarelli
Peppino Mangravite

1942 (W. S. Budworth and Son, NY)
Frank Mechau
Oronzio Maldarelli
Peppino Mangravite

1943 (Newcomb-Macklin, Chicago)
Frank Mechau
Oronzio Maldarelli
Peppino Mangravite

1944 (W. S. Budworth and Son, NY)
Frank Mechau
Oronzio Maldarelli
Peppino Mangravite

1945 (W. S. Budworth and Son, NY)
Frank Mechau
Oronzio Maldarelli
Peppino Mangravite

1946 (W. S. Budworth and Son, NY)
Frank Mechau
Oronzio Maldarelli
Peppino Mangravite

1947 (Newcomb-Macklin, Chicago)
Dan Catton Rich
Rainey Bennett
Hale Woodruff

[1] Years refer to the year that the Art Jury met, usually in the months of March or April. Fellows selected at these meetings were awarded fellowships that usually began that year and ran through the following; Jacob Lawrence, whose work was evaluated by the Art Jury at its April 10, 1940 meeting, was awarded a fellowship on April 17, 1940; its support spanned from May, 1940 to May, 1941.

1948 (Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago)
Katharine Kuh
Max Kahn
Jacob Lawrence

Appendix F
Julius Rosenwald Fund Fellowship Program Directors

George R. Arthur, 1928-1934[1]
Raymond R. Paty, 1936-1938[2]
George M. Reynolds, 1938-1941
William C. Haygood, 1941-1943, 1946-1947
Vandi V. Haygood (acting director), 1943-1946
Hilde Reitzes (acting director), 1947-1948

[1] Arthur's administration of the Fellowship Program during these years was informal—part of his role as Associate Director for Negro Welfare. Functionally, however, his administrative labor resembled much of what the Director for Fellowships would later perform.
[2] The Division of Fellowships was officially created in 1937, and with it the new officer of Director for Fellowships. During the years 1934-1936, there was no officer or administrator dedicated to Fellowships within the Rosenwald Fund.