



Le corps d'une femme noire américaine

A body of work focused on the black female body in American culture
from past to present, through a trans-temporal lens of a
Fictive Sisterhood Kinship

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Thinking Partner

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts, Dance

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Even in dolls, our tendency to objectify
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Sep 10, 2020

She's the winner if you disagree go argue with your ancestors..

#PeriodChallenge

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To my ancestral mothers, aunties, sisters...

Thank you Ssehura
Thank you Josephine Baker
Thank you Katherine Dunham
Thank you Pearl Primus
Thank you Nina Simone
Thank you Corretta Scott King
Thank you Audre Lorde
Thank you Great Grandma Gail Waitkins
Thank you Grandma Sarah
Thank you Grandma Lilliance Mae
Thank you Audre Lorde
Thank you Shirley Chishlom

We appreciate you deeply Angela Davis
We appreciate you deeply Michelle Obama
We appreciate you deeply Beyonce
We appreciate you deeply Serena Williams
We appreciate you deeply Venus Williams
We appreciate you deeply Oprah Winfrey
We appreciate you deeply Viola Davis
We appreciate you deeply Issa Rae

We see you, we love you, we stand with you Megan Thee Stallion
We see you, we love you, we stand with you Sha'Carri Richardson
We see you, we love you, we stand with you Simone Biles
We see you, we love you, we stand with you Gabby Douglass
We see you, we love you, we stand with you Naomi Osaka

I love you Grandma Sarah
I love you Grandma Lilliance Mae
I love you Stephanie Williams
I love you Rhonda Kelley
I love you Pamala Bell
I love you Wanda Kelley
I love you Auntie Lurlene
I love you Auntie Calgene
I love you Aunt Fan

I dare you to prepare a
table and see who breaks
bread in your honor.
I hope you
show up famished and in
exchange fed and fulfilled.
I hope you are celebrated,
I hope you find souls that
will dedicate a toast to you.

Cheer for you.

I hope they
arrest the waiters attention
to pour and refill your cup
for you.

That you deserve.

Desserts sweet like good
news, I hope your people find you.

.
. .
. .

Original Thoughts
By @morewineplease.podcast

My work & my research are heavily intertwined into the same vessel that is my being. Embracing this black body has allowed me to truly connect and rediscover my lineage, power in being, and ancestral soul. My research examines why I & we as black women have evolved and will continue to evolve into the cultural curators and creators that our gifts make it possible for us to be.

My research uprooted some deep & dark histories as to the abuse the black female body has endured within oppressive constructs, our own self hatred, and forced familial assimilation tactics to enable access to white dominant spaces which sometimes further diluted the force of creative resistance.

Simply put, I desire to reclaim my African name. During my time of study, I had my head read & I found that my Orisha is Yemoja with the presence of Ogun. In finding myself, and getting closer to my native roots, I have found a natural power & a rejuvenated spirit that's closer to God & the goddess within.


My intention is to showcase a progression that begins with researching the lineage & roots of black women in America, continues to the transition of reckoning with our power within a historical context, and moves to the present day life force that is our goldmine. I wanted to create a roadmap, if you will, from our past to our present as to how we got here, and as to how we will continue on.





My childhood church building,
where my dance practice
began in the basement.

Formally Cascade United Methodist Church



All this passion for dance started because of my learning disabilities & my mother's need for a babysitter while she attended choir rehearsal...

This passion, this creativity, this overachieving and sometimes overreaching personality is a direct response to the extreme learning disabilities I endured as a child. Setting the scene; it's the early 90s and I'm a newbie to the public school education system. I managed to finish my 5th grade year, however I struggled beyond belief. As a result, my parents and teachers decided to hold me back another year to ensure I had a proper foundation to prepare for middle and high school. Hindsight is 20/20 and I get it now, however I was severely crushed then. My life was never the same from that point forward, however this was also a pivotal moment where I first encountered dance and learned how dance could give me the space to be free. My story reminds me of the life of award winning choreographer Gillian Lynne, who struggled deeply in school, however became the creator and choreographer of two of the longest running shows in Broadway history, CATS & The Phantom Of The Opera. Cliche maybe, however dance became my sanctuary & fortress, propelling me through life plus teaching me that anything I wanted was attainable so long as I applied & willed myself to move through any challenge or obstacle.

Karen Bates-Hill, my middle school special education teacher, was the engine that taught me my most important life lesson. I don't even know if she meant to do this, however she taught me that there is always a creative solution out of any situation. The way she taught me the intricacies of an Algebraic equation, manifests in the way I structure my choreographic phrases & across the floor jazz progressions. How she helped me with the understanding of science, base to acidic chemical atomic compound make up, directly relates to how I choose the spectrum of emotional range within my dance practice or preparation for film & tv choreography. She gave me my roadmap in a way I didn't realize would impact my dance work through the present day.





PIVOT



I understand more why dance is necessary, it's the idiom predestined for me as to how I came to love



myself, cultivate others, and further my understanding and connection to black womanhood.

Hauntology - I'm being haunted by my past self...
moving toward the urgent questions of what my life is now.

All these characters are housed inside me...
black women living in our essence right now

fully

manifested

now.

even when it is bumping up against
what society tried to make us into...

y e a

I found my freedom.

Asé

QUEERING THE LE

PIA

NS | A RE-ORIENTATION

NOT

spectatorship in interviews

Like Foucault and Bourdieu, Bakhtin identifies the body as the site where the social has most deeply invested its values. Yet Bakhtin's version of this socialized physicality is mutable, **capable of taking on different forms**. Not failed or distorted, but rather irrepressible, the **grotesque body represents that moment when the social body is sensual, abundant**, "grandiose, exaggerated, immeasurable." The move this body makes is that of degradation—"the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity." **This body shuns the geometric ideals expressed in ballet in favor of the bumps and grinds of burlesque.** The syntax of its movement centers on the gut, rather than the heart or the head.⁰¹

**Throw that, twerk it
I want a slim, fine woman with some twerk with her
Shake that, bounce that**

"Twerk"
City Girls

I decided to conduct a series of interviews with my 99 year old grandfather, colleagues, dance scholars & historians, to flesh out some of the questions I've often had in my head about my particular anatomical makeup of the black female body. I'm a Hershey's milk chocolate hue, so I would have never passed the brown paper bag test. My 'goldmine' (buttoxx) is a pretty round brown, as my aunt Wanda likes to nickname hers. Big eyes, and pronounced facial features, size 36D chest, and long dancer legs with a medium length torso. To put it simply, I'm a Coke bottle shape black woman...

I know what I endured in my lived experiences, however I was so curious to know what their experiences are and were in relation to the black female body.

The conversations were wildly perfect, vulnerable, and raw. I based my questions on the 5 principles of The Africanist Aesthetics that Dr. Brenda Dixon - Gottschild describes in her book *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance, Dance and other Contexts*. I was blessed with the opportunity to include Dr. Gottschild within my research, to which she further schooled me on where and how she collected the 5 principles.

I am forever grateful for each and everyone's time, willingness to be real with me, and sharing of their stories.

[Context Statement]

My voice to your eyes:

Understand this - "I said what I said" is the sentiment of my intention within this space. Simply meaning, I decided as a black woman to enter into a safe space with a beautiful and diverse cast of individuals [interviewees] to further gain an understanding of what I've personally experienced as a black female commercial dance artist & body. I wanted to hear directly what others' experiences have been, however in no way shape or form should their personal perspectives be seen as a seeking of validation towards this black body. This robust black femininity stands proudly on its own two fine as hell feet.

Referencing the Three levels of human experience & the ten canons of fine form, there is no possible way I can teach you or gift you the experience of what it means to be a black woman. You MUST endure, survive, and triumph through your mama's hot kitchen on a warm spring night, when she washes your kinky coils, blows them dry, oils your scalp, then knicks you by accident on your ear with hot grease and a straightening comb for an Easter Sunday press out, while passing down her stories or gossiping like Blondell Cummings in *Chicken Soup*. Better yet, when Big Mama tells you to go fetch a switch for a classic old school a\$\$ whooping, and you had the audacity to bring back a twigg. You already know you are in even bigger trouble now.

Overstand this, when a young black girl grows into her power as an adult, the triumphs accomplished through many prayers and focused energy from her village is what gets her through, when life gets real.





Brenda Dixon-Gottschild

Re: Referral From Dr. Ras Mickey!

To: Cicely Kelley

June 9, 2021 at 3:56 PM

Dear CiCi, Greetings and wishing you well.

We met on Zoom a few months ago, and I believe I responded to a question you posed. I'm glad that those 2 books of mine resonate for you.

Just so you remember, the Ten Canons of Fine Form (RFT), which I extrapolated and appropriated in Digging, were meant as a lens for examining performance for an audience, not particularly for quotidian performance (which is the way you're using them in questioning the Black female body in everyday life). I guess it's possible, though you need to state, up front, that you're looking at a wider definition of these Canons than either RFT or I intended. Just so long as you say that clearly, so your methodology is understood.

That said, I simply don't have time between now and your deadline, as I'm getting my stuff together for a keynote at a conference mid-July.

If you wish, we could switch it, so that you'd phone me, record me for not more than 15 minutes, and extrapolate what you desire from our talk. Even so, I wouldn't be available until the week of the 21st, since I'll be away the previous week. Let me know.

In any case,, highest good on your project.

Peace,

Dr. Brenda

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild, Ph.D.

Prof. Emerita, Temple University

bdixongottschild.com and Facebook

We must use time wisely and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right.

Nelson Mandela

Transparent moment: I totally had a fan girl moment when she corrected me.... I was TOO happy!!

Good Morning Dr. Gottschild!

Thank you so much for your words and deeper explanation of your intention for Digging. You've already provided great aid in the correction of my research and understandings!

Yes, in complete respect of your time and willingness to participate, I can wait until the week of the 21st to give you a call to discuss/interview the material for my thesis. Please let me know a day and time that works best for your schedule, and I will send you a calendar invite to confirm.

Again, thank you tremendously for your time & energy!

Disclaimer:

Dr. Dixon-Gottschild has granted me free rein to utilize the contents of our email exchange, without her correcting or amending the written conversation.

**Brenda Dixon-Gottschild**

June 10, 2021 at 9:56 AM

Fwd: Black Excellence Weekly RoundUp

[Details](#)

To: Cicely Kelley, Cc: Brenda Dixon Gottschild

Actually, CiCi, going with your extending of Africanist Aesthetics into quotidian life, watch the IG video of Johnniqua Charles, below: truly an example of high-affect juxtaposition, perhaps also ephebism (as she becomes almost schoolgirlish, while the young security guard's suddenly the father figure). So there is certainly something to be said about bringing these principles to light as African-descended folk enact "performance in everyday life," if you will. So don't throw your thesis premise out the window.

We can talk BRIEFLY on Tuesday June 22 at 3 pm, if that'll work for you. Tuesday's my best day. Send me your number.

Peace,

Dr. B

With enlightenment from my email exchange with Dr. Brenda Dixon - Gottschild, I entered into these investigative interviews with these very important understandings of my ancestry...

Three levels of human experience from which African-based dance cannot be extricated⁰²

1. worldview
2. personal identity
3. collective identity

Thompson's Ten Canons Of Fine Form⁰³

1. get-down quality: descending direction in melody, sculpture and dance
2. vividness cast in equilibrium (whole foot on ground)
3. multiple meter: dancing many drums
4. simultaneous suspension & preservation of the beat
5. looking smart: playing the patterns w nature & w line (improvisation)
6. call and response: the politics of perfection
7. ephebism: the stronger power that comes from youth
8. correctness in entrance & exit
9. ancestorism: ability to incarnate destiny
10. 'an aesthetic of the cool' coolness: truth and generosity regained

⁰² Quizlet

⁰³ Judith Lynne Hanna, review of African Art in Motion: Icon and Act, by Robert Farris Thompson. Dance Research Journal 7, no. 1 (1975): 31-33

Dear Interviewee,

Thank you so much for being a part of this research and conversation relating to black women's bodies and the perspectives on her presence in contemporary American life. I'm really curious to dive into the spectatorship of this performing body, as it relates to its place within society as well as what society has taken from it. Your thoughts and perspective are highly valued and greatly appreciated!

Please be honest, open, real, and raw, as to what it is that you see and or have experienced with the black female body as a whole...

5 Principles of the Africanist Aesthetics by Brenda Dixon - Gottschild Digging The Africanist Presence in American Performance⁰⁴

5 different people.
5 different abilities.
5 different ages.
5 different ethnicities.
5 different orientations
5 different questions

Note: The interviews are transcribed in the original rhythm of our conversation.
This is reason for repetitive names. The transcription has been left unedited.

Preface: What is your viewership on the black female body as a...

04 Dr. Brenda Dixon - Gottschild, *Digging The Africanist Presence In American Performance*. (Westport, CT. Pranger Publishers. 1996) Pg. 11-16

1. Embrace The Conflict

Definition: In a broad sense, the Africanist aesthetic can be understood as a precept of contrariety, or an encounter of opposites. The conflict inherent in and implied by difference, discord, and irregularity is encompassed, rather than erased or necessarily resolved.⁰⁵

Question: Thinking about the Aesthetic of Cool definition (see #5), what's your reaction when you see a black woman break mentally, physically, spiritually?

George Staib
Male
Professor Of Dance
Emory University
Iranian-Armenian Descent

CiCi Kelley: The question I want to ask you is.

CiCi Kelley: Yes, number one. embracing the conflict.

CiCi Kelley: So in thinking of the aesthetic of the cool, and when I think of the aesthetic of the cool, it's maintaining a real cool posture you know, whatever chaos may be going on in your life, you always maintain kind of like a stoic presence.

CiCi Kelley: So based off that, what is your reaction when you see a black woman break mentally, physically, or spiritually? You know the stereotype is that black women have to be superwomen, we have to be all of these things.

CiCi Kelley: but when she finally breaks; you know just can't take that weight anymore, have you seen that, have you experienced that?

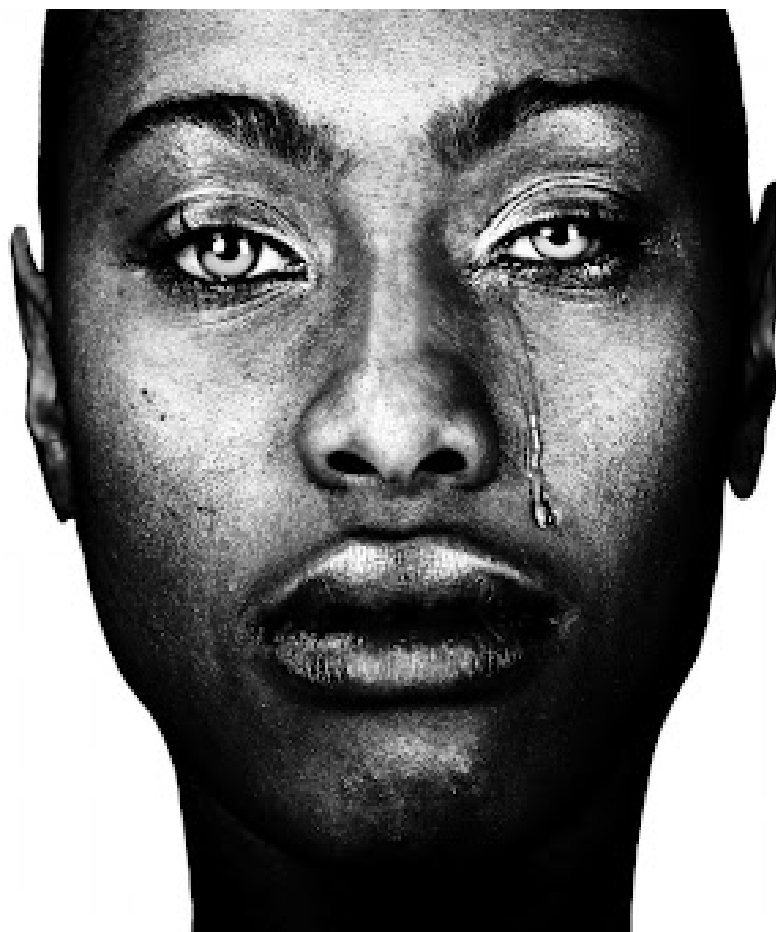
George Staib: I've seen it in different iterations, one where it's really subtle and you can't tell that the breakdown is happening, and then the other one is dramatic like almost...

George Staib: hysterics but then I also think how much of that is what I've assigned to; because when I read this about the aesthetics of cool it's like wow, that is a real thing.

George Staib: There's real; like the containment kind of inside, especially with my students to just keep it together, and I think that's probably a defense mechanism against micro aggression & macro aggressions.

George Staib: and assumptions and so on, so for me it's kind of like I associated with the straw that breaks the camel's back that something would be a trigger for losing the cool and you don't necessarily know what that is.

George Staib: And for me, I have to stop because I think this is not just this thing, this could be a week's worth of stuff, it could be a year, or a lifetime of stuff, so it is staggering sometimes...



2. Polyrhythmic/Polycentrism

Definition: From the Africanist standpoint, movement may emanate from any part of the body, and two or more centers may operate simultaneously. Polycentrism runs counter to academic European aesthetics, where the ideal is to initiate movement from one locus- the nobly lifted, upper center of the aligned torso, well above the pelvis.⁰⁶

Question: Thoughts on the assets of the black woman in movement. What's your view on twerking?

Bubba Carr
Male
Choreographer
Creative Director
Photographer

⁰⁶ Gottschild. *Africanist Presence*. Pg. 11-16

Charles's iPhone: yeah Big Freeda.

Charles's iPhone: Big Freeda that's when I first became, like I saw twerking to her music.

Charles's iPhone: And just the rhythmic quality of it and the control factor, and the expression that you can get just shaking your butt you know, like just the rhythms in the Round, I thought that was intriguing.

Charles's iPhone: And I think, from a movement standpoint and self expression standpoint, it can be interesting rhythmically.

Charles's iPhone: But then I get caught up in the sexual.

Charles's iPhone: acts, the sexual objectification of that move.

Charles's iPhone: You know and and, yes, It just kind of had me this... I've been in and out of the zone and like Okay, to me the movement and then hyper sexualized dance and.

Charles's iPhone: The really super explicit lyrics and a lot of the rap songs today's and Megan Thee Stallion & Cardi B, they're so over the top, and I'm no prude I mean Come on, I lived in the 80s in LA!!

Charles's iPhone: So I've been there and done most of that but...

Charles's iPhone: But you know I just I just kind of like I'm torn between is it objectification is it.

Charles's iPhone: You know, it is, I think that movement form is used to entice men to give you money.

Charles's iPhone: In certain settings you know so, is it a power move on behalf of the female?

Charles's iPhone: Or is it?

Charles's iPhone: Trying to give them, you know it's I mean I can't think of it like from a

Charles's iPhone: stripper's perspective, you know but, but I think part of it gives women power over their bodies and how they extract what they need or want from men in a strip club and part of it is self expression and self empowerment.

Charles's iPhone: If you do it in front of the wrong people then they're going to look at you in a certain way.

Charles's iPhone: You know, so I don't know it's it's interesting.

CiCi Kelley: in regards to who's really you know owning it, like does the woman own it because she's getting what she needs out of that man? Or is it the man that owns it because she's doing it for his pleasure, does that make sense?

Charles's iPhone: yeah and I think that each person has their own perspective, so if i'm a man in a strip club, i'm like yeah this "B" wants me and I'm throwing her some money because i'm going to get some of that.

Charles's iPhone: You know.

Charles's iPhone: And I think there's a spectrum of that you know to where there's people that think to the dirtiest edge of it and then think something like, oh she's working hard for the money!

Charles's iPhone: i'm going to help support her, I appreciate that the gay boy in the strip club looks at that booty to twerk, yes talent! you know I love her, I love the color of her G string.

Charles's iPhone: You know, so I think you have a spectrum of debt from the male side and then you have the female side where like oh i'm gonna get my money or i'm going to get more from this guy like be the sugar Daddy you know, like.

Charles's iPhone: and give him more of me because I want more for whatever I need. I'm trying to get my college, babies, houses, cars, whatever it is, you know, so I think it can be used by all people in different ways to get what you want... It's like it's almost like a currency.

CiCi Kelley: ummmmm, yeah, currency, wow!

Charles's iPhone: I mean twerking is the new bitcoin bitch!

CiCi Kelley: Listennnnnn!!



3. High Affect Juxtaposition

Definition: Mood, attitude, or movement breaks that omit the transitions and connective links valued in the European academic aesthetic are the keynote to this principle. For example, a driving mood may overlap and coexist with a light and humorous tone, or imitative and abstract movements may be juxtaposed.⁰⁷

Question: A mother, degree'd, high valued, yet a woman who appreciates the satisfaction of her sexual desires & orientation?

Dr. Floretta Barbee-Watkins
Female
Transitional General Presbyter
African American Descent

⁰⁷ Gottschild. *Africanist Presence*. Pg. 11-16

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: And in that case I will let you choose the question.

CiCi Kelley: All right, wonderful let's see um, ah OK so we're going to do number three, High Affect Juxtaposition and the question is...

CiCi Kelley: what is your viewership of the black female body as a mother, degree'd, highly valued woman, yet a woman who appreciates the satisfaction of her sexual desires and orientation.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: Like that has to be my one question....? [laughs]

CiCi Kelley: I mean it's family so naturally I feel you know, a sense of comfort to just be authentically me and silly and whatever it is, but at the same time I am experiencing an emotion of conflict in asking that question to a Reverend... I'm just gonna say that. [giggles]

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: got it!

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: So um.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: hmm, so I am on the tail end of the baby boomers, so I was born in 1964, but my parents were two generations behind me because of their age, and my age.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: My parents had been married for 10 years, and so they had a completely different understanding of sexuality than I did or in that, in which I grew into... so when I think about...

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: Being a same gender loving woman who identifies as a woman, and I want to say that clearly as well.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: Which doesn't necessarily dictate what I wear, but it does dictate, who I love, so I have a wife, we have been faithfully together for 16 years, and so, when we talk about sexuality, I think that there's a certain way to frame that.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: to frame same gender loving sexuality might be different than the hetero-normative ways of looking at that, and So for me...

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: I could not be fully self expressed in my sexuality, because of the time in which I grew up, the time in which I'm trying to identify, like "who I am" and so because of that.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: It was, it was a struggle, like right, and the struggle was real!

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: I had to consider all of the socio social norms.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: The anthropological norms.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: All these things that say this is what it means to be a woman, and this is what it takes; the

means to be a woman, and a black woman in this society during this time, so I'm a mother, because my wife has a daughter.

Dr. Flo Barbie-Watkins: But I have used my 'motherhood' in ways of nurturing and ways of providing and ways of supporting.

Dr. Flo Barbie-Watkins: So my biological 'motherhood' is not there.

Dr. Flo Barbie-Watkins: But I think about...

Dr. Flo Barbie-Watkins: Shiphrah and Puah in the Old Testament when the slaves were.

Dr. Flo Barbie-Watkins: They were pregnant, they were supposed to, you know, be taken off, and you know just drop the babies in the field... but Shiphrah and Puah they were midwives, who ushered in something new.

Dr. Flo Barbie-Watkins: So I look at motherhood more than just a biological thing of birthing a baby, it's the ability to bring something to life.

Dr. Flo Barbie-Watkins: and much of my life has been spent that exact way bringing something to life, bringing even dead things...

Dr. Flo Barbie-Watkins: to life, we can talk about that differently too and, there's a scripture in a passage of scripture that talks about a woman.

Dr. Flo Barbie-Watkins: Anyway, we're talking about that later... So as a person who is degreed, I have a doctorate of education, but I also have a mother, who was first generation college educated.

Dr. Flo Barbie-Watkins: and so there was never this idea for me of 'like are you going to college?', of course, yes I am but...

Dr. Flo Barbie-Watkins: Then there comes the sexuality piece.

Dr. Flo Barbie-Watkins: And again, you know how do you begin to deal with that when you start thinking about, you know your body, and the images of the body, the body shame that black women go through if it's not small enough...

Dr. Flo Barbie-Watkins: Or if it's not big enough, you know, and the fashion police, and the body patrolling those things that particularly black women have to contend with, you know now Angelina Jolie she is getting botox lips bigger than mine.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: You know, and yet there's something about the width of my nose that you say needs to narrow it.'

CiCi Kelley: mm hmm.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: So this whole.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: thing that keeps spinning on itself, and then you come to the place of sexuality and sexual desires, yeah so the Church has been complicit and making certain that sex is not enjoyable.

CiCi Kelley: mm hmm.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: Or that it comes, there's a part of it that becomes a sin suddenly after you're married, no one saying.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: You gotta ask the question... What are we really teaching and are really talking about? If sexuality is a gift from God to be explored to be embraced all those things... the church doesn't give that message at all.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: yeah that one bit of.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: but yet our society has been irresponsible with sexuality.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: mm hmm a free for all, I mean I grew up in Atlanta where Freakin was...

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: There were some things going on!

CiCi Kelley: really strange.

Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins: really strange.



Philly



Jawn

4. Ephebism

Definition: Emanating from the ancient Greek word for youth (ephebe), this principle encompasses attributes such as power, vitality, flexibility, drive, and attack.

I interviewed my grandfather in relation to his youth and relationship with my grandmother Sarah Kelley, during their courtship⁰⁸.

Charlie Kelley
99 years young
Male
Retired War Vet
African American Descent

Charlie Kelley: A pure doll, whatever the top that you can think can be said, add it to it, that would've been that.

Charlie Kelley: She was a beautiful grandmama, and she loved y'all very much

Charlie Kelley: I didn't go far in school, I don't know some of these real nice words to say, like you could say it, but whatever you think you would have said, you put that in there.

Charlie Kelley: You see, I didn't get a chance to go that far in school. I think I went to the 5th grade and that's as far as I went.

Charlie Kelley: That was some days when it wasn't raining and then we had to walk 4 miles, and if it was raining, well then we had to miss them days. Sometimes I went to school maybe only one day, and that was just on Friday. I should've been going 5 days...so maybe you should write that.

Charlie Kelley: She was very lovely and nice, her family was lovely and nice. We didn't have no trouble or arguments. She was just real nice and sweet, and that's just all.

Charlie Kelley
(aka Duracell)

Born March 29, 1922
currently 99 years old

Sarah Elizabeth Kelley
Sunrise: December 2, 1925 | Sunset April 8, 2006

Married
April of 1946

60 years of marriage

I miss you dearly grandma



5. Aesthetic Of The Cool

Definition: This character is all embracing. It lives in the other concepts, and they reside in it. It is an attitude (in the sense that African Americans use that word) that combines composure with vitality⁰⁹.

Question: What is your view on the black woman being upheld to a standard that she can handle everything, multitask, be domestic, sexually pleasing to her partner, yet maintain her cool throughout all of the facets and faces she puts on in public.

Dr. Brenda Dixon-Gottschild
Prof. Emerita, Temple University
bdixongottschild.com

+

Dr. RAS Mickey Courtney
Critically Acclaimed Dance Professional
Professor In Dance
Wayne State University

Disclaimer:

Dr. Dixon - Gottschild has granted me free rein to utilize the contents of our interview, without her correcting or amending the recorded conversation.

⁰⁹ Gottschild. *Africanist Presence*. Pg. 11-16

CiCi Kelley: Yes, I'm looking to find the matriculation of growth from the black woman's past to our present as it relates to the ownership of our bodies and sexuality. How did we come from Sarah Baartman a Khoi Khoi woman, through to Josephine Baker, & present day Megan Thee Stallion from Houston Texas.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: mm hmm Okay, because that's one kind of line of thought and I'm then thinking, and of course, you are thinking of.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: certain kinds of.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: African descended bodies.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: One of the things that I would do if I were reading this is, I would challenge you to...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: That stereotype, because that **is certainly not all of African descended female bodies**, I mean it's certainly not my body.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: You know it's certainly not and it's not like because I took ballet and they told me to tuck my butt in, I just have a different body. You know...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Africa is a big continent, and for us to simply look at those which is fine that you're doing, but just to again maybe say in a disclaimer at the beginning I'm looking at this certain lineage, which of course has to do with colonialist patriarchy that's what that line is about.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: And you know, I mean luckily Josephine in a very beautiful elegant way...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: People like Megan and Beyonce I guess that's elegant you know I don't know.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: I don't know if Cardi B and Megan are elegant you know.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: But they then capitalized on that they were smart in saying "oh you..."

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: metaphorically saying "Oh, you took."

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Sarah Baartman, and gave her that name.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: You then put her up as a circus.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: phenomenon.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: And you profited from her you even then started your folks wearing bustles, now have your folks getting injections of silicone to get butt

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: BUT, look what Josephine did with that, look that she used your capitalism against you, in a sense, and she made her own profit, as did Beyonce my God, and the others, Cardi B, & what's her name Megan. That in a sense, it's almost like what...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Trevor Noah says in a beautiful long interview he has with Cory Booker, I love just seeing this, Trevor said something about...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: I think, I'm quoting Trevor and just loosely quoting him, 'I think, actually African people have colonized the white world because we have snuck in,' and.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Everything they do is really like us, you know and they've maybe tried to do us in reverse or otherwise, they just have us up there, like Beyonce and Cardi and Megan you know so that's one way to talk about it.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: This is the colonized...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: The white; that Bell Hooks line; 'The white imperialist patriarchal supremacist fantasy.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Of the black female body, and that is not all!! and I would not want again, as I said, I think you could then do that as a preface or a disclaimer. I'm going in that direction.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Please understand I'm just exploring that.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: That is not my assumption of my body or any other black body we come from a continent.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: DNA is spread all over the place, not only in Africa, but all through the world, because everybody is African descended, and there are many, very many different body types, you know there's so many long people like me, I used to be thin but there's so many long legged.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: You know thin assed, excuse me black women, you know I mean there's all different types.

CiCi Kelley: Right yeah yeah.

CiCi Kelley: That's very true.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: yeah yeah all you have to do is like, if you think about the last time you saw the Ailey company or even.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Like I'm thinking of an African dance company, Illeife, right, but there's, you know you just think about all the different kinds of female bodies that you see, and then, in a sense, you know I would almost want to say it's unfair to...



Entertainer, spy for the French
Resistance, civil rights icon,
and adoptive mother of 12

By: Denise Shelton
www.historyofyesterday.com

Josephine Baker posing in her
famous banana
costume from
La Revue Nègre



Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: lineage us in only one direction, you know we... what would I like to say, we, that Walt Whitman line "I encompass multitudes."

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: or something like that.

CiCi Kelley: You know mm hmm.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: So yeah so that's my thought about that yeah...

CiCi Kelley: yeah so many words are coming to my head, i'm thinking of assimilation in respect to what you were saying about Trevor Noah, black people or maybe we're the colonizers.

CiCi Kelley: I talked about in my research is one of the things that especially my parents' generation definitely did, is they would...

CiCi Kelley: Thinking about code switching, they would make sure our names were names that, regardless of where you see it on paper, it'll pass us through in terms of employment, so they would change our... not 'change our names,' but intentionally name us white names so to speak.

CiCi Kelley: And I remember Harris talking to me about that well, the reason why you want to make sure you name your child, this is so that in any environment they don't.

CiCi Kelley: automatically assume that you're black.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: yeah their version then would probably be names like mine, which is Brenda Mae, you know...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Not names like Ki-esha, and we weren't, at that generation, your parents' generation, it wasn't so much I think Latoya and Ki-esha yeah, but it was more like...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: I don't know, maybe I'll, well maybe that's even a you know i'm old enough to be your grandmother, I mean that earlier generation, they were names like Brenda Mae or...

CiCi Kelley: My grandmother's name is Lilliance Mae.

CiCi Kelley: Okay yeah.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Right, which I love now, but yeah right, I hear her I hear her and hear what they were saying yes...

CiCi Kelley: wow oh man, this is so good, so good.

CiCi Kelley: Yes, the only other question I had that I did based off of your Africanist Aesthetic of the Cool, was what is your view on the black.

CiCi Kelley: Woman being upheld to a standard that she can handle everything, multitask be domestic, sexually pleasing to her partner, yet maintain her cool throughout all of the facets and faces she puts on in public.

CiCi Kelley: So i'm thinking like a Kamala Harris, yes.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Okay, all right.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: and she certainly was cool yeah but again.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Maybe that's another example of the Trevor Noah

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Little mantra or whatever, that other people take. I'm thinking about other women like Nancy Pelosi.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: You know she's got the same, and she's 82 or something! And she always wears her wonderful little dresses. She is so cute and I loved it when she...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: When they thought, when somebody asked her... Do you hate trump?

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: very black what she said, and you will excuse me, she didn't say don't Fuck with me.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: But she said...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: 'don't mess with me,' she said to them 'don't mess with me.'

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Now that is very cool, and very black! She could have said...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: don't want to mess with me, I'm a Catholic I pray for him every day.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Now that.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Yes, now that was the coolest possible answer she could have... so I mean that kind of thing seems to me.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: How all of...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Certainly, a contemporary millennial European womanhood has assimilated, what used to be looked upon as 'oh dear,' you know, those black women who are single parents who have kids and have to work...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Now, everybody wants to work.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: And everybody.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: wants to be the superwoman that turned against us and now again, like so many other things from us now it's the norm! (co-option of blackness)

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: yeah so and I mean that is certainly about going back to your butt ladies.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: You know, Sarah and Josephine and Megan, that now everybody wants that!

CiCi Kelley: You know yeah.



Melanated Minds

Thursday at 2:31 PM · 🌐



Today's BLACK BLACK History Moment:
1957- Louisa Jenkins, the first woman to "wish a muthafcuka would".



themelanintimes



themelanintimes A vibe! Follow
[@blackwealthplaybook](#) 📌

2w



wand.a987 😂😂😂😂 Looks like
she mean every single word 😂😂



2w 257 likes Reply

— View replies (1)



paxton_wayne She ant going to
take no shit lol



2w 142 likes Reply



themelanintimes .



16,208 likes

JULY 6



And thats just on that MF! |

Post



Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: So many examples of where we started out when we do it, or even the big earrings, I've talked about that in some lectures. You know that was ratchet.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: You know when yeah we were doing it, it was ratchet! I love that word!

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: What was trivial, what is that word?

CiCi Kelley: Trifling?

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: Yes, trifling, that's it!

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: priceless.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: It's priceless.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: You know now all doing the same thing with the braids.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: You know, so I think there's...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: A big big seed of truth in that.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: How we are expected to be now,
has become more and more...

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: The norm, or the aspiration
of working women of all kinds.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: You know.

Brenda Dixon-Gottschild: That you can do all,
like that Peggy Lee song,
you know, 'I can do this,
I can do that, I'm a woman!'



Dr. RAS Mickey Courtney
(recorded interview session)

My thoughts about this are generally... I think people who think this way I know that I was raised by a woman who was extraordinary, and who reflected this aesthetic of cool. So my mother is an anomaly, she's kind of And I always say expectation is the mother of disappointment... So to put of us are perfect, If we were perfect then we would be omnipotent, we'd people for their differences is how we move forward in humanity. So putting this life that's fair. But it's a further reflection of the patriarchal ultimately everything that we create a standard for women, the same standard

So, there is no standard in general because everybody is uniquely and women or all men, should in essence live by?...And the whole meaning that the way that I embody the notion of being cool and relaxed, and person, because my life is different, how I engage is different so the same different based upon the experiences they've had and whatever experience doesn't really work, and like I said, expectation is the mother are, the more that we can understand who they are environments, and the more we can independently and collectively people for who they are allows us to be successful as more than just

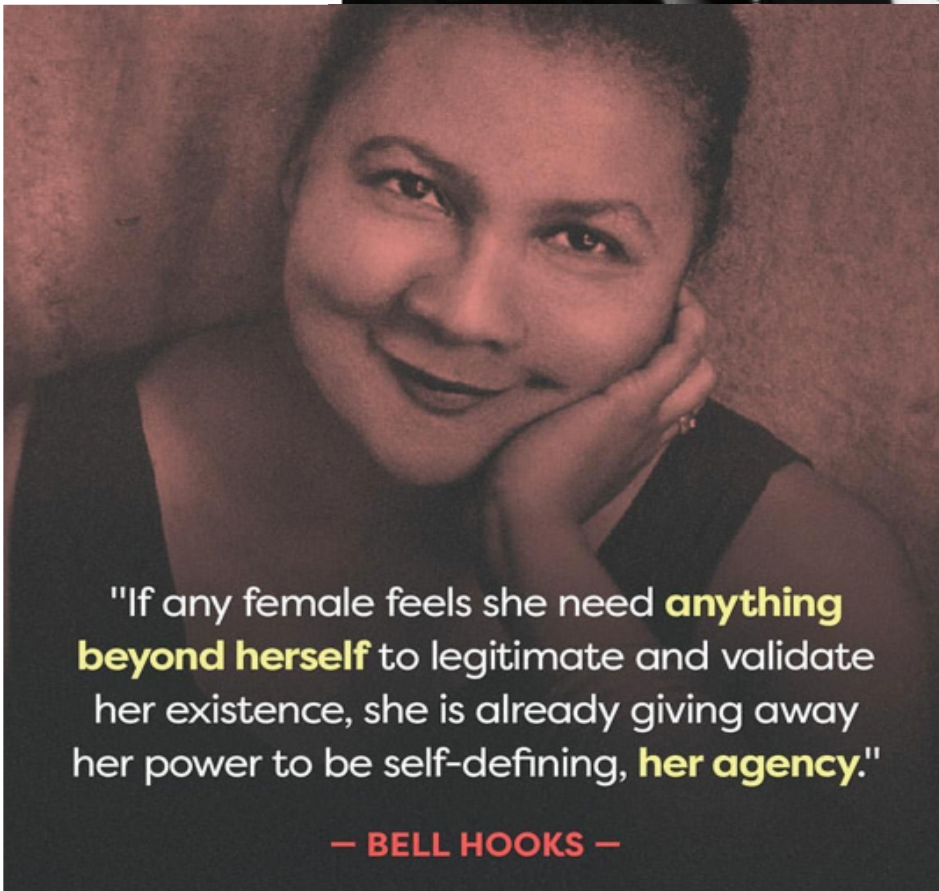
have some what of a God complex about women, and for me personally could pull off all of these things, and still have a public persona that like an exception to the rule...But the reality is, to have this expectation... these expectations upon a human, is essentially too much. None be the creator. We're all made with perceived flaws, and accepting type of pressure on to women, obviously is not fair... And we don't live in a ideal, and not the equal role that the genders play within our existence. Because we should have for men, and other genders that may exist within our lives.

independently made by the creator. So how can we keep one standard that all aesthetic of cool is a very individualistic perspective or perception, having this public persona that's of ease is going to be different then the next thing goes for women, and their perception of that aesthetic is going to be that they're having at that moment. So generally, this standard is wack, it of disappointment, the more that we can accept people for who they and the more aware we become in how to engage with people in our achieve so that awareness of this sort of standard and accepting an individual but as a collective community. Those are my thoughts...



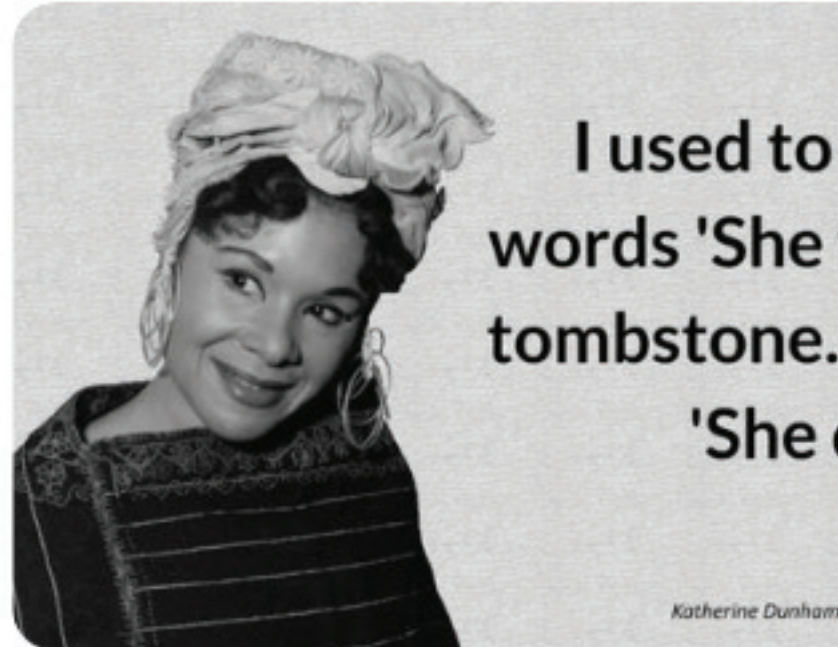
"Dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, revelling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community."

Bell Hooks



"If any female feels she need **anything beyond herself to legitimate and validate her existence, she is already giving away her power to be self-defining, **her agency**."**

— BELL HOOKS —



**I used to
words 'She
tombstone.
'She**

Katherine Dunham

want the
'tried' on my
Now I want
did it'

www.quoteikon.com

"The price
we pay for
being
ourselves
is worth it."

— Eartha Kitt









SSSSSSSS

Middle of this stage, I am stacked; ready to defend.

There's bondage around my body: the constructs of my identity & character.

Implicit is the color of your glare. You badly want to covet me, yet you equate my value to dog shit underneath your feet.

My breast; protruding. Tight ass garment, but I'm cute though.

My posterior extends like my sister Sarah Baartman – however you will not cut me open upon my death.

My stereotypes appear above my head.

You've compartmentalized me. I sway side to side like Mortal Kombat.

The color of my glare is rage, yet the inside... my adolescent voice shivering, needing protection.

You audience me in provocative understanding. To co-opt or opt out?

You want this smoke...

Chocolate melanin with the ability to create all flavors of life forms.

Balanchine who?

I move my body in stimulating positions with ancestral soul.

My thighs quake the earth with every stride of my chasse. With grace, with ferocious pride; I am aware of my sensuality.

Twist to the floor, the show you salivate for, the assets of my frame my hips thrust, leave the cornbread-fed parts of me

rebounding perfectly. That smoke you desire yet fear.

I finish & stand with my right leg tendu derrière.

Lifting my core, I draw my leg into passe, grab my ankle and extend. 180 degrees. Yes, this temple is magic.

That smoke you desire yet fear.

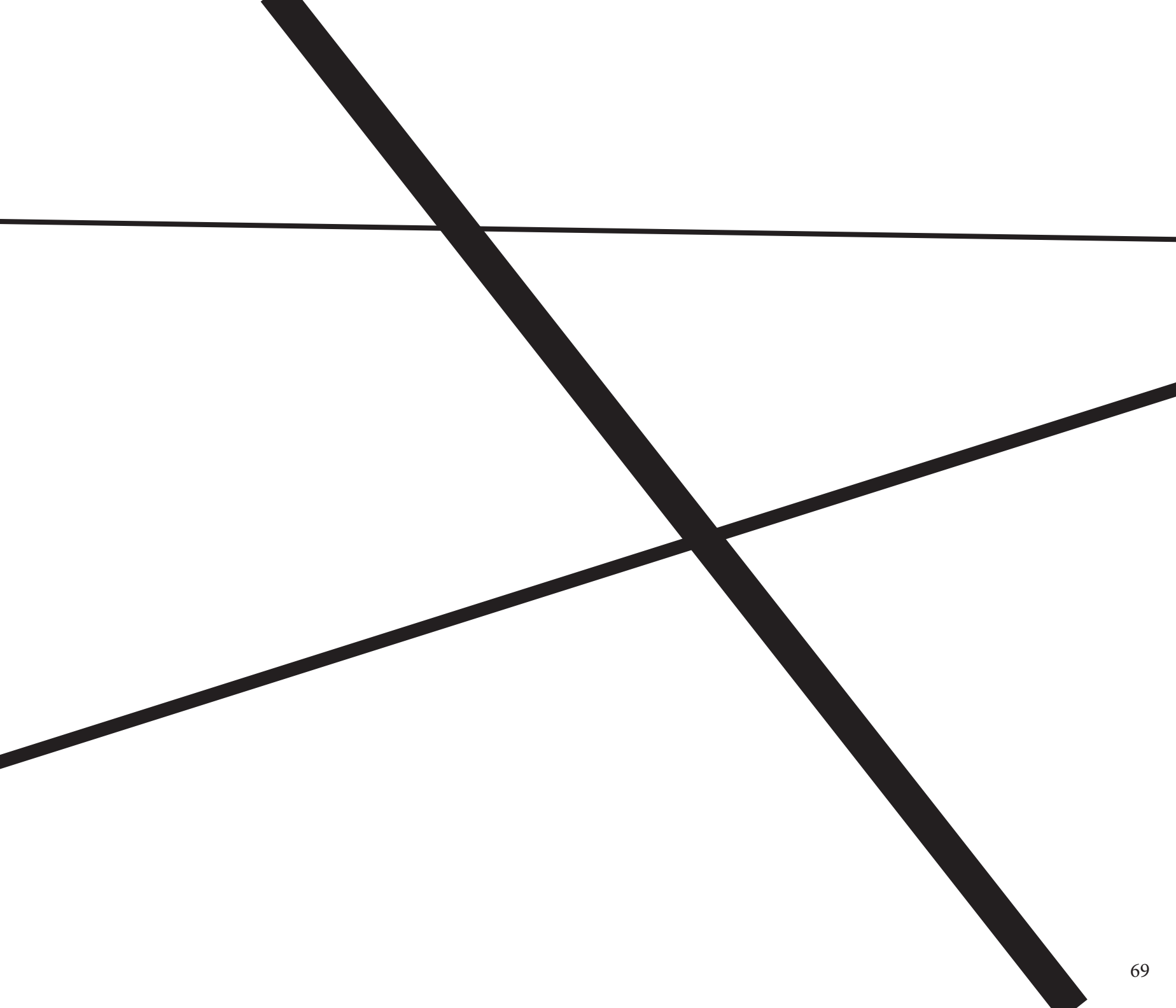


eriod



en français: **pivoter**

**THE INTERSECTIONALITY IN ME
SCHOLARLY RESEARCH + 6 EMBODIMENTS**



From childhood to adulthood/womanhood, I've always been very self aware of the energies that reside within me. These women are all personalities that serve me present day, to guide me and give me strength, however they are also very recognizable in everyday life and happenings through the lived experiences they've individually endured.

Make no mistake, these lived experiences do come at a cost to the physical flesh. This is compounded by oppressive societal and patriarchal constructs that demonize their/our presence yet also house an insatiable appetite to co-opt or abuse every inch of their/our anatomical make-up.

Personally, I feel as though each decade of my life, I am granted the opportunity to fully become possessed by these beautiful spirits and energies, to not only guide me through life but my creative practice as well.

The environment determines the precision or softness of the code switch that we as black women perform daily. These embodiments are extremely powerful, in possession of the gifts to our culture that are housed within, as they cultivate the communities and ecosystems that are blessed with their presence.

**Atlanta Street Femme
Trap Queen
The Child
Yemoja
The Executive
Ensemble**

Captions within the images are intimate conversations through a trans-temporal lens.

Both and...?

“

As a central tenet of their Indian policies, U.S. and Canadian officials were seeking to economize and—in a shift from outright warfare, which was seen as too expensive—instead “kill the Indian in” Native people by disciplining Native bodies through Western institutions. These included literacy and boarding school education; Christianity, marriage, patriarchy, and control of sexuality; medicine and rejection of Native healing practices; wage-labor capitalist productivity and adherence to the doctrines of private property; and imprisonment.

The federal governments’ stated intent in all of these institutions was to “civilize”—and thereby save—a dying people by incorporating Native people (who would then no longer be Indian) into the state. Once differences between Native Americans and European Americans were eradicated, then no special land rights need be accorded Native peoples, and Native land could be absorbed into the United States or Canada and bought, sold, and regulated according to their laws. Thus, one consequence of this corporeal policing and assimilation would be the end of Indian claims to land¹⁰.

”

10 Jacqueline Shea Murphy, *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing*. (Minneapolis, MN. University of Minnesota Press, 2007) Pg. 30

oppression > Transition > RE

CLAIMING > glow TF up SIS!

You attempt to take everything away from us, force us to then prove our brownness & blackness, in order to be deemed "civilized" for YOUR society...

This is where & why present day brown, black & indigenous women have dug deep into their ancestral roots, to rejoice and celebrate themselves loudly. I theorize that this may be one of many tangents as to why, through forced cultural assimilations, we were denied access to our multiplicities in which we are, and now we are in process to be re-birthed...

I will take ownership of these tropes manipulated in the media and do what I want/need.

I am always going to be a black woman,

I am always going to be curvy.

I am no longer going to follow your rules because you didn't want me to value myself.

The you - white capitalist patriarchal society.

A Social Reckoning - what black women have gone through vs. the pivot of the year 2020

These systems are put in place to make me feel a certain way, I no longer have to buy into this.

I am going to go after what I want - get multiple degrees, be here for my sisters, buy land, wear long nails, bantu knots and braids screaming the crown act loudly!

Embrace my fictive kinship - black women calling each other sisters, because I probably know some of the struggles you've been through...

**Oh SHE High & Mighty,
SHE High Falutin,
SHE Think
SHE High Class,
Broke & Bougie,
SHE IS...**





Diasporic Spidering:

The multidirectional process by which people of African descent define their lives. The lifelong ontological gathering of information by going out into the world and coming back to the self.

These quests articulate projects crucial to critical race theory for in addition to denying life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (and/or property) the transatlantic slave trade and the resulting systems of slavery and oppression also denied heritage and education to slaves¹¹.

11 Thomas F. DeFrantz, Anita Gonzalez, & Nadine George-Graves. *Black Performance Theory*. (Durham, NC & London, England. Duke University Press. 2014) Pg. 33-34



ATLANTA STREET FEMME

My masculinity is the loudest thing in the room without a penis,
(Clears throat)
Without a penis today...
My masculinity don't need a big d*&k for attention
The skill with this mouth
It learned to give no other kinds of f%\$K's because...
My masculinity is revolutionary....ENOUGH!

Sam Rush, Kwene, & Oompa
2016 National Poetry Slam Finals

Musical Inspo/Energy: Outkast "Elevators" Andre 3000

*"One for the money, yes, sir, two for the show
A couple of years ago, on Headland and Delowe
Was the start of something good
Where me and my nigga rode the MARTA through the hood
Just tryna find that hookup"*

Foundation to The Executive

I will no longer shrink myself to make you comfortable. Period





TRAP QUEEN

A bomb ass female.
The baddest female.
She is loyal to her friends, lives for her
Family, and gives no f%&k's to
Bitter, petty b*%\$%#'s.
She also enjoys listening to trap music

anonymous

Musical Inspo/Energy: "Mr. Right Now" 21 Savage

*Face-a@\$ ni\$\$a, do I look dumb, stupid or slow?
Ni\$\$a, please, what the f%&k is you talkin' 'bout?
Just like you wanna stick a d#%k up in me, I want some motherf%&kin' money
And don't get in your motherf%&kin' feelings
When you see me in the motherf%&kin' club randomly
And one of your ni\$\$as wanna get down on me*

To Ssehura,

Tell me who I need to f%\$k up
I'm bout that life!
Where I got to be,
cus I got yo back suh..





Yemoja

Yemaya was the river goddess of the Yoruba in Nigeria. When her people were hoarded onto the slave ships, Yemaya went with them, thus becoming their Goddess of the Ocean.

... Yemaya is a mother goddess,
the goddess of home, fertility, love and family.

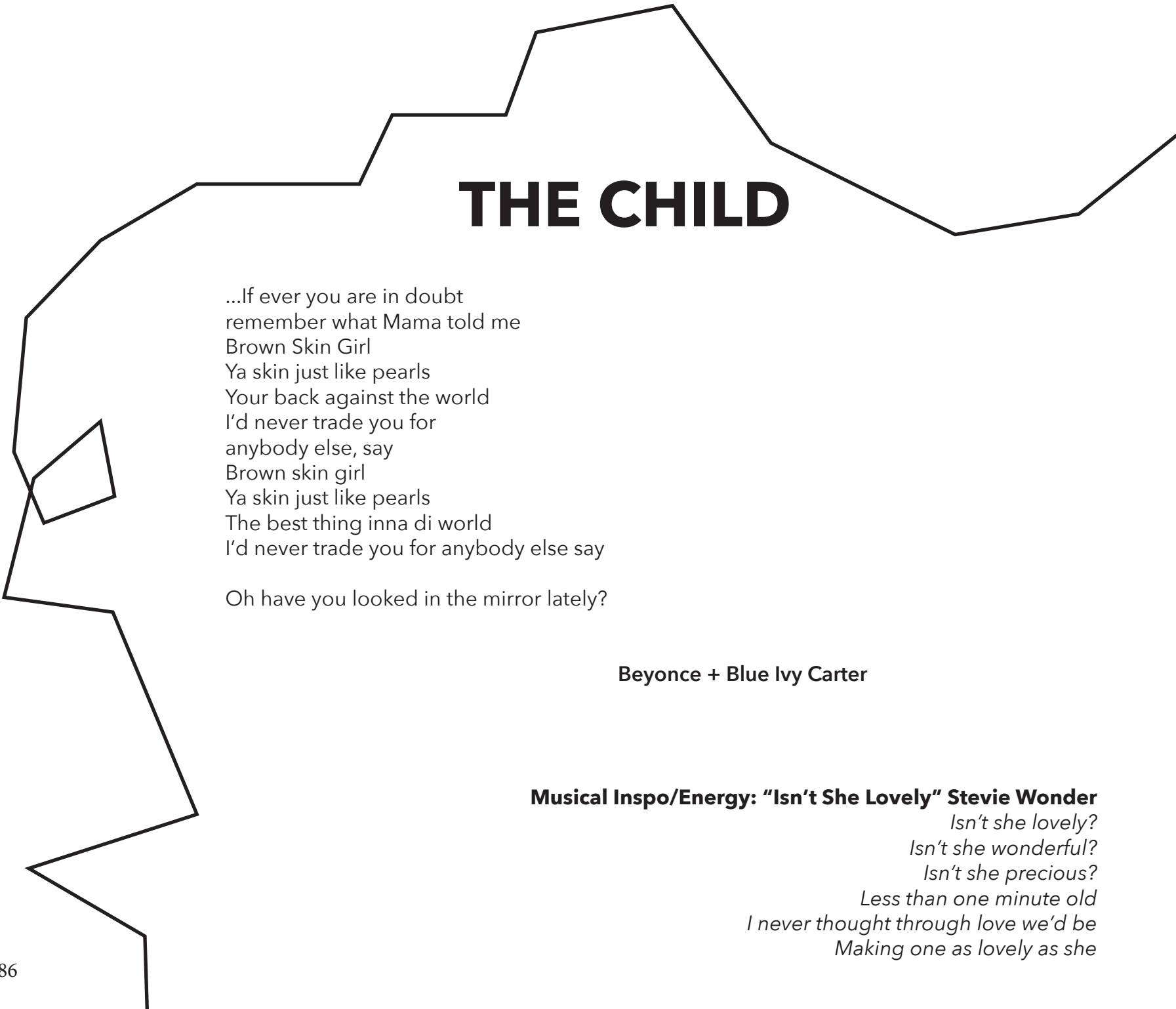
Musical Inspo/Energy: Beyonce "I Been On"

*I'm bigger than life, my name in the lights
I'm the capital "C", I don't need no hype
The capital "C" means, I'm 'bout that life
The capital "C" means, I'm 'bout that life
Bitch*

To All,

My children, my sisters in heaven.
I am with you always
The gathering of strength
that you all encompass
comes from the most high.
Lean on each others and me
in your time of need.
Your intuitive discernment is
my voice there to guide you
and give strength.





THE CHILD

...If ever you are in doubt
remember what Mama told me
Brown Skin Girl
Ya skin just like pearls
Your back against the world
I'd never trade you for
anybody else, say
Brown skin girl
Ya skin just like pearls
The best thing inna di world
I'd never trade you for anybody else say

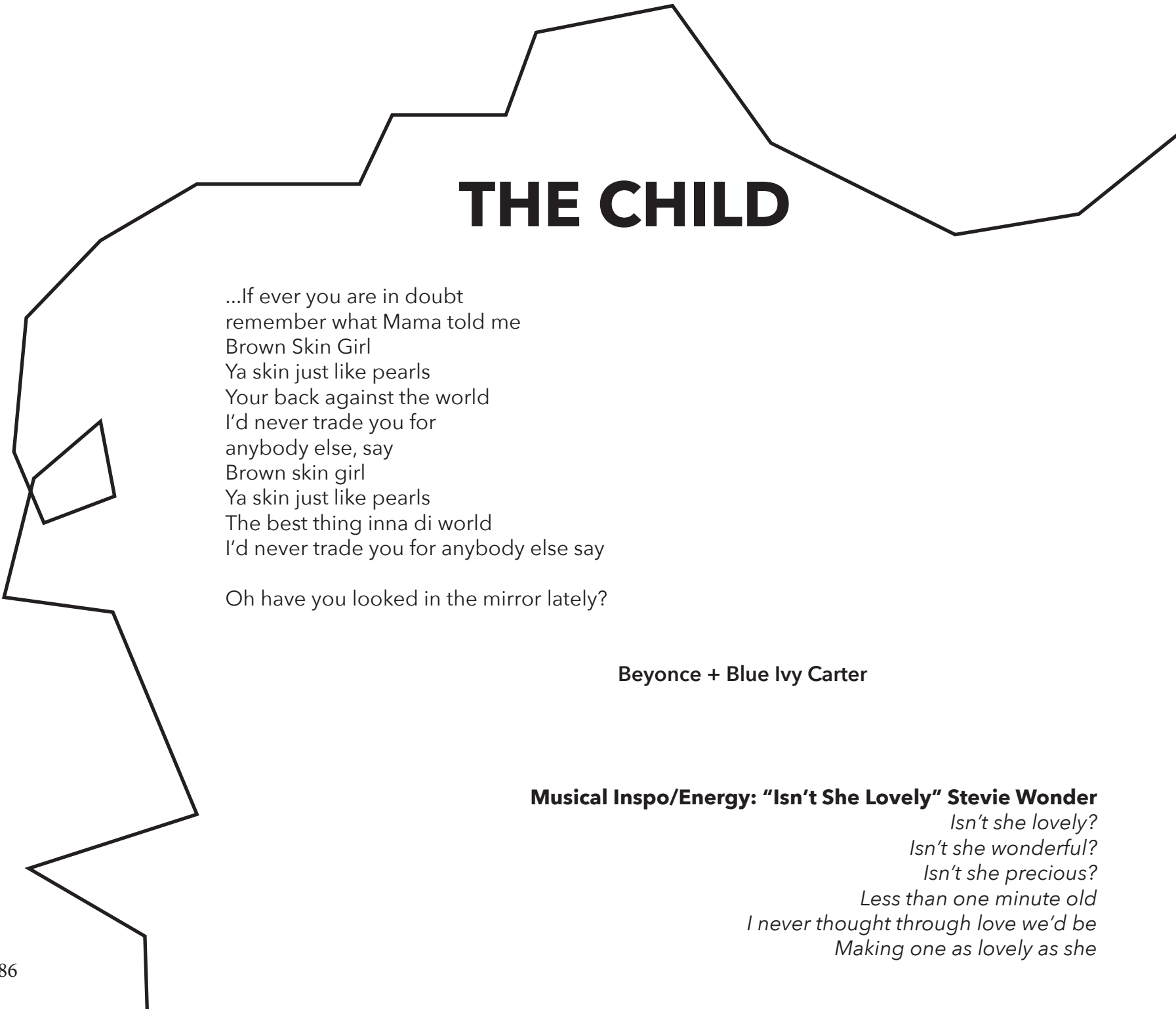
Oh have you looked in the mirror lately?

Beyonce + Blue Ivy Carter

Musical Inspo/Energy: "Isn't She Lovely" Stevie Wonder

*Isn't she lovely?
Isn't she wonderful?
Isn't she precious?
Less than one minute old
I never thought through love we'd be
Making one as lovely as she*

86



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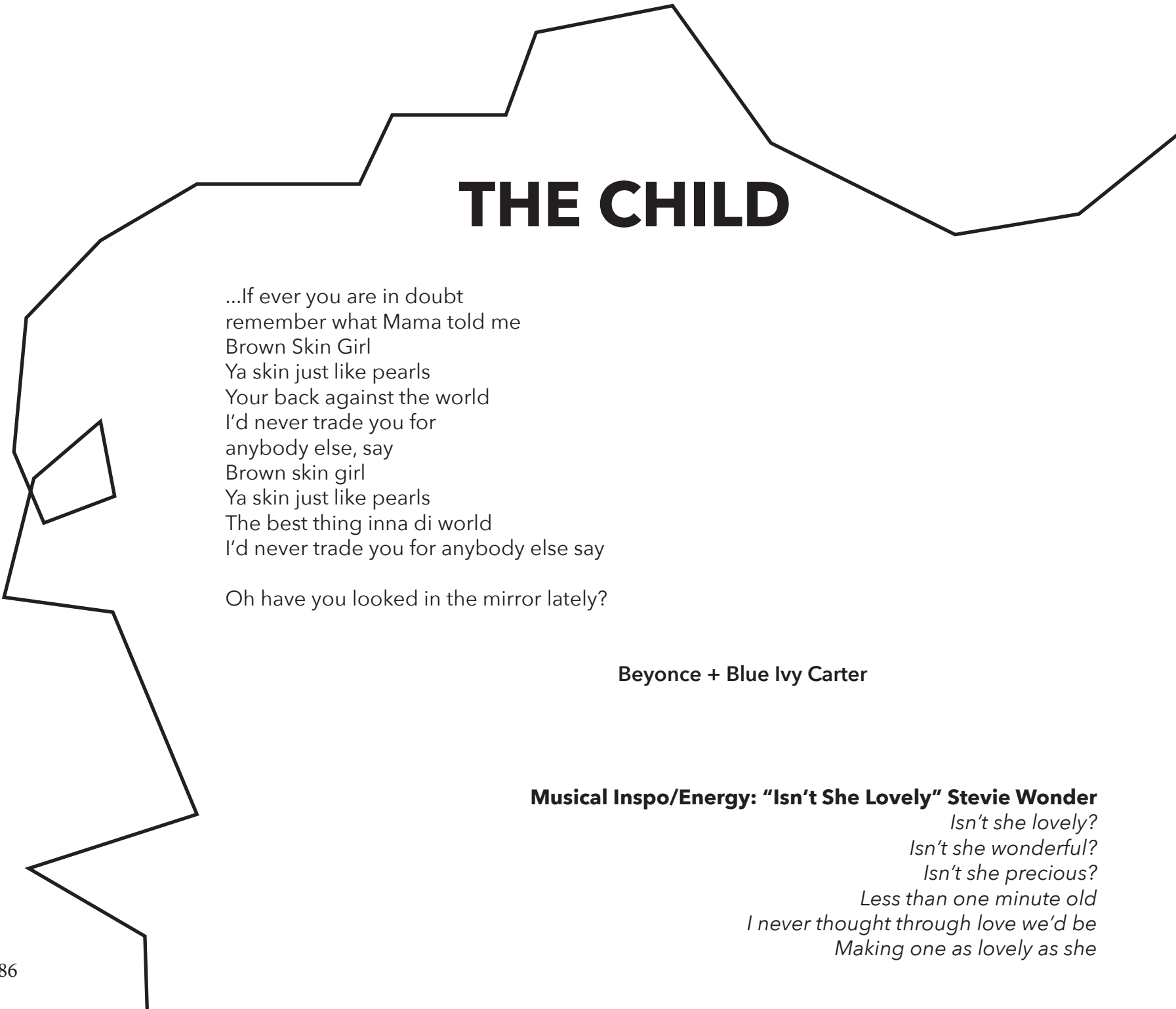
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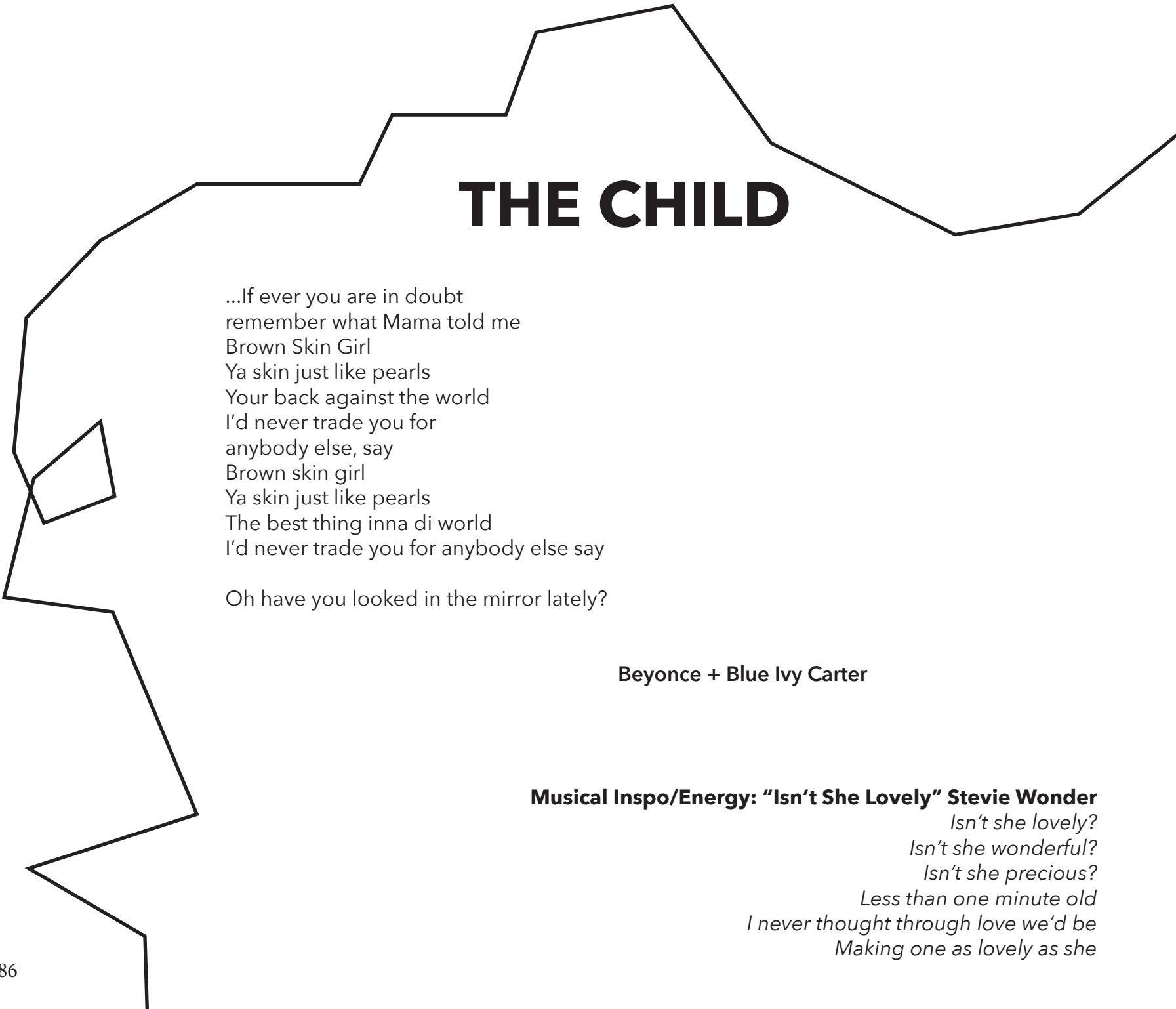
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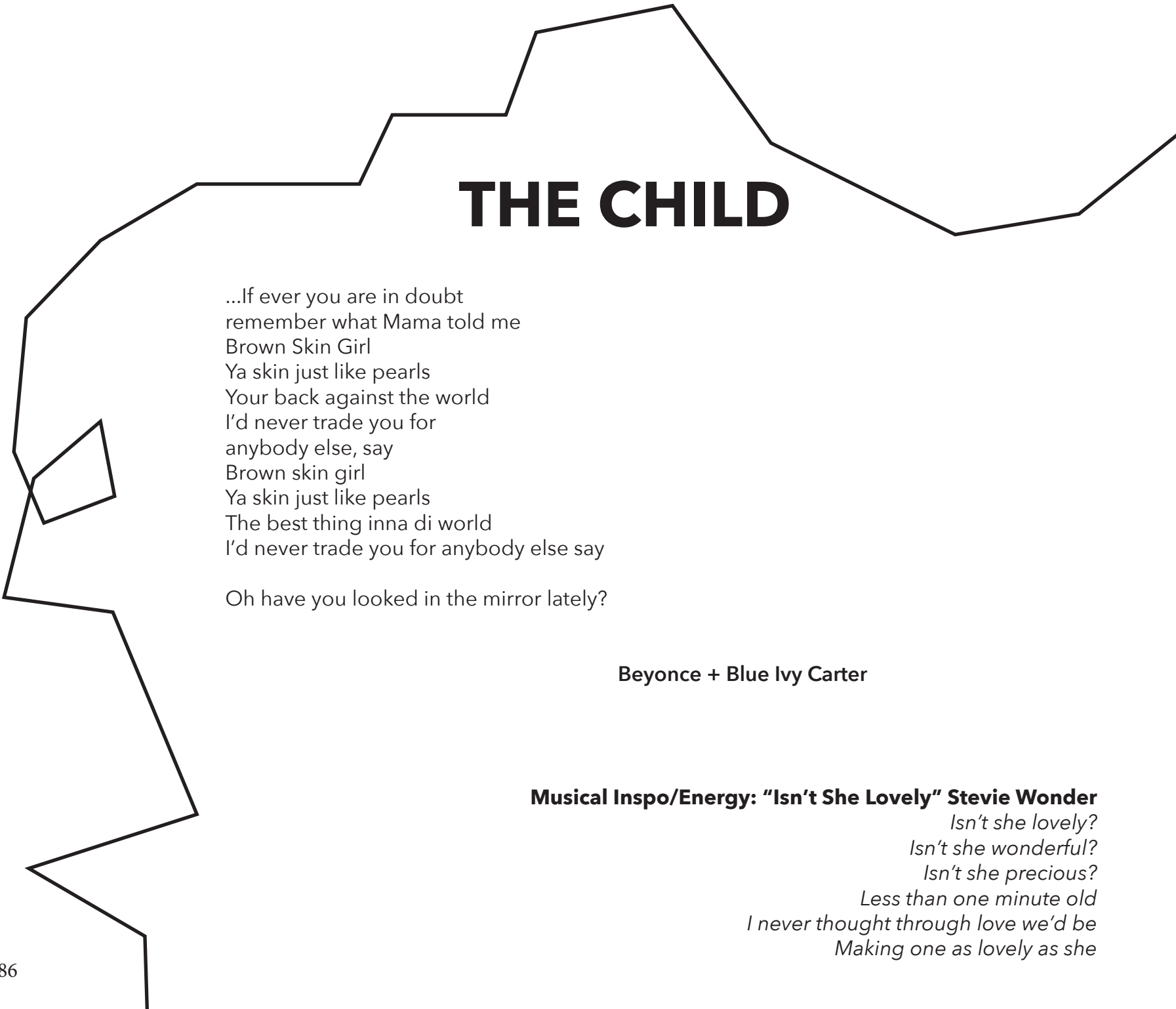
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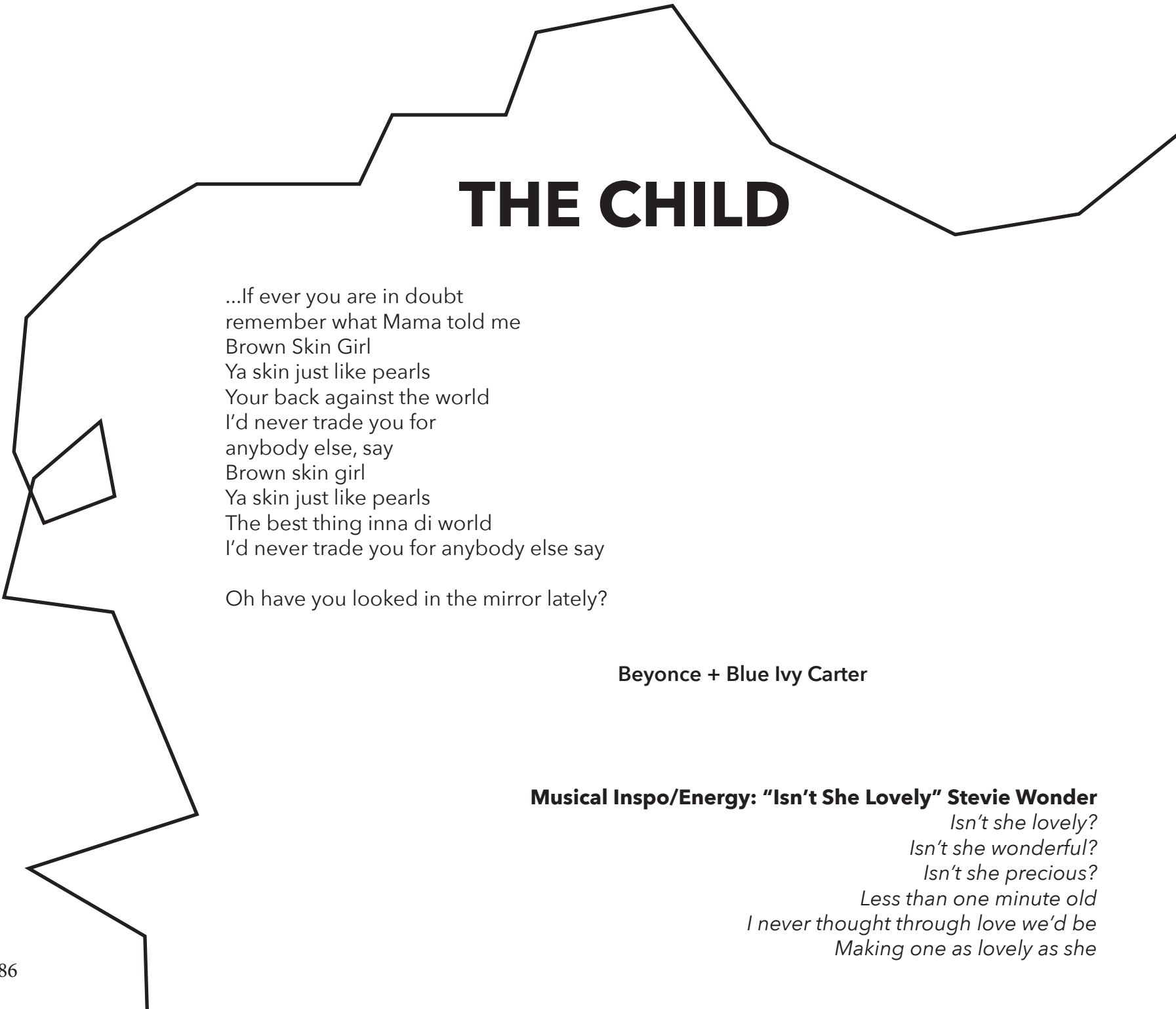
Oh have you looked in the mirror lately?

Beyonce + Blue Ivy Carter

Musical Inspo/Energy: "Isn't She Lovely" Stevie Wonder

*Isn't she lovely?
Isn't she wonderful?
Isn't she precious?
Less than one minute old
I never thought through love we'd be
Making one as lovely as she*

86



THE CHILD

...If ever you are in doubt
remember what Mama told me
Brown Skin Girl
Ya skin just like pearls
Your back against the world
I'd never trade you for
anybody else, say
Brown skin girl
Ya skin just like pearls
The best thing inna di world
I'd never trade you for anybody else say

Oh have you looked in the mirror lately?

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Making one as lovely as she*

86



To the executive,

I want to be free!
I want to be alive!
I want to be fierce!
I want to be strong!
I want to be cool!
I want to rule the world!

THE EXECUTIVE

...The strong black woman shares traits with all three of the stereotypes we examined in chapter 2. She looks suspiciously like Mammy except that her loyalties are firmly with black communities. While not subjected to the racial dynamics of Mammy, her devotion to racial community may leave sisters without the room to organize for themselves. The strong black woman has incorporated elements of the Jezebel myth because she does not require physical or economic protection from men. She cares for herself and her own children whether she has a male partner or not. The strong black woman looks like a way to channel the angry Sapphire in a socially acceptable direction. Black women may believe that their anger must always be in service of others and rarely used in their own defense. Given these connections with negative stereotypes, we should not be surprised to find that this myth has political consequences. One way to understand these consequences may be through the theory of a just world¹².

Musical Inspo/Energy "The God In Me" Mary Mary

*You see her style, you think she nice
You look at her whip, you say the whip tight
You look at her crib, you thinkin' she paid
You look at her life, you think she's got it made
But everything she got, the girl's been given
She call it a blessing, but you call it living
When it comes to money, she can be a hero
She writes them checks with a whole lot of zeros
But what they don't know is when she get home
And get behind closed doors, man she hit the floor
And what you can't see is she on her knees
If you ask her, she'll tell ya
It's the God in me
It's the God in me
It's the God in me
It's the God in me
It's the God in me
You think I'm so fresh, you think I'm so clean
You think I'm so sweet, it's the God in me
What is it you think you see? (It's the God in me)
It's the God in me*



To the child,

You encompass so much power within your being,
and can do absolutely anything you put your mind to.
Seek and obtain your education, master your destiny,
study the black women and men that have come be-
fore you for guidance!

ENSEMBLE

family, sisterhood, led by Big Mama

One way African American women try to help their daughters stand straight up in the crooked room is by telling them inspiring stories. Mothers, grandmas, aunts, and teachers want little black girls to know that they can achieve greatness. So they tell them that Harritt Tubman was a courageous and powerful woman who risked her life by leading more than three hundred slaves to freedom through the underground railroad. This positive racial identity is important to the psychological well-being of black adolescents and adults...

Stories of black excellence are particularly powerful for countering derogatory racial images because African Americans have historically relied on "fictive kinship" ties. Black fictive kinship > referring to black women as "sisters"¹³

Musical Inspo/Energy "Golden" Jill Scott

*I'm holding on to my freedom
Can't take it from me
I was born into it
It comes naturally
I'm strumming my own freedom
Playing the God in me
Representing his glory
Hope he's proud of me*

13 Melissa V. Harris-Perry. *Sister Citizen Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women In America*. (Yale University Press. New Haven and London, 2011) Pg. 101-102

Yemoja,

I pray for my family's well being.
Let my children, my grandchildren,
and great grandchildren know that
I am always watching over them in
protection and with warmth. I may
not be there physically, however
I am there in spirit.
They are my legacy...





The following gallery of images is truly where my questions, research, and theories derive from. I find it incredibly fascinating how pop culture has a historically insatiable appetite for the assets of our frame, yet continues to deny our existence as if it was just a made up creative idea within a high fashion magazine boardroom.

Though I don't always agree with how explicit the music industry has allowed itself to be in relation to the description of the black female body, I do enjoy seeing the current day female pop & hip hop artists not allow themselves to be oppressed by a Eurocentric patriarchal society that isn't inherently a part of our native culture. Patriarchy is yet another oppressive idiom that was forced upon the kidnapped Africans during slavery.

Regardless of if you agree or disagree with their approach in the ownership of their bodies, their agency is profound and purposefully intentional.

It's the respect & how they flipped the game fa me...

NOW EXHIBITING
AT
N^o. 225, Piccadilly,



THE TOP OF THE HAY-MARKET,
From TWELVE 'till FOUR o'Clock.

Admittance, 2s. each.

THE
Hottentot Venus,

JUST ARRIVED FROM THE

INTERIOR OF AFRICA;

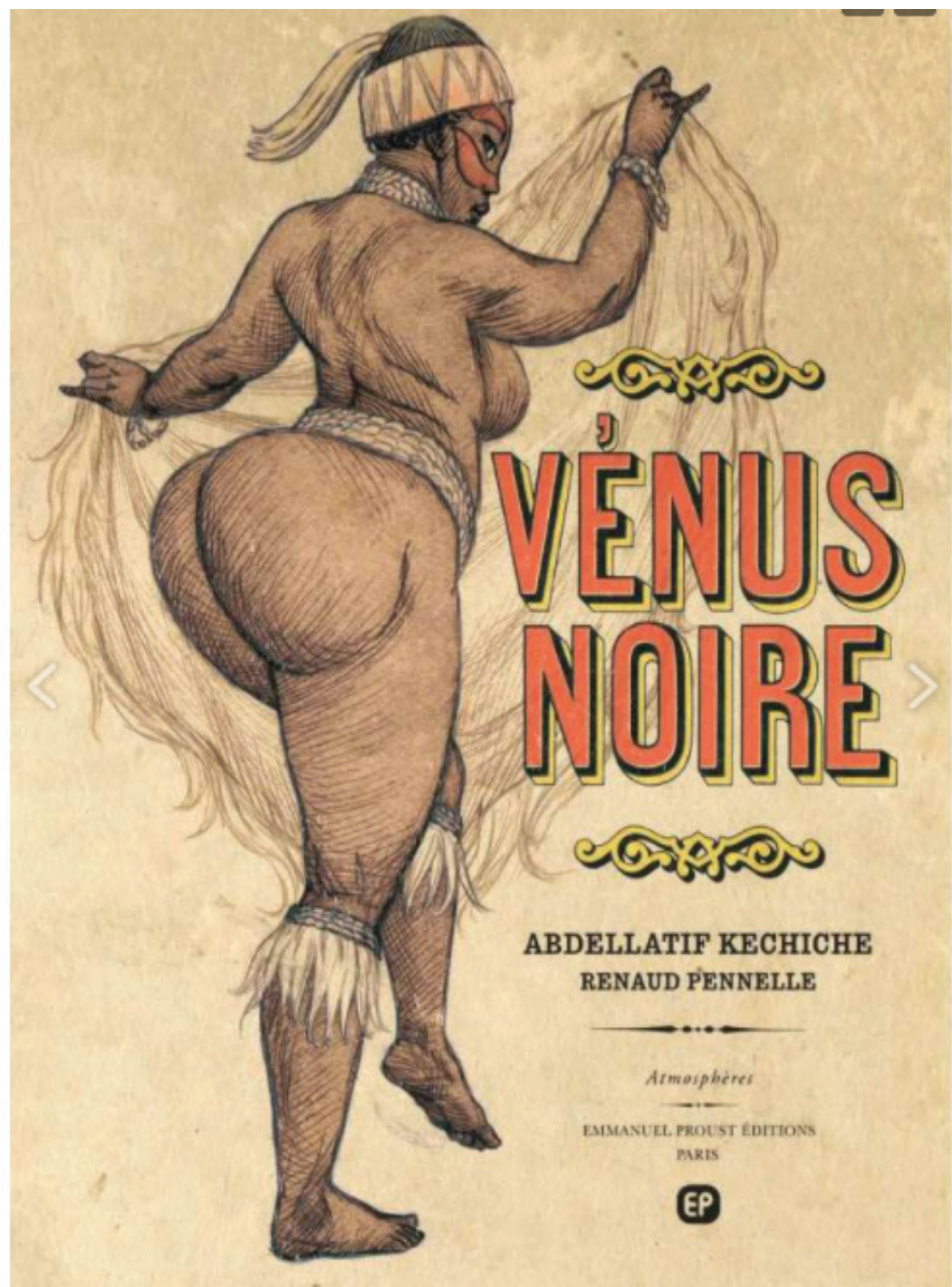
THE GREATEST

PHENOMENON

Ever exhibited in this Country;

Whose Stay in the Metropolis will be but short.





ARRIVED FROM LONDON,
And will be exhibited DURING the FAIR WEEK.
 At MR. DUFRENE's Lodgings, BRIDLESMITH-GATE,
 NOTTINGHAM.

From ELEVEN in the Morning till NINE in the Evening.

That most wonderful Phenomenon of Nature, the
HOTTENTOT
VENUS,
The only Hottentot ever exhibited in Europe.

In viewing this wonderful production of Nature, the Public have a perfect specimen of that most extraordinary Tribe of the human race, who have for such a length of time inhabited the more southern parts of Africa, whose real origin has never yet been ascertained, nor their character, which has been differently described by every Traveller who has visited those remote regions of the world: and, considering the natural morose disposition of those people, (who are scarcely ever observed to laugh) she is remarkably mild and affable in her manners. She has had the honor of being visited by their Royal Highnesses the PRINCESS ELIZABETH, the PRINCE REGENT, and several branches of the ROYAL FAMILY; also the principal Nobility of both Sexes; and declared by them to be (without exception) the greatest Natural Curiosity of the Human Species ever exhibited in England, and well worthy the attention of the Public.

Over her Cloathing (which is suitable to this climate) are worn all the rude ornaments used on Gala Days by the Tribe to which she belongs.

Elegant ENGRAVINGS, from the original Drawings of the VENUS, by Lewis, may be had at the Place of Exhibition.

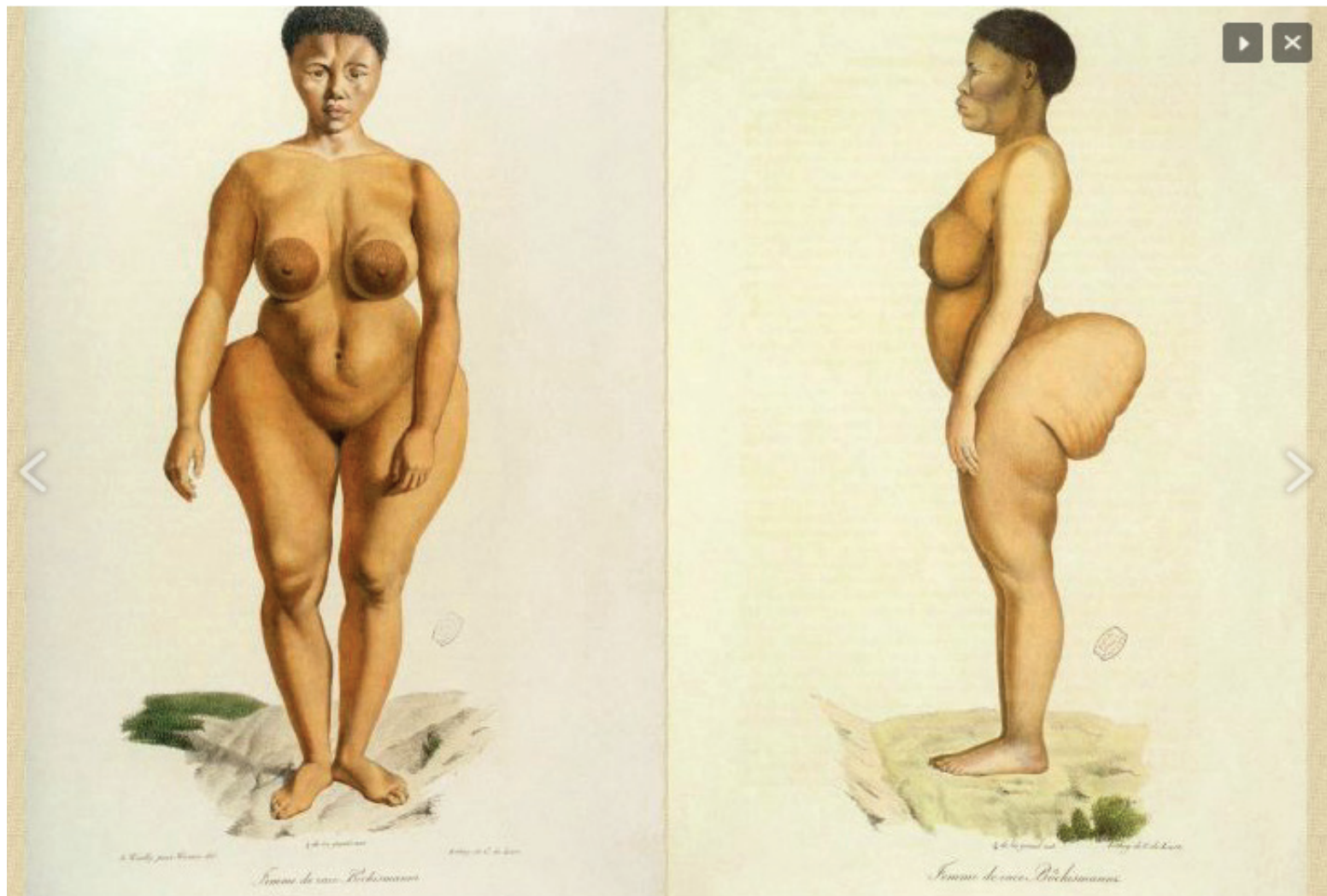
ADMISSION, One Shilling—CHILDREN, Sixpence.

Robinson, Printer, Nottingham.



full your Lordships but Such a Spouter
Lordships follow.





La Vénus hottentote.

C 40-1361-54 (profil)
C 41-469-54 (dos)





A cast of Sarah Baartman's body and her remains were returned to South Africa in 2002 by France



Obert Siza/Associated Press

Choir children stand around the coffin carrying the remains of Saartjie Baartman upon her arrival Friday in South Africa.

France returns old remains to homeland

'Hottentot Venus' part of 'research'

By Rachel L. Swarms
New York Times

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — The young African woman was lured to Europe with false promises of fame and fortune. She was paraded naked before jeering mobs. She was exhibited in a metal cage and sold to an animal trainer. When she died in Paris in 1816, she was penniless and friendless among people who derided her as a circus freak.

White scientists intent on proving the inferiority of blacks dissected her body, bottled her brain and genitals, wired her skeleton and displayed them in a French museum. That might have been the end of Saartjie Baartman, the young African woman derisively labeled the "Hottentot Venus."

Lost soul

But to her people here, the descendants of the nomadic hunters who first wandered across this land centuries ago, death is never the end of the story.

"It is important for her to come back," said Jennifer Papier, a 63-year-old descendant of the nomadic Khoisan people, who once hunted in loincloths and were often killed by white farmers who classified them as vermin. "She is one of ours."

Growing trend

All across the world, museums are taking similar steps to return human remains as they reassess collections acquired in an era when indigenous people were deemed worthy of scientific study, but unworthy of the consideration commonly accorded to whites.

Two years ago, Spain returned to Botswana the bones of an unidentified African man who had been stolen from his grave and displayed in its museums for nearly a century. Known simply as "El Negro," he was given a state burial in Botswana, where he was welcomed as a stolen ancestor and a lost soul.

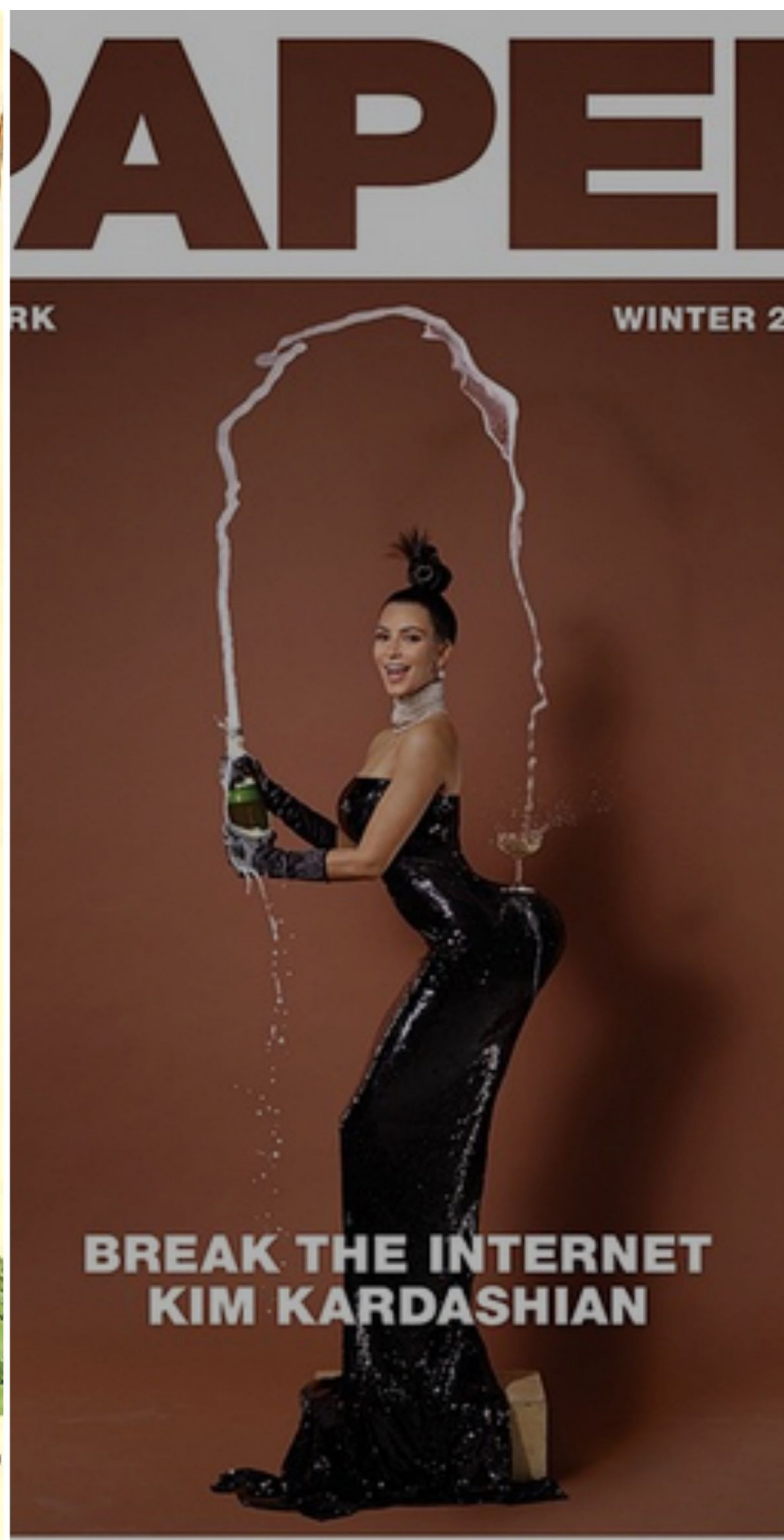
In the United States, many museums are now returning remains of American Indians to their descendants.

In Australia, museum officials are still struggling to identify thousands of unidenti-



and BEAUTY -- SARTJEE del. HOTTENTOT

Half October 1851 by Charles Rogers New York



**THEY TORTURED SARAH BAARTMAN
ONLY TO MAKE DRESSES TO IMITATE HER SHAPE**





120.

JOSÉPHINE BAKER

Image Credit:

PARIS - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
BEFORE COMING TO PARIS

Top 10 interesting facts about Josephine Baker

Article By: Molli on October 25, 2019

Picture Found: Josephine Baker
by oakenroad - Flickr

www.discoverwalks.com

Image Credit:

JOSEPHINE BAKER'S SECRET MOMENTS
DID YOU KNOW SHE WAS A SPY FOR THE
FRENCH RESISTANCE?
BY VIENNA VERNOSE
JUN 3, 2019

www.crfashionbook.com





Image Credit:

Josephine Baker in color, as you've never seen her before
Entertainer, spy for the French Resistance, civil rights icon, and adoptive mother of 12

Article By: Denise Shelton

Public domain portrait of Josephine Baker colorized by Olga Shirnina

www.historyofyesterday.com











Image Credit:
Megan Thee Stallion 2021: Hollywood

Photography By: by James Macari

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