

NINA CRAMER

Carving Out Spaces of Possibility

An Interview with Ayana Omilade Flewellen

Archaeologist Ayana Omilade Flewellen is assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Riverside as well as co-director of an archaeology project at the Estate Little Princess heritage site, an eighteenth-century sugar plantation on St. Croix, US Virgin Islands. Grounded in Black feminist theory, Flewellen's research attends to the constraints of the sources scholars rely on to learn about the lives of historical African Diasporic subjects: What do the sources reveal? What knowledges do they foreclose? What can be known and how? In this interview, Flewellen explains how dress – understood as a creative, performative practice that clashed with the colonial policing of Afro-Caribbean lives – provides particularly compelling insights into everyday negotiations of racial and gender ideology. Photographer Chalana Brown also joins the exchange, bringing perspectives on the present-day significance of madras cloth traditions in the US Virgin Islands that date back to the seventeenth century. This text is thus intended as a contribution to a larger conversation, taking place across disparate geopolitical contexts and institutional infrastructures, on the potential connections and frictions between archaeological, artistic and art historical approaches to visual and material culture pertaining to Afro-Caribbean people's lives under Danish colonial rule.

NINA CRAMER (NC): *Thank you for making time to speak with me today, Ayana. To give readers an impression of your work as an archaeologist, I would like to begin by asking you about the Estate Little Princess Archaeology Project on St. Croix, which is an ongoing project that you are involved in. Can you give an introduction to that site and the research being done there?*

AYANA OMILADE FLEWELLEN (AOF): The Estate Little Princess Archaeology Project was founded in 2016 and the first excavations took place in the summer of 2017.¹ I'm one of the co-directors of the project along with Justin Dunnivant, who is a postdoc at Vanderbilt University, and William White, who is an assistant professor at the University of California, Berkeley. Alexandra Jones leads the youth training program and she is the executive director of Archaeology and Community, which is a non-profit based in Washington DC, while Alicia Odewale, an assistant professor at the University of Tulsa, is the brain behind the artifact analysis lab.

The genesis of the project came from a collaboration between several nonprofit organizations. In the fall of 2015, Jay Haigler from Diving With a Purpose – a nonprofit dedicated to oceanic conservation and heritage preservation of submerged resources pertaining to the African Diaspora – reached out to Justin Dunnivant, who along with me is a co-founder of the Society of Black Archaeologists – a nonprofit dedicated to creating pathways for more archaeologists of color, specifically of African descent, to be in this field and also to promote community-engaged scholarship² – and asked him if there were any archaeologists interested in doing a terrestrial project on the island of St. Croix. Diving With a Purpose was interested in starting a community-based project that encompassed both maritime and terrestrial archaeology pertaining to the African Diaspora in collaboration with the Slave Wrecks Project – an international umbrella organization housed at the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture in partnership with George Washington University. One of the reasons why they had an interest in St. Croix is because not a lot of archaeological work has been done on any of the US Virgin Islands pertaining to the era under Danish colonial rule that specifically asks questions regarding the lifeways of enslaved people.

Justin and I initially took several trips down to St. Croix with members of Diving with a Purpose and the Slave Wrecks Project on reconnaissance missions, to see what was possible on island. We set up meetings with community members that were doing heritage work on island, such as Frandelle Gerrard's organization Crucian Heritage and Nature Tourism (CHANT) and The Caribbean Center

for Boys and Girls, which does a lot of programming with youth on island. We met with stakeholders and really had intentional conversations about what they wanted to see on island regarding their heritage. A lot of them wanted opportunities for the youth to be involved with the work but they also wanted avenues for economic advancement for their children. And having an interest in both maritime and terrestrial archaeology meant that we were able to set up a project that not only catered to the desires of cultivating cultural stewardship on island, but also provided training for Black youth to get involved in maritime archaeology, which gave them the skills to do scuba diving and training, which on St. Croix has been a very large economic avenue of access that historically has excluded people of African descent. In addition, through the Estate Little Princess project, we have a yearly archaeology field school that runs for about a week in partnership with another nonprofit called Archaeology in the Community, which provides high-school-age youth on island the opportunity to come to the Estate Little Princess for an introduction to archaeological theory and method. They dig with us, they sift dirt to find artifacts, they wash them, catalog them, classify them, and help us catalog them. It's really designed, like I said, to help foster cultural stewardship on island. Every year that we go out to the site, we open up the space with a libation ceremony that is conducted by Dr. Chenzira Davis-Kahina, who is the director of the Caribbean Culture Center at the University of the Virgin Islands on St. Croix. In 2019, we were also able to have a public archaeology day where we invited members of the public to come out and see the work that we're doing, hold the artifacts, and provide us with memory maps of what the space looked like for some of them when they were youths, which also adds to the collective story of that space.

Our research questions center on the everyday lives of formerly enslaved and later free Africans at the Estate Little Princess, an eighteenth-century Danish plantation that cultivated sugar and was also a rum distillery. It was on the smaller side in comparison to other large-scale plantations like Estate Saint George or La Grange, which housed twice as many enslaved individuals at its height; the Estate Little Princess at its height housed about 147 enslaved individuals. We really focus on the enslaved village area of that site. Historical documentation tells us that there were about 15-25 coral structures that were built to house the enslaved labor force at the plantation. That's where our excavations have occurred, looking at how these domestic spaces were used, how shared space between the structures was used by enslaved and later free Africans, thinking about where folks cooked their food, what foods they ate, what sort of craft production they engaged in, what materials people had access to in terms of

ceramic goods. My own research focuses on clothing and adornment, and we've come across bone buttons and what we think is a hand-carved stone bead, but we haven't recovered a lot of adornment materials. Part of that is because we've been focusing on doing a large-scale survey of the enslaved village area to get an idea of the extent of the distribution of artifacts and we haven't focused specifically on the inside of domestic structures, which ordinarily is where you would find items pertaining to adornment.

NC: *Who has ownership of the artifacts that you find during excavations?*

AOF: The artifacts belong to whoever owns the land, and The Estate Little Princess is owned and operated by The Nature Conservancy. It's the home ground for The Nature Conservancy regional office, so they own that land; and therefore, they own the artifacts that are recovered from our excavations. We have a signed agreement with them that we can remove artifacts from the land and bring them to our home institutions to undergo further analysis for educational purposes. Right now, Alicia Odewale hosts the artifacts that have been recovered from the Estate Little Princess at the University of Tulsa because there isn't yet an adequate facility on island that can host the artifacts. We're hoping that in 2021-2022 those artifacts will be moved to my institution, the University of California, Riverside. And once a facility is created on island, they will be returned to St. Croix.

NC: *What kinds of artifacts have you encountered at Estate Little Princess and what can they tell you about the experiences of Afro-Crucians who lived there? I'm curious about the analytical frameworks you use to understand these artifacts' material properties and social-historical significance, how you date them and place them in a larger context.*

AOF: Generally, for colonial sites throughout the Americas, the easiest way to date a site is through the ceramics that are recovered from that site, because ceramic technology shifted throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Once you get into the twentieth century, glass production becomes the heavier signifier of technological change over time. But for instance, at the Estate Little Princess, there are a wide variety of ceramics, which is really exciting. Because if you can imagine during the 1700s, the Caribbean was being carved up as different European powers were laying claim to different lands, and what Toni Morrison described as "pitched battles for God, king and land"

really took place in the water and on land.³ This often meant that the islands had restrictions on how and who they could get resources from. For instance, a British colony wouldn't readily be trading with Spanish colonies throughout the Caribbean. There is recorded documentation regarding the formation of provision land as requirements for plantations, partly because they could not guarantee that they could continue to bring in food to these different landscapes because of the blockades that were occurring throughout the Caribbean blocking trade to and from different lands. So, the Caribbean during that time was a reflection of the power struggles unfolding in Europe over the exploitation of Black bodies, the decimation of indigenous populations and the extraction of goods for wealth that lays at the foundation of those countries today.

But St. Croix was unique because it had open ports, which meant that the island was trading with several different European colonies and forces throughout its occupation. As a result, there are a wide variety of ceramics showing up on St. Croix, which gives a view into the access that not only Europeans had on the island, but also the access to goods that enslaved populations had.

Thus far we're hoping, through the analysis of ceramics recovered at the site, to be able to gauge things such as form; whether people were using plates or bowls, which would give an insight into what kinds of food people were eating and might indicate cultural affiliations, what people had access to and their adaptability to lack of resources. We're finding a mix of both European ceramics and Afro-Caribbean ware. We know that Afro-Caribbean populations were making their own ceramics throughout the island. And something we're looking forward to doing in collaboration with an organization called the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery is doing laser ablation on this low-fired earthenware to see the clay source of where the objects come from and to compare them to other Afro-Caribbean wares showing up on St. John or St. Thomas and other Caribbean islands. Because it would be interesting to know if there was an inter-island distribution or trade in these African-derived ceramics, or if it's even something larger than that; that there may have been a trade across various islands in the Caribbean, and that's just not something that's known to us yet. We're also looking forward to getting a zooarchaeologist to analyze the fauna to see what kinds of seafood people were eating. Those questions have yet to be answered but the data itself is being excavated to answer them.

Another really exciting point that we've focused on are the structures themselves. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a lot of structures were built using massive amounts of coral. We now know that coral populations are being decimated at increasing levels, but the work that Justin Dunnivant is

doing is thinking about how the harm toward coral reefs has a longer history; that throughout mining, generally carried out by enslaved populations, human interactions with water and coral have been decimating coral populations for centuries and have been leading to the erosion of coastlines, which causes more impactful hurricanes. So those are some of the broader questions that are being asked by scholars at the site as well.

NC: *In your article “African Diasporic Choices: Locating the Lived Experience of Afro-Crucians in the Archival and Archaeological Record” (2019), you describe the ethical-methodological implications of how thingification becomes “a point of slippage for archaeologists who come to study people through the materiality of their lived experiences. The space between studying things and the ‘thingification’ of the people we study is a space of moral and intellectual tribulation for archaeologists who study the African Diaspora.”⁴ Could you expand on this point?*

AOF: Prior to that quote, I talk about Jessica Marie Johnson’s work in “Markup Bodies: Black [Life] Studies and Slavery [Death] Studies at the Digital Crossroads”, where she brings up the thingification of Black people in the archive of the transatlantic slave trade.⁵ Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, there was this huge push to quantify the documentary evidence of how many enslaved people were brought across the Atlantic, how many calories they got in their diet – all of these ways to get at numbers rather than thinking through the process and conditions of African Diasporic life, which is what we’re ultimately trying to get at, through the limitation of the data available to us. For me, it always has to be at the forefront of our minds that we are dealing with past historical characters who were enslaved, who were assumed commodities, and who we do not want to do further harm or damage. And that informs the work of redress that we’re doing as we approach the archive, as we come to the archaeological record.

The tools at hand for us, like those of the digital humanities, can provide really fruitful new articulations of the connections between different sites. Like the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery that I’m affiliated with, through their work of providing an online space for artifactual material culture to be uploaded so that sites can be placed in conversation with each other – something that would have been impossible 10-15 years in the past. And this allows us to have conversations about the process and conditions of African Diasporic life on this side of the Atlantic. We are dealing with counts, numbers and weights of artifacts. That’s what the methodological practice is within archaeology. In terms of our analytical framework, we classify the attributes of different artifacts; that

information is uploaded into a database, and from there we can crunch numbers to get distribution maps of where different artifacts were found across the site, cluster maps, things like that. They can tell us really fruitful information. But the condition and the lives of the people who used those objects, for me, has to always be central to the interpretations that we bring forth.

Another thing I've been thinking through is the fetishization of Black imagery from the past. As someone who fell in love with stereographs and stereoscopes as part of my dissertation research, I started seeing that there are all of these portraits of Black women that are up for auction, for instance on eBay. And I've been trying to think through what it means to possess and to sell these images. It ties into this larger question of the thingification of people and only seeing them in terms of the value of what they can produce for your research, for your interpretation.

NC: *I think art historians often face a similar quandary. When analyzing forms of representation that have contributed to objectifying or commodifying African-descended people in artworks that are themselves commodities, the risk of colluding with anti-Black logic is present in a variety of ways. It's interesting that these academic disciplines, at least in their normative iterations, have similar limitations when it comes to the troubling relation between objecthood and personhood that coloniality has ascribed to many Black lives.*

AOF: Yes, we find ourselves situated within disciplines that are not equipped to talk about the complexities of Black life. Disciplines like archeology and anthropology were used for the codification of otherness and are not necessarily made for the exploration of the human or dwelling in the complexity of that. I feel like part of the problem arises because these disciplines weren't designed to facilitate this work. So some of us are constantly breathing new life and trying to carve out spaces of possibility so that we can actually do the work we've been called to do, which is to explore the lived conditions of people in the past.

NC: *One of the complex issues that your work grapples with, by virtue of your specialization in the study of sartorial practices, is understanding African Diasporic individuals' agency under conditions of material deprivation and political suppression as a result of enslavement and/or colonization. How do you approach the relationship between agency, embodiment, colonial domination and dress practices?*

AOF: The way that dress shows up for me is really pushing against the notion of frivolity that people often associate with dress. I remember when I first brought up that I wanted to look at dress among African Diasporic women in the former Danish West Indies, a Black woman colleague and scholar said to me, “They weren’t worried about how they were dressing, they were slaves”. People often think that enslavement was so unimaginably disparaging that people were not thinking about how to dress their bodies; it’s unimaginable for many people to have that conversation. And yet we have all of this imagery and all of these sources showing how it was quite the opposite. Among a variety of different people of African descent – whether they were free or enslaved or even within enslaved populations, whether they had some kind of skill or craftsmanship or some other kind of status attached to them – dress was important, even in the most constrictive of circumstances.

The act of dressing your body, whether coerced or not, was a daily practice. This is what makes it so central to formations of identity, rather than – or perhaps alongside – other forms of dress that oftentimes are provided more platform, like costume dress or Sunday best or carnival costume. I focus on the everyday practices of dress because I think it’s within those quiet moments that people were really navigating day-to-day struggles with racism, the threat of sexual violence and economic disenfranchisement. I think it’s in those daily practices and quiet acts that you can really see that at work and see the spaces of possibility for choice. I root my work in Black feminist theory because of its ability to situate the everyday as a site for the formation of knowledge and the ongoing construction of identity.

And dress has always been such a contested space. For instance, sumptuary laws were enacted in the former Danish West Indies to limit the ways that people could dress. They are some among many sumptuary laws that were enacted by a variety of European governments throughout the Americas to really try to dictate racial, class and status demarcations amongst populations in their various colonies. We can see these laws as ways that governments tried to control the ever-expansiveness of blackness at that time. And at the same time, we know that people were usurping those laws. A lot of work has been done around how these laws were enacted, criminalizing certain dress practices, but people weren’t really arrested for breaking them. But the law itself, the fact that it was even brought up, speaks to the social conditions and relationships between populations at the time. I always tell people, it’s not nothing, because if it was nothing, it wouldn’t have existed.

NC: *Some of the material traces of African-descended individuals that you have analyzed for information on sartorial practices in the former Danish West Indies are advertisements for fugitive enslaved people. In preparation for our conversation today, I read some of the texts reproduced in Enrique Corneiro's book Runaway Virgins: Danish West Indian Slave Ads 1770-1848 (2019) and it was immediately apparent how much of the description is focused on injuries that people sustained as a result of enslavement. I would be interested to hear your thoughts on the fact that this kind of description was intermixed with information about attire and hairstyles – it seems to really bring into relief the way dress was inextricable from structures of subjection.*

AOF: When we speak about dress, people often automatically jump to clothing. And that's a three-dimensional supplement that is enclosed on the body. But dress also encompasses body modifications, whether they come through choice, through coercion, or through environmental impact. Those kinds of body modifications are also part of the conversations around dress. And you see that so clearly in these advertisements, how dress speaks to not only histories of enslavement, colonization, commodification, but further elucidates the extreme amounts of harm and violence that were so commonplace. Because the advertisements were commonplace. It was not extraordinary to talk about. When I look at the advertisements, I go through the whole newspaper, and the newspapers themselves are like eighteenth-century Twitter feeds, where sometimes they just report on the gossip that's happening around island. But so much can be thought through around the body, and around the color of skin in particular, through the newspapers.

For instance, in one of the editions I was looking at there were advertisements, but there was also a caution that one of the plantations on St. Croix had put up mantraps. They had lined areas of their cane alleys, the alleyways between different cane fields, with traps to catch runaway slaves. And it was commonplace. It was in the newspaper to let you know, as a planter and overseer – someone who had access to this newspaper, which meant you were able to read, which meant that you had a certain level of education – that this was happening so that you wouldn't get harmed. And you could tell your enslaved property to be cautious of it. So there is something around the everyday harm and threat to the Black body that so clearly comes out in the advertisements but is also spoken of with such ease throughout the newspapers, that you know that it was just an everyday occurrence. When looking at these sources, I consider what was and wasn't given thought.

You can also gauge, in the language used in the advertisements, shifts in racial ideology over time. One of the reasons I have been gathering advertisements is to think about what language was being used to classify Black bodies, what sort of gendered language was being used? How did it change over time? What sorts of clothing did people have access to? Is there a trend in what they were absconding with?

NC: *Within art history, close readings of sartorial elements are often performed in analyses of painted portraits, such as this portrait of Justina Antoine, a woman from St. Thomas, and the white Danish creole family in which she labored as a “nanny” – the same family who commissioned this painting by Wilhelm Marstrand in 1857 that was purchased at auction by the Danish National Gallery in 2017. Many things can be said about this painting, but the aspect I want to ask you about is the African Diasporic self-fashioning represented in it. Are there any elements of the figure of Justina’s self-fashioning that stand out to you?*

AOF: When I look at images like this, I go to Tina Campt’s work in *Listening to Images* (2017). I love her work. One of her chapters is on what she calls a “tense grammar”. She writes about anthropological representations of Black people during the late nineteenth century and twentieth century that are often just seen as images of coerced performance among individuals who were photographed but asks, what are the other stories that can be told around these images? And is there a way to have a conversation that brings up the limitations of the data source that we have access to – in this case, the painting – while also thinking through how the person that is featured is a full person who was navigating structures in particular ways and making sense of her life in particular ways? We might not have documentation to give us that information, but, certainly, we can imagine.

Specific kinds of femininity and notions around modesty also come up for me in this image with regard to the frock that she is wearing. I’m always amazed at the entrenched ideology around femininity, which meant that even women who were doing agricultural labor were wearing dresses out in the field, down to

Wilhelm Marstrand: *Portrait of Otto Marstrand’s Two Daughters and Their West-Indian Nanny, Justina Antoine, in the Frederiksberg Gardens Near Copenhagen, 1856-1857*. Oil on canvas, 89 x 67 cm. SMK – The National Gallery of Denmark.





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Chalana Brown: *E³: Exploration, Evolution, Effectuation. Exploring the evolution of Virgin Islands identity thru history, fashion, photography and fabric*, 2021.

“In recent years, there has been a renaissance of cultural identity in the Virgin Islands, mainly headed by millennials. The tradition of wearing madras clothing and head ties, which have a symbolic meaning depending on how they are tied, was kept up by long-standing quadrille groups like the St. Croix Heritage Dancers and the Mongo Niles Quadrille dancers from St. Thomas. However, the modern outfitting and re-imagining of madras wear in the Virgin Islands is being effectuated by all residents. Local designers have started fashion lines utilizing the fabric. The revival of madras fabric has opened a dialogue in the Virgin Islands about our colonial past and its correlation to our present identity. We are further exploring the shared colonial experience with other nations and people of color in India and Africa. Bradley Christian, a cultural bearer in the art of headtie, and Mary Dema of the Christiansted Community Alliance worked with Senator Myron Jackson, a member of the 33rd Legislature and staunch advocate of arts and culture in the territory, to establish the Virgin Islands’ official madras in Bill 33-0226. The bill’s passing further promotes national pride and identity amongst our islands.”

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the ankle. Also, how, especially for domestic servants at this time, the varying meanings behind the color white and purity and morality totally contradicted the ideology around Black women. And something Laurie Wilkie, a mentor of mine, played with was the intricacy of hook-and-eye closures; how it actually takes a very long time to put this clothing on and what that could mean for Black women who were in these rather precarious situations, of armoring the body. Even though we know that regardless of what Black women were wearing, there was always a threat of sexual-racial violence.

Also, when looking at this image, it brings up the work of an artist working on St. Croix, Chalana Brown. Chalana Brown works specifically with madras cloth, thinking through its historical context as being costume for the quadrille dance and what it means to reclaim that cloth as a source of cultural pride today.⁶ The cloth that makes up Justina's headwrap in this image has a long history that speaks not only to dress practices in the former Danish West Indies but also to the connections that the former Danish West Indies had with Denmark and West Africa, as well as Denmark's colonies in India, which is where they sourced that fabric from.⁷ There are so many conversations to be had about this fabric and the practices associated with it – not only keeping it in the past but also considering how Virgin Islanders are activating those narratives in the present and in the future to still talk about how women dress their bodies and express cultural forms through dress, cloth and head wrapping practices.

NC: *Your research brings together a variety of sources – archaeological artifacts, vernacular photography, print culture and other kinds of written archival material – to enquire into the dress practices of African-descended people in the former Danish West Indies, pre- and post-emancipation (in 1848). What potentials lie in combining these different kinds of sources?*

AOF: I feel like I always turn to Saidiya Hartman – her methodologies just make so much sense for wanting to be human while doing this work of seeking out other human experiences.⁸ She is one of many Black women historians who have talked about the limitations of the data sources that we have access to, whether archaeological or documentary sources. And drawing on their work, I really try to think through: How can I tell the most holistic, encompassing story of the past? I feel like being able to pull on many different sources that speak to a certain time period allows me to get close to that. But even with all of these sources, as Hartman brings up, the final leap of knowing the interior lives of these historical people is often still not within our grasp. Barbara Christian talks about how the

creative and literary fiction become spaces where Black women can seek out those interior lives that we cannot gain access to with all of the historical sources that we have at hand.⁹ But I still feel like I want to have as many sources as possible to tell these stories of life; how people even under the direst circumstances were still living. The data sources themselves, especially documentary sources, are so bent on maintaining the narrative that Black people are just commodities, are just objects to be consumed, that to strive to connect and to strive for redress is really to rupture those sources. And that's the work that we have to do. There is still a desire to present people as human and to present people as complex. And to revel in that complexity.

NOTES

- 1 See Dunnavant, Justin P., Ayana Omilade Flewellen, Alexandra Jones, Alicia Odewale, and William White. 2018. "Assessing Heritage Resources in St. Croix Post-Hurricanes Irma and Maria." *Transforming Anthropology* 26, no. 2: 157-172.
- 2 See Odewale, Alicia, Justin Dunnavant, Ayana Flewellen, and Alexandra Jones. 2018. "Archaeology for the Next Generation." *Anthropology News* 59, no. 1: 210-215 and Franklin, Maria, Justin P. Dunnavant, Ayana Omilade Flewellen, and Alicia Odewale. 2020. "The Future is Now: Archaeology and the Eradication of Anti-Blackness." *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 24, no. 4: 753-766.
- 3 Morrison, Toni. 2008. *A Mercy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 9.
- 4 Flewellen, Ayana Omilade. 2019. "African Diasporic Choices: Locating the Lived Experiences of Afro-Crucians in the Archival and Archaeological Record". *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Informationsvidenskab og Kulturformidling*, 8(2), 57.
- 5 Johnson, Jessica Marie. 2018. "Markup Bodies: Black [Life] Studies and Slavery [Death] Studies at the Digital Crossroads". *Social Text*, 36 (4 (137)), 57-79.
- 6 Quadrille is a traditional Afro-Caribbean dance of the Virgin Islands that is accompanied by quelbe music.
- 7 The Danish East India Company established trading posts in Tranquebar (1620–1845), Serampore (1755–1845) and Nicobar Islands (1756–1868) that facilitated the extraction and circulation of spices and textiles throughout global trading networks. Between the years 1659-1850, Denmark-Norway administered a series of trading posts and forts on the coast of West Africa that were central to the Danish involvement in the transatlantic trade in and displacement of enslaved African people to the Caribbean.
- 8 In texts such as "Venus in Two Acts" (2008) and *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* (2019), Saidiya Hartman develops critical methodologies for approaching the experiences of historical African Diasporic subjects through the limitations of extant archival sources, while maintaining a sensitivity toward the conditions of both historical individuals and the present-day researcher. These methodologies also build on Hartman's critique of the way the inclusion of Black people into the domain of liberal humanism has provided further ground for anti-Black violence and effacing of Black subjects – a problem she explores in texts like *Scenes of Subjection* (1997) and "Delia's Tears" (2010).
- 9 See Christian, Barbara. 1985. *Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers*. New York: Pergamon Press.