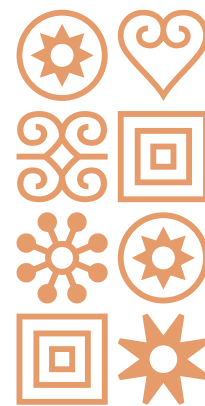


Aisha A. Upton
Jalia L. Joseph



Exploring the Black Feminist Imagination

Upton and Joseph discuss dreams and the imagination as a locus of knowledge production and social action. Dreams and imagination have radical potential for Black women. The Black feminist imagination (BFI) incorporates Black feminist values (the importance of community), Afrofuturism (the incorporation of Black history and stories in literature), and elements of Black feminist sociology (BFS, the liberatory potential of Black feminist work).

What is the Black Feminist Imagination?

The BFI can be expressed in many forms in various fields like sociological theory, fiction writing, and poetry. Centering the possibilities for a Black future, a BFI recognizes the connections between whiteness and capitalism and endeavors to unlearn both systems of oppression. Upon doing that, we can resist the **"art of forgetting"** that limits our ability to imagine better futures (p. 300). Forgetting our agency and power perpetuates colonization and suppression. The BFI trusts knowledge from the spirit and connects our past selves with the present and future.



Beloved Community

Central to Black feminist imaginary literature is the "beloved community" -- a mechanism Black feminist writers use to offer healing to their peers. Working from Bambara's *On the Issue of Roles*, Upton and Joseph write that "dismantling hierarchies within your own community is an act of self-love and survival" (p. 303). The authors connect examples of secluded communities in Black feminist literature from N.K. Jemisin to Octavia Butler to elaborate on how **communities of love and respect** are spaces empowerment, self-definition, and healing.

Impacts for the field

Black feminist sociologists, like Anna Julia Cooper, have continuously honored the imagination and emotional lives of Black women. The material and affective aspects of life are key to how we process life events and embodied knowledge. Thus, the future of BFS requires new methods for theorizing that incorporates dreams, imagination, and hope to sustain the legacy of Black feminist scholars and the BFS community.

Dreams and the imagination are subversive forms of knowledge that can be used in activism. In BFS knowledge production memories, dreams, and imaginations cannot be lost to the art of forgetting.



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