

Diasporic Dreaming: The Extraordinary Literacies and Superpower of Black Transnational Girlhood

Introduction: Unfurling Black Girl Superpowers

Black girls are as diverse as the stars in the sky. They belong to global communities, speak a variety of languages, and propel innovation. Despite these qualities, their learning environments can be alienating and even hostile. In the editorial, “Why Black Girls’ Literacies Matter: New Literacies for a New Era” (2016), Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz explains the urgency of Black Girls’ Literacy is a result of the climate in which Black girls are coming of age: higher rates of suspension, and the increased likeliness to attend schools that lack a full range of college preparatory courses and underqualified teachers. Assaults to Black girls also include invisibility in literacy research, misrepresentation and dehumanization in media, and disconnection between their lives and sanctioned curriculum (Muhammad & Haddix, 2016).

Black transnational girls exist in realities unfathomed by US classrooms. Haitian and Haitian American (H/HA) girls in particular, develop literacies while navigating multiple social contexts replete with Discourses of white supremacy, global anti-Blackness, and African diasporic counternarratives. I will never forget the first time I had to contend with these competing Discourses of Haiti in my own schooling experience as young Haitian American girl. It took years of study and self-reflection to unlearn this particular lesson.

I was “born and raised in the County of Dade” (DJ Khaled, 2006, track 2), Miami, Florida, lovingly referred to as the “Three-Oh-Five” for its primary area code. At the time, my middle school served a diverse population of African American, Caribbean, Latinx, and Asian students. We were a *mélange* of skin colors, languages, cultural norms and identities—plate tectonics

constantly rubbing, subducting, and drifting toward and away from each other in one school. By the early 2000s, the Haitian population in South Florida had grown considerably, and currently accounts for approximately 44% of the total Haitian population in the United States (Schultz & Batalova, 2017). At school, my heritage was always on full display as a source of pride, tension, kinship and/or entertainment. In first curricular encounter, my Haitian heritage became a source of shame.

I vividly remember my 6th grade world geography teacher, a timid, soft-spoken, white woman with a funny sounding Italian last name. We struggled to say her name her name, and often parodied its pronunciation. She too, struggled with my name, as did all my white teachers when they first saw it on paper— its pronunciation always sounded off-key. They could never quite find the right notes.

On this particular day of 7th period world geography, we were reading about the Caribbean. Per our class routine, my teacher-with-the-funny-sounding-Italian-name asked for a volunteer to read the section on Haiti. My hand shot up like a dart before she could even finish her request. As soon as my teacher gave the “okay” to read, my classmates audibly grumbled their annoyance and disapproval—I could *feel* their eyes roll. “*There she goes again...always doing the most*” But, guess what? I.DIDN’T.CARE. Reading out loud was an absolute pleasure. I loved how smoothly I read. I loved changing my intonation to match the mood of the passage. I loved letting everyone else in the room know I was brilliant. And for the first time, I had the chance to read about *my people*—to flex my brilliance on a topic that that highlighted my culture. I cleared my throat, squared my shoulders and positioned myself to project the introductory lines for the section headed as “Haiti”.

"Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere."

My voice, which was clear and well supported at the initial annunciation of the word 'Haiti,' was barely audible by the end of the sentence. I read the rest of the section completely deflated. Worst of all, I could hear the snickers. The subtle laughter loudly confirmed my peers registered my humiliation after reading the sentence. On the surface, this memory resembles much of what makes middle school, middle school—the inevitable series of embarrassing events. However, this encounter was particularly dangerous because of the messages I internalized as a 12-year-old girl. The textbook and my social studies teacher's silence initiated me to Haiti's crudely popular tagline. As a result, I logged the moment as a lesson in hubris; I was too haughty, too arrogant, and I was essentially "put in my place." This mundane moment had significant implications. It taught me to "tone it down" and make myself smaller lest I be reminded where I come from. On that day, I learned to stifle my own superpowers. For this reason, my work as a Haitian American feminist literacy scholar is driven by perennial question, what learning dynamics unleash Black girl superpowers?

Teaching and learning alongside Haitian and Haitian American (H/HA) girls for three summers offered unique insights into this complex question. This study deeply considers what it means to generate affirming learning experiences for Black H/HA girls embodying transnational communities. Examining their intellectual pursuits present the rare opportunity to explore the transnationality of Black Girl Literacies. This article concentrates on the study's most significant two findings: H/HA girls possess the extraordinary literacies of diasporic dreaming. Moreover, their extraordinary literacies of diasporic dreaming became fully actualized in a learning environment purposely governed by the empyreal logics of Haitian Vodou and the Diasporic

Lakou (Desir, 2011).

I invite you into this work by first clarifying my culturally specific linguistic choices. To begin with, I resist characterizing the girls in this study as immigrant. The term “immigrant” as a social construct plays an important role in signaling the social locations and dislocations (Diaz Beltran, 2018) of migrant children experiencing Western curriculum. However, I want to avoid the nomenclatural gymnastics of “first generation” versus “second generation” versus “third generation”. There is no clear consensus on how to designate each generation. Furthermore, delineating immigrant status to such specificity invites impractical questions of “*How immigrant are you?*” or put another way, “*How many generations removed can one still be considered Haitian?*” Therefore, I draw on transnational feminist theorists, M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty’s (2010) work to operationalize transnationality as “the politics of knowledge, and the spaces, places, and locations that we occupy” (p. 25). As the children of Haitian diaspora, transnationality becomes enmeshed in their literacies because of how both local and global discourses, policies, and histories impact the ways in which Haitian diaspora experiences racialization and evoke their migrant identities (Glick-Schiller, 2011). Transnationality allows for new lines of inquiry to surface such as how do the literate lives of Black girls bridge global communities? How is diaspora manifesting in their meaning making process? What are their global vantage points?

Within this study, “dyaspora” (*JAS-PO-RAH*) is in direct reference to the Haitian diasporic experience and reflects the Haitian-Creole spelling and pronunciation. Dyaspora is a term used to “identify the hundreds of thousands of Haitians living in many countries of the world” (Danticat, 2001, xiv). Haitian cultural anthropologist, Gina Ulysse, discusses the tensions situated

within in the label “diaspora”. The moniker levies a critique of Haitians who have long since left the harsh realities on the island but also desire to play a part in ameliorating those conditions (Ulysse, 2006). Ulysse uses the concept of “diasporic dreams” to illustrate the aspirations of Haitians abroad to have direct impact on what happens on the island. Ulysse’s scholarship cautions me against reinforcing the paternalistic relationships that can manifest within the Haitian diaspora. For this reason, my approach to diasporic dreaming is to honor the global experiences of Haitians abroad while foregrounding the Black liberation epistemologies Haiti gifts its people and the world.

Thus, I define diasporic dreaming as the intellectual, spiritual, and linguistic engagements of Black transnational girls. Their engagements negotiate spatial and temporal relationships across global contexts. As diasporic dreamers, Haitian girls showcase their ability to simultaneously read multiple worlds using Haitian spiritual epistemologies and Black Feminist Discourses unbounded by space and time. These engagements emphasize their social locations as Black girls of the Global South. The dream space centers the process of looking forward and backwards in time, while orienting towards multiple locations as home. The concept calls on researchers and practitioners to affirm H/HA girls’ diasporic dreaming as extraordinary literacies; these are their superpowers. My use of superpower is neither frivolous nor sensational, but in direct defiance of the misogynoir (Bailey & Trudy, 2018) which dismiss Black women and girls’ intellectual contributions as invalid, questionable, or unintelligible.

This article focuses on four middle school H/HA girls enrolled in a culturally based and spiritually grounded out-of-school literacy program called the Haitian Empowerment Literacy Project (HELP) in Miami, Florida. I interrogate how the girls narrated Black transnational girlhood

through autobiographical writings, literary discussions, and media analyses. I observed the ways HELP's curriculum, shaped by Haitian empyreal logics of Vodou and the diasporic lakou, supported H/HA girls' extraordinary literacies.

In the sections to follow, I describe how Haitian Vodou, the diasporic lakou, and Black feminist literacies form the study's conceptual frames. Afterwards, I discuss Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Race Methodology as a methodological approach to language analysis. Next, I highlight the ways the girls engage diasporic dreaming. I conclude this article by illustrating the significance of diasporic dreaming to centralize the literate lives of Black transnational girls, orient curriculum towards the Global South, and lock step with evolving 21st century literacies.

Grounding Diasporic Dreaming as Extraordinary Literacies

Haitian Vodou

Vodou is a complex belief system containing multiple deities with ceremonies and rituals to honor them. However, for the purposes of this project, I focus specifically on the core teachings of Vodou and how these foundational principles align with the Haitian lakou to construct Haitian empyreal logics. As a system of spiritual beliefs and meaning-making, Vodou's cosmology is grounded in African Humanism which emphasizes social institutions and collectivity (Bellegarde-Smith, 2006). More importantly, relationships between "the living, the dead, and the unborn play equally significant roles in an unbroken historical chain" (Bellegarde-Smith, 1990, p. 13). Vodou and its practice in Haiti traces all the way back to the forced arrival of enslaved Africans on the island of Hispaniola.

As a spiritual practice, Vodou “became not only a means for revitalization through ancestral traditions, but also the channel par excellence to organize and to resistance” (Michel, 1996, p. 281). Pan-African historian, C.L.R. James (1963) describes Vodou “as the medium of conspiracy” against white slaveholders. Despite the explicit proscription of the religious practice, enslaved Africans “travelled miles to sing, and dance, and practice the rites and talk; and now, since the [Haitian Revolution] to hear political news and make plans” (James, 1963, p. 86). Vodou functioned as a significant unifier amongst enslaved Africans on Hispaniola. By the beginning of the 19th century, it is believed that 75% of Haiti’s population was born in Africa (Brown, 2006), explaining how Vodou’s development on the island is an amalgamation of rituals from west, west central, and south-central Africa with significant contributions from Dahomean, Yoruba, and Kongo cultures and civilization (Bellegarde-Smith, 2006). Despite its emancipatory origins, Vodou and its African practitioners were demonized as black magic and anti-Christian in nature (Michel, 2006). This led to rigid policing of the religion amongst Haiti’s enslaved Africans which remained even after the expulsion of white slaveholders. Colonial violence against the practice of the African indigenous religion forced clandestine dynamics for practitioners. Haitians famously quip that Haiti is 80% Catholic, but 100% Vodou (Bellegarde-Smith, 2006).

As an ancestral religion, Vodou “represents a key element of Haitian consciousness and provides moral coherence through common cosmological understandings” (Michele, 2006, p. 28). As a practical faith, Vodou’s “primary concern is the well-being of individuals and the welfare of the group. People turn to the spirits and their ancestors to secure a better life for themselves and their community” (Michel, 2006, p. 28).

The primary source for these wisdoms come from bringing “their African/Creole spirits, their *Lwa*, into all affairs and consistently seek their influence” (Michel, 2006, p. 30). *Lwas* represent the cosmic forces embedded in Haitian experiences, and are sought out on a daily basis (Michel, 2006). The primary objective for practitioners is “creating harmony, in keeping a balance, in cultivating virtues such as justice, beneficence, benevolence, patience, forgiveness, and cooperation, in respecting elders, and instilling desirable values in children” (Michel, 2006, p. 28).

Everyday experiences become opportunities to engage in spiritual enrichment, connection to ancestors, and opportunities to embody harmonious spiritual principles. For this reason, it functions less as an institutionalized religion, but “extends ‘naturally’ and easily, permeating all systems, structures, and institutions in the large and subtle ways in which most Haitians view their world and all worlds, even as they migrate” (Bellegarde-Smith, 2006, p. 103). Participation and interaction with the divine do not require access to formal worship spaces, or officially appointed spiritual leaders. Generations of practicing spirituality in plain sight created “a democratic and functional religion, embedded in the vicissitudes of its followers’ daily existence, and in their struggle for survival” (Michel, 2006, p.28). The ubiquitous nature of spiritual interaction creates a religious dynamic in which one learns everywhere and at all times; there is a complete unity between religion and life—so one does not have to be a Vodou adept in Haiti to be able draw on its influences and enrich their spiritual meaning-making and survival (Michel, 2006).

Haitian Vodou as an empyreal logic organizes spiritual energies directly from ancestral wisdoms of resistance, justice, balance, and communal harmony. Serving ancestral spirits means “a constant effort to maintain these wisdoms” and achieving unity (Michel, 2006, p.31). McAlister

(2006) explains “as individuals are defined by their relationships both to ancestors and to those living in the community, illness is always approached through a careful consideration of imbalance in relationships” (p. 82). Healing occurs in the Vodou tradition once balance is restored to an imbalanced interpersonal relationship.

HELP’s approach to literacy instruction was deeply tied to the development of students’ spiritual and racial consciousness. Haitian Vodou cosmology and Judeo-Christian traditions conferred purpose and framework for HELP’s curriculum. The 7-week summer institute was led by an overall theme and each week was guided by a lwa and their corresponding principle. The tables below illustrate the summer themes and weekly focus for the program.

Table 1: Haitian Empowerment Literacy Project Summer Themes (2010-2015)	
Program Year	Overall Summer Theme
2010	You are a Dream Actualized
2011	The Roots are Deep: Decolonizing the Imagination
2012	Manifestation of God’s Love
2013	Spiritual Consciousness Connects us to the Divine Mind
2014	Mystical Imagination: “Zero Curriculum: From Nothing Comes Everything”
2015	Beyond Liberation
(Desir, Hall, Auguste, Seraphin & Gallagher, 2017, p. 338; Seraphin, 2019, p. 86)	

Program Week	Lwas/Haitian Principle	Meaning of Principle	Literacy Focus
Week 1	Gede	Life/Death	Self
Week 2	Marasa	Duality	Self
Week 3	Simbi	Healing	Interpersonal
Week 4	Legba	Crossroads	Interpersonal
Week 5	Jeni	Psychosocial Spirituality/Intelligence/Awareness	Community (Internal)
Week 6	Ezili	Love	Community (External)
Week 7	Azaka	New Beginnings	Integration
	(Seraphin, 2021, p. 41)		

The Diasporic Lakou

Vodou's kinetic energies are sustained through the interconnectedness between those who came before, those who are, and those who will be. This interconnectedness is replicated and honored in the spatial configuration of neighborhood lakous, or yards. The Haitian lakou represents "a family and/or spiritual compound where work is shared and anchors the social framework in Haitian traditions (Desir, 2011). While lakous operate as centers for family and community, they also function as "dwellings for the lwas and the ancestors (who partake in rituals held for them there), they are religious and ancestral centers" (Smith, 2001, p. 80). Haitian American school psychologist, and HELP program co-founder, Dr. Charlene Desir presents the Haitian lakou as an educational space which maintains importance across the waters in the United States. Desir (2011) asserts, "The lakou nurtured community under slavery and fueled the

revolution...What is done inside the lakou has potential for lasting change because it engages the spiritual source of Haitian survival and resistance” (p. 282). In 2010, Desir worked closely with teachers and community organizations in the northern region of Haiti to develop mental health supports for children recovering from the trauma of the devastating 2010 earthquake. Desir explains how the educational lakous became a space for teachers to generate learning experiences for primary and secondary students to process trauma, terror, and community healing after experiencing such large-scale destruction. Desir suggests the lakou helps Haiti’s diaspora to shift their social perceptions and reassess the relevance of Western training and its relevance to Haiti. The diasporic lakou provides an opportunity to those outside of Haiti to “recognize and value Haitian knowledge and Haitian approaches to learning and teaching” (2011, p. 293).

Desir’s work with students and teachers in Haiti deeply influenced the curricular design of HELP. In collaboration with education psychologist Pamela Hall, the program was intentionally designed to align Haitian culture, spirituality, and literacy. In the traditional lakou space, energies are felt and facilitated in the daily experiences of familial and communal gatherings. The diasporic lakou of HELP was specifically built to carry these ancestral knowledges across the waters. At HELP, students convened regularly in programmatic meetings to learn from “lawyers, acupuncturists, financial planners, Protestant pastors, Catholic missionaries, Vodou practitioners, and spiritualists” (Desir et al., 2017, p. 339). As a collective, students produced the end-of-summer showcase and depended on each other to carry out tasks. HELP’s diasporic lakou infused Haitian Vodou principles in their literacy instruction.

Centering Black Transnational Girls' Literacies

Black feminist literary scholar, Regine Jean-Charles, argues that Haitian girls occupy contradictory spaces— “they are inscribed into a narrative of suffering and abjection that renders them hypervisible and invisible” (p. 143). Jean-Charles (2018) illustrates that the conversation around Haitian girls does not actually consult them and negates their imaginative acts as futile, particularly in the aftermath of Haiti’s devastating 2010 earthquake. To center Haitian girls, Jean-Charles advocates embracing their right to be fully present and embodied, to speak for oneself, and to dream (2018). Additionally, Haitian girls’ act of imagination must begin by “actively centering their visions and the possibilities that emerge from them. Black Haitian girls deserve the right to be seen outside their suffering, and understood through their “imaginative leaps” (Jean-Charles, 2018, p. 150).

The girls of the Haitian diaspora are heirs to a rich legacy of literacies that amplified Haitian women’s voices, and disrupted patriarchal narratives that shaped their lives and cultural representations in Haiti (N’Zengou-Tayo, 1998). Haitian women’s narratives are deeply political and tell the story of gendered sociopolitical conditions. The Haitian Women’s Movement of the early 20th set the stage for an array of Haitian women’s literacy practices rooted in the advancement of women’s social status. During this era, Haitian women’s novels explicitly critiqued US occupation and colorism within society. Haitian women writers engaged their male counterparts in literary dialogue which is recognized as birth of Haitian Feminism (Latorture, 2000). Organizations such as *Ligue Féminine d’Action Sociale* (Women’s League for Social Action), “whose goal was the physical, economic, social and political amelioration of the condition of women in Haiti” (Latorture, 2000, p. 84), spoke openly against Haitian women’s

second-class status. In 1935, this same organization also created, *La Voix de Femmes* (Women's Voices), a publication curated by women and "was the first medium devoted to the publication of women's issues, which included literary works" (Latorture, 2000, p. 84). Poor rural Haitian women also played prominent roles in grassroots peasant liberation movements. For example, the Mouvement Peyizan Papay, (MPP, or Peasant Movement of Papaye) sought to reshape the political geography of Haiti's Central Plateau to address women's needs (Moore, 2020). Though defined by their roles in maintaining "the household economy, organizing the family, raising children, working in the fields and gardens" (N N'Zengou-Tayo, 1998, p. 124), rural Haitian women have long cultivated gendered organizing practices such as community training programs to demand fair agricultural rights as women and caretakers of land (Moore, 2020). The diasporic dreams of transnational Haitian girls must rest on the legacy resistance of their Haitian foremothers.

I look to Black feminist literacy scholars in the US to conceptualize the literacies of H/HA girls in HELP. Kimberlé Crenshaw's pivotal concept of intersectionality grounds much of their work. Crenshaw made clear "the need to account for the multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed" (Crenshaw, 1990, p. 1245). Intersectionality refers to the "intersecting patterns of racism and sexism, and how these experiences tend not to be represented within the discourses of either feminism or antiracism" (pp. 1243-1244). Intersectionality clarified how Black women's gendered and racialized identities compounded their experiences with racism and sexism. Black feminist traditions within literacy research elucidate the intersectionality of Black girls' literate lives. Elaine Richardson's (2002) seminal text, *To Protect and Serve: African American Female Literacies*, conceptualized African American girls'

literacies as the “constellation of African American cultural identities, social locations, and social practices that influence the ways members of this discourse group make meaning and assert themselves socio-politically in subordinate as well as official contexts” (Richardson, 2009, p. 755). Richardson positions Black girl literacies as “vernacular resistance arts and cultural productions that are created to carve out free spaces in oppressive locations such as classrooms, the streets, and workplaces” (p. 678). Black girl literacies are communicated through Black discourse styles of “storytelling, conscious manipulation of silence and speech, code/style shifting, and signifying, among other verbal and nonverbal performances” (p. 680). These literacies are often disadvantaged in the literacy classroom. Ultimately, Richardson demonstrates that “rather than being a barrier to literacy achievement, Black girls’ language practices, knowledges and understandings can be, and have been, used advantageously to help Black [girls] in their literacy experiences at school” (Richardson, 2002, p. 698).

Sutherland’s (2005) qualitative study of six Black girls reading Toni Morrison’s “The Bluest Eye” (1970) supports Richardson’s conclusions. Sutherland posits ascribed identities of Black girls based in dominant frames create boundaries around Black girl identities. Through deep discussion and personal essays, the girls named the ways Eurocentric views of beauty, and imposed expectations created boundaries around Black women’s lives. Their literacy practices of self-assertion and self-definition negotiated these boundaries and facilitated co-constructed identities for young Black girlhood (Sutherland, 2005).

Negotiating the boundaries of Black girlhood is important, however, does not complete the humanization process for Black girls in literacy classrooms. The Black Literacy Girls’ Literacies Collective (BGLC) (2016) was created with this specific task in mind. As Black feminist women

scholars and English educators, BGLC's primary members, Marcelle Haddix, Sherell A. McArthur, Gholnesca E. Muhammad, Detra Price-Dennis, Erica Womack, and Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz, committed to privileging Black girls and women's knowledge productions, being purposeful when writing about Black girl literacies, and creating spaces that preserve the souls of Black girls and women (Haddix et al, 2016). The collective defines Black girls' literacies as "specific acts in which Black girls read, write, speak, move, and create in order to affirm themselves, the(ir) world, and the multidimensionality of young Black womanhood and/or Black girlhood (Price-Dennis, Muhammad, Womack, McArthur, Haddix, 2017, p. 5). As a result, BGLC produced scholarship that both examines and creates spaces specifically designed for Black girl literacies to flourish. For example, Muhammad and Haddix (2016) construct the Black Girls Literacy Framework as pedagogical guidance for a more complete vision of Black girls in classrooms. They explored empirical research of Black girls in areas such as digital literacies, language practices, literacy collaboratives, performative literacies, etc. From their extensive review, they offered concrete recommendations to support literacy instruction for Black girls. They advocate engaging in "broad categories of reading, writing, language, embodied literacies, and literature (Muhammad & Haddix, 2016, p. 305), tying literacy to identity work and mediating self-hood, connecting students to the historical literacy practices of Black ancestors, collaborating in environments that are social and involve co-construction of knowledge with other Black girls, foregrounding intellectual and critical thought, discussing and reflecting on social problems, and keeping Black girl literacies in critique of power and social transformation (Muhammad & Haddix, 2016). Their review studies of literacy collaboratives demonstrated Black girls gain opportunities to advance their skills, identity, intellect, and criticality "when connecting

[them] to their literary histories; when spaces include multiple enactment literacies" (Price-Dennis et al., 2016p. 313). Black feminist literacy scholarship provides the tools to name the multiplicity of Black Girls' Literacies and the classroom practices which cultivate them.

In summary, Dyasporic dreaming represents the social, and spiritual practices embedded in Haitian Vodou cosmology. It also also revives Haitian feminist literacy practices which demands visibility. These practices are classified as extraordinary for their ability to tap into ancestral wisdoms to maintain the balance within their community. Dyasporic dreaming extends Black women's robust global legacy of life preserving literacies. This article works to encapsulate Black Transnational Girls' literacies and resolve.

Methodology

This study uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Critical Race Methodology (CRM) for language analysis. This approach positions the participants' work as valid and their experiential knowledge valuable. Additionally, this study was committed to executing serious examinations of power within the context of race, ethnicity, and gender. James Collins (2011) instructs CDA researchers in education to discern "how we engage each other, learn in groups, develop identities, and resist oppression" (p. x). To achieve this, I utilize Gee's (2011) seven situated tasks of language analysis. The tasks direct language analysis into various "modes of inquiry" that promote the analysis of language from its most granular representations to a global perspective in terms of how language constructs figured worlds for interlocutors.

CRM in education research also seeks to understand the intersectionality of race, class, gender, immigration status as layers of subordination, and has an explicit commitment to social

justice by offering liberatory or transformative responses to race, class, and gender oppression (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). As a methodology, CRM challenges dominant ideology, accesses the experiential knowledge of students, and promote their counternarratives. Counternarratives play a crucial role signifying how racial and ethnic ideologies imprint on students' lives, and explores the ways they shirk them. Additionally, CRM uses transdisciplinary methods to combat ahistoricism. Experiential knowledge represents contextualized realities, and creates connections to present day experiences to documented patterns of systemic oppression. Framing the discourses of my participants as counternarrative productions within a historical continuum works to legitimize their experiences as young literate people of color. I adopted Gee's Seven Situated Tasks to generate 15 modes of inquiry to ask questions of the specific ways the girls indexed Blackness, Haitianess, gender, power in relationships, their orientations of identities, their use of multiple languages, the significant moments, and activities across multiple literacy events.

Participants

The four H/HA girls of featured in this paper are Antoinette, Lovely, Nadège, and Venus. Antoinette, Nadege, and Lovely attended the same K-8 private Catholic school in Miami, Florida and were classmates. Venus attended school in the neighboring Broward County Public School district. Institutional Review Board approval was obtained prior to the start of the case study and all the girls have completed and signed consent forms to participate. All names in this study are pseudonyms. I selected participants based on their level of engagement across multiple literacy activities to ensure triangulation from multiple datasets. The four participants

completed a majority of the journal entries, participated in multiple classroom discussions, performed in the showcase, and participated in one semi-structured interview at the completion of the program. Overall, I approached the data set asking what did the girls reveal about themselves and their thinking in each dream space? How do Haiti's Vodou empyreal logics manifest in their meaning making? In what ways do they embody the Haitian Diaspora?

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Rising Grade Level</i>	<i>Generational Status</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Years Enrolled in HELP</i>
<i>Antoinette</i>	14	9 th	Migrated to US in 2005	North Miami	2
<i>Nadège</i>	14	9 th	Migrated to US in 2007	Miami (Pinewood)	2
<i>Lovely</i>	14	9 th	Born in South Florida	North Miami Beach	2
<i>Venus</i>	14	9 th	Born in South Florida	Hallandale Beach	1

Black Transnational Girls' Diasporic Dreams

This portion of the article illustrates how H/HA girls in this study engaged in diasporic dreaming. Specifically, I analyze their extraordinary literacies in three dream spaces, or modes of literacy: autobiographical writing, literary analysis, and media analysis. The corresponding data for each dream space include the girls' in-class journal entries, transcribed classroom discussion of Edwidge Danticat's short story, "A Wall of Fire Rising" from the collection, "Krik? Krak!" (1995), and transcribed student-led discussion of media texts.

The girls' autobiographical writing drew on their ancestors and God, acknowledged imbalance and/or harmony in their familiar relationships, and thoughtfully mapped their intersectionality as Black transnational girls. Their literary analysis centered their familial experiences as children of Dyasporas. Within their media discussions, the girls outline the

borders of their gender identities. Each dream space presented opportunities to activate different aspects of their extraordinary literacies to create generative learning environments.

Dyasporic Dreaming in Autobiographical Writing

Journaling was a core writing strategy in HELP's curriculum. Every student received a composition notebook at the beginning of each summer to keep track of their learning activities. I routinely implemented quick writes as a pre-reading strategy to explore themes from the short stories during our morning reading block. In the afternoons, journal writing was a tool for personal reflection in relation to the weekly guiding principle and/or an extension of our conversations in the all-program morning meetings. I crafted journal prompts to elicit students' personal experiences and opinions on topics such as racial identity, culture, and personal aspirations. The table below details the major journal prompts for the students in my 2015 7th and 8th grade literacy class. Every student in the program responded to the last three journal prompts; these prompts were the foundations for creative performance arts for the end-of-summer showcase. For this article, I focus on the participants responses to prompts on June 15th, June 17th, and June 22nd. These prompts encouraged students to reflect on their personal histories, tease out racial, ethnic, and national identities, and practice self-definition.

June 8, 2015	Describe a typical school day.
June 9, 2015	How would you describe Miami to someone who has never been there?
June 15, 2015	Where do you come from? Who do you come from? What do you come from?
June 17, 2015	What does it mean to be Haitian? Black? American? Do they ever clash with each other? What else do you use to identify who you are?
June 22, 2015	Who am I?
June 23, 2015	What do I desire? (Heart maps)
July 1, 2015	What is your life plan? What legacy do you want to leave behind?

(Seraphin, 2019, p. 104)

The *Marasa* lwa principle guided the literacy focus and instruction in this segment of the summer institute. *Marasa* represents divine twin spirits prone to mischief when not properly recognized in Vodou rituals (Michel & Bellegarde-Smith, 2006). For practitioners, Marasa symbolizes wholeness, plurality, healing (Bellande-Robertson, 1997). *Marasa* consciousness in Vodou canon and Haitian literary traditions represents the ability to perceive the dualities and/or multiplicities in experiences and “invites us to imagine beyond the binary” (Clark, 2009, p. 12). HELP operationalized the *Marasa* lwa to facilitate student reflections regarding the multiplicity of their identities and the interconnectedness of “self” with past histories and locations. On June 15, I asked my students to respond to the questions, “Where do you come from? Who do you come from? What do you come from?” in week two of the 2015 HELP summer institute. When tasked with self-inquiry through this lwa principle, the girls named their ancestors and connections to God, acknowledged imbalance and/or harmony in their familiar relationships, and delineated the complexities as Black H/HA girls living in the United States. For the June 15th prompt, “Where do you come from?”, both Antoinette and Lovely described their origins from spiritual and communal perspectives. Antoinette writes,

“I come from the one sent above. I was raised and taught by those around me, not just my family members. My faith kind of shape me as a person and who I want to be. I learned morals on how to respect myself and others” (Antoinette, June 15, 2015).

In the same vein, Lovely, writes,

“I come from Miami which is where I was born. I come from heaven, which is where I was born. I come from my family, teachers, friends, classmates, parents, and God they help shape me and watched me grow. I come from Africa, the Haitian culture, Christianity, and

a community of diverse people and ethnicities" (June 15, 2015).

Lovely and Antoinette's descriptions transcend physical locations by situating their origins in the communities around them and their faith. Lovely further places herself in the African Diaspora by signifying both the African continent and Haitian culture. Likewise, Venus names her parents, as "a very energetic woman named Guerlande and a quiet man named Mickenson", she also describes her homelife " a loving environment where you can be yourself, and goof off, and just relax" (Venus, June 15, 2015).

In contrast, Nadège couches her origins within family and faith, but also details the tensions that exist in her familial relationships. Nadege's response below marks,

"I come from a line of hardworking individuals that are willing to put in the time and work, to get what they want. I come from a family that is full of faith, but sometimes tend to be narrow-minded. We are physically very close, but we have differences that come between us. Yet, our morals and our blood keep us together at the end of the day" (June 15, 2015).

Nadège complicates her autobiographical piece with familial tensions. She references the "differences that come between us" but maintains her bond. In this case, calling out those tensions represents Vodou wisdom in honoring the relationship but identifying a source of its imbalance. In short, the girls exercised thinking of themselves as part of a continuum while naming the different sources which contributed to who they were as young girls.

In the Haitian literary canon, Marasa consciousness symbolizes the "three racial and cultural currents, African, European, Amerindian, whose convergence has given birth to the

Haitian people and its creole culture" (Bellande-Robertson, 1997, p. 54). Thus, the journal prompt on June 17th asking, "What does it mean to be Black? Haitian, American", upholds the lwa principle and urged the girls to clarify how these constructs shaped their identities. Their responses presented different relationships to Blackness, Haitianess, and Americanness based on their acceptance or rejection of hegemonic Discourses of Blackness. The starkest contrast can be seen in Venus and Nadege's entries. When asked what does it mean to be Black, Haitian, and American, Nadege surmises,

"Are these things the same? Are they different? No, not at all, but they can find common ground. I am Black, as in that is my race. Because of my race there are certain expectations that I must surpass. Just as in my Haitian culture, I am expected to do better than everyone else that came before me in my family. I don't really consider myself American, even though I listen to American music, eat American food, and go to a very American school...I live in it, but it is not me" (Nadège, June 17, 2015).

Nadège articulates the double hurdles she must overcome as a Haitian girl. She names the low expectations embedded in Blackness and immigrant aspirations located Haitianness. She must exceed deficit expectations of her abilities, while accomplishing family firsts as a Haitian girl receiving opportunities those before her did not have. Lastly, Nadège flatly rejects taking on an American identity because she does not see herself within it. Both high immigrant aspirations and low hegemonic expectations border Nadège's transnational girlhood.

One the other hand, Venus rejects Blackness as a label and outlines how her Haitian identity positions her as a family mediator. Venus comments,

“To me, being Haitian, and being American clash all the time. My mom can speak English but has a very thick accent, and my brother can’t speak good Creole, so I always found myself translating for both of them. I’m not very black but I think to be black is to connect yourself to you roots, and always defending yourself.

Venus signifies how language disrupts her ability to reconcile being both Haitian and American. She highlights the difficulty in communication between her sibling and mother position in the “in-between” space as a Haitian daughter mediating linguistic differences in her household. Venus also highlights the conflict in Blackness. In one sentence, Venus marks a core Vodou empyreal logic of connecting to your roots, but also couches this logic in contemporary realities of Black people needing to defend themselves. Though she doesn’t give detail on what she believes Black people are defending themselves from, Venus may be referencing the interpersonal and structural aggressions of racism and white supremacy embedded in Black US experiences. Unlike, Nadege, Venus does not draw common ground between Blackness and Haitianness. She comments,

Being Black and being Haitian are very different to me. I feel being Haitian is a bit more cultural while being black is just a label. I feel that me being Black and being American clash because when my friends listen to their rap music, I would rather listen to something a bit more theatrical.

Here, Venus rejects notions of Blackness because of her encounters with race presumes Blackness as doing the added exhaustive work of “always defending yourself” and defined by American Hip-hop culture. From this standpoint, her rejection can be understood as resistance to the added labor and valuing her interests outside of the monolithic frames of Blackness.

For the most part, Lovely, and Antoinette's, entries existed in the middle of the spectrum. For example, Antoinette writes, "To be Black means to be constantly judge by those that are not of my same color. (not all) and to be inferior to those who lead me to believe that they're my superior in looks, class, intelligence, and etc." (June 17, 2015). She then rejects white supremacist ideologies by saying, "However, I believe that black is beautiful in more ways than you can imagine and it's about time people stop looking down on us..." (June 17, 2015). Antoinette activates the counternarrative, "Black is beautiful" to ward off the harm of White supremacist discourse.

Antoinette also repositions Discourses of Haiti by describing Haitianness as being a part of "a one-of-a-kind group" where she's given unique opportunities to bond in language and culture by saying, "Sak pase? to [her] fellow Haitian" (June 17, 2015). On the other hand, she muddies her conceptualization of Blackness by stating, "black people take advantage of their color" by sometimes using the "racist card too much as a pity card" (June 17, 2015). Thus, Antoinette mobilizes a racist rhetorical device typically used to negate legitimate claims to systemic racism. In this excerpt, harmful discourses infiltrate her perceptions of Blackness even while she espouses counternarratives for Blackness. The girls demonstrate that their positionalities are complex and notably shaped by their experiences with dominant and/or counternarrative Discourses of Blackness. Nonetheless, the Marasa-conscious literacy focus provided the dream space to attend to their intersectionality as Black H/HA girls.

HELP's curriculum emphasized the importance of self-definition. Each summer, across across all grade levels, students exercised self-definition by answering the open-ended question, "Who am I?". This entry is especially important to take into account the ways H/HA girls

construct Black transnational girlhood. I found the girls crafted self-portraits which emphasized their personalities, talents, and meaningful relationships. They cite a constellation of Haitian, Black, and/or Christian knowledges to support their assertions of themselves. This is most clearly seen in Lovely's entry. She begins her entry by brainstorming a series of adjectives. She writes, "My name is Lovely and I am: gorgeous, adorable, beautiful, rare, intelligent, emotional, lovable, loving, energetic, optimistic, long hair, I have purpose, Black, reader, insecure, confident, excellent, independent, Vampire Diaries, Anime, nice, afraid" (June 22, 2015). Lovely then draw on these descriptors to construct her narrative. She writes,

I am a: Gorgeous Haitian young woman I who is afraid of the future and is both beautiful and...rare. An intelligent young dreamer who is emotional, short, and awkward. An aunt full time who is very loving and lovable. I am short yet energetic but very...optimistic. A tomboy transitioning with long hair who is on a mission. Black and blessed. I am an active reader who is insecure yet confident, helpful. An excellent sister and daughter. An independent and trustworthy Catholic who is a weirdo for Vampire Diaries and Sci-Fi. A geek who loves anime. Who has a nice singing voice. An awkward person who loves the color yellow. She loves her religion and music. I am full of secrets.

Lovely displays an array of qualities from her outward appearance, her intellectual abilities, and popular culture obsessions. She takes a holistic approach by naming her strengths and positive attributes while acknowledging awkwardness and fears. Lovely indexes her girlhood through her relationship to family, for example, "loving and lovable aunt", "excellent sister and daughter". Her girlhood presents competing images of the "gorgeous young woman" and "transitioning tomboy" which marks an in-between space for the choices she'll make with her body. I think

Lovely's catchphrase of "Black and blessed" best encapsulates how her racial and spiritual consciousness intersect. Her entry demonstrates a level of self-awareness and vulnerability.

In similar fashion, Venus showcases her positive attributes. Venus opens her entry by saying, "I am an artistic, creative person", and details her passion for singing and playing the piano. Venus also dictates her rules of engagement. She notes, "I am very quiet and reserved but once you get to know me you'll realize how energetic I can be...I can be overly nice, but I have a very smart mouth when I want to" (June 22, 2015). Nadège, however, uses her narrative for more somber reflection. She opens,

Last year, I stood on stage and spoke to an audience about who I thought I was. I was filled to the brim with confidence about my identity. However, as I went through my 8th grade year, that solid image shattered. I came back to HELP to pick up the pieces and glue them back together (June 22, 2015).

Nadège highlights why persistent self-definition and self-reflection plays a crucial part in Black girls' identity development. Her introduction reminds of the ways schooling experiences erode the brilliance of Black girls. She goes on to remind herself of who she is,

As of right now I consider myself to be: a black scholar, education is a very important aspect of my life. In fact, my biggest fear is that I won't be able to succeed as much as I can in getting an education...As a black student, some people don't really expect me to succeed, so I can't let those people have the last laugh (June 22, 2015).

Nadège exposes the incredible weight she feels as a diaspora child to take advantage of opportunity, prove naysayers wrong, and achieve academic success. In the latter portion of the narrative, Nadège reclaims her identity. She writes,

“I may not be the best writer, but when I write, I’m exposed to a type of freedom that I don’t have in real life...When I write, I get pulled into a reality that I created. I get an amazing feeling when I complete a piece, no matter how short” (June 22, 2015).

Lastly, Nadège outlines her Christian identity and credits her Protestant household and Catholic schooling for playing “an important part in developing what [she] believes in” (June 22, 2015).

Overall, Nadège shares an honest account of hurt, uncertainty, and commitment to healing. She uses this writing prompt as an opportunity to course correct by underscoring the aspects of her identity which ground her. She is given space to celebrate her gifts.

As members of the diasporic *lakou*, the girls in this study developed *Marasa consciousness*. Each girl shared a range of perspectives regarding their origins, the larger social meanings embedded in racial constructs, and self-definition. What remains constant in their autobiographical writing is the ability to evoke nuances, present their multiplicities, and write about their lives in their own terms.

Diasporic Dreaming during Literary Analysis

The third week of instruction at HELP focused on the *lwa*, *Simbi Dlo*, or *Simbi of Water*. In Vodou lore, water represents life force, purifying energy, and medium into the invisible spirit world leading to ancestors (McAlister, 2020). As a water spirit, the *lwa* Simbi, symbolizes a conduit into the spiritual world and is known as a great herb-healer (McAlister, 2020; Bellande Robertson, 1997). Hence, the third week of instruction focused on modes of healing particularly

within interpersonal relationships. The assigned reading for this week was Danticat's, "A Wall of Fire Rising" from the collection, "Krik? Krak!" (1995). The short story centers a rural Haitian family: Guy, Lili, and their son, Little Guy. Guy, despondent about his life in poverty, fixates on flying the hot air balloon stored at the local mill. His son, Little Guy earns the prominent role of the legendary Haitian founding father, Boukman, in the school play about the Haitian Revolution. Little Guy proudly memorizes his line and the short story ends with Guy flying the hot air balloon and leaping to his death. On June 25, our class discussed the significance of the balloon and Guy as a parent to Little Guy. In this conversation, the girls' intellectual deliberation began by unpacking Guy's state of mind. The conversation then made an interesting segue into their relationships with their own parents, revealing the tensions, frustrations, pressures, and aspirations for their families in the US. Their deliberations about transnational familial relationships tap into the literacy focus on interpersonal connections, and takes steps towards understanding and healing within the *Simbi Iwa* principle.

At the start of the whole group discussion, I pose the question, "What does the hot air balloon represent to Guy?" To which Nadège responds, "

Okay. I think it represents for him the opportunity to show his wife that he could be more than just a worker scrubbing toilets. And the thing is that the hot air balloon was like hope. Because he didn't want to be like his father who was someone that was poor all his life. He didn't want to be remembered as that (June 25, 2015).

Lovely chimes in "I felt like it, was freedom for him. Because it was like free from being poor and things like that. He could go away from his life. And so, he could make something different of himself, clumsily" (June 25, 2015).

Further in the discussion, I asked students, "Does Guy remind you of anybody?" This question generated a cascade of responses from students with experiential and cultural knowledge as children of diasporas. Venus opens up first to her peers by sharing,

So, I'm the first child my parents had here. And then I have my little brother. And so, since I'm the oldest, they always expect me to be the example. So, when I mess up, they always like, oh, so now how do you think your brother's going to be doing when he gets to this age. He's going to be even worse than you. So, I'm kind of forced to have to be perfect (June 25, 2015).

As the first US-born child of her parents, Venus explains how her mistakes as a teenager don't just impact her, but are noted as generational errors that affect her younger brother's outcome.

As a Black transnational girl, there is added pressure to ensure her family's social mobility.

Venus's testimony prompts Lovely to discuss her 8th grade awards ceremony.

There's this girl who was my best friend. Her name is Josephine and so she had gone up over and over and over again. So, when it was my time to go up, my parents don't even clap for me. They just look. So, when I actually went home, when I was at the car to go home, my mom was like I don't even want to look at your face no more. I was like, why? And she was like, oh, your friend. You see your friend? The one you be calling on the phone every day? Yeah, she's going there and get all the awards. You don't get nothing (June 25, 2015).

Venus and Lovely are not the only ones to share these accounts. The classroom discussion about Guy becomes a space of vulnerability and validity as other retell their parents' reactions to

academic failure and success, the pressures to try harder, and processing ridicule. I argue that this generative moment is a healing one, and personifies the *Simbi Iwa* principle. By openly disclosing a moment where they felt pressure or were admonished, Venus and Lovely give everyone else room to do the same. As Black transnational girls straddling Haitian immigrant expectations and US schooling barriers, they come to realize they are not alone in the dream space.

To transition discussion, I ask, "why do you think your parents react that way?"

Antoinette best summarizes the shared experiences by answering,

I think that they want you to surpass past them, because they probably weren't living the way we're living right now. But it's their approach to the way they want us to surpass them. Like making us do stuff that we don't know that we have to do. Or like trying and force us to do stuff, that it's not helping (June 25, 2015).

Antoinette relays an important point when she comments, "making us do stuff that we don't know we have to do". She highlights that for many transnational students, there isn't a roadmap; they are tasked to make considerable gains without having access to the "cheat codes" for US schooling.

Dyasporic Dreaming during Media Analysis

For one hour, once a week, students discussed media texts during a segment we called "What's Hot?". Students contributed different social media texts which explored topics such as racism, sexism, xenophobia, and inspiration. Throughout the week, students emailed media texts, or popular culture narratives (PCN) (Staples, 2012). Examples of student-selected PCNs

include Rihanna's "American Oxygen" music video, the Key and Peele's sketch "Alien Imposter," Todrick Hall's "Beauty and a Beat," and Tre Melvin's "Pursuit of Watermelondrea". During the week, I grouped a collection of PCNs by themes. Then on Thursday afternoons, we would screen the PCNs, devote few minutes writing down reactions and questions, then form a circle for discussion. In this final section on diasporic dreaming, I highlight the conversations on June 25th and July 13th. On June 25, 2015 the media texts included Caitlyn Jenner's one-minute Vanity Fair promotional video, "*Caitlyn Jenner is Finally Free on Vanity Fair's Cover*" (2015), Ruby Rose's music video, "*Break Free*" (2014), V. Bozeman's music video, "*What is Love?*" (2015), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TedTalk "*We Should All be Feminists*," and an anti-feminist YouTuber's rant against women hitting men. The students worked through the ideas of gender equality, why feminism is necessary, transgender people, and gender identity. In the diasporic dream space, the girls revealed the dominant Discourses of gender and how it is complicated by their cultural and religious frames.

In the promotional interview clip, Jenner is seen preparing for a photoshoot and explains, that "Bruce always had to tell a lie...Caitlyn doesn't have any secrets" (Vanity Fair, June 1, 2015). Ruby Rose's music video, "*Break Free*" begins with a Rose in female-presenting clothes and makeup. She then strips away the makeup and clothing to don more masculine-presenting attire. After viewing *Vanity Fair's* promotional video clip and "*Break Free*," girls in the study expressed resistance to the notion that someone could "change" genders, or that gender, in general, was a social construction. Their resistance helps located the hegemonic Discourses grounding their conceptualization of gender.

Antoinette outright dismisses Rose's transformation she says, "all she did was she change

her hair, she changed how she dressed, she changed the shoes she put, she took off her nail polish" (July 25, 2015). I pushed Antoinette to further clarify her stance and asked whether she thought Ruby Rose's transformation was serious, she countered, "No, I said that there's not much of a difference. All the difference is that [Jenner] actually went somewhere to put on boobs. What [Rose] did, is she didn't take them out. She just used tape or a bandage and wrapped it around" (July 25, 2015). As a 14-year-old girl, Antoinette parrots transphobic Discourse when denying the significance of Rose and Jenner's transformation.

Lovely is hesitant to reject Jenner outright, but is unable to reconcile her Christian faith and transgender identities. She comments,

What I mean, I agree and disagree with this because if God made you one gender, it's for a reason. Like you said, He made you in his image, so you have a purpose in life, and your purpose is the gender issue, to make a difference in life (June 25, 2015).

Lovely, goes on to say,

I don't go against them because the Bible says that women who transform themselves into men and stuff is kind of wrong because He made you in his image, and it goes against Him. It's kind of like when they say, for example, let's say Caitlyn Jenner changes himself into a woman, but at the end of the day, he still knows he's a man. You know what I mean? (June 25, 2015).

In this instance, Lovely couches transphobic rhetoric in religious Discourse. She weaponizes "God made you in His image" to negate supporting trans identities, uses inappropriate pronouns, and misgenders Jenner. Nadège, on the other hand, keeps herself open to questioning the social meanings of gender; particularly the notion that transwomen cannot be

women because they are unable to bear children. Nadège ponders,

Here's what I think. I remember seeing this thing. It was an argument where this person said that a man becoming a woman, he will never be a woman because they can't have children. The thing is that there are some women out there that can't have children, so are you trying to say that because they can't have children, they're not women?

This is a promising interjection since it become apparent that Nadège begins to question construction of womanhood, and takes on a primary premise of childbirth. However, like her peers, she pivots,

You can't wake up one day and decide, "Oh, I want to become a man." If I were to wake up one day and see that I was a boy, I would not accept that. Even though sometimes it's very hard to be a girl, that's just what I'm used to. That's who I am. That's how I feel about it. (June 25, 2015).

While she acknowledges how patriarchy makes it difficult to be a girl, her experience does not extend to transwomen. She is unable to make those connections; in her limited experiences, transitioning is characterized as spontaneous, irrational. Nadège is unable to connect her struggles as a Black girl in a patriarchal social system to the struggles of queer and transgender women in the same system.

Our "What's Hot?" discussion on trans and queer identities surfaced uncomfortable discourses of transphobia. The girls' contribution to our media analysis indicated that their gender constructs relied on binary, heteronormative, and Christian ideology. It is important to point out that these views did not go unchallenged by myself or their peers. Karla, a Black H/A 8th grade classmate resoundingly stated, "If you want to be a woman, then go ahead and be a

woman. If you want to be a man, then go ahead and be a man. That's it" (June 25, 2015).

Towards the end of our discussion, I conducted a mini-lecture on gender as a social construct loaded with sexist expectations. I also discussed what it meant to dehumanize someone and compared it to the white supremacy's legacy of dehumanizing Black people.

The goal here is not to shame or admonish the girls in this study, but to highlight the ways diasporic dreaming can be messy and infiltrated by harmful perspectives. At the same time, it is important to note that the dream space is not stagnant; their dreams are constantly shifting, adapting and learning new liberatory narratives to reimagine their positionalities. As much as the conversation revealed complicity in transphobia, it also informed me as their teacher, that there is far more work and room to grow.

Conclusion

In multiple dream spaces of autobiographical writing, literary analysis, and media analysis, the girls in this study demonstrated a range in literacies that shape Black Transnational Girlhood. Their extraordinary literacies included honoring their origins, naming the multiplicity in their lives, and connecting to community in shared practices of healing. Their extraordinary literacies also demonstrate the Haitian empyreal logics generate culturally relevant spiritual and racial consciousness while supporting literacy development.

This study presents several implications for Black Girl Literacies, literacy instruction, and literacy research. Black Girls Literacies is essential area of research for its ability to humanize Black girls. This study expands the Black Girls Literacies by exploring the transnationality Black girls. The concept of diasporic dreaming concentrates on Black girls situated within global

communities and name their embodied transnational literacies.

In regards to curriculum and instruction, HELP exemplifies how spiritual and racial consciousness support academic pursuits. HELP deepened student's intellectual work by accessing Haitian cultural and religious traditions to make meaning of their positionalities. I maintain that literacy development, spiritual consciousness, and racial consciousness have reciprocal relationships, where all three aspects enrich each other in a dynamic learning environment. It is also important to orient curriculum towards the Global South. Haiti's infantilizing tagline of being "the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere" erases the legacy of imperialism and complicity of the global community, and also diminishes Afro-Haitian perspectives on how to make meaning of the world. Orienting curriculum towards the Global South means affirming the lived experiences and epistemological wisdoms of Black and Brown people. It means that students from the so-called "Third World" are visible outside of dehumanizing perspectives. I do not expect K-12 practitioners or administrators to become expert in Haitian Vodou cosmology—HELP had the advantages of being an out-of-school literacy program, on a private Catholic university, with a predominantly H/HA staff. Practitioners can, however, commit to creating their own dream spaces for Black transnational girls by teaching inclusive texts written by Black and Brown women from the "Third World". They can also be attentive in creating opportunities for identity work that branches outside US contexts. Disrupting the us/them, US/ "Third World" binaries broadens Black girls' access to classroom literacy engagements. In such an environment, their diasporic epistemologies have room to unfurl. As the BGLC points out, work that centers Black girls benefits all students. Black transnational girls in the twenty-first century deserve to know themselves outside of deficit

Western-centric discourses. Transnational literacy instruction promotes alternative ways of knowing the world and understanding "self". At the beginning of this article, I asked what learning dynamics encourage stars to unfurl? Literacy research can best answer this question by seeking out the literacies in Black Diasporic communities, especially the literacies of Black girls, and examine their potential in in curriculum and classroom practices. By framing those literacies as the superpowers of Black transnational girls, we center their lives, reorient curriculum, and capture the shifting dynamic of 21st century literacies.

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