


7. Charles P. Henry, *Culture and African-American Politics* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1990), 12–13. Likewise, social philosopher Leonard Harris asks us to imagine what would happen if we used the same indices to study the "urban rich": "Suppose that their behavior was unduly helpful to themselves, say they rarely married, had more one-child families, were more likely than previous rich to be sexual libertines practicing safe sex, were health conscious, and were shrewd investors in corporate and ghetto property without moral reflection." Leonard Harris, "Agency and the Concept of the Underclass," in *The Underclass Question*, ed. Bill E. Lawson (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 37.


10. These typologies are drawn from Hannerz, "

11. Gwalney, Droyllongs, xxiv, xxxii.

12. James Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture," in The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 246. Don’t get me wrong. The vast and rich ethnographic documentation collected by these scholars is extremely valuable because it captures the responses and survival strategies hidden from economic indices and illuminates the human aspects of poverty. Of course, these materials must be used with caution since most ethnographies do not pay much attention to historical and structural transformations. Instead, they describe and interpret a particular community during a brief moment in time. The practice of giving many of these communities fictitious names only compounds the problem and presumes that region, political economy, and history have no bearing on opportunity structures, oppositional strategies, or culture. For an extended critique, see Andrew H. Maxwell, "The Anthropology of Poverty in Black Communities: A Critique and Systems Alternative," Urban Anthropology 17, nos. 2 and 3 (1988): 171–92.


14. Stack, All Our Kin, Ludner, Tomorrow’s Tommorow. This dichotomy also prevails in Anderson’s more recent Streetwise.


24. King and Ogubiyi, "Should Negro Women Straighten Their Hair?" 69–70, 71.


28. Cruse, Rebellion or Revolution?, 73.

29. As Linda Roemere Wright’s research reveals, ads and other images of Afrocoifed women in Ebony magazine declined around 1970, just as the number of images of black men with Afros was steadily rising. See Linda Roemere Wright, "Changes in Black American Hairstyles from 1964 through 1977. As Related to Themes in Feature Articles and Advertisements" (M.A. thesis, Michigan State University, 1982), 24–25.


31. Historian Roger Lane treats the dozens as a manifestation of a larger pathological culture: "African-American culture was marked by an aggressively competitive strain compounded of bold display, semiritualistic insult, and an admiration of violence in verbal form at least. ‘Playing the dozens,’ a contest involving the exchange of often sexual insults directed not only at the participants but at their families, especially their mothers, was one example of this strain." Lane, Roots of Violence in Black Philadelphia, 1860–1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 146–47. See also Roger D. Abrahams, Deep Down in the Jungle: Negro Narrative Folklore from the Streets of Philadelphia, new ed. (Chicago: Aldine,
of Culture: Twentieth-Century (1988), 246. Don’t get me wrong. It is extremely valuable because it outlines and illuminates some caution since most ethnographers. Instead, they describe and practice of giving many of these realties that region, political economical strategies, or culture. For an example, Black Communities: A Crisis (1985), 171–92, 12. 23, so prevails in Anderson’s more David Wellman, Ulf Hannerz, and other interpretations of soul music: The Black Power Movement (1992), 194–97; Claude Brown, (in the Interpretation of Afro-American, 1981), 232–43; and Roger D. Smithers, 36–50.


(Garden City, N.Y.: Double-Decker.


41. Digital Underground's song "Good Thing We're Rappin," Sons of the P (Tommy Boy Records, 1991) is nothing if not a tribute to the pimp narratives. One hears elements of classic toasts, including "The Pimp," "Dogass Pimp," "Pimpin' Samp," "Wicked Nell," "The Lame and the Whore," and perhaps others. Even the meter is very much in the toasting tradition. (For transcriptions of these toasts, see Bruce Jackson, "Get Your Ass in the Water and Swim Like Me": Narrative Poetry from Black Oral Tradition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 106–30.) Similar examples which resemble the more comical pimp narratives include Ice Cube, "I'm Only Out for One Thing," AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted (Priority Records, 1990) and Son of Bazerk, "Sex, Sex, and More Sex," Son of Bazerk (MCA Records, 1991).

42. Other examples include Capital Punishment Organization's aptly titled warning to other perpetrating rappers, "Homicide," To Hell and Black (Capitol Records, 1990); NWA's "Real Niggaz," Efil4zaggin (Priority Records, 1991); Dr. Dre's "Lyrical Gangbang," The Chronic (Deathrow/Interscope Records, 1992); Ice Cube's, "Now I Gotta Wet 'cha," The Predator (Priority Records, 1992); Compton's Most Wanted's, "Wanted" and "Straight Check N' Em," Straight Check N' Em (Orpheus Records, 1991); as well as many of the songs on Ice Cube, Kill 'Em All (Priority Records, 1992); Ice T, OG: Original Gangster (Sire Records, 1991); Ice T, Power (Warner Bros., 1988); NWA, 100 Miles and Runnin' (Ruthless Records, 1990). See also chapter 8 of my book Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class (New York: The Free Press, 1994).