



A COURSE FOR WOMEN OF COLOR AND THEIR ALLIES

WOMANIST THEOLOGY

MARCH 6 - APRIL 17

ETCHI JULIETTE BESEM OBEN



Womanist Theology for the Parish

March 13, 2021: "Ain't I Also a Woman?" The 4 Elements of Womanist Theology and their Implications.

On the Course, Pick a Group

- **Week 1 - March 6, 2021: "In Search of Wholistic Justice" - The History and Proponents of Womanist Theology**
Reading: Womanist Theology p.159-162
- **Week 2 - March 13, 2021: "Ain't I Also a Woman?" The 4 Elements of Womanist Theology and their Implications.**
Reading: Womanist Theology p.163-166
- **Week 3 : March 20, 2021: "What does Justice Look Like? " - Womanist Theology and the Scriptures**
Reading: Womanist Theology p.167 -169
- **Week 4 : April 10, 2021: " I am a Global Citizen" - Intersectionality : Finding Solutions from the location of Black Women.**
Reading: Womanist Theology p.170-172
- **Week 5- April 17, 2021 : "Inclusive Social Justice" - Contemporary Womanist Theologians and the Church**
Reading: Womanist Theology p.173-176



About Toinette Eugene PhD



BIBLE STUDY RETREAT
WOMEN OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES
TELL THEIR STORIES

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19 ~ 9:00 AM TO 1:00 PM

Los Angeles Times

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“Womanist” theologian Toinette M. Eugene, an expert...

By ROSANNE KEYNAN
JAN. 1, 1994 12 AM PT

“Womanist” theologian Toinette M. Eugene, an expert on the African American family and feminist issues in the church and society, will deliver a public lecture at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 13, and teach a weekend course Jan. 14-16 as part of a Martin Luther King Jr. birthday observance at Immaculate Heart College Center.

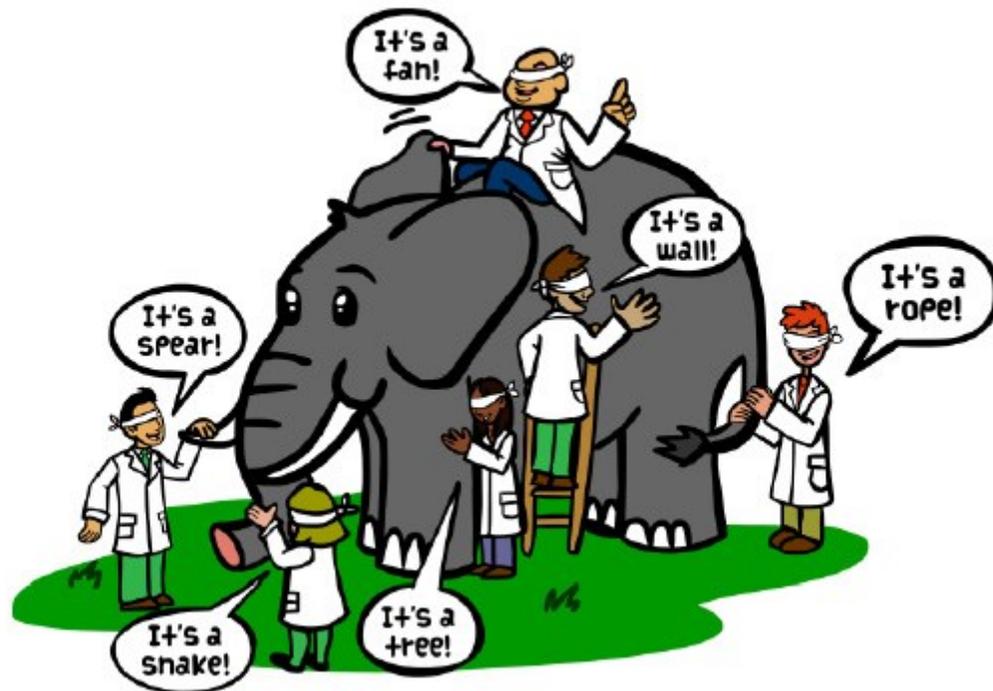
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Retreat Director:

Dr. Toinette Eugene is a theological ethicist who is well known both locally and nationally for her academic expertise, publications, and presentations in the areas of Black Catholic Theology, social spirituality, and for her leadership in responding to issues of cultural diversity, and sexual and domestic violence. Dr. Eugene holds a Ph.D. in Religion and Society, and an M.A. in Theology and Education earned at the Graduate Theological Union and at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California. Her B.A. degree is in English Literature from the University of San Francisco.

The Concept of Location



- Who speaks **Truth**?
- How do we **Know the Whole Subject**?
- What accounts for the **Differences** in responses?
- What happens when **One response is imposed** on all the others as the **ONLY TRUTH**?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP 2

- What is a summary of Walker's 4-part definition of Womanist?
- Briefly explain the relevance of the three key sources of Womanist Theology – Women Freedom figures, Women's clubs and Women's novels and stories.
- How has the church contributed to encourage the development of Womanist Theology?
- How has the church hindered the development of womanist theology?

The Ripple Effect of Growing Your Persona



- A ripple effect occurs when **an initial disturbance** to a system **propagates outward to disturb an increasingly larger portion** of the system.
- What mission from **your personal intuition** have you set aside?
- **What is one side of you that is underdeveloped?**
- Individual – relationships – community - society

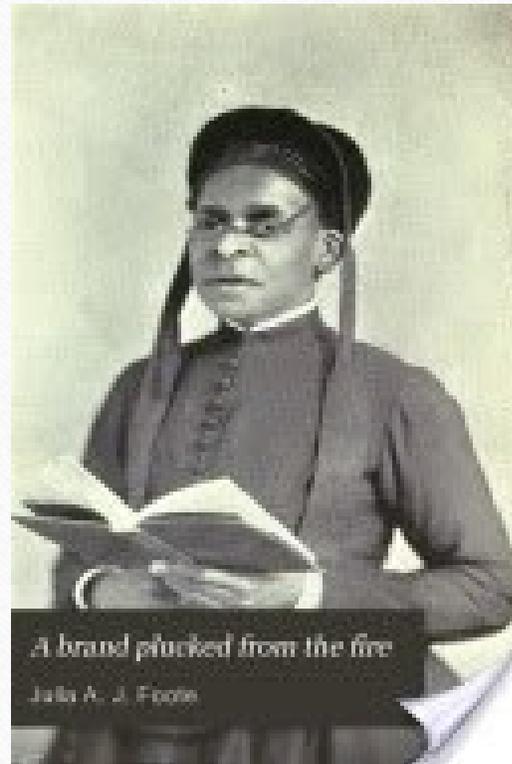
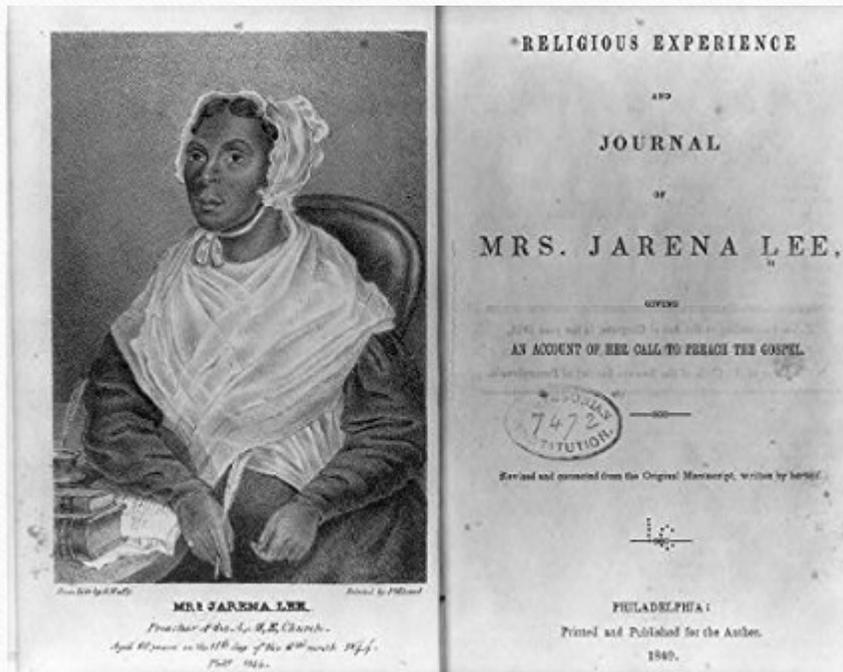
STARTING POINTS/SOURCES OF WOMANIST THEOLOGY

- **Women Freedom figures**
- **Women's clubs**
- **Women's novels and stories**

FOUR ELEMENTS OF WOMANIST THOUGHT

		Tradition	Community	Spirituality/Self	Critique of Feminism
1	WOMANIST – Womanish and not girlish	Wants to know more, responsible and in charge	Loves women and men, commits to the survival of the whole	Loves herself regardless, outrageous, audacious	Prefers women's culture
2	Harriet Tubman	Model of Christian faith, Commitment to freedom.	300+ slaves out of slavery. Invented the "Underground Railroad"	Wisdom and Humanity	Questioned black women's full humanity

THREE FREEDOM FIGHTERS



MARIA W. STEWART

...is the earliest known American woman to lecture in public on women's rights and abolition

Stewart is known for four powerful speeches she delivered in Boston in the early 1830s - a time when no woman, black or white, dared to address an audience from a public platform.



EXAMPLES IN FOUR ELEMENTS

		Tradition	Community	Spirituality/Self	Critique of Feminism
1	Jarena Lee (1783-185?) NJ	Spiritual autobiography /struggled with worthlessness	Wrote to Richard Allen on Women's exclusion from AME Ordained Ministry	Widowed with two kids, stood up and preached a Jonah sermon. Became first woman	Faced hostility because she was black and a woman.
2	Julia Foote (1823-1900) NY	Women's equality in the Christian spirit; concepts of salvation and righteousness	First woman ordained at AME Zion Church	Favored her personal intuition over deference to husband	Questioned black women's full humanity/Public leadership roles for black women
3	Maria Stewart (1803-1879) CT then Boston	Wrote prayer, meditations, political essays on God's justice	Challenged Blacks in North to be active abolitionists – (pol, educ, eco).	Religious conversion as a disinherited widow to become a firebrand preacher	Reproaching whites will not change our condition

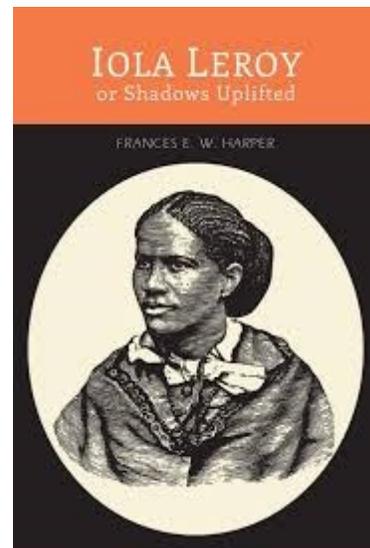
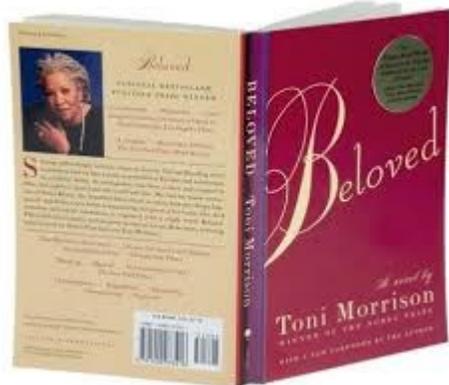
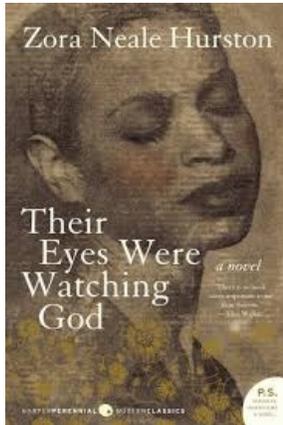


1800 WOMEN'S CLUBS

- Yoked their religious and social perspectives
- Groups and programs evolved out of immediate needs
- Various professions form mentorship guilds
- Form women's clubs for community uplift and support
- **Activism included establishing Instruments of change (Night schools, prison ministry, elderly care, insurance, rights advocacy)**
- Started anti-lynching Crusade



NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES



- How is the Bible, a Library of Books, powerful?
- Exodus is one thing to the Israelites and another thing to the Egyptian ruling government
- Black women novelists have written about the religious meaning found in everyday Black lives
- Explore and overturn themes of slavery, colorism, sexism, and racism.
- Blend literary and cultural anthropological insights from Black lives

The Contribution of the Black Church

- Provided space for women to gather
- Provided cover for women to form religious groups that were actually activist groups
- Provided rooms for educational, economic and political activities
- Provided models for young girls to copy such that being accomplished became normal.
- Provided a location for women in need and in danger to get solutions

TO BE A WOMANIST IS CONFESSIONAL

- The term that cannot be imposed, but must be claimed.
- Organic undertaking of constant self-reflection in the context of the "doing" of one's theological reflection
- Katie Cannon shifts from the use of **Black feminist consciousness** to **Black womanist consciousness** as an interpretative principle that addresses oppression, identifies texts that empower— specifically biblical texts—to "dispel the threat of death in order to seize the present life" (Katie's Canon, 5 **Redemption** is incomplete without bleaching.
- **The first is a multidialogical intent.** This values conversations with people from various religious, political, and social communities. Womanists enter these conversations with the reality of the slow genocide of Black people as their primary focus to maintain their integrity and accountability to Black communities as they engage in these multiple conversations with many dialogue partners.
- The second element is **a liturgical intent** in which Black female clergy and scholars develop a theology relevant to the Black Church in its action, thought, and worship. Challenges Church to examine the oppressive messages it gives both consciously and unconsciously to Black peoples.
- The third element is **didactic intent**. This **is a commitment to reason and female imagery** considers teaching and how the Black Church deals with **justice, quality of life, and survival**.
- Finally, the fourth element and metaphorical language when constructing theological statements.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP 3

- What Bible stories serve Womanist theology?
- Briefly explain how a story is reconstructed.
- What does “To receive and interpret God in their own context” Mean.
- What is the importance of the life, ministry and death of Jesus Christ?

THANK YOU

- **Week 3 : March 20, 2021: "What does Justice Look Like? " - Womanist Theology and the Scriptures**
- **Reading: Womanist Theology p.167 -169**