

The Black Christian Activism in Amiri Baraka's *The Baptism*

Okou Eudoxie Michelle Akissi

Alassane Ouattara University

michelle.okou@yahoo.fr

Abstract: This literary analysis stresses mass murder in the Baptist church to show that activist black Christians need to use techniques and strategies of self-defense to avoid conflicts and strike back against physical attacks. It indicates that to avoid conflicts, black Christians must not throw anger but rather transform it. It highlights that sexual and political awareness are useful to have a happier life in the racist American society. It relies on black Marxism to maintain that Baptist Christians have to refuse the lower value ascribed to them and come to blows, during assaults with deadly weapons, in order to foster a social and political change.

Key Words: black Christians, Baptist Church, anger, mass murder, self-defense.

Résumé: Cette analyse littéraire met l'accent sur le meurtre de masse dans l'église baptiste pour montrer que les chrétiens noirs activistes doivent utiliser des techniques et stratégies d'auto-défense pour éviter les conflits et riposter aux attaques physiques. Cela indique que pour éviter les conflits, les chrétiens noirs ne doivent pas extérioriser la colère mais plutôt la transformer. Elle souligne que la conscience sexuelle et politique est utile pour avoir une vie plus heureuse dans la société raciste américaine. Elle s'appuie sur le marxisme noir pour soutenir que les chrétiens baptistes doivent refuser la valeur inférieure qui leur est attribuée et en venir aux mains, lors d'assauts avec des armes mortelles, afin de favoriser un changement social et politique.

Mots clés: chrétiens noirs, église baptiste, colère, meurtre de masse, auto-défense.

Introduction

Unprecedented violent crimes educate black people. This work establishes the fight of the whole black people against their common oppressors, the white ruling class. Thanks to Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (2021) it epitomizes Amiri Baraka's intent to construct a new way of being in the American society that black Christians know. It shows the role of Baraka's Black Revolutionary Theater in the social construction of mass murder. Given the relatively high body count and the notion that mass murders were exceptionally rare in the U.S. before 1966, mass murder was not in the vocabulary of Americans before the mid-sixties. Mass murder generates heavy media coverage and reports of the incident interrupts regular programming throughout the world. It attracts an extraordinary amount of attention. From the twenties to the sixties, mass murder was described as unprecedented and one of the most horrifying crime in the United States history.

Since 1966 there has been an ever-growing mass murder wave in the United States. The mid-1960s is a time in which mass murder rate begins to skyrocket. Baraka represents the rare episode in which eight people were killed one year before the date of publication of *The Baptism* (1967). He depicts a relatively new phenomenon, an attack without warning, by an individual intent on killing as many people as he can. The interest in *The Baptism* is justified by the fact that the senseless and appalling crime of mass murder occurs more frequently than ever before in history.

Baraka's revolutionary play *The Baptism* depicts a shocking crime, a mass murder. He shows the reasons why a mass murderer commits an atrocity and the effective means to avoid a mass killing. This work examines the events and circumstances that led up to the mass killing. The analysis of the mass murderer's slaughter focuses on the hatred he holds for the numerous defenseless Christians. It also shows that a mass murderer does not act on a vague and incomprehensible motive. Due to his mental health, the mass murderer is acquitted on the basis of insanity for his murders. *The Baptism* is written to have a substantial impact on beliefs and perceptions about mass murder. It indicates that mass murderers perpetrate crimes on the ground

of insanity. It is written and first performed on the cups of a turbulent period in American society when crimes rates were increasing dramatically. It underlines the generalized problem of violence in the United States. *The Baptism* aims to have a profound influence on the public's fear of crime and thus plays a significant role in shaping what is known about mass murder.

The main theme of *The Baptism* is mass murder, the death of almost eight devote Christians. The play ends with mass murder and the imminent destruction of the Baptist church to convey the refusal of black Christians' victimization. It depicts oppression at the level of religious convictions. The image of death and the imminent destruction of the Baptist church shows the objective of oppressors against their adversaries. The task of Baraka is the revival of the negation of mass murder. Baraka envisions the disappearance of the Christians and the Baptist church if Baptist Christians do not develop a revolutionary personality, and initiate a reactionary threatening movement.

The Baptism displays a series of painful historical experiences. The solidarity of Baraka with the proletariat is mediated by the slaughter of the defenseless Baptist Christians. He suggests an ontological impatience in which mass murder and church bombing are for the first time perceived in the very moment in which they are refused. Baraka does not only use a psychological means to relate and commemorate the past, his play is also a mode of contact with a vanished form of social and historical existence.

This work is a literary criticism based on Marxist theories. It relies on Cedric Robinson's black Marxism which focuses on the specific black struggle against the white ruling class. There are several different Marxism in the world of today, each answering the specific needs and problems of its own socio-economic system: thus, black Marxism corresponds to the struggle of Blacks against racism. This work shows the role of literary criticism as such in the process of political education. It indicates that on account of the increasing number of shocks of all kinds to which black people are subjected, they need to develop personal defense mechanisms: transforming their sensations into any genuinely personal experience.

Black experience is socially conditioned, it depends on a certain rhythm of recurrences and similarities in racist events. Baraka dramatizes the historical nightmare of black Baptist Christians, to raise black consciousness. He describes an historical shock from the external

environment. He represents a mass murder and alludes a church bombing. He stresses shock to rationalize organic defenses and the power of physical mechanisms. To singularize the black Christian activism in Amiri Baraka's *The Baptism* (1967), this work indicates that to avoid mass murder, Christians need to receive sex education in church and foster black Christian militancy. Baraka represents Baptist Christians' nightmare. He fills the audience with sadness and fear. Stimulated by revolutionary temperaments and gestures, the audience is bathed in a revolutionary temperament. *The Baptism* aims to move the audience to avoid aggression and strike back if it is not avoidable.

The Christians' death is the result of the disguise of a repressed, unconscious fantasy-satisfaction of sexual desire. This repressed sexual desire is transformed into anger and creates chaos. *The Baptism* is an inner meditation on Blacks' sufferings. The memory of sexual and spiritual gratifications of Baptist Christians before their horrific death shows the political role of *The Baptism*. The primary energy of revolutionary activity derives from the memory of a primal happiness which Baptist Christians can regain through externalization, if they deserve themselves the right to be happy everywhere and at every time. The stimulation of their memory restores the force of their own most vital drives and wishes.

Baraka refers to sexuality to capitalize freedom. Through sexual freedom, Baraka raises precisely the problem of happiness, and forces us to ask whether Christians can know what is good for them, whether the Christian good can be judged in terms of a subjective feeling of contentment. He depicts different sexual activities as a way of reducing conscious unhappiness within the oppressive American society, of foreclosing conscious dissatisfaction with the system and compensating from an emotional point of view. *The Baptism* shows how the apparently contradictory claims of the pleasure principle and of some form of social morality might be harmonized and justified by the topology of the instincts themselves.

It typifies a lucid and remorseless dissatisfaction with the ongoing mass murder on the grounds of some remembered plenitude, to furnish an adequate revolutionary stimulus. It is a means for maintaining contact with the very sources of revolutionary energy, of preserving the concept of freedom, underground, during the tumultuous time of the sixties. The concept of freedom comes as the awakening of dissatisfaction, a sudden perception of an intolerable present

with the glimpse of another state in the name of which the first is judged. For Baraka, freedom emerges from the neutralization of oppressive impulses.

I. Sexual Education in the Church

Amiri Baraka's drama is deeply engrained in the Marxist approach which centers on the proletarian black revolt. *The Baptism* (1967) presents a grotesque, ugly and distasteful reality of the black masses in America. It refers to the struggle of the underclass black people in the oppressive American environment. Baraka exposes this oppressive social surroundings marked by frustration and violence. Each element within the play is important enough to be part of the overall scheme of things. Every detail is significant to furnish the dramatic work credentials, and to embody a meaning. The setting, the screams, the cries, the running and the murder aim to move some soul to actually understand what the underclass black community is and what it ought to be considering the actions dramatized. They are not chosen at random. These dramatic elements maintain that Black Country ought to be a place for all men to live properly.

Baraka fights for justice and uses his play as a weapon to gain power for the underclass black Christians in America. In his manifesto entitled "The Revolutionary Theatre" published in his *Home: Social Essays* (1967) he argues that his social theater describes possible worlds and Blacks' intolerable living conditions:

Our theatre will show victims so that their brothers in the audience will be better able to understand that they are the brothers of victims, and that they themselves are victims if they are blood brothers. And what we show must cause the blood to rush, so that pre-revolutionary temperament will be bathed in this blood, and it will cause their deepest souls to move, and they will find themselves tensed and clenched, even ready to die, at what the soul has been taught. (213)

In *The Baptism*, Baraka describes the real black American world from the point of view of victims. His play then, sheds the spotlight on the dreadful living conditions of the underclass black Christians. The setting is a Baptist church as announced by the title. The scenery is easy to imagine. The stage directions at the beginning of the play provide vivid and carefully arranged details about the surroundings:

An almost well-to-do arrogant Protestant church, obviously Baptist. Most of the action takes place on the altar. A huge white cross of glass is dangled from the ceiling at the rear of the altar with the inscription “IHS” written on the crossbar. The decor is mostly red velvet and gold. A speaker’s stand is at the front of the dais, and 2 microphones stand in front of it. The inscription “IHS” is written on the speaker stand as well. Under this inscription a plaque that says “WHBI RADIO.” (I.i.11)

The expressive setting of *The Baptism* represents the basic decor of a Baptist church. The plaque that says “WHBI RADIO” written on the speaker’s stand mentions that the sermons to be preached will be widespread outside the church. It typifies the importance of sermons and religious services in everyday life, outside the borders of the church. Baraka represents the Christian’s essential needs including sexuality and praying, sex education and politics. Through the portrayal of homosexuality, masturbation and heterosexuality in the church, Baraka sheds the spotlight on the importance to tackle sexuality in church. Sexuality and prayer are represented concurrently to mention that both issues are useful to have a happy and pleasant Christian life.

Sex is a troublesome topic in public otherwise, the issue of sexuality is more vexed. Sex issue transcends decades and locations. Baraka exposes the uncomfortable truth of young people’s sexuality in the church to maintain that sex is every day and all around. *The Baptism* stresses the importance to engage and receive sex and relationship education in church. The underlying purpose of the play is to think about the Christian young people’s sexual development and planning for their future sexual relationship. Baraka suggests that the church needs to be a very powerful site for the production of gendered, classed and racialized identities. According to Pam Alldred and Miriam E. David’s *Get Real about Sex: The Politics and Practice of Sex Education* (2007) the useful sex education includes: “a set of policies and practices steeped in assumptions about what men’s and women’s lives and loves ought to be.” (6) Baraka aims to maintain that the delivery of church sex education will help Christians to be sexually aware instead of being the unknowing and unworldly people in the society.

The dialog in the opening scene shows the minister characterizing clergymen and prayer and, the homosexual, determined by his quest of strong sexual partners, embodying adults and homosexuality. This opening scene maintains that sexuality and prayer do not repulse each other.

The play begins with the minister's prayer to Lord but he is disturbed by the homosexual who is looking for someone to sleep with. In fact, he is deceived because the minister does not have the suitable physical appearance for his sexual needs and activities. Baraka shows that the church is not merely perceived as a building for public Christian worship.

MINISTER. Break the chain of ignorance. Lord in his high place.... We take off our hoods (removes red hood) and show our eyes. I am holy father of silence.
(Kneels.)

HOMOSEXUAL.... The man kneeling is only suppliant. Tarzan of the apes of religion. Lothar in the world. Weakling and non-swimmer. Manager of the Philadelphia Phillies. Not a good person to sleep with. (I.i.11)

The presence of the homosexual who does not hide his sexual orientation shows that inside the church, there are some people who maintain their principles and their identity instead of dropping them to accept new values. Through the opening scene dialog between the homosexual and the minister, Baraka explores the issues of sexuality and prayer in the Christians' life. This dialog refers to the duality of Christians. The homosexual and the minister represent both sides of the same nickel. In fact, the minister's kneeling position alluding to prayer does not fit to the homosexual who is looking for an athletic sexual partner.

The opening dialog indicates that Christians do not drop their behavior before going to church. Their first way of life is not impeded by the sermons preached. The characterization of homosexuality in the church suggests that people do not break their habits and their values when accepting Christianity. They express their desire to be free from any kinds of oppressions and to a larger extent racism. Through the homosexual, Baraka claims that sex must not be a taboo subject in church. As a matter of fact, the homosexual assumes that Christians have to accept everything that is part of their being because everything is issued from God. He suggests that accepting their mind and their body, Christians are likely to love themselves and benefit from the usefulness and pleasure of sexual organs. In the play, he is the apostle of sensual pleasure.

HOMOSEXUAL.... I am the sinister lover of love. The mysterious villain of thought.
I love my mind, my asshole too. I love all things. As they are issued from you know who. God. God. God. God. Go-od. (I.i.15)

For the homosexual, every Christian must make use of sex since it is God doing. He does not believe in the sanctity of sex. Taken at face value, it is not sacred nor devilish; it is rather useful.

HOMOSEXUAL.... Cock of creation. Bah. She takes flesh, just like you did son, but she makes it abstract and useless. So it is holy and harmless. I pee on her Jesus if he but dare to tell me who and when I can get laid. (I.i.18)

The homosexual aims to lead the boy who is his addressee to love his human nature and to satisfy its needs. As Michel Foucault argues in *History of Sexuality III: The Use of Pleasure* (1987), the homosexual sustains the idea according to which sexuality is an ethical and problematic part of human existence. He is not concerned with the moralistic censure of explicit discussion of sexuality and sexual practice. It goes without saying that the homosexual's prayer is to have a sexual partner. His one prayer is that he will seduce the boy.

HOMOSEXUAL starts running in place, stops, drops trousers to reveal red leotards.

BOY. (Looking over Minister's shoulder at HOMOSEXUAL) Father, you must help me. I've sinned. And I was to be baptized today. (His attention begins to wander.) Father... (I.i.12-13)

The ellipsis at the end of the boy's speech act shows that he is impressed by the homosexual. Their strong mutual attraction symbolizes their special interest in life pleasure. For the homosexual, Christian religion helps people ask and receive essential needs. Consequently, the result of a prayer is perceived in the present life so that, there is no need to wait for the everlasting life to take pleasure in life.

BOY. (Screams) I was praying.

MINISTER.... Prayer. You were praying and the Lord will respond. You are not lost my son. If you are true and clean and ambitious, the Lord will not pass you by.

HOMOSEXUAL. He needs a job, holy father. And I need a secretary. (I.i.15)

Hearing the boy talk about an already done prayer, the homosexual suggests that the reason is that the boy is out of a job. To help the boy have joy in life, the homosexual offers him a job. His sexual orientation is not taught by the religious sermons but his kindness is a Christian value.

Baraka provides the details about the boy's prayer which is actually a sexual act. He uses a metaphorical language to describe concurrently sexuality and prayer.

OLD WOMAN.... Sin. He took that member in his hand. With the other hand under his chin as if in profile to pray. And I watched the eyelids flutter. As a soft bird will. His black hair sparkling on his ears. And his lips moving slowly with that flutter of eyelids for our Lord. BLASPHEMER....BLASPHEMER. You spilled your seed while pretending to talk to God. I saw you. That quick short stroke. And it was so soft before, and you made it grow in your hand. I watched it stiffen, and your lips move and those short hard moves with it straining in your fingers for flesh. Not God. You spilled the seed in God's name? And then that fluid, what all life needs, spilled there in your fingers, and your lips still moving begging God to forgive you. (I.i.16)

The boy was not praying as he lets the minister and the homosexual know. In a holy ecstasy, the old woman reveals that the boy was having sexual pleasure through masturbation. Baraka sheds the spotlight on sex and happiness in the Christian's life. Referring to sexual pleasure, he mentions the gratifications of prayers. He suggests that Christians take real pleasure in praying.

HOMOSEXUAL. How many prayers?

BOY. One after every meal.

HOMOSEXUAL. For how long?

BOY. (Sobbing) For one year.

HOMOSEXUAL. Hm. 365 days, 3 meals a day, that's one thousand ninety-five meat beating. Not bad. Not bad. (I.i.21)

The dialog on the boy's sensual pleasure refers to the delight experimented by Christians when praying. It shows that Christians are rewarded with happiness for their prayers to Lord. The clear identification of the boy's masturbation with prayer reveals that sexuality and prayer are two important and delightful activities for Christians. As soon as the homosexual realizes that the boy was not praying the Lord but rather masturbating himself, he offers him a dance representing a passionate relationship. He is seducing the boy because the latter is libidinous. From this point

of view, asking the boy to perform a dance with him, the homosexual reveals that he is ready and willing to have sex with the boy.

HOMOSEXUAL. (The ballet step. Humming his song. Stops.) Do you dance, lad?

BOY. Yes sir. I know the popular steps of the day.

HOMOSEXUAL. Will you dance with me?

BOY. In church?

.....

HOMOSEXUAL. Yes.... Dance with me lad. (Extends both hands.) (I.i.17)

The dialog between the homosexual and the boy indicates that Christians express their social and sexual needs in church even if they receive the gratifications outside the borders of the church. Baraka maintains that Christians can be happy thanks to their encounter in church. He uses dance and music to depict prayers in church. In fact, entering the church singing a chant, the women shout their feeling of exaltation. Thus, Baraka shows the Christians' happy union with Jesus Christ.

WOMEN. (Raise their heads and begin singing again loudly) Yes, Jesus loves me.

Yes, Jesus love me. Yes, Jesus love me, cause the Bible tells me so. (I.i.23)

Carrying “candles” and “trumpets” while singing, the women express their great pleasure to be chosen and loved by Jesus. These objects represent respectively their prayers and hymns of praise. Through the introduction of the women singing a chant with “the medieval drum being beaten in the background,” Baraka underlines the importance of music in the Christians' prayers. (I.i.20) He describes the ecstasy resulting from Christian prayer in church. He equates the religious ecstasy with sexual gratification. Actually, the singing women delight the devout old woman who was initially “singing” alone, (I.i.18) and motivate her to perform an erotic dancing.

The OLD WOMAN on the floor stops her singing for a moment in order to hear what the WOMEN are singing. Then she takes up their song, but rises from the floor and begins to do a slow off-time seductive dance, starting to take off more skirts.

OLD WOMAN. Get it, ladies. Get it. (Puts her hands behind her head and shakes her hips, and does little skips.) Dance with me, boy. (I.i.20)

The old woman's pleasure in music leads her to sexual arousal. Her dance suggests the women's pleasant singing voices and the entrancing voices of Christian choirs. Through her seductive dance resulting from the women's singing, Baraka reveals that Christians are entranced by a choir of excellent voices during religious rites. The old woman portrays parents and heterosexuality but also devoted Christians. Her seductive dance represents the parents' acquiescence to heterosexual activity. It also shows that Christian religious practices are delightful.

The presence of the homosexual, his intent to find a male sexual partner, the old woman's erotic dance as well as the description of the boy's masturbation in the church show that churches are highly sexualized spaces. With the frequent interjections of the homosexual, Baraka focuses on homosexuality as heterosexuality's Other. His purpose in characterizing homosexuality is neither romanticize nor condemn it. With the frequent reference to sexuality through the characterization of homosexuality, the mention of the boy's joyful and pleasant masturbation, and the erotic dance of the old woman, Baraka represents the troublesome nature of sex.

Baraka mentions that heterosexuality is not the unique form of sexuality. In addition to heterosexuality and homosexuality, he also depicts masturbation and erotic dance. Baraka infers that frank sex education needs to be framed within the protectionist and empowerment discourses of clergymen characterized by the minister and adults embodied by the old woman and the homosexual in church instead of resisting their children and young people's sexuality.

Baraka shows that sexuality is multifaceted. In addition to heterosexuality, homosexuality, masturbation and erotic dance are sanctioned and sanctified due to their representation in the church. They are not obscured since they are some alternatives and other forms of sexuality. *The Baptism* underlines that sexuality is used variously. According to Pam Alldred and Miriam E. David's *Get Real about Sex: The Politics and Practice of Sex Education* (2007), the term sexuality is used "to mean desires, identities, psychic and physical activities, or, as, a form of popular shorthand, sexual orientation." (4) Heterosexuality, homosexuality, masturbation and erotic dance are portrayed in the church to maintain that sexuality is not a danger for Christians, it is useful to be open-minded and to have a strong social and political conscience. In the play there are not linked to admonishments of guilty pleasure. *The Baptism* encapsulates a widely held

sentiment expressed by sexually aware people. It does not describe sex as an object of anxiety and taboo. Sex is only revealed as an object of pleasure and fascination.

The minister's identification of the boy with his "son" (I.i.15) and the "seductive" dancing old woman (I.i.20) show that young people are the legitimate concern of clergymen and parents. Baraka maintains that parents and clergymen's discourse of protection needs to include frank sex education since it arms children for their future sexual life and prepares them for sexual activity. Sex and relationship education is a basic human right. In addition to the school, it is the church's business to teach about sex and morality.

Normally, the objective of a performance in church is to praise the Lord but not to have sex. The old woman and the homosexual do not praise the Lord during the performance of the women but rather express their sexual orientation.

OLD WOMAN. Dance with me, boy.

MINISTER. Have you gone mad? This is the Lord's house.

HOMOSEXUAL. Dance with me, boy. (I.i.20)

The homosexual and the old woman offer a dance to the boy in the church to clearly mention that they care about the boy's sexuality and masculinity. Both are not prudish to undermine that adults and parents need to stop being excessively proper in conduct and dress before their children. In order to help their children to be sexually aware, parents and adults must have frank conversations about sex and sexuality with young people. The homosexual and the old woman draw the boy's attention on his preparedness for engaging in sexual activity.

The homosexual, the old woman and the boy mind their sexual pleasure and expose it in the church. Reacting to the women's exaltation, the homosexual is almost giddy with excitement at the unexpected attentions of the "handsome" boy. (I.i.9) Charming the boy, the homosexual ridicules the women.

HOMOSEXUAL. You [singing women] will never be interesting. (I.i.23)

The homosexual refuses the competition with the women since he is actually aware of the heterosexuality of the boy and his irrepressible tendency to have sex due to his frequent "meat beatings." (I.i.21) He tries to send the women away from the church because he is seducing the boy.

HOMOSEXUAL. Flies! Harpies! Working girls! Go back to your apartments and wait for a phone call. Go to the bar and read a paperback. But don't try to queer my, ahem, scene. (I.i.22-23)

The homosexual insists to express his homosexuality to mention that heterosexuality is not the only form of sexuality. He has set his heart on the boy but with the entry of the women, he is not confident since he realizes that they can spoil his chances of getting, "a good person to sleep with." (I.i.11) The homosexual is not seduced into having sex with the women, on the contrary, the boy is excited by the women. In addition to the old woman who performs a seductive dance when listening the women's voices, the boy is seduced by the women's union with Jesus since they sing their acquaintance with him.

BOY.... I feel the sin returning. That hardness in my flesh. (I.i.23)

In fact, to describe the women's relation with God, the minister and the old woman refer to marriage with Jesus and this is what follows:

MINISTER. They have all been embraced by the Lord's light. Brides of the Lord's son, our own Jesus Christ.

.....

OLD WOMAN. They are the hosts of the Lord, the wives of His son. (I.i.23)

Considering the women's union with Jesus Christ, the boy pretends to be the "holy husband" in order to be intimate with the women. Subsequently, they are misled by the boy's fine words.

WOMEN. He is the Son of God. Our holy husband. It was he who popped us in those various hallways of love and blessed us with the beauty of Jehovah. (Some of the WOMEN are still praying.) And bring me a new doll, and a monopoly set, and an FM radio and a picture of monk... (I.i.24)

The women's prayers for a "new doll, a monopoly set, and an FM radio and a picture of Monk," typify their male breadwinner expectations. Contrary to the women, the boy's burning sexual desires and active sexual life typify his personal and social development, emotional well-being or happiness, and preparedness for adult life. The hegemonic form of the boy's masculinity displays how gender and sexuality are seen within churches.

To succeed to have sex with the young girls, the boy works hard to perform a socially valued masculinity. His irrepressible masturbation (I.i.21) and his sexual excitation in the church when he realizes that the minister refers to his intimacies with the girls, lie in the unruly nature of desire and sexuality. In fact the minister argues that the women “have all been embraced by the Lord’s light. Brides of the Lord’s son, our own Jesus Christ.” (I.i.23) At the time of this utterance, the minister ignores that the boy lets the women know that he is Jesus Christ. Unknowingly, he is revealing that the women are the boy’s sexual partners and have all been embraced by the boy’s blasphemy.

The women are rewarded a purity by virtue of their union with Jesus Christ. The candor of the young women depicts their non-sexual nature. They are then corrupted by the boy and their deception is the consequence of their lack of experience. Their sexual innocence creates the conditions for their vulnerability and abuse. The women’s approach to life is naive and the boy profits by their naivety. Since they have faith in God and are ready to give their mind and their body to Jesus, they are mistaken and consider that the boy is trustworthy. The boy deceives the women with trickery using the teaching of the minister and the old woman representing respectively clergymen and devout Christian parents.

The boy knows the sermons and uses them for profit without regard to the Christian teachings. Baraka uses the naivety of the women to mention that Christians have to develop a more critical attitude, instead of accepting everything at face value. The boy and the women stereotype young people with burning sexual activities. The boy’s masturbation and sexual intercourse with the women show the awareness of his sexuality and exemplify the teenagers’ sexual desires and activities. The boy identifies himself with Jesus Christ and succeed in making people believe it to establish that young people are active in producing their own identities. The boy’s sexual nature and the women sex abuse make the association of masculinity with reason and the mind and femininity with emotion and the body.

In addition to the women, the minister and the old woman are mistaken about the boy. Their deception due to the fact that they consider the women as “the virgins of Christ’s love” (I.i.22) indicates that even if adults and clergymen have a responsibility to protect children, they have to not limit the sexual power that the young could have.

MINISTER. (Kissing the Boy's feet) Oh, Jesus bless me, I beg you.

OLD WOMAN. Yes Jesus. Bless us. Please, bless us. We are only useless human flesh, but we love your word and have placed our lives in your service. (I.i.25)

The minister and the old woman put faith in the words of the “young girls” (I.i.20) to reinforce the conflation of innocence with non-sexuality for the child. They are convinced that the women and the boy are the best or highest achieving young Christians, ignoring young people's views and sexuality. Consequently, they are all victims of the boy's sexual awareness. The minister, the old woman and the women give their life for the Gospel. When they hear that the boy is the Christ, they believe him because as good Christians, they dream to see the people around them reach their full potentials.

The minister and the old woman know that the boy was very frequently masturbating himself (I.i.16, 21) but they take for granted that he is Jesus Christ, “the holy husband.” (I.i.24) The boy's usual “meat beatings” (I.i.21) reveal that he is a young man with burning desires and this description does not actually fit the holy Messiah. He tricks the women, the minister and the old woman into praying and worshiping him. Through the different reactions of the boy, the minister, the old woman and the women, Baraka insists to mention that Christians have to be alert to deception since the boy tricks the women, the minister and the old woman into praying and worshiping him.

In *The Baptism*, Baraka explores the issue of sexuality in church. The play is saturated with sex through humor, innuendo, double-entendre and explicit commentary. Through the particular relationship of the minister, the homosexual and the old woman with the boy and the young girls as well, Baraka stresses the clergymen, parents and adults' moral responsibility to provide sex and relationship education to young Christians. Clergymen, adults and parents as well as society more generally need to deal with their resistance to acknowledging and responding constructively to the sexualities and sexual relationships of boys and girls. Talking about sexuality and the church is disturbing because the church is on the public and sexuality on the private side of the public/private division. The church, as a public setting, is a troublesome site for the discussion of sex yet one that need to carry the public duty to educate young Christians on this private matter.

To show the critical attitude that Christians need to have, the homosexual asks for evidence to be sure that the boy is the Christ.

HOMOSEXUAL. (Looking at him [the boy] sideways) Yeh? Well, that's a wig.
Prove it! (I.i.24)

The homosexual's sideways glance indicates that he is highly dubious. Instead of sinking to his knees as the minister, the old woman and the women, he remains on his feet and dubious about the godlike powers of the boy. He takes the necessary time to evaluate the information received from the ecstatic women, minister and old woman. The homosexual expects the boy to play God that is, to perform a miracle before believing that he is the Christ. The women's cheerful exaltation does not destroy the homosexual's strong social conscience. He is the only individual who does not take what the women say about the boy at face value. He has a suspicion that they are not telling the truth. His attitude is the first step to avoid deception and daylight robbery. It leads the boy to recognize that he is not Jesus Christ.

BOY. (Also sinking to his knees) Oh, father, please please forgive me. I'm not the Christ. That is also part of my sin. I'm only an ignorant boy who's whacked it off over a thousand times this year. I lied to the girls. (I.i.25)

The boy is obliged to tell the truth because he is unable to prove that he is the Christ. His lie is impeded by the rational behavior of the homosexual, and yet the women, the old woman and the minister are not open-minded. Despite the boy's avowal of lie, they are stubbornly convinced that he is the Christ.

WOMEN. (They are swooning on their knees, writhing in ecstasy) Beautiful screw of the universe!

MINISTER. Jesus.

BOY. Father, I'm not the Christ. I lied. I am only flesh.

.....

OLD WOMAN. Son of God. Bless us. (I.i.25)

The women, the minister and the old woman are overcome by emotion. Consequently, the presupposed holiness of the boy throws them into a state of frenzy. Thanks to the homosexual, they finally realize that the boy is not the Christ.

HOMOSEXUAL. Hey. Hey. Why don't you dopes get up? You heard what the kid said. It's all a joke. He just put these art majors in a trick. Get up. Take a look at genius. (I.i.26)

The homosexual's rejoinder appeals to the women, the minister and the old woman's minds rather than their emotions. As soon as they discover that the boy is not trustworthy, they are horrified by his lie. They are mistaken so they feel angry and frustrated with the boy's trickery. Consequently, they all agree that the boy is "Evil. Evil. Sinner. Son of Satan. Blasphemer." (I.i.27) to express the exact opposite of what they have been told. Thanks to the homosexual, they are awake to the mischievous trick of the boy. Due to his critical attitude, the minister, the old woman and the women are definitely aware of the boy's fallacious identity and active sexuality and associate sex with guilt.

Sex is an object of pleasure and fascination, anxiety and taboo too. Baraka underlines and describes it to break the assumptions and psychological baggage about the private nature of sex and sexuality. The boy's exquisite seduction of the women and the characterization of homosexuality maintain that the sexual harassment of girls by boys and same sex desire abound in popular discussion and adult Christians and clergymen must face up to their moral responsibilities.

The aberrant childhood sexual innocence of the women highlight the importance of the introduction of sex education in the activities performed in churches. Their deception and the corollary deception of the minister and the old woman invite clergymen and parents to provide sex education to boys and girls and acknowledge the sexuality of the young instead of attaching penalties to those whose sexuality is in evidence.

The boy is thought to be innocent but he is sexually aware and forfeits his innocence since he is sexually active. He takes advantage of not only the women but also the minister and the old woman. His attitude conflicts with educational success and typifies that he is member of an underclass community. His irrepressible masturbation conveys the troublesome side of the mind-body split.

BOY.... I feel the sin returning. That hardness in my flesh. (I.i.23)

The boy's outburst of sexual excitement when he remembers his sexual activities with the women maintains that he does not exercise a rational control over his body because he is not an educated mind. Furthermore, the women's deception is the result of social exclusion occurring in deprived communities among young women who are "education underachievers" as named by Rachel Tomson and Simon Blake in their "Editorial: Two Steps forward and One Step Back, The Changing Context for Sex Education" (188) published in *Sex Education* (2002). Due to their aberrant innocence, the young women are perceived as lacking education. Their attitude is racialized "as a problem of black young women, constructing black families as deviant for their dominant mothers and disengaged fathers" according to Pam Alldred and Miriam E. David's *Get Real about Sex: The Politics and Practice of Sex Education*. (12) The women's vulnerability is an effect of being outside of education. The frustration of the minister, the old woman and the women encapsulates a widely held sentiment expressed by those who do not attend school or are undergraduates. Their common behavior, their vulnerability and their abuse suggest that they are in the rural South. This idea is thoroughly portrayed to trigger black Christian activism.

The boy's masculinity is associated with toughness, power, authority, competitiveness and the subordination of its Others. His 'hegemonic masculinity' as called by Raewyn W. Connell in her book *Masculinities* (1995) involves denigrating the feminine, the clergymen and adults and he feels the brunt of this since he does not stop voluntarily the reverberation of his worship. Actually, the women, the minister and the old woman, "all moan ecstatically, sinking to their knees, praying" the boy and his only answer is "Oh!" (I.i.24) His ascendant masculinity devalues its Others. His active imagination and sexual domination reproduces race and class hierarchies and it underlies educational inequalities.

The devout citizens described in *The Baptism* are not sexually aware, so they are not open-minded. They are blinded by emotion and sentimentality. As a result, they do not have a strong social and political conscience. They are very vulnerable to abuse and mass murder. Amiri Baraka depicts these traits, prejudicial to the black Christians' freedom, to suggest black Christian militancy.

II. Black Christian militancy

Baraka shows that the church is a site of disillusion. It reveals the melancholy of the disadvantaged black Christians in the American surroundings. He focuses on black victims. His target audience is specifically Christian to urge the black Christians to embrace the revolutionary ideology. The setting exposes the victimization of the black Christians and trigger the refusal of the lower value ascribed to them. The victims described in *The Baptism* are responsible for their own sadness and death. First of all they hold back anger, then they react out of anger without thinking about the consequences of their reaction. Moreover, they do not retaliate against mass murder. They do not know what is good and what is bad for them. The Christian values and ideals blind them, so they become dumb and dead. They ignore the effective means to avoid slaughter.

The boy wants to belong to the Christian crowd. Thus, his desired baptism is a way to find some place to belong to the church. Telling to the women that he “was related to God” (I.i.25) and talking about love, forgiveness and compassion come out of his false personality. With sermons on love, happiness and compassion, Christians have repressed humanity, they have associated sex with guilt and they have not allowed individuals to be angry sometimes. The ultimate, total result is that everybody goes on gathering anger, then one day everybody is so full of this poison that it explodes in a conflict engaging the whole community. The responsible for this conflict are the “holy father,” (I.i.15) the “holy woman” (I.i.20) and the “blessed vestals.” (I.i.26) These moralists and do-gooders have not allowed the boy to be natural.

Making love with the women, the boy was expressing sentimentality rather than spirituality. Their relation is physical, it is nothing spiritual. Expressing sentimentality through sex, happiness and exaltation, the women did an activity that were not to do. They did things they were never wanted to do. They are the women they are not. Their thought is repression, it is a prudish way to destroy themselves. The idea of the divinity of the boy pushes them towards a negative emotion. They are overwhelmed by love and happiness. Agreeing to love, forgiveness and compassion, Christians suppress so much anger that it becomes poisonous. By repressing this natural emotion, they deceive themselves. The whole effort to control takes all their energy and then they simply die.

To purify themselves of sexual pleasure and the sin of blasphemy, “they all move toward the boy menacingly.” (I.i.27) They plan the irremediable disappearance of the boy to absolutely stop his pernicious lies. They choose to sacrifice the boy because given his adolescence, he is likely to manage to have sex even if he has to make use of blasphemy. They are convinced that the boy cannot be redeemed so he has to leave the church to protect Christians from deception, to restore their relations with God and to be worthy of the true Christ. The boy’s attitude is contrary to their accepted standards of good behavior. He has a different set of values from Christians so they commit themselves to preserving traditional Christian values. They do their best to take the devil away from themselves to atone for their mistakes. To avoid to persistently offend against the Messiah, they are ready to kill the first offender. Baraka, then, shows that Christians highly value chasteness.

Facing the minister, the old woman and the women’s awareness of his trick, the boy tries to outwit them. He sinks “to his knees,” (I.i.25) “weeps” bitter tears of disappointment and “looks toward heaven” (I.i.27) as a supplicant to look suitably repentant. He implores the minister’s forgiveness to easily mislead him about the straightforwardness and transparent honesty of his utterance.

BOY. (At the MINISTER) Father, please forgive me. (At the ceiling) Father, why have you forsaken me. Forgive me. I am only youth. Not sin or evil. Only youth. I ask forgiveness for your sins as well as my own. (I.i.28)

The boy’s seemingly repentance does not upset the minister, the old woman and the women the slightest.

MINISTER. You have sinned. We will cleanse ourselves.

OLD WOMAN. You must be sacrificed.

BOY. You would kill me?

MINISTER. We must.

WOMEN. We must be worthy. (I.i.28)

Far from having an irrational reaction to lie, the minister, the old woman and the women are scandalized by their lack of judgment. They intent to witness the suffering and the death of the boy. Thus, they transfer their auto flagellation on the scapegoat.

OLD WOMAN. Blasphemer. You spilled your seed in prayer. You sacrificed these blessed vestals to your lust. You should die! Die!

MINISTER. May the true God strike you dead.

WOMEN. May our true husband-to-be castrate you with his lightning. Liar! Devil!
(I.i.26-27)

The old woman identifies the boy with sin, then he has to disappear to take “the devil,” “Satan” and “the blackest evil” away from the church and Christians as well. (I.i.26) “The MINISTER, OLD WOMAN and the six girls move toward the BOY wailing” about past mistakes because they unwillingly admit them and feel slightly ashamed. (I.i.27) They identify the boy with a demonic energy to cast their own lack of judgment and to have a clear conscience. They are shocked by their blissful ignorance and conclude that he deserves a horrible death to relieve their discomfort. They refuse to assume that they are the blissfully ignorant and only have themselves to blame given that they do not analyze the boy’s words before trusting him.

They are complaining because the boy pretends to be “the Son of God,” (I.i.24) they ignore his eagerness to be “baptized” (I.i.23) and to “cast down” his “sins.” (I.i.15) They realize that the boy desires to be baptized to hide his trick and to be welcomed by Christians.

BOY. (Strangely agitated) I must be baptized!

.....

BOY. Father, I must be baptized! I feel the sin returning. That hardness in my flesh.
(I.i.23)

The boy is in a hurry not only, to publicly appear as an individual who follows the Christian principles but also to prevent the minister from knowing that he is a miscreant and a usurper who abuses the women identified with “blessed vestals” (I.i.26) by the old woman. At last, the minister is forcefully convinced that the boy is “truly damned” (I.i.26) so there is no need to forgive and bless him.

Standing for righteousness, the minister, the old woman and the women stand up to their cost against the boy they consider as the servant of darkness, “Evil. Evil. Son of Satan. Blasphemer.” (I.i.27) They aim to rid themselves of his evil. Their anger is the first step towards revolution. It represents their refusal of the boy’s intolerable blasphemous behavior. The minister,

the old woman and the women just have faith, they do not mind their bodies and they do not see the Lord's way as a violent one. Angry at the boy's blasphemy "they move dreadfully toward the BOY" (I.i.28) singing a chant "with the medieval drum being beaten in the background." (I.i.20)

WOMEN. Sacrificed! Sacrificed! (They sing) Leaning, leaning safe and secure from sin or harm...(The MINISTER and OLD WOMAN are also singing.) Leaning on the everlasting light. (They move dreadfully toward the BOY. The WOMEN beat their drums) (I.i.28)

Due to awareness, the minister, the old woman and the women are eager to get rid of the boy because he leads them to worship a false god and to deceive the "holy husband." (I.i.24) For his "blasphemy" (I.i.27) he does not deserve to stay alive. They decide, then, to erase the responsible for their deception. To be worthy of Jesus Christ, they intend to perform a forcible purification. The boy's offense gives them grounds for moving dreadfully toward him and shouting angrily: "Blaspheme. Blaspheme! There must be a sacrifice." (I.i.28) The repetition of the verb "blaspheme" mentions that they become aware that the boy is a blasphemer. They assume that blasphemy is not appropriate for Christians, so they plan to bring the sin of blasphemy to an end. With the boy's death, they envision the death of obnoxious behavior so that nobody will no more be mistaken.

Emotions blind people exactly as alcohol does. The minister, the old woman and the women are spontaneous, they are not acting to a preplanned idea. In fact they were not ready, not prepared to do anything. Their reaction is dominated by the boy. They get angry, and then they act out of anger. They are not independent people. Their anger shows that they are manipulated by the boy. The emotion that their mind is filled with is brought by the boy. It is beyond them. The boy fills their mind successively with joy and anger. He pulls them this way or that way. They are easily affected, they are blackmailed emotionally. Their reaction is an emotional blackmail.

The minister, the old woman and the women suppress so much and become unhealthy because the church teaches them to control not to transform. Through suppression, their mind becomes split. They accept love, happiness and compassion because it is part of their conscious mind. Anger is part of their unconscious mind so they deny it. This division is not natural, it

happens because of repression. And into the unconscious, they go on throwing all the rubbish that Christians reject. Throwing sex in the unconscious, it becomes anger, and anger becomes more and more part of them; it goes into their hands, into their bones, into their blood and into their heartbeat. Planning to sacrifice the boy, they expect to relieve from pain and anger, it is a catharsis, and there is nothing spiritual in it. They do not hold their emotion back so it creates chaos.

They wanted to worship Jesus Christ and the homosexual prevents them from worshipping “the Son of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ” (I.i.24) so they hit him. They hurt him for giving the right information about the boy: “They throw HOMOSEXUAL out of the way, kicking him as he falls.” (I.i.27) The homosexual comes as a block, as an obstacle. Their whole energy is to be intimate with the “holy husband” (I.i.24) and their awareness blocked the energy. They cannot get what they wanted. Now this frustrated energy becomes anger against the homosexual who has destroyed the possibility of fulfilling their desire. They have suppressed so much anger that there are no moments when they are not angry. The point is that they should not have thrown anger on anybody because according to Osho’s *Freedom from Anger, Jealousy and Fear* (1999) anger is a vomit. They take for granted that the boy is the Son of God and their whole psychic being wants to throw it out, but there is no need to throw it out, there is no need to throw it on somebody.

The homosexual’s response to the boy’s trick is out of freedom. It is not dependent on the boy. He knows that the boy is wrong, then for his wrong he does not burn his heart with anger. He maintains that people need just a little more awareness, more consciousness of what is happening. For him the public expression of anger is foolishness and can lead to a certain conflict. He tries to avoid obnoxious behaviors, so “he tried to defend” the boy. (I.i.29)

HOMOSEXUAL. Fools. Assholes! Devout citizens! Stop it! Go home to your radios!
(I.i.27)

Through the homosexual’s rejoinder, Baraka aims to lead people to transform sadness and anger in order to avoid bloodshed. To be angry means that something is inside that needs some activity to be relaxed. For this reason, the homosexual considers that it is better to go home to their radios, just a little activity to get rid of anger. A few minutes catharsis is useful to feel unburdened and to never throw anger on anybody, because that is absolutely foolish. Considering

the homosexual's advice, it goes without saying that anger has to be a private phenomenon, otherwise there is no end. To avoid to create more anger in Christians, the homosexual asks the minister, the old woman and the women to stop wailing. He knows that things go on moving in a circle and he wants to end them. With their desire to sacrifice the boy, they start expressing anger. They do not mind that the boy is not going to sit silently and let things happen. The boy is not a marble statute, and he expresses anger in reaction to their anger.

In a moment of loneliness the boy realizes that he is ejected from the Baptist community, then he starts feeling a strange craziness. The moment he is alone, the false identity starts falling apart and the repressed real starts expressing itself. It creates fear to stand alone before the angry minister, old woman and women. It takes some time for the real to express itself.

BOY. Father, have you no charity? Forgive me. It was the mistake of youth. Forgive me blessed vestals. Forgive me, devout mother. I have made no sacrilege except to yield the boomings of my flesh. I am not, not, evil. (Weeps.) Father. (Looks toward heaven.) Why have you forsaken me? Again? (I.i.27)

The boy weeps and yet his tears are false, they are not coming but they are brought. He wants to be supported twenty-four hours a day because the false, without support, cannot stand. The minister, the old woman and the women estrange the boy, therefore as soon as he realizes that he cannot fool them anymore, he reveals how wicked he is. On the one hand, they do not succeed in getting the better of the boy, but on the other hand he "pulls long silver sword out of" his "bag," "begins to strike his attackers down with the sword" and "they fall screaming around him." (I.i.28-29) They are weaponless and defenseless facing the boy who takes advantage of their vulnerability to an outburst of anger and violence. His strike represents the opposition between the sacred and the profane.

In the church, the boy "begins to strike his attackers down with the sword" to maintain that sometimes people need to fight if their freedom is violated. He transforms and expresses anger. Their death suggests that they should not only have repressed and controlled anger, but also they should not have thrown it on the boy. He was also controlling and repressing anger, so when they throw it on him, they create a chain. He throws more anger on them, and they become

enemies. With their sudden death, Baraka mentions that repression is suicide, a very certain slow poisoning. The Christians' death is caused by repressed emotion.

They condemn sex and anger, these natural phenomenon, so they become poisonous, destructive and suicidal. Singing "Leaning, leaning safe and secure from sin or harm.... Leaning on the everlasting light" (I.i.28), they are holding down a volcano. Their anger is active sadness. Sadness takes them to their innermost core. They ride on it and discover that they can be violent or cruel. They do not accept sadness, desperation or anger they rather try to get rid of it. They do not accept the boy as he is. First of all they give him ideals, ideas, and ideology, then they hope to make him feel so condemned that he will forget all about freedom. They give him right and wrong, fixed ideas so that he will remain guilty forever. Since the boy is free, he slays them.

Obviously, the slaughter is motivated by anger but the boy is not really angry at the minister, the old woman and the women. He is afraid of them. Anger is a cover up, it shows fear. Anger creates a curtain around the boy, he hides behind. It reveals that fear is in-built, and very essential. Without fear the boy would not be able to survive at all. Fear is then helpful to stay alive. His fear is a life-protective measure, and reveals a natural tendency to protect himself. With the "pile of bodies" and the homosexual who "turns Minister's body over with his toe," (I.i.32) Baraka represents the fear of death, coupled with the fear of remaining unfulfilled. He suggests that the fear of death which is the fear of annihilation to mention that awareness is needed, not condemnation. He maintains that Christians need to be afraid of emotions because they will create chaos if they are manipulated by the outside.

Talking about love, forgiveness and compassion is not sufficient to be a trustworthy individual. The boy is a cruel young man but he is the one who repeatedly asks for love, forgiveness and compassion to mention that he laughs at these values.

BOY. Father, have you no charity? Forgive me. It was the mistake of youth. Forgive me, blessed vestals. Forgive me, devout mother... (I.i.27)

.....

BOY. ... You have no charity! No humanity. No love.... No charity! No love! (I.i.28-29)

.....

BOY. Father! Compassion! (I.i.31)

The boy's mass murder is the angry response to humanity, love, forgiveness and compassion. Abusively, he expresses them, and yet they do not guide him. In fact, he mocks them. He is a mass murderer but from the beginning to the end of the play, he keeps on talking about compassion, forgiveness and love. Baraka, then, indicates that a person who never becomes angry and goes on controlling his anger is very dangerous. He maintains that Christians have to be aware of this kind of person because he will kill them. A person who never becomes angry will certainly suddenly explode. He will jump and murder as if he is possessed by something. The boy is possessed by his own unconscious repressed.

The minister, the old woman and the women disagree with the boy notwithstanding they do not assume action must sometimes be taken to right terrible wrongs. They do want the disappearance of the boy but they fail in their way to get it. On the contrary, the boy carries a weapon, concealed in "a bag on his back" (I.i.12) to defend himself or get what he wants in a conflict. He is ready not only for possible retaliatory assaults but also to deliberately harm the people who will not accept his behavior. He kills the minister, the old woman and the women because he considers that they have "no charity! No love!" (I.i.29) whereas they call him a "blasphemer." (I.i.27) They have different views about sexual awareness and sin. He does murder them because they do not tolerate his blasphemous attitude. In fact, he is angry about their refusal of his company. Through the mass murder committed by the boy, Baraka suggests that Christians have to be criticizing and to avoid being so innocent as to believe everything a stranger tells them kneeling as a supplicant at the altar, since in *The Baptism* "most of the action takes place on the altar." (I.i.11)

The minister, the old woman and the women constitute a group of Christians as meek as a lamb. Their altercation with the boy, followed by their death epitomizes the eternal struggle between good and evil. Actually, they are mild and naive; they identify the boy with the devil but they do not think about his retaliation after their verbal attack. Indignantly, "they all" only "move towards the BOY menacingly" and "they throw the HOMOSEXUAL of the way, kicking him as he falls." (I.i.27) They do not hit the boy, they only voice their anger but they are not ready to come to blows over the sin of blasphemy. They are vulnerable to the boy's sudden physical attack

because they are not prepared for an assault on their religious beliefs. The boy is but one young man but he does not look away. He confronts them all to show that with no one to help them against their attackers, Christians must brave it by themselves.

It goes without saying that the death of the minister, the old woman and the women aims to move Christians to use weapons to defend their religious beliefs as well as their community. Ending the play with “the pile of bodies,” (I.i.32) Baraka aims at leading Christians to revolution and to stand up against the tyranny of their oppressors. The death of the minister and his female followers suggests that in addition to the threatening words and gestures, Christians have to arm themselves to defend their high ideals since some individuals embodying the devil do not live up to these ideals.

Just after the slaughter of the Christians, “the MESSENGER enters,” he “wheels his motorcycle into the church.” He does not park before entering because he does not enter the church for religious purpose. He is on an official assignment since he wears a uniform which even identifies his employer. He is “in a motorcyclist’s outfit, i.e., leather jacket and pants.... Takes off his long leather gloves. He has a gold crown stenciled on the back of his jacket. Under the crown, the words: “The Man.”” He carries a “notebook” (I.i.29) to help him carry out orders to catch the boy before his father bomb the church to disguise his crime of passion.

His conversation with the boy reveals that the boy lives in an imaginary world. In fact he is neither talking to God when he stares at the ceiling nor to his father. His assumed dialog with his father is wholly imaginary. He is stubbornly convinced that his father is God and that he has a divine origin. Consequently, he introduces himself to the women under an assumed name. His speech carries so much conviction that the minister, the old woman and the women mistakenly believe for a while that he is “Jesus Christ,” “The Messiah.” (I.i.24) He is actually a cruel and capricious young man. He happens to have a tender heart when he is not upset about his vivid imagination. He is a mass murderer but he does not hurt the homosexual because he “pats BOY on shoulders,” (I.i.25) “extends both hands” to dance with him (I.i.17) and “tries to defend” him. (I.i.29) For sure, the messenger knows that it is safe to avoid to worry the boy, so he pretends to agree with him about his assumed identity.

BOY.... I am the Son of Man. The Christ.

MESSENGER. Yeh, I know. I came to get you...

BOY. Came to get me?

MESSENGER. Yeh. The man sent me.

BOY. The man?

MESSENGER. Yeh. The man. Your father.

.....

BOY. But he sent me here to save them. This earth.

MESSENGER. Yeh, I know. But you been fuckin' up royally. You agree? (I.i.29-30)

The messenger listens out for the boy's assumed name. He knows that the boy is not the Christ but he does not maintain that the boy is not in his right mind. He does not listen to what the boy tells him since he realizes that his efforts to persuade him proved fruitless. He knows exactly who he is dealing with.

MESSENGER. I don't have time to argue, Percy, orders is orders. The man's destroying the whole works tonight. With a grenade.

BOY. What? Damn it. It's not fair. It's not fair. He didn't give me a chance.

MESSENGER. Chance? To do what? Murder some more people? ... Percy baby, I got orders. (I.i.30)

The boy's right name is "Percy" (I.i.30) and he is just the son of "The Man." The definite article mentions that the boy's father is a famous man. The "gold crown stenciled" above "The Man" (I.i.29) shows that he is really a rich and an influential man but not God. The boy does not really know who he is. He does not remember the identity of his father and one his messengers as well.

BOY. The man?

MESSENGER. Yeh. The man. Your father.

BOY. Oh? (Looks at the MESSENGER.) Oh, I recognize you. You're one of the messengers.

MESSENGER. Yeh. I'm closing up this whole deal. The man don't like none of the action. It's all finished. (I.i.30)

The messenger properly name the boy and his father but, in their dialog the boy convinces himself to talk to God.

MESSENGER. Oh, now come on Percy, will you. (Look at his watch.) It's twelve now. The man's going to start the fireworks as soon as the bars let out. Only three more hours. (Does tricky mambo step.) Hooo!

BOY. No. No. (Kneels in supplication.) Father. Father. (Looking toward ceiling.) Don't give up on me. You have no charity.

MESSENGER. Oh, man.

BOY. Have compassion for them, father. Have compassion for me. (I.i.31)

The boy is a mass murderer, otherwise he pretends to commiserate with human being in his grief. He frequently looks at the "ceiling" instead of looking at the messenger as if he were an angel who delivers a message from God. The boy is not aware of the murder of the minister, the old woman and the women. He persuades himself that he is the savior of humanity, and tries desperately to avoid the bombing of the church.

BOY. No! I will stay here on earth, and perish with them. If their sin is my doing, then I will suffer with them. Leave me!

.....

BOY. No! I refuse. Neither God nor man shall force me to leave. I was sent here to save man and I'll not leave until I do. Nothing will make me forsake this flesh. (Screams at ceiling.) I will not leave! (I.i.31)

The difference between the boy's nature and the ideas of the "devout Citizens" (I.i.27) causes a split; he becomes schizophrenic. He murders the minister, the old woman and the women and he believes in the very contrary. His whole being is poisoned by suppression. The messenger neither blames the boy for his behavior nor congratulates him for his mass murder. Frequently in their dialog, the messenger names the boy "Percy" (I.i.30, 31, 32) to stop the discourse of the boy upon his divinity and his mission as Jesus "Christ." (I.i.29) He insists to name names to be convincing and to help the boy wake from the lethargy that impedes him to leave the church before the bombing. The repetition of the boy's name typifies the messenger's appeal to raise the boy's consciousness of human frailty.

To transform anger, the messenger does mambo steps. The messenger is angry because of the murder of the Christians. His whole being feels anger, every fiber of his being is vibrant with it, and then he “starts a mambo step, which continues through most of the scene.” (I.i.29) As he becomes aware, anger disappears. Anger becomes energy, anger becomes compassion, anger becomes forgiveness, and anger becomes love. And he does not need to repress, so he is not burdened by some poison. As he is not being angry, he is not willing to kill anybody. The object of his anger is saved and he himself is saved. My point is that there is no need for anybody to die. Anger is consumed by awareness. Awareness is a golden key.

Thanks to the mambo, the messenger refuses to moralize the boy and he takes the hypocrisy of society as a given. The messenger’s mambo is expressionist. Instead of killing the boy because “this kid’s always been a drag,” he “does one more mambo step” (I.i.32) because according to Ned Sublette’s *Cuba and its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo* (2004) the mambo is aggressive, jumpy and violent. “The mambo’s hopped-up tempos, its dissonance and stridency, and its pushing of human players to the limits of their endurance” (560) is perfect to get rid of anger. Mambo helps much anger and fear to evaporate. By means of the messenger’s mambo, Baraka argues that to perform an activity helps anger and sadness to evaporate. Baraka invites Christians to take the hypocrisy of people as a given, to avoid to burden their heart with anger.

The boy’s father, “The Man,” (I.i.29) sends the messenger in the church to avoid retaliation. His intent to burn the church down suggests that Christians need to protect “the Lord’s house” (I.i.21) by any means necessary. With the entry of the messenger, the bombardment of the church is suggested to blow out the embers of Christian revolution. The point is that Christians and the church as well are not safe from attack. They need to ask for help if they cannot get rid of anger and their attackers to avoid the destabilization of the church. Despite the conciliatory tone of the messenger, the boy does not willingly agree to leave the church before the bombing. Consequently, the messenger concludes that it is useless to try to reason with the boy.

MESSENGER. Aw, Percy, goddamn. (Walks over and hits him over the head with a tire iron.) This kid's always been a drag. (Hoists Boy's body onto his shoulder, puts him on the back of the motorcycle... (I.i.32)

Given the dialog with the boy proved to be ineffective, the messenger uses a more radical means to overcome him. The minister, the old woman and the women launch a diatribe against the boy (I.i.26-29) but all together they do not defeat him, consequently he does "murder" them. (I.i.30) They do not find the right way to deal with him. On the contrary, the messenger does not "have time to argue" (I.i.30) and "hits" the boy "over the head with a tire iron." (I.i.32) The strike of the messenger and the assault on Christians show the usefulness of physical attacks. Baraka maintains that to overcome a bloodthirsty person and to avoid bloodshed as well, one must attack first to be safe.

During the dialog with the messenger, the boy refuses to leave the church so he "kneels in supplication" to be close to the earth he is convinced to save, but the messenger is insistent and "hoists BOY's body onto his shoulder." (I.i.31) The messenger is a diligent worker. He defeats the boy to achieve the man's aim. He is ready for anything to reach his objectives. Carrying a tire iron, the messenger does not handle a formal weapon but it happens to be useful to overcome the boy. Considering the setting of the play, a "Protestant church, obviously Baptist," (I.i.11) Baraka mentions that Christians need to be fully prepared to fight and to use all the means at their disposal to stay alive.

Obviously, the "tire iron" (I.i.32) used by the messenger was not in the church before his entry, he brings it to guard against all eventualities. Through the messenger carrying a tire iron in the church, Baraka mentions that Christians have to be prepared for the worst and anticipate unexpected assaults. The messenger typifies that the proper way to instigate a change is to launch a sudden attack. As the boy, from the outset, the messenger does not handle his weapon and surprises his addressee with his physical attack. This way of behaving ensures him success. The messenger attacks the boy without a warning whereas the minister, the old woman and the women "move toward the BOY wailing" and "menacingly" (I.i.27) rather than mounting a sudden attack. Baraka, then, argues that if a conflict is inevitable, Christians must wage war on their offenders.

The fact that the boy is taken “to the back of the motorcycle” (I.i.32) where he refused to “jump” saying: “Neither God nor man shall force me to leave.... I will not leave!” (I.i.31) proves that action is the suitable means to achieve a dramatic change. The messenger “hoists BOY’s body onto his shoulder” (I.i.32) to celebrate the achievement of his aims since he sees his efforts rewarded. He defeats the boy and “wheels the cycle out” without the slightest resistance by right of his might. (I.i.32) Not surprisingly, only “its engines are heard turning over off-stage” rather than scuffling. (I.i.32) The stage directions epitomize the effective means to lead a revolution. They provide a vivid description of meaningful actions to fulfill one’s expectations facing an intolerable situation in the stand for righteousness.

The minister, the old woman and the women give themselves over to the Lord and are sure that he will take care of them. Consequently, they do not retaliate against the boy by striking him. In fact, “they fall screaming around him.” They do not react violently when he slays them all. (I.i.29) Given the messenger strikes the boy and defeats him, Baraka typifies that they should have armed themselves to avoid the slaughter perpetrated by the unkind boy. He aims to make vigilantes for the Christians in the United States of America since he shows that they cannot get themselves on church safe due to the murder of the Christians and the likely explosion of the church. He warns Christians of the danger of inadequate reactions to violence so that they will be suspicious of strangers and try to avoid mass murder and church bombing. Obviously, he aims to bring about black Christian activism.

The boy kills the minister, the old woman and the women, “perhaps six young girls.” (I.i.20) Consequently, he slays almost eight people who do not put a fierce resistance to him. They do not match strength with strength. Their imposing presence lacks in violent physical reactions. The boy’s outburst of bloodshed prevents them to strike back. It indicates that the possibility of losing their lives hangs over Christians like a sword of Damocles at all times. Their singing and the drumbeat mention that they refuse to come to grips with their opponent. They couple their voice with a drum to strengthen their message but it lacks for physical power. They have taken a stand and have paid a price for it. Their murder and the imminent destruction of the church show that there are bad men terrorizing the Baptist black Christians.

Baraka depicts the mass murder of Christians and the imminent destruction of the Baptist church to show that the world is at its cruelest and torn apart by hatred. Moreover the bombing of the church is programmed because the minister, the old woman and the women are dead. The “fireworks” envisioned by the man (I.i.31) is the result of the inactivity of Christians. In addition to the “Protestant church, obviously Baptist,” (I.i.11) “the grenade” (I.i.30) is likely to cause a lot of damage in the whole neighborhood. The explosion will cause extensive structural damage to the Baptist church, to other buildings and cars parked nearby.

The murder of the Christians and the imminent destruction of the church indicate that the time is fast approaching when people must think about the protection of the church and its surroundings. Baraka aims to instill well-founded fears in Christians so that they will be prepared for violent physical actions to allude impending disasters and overcome any kind of obstacles as well.

Representing the death of the devout Christians and alluding the destruction of the church, Baraka maintains that Christians should be given an opportunity to express their views. The minister, the old woman and the women characterize the oppressed black American Christians. Thus *The Baptism* is a diatribe against social oppressive measures. Baraka stands with Christians and pleads for social justice. He sheds the light on the unfair treatment of Christians. The murder of Christians and the imminent destruction of the church are Baraka’s stimuli to motivate Christian revolution. They are represented to trigger off a series of violent attacks to jeopardize opposing views. He mentions that Christians are the target for unexpected terrorist attacks. He draws attention to the imminent bombing of the church not only to avoid a tardy response to violence but also to avoid the evitable death of authentic Christians. The murder of the Christians coupled with the achievement of the messenger shows that anyone who stands peacefully to a killer disappears.

Considering the vulnerability of victims, Baraka draws the attention on the importance of politics to overcome racism. Through the minister and the homosexual, he maintains that Blacks should have a strong social and political conscience. At the very beginning of the play, the minister wears a mask. During his first speech act, he “removes red hood” (I.i.11) to indicate that he teaches Christians to reveal their behavior and their feeling within the borders of the church.

The minister removes his hood before kneeling at the altar where the play takes place to maintain that black Christians present their political and social needs to God to have a better future. The red color of the hood suggests blood and suffering. It foretells bloodshed, and reveals that the Christian reaction against violence and hate crimes cannot be bloodless. It suggests that Christians need to fight for their religious belief. He does not throw his hood away, he rather removes it to show his eyes in order to typify that before being alone with God, Christians wear a mask to hide their “torn and bleeding hearts,” to shade their “tear and sighs.” According to Paul Lawrence Dunbar’s “We Wear the Mask” (1895) published in *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar* (1993) the underlying reality beneath Blacks’ mask is their “tortured souls.” (71) Subsequently, the homosexual insists to listen a sermon about politics. He mentions that black people do not abandon their political convictions when entering the church.

HOMOSEXUAL. (Starting to run in place)... (Raises arm.) We will speak of politics
or be forever silent. (I.i.11-12)

The homosexual shows that the church does not only care about spiritual belief but it is also concerned in social and political aspirations. He indicates that Christianity does not annihilate social needs. He is waiting to hear a sermon about politics to mention that politics is regarded as sacred. Connected with Christian religion, politics is highly valued for the underclass black people. Through his utterances and his raised arm, he stresses his interest in black Christian activism. He infers that thanks to the church, the subjugated black people live up to their ideals.

HOMOSEXUAL.... Let it be politics or shut up. (I.i.19)

Through the homosexual’s special interest in politics, Baraka suggests that the redemption of the black masses passes through black militancy and black Christian activism. His both reference to politics in the church shows that black Christians have to capitalize on politics to fight back racism and resurrect the oppressed black people. The minister’s removal of the “red hood” (I.i.11) evokes a social change and the homosexual’s raised “arm” and “running” (I.i.12) induce a political change. Through both the minister and the homosexual, Baraka portrays black Christian militancy.

Conclusion

The Baptism is a satire on black Christians. It shows black victims to bring about changes in the disadvantaged black Christian community. It draws attention to the reasons of the victimization of black Christians, stressing that they repress sex and consequently lack in physical power to defend and preserve their religious beliefs and above all, their lives. Because they prefer asexual relationships, they avoid physical attacks. Consequently, they ride on the emotional and the nonphysical because they are not sexually aware.

They devote most of their energies to the nonrealistic and the nonphysical. They are, then, so vulnerable that all the devout citizens are murdered during a single conflict. They only care about traditional values and even ignore their others. They are subdued by opposing forces depicted in blasphemy and physical violence because they refuse and condemn them rather than understand them and be aware of their existence. Social and political changes cannot be brought only by verbal attack. This work shows that Christians must join actions to words to witness a drastic change. They publicly accuse divergent opinions and yet they do not know the appropriate reactions before their opponent. Given their vulnerability, a criminal act has been committed several times.

The devote Christians repress sexual activities so they are accustomed to live without the activities engaging their physical power, and refuse to confront their attackers with a physical attack. They pass on because instinctively, they expect God to strike back their opponent, and do not allow themselves to be engaged in a bloody battle. At their cost, they mistake sentimentality to spirituality, and emotion to faith.

The Baptism is written in response to the underclass black Christians' legitimate demand of social justice. It suggests the most effective means of self-defense possible. It teaches that each individual has the potential to extricate himself from virtually any type of confrontation. More importantly though it shows that a given individual is capable of dictating the circumstances in which he lives. Control of oneself and the people around, is essential to avoid prejudice, assault, and bloodshed. If Christians learn to stay in control of themselves, physically and mentally, they will lay the groundwork needed to unearth their real potential, for a better body, a more focused and clear mind and a happier lifestyle. Learning the vital parts of the anatomy where one can

strike and disable an assailant is certainly important. To defend themselves, Christians must seriously practice self-defense strategies on a regular basis.

Proficiency in self-defense will give them the ability, confidence and self-esteem to take charge of any situation. Once Christians make the decision to take control of their life, they will feel like new, freer individuals. The problems of living in a dangerous society will be of far less concern to them. They will therefore be able to focus on spirituality that will not only protect but enhance their well-being. Thus the goal of this work is to grant the Christians the option of fighting back against crime and the psychological effects of its presence. *The Baptism* encapsulates useful techniques to try. Christians of all ages and walks of life need to take up self-defense to improve themselves in a variety of ways and to have better stamina, endurance, physical fitness, mental acuity, and the ability to defend themselves with incredible speed and power.

Given that people react the way they train, if Christians do not train at all, they will be unable to defend themselves should the need arise. Self-defense can help Christians achieve mastery over themselves as well as the circumstances in which they live. It requires diligent practice at a reputable school on a regular basis. There are no quick and easy solutions to the problems of self-defense posed in a given society. If Christians refine their physical abilities, they will find themselves improving in spirituality and many other areas in which they probably had expressed no interest. Self-defense skills result in a relaxed state of mind, improved patience, better concentrative powers and numerous other benefits. Self-defense teaches to end a potentially dangerous situation before an attacker can make it materialize. It teaches to use one's natural flexibility to mete out serious blows from in close. It teaches to people to use their natural assets as well as those they have not yet discovered.

Christians really need self-defense strategies and techniques because very often they are assaulted. It will be helpful to have necessary skills for quickly and efficiently destroying an attacker, and methods for preventing a confrontation from turning physical in the first place. This work indicates that Christians must not only learn self-defense to avoid assault and violent crimes, but also avoid arguing on divergent views. To survive, evading an attack is superior to blocking an attack, so Christians need to trust their instinct because it is the best detector of danger. To

eliminate danger, they have to escape from a situation before it turns bad, if possible. To avoid to be the target of attacks they have to not appear blinded by emotion. To reduce the likelihood of becoming a target in the first place, they need to walk with confidence and awareness. They also need to be strong enough to remain calm and respond confidently and assertively to maintain a non-confrontational stance. To be safe, they need to use verbal boundaries, get physical if an aggressor does not back off. In a conversation, they should use verbal skills and a non-confrontational stance, but during an attack they must take advantage of the element of surprise and respond immediately.

The Baptism alludes to the bombing of Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church where four young African-American girls died. It shows that the expectation of confrontation and violence creates a circle. It argues that black Christians are blissfully ignorant of the Ku Klux Klan's hate crimes. As a matter of fact, Doug Jones in *Bending Toward Justice: The Birmingham Church Bombing that Changed the Course of Civil Rights* (2019) mentions that "According to Police records, the Ku Klux Klan detonated dozens of bombs in churches, houses and black businesses from 1947 to 1963 and infamously helped earn Birmingham the moniker of 'Bombingham.'" (23)

A bomb exploded at the 16th Street Baptist Church on Sunday morning, September 15, 1963. As Blacks protested racial segregation, white supremacists initiated an unprecedented campaign of violence and intimidation. Young Christians were slain when they were at their most vulnerable in a place they have the right to feel most secure. The bombing was a relentless Klan campaign to terrorize black Christians. Founded in 1873, the bombed church was the oldest and most prestigious black Baptist Church in Birmingham. The church was bombed by the Ku Klux Klan because it was used as the assembly point for protest actions.

To avoid a swift eruption of further fatal violence, Baraka suggests that Christians have to protect the lives and the churches of black activists. He virtually beseeches the enraged black Americans for calm. His play is a plea to contain anger. Baraka's righteous attention is on his own people who had done nothing to protect young black Christians and the black Baptist church. He is brilliantly indelicate in laying responsibility for the catastrophe at the feet of black Christians because they do not accept responsibility and blame everybody else. Baraka aims to

trigger the rise of black consciousness. His play pays a tribute of respect to the young defenseless Christians murdered in 1963.

The purpose of this work is to maintain that black Christians must have a volunteer group keeping an eye on churches and places that are potential bombing targets. This group would make some rounds and approach the churches or iconic places and dutifully report incidents to the police in order to identify the culprits and produce concrete evidence and multiple eyewitness accounts for the conviction of murderers and bombers.

Mass murder is a widely publicized incident. In this work I am interested in the “why,” why does a mass murderer commit such senseless acts of extreme violence? It shows my interest in the topic of mass murder. It explores the factors that influence the prevalence of mass murder in black churches. It describes the characteristics of a mass murderer and the circumstances surrounding his crimes. It stresses mass murder because according to Gary Laverne in *A Sniper in the Tower: The Charles Whitman Murders* (1997) “murders, armed attacks, robbery and rapes have become common in present-day America.” (239) It bears much scrutiny about what causes an individual who can be described as the “all-American boy” to commit atrocities. Mass murderer’s mental health reveals that his actions are those of a person who had lost touch with reality.

This work highlights mass murder because it attracts an extraordinary amount of attention. It dominates the headlines both at home and abroad. The allusion to the bombing of the Birmingham 16th Street Baptist Church in 1963 aims to shock the audience because according to Grant Duwe’s *Mass Murder in the United States: A History* (2007) “mass murder is a historically new crime that was virtually non-existent prior to the mid-1960s.” (6) My work focuses on a shocking crime because the massacre in the church is an incident with which many people could identify. The church mass killing truly epitomizes a morality play, a dramatic yet disastrous conflict between good and evil.

One year before the publication of *The Baptism* (1967) Richard Speck in Chicago on July 14, 1966 murdered eight young women in a row house that served as a dormitory. He was convicted a year later and sentenced to life in prison because he was identified by the ninth young women who survived the ordeal by hiding under a bed. Speck’s mass murder was described as

one of the worst crimes ever committed in the United States, the crime of the century. With the Speck massacre still fresh in the minds of many Americans, Baraka represents a catastrophic mass murder perpetrated by a schizophrenic boy to stress the horror and anguish caused by the highly visible and sensational mass killing. *The Baptism* was painfully reminiscent of the mass murders around the mid-sixties. Referring the Speck Massacre in 1966 and the church bombing in 1963, Baraka underlines the incidental and impersonal casualties of uncharted battlefields that exist only in demented minds.

He represents two incidents occurred on the cusp of a turbulent period in American society. Grant Duwe in his book *Mass Murder in the United States: A History* (2007) argues: “the 1960s brought forth political assassinations, the civil rights movement, urban riots, the war in Vietnam, and the rise of the youth counterculture.” (12) The sixties was a time in which crime rates were increasing dramatically. Baraka epitomizes the rise in crime and the general violence problem in the United States. He shatters Christians’ perceptions of safety in churches and public spaces. His preoccupation with weaponry is the proof that the United States needs stronger weapon laws. He aims to urge Congress to pass the legislation to help prevent the wrong persons from obtaining swords and firearms.

Bibliography

- Allred, Pam and Miriam E. David. *Get Real about Sex: The Politics and Practice of Sex Education*. London: Open University Press, 2007.
- Connell, Raewyn W. *Masculinities*. London: Polity Press, 1995.
- Dunbar, Paul Laurence. *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1922.
- Duwe, Grant. *Mass Murder in the United States: A History*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2007.
- Elam, Keir. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London: Methuen, 1980.

- Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality III: The Use of Pleasure*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987.
- Gold, Meredith. "Personal Safety." *Black Belt*, 25 July 2014, www.blackbeltmag.com. Web. 21 July 2022.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.
- Jones, Doug. *Bending Toward Justice: The Birmingham Church Bombing that Changed the Course of Civil Rights*. New York: St Martin's Press, 2019.
- Jones, Leroi [Amiri Baraka]. *Home: Social Essays*. New York: William Morrow, Apollo Editions: 1967.
- Jones, Leroi [Amiri Baraka]. *The Baptism and The Toilet*. New York: Grove Press, 1967.
- Lavergne, Garry. *A Snipper in the Tower: The Charles Whitman Murders*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1997.
- Levin, Jack, and James Alan Fox. *Mass Murder: America's Growing Menace*. New York: Berkeley Book, 1985.
- Osho. *Freedom from Anger, Jealousy and Fear*. New York : Osho Media International, 1999.
- Park, YH and Jeff Leibowitz. *Fighting Back: Taekwondo for Women. The Ultimate Reference Guide to preventing Sexual Harassment, Assault and Rape*. Seoul: YH Park Publications, 1993.
- Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. 3rd ed. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021.
- Sublette, Ned. *Cuba and its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2004.
- Tomson, Rachel and Simon Blake. "Editorial: Two Steps forward and One Step Back: The Changing Context for Sex Education." *Sex Education* 2.3 (2002): 187-193. Web. 14 Mar.2022.