CONCLUSION

*there is somethin
sacred abt hein
invited to bring
yrself to someone’s song*

- Shange

This academic odyssey which began with a response to Shange’s cry “Somebody / anybody sing a black girl’s song” (*FCG* 4), became a pilgrim’s progress. It carved and built an emotional and spiritual bridge across space and time, forming connections between them and this woman of colour.

Bonner, Childress, Hansberry, Kennedy and Shange manifest a human vision that defines the ‘universal’ as a term that includes the specifics of race, sex and class. In this, Black feminism is unique as it seeks to realize the hopes and dreams of not only Black women, but also the community, at large. This instinct to create, nurture and empower has been defined as “Womanism,” by Ogunyemi (64). This process of transformation accommodates wider realities that spill into larger political processes, into possible worlds.

Black feminism has evolved from a necessary politic to a transformational politic; one that calls women to love womanness and men to resist dehumanizing concepts of domination; one that creates a culture of understanding difference. These
five Black women playwrights have engaged in a dialectical struggle to create an understanding of the politicization of the self and how race, sex and class determine the collective experiences of all women of colour. In subverting the gaze they have created authentic spaces for self-definition and in returning the gaze they have validated the presence of the Black woman in the theatre. They have moved on to the other side of the rainbow. Implicit in this re-visioning of the self, is a recognition that the healing of all our wounds is forgiveness that permits a promise of our return at the end" (Walker Goodnight Willie 53).

Innovation, experimentation and a spirit of adventure mark the evolution of Black women’s drama, from Bonner to Shange. These five myth decipherers have created a unique space in the theatre for the articulation of Black women’s thoughts and feelings through ‘Thought’, ‘Narrative’, ‘Plot and Character’, ‘Music and Spectacle’. Resisting methodolatory and essentialism, they have struggled to locate an authentic Black female presence in the theatre. This continuum is marked not only by struggle and survival, but also by the celebration of the Black woman’s spirit. The future points to an amalgamation of wisdom and experience, a vision of aesthetic fulfillment in the expression of their artistic dreams. The possibilities are endless, for as Walker’s daughter exclaims “Mama, you have a world in you eye” (Walker In Search 393). May the song of the Black woman’s “endless possibilities” be heard.
Notes

1 Ntozake Shange. qtd. in Render Me My Song: African-American Women Writers from Slavery to the Present. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990) 198