

ABSTRACT

HUMANITIES

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COMMON GROUND: A COMPARISON OF THE IDEAS OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE WRITINGS OF HOWARD  
W. THURMAN AND HUEY P. NEWTON

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This study examined the idea of consciousness as a phenomenal reality in the writings of Howard W. Thurman and Huey P. Newton. The purpose was to determine if there was confluence in the relationship between their usage of consciousness as an idea and their experience of blackness. This study was based on the premise that the experience of blackness caused a strong desire for freedom in the consciousness of the Africans who were brought to the Americas.

In order to develop a clearer understanding of the connection between experience and the modalities used by each writer to accomplish their goal it was necessary to approach this study through a critical method rooted in an Afrocentric paradigm. This paradigm also aided in gaining a better visualization of the desired goal of each writer. This study was qualitative in nature, using Afrocentric methods of interpretation concentrating on the African Freedom Aesthetic to extract the purpose and means through which consciousness was used in the writings of the research subjects.

This researcher found that both Thurman and Newton subscribed to the belief that in order for there to be a transformation in the lifestyle of blacks there would need to be a shift in the consciousness such that blacks could transcend the ill effects of living in a society which tolerated blacks but never embraced their humanity. The conclusions drawn from these findings suggests that confluence existed in the fact that both men believed that a change in consciousness gives the individual and community the ability to transcend the lived experience.

