

Now I wish to explore my interpretation of Study for The Joy of Living. I was first drawn to this sketch because of the bright red object - perhaps a vase - on the girl's head. The object stood out against the predominantly white and black sketch. After further research, I was even more interested because of the intersection between race and gender embedded within the sketch. The sketch, which was probably made in the late 1930s, was concurrent with the FWP (Federal Writers Project). The federal government launched FWP in 1935. Its' mission was to send out unemployed writers to collect stories from Americans living specifically in the south and the west. The creation of the FWP in the 1930s demonstrates a popular current in American culture during the New Deal era in which people idealized the more noble and simple pre-industrial America. The pre-industrial era provided Americans an escape from the hard realities of The Great Depression. (Silber 2018: 37). While the FWP collected stories from both white and black communities, I wish to focus on their depictions of African Americans. A division of writers from the FWP collected stories from previously enslaved people as a part of a series called Born In Slavery: Slave Narratives. At the time of the project, 1936 to 1938, the interviewees ranged from age 72 to 108 (Spindel 1996: 252). While the project had the good intention of centering or liberating the historical memory of enslavement, it ultimately was problematic. The writers, who were predominantly white, embedded their racial biases into the questions they asked and the stories they wanted their interviewees to tell. Indeed, often the project's products were quaint stories of enslavement that peddled racially coded ideals of folkness; thereby, concealing the intense suffering cattle slavery inflicted on enslaved people (Silber 2018: 41).

Lastly, a brief note before I let Anne Rice's interview speak in both languages. While trying to stay true to Anne Rice's voice and story, I did have to change some of her language because it was difficult to translate into Italian. I do not, however, promote a hierarchical privileging of specific lexicons as more "respectable" or "proper." Still, due to the limitations of my translations, I did have to convert Rice's language into the Italian lexicon considered to be more "conventional" or "academic."

[Olivia Schaffer on Joseph Stella · further information 2]