1-1-2017

Weird Propaganda: Texts Of The Black Power And Women's Liberation Movements

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WEIRD PROPAGANDA: TEXTS OF THE BLACK POWER AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENTS

by

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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

2017

MAJOR: ENGLISH

Approved By:

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Advisor   Date

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the Detroit left activist community, historical and contemporary.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: WEIRDNESS AND PROPAGANDA (INTRODUCTION)

I.   Weirdness

I use the term "weird propaganda" to refer to political art that attempts to convince its readers of a worldview and that is also fundamentally about uncertainty: work that mixes strong, certain beliefs with a broad sense of anxiety, hope, dread, and speculation rooted in the fundamental strangeness of radical change.[1] In order to motivate a readership to spend time and energy on political organizing, to take risks, and to hold at bay mainstream beliefs in favor of a new worldview, writers and artists suggest a vision of a better possible world. The texts I examine here route that sense of possibility through the weird, often embracing the uncanny as a way of negotiating the day-to-day uncertainties of political organizing and, more broadly, political hope. Weird propaganda also has the capacity to make the current world seem odd. Writers employ a version of Victor Shklovsky's "enstrangement effect," describing the world in terms unfamiliar to their readers and projecting other worlds that throw their own into relief.[2]

My project examines texts of the Black Power and Women's Liberation Movements: the early Black Arts Movement anthology *For Malcolm*, which I consider a part of the Black Power movement because of the key role of Malcolm X's legacy; the now-canonical texts *Our Bodies,*

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[1] I generally follow the Leninist traditional split between agitation and propaganda, where agitation refers to fomenting action around the present and immediate struggles of workers and propaganda describes the process of conveying larger world views and ideologies (Lenin). Most of the texts I attend to here are more propaganda than agitation, though the *Black Panther* frequently combines the two modes.

[2] See Victor Shklovsky's *Theory of Prose*. In describing the enstrangement effect in Tolstoy's work, he writes: "[Tolstoy] does not call a thing by its name, that is, he describes it as if it were perceived for the first time, while an incident is described as if it were happening for the first time. In addition, he foregoes the conventional names of the various parts of a thing, replacing them instead with the names of corresponding parts in other things" (Shklovsky 6).

Ourselves; *The Black Woman*; and *Sisterhood Is Powerful*; a number of pamphlets and other small press works; and the Black Panthers' newspaper. The texts convey particular political views in an explicit way; they also ask questions about the nature of collectivity, who might be included in categories such as *women* or *Black* or *working class* and what that inclusion means; what a future in which their ideas spread would actually look like; and what might have been otherwise under different conditions. The texts express uncertainty about address: who does the text represent; who does it speak to; who is the "we." In looking at social movements historically, we tend to see unified groups, "organization" in its ideal form. But the composition of an organization is, in the moment, constantly shifting, and generally reaching outward, expanding to encompass more people.

I call the works I examine here *weird propaganda*, drawing on multiple senses of the word *weird*. First, the work that I look at here is odd—"out of the ordinary course, strange, unusual; hence, odd, fantastic" per the Oxford English Dictionary's fourth definition of the word ("weird, adj."). That is: I did not expect to find in these archives what I found there. Conventional wisdom would suggest that propaganda is usually pat and didactic. And of course, plenty is. But the bulk of small-press and independent work produced in the Women's Liberation and Black Power Movements—much of which was produced in intense, hurried spurts in the late 1960s and early 1970s—is truly strange and outside of expected modes of political discourse, even as it presents revolutionary ideologies in unsubtle terms at the same time. A lot of it contains literary gestures and conventions associated with other types of work: magical realist fiction; avant-garde or experimental poetry; pulp science fiction, horror, and fantasy.

As a reader, scholar, or general consumer of culture, I like art that is weird—art that gets at something that cannot be otherwise accounted for, that is countercultural or sub-cultural, that

brushes up against quotidian aesthetic norms in uncomfortable ways. And I have aimed to keep this broad, colloquial sense of weird in play in this project. The weirdness of the texts is surprising, given that revolutionary movements are trying to shift norms, and to also gather proponents. That is, one might expect revolutionary movements to have an investment in normalcy, to rely on conventional or at least very straightforward aesthetics to midwife radical ideas into the mainstream: think of sitting at an Occupy encampment and being inundated with folk music with lyrics that describe social movements, for instance. If art purports to be 'about' politics, we might expect it to have a certain loyalty to straightforward realism. Certainly, there has been plenty of debate over realism, politics, and the nature of representation: within the Frankfurt School, the Harlem Renaissance, contemporary conversations about conceptual poetry—the list goes on and on. Far and away, though, most of those debates happen about art that is political, and not about primarily political texts that, necessarily, also engage aesthetics—propaganda. The aesthetic comes into play where do not expect it to, in texts which mostly seek to convey straightforward political ideas or sentiments. With some notable exceptions, the writing and art that I focus on here comes directly out of social movements.[3] My motivating questions are not about how specific artistic or literary works are political; instead, they're about texts whose primary commitments are to political work, and which were initially received as political, in political contexts. Propaganda often *does* operate in a straightforward and uninteresting pedagogical mode. But it seems that aesthetics are, at least some of the time, yoked

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[3] The most important exception is the topic of Chapter 1, the early Black Arts Movement anthology *For Malcolm*. Some of the writers there were no doubt politically active, but Dudley Randall, coeditor of the book and publisher of Broadside Press, was fairly apolitical and an outlier in the Black Arts Movement. However, the chief question that the book raises is precisely how to spur a political legacy in the wake of Malcolm X's death, and its poems are quite overtly "about" politics, and are often about the relationship between the aesthetic and the political.

to the inherent oddity of the notion of radical change: the art and writing of the Black Power and Women's Liberation movements turn out to be super weird, in the most colloquial sense.

II.   The Supernatural

The term *weird propaganda* is also useful for other, related but distinct, senses of the word *weird*. First, *weird* means having to do with the supernatural, unearthly, or uncanny.[4] The work I discuss here has an investment in this sense of *weird* in a few different ways. A lot of this work has a self-referential quality and a concern with its own conditions of production. Writers make reference to print and newspapers; use ink in metaphorical ways (sometimes relating it to blood); and convey suspicion and hesitance about questions of medium, or make media work in ways counter to their associations. Self-references create a sense of the uncanny—uncanny as in strangely familiar—that runs throughout these texts.

Self-referential work flags its own conditions of production, disrupting any illusions that it is simply conveying information (as it might in the case of the *Black Panther* newspaper) or that it is a window into the author's consciousness and emotional life (as it might in the case of the poetry in *For Malcolm* or Women's Liberation poet Alta's *Burn This and Memorize Yourself*). The point of self-referential works is that they cannot convey reality in any straightforward sense, and must instead convey their own mediated character. Here I draw on Phillip Brian Harper's description of abstraction in *Abstractionist Aesthetics: Artistic Form and Social Critique in African American Culture*. Harper describes abstractionist artwork as work that "*emphasizes* its own distance from reality by calling attention to its constructed or artificial character," accomplishing Bertolt Brecht's alienation effect (2-3). The term I use here, *weird*, does not map precisely onto abstraction. Fantasy and gothic writing, for instance, are not

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[4] According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "Partaking of or suggestive of the supernatural; of a mysterious or unearthly character; unaccountably or uncomfortably strange; uncanny."

particularly abstract *or* particularly representational. Often, such writing relies heavily on conventions of realism to accomplish a depiction of a world that is different, but like, this world.

Yet Harper's categorization highlights the connection between writers flagging the material of the page itself—an act equivalent to breaking the fourth wall in theater—and the weirdness we associate with genre elements from horror and fantasy that arise alongside self-referential gestures in the texts I examine here. Self-referentiality calls into question the text's integrity—integrity in the sense of wholeness. The boundaries of the text become uncertain. If, as is the case on the cover of *For Malcolm*, the X in Malcolm X's name on the cover is both referential—refers to Malcolm X—and *self-referential*—refers to its own X-ness, its sitting there as a mark on the front of the book, then we do not know where the *frame* ends and begins. That is, we are forced to ask where the 'real' world ends and begins, as opposed to the world of the text that we are reading—an uncanny effect to be sure.

Extradiegetic gestures work similarly. Writers and artists gesture outside the frame of what is being narrated to implicate the reader. In film, music that is extradiegetic comes from outside of the narrated story—something intrudes from beyond the frame. In many of the texts I examine here, authors refer to the world beyond the literary frame of the article or poem or other text. That is, they establish a frame in which the content or action exists—sometimes simply manipulating, say, the cover of a book, to establish or exploit literary conventions around where it is that meaning will be made. They then puncture that frame in some way that calls upon the reader. The Boston Health Book Collective, whose members co-authored the classic feminist educational book *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, switched the name of the book between editions. The earliest published versions were titled *Women and Their Bodies*, a title that retains a sense that the book will describe a world that the reader looks in on. That is, even though the target

audience is women, the book grammatically follows the convention of delineating content that the reader will observe from outside. The altering of the title is a diegetic leap, or a leap outside of the frame for content that the earlier editions had established, since the audience is called into the action of the title. That is, the reader is no longer part of an abstracted public, looking for information about a subject in a book; instead she is both reader and subject. Similarly, Emory Douglas's images in the *Black Panther* often are mostly cartoons that then also include representations of people wearing buttons or holding newspapers that themselves are collaged photographic images.[5] In these images the less realistic world of cartoons and caricature frame a more realistic world—the photographed world. The images call into question boundaries between worlds, and the 'real world,' the world of the reader, becomes just the largest frame in a sequence of framing devices. That is, Douglas's technique of photomontage gives the impression of distinct frames nested within one another. Photos exist within drawings, often photos that are themselves other Black Panthers propaganda. This nesting effect projects the real world—the reader reading the paper—as the largest frame or nest in the series.

In short, self-referentiality, particularly self-referentiality that flags the concrete nature of print, or highlights the author's role as author or the reader's role as reader, disrupts writing's role as content that we can read, observe, or consume from afar. If the X in Malcolm X's name on the cover of *For Malcolm* is both the language used to reference Malcolm X the person, to tell a story about this person—a story that must be mediated by text because we are not in the same haptic world as the person—*and* black ink on a page, that we can touch with our bodies, with which we *do* share a haptic world, our sense of the separation between this haptic world and that

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5 Photomontage has long been used as a defamiliarizing technique, and has often been employed in political art. Both Dadaists and early Soviet artists used the technique, and the Constructivist photographer Gustavs Klucis wrote an essay, "Photomontage as a New Form of Agitation Art," arguing for photomontage's political usefulness.

haptic world is shaken. The breaching of borders of our own world and some other world: this topic is both the traditional territory of fantasy, horror, and other genre fiction and germane to the key questions of political organizing: how do people form collectivities? On what basis does a collectivity retain its boundaries—for example in the case of the Black Panthers, how does one separate out the many infiltrators and sell-outs that plagued the organization? Is the category "women" or "Black women" a meaningful border, and what does political disagreement within these categories mean? In short, if one is to be part of something larger than oneself, what are the boundaries of this new formation?

Secondly, and returning to the multiple ways we might describe the work here as "weird," the work I examine here is invested in the grotesque, from gory pictures of brains spilled open in Vietnam in the *Black Panther News Service* to melancholic attachments to Malcolm X's dead body in *For Malcolm* to images of hanged witches alongside estranging close-ups of women's bodies in Su Negrin's *A Graphic Notebook on Feminism*. The work also has an investment in the gothic, with a poem in *For Malcolm* tracing Malcolm X's blood through the labyrinthine pipes and walls of New York, in haunted-house fashion, and the Black Panther Party comparing police violence to an Edgar Allen Poe story.

Third, the work I discuss here has an investment in the ghastly or spectral. Social movement texts are curious—they must, almost by definition, both attempt to represent a group larger than those actually writing and publishing the texts—*to* that very group. That is, a small group of people usually writes speaking as a larger group—the Black Panthers, for instance, write to represent, in the sense of speaking *for*, Black people (at some points) and also more generally "the oppressed peoples of the world" (a phrase they use frequently). The people that the small group is speaking *for*—in place of—is also the group they are speaking *to*. They are

writing in hopes of attracting the attention and loyalty of all Black people, or at least all Black people who are not "lackeys" or "pigs." (I'll write more about these categorizations later.) The paper creates a series of gaps—a gap between the small group of writers and the large voice they inhabit in writing; a gap between the projected audience for the paper (all oppressed people) and the actual readers; a gap between the actual number of people involved in any capacity and the dream of larger involvement reflected in the writing of the paper. These gaps suggest a sort of phantasmatic force that is not quite there, a force that might heed the call to action—creating a radically different future—or that might not, in the exact formation proposed by the Panthers or by other revolutionary groups, exist at all. That is, collectivities are called to existence rhetorically[6]; the actual collectivity may or may not manifest in on-the-ground organizing efforts, even while the existence of the text itself, especially in the case of sustained and regular publishing as in the case of the Black Panther's newspaper, is itself a form of organization. Propaganda texts are part and parcel of organizing *and* simultaneously project something larger than themselves, which may or may not come to fruition.

Revolutionary organizing involves projections and gaps, necessary tricks of the voice, and the projected larger collectivity is always present as a phantasm not only motivating those already organizing, but also striking fear in the powers-that-be—the FBI, the government, the capitalist class, white supremacists, the racial state. The projected audience for *The Black Panther*, for instance—all the oppressed people of the world, coming together as a collective—is a ghost, a monster, and the establishment's nightmare.

III.   Controlling Fate

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[6] This is a point that rhetorical theorist Maurice Charland makes—though as an intervention into rhetorical theory—in his essay "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Quebecois*."

Another sense of "weird" comes into play here. Yet another definition of the word from the Oxford English Dictionary is "having the power to control the fate or destiny of human beings, etc.; later, claiming the supernatural power of dealing with fate or destiny." Historically, weirdness has to do with futurity, with predicting the future and controlling it. Revolutionary groups are precisely trying to control the fate and destiny of human beings, and to alter those fates. And unlike say, liberal activists, who are apt to want a vision of 'progress' that they can fully see, without sharp breaks or unpredictability, revolutionary groups are trying to change the future in ways that are unimaginable. The future often presents itself in these texts as a sort of impasse. Writers in *For Malcolm* cannot conceive of a future for Malcolm X's legacy, though as those writers wrote the Black Panther Party was forming in the Bay area. In *A Graphic Notebook on Feminism*, Su Negrin presents women from across history but gestures toward the future with only the slogan, rendered in a Halloween-ish, 'eerie' font, "FEMINISM LIVES" at the back of the pamphlet. The Panthers envision full-fledged armed struggle against the state, but simultaneously mourn the fact that Danny Brown, a young man killed by police, will not learn what life "really [is]" or understand why his government allowed him to be shot—Danny Brown's future, for the Panthers, only goes as far as understanding the world and its racism, and not beyond.

Left activist and science fiction writer China Miéville has argued that a sense of dread is fundamental to both human consciousness and Marxist theorizations of the world, advocating a "gothic Marxism," as he terms it. The Left, he argues, should be invested in rationality, but rationality with holes in it. Dread and fear carry within them the unknown. Miéville is not explicit about this, but he implies that the category of the unknown—the world as it isn't, at least

not yet—is fundamentally of interest in revolutionary movements in that these movements are attempts to change the world.

In roughly the same period as the activist texts I examine here, Sun Ra produced psychedelic music, Henry Dumas wrote in a Black nationalist and magical realist idiom, and feminist science fiction writers like Ursula Le Guin, James Tiptree, Jr., Octavia Butler, and Joanna Russ emerged. That is to say, revolutionary organizing attempts to both shape the future and make the world radically otherwise, and therefore has an understated, witchy current of genre fiction running through it—and also influenced and maintained an exchange with larger cultural trends that manifested in artistic communities in this period. We might see genre and propaganda texts as part of the same conversation about making the world otherwise.

Lastly, while weirdness does not necessarily have to do with the bodily, the traditions of horror, science fiction, and fantasy that propaganda picks up on are heavily invested in the bodily. From Edgar Allen Poe's classic "The Premature Burial" to Phillip K. Dick's *Ubik*, in which objects and people continually disintegrate unless they are treated with a spray, to magical realist Julio Cortazar's short story "Letter to a Young Lady in Paris," in which a character cannot stop vomiting up small, living rabbits from nowhere that then take over the apartment he is staying in, what Victoria Nelson terms the anti-realist tradition, and I am terming "weird," is concerned with questioning the substantiality and integrity of bodies, and is therefore well-suited to exploring the substantiality and integrity of collectivities, and the significance of an individual's body for that collectivity.

IV. Abstraction and Embodiment Through Print

My project is animated by several additional key concepts that I will rely on throughout. The first I will term Abstraction Versus Embodiment. Many of the texts I look at flag their own material qualities, either by explicit discussion of print, ink, and sometimes blood (which also

relays marking) in their content or by highlighting their own concrete qualities on the page through unusual graphic renderings. In doing so these texts participate in an experimental tradition; they also participate in a tradition of using black ink and white paper as an idiom for race, with a black ink-white paper graphic opposition pointing to a Black-white racial opposition.[7]

The self-referentiality of these texts is of interest because it often *stands in for* the relationship between embodiment and abstraction. When one reads, one takes meaning from the concrete words on the page. There is a distinction between the material of print and the meaning derived from it; the concrete, physical ink on the page stands in tension with meaning. Additionally, the world of print itself has historically formed our notions of the public. The term "public sphere" is vexed, and it does not describe much about how the world actually works. That is, there is not a neutral realm in which people discuss ideas and the best ideas win out. However, "public sphere" is a useful term for describing an ideological formation: the *belief* that print and other media provide a space for a fair and rational exchange of ideas. Such an ideologeme also includes a notion of the "general public"—a projection (backed up by institutional forces) that forces anyone not perceived as neutral to bracket their identities in order to participate. In essence, one must be abstracted *into* the public sphere, and women and people of color are abstracted less easily, and at a price. A white-male form is the default, standard, Platonic ideal (Harper 34) that explicitly or subtly excludes others, and print has been a key site

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[7] There is a fairly long tradition of using aligning ink with racial Blackness. Jonathan Senchyne documents the early use of this idiom in the nineteenth century (142); James D. Sullivan examines broadsides from Broadside Press, the focus of one of the chapters of this project, and observes that book and broadside designs alter the usual patterns of black ink on white page to highlight that white is usually the negative space, or neutral backdrop, against which black words are printed (36). Jennifer DeVere Brody's book *Punctuation: Art, Politics, and Play* describes "the link (or leak) between black ink and embodied forms of blackness" (65).

of this exclusion. We might also consider that African American ability to write was considered proof of personhood with regard to slave narratives—that is, entry into print was a mode of categorization. Panning out even further, abstraction has been used to dehumanize African Americans in popular culture, and it is also the basis of slavery—the abstraction of a body into property and value (Harper 30-31), while David McNally points out that a similar abstraction, and violence against the bodies of all workers, occurs in capitalism more generally (13-14).

The public sphere—or rather, the actual set of processes related to print, publication, and representation in media, as covered over by the ideology of the public sphere—to some extent asks all people of color and women in general to bracket their embodied selves in order to enter it. That is, the mode of the public sphere is not hospitable to the revolutionary activists whose archives I examine here, and not a good medium for the spread of revolutionary ideas. At the same time that women and African Americans are abstracted into—or left out of—public spheres, women and African Americans are figured as *more* bodily than white men. That is, African American women and men and women more generally are simultaneously asked to bracket their bodies as a condition for entry into the public sphere *and* constructed as hopelessly fastened to their bodies. Long-running stereotypes of African Americans of any gender construct African Americans as particularly physical; white women and other women of color, too, are figured as somehow *more* bodily, and, as McNally puts it, "liberal-bourgeois rationalism pivots on a disdain for bodies, corporeal experience, and material practices" (8). Writers seeking to spark collectivities based upon categories of oppression—based upon the experience of being Black in the United States, or the experience of being a woman—must negotiate the fact that the stereotypes of bodiliness intersect their own emphases on the bodies that, via experiences of oppression, bind them together.

The writers I examine in this project are frequently suspicious of print—the Black Panthers emphasize that their newspaper is not like other newspapers; poets in *For Malcolm* allude to Malcolm X's warnings against believing what you read in mainstream papers; the Boston Women's Health Book Collective pushed against conventions of health books by including personal testimony, instructions for activities, and photographs of individual women in their specificity alongside medical drawings. In reaction to the construction of the public sphere, which asks women and African Americans to bracket the very identities on the basis of which they are oppressed, and on the basis of which they attempt to form collectivities, the writers I examine here create propaganda that is *about* physicality. They resist the pull of the public sphere toward an abstraction that erases their most legible grounds for forging solidarity and also evokes the legacy of both slavery and the abstractions of capitalism.[8]

V. Representation

Another key question that runs throughout this project is that of representation. Representation is a vexed topic, perhaps more so now than at the time of the archive I examine. In order to attempt to forge a collectivity of any sort, one must attempt to speak for others. Address in propaganda has several things going on: a smaller group speaks for a larger group; a smaller group speaks *to* a larger group; a smaller group attempts to *depict* a larger group. Both scholars and activists frequently have a knee-jerk reaction to these acts of representation: speaking *for* others is often suspect, for good reason. However, unless we view categories like *Black* or *Black women* as monolithic, we must acknowledge that political work that aims to forge collectivities requires representation. Gayatri Spivak, in her canonical essay "Can the Subaltern

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[8] See David McNally's synopsis of capitalist abstraction of bodies in *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires, and Global Capitalism*: "Commodified abstract labour is … effectively *disembodied*, detached from the persons who perform it" (14).

Speak?" draws out two often-conflated senses of "represent": represent means both "'speaking-for', as in politics, …and 're-presentation', as in art or philosophy" (70). As Spivak points out, these are related, but not the same: one can stand in for a larger group, and one can also depict a larger group. The act of depicting a group—of causing members of a group to feel descriptively represented, and descriptively represented *as* members of a group rather than as individuals, as, say, Emory Douglas's artwork might—is quite distinct from standing in for a group. Both of these types of representation, though, are germane to propaganda, and the one type of representation—re-presentation in the aesthetic sense—may convince the larger group that, indeed, the smaller group can stand in for them.

Speaking to also comes into play here. The Black Power Movement in part figured itself as a turn away from a Civil Rights Movement tactic of rhetorically appealing to white people and people in positions of power on behalf of Black people, and a turn toward speaking to other Black people and asking them to arm themselves. The Black Panthers certainly still speak *for* and *depict*, but there is a palpable shift to speaking *to*. The Black Arts Movement followed similar lines, with writers sometimes characterizing earlier African American writing from the Harlem Renaissance as designed to appeal to White people. In both the *Black Panther* and a lot of Black Arts Movement writing, writers are interested in hailing all Black people, but also separating politically committed Black people off from others.

The texts also share an impetus to bring more people into the fold of representation. Representation here is dynamic. That is, because the groups of writers here are trying to rally more people to their causes, questions of who is represented are always in flux. Propaganda aims to be a sort of contagion. Aesthetic gestures here work to hail the reader into a collectivity, and the collectivity is always a moving, shifting force.

Beyond just gathering new members, the Left, generally, has to engage a sort of boosterism. Activists burn out after doing nearly impossible work fighting uphill battles for years or decades, taking risks and making sacrifices. In order to make organizations function for any length of time, those involved in them have to continually nurture feelings of optimism, solidarity, and collectivity. Or, taking a longer view, sociologist Deborah Gould writes:

> …in order to attract and retain participants and to pursue a movement's agenda, activists continually need to mobilize affective states and emotions that mesh with the movement's political objects and tactics, and suppress those that do the opposite. Social movements provide affective pedagogies to participants and supporters, authorizing ways to feel and emote that often go against the grain of dominant society's emotional norms. (213)

Mobilizing useful affective states takes a number of forms; Gould is writing about the 1980s organization ACT UP and AIDS activism here, and the model involves the various caretaking work that happened among ACT UP members, as well as the dating scene and a sexy mood that Gould chronicles within the organization. Taking perhaps a still longer view, the sociologists Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesenthal describe a problem of labor organization that, given the intersectional nature of racial, gender, and other forms of oppression with capitalism, applies to nearly any Left movement. When dealing with capital itself, capitalists are dealing in "dead labor." One can picture capital as being like water—you add to it and you get a larger quantity of a homogenous substance. Whereas workers are living labor:

> One simply cannot add one unit of labor power to another so as to obtain what would be a "double-worker," who could then legally contract for and physically control twice the amount of labor power; two rocks put into the same pot remain two discrete rocks. Living labor power is both indivisible and "non-liquid," and it is this insuperable individuality that we will show to be of the greatest consequences for labor's specific "logic of collective action." (Offe and Wiesenthal 74)

Or, as Offe and Wiesenthal put it later, ""Workers cannot 'merge,' at best they can associate in order to partly compensate for the power advantage that capital derives from the liquidity of

'dead' labor" (74). One consequence is that any sense of collectivity is something that must be worked for, and many Left writers and activists work for that sense in part by suggesting that that sense is natural. That is, on the one hand there is a natural tendency for workers to align themselves with each other; on the other, any such tendency must still be forged by a sort of projection or pronouncement. Collectivity in writing is performative. In practice, it exists in fleeting specific moments of people acting in concert. When one represents in the sense of stand-in-for, one might not be asserting representation so much as asking or calling out—questions projected out to the ether that may or may not be answered: "Can I represent you? Is there a 'we'?"

VI. Turning to Propaganda

This project in an inherently interdisciplinary one. A lot of my research involved reading in sociology and history, rather than literary studies. Historically, there has been a baseline assumption that propaganda is not of literary interest, and the bulk of writing about the Women's Liberation and Black Power movements is in history and sociology. Additionally, projects about explicitly political art frequently tend toward the literary-historical. I aim to contribute here to the growing body of work that deploys the methodologies of English and cultural studies to look at propagandistic work.

I focus on weird propaganda in part because I believe there is a larger cultural need for us to attend to these two categories, *weird* and *propaganda*. In looking at explicit propaganda, rather than reading literary texts politically, I hope to nudge toward a larger shift in the frame for talking about art and politics. Since the 1970s, in large part as a result of the social movements I examine here, it has become commonplace, as a mode of reading, to locate the politics of a piece of writing or visual art. A well-informed reader or critic assumes that writing is always political.

The default mode of close-reading in both undergraduate courses and graduate seminars involves reading the politics off of a piece of writing. In many ways, this is great. I am certainly not advocating an updated New Criticism, nor the shift away from a Jamesonian hermeneutics in favor of an apolitical 'surface-reading' that Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus have advocated.[9] *However*, if *everything* is political, the word *political* begins to lose its referent. We are all 'doing politics' all the time, without ever considering questions of political power.

To some extent, the social movements of the past several years have forced a large-scale cultural reengagement with on-the-ground politics. At the same time, unfortunately, there is probably some causality between the default modes of teaching in undergraduate English, women's studies, and cultural studies courses and the version of online activism that has become pervasive now: reading and explaining how a text or film or tweet supports oppression in some way, then 'calling out' whoever produced the text or film or tweet. The practice echoes some modes of teaching; ideology critique has become pervasive and, in some instances, supplanted political organizing.

Clearly, it is good to engage politics in one's teaching and criticism, whether that means making claims for the political work that literature and art can do or, if one is tasked with, say, teaching canonical literary texts, teaching those texts politically. However, the decades-long waning of political activity up until 2011 or so meant that the political reading of aesthetic production was often the main mode of politics for large numbers of people, both faculty and students. The question "what is the best way to build political power?"—a question to which almost no one would answer, "by close-reading literary texts"—was rarely asked. Campuses

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[9] See Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus's critique of literary criticism "as political activism" (1) in *Representations* 108, where they advocate "surface reading" as an alternative to politicized close-reading.

were sites of political struggle in the 60s and 70s, and this political struggle resulted in the formation of Black Studies and Women's Studies departments, for instance (undeniably huge wins for the Left that both relied on political power and built more political power). But in general, academia became less political in the 80s, 90s, and aughts as the Left fell apart more generally. We started from the point of close-reading texts and politicizing things, resulting in a kind of confusion about how one "does" political work.[10] For these reasons, I think it is particularly productive to look at propaganda now. We can recalibrate our senses of the word *political*, which have become fairly meaningless, by looking at texts where we *cannot* close-read politics because the politics are already on the surface. Additionally, looking at the ideas of on-the-ground political movements will tend to reorient academic communities toward solidarity—a concept that is often not as prominent in contemporary political discussions as it was in the past, and that ought to be.

I focus on the *weird* here because the weird shifts our attention away from our present moment and toward other possibilities. While I do not have space or time with this project to build a full argument about the contemporary political mood, I contend that that mood is simultaneously one of deep cynicism and hope. Alongside the rise of Black Lives Matter, Occupy, Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign (significant regardless of what one thinks of his actual politics), and the victories of the Fight for Fifteen minimum wage and unionization campaign, we have the fact that these surges in organization have won only modest victories. And in the same time frame, we have seen increasing austerity measures in the large-scale defunding of public education, passage of Right to Work bills, and innumerable other areas. Moreover, there is a general sense that the world is getting worse, with climate change and

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[10] For my take on this in relation to contemporary poetry and poetics, see "Organization and Aesthetics" at the blog *A Better World Is Probable*.

neoliberal policies creating a widespread sense of despair, reflected in the fact that so much contemporary science fiction is dystopian rather than utopian. (Think of the films *Children of Men* or *Advantageous*.) Of course, it would be difficult to make the case that the world is objectively getting worse. I am not sure how we would take a worldwide measurement of the suffering of years past against current suffering. But there has been a clear shift away from a sense of progress or possibility. In the period of the 1960s, there seems to have been a widespread belief that the world would progress. Even as visions like *Star Trek*'s might now strike us as naively liberal, that naiveté strikes me as far preferable to current moods of resignation.

To give one brief example, just over the past year there has been a proliferation of FaceBook groups for the sharing of absurdist, nihilistic memes (a topic I will likely write about in more detail in the future).[11] People—probably mostly young-ish, probably either stuck at desks or unemployed—make meme after meme about wishing to die, following meme-patterns for humor. For example, a fairly typical meme is as follows:

> THE WORLD'S GOING TO END
> 2012: Oh God, no!
> 2016: Are we doing this or not??

The memes are, of course, jokes—I do not take them to express a true desire to die on the part of the writer. But the act of collectively creating large bodies or work that copies other such work—

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[11] For more on "Weird FaceBook, see *New York Magazine*'s February 2016 article "The Rise of Weird FacBook: How the World's Biggest Social Network Became Cool Again (and Why It Matters)." The author, Hudson Hongo, writes that "the 'Weird' version of any social network is the one in which its tools are pushed past the bounds of their intended purposes, usually for the purposes of inscrutable, self-referential humor." Hongo also observes that Weird FaceBook has grown considerably in 2015 and into 2016, for unknown reasons; that "Leftist and anti-capitalist politics dominate Weird FaceBook"; and that in some ways Weird FaceBook is a sort of retort to 4Chan and Reddit and their notorious bad politics.

of meme-ing—about desires for death and for the destruction of the world indicates a collective mood of sorts. People are invested in having others echo back to them—with humor—a sense of despair. People take pleasure in sharing the sense of despair. Simultaneously, Weird FaceBook has a decidedly leftist vibe (Hongo) and has also been a hub of activity in support of Bernie Sanders through a group called Bernie Sanders' Dank Meme Stash. The humor in that group (which had hundreds of thousands of members and often wound up being covered by mainstream media because it had an influence on the primary), was also absurdist—but had a streak of earnest hopefulness about the Sanders campaign itself. And so we can track in our contemporary moment, too, weirdness mixing with earnest and straightforward political ideology.

Strange, gothic, gory, and oriented toward futurity and dread, "Weird Facebook" or absurdist FaceBook is both a contemporary example of the aesthetic weirdness that I identify in the archive I examine here and an indicator of the need for more weirdness, and different kinds of weirdness—an opening of political possibility at the level of dread, solidarity in dread, and perhaps eventual imagination of something else. While my primary aim in this dissertation is to contribute to the growing body of scholarship on affect, social movements generally, Women's Liberation, Black Power, and general considerations of aesthetics and politics, I also hope to highlight both propaganda and the weird as topics that have a lot to give us in our pursuit of a less-terrible world.

CHAPTER 2: *FOR MALCOLM* AND EMBODIED COLLECTIVITY IN THE BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT

The problem with black families, they say, is absent fathers. Malcolm X is absent because he's dead.

—Glenn Ligon

I. *For Malcolm*

For Malcolm: Poetry on the Life and the Death of Malcolm X appeared at a politically volatile juncture in history—in Detroit in June of 1967, just a month before the historic 1967 riots, or Great Rebellion. The anthology was the first Broadside Press book planned and the second actually published. Dudley Randall, a Detroit poet from a middle-class background who studied at Wayne State University and later at the University of Michigan, started Broadside in 1965, initially publishing only single broadside sheets and later going on to publish books. At the 1966 Fisk Writers Conference, he heard a number of poems about Malcolm X and conceived the anthology, then later asked the Chicago poet Margaret G. Burroughs to co-edit (Boyd 127). While Detroit ultimately became less significant to the Black Arts Movement as the movement developed (Smethurst 234), Broadside played a crucial and catalyzing role in the early Black Arts Movement. The anthology itself was simultaneously central and peripheral to the movement. It included canonical Black Arts poets LeRoi Jones, Gwendolyn Brooks, Etheridge Knight, Mari Evans, and Sonia Sanchez, and it was based out of Detroit, a center of Black culture in the 1960s. But in addition to canonical Black Arts poets, the anthology included several white poets and a few Black poets who actively resisted Black Arts aesthetics, like Robert Hayden and Conrad Kent Rivers. And despite creating one of the first and most key presses of the Black Arts Movement, Randall was fundamentally opposed to one of the unifying

threads of the movement—the idea that aesthetic concerns flowed from political concerns, rather than the reverse.[12]

Yet despite the anthology's idiosyncrasy within the movement and non-canonical status, *For Malcolm* offers us a unique vantage point from which to consider the role that masculinity played within Black Arts Movement work, particularly in relation to a sense of political crisis characteristic of the movement. *For Malcolm* shows some of the ideas that would later animate both the Black Arts Movement and the Black Power movement as they were being initially articulated and hashed out. In this chapter, I will argue that poets' near-obsessive references to masculinity in *For Malcolm* do not function to valorize masculinity or patriarchy, as one might expect. Instead, the poets here redeploy a series of white supremacist constructions of black masculinity—black masculinity as threatening, as contagious, as reproductive, as transferable—as a metaphor for communicability. The poets both depict Black collectivity spreading and, in an extra-diegetic leap, incite the reader to catch the sense of collectivity that Malcolm X sparked. Where we might expect contagiousness to function as a metaphor for sexuality, sexuality functions as a metaphor for contagiousness. Ultimately, Black masculinity is a useful metaphor for the poets because it enables them to project a vision of a Black collectivity that is based on embodied presence rather than on the model of the liberal, Habermasian public sphere—a collectivity that does away altogether with the notion of abstracted, individualized subjects entering into rational discourse.

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[12] Randall's biographer, Melba Joyce Boyd, uses the following quote to demonstrate Randall's editorial philosophy: "I believe that a poet has the right to write as he or she wants to write and not as they are told. As long as the poetry moved me or other people, it could be published. I would accept poets on whether or not I liked their poetry, not so much on their political stances but on what I thought was their ability as poets" (Boyd 242).

II. Masculinity

Contributors come from a range of backgrounds: a poem by John Sinclair, the founder of the White Panther Party who espoused a sort of sex-drugs-rock 'n' roll revolutionary plan, precedes a poem by Amiri Baraka (then LeRoi Jones); the biographies in the back of the book identify a large number of new poets, and their poems appear alongside those of well-established poets Gwendolyn Brooks and Margaret Walker; Detroit is heavily represented, but does not dominate; an Afro-Russian poet's work is included in both Russian and English.[13] And the editors themselves observe in the book's introduction that "the styles vary from the clipped syllables of Gwendolyn Brooks and the glittering phrases of Robert Hayden, from the dense-packed images of Carmin Auld Goulbourne and Oliver LaGrone, to the experimental punctuation and phrasing of LeRoi Jones, John Sinclair, and Le Graham, and the hip dialect of Ted Joans and Etheridge Knight" (xxi). But for all the diversity of the writers, the poems' representations of Malcolm X circle around similar themes and images: Malcolm X's masculinity, blood, abstraction and concreteness, marking, black and white colors, and the idea of communicability or transferability. While the book is not at all homogeneous—each poet treats these themes and images somewhat differently—the repetition is remarkable.

The book also has the feel of being particularly crafted as an anthology. It is broken up into sections: "For Malcolm: The Life," "The Death," "The Rage," and "The Aftermath." The poems are not arranged by author, and even within individual sections, there might be multiple poems by the same author separated by other poems. Christine C. Johnson, Clarence Major, Ted Joans, James Worley, Etheridge Knight, Conrad Kent Rivers, Theodore Horne, Edward S. Spriggs, and Bobb Hamilton each have two or three poems in the anthology, and, most of the

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[13] Broadside Press generally published exclusively Black poets; *For Malcolm* was the only exception during this period. Later, the press would go on to publish Latin American poets.

time, these poems do not appear next to one another. Dudley Randall and Margaret G. Burroughs clearly pieced the book together with considerable attention to ordering, and the book feels all the more like a collaborative effort—and single work—because of the attention given.

The book's significant emphasis on masculinity begins in its introduction: Burroughs and Randall themselves observe and reinforce the role that masculinity will play in the rest of the book: "The theme which recurs in many of the poems, and which recalls the theme of Ossie Davis's preface, is that Malcolm was a man, in spite of white America's efforts to emasculate the Blackman" (xxi). They go on:

> There is no black man, regardless of his agreement or disagreement with Malcolm's politics, goals, or racial theories, whether he's a serf in Mississippi, a cat on the corner in Chicago, or a black bourgeois in Westchester, who didn't feel a stiffening of his spine and pride in his blackness when he saw or heard Malcolm take on all comers, and rout them. There are some who feel threatened by the taking of full manhood rights by the Blackman. Malcolm was a man, and for being a man he was murdered." (Xxi-xxii)

"The taking of full manhood rights by the Blackman" suggests that the anthology will fall into a problematic sort of strategic essentialism that Michele Wallace describes in *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*: a vision of Black sexuality based on white patriarchy, formed in response to internalized white supremacist ideas about Black sexuality, that views women as objects that Black men and white men fight over. (I rely on Wallace heavily in the pages that follow because her account of Black masculinity provides uniquely clarifying insights into *For Malcolm*.) Yet Burroughs and Randall's observation that the anthology appeals to diverse

audiences foreshadows a sort of crisis that plays out across the anthology, and masculinity's relationship to this crisis is more complicated than Burroughs and Randall suggest here.

Following the introduction is a preface by Ossie Davis, the actor and playwright who famously eulogized Malcolm X, and Davis's eulogy itself is printed in the back of the anthology.[14] The eulogy is entitled: "Eulogy of Malcolm X: 'Our Black Manhood…Our Black Shining Prince!…'" (ellipses in original). Davis expresses love for Malcolm X in a defensive mode:

> There are those who will consider it their duty, as friends of the Negro people, to tell us to revile him, to flee even from the presence of his memory, to save ourselves by writing him out of the history of our turbulent times. Many will ask what Harlem finds to honor in this stormy, controversial and bold young captain—and we will smile. Many will say turn away—away from this man, for he is not a man but a demon, a monster, a subverter and an enemy of the black man—and we will smile. They will say that he is of hate—a fanatic, a racist—who can only bring evil to the cause for which you struggle! And we will answer and say unto them: Did you ever talk to Brother Malcolm? Did you ever touch him, or have him smile at you? Did you ever really listen to him? Did he ever do a mean thing? Was he ever himself associated with violence or any public disturbance? For if you did you would know him. And if you knew him you would know why we must honor him: Malcolm was our manhood, our living black manhood! This was his meaning to his people. And, in honoring him, we honor the best in ourselves. (121)
> The eulogy ends emphasizing masculinity as well: "…And we shall know him then for

what he was and is—a Prince—our own black shining Prince!—who didn't hesitate to die, because he loved us so" (122).

The transition from "man" to "seed" and the description of Malcolm as a prince both suggest a specifically masculine *legacy*. The language of "black shining prince" occurs again and again in the book's poems, as do the defensiveness around Malcolm's legacy and the theme of a seed's having been planted. The preface, "Why I Eulogized Malcolm X," reinforces these

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[14] Manning Marable writes that "in subsequent decades [the eulogy] would dwarf everything else that occurred [on the day of Malcolm's funeral]" (458-9).

themes. Davis sets the preface up as a reply to a magazine editor who asked him why he had

eulogized Malcolm X and writes:

> You may anticipate my defense somewhat by considering the following fact: no Negro has yet asked me that question…Every one of the many letters I got from my own people lauded Malcolm as a man, and commended me for having spoken at his funeral.
>
> At the same time—and this is important—most all of them took special pains to disagree with much or all of what Malcolm said and what he stood for. That is, with one singing exception, they all, every last, black, glory-hugging one of them, knew that Malcolm—whatever else he was or was not—**Malcolm was a man!** White folks do not need anybody to remind them that they are men. We do! This was his one incontrovertible benefit to his people. (xxxiii-xxiv)

In all of these documents, Malcolm is virtually defined by his masculinity, and masculinity

seems to actually stand in as a fetish for politics or religion. One might expect Malcolm to be

remembered for his religious work in the Nation of Islam, or for his work with the Organization

of Afro-American Unity or Muslim Mosque Incorporated afterward.[15] Instead, Davis remembers

that Malcolm was a man—and suggests that this masculinity takes the place of any number of

more tangible and seemingly relevant accomplishments.[16]

Many Black feminist scholars have suggested that admiration and canonization of

Malcolm X often plays a reactionary role in allegedly-progressive political projects.[17] And the

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[15] The OAAU was short-lived due to a lack of organization, but it still seems surprising that it did not attract more of Malcolm X's followers and more people, like many of the poets here, who were moved by his death and preferred his later politics to the Nation of Islam.

[16] Robin D. G. Kelley reminds us that a particular use of the word "man" was also a hallmark of the zoot suit culture that Malcolm was a part of in his youth. Zoot suiters "made a fetish of calling each other 'man'" "in a world where whites commonly addressed them as boy" (Kelley 166). "Man," was a cultural rebuttal to "boy," the response to white obsession with Black masculinity. Kelley's account reminds us of the context for strategic essentialism that lauds Black masculinity. White denial of Black masculinity permeated even the language of address.

[17] Wallace writes that "Malcolm was the supreme black patriarch" (37) and argues that the Black Power Movement embraced a Black Macho image. In Wallace's account, Black Macho involves the active resentment of Black women, viewing them as an overly-masculine, castrating force. Black Macho also involves a preference for white women and figures white women as passive and properly feminine possessions of white men. Black Macho was a sort of retort to and

sometimes prominent focus on masculinity in the Black Arts Movement would seem to be part

of the Black Macho ethos that Wallace describes.[18] While I have no interest in defending the

homophobia and misogyny of some of the poems of the movement, I think it is worth thinking

through the multiple ways that images of masculinity function in the Black Arts Movement.

Davis describes (apparently pervasive) disagreement among African Americans over Malcolm

X's politics. Yet the fact that Malcolm X "[reminded]" them that they were men was Malcolm

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extension of an image of an idealized masculine patriarch—embodied by Malcolm X and associated with a protective attitude toward Black women. Both the macho image and the patriarchal image, Wallace suggests, reflected the Moynihan report and internalized white projections of Black sexuality. While Wallace does not say much about Malcolm X as a historical figure, she believes the circulation of his image to be the other side of the Black Macho coin, as well as its immediate predecessor. Over a decade later, Barbara Ransby and Tracye Matthews offered a similar assessment of 90s "Malcomania" and Spike Lee's Malcolm X biopic in relation to some rap music, writing that in popular discourse "Malcolm is the strong, redemptive Black patriarch and Ice Cube is the warrior Black pimp" (61-2). And Nikol Alexander-Floyd's 2003 assessment of Wallace's book discusses the Million Man March in relation to *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* and argues that the Million Man March deployed the patriarchal side of the Black Macho coin (183). Wallace's assessment of the Black Power Movement remains relevant both in terms of contemporary political commentary about Black families and in terms of how literary scholars think about the Black Arts Movement.
[18] Wallace's broader take on the Black Power Movement is that frustrations with the repression of the Civil Rights Movement led many Black men to give up on the larger vision of the movement and instead settle for taking a symbolic possession of white men: white women. Wallace writes of "the black man": "He pursued the white woman though it might mean, and had meant, his life, because he understood that she was a piece of the white man's property that he might actually obtain. He turned his back on the white man and degraded the black woman because that produced much faster and surer effects than a sit-in at GM" (48). In Wallace's view, the Black Power Movement (and ethos of the late 60s and early 70s) was wrapped up in a misogynistic definition of what Black liberation might be. Malcolm X was not indicative of this; instead he stood for an earlier notion of what Black patriarchy looked like. But he was vital to the notion that developed. She writes: "Stokely Carmichael, as media figure and America's new sex symbol, was the embodiment of the impending revolution, but Malcolm X was its lifeblood; without him revolution would have been unthinkable. He was the dream. White men may speak of Martin Luther King with misty eyes but to black men, at least black men under thirty-five, King represented a glaring impossibility—a dream of masculine softness and beauty, an almost feminine man—and they took his murder as the final warning to rally to the other side: Men must be hard, knock down whoever is in their way, and take what they want 'by any means necessary'" (37). (It is, however, worth noting that in the introduction to the current edition of *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*, Wallace distances herself from her original text and downplays the assessment of the Black Power Movement that I describe here.)

X's "one incontrovertible benefit to his people." Davis's general overstating of the case, the fact that women seem to be addressed by Malcolm X as well as men (unlike in the ethos that Wallace describes), and the conjunction here of diversity of political views and masculinity suggests that masculinity here operates symbolically.

While Wallace makes a convincing case that many people involved in the Black Power movement, the Black Arts Movement, and in particular forms of Black nationalism absorbed white ideas about Black gender roles, this chapter traces in *For Malcolm* a distinctively Black masculinity that I will argue is a good deal more peculiar and more productive than the Black patriarch figure that Malcolm X embodies in other cultural contexts. Wallace writes that "white men were perversely obsessed with the black man's genitals but the obsession turned out to be a communicable disorder" (73). In her view, the Black Power movement simply mirrored back what whites had been saying about Blacks for decades: that Black male sexuality was a threat to white womanhood, that Blacks were equal to their sexuality, and so on. In *For Malcolm*, though, masculinity comes to stand in for communicability itself, rather than simple obsession. That is, Black male sexuality is conceived of as threatening in part because it is conceived of as a means of reproducing Black sociality, and in part because masculinity is generally conceived of as power.[19] Black male sexuality, Wallace points out, is figured as inherently threatening to the white supremacist power structure:

> On one level, the emotional, hysterical level and the level on which most powerless white men react, white men feared the black man's sexual dexterity, the black man's sexual appeal, and the black man's attraction for the white woman. But on another level, on the level at which actual power changes hands, white men feared the black man's penis as the starting point of black families, of the

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[19] Patricia Hill Collins makes a similar point about the formation of white sexuality around black sexuality: racism and heterosexism, she says, each use binary logics that rely on a normal/deviant binary (237). "For racism," she writes, "the point of deviance is created by a normalized White heterosexuality that depends on a deviant Black heterosexuality to give it meaning" (238).

strength of numbers, of the perpetuation of the race, and the resourcefulness gained from centuries of oppression. (72)

Richard Dyer, in theorizing whiteness and film, suggests something similar—that sexuality (of any sort) is perceived as a threat to whiteness, both because of the possibility of miscegenation and because sexuality itself is coded as black (Dyer 23). In both of these formulations, sexuality is contagious, the thing that allows blackness to spread. [20] *For Malcolm*, though, is not a meditation on sexuality so much as it is a meditation on political organization. While poem after poem focuses on Malcolm's masculinity, masculinity here is not an end in itself. Instead, the poets of *For Malcolm* deploy sexuality as a strategic metaphor for communicability—the communicability of revolutionary political affect. That is, these poems *are* about masculinity at one level, but the true topic is contagiousness. Black masculinity is relevant here because it has been figured as a contagion within white supremacy. The *For Malcolm* authors redeploy this association as a means to speculate on contagiousness and how a group can build power.

Sexuality here addresses a problem fundamental to social movements: a collective mood such as the one so strongly evoked by Malcolm X does not necessarily correlate to actual political organization.[21] It is worth pausing here for a moment to consider what we mean by "mood" and "affect." Here I follow Jonathan Flatley's description of revolutionary counter-

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[20] Marlon B. Ross puts the problem another way: writing about racial discourse of rape, castration, and metaphor, Ross notes that in white-supremacist patriarchy, "women, black or white, mediate racial combat by being made the targeted spoils, imaginary or real, of the other race's men" (Ross 314). What's curious, though, is that actual systemic rape of Black women gets metaphorically extended to men: in an "unspoken act of metonymy," "black men, rather than women, become the improper tokens of the other race's raping desire" (Ross 314).

[21] Here and throughout, I use the term "affect" simply to denote an analytic category. While "emotion" tends to suggest an "inside out" model in which an individual has an emotion at a personal and isolated level (and can then project that emotion out to the world in some way), "affect" connotes emotion considered socially. Emotions are always interactive, formed out of a dialectical relationship. I use "affect" to distinguish this version of feelings from the individualized version called to mind by "emotion."

moods, a description he develops through Heidegger's work on moods and counter-moods: mood, or "attunement" is "the overall atmosphere or medium in which our thinking, doing, and acting occurs" (503). Flatley writes:

> Only within a mood or by way of mood can we encounter things in the world as mattering to us. In an important sense, a mood creates our world at a give moment. Thus, in some moods collective political action might not even enter one's consciousness except as something impossible, futile, foolish, or obscure. But then, with a shift in mood, organized political resistance all of a sudden seems obvious, achievable, and vital, and it makes urgent and complete sense to storm the Winter Palace, to occupy Wall Street, or to strike.

Mood here, and affect more generally, is not pre-discursive emotion (as it is described by Teresa Brennan or Ruth Leys). Affect is not volitional and not reducible to cognition—but at the same time, affects *can* be contested, influenced, or interrupted (Flatley 505). Art and literature (as well as any number of other texts) created out of social movements may often register these shifts in mood or attempt to create such shifts. Attention to art that seeks an active role in social movements can help us understand the affective dimensions of social movements—an area that has often been ignored.

While Flatley explores how a shift in mood led to the formation of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in Detroit, I explore a somewhat more anxiety-ridden phenomenon. It seems that for many people, Malcolm X symbolized the possibility of a Black collectivity. *For Malcolm* indicates the mood—an orientation toward Black collectivity—that Malcolm X left when he died. But the book also reveals the extent to which that mood involved an attachment to Malcolm X's physical body. *For Malcolm*, as a text that gathers numerous writers together, can constitute some version of collectivity. But it cannot constitute actual on-the-ground political organization—and if it could, it is not clear what its political beliefs would be. The book does not suggest a fully-formed counter-mood. Instead, it reveals the difference

between affective response to Malcolm X as a symbol of Black collectivity and on-the-ground organization. Malcolm X's physical body operates as the link between an imagined collectivity and practical organization.

The question of the nature of the very possibility of Black collectivity animates the Black Arts Movement more generally, as Phillip Brian Harper and others have noted. Furthermore, any revolutionary movement, but particularly revolutionary movements waged by people of color, women, or other minorities, is tasked with articulating a vision of collectivity other than the dominant liberal public sphere model. The liberal public sphere model relies on a disembodiment of the subject, with whiteness "[masquerading] as racelessness" and masculinity taken as "the norm" (Collins 237). This model of the public sphere is not one that foments the formation of Black collectivities. As the visual artist and essayist Glenn Ligon puts it, "even if race is just one more costume to wear, when black folks try to change for the next act, the zipper always seems to stick" (14). That is, liberal public sphere models tend to make African Americans invisible as a group at the political level at the same time as they encourage discrimination based on race at the level of lived, embodied experience. Because traditional liberal politics work by bracketing Blackness at a formal level (and thereby ignoring racism that is not explicitly codified as such), successful Black political organization requires an emphasis on embodiment. Embodiment is what is omitted elsewhere, and a politics that refutes liberal public sphere models must be *about* the bodily in some sense. *For Malcolm* is able to provide a model of a Black collective as it explores the question of communicability. Additionally, the joint emphasis on communicability and embodiment re-forges the question asked in many Black Arts Movement texts: who can be part of a Black collective, and how do differences, particularly class differences, come into play? Sexuality here is embodiment and contagion, and the best political subjects are those who are

open to this embodiment and contagion—those most receptive. In *For Malcolm*, then, the idealized political subject is not the patriarch figure, but the person who is most open to a transferable collective mood, a distinctly feminized figure. The valorization of femininity (as a trait anyone of any gender might have) would seem to stand in contradiction to the book's apparently-normative valorization of masculinity. But the masculinity that Davis valorizes in his preface and eulogy was, perhaps, the most available metaphor for a revolutionary Black collectivity—a collectivity that must overcome the political, aesthetic, and class differences that *For Malcolm* also registers. This is not to say that masculinity is only a metaphor for something else. Rather, masculinity sits at the crux of several related threads. White supremacy has historically sought to simultaneously emasculate Black men and tag Black men as hypersexual as a way of dehumanizing Black people; Malcolm X's particular performance of gender—his affective presence and his mix of defiance and skill at traditional public-sphere masculine performance—made him a symbol of non-apologetic Blackness. But his masculinity in this book is also bound the question of communicability.

The anthology's first poem is by Gwendolyn Brooks, who had recently allied herself with the Black Arts Movement (Smethurst 48). Here is Brooks's poem "Malcolm X," which is dedicated to Dudley Randall, in its entirety:

> Original.
> Hence ragged-round,
> Hence rich-robust.
>
> He had the hawk-man's eyes.
> We gasped. We saw the maleness.
> The maleness raking out and making guttural the air
> And pushing us to walls.
>
> And in a soft and fundamental hour
> A sorcery devout and vertical
> Beguiled the world.

He opened us—
Who was a key.

Who was a man. (3)

Brooks does not simply emphasize masculinity here; masculinity seems to be the main content of the poem. The somewhat mysterious first stanza describes Malcolm X, then the poem proceeds to a falconry metaphor: "He had the hawk-man's eyes. / We gasped. / We saw the maleness" (lines 3-5). The metaphor is odd and inconsistent—initially Malcolm X's eyes are simply like the eyes of a falconer, but the "maleness" comes to take the place of the hawk or falcon.

The poem goes on to describe a "we" gasping at maleness. That Brooks uses the word "maleness" rather than "masculinity" suggests that the word is a euphemism for "penis." The "maleness" rakes out and "[makes] guttural the air." ("Rake out" is the term that cements the falconry metaphor. Falconers say that hawks "rake out" when they fly too far away from their masters.) A guttural sound is one that is made in the back of the throat—so the notion of raking out has to do with the breaching of a boundary and the notion of the guttural has to do with depth in the oral cavity of the throat, as well as the association with harsh sounds. (Additionally, the throat and the vagina are linked and considered as parallel entry points into the female body in a variety of literary texts and films (Clover 79)).

So Malcolm X's masculinity, in the physical form of his penis, pushes the "us" to boundaries. Malcolm X's "vertical" sorcery in a "soft" hour vaguely suggests sexual penetration as well. In this image Malcolm X's "maleness" is breaking boundaries, exceeding the reach of the falconer (Malcolm X himself), breaching an opening, altering the nature of the air, and either pushing the "us" (which I take to refer to Black America) to boundaries and/or pinning the us

against a wall. Gasping is a noise associated with surprise or fear, and the gasping seems to be in response *to* the maleness. "Pushing us to walls" evokes violence, and the "vertical" in "A sorcery devout and vertical" suggestions an erection. The poem closes with an explicitly coital image: "He opened us—Who was a key. // Who was a man." So, the mixed metaphors of the poem simultaneously suggest Malcolm X pushing African Americans to break new, arguably *political* boundaries through his own breaking of boundaries, with his political charisma and organizing work as the key, and Malcolm X sexually penetrating the larger African American community with a "maleness" that is detached from his being, "opening" the community, disseminating revolutionary affect. Here, it is not Malcolm X's *ideas* that pushed boundaries, but his embodied masculinity. Furthermore, the penetration is an unlocking, and the more general gloss of the poem—this is a tribute to Malcolm X, who changed the character of African American culture—suggests that the collective speaker regains masculinity via Malcolm X. Thus the act of penetration depends on the femininity of the speaker, and articulates the femininity of the speaker, but also changes it. Brooks' poem presents Malcolm X's masculinity as transferable to others—to the feminine "we" of the poem—through sexuality. Masculine sexuality is the means through which African American culture can become—what? Masculinity seems to be means here rather than end; the goal is to be "opened." The ambiguity of the final lines—does "who was a key / who was a man" refer to "he" or to "us"?—reinforces the idea of incorporation. The slippage places the ultimate focus of the poem on masculinity as dissemination and idealizes the recipient.

The reactionary masculinist thread of Black politics—exemplified by the Million Man March, or Bill Cosby's politics, or by some of the beliefs of the Nation of Islam—sees properly normative families as an end in themselves. Here and throughout *For Malcolm*, though, the

question is one of opening, communicability, and revolutionary collectivity. In addition, though, the penis here seems to be detached from Malcolm X's physical body: it rakes out, moves away from the body, as it disseminates. There is a tension here between masculinity, associated with the penis as phallus, and a certain transferability of the penis itself. The contagion of Black masculinity fits into Judith Butler's description of the lesbian phallus: the *masculine* phallus cannot help but indicate its difference from the penis (since a symbol cannot be the same as that which it signifies (Butler 83).[22] Therefore, the lesbian phallus "furthers a crisis in the sense of what it means to 'have' one [a penis] at all" (89). The detachability of the penis in Brooks's poem similarly destabilizes the masculine metaphors. This is perhaps because Malcolm X is dead. If Malcolm X's ideas are to be disseminated, and this dissemination must occur via Malcolm X's embodied masculinity, we must change our notion of how, exactly, that embodied masculinity works if we are to have much hope. If Lacanian psychoanalysis requires the phallus to symbolize the wholeness of the body (Butler 89), the phallus here is instead one that has the transferability and plasticity of the lesbian phallus. Malcolm X's death requires it, if Malcolm X was a sort of controlling signifier of a jumbled, detached *potential* collectivity. The gap between what Malcolm X symbolized (a coherent Black nationalist collectivity) and actual African Americans (not adherent to any one philosophy and with no common link other than the experience of discrimination) reveals Malcolm X's "maleness" here to be a sort of phantasm or potentiality, and thus the gendered metaphors can never really operate in the usual heteronormative way.

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[22] More specifically, Butler writes: "The phallus *symbolizes* the penis; and insofar as it symbolizes the penis, retains the penis as that which it symbolizes, it *is* not the penis. To be the object of symbolization is precisely not to be that which symbolizes" (83).

III. Crises in Social Movements

Malcolm X left a confusing and mixed legacy for his supporters, and the question that circulates throughout *For Malcolm* is 'now that Malcolm X is gone, what do we do?' As Manning Marable observes, "from the moment of [Malcolm X's] murder, widely different groups, including Trotskyists, black cultural nationalists, and Sunni Muslims, claimed him" (8). Furthermore, the Nation of Islam was an odd mix of religious organization and political organization (or, in Marable's account, a religious organization thrust into the political because of the time period (11)). When Malcolm X broke with the Nation of Islam, he moved away from a conservative religious organization—but in changing his Black nationalist politics to something that was (sometimes anyway) inclusive of whites, Malcolm X seemed to soften his politics. His politics after the break with the Nation were both less conservative and more conservative at the same time, thus leaving a strange legacy. And the organizations that Malcolm X did leave were not well-organized (Marable 460). Marable observes: "Neither the OAAU nor the MMI [Muslim Mosque Inc.] had cultivated procedures of collective decision making, and without Malcolm, the weak bonds that had held the groups together came apart…collective leadership was the desired goal," but people deferred to Malcolm X (460).

So on the one hand, there were crises of leadership in the MMI and the OAAU after Malcolm X died. Even more significantly, though, most people influenced and affected by Malcolm X had nothing to do with either of those organizations. After Malcolm X's break with the Nation, his politics were not consistent, and most of the people who admired Malcolm X had never *followed* his politics, exactly. Malcolm X projected a vision of a Black collectivity that did not exist in any organizational structure—so what he symbolized was a collectivity that did not, in fact, exist. Eldridge Cleaver wrote of Malcolm:

The Black Muslim movement was destroyed the moment Elijah cracked the whip over Malcolm's head, because it was not the Black Muslim movement itself that was so irresistibly appealing to the true believers. It was the awakening of twenty million Negroes which was so compelling. Malcolm X articulated their aspirations better than any other man of our time. When he spoke under the banner of Elijah Muhammad he was irresistible. When he spoke under his own banner he was irresistible. If he had become a Quaker, a Catholic, or a Seventh-Day Adventist, or a Sammy Davis-style Jew, and if he had continued to give voice to the mute ambitions in the black man's soul, his message would still have been triumphant: because what was great was not Malcolm X but the truth he uttered." (59).

As sexist as some of Cleaver's other writing in *Soul On Ice* may be, Cleaver gets at something important here. What precisely Cleaver means by "the truth he uttered" is not clear—since it would not be the truth of Islam or Catholicism or Judaism. What Cleaver refers to seems to be more a collective mood: the "mute ambitions in the black man's soul," with "the black man" as both singular and a group—even Cleaver's word choice and syntactical choices here suggest a pulling together of individual experience into collective, publicly acknowledged experience. And "the truth he uttered" also seems to be about numbers—"the awakening of twenty million Negroes." Cleaver's point here may seem circular. Cleaver is suggesting that what was so compelling, that is, what drew people to Malcolm X, was that Malcolm X drew so many people to him. But Cleaver seems to be in line with many of the poets in *For Malcolm* here, as well as with many other commentators on Malcolm X. Malcolm X was so compelling because he signified a Black collectivity—a Black collectivity that *did not really exist* in any practical, organization sense. That collectivity, here and in *For Malcolm*, is attached to Malcolm X as a specific, embodied individual rather than to any particular political ideology.

After Malcolm X died, then, his legacy was an open question. Malcolm's physical body seemed so central to the nascent political collectivity still forming around him that tension bubbled up even in the promotional activities for *For Malcolm*. In February of 1967, several

months before *For Malcolm* would actually appear, the Detroit branch of the Socialist Workers Party hosted a Friday Night Socialist Forum memorializing Malcolm X (Breitman). Dudley Randall brought a group of poets to read from *For Malcolm*. The Reverend Albert Cleage, a former Freedom Now Party activist who had worked with Malcolm X and at the time was beginning to form the Black nationalist Christian movement, delivered a talk entitled "Myths About Malcolm X." Cleage's talk essentially argued that in the time since Malcolm X's death, white socialists and others had tried to reinterpret Malcolm X's significance through misconstruing some confused statements he had made toward the end of his life. Cleage argued that Malcolm X's famous "Message to the Grassroots" speech was his "last will and testament" (Cleage) and described the myth of an integrationist Malcolm X as something that Black people should work to debunk. Three weeks later, George Breitman, a white member of the Socialist Workers Party who had done extensive work in getting Malcolm X's speeches into print, gave a talk at the Friday Night Socialist Forum. The talk was a response to Cleage and it too was called "Myths About Malcolm X." Breitman argued that while Malcolm X was by no means an integrationist (since he believed Black people needed to build their own movement before uniting with whites with similar interests), one could not excise the last year of Malcolm's life from Malcolm's legacy. Tension and heated debate about Malcolm X's legacy continues to this day—Manning Marable's much-awaited biography, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*, occasioned many critical responses, including a volume titled *A Lie of Reinvention: Correcting Manning Marable's Malcolm X*, for instance. Malcolm X's particular history left his legacy open to a particularly wide range of interpretations.

Malcolm X was a key figure for both Black Power and the Black Arts Movement, beyond just the Broadside Press anthology. Phillip Brian Harper has observed a tendency toward

political crisis in the Black Arts Movement more generally. While the canonical poems of the Black Arts Movement make clear that the white establishment is the enemy, they do *not* generally articulate a political path forward, substituting instead a division between a masculine, and properly Black *I* and a *you* that is accused of not being properly masculine or properly Black (Harper 41-53). That is, Harper suggests that notions of Black masculinity mediate a political crisis inherent to Black nationalism. Since Black nationalism does not necessitate any particular political project—it could refer to the Black capitalism of Garvey or the Leninism of the Black Panther Party or the League of Revolutionary Black Workers or the cultural nationalism of Maulana Karenga—a sense of anxiety and crisis continually accompanies Black Arts work. Harper argues that many of the canonical poems of the Black Arts Movement crystallize this anxiety in their uses of *I* and *you*, and that while the poems explicitly address a Black audience, their enunciation actually suggests a white audience, plus a Black audience that *overhears* the poems.

This sense of crisis is particularly acute in *For Malcolm*. And while Harper describes the canonical Black Arts Movement poems that he reads as indicating social division within the Black Arts Movement—division between a masculine and politically conscious *I* and a feminized and politically naïve *you*—the most common division in *For Malcolm* is between Malcolm X and a feminized, politically naïve *we*. That is, the book's subject—Malcolm X— forces a shift in Black Arts Movement constructions of masculinity, emphasizing not the femininity of whites or "Negroes" as opposed to "Blacks," but the overwhelming masculinity and political potency of Malcolm X. As Harper observes, many of the canonical poems of the Black Arts Movement strike an accusatory note in their relationship to implicit Black readers. This dynamic is present in specific poems in *For Malcolm*. Amiri Baraka's "A Poem for Black

Hearts" focuses on Malcolm X rather than on a politically conscious *I*. But the you is the one that Harper describes:

> For all of him, and all of yourself, look up,
> black man, quit stuttering and shuffling, look up,
> black man, quit whining and stooping, for all of him,
> For Great Malcolm a prince of the earth, let nothing in us rest
> until we avenge ourselves for his death, stupid animals
> that killed him, let us never breathe a pure breath if
> we fail, and white men call us faggots till the end of
> the earth. (Pages 61-62, lines 20-27)

The focus here is not on Malcolm X's body (as it is in many of the other poems in *For Malcolm*), but on the black *you*, who the speaker accuses of stuttering and shuffling. The *we* here needs to avenge Malcolm X, rather than simply be open to Malcolm X's contagious mood.

We can contrast Baraka's poem—typical of the Black Arts Movement's way of indexing social division and crisis as described by Harper—with two poems by Theodore Horne and one by Raymond Patterson in *For Malcolm*. Each of these poems crystallizes the recurrent theme of communicability that circulates throughout the book, and Baraka's poem turns out to be an outlier. Raymond Patterson's "At That Moment" (69) begins:

> When they shot Malcolm Little down
> On the stage of the Audubon Ballroom,
> When his life ran out through bullet holes
> (Like the people running out when the murder began)
> His blood soaked the floor
> One drop found a crack through the stark
> Pounding thunder—slipped under the stage and began
> Its journey: burrowed through concrete into the cellar,
> Dropped down darkness, exploding like quicksilver (Lines 1-9)

The poem then goes on to describe Malcolm X's blood as "a thousand fiery seeds" (line 16) traveling throughout the city, into the "pipes and powerlines, the mains and cables" (line 15). The poem closes with these lines:

> At that moment,

> Those who drank water where he entered. . .
> Those who cooked food where he passed . . .
> Those who burned light while he listened . . .
> Those who were talking as he went, knew he was water
> Running out of faucets, gas running out of jets, power
> Running out of sockets, meaning running along taut wires—
> To the hungers of their living. It was said
> Whole slums of clotted Harlem plumbing groaned
> And sundered free that day, and disconnected gas and light
> Went on and on and on. . .
> They rushed his riddled body on a stretcher
> To the hospital. But the police were too late.
> It had already happened. (Lines 17-30, ellipses in original)

A few things are striking here. First, an emphasis on Malcolm X's physicality is completely merged with an emphasis on how something of him spreads. We're not given a picture of people mourning Malcolm X's body, for instance. The poem takes place in the interval between when Malcolm X was shot and when he died. Malcolm X's blood acts as a conduit for potential political wins ("Stop utility shut offs!") or perhaps simply a projection of a world in which African Americans do not experience poverty or ghettoization. Malcolm X is also depicted as satisfying "the hungers of their living," which highlights the incorporation metaphor here—Malcolm X does not simply touch people or improve lives and move on; rather, those he encounters consume him and incorporate him into their being.

What is particularly curious, though, is that this effect only seems to work while Malcolm X is still alive. His blood leaves his body—as Malcolm X's penis seems to detach from his body in Gwendolyn Brooks's opening poem—and has its effects on people, but the poem's last lines do not imply that this effect continues. Instead, the poem ends on the note of his death. At the same time, though, X's death has already happened at the end of the poem: "…But the police were too late. / It had already happened." The confusing temporalities here suggest a sense of crisis about *how* exactly—through what conduit—Malcolm X will leave a political legacy. And

it is the occasion of Malcolm X's death that allows his legacy to spread widely, even as Horne's speaker worries that the legacy may simply end *with* Malcolm X's death.

Not long after Malcolm X's murder in the Audobon, Amiri Baraka wrote: "Malcolm's greatest contribution was to preach Black Consciousness to the Black Man. Now we must find the flesh of our spiritual creation" (qtd. in Marable 481). Baraka, along with Patterson, makes clear that a sense of revolutionary collectivity can exist where no practical revolutionary ability exists. Maurice Charland has pointed out that the formation of political subjects is not a matter of persuasion so much as interpellation (134). One is not persuaded to become part of a Black revolutionary collective; rather, one is interpellated into the collective "through a process of identification in rhetorical narratives" (134). *For Malcolm* shows, though, that there are gaps between the rhetorical constitution of collective political subjectivity, the affective constitution of collective political subjectivity, and the ability to *politically* function as a collective. The affective dimensions may flow from political work—cross-racial solidarity achieved over the course of a strike, for instance—or rhetorical work might hit an affective nerve and prompt political action. Or an acting political collective might form with differing and competing affective dimensions, as was often the case with regional Occupy movements (where affect was hinged to individual senses of the national movement). Getting the various dimensions of collectivity to line up is part of political struggle, a challenge to writers like Baraka and Horne as well as to Black Power activists more broadly. Stokely Carmichael, for one, admonished in 1966: "We have to say, 'Don't play jive and start writing poems after Malcolm is shot.' We have to move from the point where the man left off and stop writing poems" (qtd. in Harper 51), echoing Baraka but also explicitly turning away from artistic and rhetorical gestures. As Carmichael suggests, embodied physical presence cannot sustain a social movement on its own;

movements that exist only at the level of rhetoric or affect are not movements at all. Malcolm X's body here is a fetish for multiple things: embodied presence in social movements (presence that can strike, for instance, or wage war); the embodied presence that is affixed to African American bodies and bracketed in the Habermasian public sphere; and, at the same time, the affective and phantasmatic link between a rhetorical Black collectivity and an organized, embodied one.

IV. Possession, the Public Sphere, and Revolutionary Affect

A poem by Theodore Horne, included in the section "The Aftermath," further demonstrates Malcolm X's strange role. "Malcolm Exsiccated" begins by suggesting that the speaker was previously suspicious of Malcolm X's ideas:

> No sooner than I heard them holler out in Harlem,
> The well is dry, did I crave a drink from it . . .
> I remember I used to spurn it when it brimmed—
> pointing out how rife it was with impurities,
> choosing the well-distilled—and dearer—libations.
> I waited for it to settle, which it seemed to be doing,
> gradually becoming much clearer and more enticing.
> Frankly impressed that it refreshed so many others,
> I often approached a pail that passed before me,
> poised a dipper to take a draught, then put it off. (Lines 1-10)

Horne echoes Ossie Davis's sentiment in the preface. As in Davis's account of a larger public's relationship to Malcolm X, the speaker admires Malcolm X without subscribing to his political views. "I waited for it [the well] to settle, which it seemed to be doing" (line 6) indicates that the speaker was less interested in the Nation of Islam's views than he was in the political views that Malcolm X espoused after his break with Elijah Muhammad and his trip to Mecca. That the text references this break so explicitly is noteworthy, since contributors include at least one member of the Nation as well as whites. That is, part of the tension of the book is precisely the

"settl[ing]" that the speaker refers to, and this is one of the few points at which that settling is explicitly mentioned.

Horne chooses to use thirst and a well as the metaphors here. Malcolm X was, in this metaphor, a particularly refreshing well, rumored to be an oasis: "Was it really the oasis they said it was? / Though I thought not, now I will never know" (lines 12-3). What's particularly striking here is the "now I will never know." Up until this point, we may well have been talking about Malcolm X's ideas. The speaker was intrigued but had some disagreements. He was struck that so many people latched onto those ideas and took inspiration from them. Malcolm X was a well of ideas, and now that he is dead, the well is dry—so he will produce no more new ideas. This all makes sense—but if the speaker will never know if "it" was "really the oasis they said it was," then the speaker cannot be referring principally to Malcolm X's ideas. If so, why not go back and read some of the published speeches, talk to people who had been involved in the Organization of Afro-American Unity, read the autobiography, and so on? The fact that the "well" is now dry and completely inaccessible to the speaker means that the speaker is not referring to Malcolm X's ideas, but his physical form. Or, to be more precise, the poem suggests here that Malcolm X's ideas were bound to his physical form: the speaker cannot imagine the life of the ideas apart from the life of Malcolm X. This is odder still when we consider the discussion of distillation and impurities: the speaker must be referring to Malcolm X's thinking here (not his physical presence), but whatever is referenced is now inaccessible. The poem continues:

> Perhaps a mere sip might have been something to savor…
> Now, with fancied unquenchable thirst, afire with the regrets
> of an inferno-fated spectre, I creep to the wall of the well
> and peer into its pitch-black depth at a desert;
> sand stopples my throat, and froth unparts my lips. (Lines 14-18)

Considering the subject at hand, this imagery is quite striking. The speaker has an unquenchable thirst—that apparently cannot be satisfied by taking up Malcolm X's political ideas or affiliating himself with a nationalist group of some sort. What the speaker wants has to do not with Malcolm X's politics, but with his physical being—and the speaker suffers like a person damned to hell for not having access to it.

Here Malcolm X as water should be ingested, incorporated into one's body. Part of the tension in the poem is the speaker's self-castigation for not having ingested Malcolm X as water earlier, or been open to Malcolm X's politics. The ideal political subject in *For Malcolm* is not one associated with masculine toughness, but one who is open to the contagion that is Malcolm X. The ideal subject opens him or herself to an illogical (if one doesn't agree with Malcolm X's politics) and revolutionary mood, and the mood changes the subject, brings her or him fully into a Black collectivity.

We can look across media and genre to other work that thematizes contagion and incorporation, and that operates in the realm of the weird: possession films, which took off right around the time of *For Malcolm*'s publication. These films, too, tend to thematize racial and gendered openness. Carol J. Clover's assessment of possession films in *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* offers some unique ways to understand *For Malcolm* and the way that *For Malcolm* conceives of contagion and incorporation in gendered and racialized terms. Just as "the drama of [possession films] … turns on the process of conversion: the shedding of disbelief, the acceptance of the mystical or irrational" (67), the drama of *For Malcolm* turns on the process of conversion: the disruption of skepticism about Malcolm X's espoused politics and the acceptance of the instance of Black collectivity that Malcolm X symbolized and spread.

In possession films, the possessed person is opened up—in a way that is sexually coded—to the possessing spirit (Clover 102). Clover describes the gender logic of possession and occult films: the possessed person, she says, is always a woman, or at least feminized; women are "[ports] of entry for the satanic" (71) "*Vulva*," Clover points out, "is related to *valve*—gate or entry to the body—and so it regularly serves for all manner of spirits" (76). There is also a usually-male character who witnesses the possession (Father Karras, the main priest in *The Exorcist*, for instance), and the film is ultimately more about the male's struggle to accept the possibility of the occult (over hard science) than it is about the possessed woman (Clover 85). We can see echoes of the same logic in the poems in *For Malcolm*. A second poem by Theodore Horne demonstrates. Here is the beginning of "There's Fire (For February 21)":

> Wonder why is it I still smell smoke?…
> I don't mean the odor of cinders
> issuing from so many blockheads' tempers,
> or that parched and pungent fume of eggheads
> and fatheads scrambled together—and neglected.
> Nor is it that stench of black and white
> passions ignited in a long hot summer—
> It is another sort of smoke—but not
> that of burning churches in Alabama,
> burning blackflesh way out in a wheatfield,
> burning whitepine crosses in a frontyard,
> or burning midtown mosques; it isn't quite
> that kind of smoke which just now smarts
> my eyes to tears, and smites my nose. (Lines 2-14, ellipses in original)

At this stage in the poem, the speaker implies that smoke is a metaphor for Malcolm X's legacy and that fire is a metaphor for something else—perhaps his physical being. The speaker feels the need to clarify what kind of smoke, since smoke is a loaded metaphor, given the history of white supremacist church bombings and cross-burnings. Smoke generally seems to waft in and out, across space and time, sometimes associated with individuals and other times with events, always with strong affective associations. And smoke, like Malcolm X's blood in Raymond

Patterson's poem and like pneuma of various sorts in horror films, is something that is taken into larger bodies and incorporated.

The speaker is ambivalent about Malcolm X's ideas and echoes the speaker's concern about "impurities" in "Malcolm Exsiccated." "The stench of passions ignited in a long hot summer" (lines 6-7) suggests smoke associated not with white supremacist oppression (as in the reference to cross-burnings) but with Black rebellion. "Long hot summers" refers to the rebellions that occurred throughout the mid-1960s in cities across the country. Mainstream accounts generally refer to these as race riots. "The stench of black and white / passions ignited in a long hot summer" depicts the riots negatively ("stench," and the fact that the speaker distinguishes the good smoke he smells from their smell). The lines also flatten the rebellions out into a vague, negative violence. The speaker views the rebellions, a crucial moment of the Black Power Movement, as negative, and seems to view the violent acts by oppressed African Americans as morally equivalent to the violent acts of oppressive white supremacists. The speaker's ambivalence is, to some extent, ambivalence about the entire project of the Black Power Movement. This skepticism is typical of the poems in *For Malcolm*. But the speaker goes on to distinguish the smoke he now smells:

> …it isn't quite
> that kind of smoke which just now smarts
> my eyes to tears, and smites my nose.
> What I smell is not unlike an incense
> yet stronger, stranger, and intoxicating.
> I knew a source of this aroma once,
> but that was snuffed out. He is cold…
> But how is it that I smell that smoke?
> I'm hoping where there's smoke—you know the saying. (Lines 12-20)

A few interesting things happen here in this closing. First, the speaker suggests that the smoke that symbolizes Malcolm X's legacy is of a different nature than the smoke mentioned earlier—

but the types of smoke the speaker distinguishes it from include both KKK cross-burning smoke and the smoke of Black rebellion against white power structures. This conflation means that whatever the speaker's describing, the sense of justice he articulates stands in stark contrast with the notion of Black self-defense that Malcolm X helped to popularize. The speaker goes on to describe the smoke that symbolizes the legacy of Malcolm X in rather bizarre terms: "not unlike an incense" and "stronger, stranger, and intoxicating." The language is associatively feminine.

The poem mourns Malcolm X and seeks something left of him after his death—a melancholic, ghostly, and weird project, to be sure. Clover's work clarifies some of the odder aspects of the poem. "Eggheads / and fatheads scrambled together" refers to smart or dimwitted versions of *masculinized* logic ("White Science" in Clover's terminology), and the smell that is "not unlike an incense / yet stronger, stranger, and intoxicating" is feminine ("Black Magic" in Clover's terminology). The poet's ambivalence and interest in traditional Western logic gives way to enthusiasm for Malcolm X and an interest in feminine magic toward the end.

While the anthology does not depict Malcolm X as monstrous—quite the opposite—it does depict the formation of a Black collectivity around him as something that requires a suspension of rational thought. Over and over, writers articulate their disagreement with Malcolm X's politics and simultaneous, illogical attraction to him. In horror, the possessed person is a separate character from the person who must undergo a transformation. There is the possessed woman, and there is the male observer who cannot help unless he gives up his belief in White Science—traditional logic—as explanatory. In *For Malcolm*, and possibly in other texts from the 60s that deal with political fervor and collectivity—the figure is collapsed into one, a political subject whose test is whether he or she can allow herself to be 'opened to' the political mood (which is embodied in a masculine figure). This connection between Black Magic in

horror and political fervor may even give us a way of understanding that odd scene in *The Exorcist* (1973) that shows Regan's mother, Chris MacNeil (played by Ellen Burstyn), acting for the movie that she is in Washington to film. Chris's character in the movie-within-the-movie is in the midst of a large protest for an undisclosed cause, and she leaps up to the front of the crowd to speak, then tells the crowd that you have to work within the system to get what you want. At face value, the scene does not resonate with the themes of the rest of *The Exorcist*. But perhaps there is a larger discursive context for questions of rationality and protest in this period, with elements of horror appearing in propaganda and horror movies themselves commenting mediating questions of political organization.

According to Clover, the proliferation of "white males, typically doctors…and…surgery, drugs, psychotherapy, and other forms of hegemonic science" in horror films represent Western rational tradition (66). Western rational tradition is one and the same with the idea of the Habermasian public sphere. The opposite, "Black Magic," is symbolized by

> satanism, voodoo, spiritualism … crosses, holy water, seances, candles, prayer,
>
> exorcism … and its inhabitants are blacks, Native Americans, mixed-race
>
> people…and third-world peoples in general, children, old people, priests,
>
> Transylvanians—but first and foremost women" (66).

Clover gets at the connection here between people of color and women in this particular cultural logic: both are excluded from rational public discourse and associated with a threatening alternative. They are not necessarily themselves the threatening alternative, but they are subject to invasion by it, particularly when they experience rage and pain (Clover 71), often due to inability to cope with a loss (Clover 73). Certainly, we can see how horror and social movement literature (particularly by women and people of color) might overlap: here pain and rage at

Malcolm X's death (and the daily experience of racism) leaves the speakers of the poems open, valves to a dangerous, irrational affective force that both actively rejects the public sphere model of political activism and poses a real threat to those who adhere to that model. Horror films also offer an available way of talking about return: most possession films end with a hint that it is actually not over, that the evil lives on and may resurface in the future (Clover 72), just as most of the poems here speculate on whether Malcolm X may live on in some form.

Many of these poems act almost as incantations. Edward S. Spriggs's "Stillborn Pollen Falling" (72-3) ends with the lines "The waters are rising / & the ritual begins again" (lines 12-3). The present perfect tense and the word "ritual" each suggest that the poem is performing a sort of resurrection of revolutionary affect itself. Another poem by Spriggs, "Berkeley's Blue Black" (74), references "[waiting] for the second coming / of MALCOLM" (lines 7-8). Etheridge Knight's "The Sun Came" also references the occult or gothic:

> The rays of red have pierced the deep, have struck
> The core. We cannot sleep.
> The shadows sing: Malcolm, Malcolm, Malcolm.
> The darkness ain't like before.
> The sun came, Miss Brooks.
> And we goofed the whole thing.
> I think.
> (Though ain't no vision visited my cell.) (Lines 11-8)

Knight's description of the "deep" piercing resonates with smoke and water's penetration of the body in Horne's poems and blood's penetration of the piping and utilities in Patterson's poem, as well as with Clover's description of possession in horror films. Knight's reference to Malcolm X's ghost in the final line further emphasizes the nature of the mistake: Malcolm X, the sun, came, and "our ears were not equipped / For the fierce hammering" (lines 5-6). Knight and other African Americans resisted the penetration, focusing too much on reasoning out and evaluating the arguments that Malcolm X was making, but now "…beneath the placid faces a

storm rages" (line 10). If the placid face is the previous, rational subject, this new subject that has been touched by Malcolm X is in a rage—out of control, unreasonable. And while the speaker specifies that no vision has visited him, even the mention of a vision seems to do the same work as those shots at the end of horror movies in which some small part or piece of the evil is revealed to still be lurking about.

Kent Foreman's "Sleep Bitter, Brother" (23) even directs Malcolm X *not* to rest peacefully:

> Keep fingers crossed when you give up the ghost,
> And strings attached; there's work for ghosts to do.
> Sleep bitter, brother, and at last provide
> Uneasy dust beneath a restless sod. (Lines 4-7)

Ted Joans's "True Blues for a Dues Payer" (25) refers to Malcolm X as "my soothsayer His Hipness Malcolm X / a true dues payer!" (lines 13-4), with "soothsayer" calling to mind the set of Black Magic associations that Clover refers to. Robert Hayden's poem "El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X): O masks and metamorphoses of Ahab, Native Son" (14-6) even makes reference to Malcolm X's prison nickname: Satan.

These brief bursts of horror and ghost story imagery begin to make sense when we consider that the horror story begins when modernity begins, since horror and uncanniness make sense only in the context of Enlightenment ideas (Miéville). The fantasy author and socialist activist China Miéville argues that Marxists generally ought to be materialists—but materialists with "chinks in their armor" that allow in fear, dread, and a sense of the uncanny (Miéville). A sense of possibility and potentiality necessary for political work resides in those chinks, despite the usual Marxist suspicion of anything unrealistic (Miéville). We can see a rejection of the public sphere model, as well as an invocation of the potentialities of dread, in *For Malcolm*'s turn to the supernatural.

Overall, *For Malcolm* makes a claim that, in order to succeed, political organization must not model itself off of the rational public discourse model that is the alleged (and exclusionary) basis for American politics. It also shows a conversion, though not *exactly* the one that Clover identifies in horror films. Here African Americans are convinced to give up their reliance on the notion of a rational public sphere, in which it makes sense to keep one's distance from Malcolm X if you disagree with some of his views, and open themselves up to contagious political affect, to the sense of Black collectivity that Malcolm X supernaturally inspired. As in horror films, the ideal figure for this opening is female or at least feminine. Possession films deal with "fertility and conception" (Clover 81) and, by association, to the birthing of social movements that are horrifying to the current power structure—social movements that, while not Satanic, would be in opposition to the rational public sphere model. And in the horror films, being too skeptical of Black Magic will get you killed, since you have no defenses if you continue to operate on the model of Western rationality, rather than accepting help from the priest or soothsayer or medium. And the writers in *For Malcolm* had good reason to undergo a conversion at this moment. While the Civil Rights Movement no doubt included diverse ideas about the public sphere model and rational discourse, in 1967, African Americans across the country were increasingly skeptical of nonviolent strategies and convinced that models assuming a rational opponent were doomed to failure—and, indeed, might get you killed. (Murders of Civil Rights activists were alarmingly frequent.) Through rage and pain about Malcolm X's murder, the writers here find an openness to the notion of collectivity.

V. Print as Embodiment

Clover also observes that possession films are invested in the physicality of women and that the films "[force] the 'physical presence' of a woman…to externalize its inner

workings,…to give a material account of itself" (82). Here too we find a parallel: the writers of *For Malcolm* emphasize the actual material quality of the book, forcing the act of reading to give a material account of itself. Recent work in American print cultures draws out a set of connections between print and the notion of the public sphere that goes far beyond the Habermasian narrative. Building on Nancy Fraser and Michael Warner's notions of "counter-public," Elizabeth Maddock Dillon asks:

> How might we define the shape and terms of participation in a public sphere not grounded in critical rationality, not grounded in an abstractive, negative relation to an embodied presence? Further, how might we understand such a public sphere in terms that are not merely oppositional with respect to existing, dominant accounts of the public sphere—that is, not simply defined in terms of illogic, nonspeech, nonsense, or sheer physical presence? (324-5)

I will argue here that *For Malcolm* is one attempt to answer, by example, the former question. I will also suggest that the second question may not be so pertinent. That is, at least in the case of the emerging Black Power Movement in 1967, simple negation was able to do a lot of affective work (perhaps less so in the period Dillon is writing about, the eighteenth century). The implicit goal in rejecting the public sphere model is not necessarily to form a better kind of sphere in its place.

I would suggest that we think of the public sphere not as an actually-existing formation so much as a key ideologeme within a liberal worldview. What I mean by 'public sphere' is not *precisely* Habermas's version, but simply the version of the public sphere that resides in popular discourse and consciousness. Regardless of *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* and regardless of the work by numerous scholars to make the public sphere a more useful analytic category, in our culture more broadly, the public sphere functions at the ideological level. Civil Rights Movement activists operated through some version of the public sphere, demonstrating that African Americans were being wronged and arguing through reason and

emotion, rather than force, for better treatment. The turn that we are concerned with here—the turn, via the figure of Malcolm X, to the Black Arts Movement and to Black Power—is a rejection of the public sphere ideologeme as dangerous and mistaken. The worldview that assumes that each individual acts based on reason and has an equal voice in things is, Black Power activists suggest, a dangerous one. In the context of social movements, it encourages activists to make what many in the Black Arts and Black Power movements considered strategic errors: trying to sway the cops, shifting social movements' efforts into electoral politics, or acting with the assumption that the movement simply needs to show that it has support, and the powers-that-be will have to respond. In this view, assuming that your opponents will act rationally and disinterestedly sets you up to fail—and perhaps to capitulate and make various concessions in order to demonstrate your side's rationality. For instance, if your opponent has an interest in keeping you disenfranchised regardless of what kinds of arguments you make, then your best course of action is to direct your energies not at your opponent, but toward the number of others who are also disenfranchised and recruit them to active resistance. At least, this is the argument that the Black Power movement would make, implicitly in its organizing strategies and sometimes explicitly as well, in relation to the Civil Rights Movement, which had a much less contentious relationship with ideologies of the public sphere. Stokely Carmichael's words in a 1967 speech are demonstrative:

> Dr. King's policy was that nonviolence *would* achieve the gains for Black people in the United States. His major assumption was that if you are nonviolent, if you suffer, your opponent will see your suffering and will be moved to change his heart. That's very good. He only made one fallacious assumption: in order for nonviolence to work, your opponent must have a conscience. The United States has none. (*The Black Power Mixtape*)

Carmichael's argument engages the public sphere ideologeme: in public sphere ideology, one can use an emotional or rational appeal to convince his "opponent" (a word that toes the line

between registering public sphere and Black Power ideologies here) to concede a point. Justice will ultimately prevail, since all actors in this fantasy are, in some fundamental way, neutral. (I myself do not mean to suggest that Civil Rights activists believed their detractors were neutral, merely that activists strategically chose to engage with mainstream white audiences *as though* they were a neutral public sphere.) Carmichael's argument that Black peoples' opponent has no conscious, and the fact that he names that opponent as the United States, suggests that Black Americans and their oppressors are diametrically opposed and unevenly matched, rather than neutral parties negotiating politics and making rational and emotional appeals to one another.

The very fact that this public sphere model asks political subjects to bracket their embodied selves also means that the model cannot serve well at the affective level for movements based around ending discrimination against African Americans or women. The public sphere does not need to be replaced by some other formation, as Dillon suggests. Rather, those who would be part of an African American collective aiming for concrete political gains need to replace any notions that the world operates in the way public sphere discourse says it does with an entirely different worldview, or way of interpreting events—perhaps a Black nationalist or a Marxist worldview (or a combination, as in the case of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, which would form shortly after the publication of *For Malcolm*). In either of these ways of looking at the world, an oppressing group and an oppressed group stand at fundamental odds with one another, and reason is inconsequential. While the idea of reason or logic doesn't get thrown out the window, it is a presumption that logic is not a tool in winning an oppressing group to your cause. (The oppressing group will not be reasoned with; they must be forced to yield power through other means.) Indeed, contagious revolutionary affect, notions of collectivity, revolutionary versions of horror-movie violence, a sense of oneself

as part of a totality, rather than as an individual, and a collective suspension of individual skepticism seem better tools for the Black Power Movement, or any social movement, than does any traditional notion of reason.

So the question here is not whether "public sphere" is a useful analytic tool or descriptor. The question is how activists and writers might signal their refutation of the public sphere-based worldview to make space for collectivities based on different worldviews—collectivities based on an understanding of the forces that participants are up against. One problem that the writers in *For Malcolm* face is the tendency of print toward public sphere models. That is, print has long been considered the key site of public sphere discourse in America. On top of that, African American writers must negotiate the fact that the ability to read and write—and particularly to have one's words appear in print—was considered proof that African Americans were fully human (Gates 12). That is, the act of publishing ropes one into a set of assumptions and a framework that is premised on white supremacist ideas (ideas also based in the public-sphere worldview) from the start. Furthermore, African American literature is continually taken to be of a documentary nature (duCille 458). That is, African American writers are forced to contend with the idea that their writing ability proves their humanity in the liberal public sphere model *and* with the idea that what they write must document either historical fact (as with slave narratives) or the so-called African American experience (in the case of more contemporary writers) in some way. African American writers are presumed to bear witness, rather than to agitate; to tell the truth of racism so that the other inhabitants of the liberal public sphere can respond in some way.

Of course, Black Arts Movement writers (like Harlem Renaissance writers before them) emphasized that they were not writing for whites—but the fact that they had to emphasize this

indicates that the standard discourse around this still suggested the opposite. Part of the Black Arts impulse to negate that assumption, to write agitation literature rather than documentary for the powers-that-be, takes the form of a flagging of the material and graphic qualities of print. While print, as opposed to in-person conversation or assembly, necessitates a certain disembodiment, print itself is still material.

For Malcolm plays off of this materiality via a second connection between print and racialization: the historical construction of black ink as signifying racial Blackness. In the nineteenth century, black ink and white paper came to operate as racial metaphors (Senchyne 142). White and black do not correspond to actual visual color, of course, and it was at least partially through the printed page that legal categories of Black and white came to be figured as binary, opposite, and visual (Senchyne 144). Additionally, discourse about print helped to form and reinforce the idea of whiteness as unmarked, blank, and neutral and blackness as a sort of mark (Senchyne 151). The poets in *For Malcolm* carefully control their engagement with the public sphere of the printed word, flagging the material and visual aspects of printing throughout the anthology as a way to offset the pull toward public sphere discourse that print enacts on Black writers. By figuring print as blackness, the poets can drag embodiment into the printed book and launch an implicit criticism of the public sphere worldview. And this criticism can, presumably, clear the way for forms of collectivity that do not make the strategic errors that minority appeals to public sphere elites generally make.[23] At the same time, ink is something that

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[23] It should be clear that what I am suggesting here has little to do with whether Black Power activists or Black Arts writers were actually acting rationally or acting based on emotion. Plenty of research has shown that these are not opposites, and that one in fact needs emotional motivation *in order* to act rationally. Recent work about social movements within sociology has put emotion back on the table. Sociologists coming out of the 1960s and 70s worked to change the prior presumption that activists were, essentially, an unruly, emotion-driven irrational mob (Gould 14-5). They insisted that activists were driven by reason, and only recently have scholars

is transferable. In fact, print works because ink is transferable, and books are made by the transfer of ink. While one way of thinking about print reinforces the idea of white as neutral (and thus the notion of the public sphere and the bracketing of embodiment), another way of thinking about print—print as black, embodied, material, and transferable—functions as a perfect metaphor for the contagious Black collectivity that *For Malcolm* envisions. If Black is the mark upon the neutral page, that Blackness also rubs off, so much so that in nineteenth century printing, the apprentice who dealt most with the ink was called the "printer's devil" because the ink would stain his skin (Senchyne 147). The satanic pneuma of horror films, the printer's devil, and Malcolm X as "Satan" in poems that reflect on his prison stint have in common their infectious, contaminating, and trouble-making nature as well as their association with the color black.

For Malcolm's critical stance toward the medium of print begins on the cover, which is beige with "For Malcolm" in a simple sans serif font across the top and a giant X in the middle. Toward the bottom are the words "Poems On The Life And The Death Of Malcolm X" and then in smaller font "Edited by Dudley Randall and Margaret G. Burroughs" and then "BROADSIDE PRESS: Detroit." The large X in the center, which takes up most of the cover, is made to look as though it has been painted on. The edges of the X are rough and the two lines are rendered so

begun a discussion about how emotion works in social movements that does not assume that emotion is, essentially, bad (Gould 14-5). For more on this conversation, see *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, edited by Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta. What interests me here, though, is not the debate about how these things actually work. It is clear to anyone who has done any sort of activism that emotion and reason (if we can even separate them that way) both play roles in the various decision-making that activists do, and across various types of activities that might be grouped under 'activism'—from staid nonprofit work focused on lobbying to black bloc direct actions. I take as a presumption that social movements have affective dimensions that we might study and that this does not at all conflict with the idea that activists employ reason. What I want to examine in this chapter is the affective role that a rejection of public sphere theory and its accompanying split of reason and emotion into dichotomous opposites plays.

that they look like brush strokes. The painted-on quality suggests a resistance to the normal associations of print: this X is painted, but the painted quality is obviously fake. However, once one notices how the X works, one realizes that the X is not any more fake than the rest of the text. The ink throughout is 'painted on,' an actual substance applied to the page. Additionally, the X reads as a mark, rather than a word. X is what someone signs if she or he can't write, and in particular what a slave who could not write would have signed in the antebellum era. X is also, of course, meant in the tradition of the Nation of Islam to signify white supremacist violence more generally. And on top of that, it is a marking out—a handwritten mark scribbles out a printed word; it creates an absence and replaces meaning with pure mark; it takes reasonable discourse and writes over it with material.

Below, the press's name, "BROADSIDE PRESS," is rendered in all capitals, drawing attention to it. The name of the press is curious in its self-referentiality. Dudley Randall reported that he had named the press Broadside Press simply because at the beginning, the press produced only broadsides (Boyd 230). But apparently the name stuck. When the press's name referred simply to what it produced, the self-referentiality seems to highlight print production as a process, if a bit elliptically. But a press named "Broadside" that produces books seems odder still. The press's business, perhaps, was to produce materials for circulation. Broadsides forefront their material nature (Sullivan 33). If print is a simple conduit for information, it could occur in any form, usually a compacted form, with a lot of information in one place. But broadsides, with or without images, function as visual art, and in doing so they highlight the visual nature of print. The name "Broadside Press," then points to the visual nature of print and to the production of

that print, both. The name also seems to suggest something that is passed among individuals, rather than something that is simply "published."[24]

The book itself features a black and white picture of Malcolm X speaking into a microphone in the opening pages. The image is roughly a profile or three-quarter view of Malcolm X's face. The image is on the verso, and Malcolm X seems to be looking toward the rest of the book, speaking to the poets. The bold sans serif, all-caps poem titles, poets' tendency to use all caps at different points in their poems, poets' tendency to use ellipses, and even the repetition of X over and over all combine to create an effect that James D. Sullivan has described in Broadside Press's broadsides: an implicit "critique of humanist assumptions in whiteness as a universal standard of legible space…and black as differentiation upon it" (35) through the graphic drama of black and white on the page. This rejection of public sphere discourse is, at the same time, a concern for the ability to get bodies in the streets, to "find the flesh of our spiritual creation" in Baraka's words. After all, public sphere discourse relies on individuals persuading individuals at the rhetorical level, rather than on movement-building, on getting actual bodies in action.

The end of the book features a "Photographs of Authors" section. The photos are not uniform—authors appear to have sent in photos of their choice. Most are roughly a quarter page, though Gwendolyn Brooks and Ossie Davis with Ruby Dee each get a full sheet. At first glance, the photos seem like they may be there to register race. *For Malcolm* was unusual in Broadside Press's catalogue as well as in the Black Arts Movement more generally for including white authors. But, of course, photographs do not tell race necessarily—both because race is not

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[24] James D. Sullivan notes that "A broadside presents a poem as a contingent artifact dependent on the visual design and on the context of its appearance. A book, on the other hand, usually presents a poem as existing outside the history of the specific artifact that manifests it" (33).

strictly visual, and because the medium of photography cannot necessarily convey who would be read as Black and who would be read as white if you were to see the authors in person. What the photographs do register, though, is embodied presence—the authors bring their bodies into the medium of print, and print is no longer the site of disembodied exchange of ideas, but a site of the material word and representations of bodiliness. While political organization after Malcolm X's death is represented as fleeting, with Malcolm X's physical being flickering ghoulishly in and out of poems, the book registers the impulse toward organization and a making actual of the phantom collective that poems refer to throughout.

Clarence Major's "They Feared That He Believed" brings together many of the anthology's disparate strings. Here is the poem:

> The press boys tried to erase
> what he said. Smear it. Change it.
> This meant that he no longer
> trusted the lies of the times.
> Too strong in his manhood.
> This meant that reason was no longer reason.
> What he said showed them
> he did not see the world through
> THEIR eyes. This frightened them:
> And his death came.
> Was not permitted by magic to take;
> he was not here long enough
> for the final exams—so
> no showdown came: because the cops
> and the lie still lived.

"The press boys tried to erase / what he said" indicates that the press erases—or gets rid of race, invokes a public sphere model that brackets embodiment. At the same time "Smear it" means not just the "smear" of a reporter's altering a story. The word "smear" also calls to mind the transferability of ink, and with it the transferability of collective affect. Malcolm X also "no longer / trusted the lies of the times," which meant that "reason was no longer reason." Reason's

being no longer reason is the rejection of public sphere notions of reason; this corresponds to his being "too strong in his manhood." Manhood is not masculinity in any straightforward way, but rather an embodied presence. "What he showed them / he did not see the world through / THEIR eyes…" gets at an alternative to the public sphere worldview—a version of standpoint theory, which is fundamentally opposed to the public sphere model. The poem gets more abstract toward the end. "Was not permitted by magic to take" is a strange phrase—it seems that "take" here must mean "take" in the sense of catch on, take root, work. Potentially, the lines could mean that Malcolm X's death was not permitted to take—but the end of the poem seems to suggest otherwise. Magic did not allow Malcolm X (or a Black collectivity) to "take"—or properly spread, take root in or mark others. Malcolm X's life was cut short, before any build up of Black power that would allow a "showdown." "Because the cops / and the lie still lived" is perhaps the oddest part of the poem, and it feels like a relatively cynical note to end on, compared to most poems' hopeful (if doubt-inflected) gestures toward the possibility of a radical legacy. The parallelism of "the cops" and "the lie" seems to suggest, though, that repression comes in the form of physical police repression, but also in lies—one of which, the poem implies, is "reason." If we turn again to the title, we see that what was threatening about Malcolm X was his belief. That is, Malcolm X believed in something outside of the normal parameters of possible politics, and his suspension of disbelief allowed him to project a vision of Black collectivity. [25] The poem rejects conventional logic in favor of "belief."

For Malcolm is a strategic text. It performs in writing a vision of collectivity that it simultaneously mourns. Malcolm X's death is presented as an occasion for unity and collectivity, and *For Malcolm* seeks to stage the scene for such a collectivity to be made "flesh." Over and

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[25] The odd creation narratives of the Nation of Islam may have played a role in designating Malcolm X as a symbol of non-reason.

over, it rejects the public sphere worldview and advocates a feminized openness to a masculinized contagion, redeploying white supremacist notions of a contagious, threatening black masculinity as a metaphor for revolutionary organizing. Furthermore, it twists print's racial metaphors for its own purposes. If print has been used to establish the idea of black as a mark upon a white, neutral page, *For Malcolm* turns that mark into embodiment, critiquing the idea of white as neutral but also advocating an alternative to the public sphere. The alternative is embodied action. If being marked as particularly bodily is a disadvantage in the public sphere model, in a direct action model it is not. Instead of ideas being the weapons of struggle, ideas function to spread and incite more people putting their bodies behind the movement. Here embodied presence and the supposed contagious, threatening, spreading nature of Blackness are what it takes to make flesh a Black collectivity with the power to effect political change.

CHAPTER 3: DIFFERENCES AND DISAGREEMENTS: CALLING THE CATEGORY *WOMEN* INTO BEING

I. Leadership in Women's Liberation

The Civil Rights and Black Power movements were generally comfortable with traditional notions of leadership, which allowed Malcolm X's body to act as a lightning rod for speculation on Black collectivity after his death. But I would like to turn now to the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which was generally troubled by traditional forms of leadership.[26] When a woman in the movement took on an informal leadership role, other Women's Liberationists might accuse her of being "male-identified" or otherwise oppressive to the other women. Women in the movement were often deeply suspicious of anything that suggested hierarchy, and some movement veterans have even referred to 1969-1971 as a "McCarthy Era" within Women's Liberation because women were so frequently accused of leadership and then pushed out of groups (Flora Davis 98). There are, of course, a few prominent figures associated with the Second Wave, like Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan. However, those prominent figures were generally figures of 60s and 70s feminism more generally, and not specific to Women's Liberation. While it is nearly impossible to draw distinct borders here, I use *Women's Liberation* to designate the seminal and more radical arm of the larger women's movement. While there was considerable traffic between Friedan and Steinem's National Organization for Women and the smaller, more radical groups I examine here, Friedan and

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[26] Carol Giardina's account of Women's Liberation locates the early movement within the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and Students for a Democratic Society. The suspicion of leadership began significantly after the movement began and was not initiated by the original leaders of the movement in Giardina's account. Giardiana also argues that, through the debate over leadership, the radical women who started the movement coming out of SDS and SNCC were replaced by women more oriented toward liberal politics (240-241). Nonetheless, if Women's Liberationists were not suspicious of leadership early on, they still did not fix on specific women in the movement as representative.

Steinem were part of a liberal feminist strand that is not representative of Women's Liberation proper. That is to say, traditional figures of leadership existed only at the relatively conservative, NOW-oriented edge of the movement.

Yet writers of Women's Liberation shared many concerns with the writers of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, and those concerns were similarly hashed out through representations of bodies. Like the writers of *For Malcolm*, many Women's Liberationists rejected the public sphere model in their calls for social justice. They also shared *For Malcolm* writers' simultaneous desire for collectivity and anxiety about collectivity formation in a group with all sorts of differences.

Women's Liberation activists produced a huge number of texts in the span of just a few years.[27] Many of these texts—from handbooks to poetry books to political essays—addressed anxieties around the question of difference and representation. Some addressed sharp political differences as well. A trend runs through both small press materials and more well-known texts that found their way to commercial publishers, specifically *Sisterhood Is Powerful* (Random House, 1970) and *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (Simon and Schuster, 1973), which evolved from a DIY pamphlet to a small press book on the New England Free Press before being picked up by Simon and Schuster ("OBOS").[28] Like the writers compelled by Malcolm X's death, Women's Liberation writers struggled with political disagreement, questions of representation, and anxiety about whether meaningful forms of collectivity were possible. The writers negotiated these anxieties in print in multiple ways. While they did not focus on a particular leader's body, they did often focus on women's bodies. In some cases, writers developed a generalized image of

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[27] See one round-up of Women's Movement texts in a 1971 issue of *PM* edited by Bill McCauslin.

[28] For more information on commercial publishers' interest in the feminist movement, see Giardina, 231-233.

women's bodies that strived for universalism. In other cases, writers attempted to write through an apparent contradiction of the women's movement: women are alike in the fact that they are oppressed as women, and they are different in that they are differently oppressed as women—race, class, and other factors inform each woman's particular experience of oppression. Deploying a universalized image of the category *woman* risks merely shifting a liberal public sphere rhetoric that often leaves African Americans, working class people, and others out. Yet it is patriarchy that names women as women and oppresses women on that basis, and so the category must be held onto in order to combat oppression. To be effective, the propaganda of Women's Liberation had to allow different experiences of patriarchy to be put into conversation and collectively addressed and simultaneously gesture toward some type of solidarity among women. That is, the task that writers of Women's Liberation take up (with varying degrees of success) is that of rallying around the term *women* without homogenizing it.

Like *For Malcolm*'s editors, many of these writers use photographed portraits and graphic design elements to suggest both diversity and bodiliness—a bodiliness that thwarts public sphere models based on the abstraction of bodies—within their projected collectivity. While some of the techniques are ham-handed, the writers of Women's Liberation repeatedly invite readers to project themselves into the books and become politically-conscious feminists. Writers use similar techniques, too, to ameliorate tensions they create in making pointed political critiques directed at others within the movement. Movement texts repeatedly hail readers into the performed collectivities of the books themselves.

II. Difference, Syntax, and Graphic Design

Difference within the feminist movement is one point of contention that writers address through graphic design. Even a cursory glance at the cover materials for the most canonical texts

I'll examine here, Robin Morgan's anthology *Sisterhood Is Powerful* (1970), the Boston Women's Health Book Collective's *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (pamphlet 1970, New England Free Press 1971, Simon & Schuster 1973), and Toni Cade's anthology *The Black Woman* (1970) reveals the knot of complexity around the problem of universal categories. *Sisterhood Is Powerful*'s cover depicts the famous feminist symbol, the Venus symbol combined with the solidarity fist. Morgan herself had created the symbol two years earlier—it appeared on buttons that Morgan and other organizers passed out at the historic 1968 Miss American Pageant protest (Morgan, "Saturday's…" 260). The clenched fist solidarity symbol dates back at least to the early twentieth century, when the International Workers of the World used the symbol frequently in their cartoons and other print materials. Big Bill Haywood, a founding member of the IWW and prominent labor activist, used the fist to demonstrate the importance of solidarity: he would explain in speeches that a hand with the fingers outspread, acting individually, cannot hit hard; a hand with the fingers acting together to form a fist can strike a hard blow ("Big Bill Haywood"). The image on the front of *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, then, is of individuals working in accord, and thus being more powerful, circumscribed by the circle of the "woman" symbol. The book poses the question of the relationship between the category *woman* and solidarity right on the cover. The title echoes the image, suggesting that solidarity among "sisters" engenders a collective with the ability to make change. The image also prompts viewers to associate the Women's Liberation Movement with the Black Power Movement and its successes: the raised fist image, despite dating back to the International Workers of the World, circulated most prominently in the late 1960s and early 1970s as part of Black Power iconography.

Our Bodies, Ourselves dramatizes the question of solidarity in a more complex fashion in its early covers. The book grew out of a course that women from the activist group Bread &

Roses gave at a conference held in Boston in 1969. The first version of the publication, a DIY, stapled booklet, was titled *Women and Their Bodies*. The second edition, published by New England Free Press in 1971, was titled *Our Bodies, Our Selves: A Book By and For Women*. The next edition, published by Simon and Schuster in 1973, collapsed the *Our Selves* into *Ourselves*. The original title refers to the category *women* in the third person, taking a distant, official-sounding stance. Through its objective tone, the title leads the book into the traditional public sphere.

In keeping with the feminist epistemology of the book—one of the book's key interventions is the idea that women build knowledge through their own experiences—the second edition's title is more personal and immediate. The phrase *Our Bodies, Our Selves* is a loud rejection of conventions for writing into the public sphere, and it invites the reader into the "our" of the title. The "Our" of the title feels, unlike "Women" in the original title, like an intentionally demarcated group. The third title perhaps only corrects the grammar of the second—but in correcting grammar, it emphasizes the collective *ourselves*, a political group that reaches out toward other women, other potential members of a collective, and pushes toward solidarity or unity. In the phrase *our bodies, our selves,* separate selves might correlate to separate bodies. But in the phrase *our bodies, ourselves*, the "ourselves" is one designation. Additionally, the move in the phrase itself from two words (*our bodies*) to one word that parallels the two (*ourselves*) enacts precisely the kind of collectivity that the second wave sought. Two words act together as one. Individual things—*our bodies*—form a single thing, *ourselves*. The final title models what it wishes readers to do, and the progression of the titles from one edition to another is a sort of honing of the model of collectivity that the book puts forward.

Additionally, the cover image of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* forefronts the contradiction inherent in collectivity. The New England Free Press edition and the Simon and Schuster edition share a cover image: three white women walk in a march. The one on the left, an older woman wearing a button with the feminist raised fist symbol on it, carries a sign with the one on the right, a young woman. Another young woman walks between them. The sign reads, in hand-drawn marker or perhaps paint, "WOMEN UNITE," and both the women carrying it look in the direction of the camera, but not directly at it—to somewhere a bit beyond. The mode of address here is telling: the sign is a riff on the slogan (originally from the *Communist Manifesto*) "workers of the world, unite!" The primary way of reading the text is as addressing women, despite that the phrase would be more legible with a comma. In this reading, the women in the photo are speaking to those belonging to the category *women*, which feels slightly off in the holders of the sign are also women—though, grammatically, there is no easy slogan that would reflect that fact better.

The work that the book title does in shifting from *Women and Their Bodies* to *Our Bodies, Ourselves* cannot quite be accomplished via the sign. There is a split between the holders of the sign and the implied audience of women. Because of the lack of comma, though, one can also read the sign as announcing a fact using third person—*women unite*, i.e. women are uniting. In this case the sign seems to narrate the march itself. The slippage between these two ways of reading the sign itself echoes the complexities of political address. Does the sign show women narrating their own actions to the larger liberal public sphere, or does it show women addressing other women, forced by conventions of writing to leave themselves out of the category and imply that their own voice is descended from the liberal, detached public sphere? Or are the three women together demonstrating women uniting? The cover seems to use this effect well: the sign

WOMEN UNITE sits right above the title, with only the figure of the old woman (and her button) between, so that the title appears as a sort of answer to the problem posed by the sign. Next to one another, these two images imply a complexity of the category woman, allowing various versions of "us" and "women" to overlay each other.

While the two women holding the sign are looking at something beyond the camera, the woman in the middle, whose face is partially obscured by the sign, seems to be looking directly at the camera and therefore at the reader. The reader observes the women holding the sign walking as part of a march; simultaneously (and at a closer look), the reader is directly addressed by the stare of the middle woman whose forehead is obscured by the sign. The photograph forces the reader to oscillate between impartial observer (in relation to the women holding the sign) and participant (in relation to the woman staring at the camera). That the reader is hailed into the scene evokes the book's rejection of traditional medical knowledge creation in favor of an epistemology of women's experiences. It also evokes the fact that modes of address and, relatedly, questions of the category *women* are contentious. Additionally, the older woman's button suggests collectivity as contagion: within this symbol of a feminist movement is another symbol of the feminist movement; in turn, the reader is holding a symbol of the feminist movement by holding the book, and might herself be brought into the feminist movement.

Toni Cade's *The Black Woman: An Anthology* offers yet another riff on questions of universality, who can be addressed, and who can be represented. The title of *The Black Woman* suggests a homogenization: it is not *Black Women*, but *The Black Woman*. *Sisterhood Is Powerful* and *Our Bodies, Ourselves* generally avoid language like this in their texts; there is not much mention of Woman doing this or that. But *The Black Woman* is generally less anxious around the question of collectivity and representation, perhaps because the very creation of the

anthology was a response to Black women's being situated in multiple, possibly competing collectivities in the particular historical moment of the text: the heading for the back matter of the book is "Two Kinds of Revolution," Black Power and Women's Liberation, and the materials state that the women in the anthology are active in both. That is, while the question of sameness and difference within the category Black women may be just as contentious as sameness and difference in other categories, the anthology grows explicitly out of problems of difference within Black Power and Women's Liberation. The very existence of the book addresses questions about difference that had come to the fore in Black Power and Women's Liberation, and *The Black Woman* glides through problems that elsewhere present themselves as dilemmas. Janet R. Jakobsen notes of the introduction to The Black Woman that, "unlike in *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, there is no assumption that an 'autonomous' Black women's movement must be separate and unique…in relation to other movements" (77). The book contains a wide range of political essays and fictional work, and Cade notes in the introduction that "what is immediately noticeable is the distinct placements of stress." "Oddly enough," she writes, it is necessary to point out what may be obvious—Black women are individuals too" (10). While editors of mostly-white texts tend to emphasize women's solidarity with one another, Cade, as she herself points out, can emphasize difference and still push against dominant white supremacist expectations for Black women to share all the same experiences and political positions.

Yet the image on the cover is of a single woman, rather than a group. A woman wearing an afro stares in three-quarter view at the reader. The portrait is a bust—from her shoulders up. The woman's hair frames her face and remains visible on the left side of the cover but blends into the black background on the right side, allowing the title and other front matter to fully take over the top right corner of the book. The reader will presumably not see herself as this particular woman,

since the reader would have to imagine herself as an individual rather than as one among a group, nor can she enter the scene in the same way that she can with the image from *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. The woman's face occupies most of the page, and the background is black. The woman seems to exist in an imagined space, rather than a concrete space like the site of the protest in *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. The front matter directs the book outward toward Black men or perhaps white women: "Black women speak out. A brilliant and challenging assembly of voices that demand to be heard." The panoply of voices here addresses people other than Black women, though once we are within the text, many voices do in fact address other Black women. (And at the least, the anthology is covertly addressed to other Black women, despite announcing otherwise.) Cade constructs *The Black Woman* as an intervention into two already-existing movements, not something to itself foment a movement. Additionally, while *Our Bodies, Ourselves* contains numerous pictures and personal narratives (both from the authors and sent in by readers of previous editions), and *Sisterhood Is Powerful* jumps among political text, poem, picture, and any number of other genres, *The Black Woman* is largely a collection of theoretical essays bookended by personal narratives and other genres. The front image allows a reader to see herself as *like* the woman on the front cover—that is, there is no necessity for the reader to be part of a homogenous collective; Cade's goal is to spur a sense of solidarity, but not necessarily total identification. Alternatively, the cover allows a reader to be invited or prodded by the woman's slightly accusatory look to participate alongside her. A Black male reader (or a white woman reader, though a lot of the book is more addressed to Black men in the movement) might see the woman's face as a challenge, an assertion of her identity. All three book covers differently ask: *who is to be included in our collective body? Is it you?*

III. Social Movements and the Quotidian

Social movements generally form in negation: people react to lived experiences of oppression, with some specific, illustrative event often touching off a wave of activity: the murder of Emmett Till; the suicide of Mohamed Bouazizi, the Tunisian fruit vendor whose death sparked the Arab Spring; the acquittal of George Zimmerman. Movements erupt for unpredictable reasons and then depend on concrete organization to sustain themselves. Activists' ability to sustain a movement is dependent on how much organization there was to begin with, too. The riots of the long hot summers of the 1960s shifted into the sustained political work of The Black Panther Party and, in Detroit, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, as the decade wore on. Strikes in Egypt in the decade leading up to the Egyptian Revolution (Alexander) laid necessary groundwork. In ACT UP, longtime women's health activists coming out of the feminist movement worked with gay men to create the knowledge base and network on which the larger movement relied (Wolfe). In short, there is interdependence between the sudden bursts of activism that bring in new people and shift ideas into the mainstream and the more deliberate, sustained, and trying work of organizing during political downturns, or even as movements wax, wane, and shift into new forms.

By definition, a mass social movement brings together a large swath of people who have not previously been politically involved. In these moments, people react to events with a shared sense of injustice, but generally without a shared sense of a political project, of strategy or tactics.[29] People today who have been involved with Occupy or with any of the protests or riots associated with Black Lives Matter have experienced the intense, euphoric sense of collectivity

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[29] However, one of the developments of the past several years is a focus on direct action and local, as opposed to national organizing. Occupy and the Black Lives Matter movement have pioneered new strategies that seem very much tied to their political projects.

that emerges with a mass movement. The fact that much of 1980s popular culture in the United States revolved around memorializing or otherwise negotiating the potentially revolutionary moment of the 1960s attests to the singular effect of such moments. But as social movements mature and participants organize themselves along political lines, debate principles, strategies, and tactics, the dominant mood of the movement often shifts away from euphoric collectivity. The materials I examine here negotiate some of the tensions of Women's Liberation, gesturing toward utopian moments in the past and in the future. In *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, José Esteban Muñoz envisions utopia as both existing in everyday gestures and tied to visions of the future. That is, writers and activist-writers can get at the futuristic, the unbelievable, another way of living, and a sense of collectivity via quotidian gestures (26). While a lot of political writing of the 1960s and 1970s is quite overt in gesturing toward the utopian, everyday utopian gestures appear in the texts I examine. These gestures often seem more affectively powerful than the political dialogue in the texts. Quotidian gestures can get at the complexity and difference of lived experiences of oppression and sustain conversation across difference. They can also fight the tendency that exists regardless of individuals' politics (because of both mainstream media and larger structures of white supremacy) for the experiences of Black (as well as working class and other) women to be lost. The writers here use such gestures to incite an initial identification with the movement and get more women to become self-conscious political actors. The gesture serve a dual function, though: because movement work is often trying, and movements wax and wane, writers can use the same solicitous gestures to recall euphoric feelings of solidarity when they offer critique to others in the movement, as well.

IV. Class and Race in the Second Wave

In the contemporary popular narrative, a good feminist disparages the Second Wave in favor of the Third Wave.[30] Conventional wisdom holds that the Second Wave was a white, middle-class movement, and Third Wave and contemporary feminisms are less so, or at least more aware. Yet differences among women have been a concern of many feminists since at least the 60s and 70s. Feminists writing at the time, and from a variety of positions, were *already* concerned that the movement was dominated by white and middle class women—whereas the concern about class and race is often today taken to be our contemporary retrospective wisdom, and a critique of the Second Wave. The tension of gesturing toward collectivity and simultaneously recognizing difference in fact *drives* much of the theory, creative writing, and graphic design of the small press publishing of Women's Liberation.

While Women's Liberation *was* predominantly white, Black feminism was not an entirely separate tradition, and the notion that 60s and 70s feminism was a white movement ignores the work of figures such as Florynce Kennedy, Shirley Chisholm, and Frances Beal and large numbers of less famous women who participated in consciousness-raising groups, brought feminist issues to the fore in other radical groups, or were active in specifically Black feminist groups like Poor Black Women.[31] Additionally, white feminist writers frequently noted their own

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[30] I am thinking here not of trends in academic feminist thought, but of more popular versions of feminism that are often prominent in activist communities and that exist online on influential sites such as Everyday Feminism, Jezebel, and Feministing.

[31] See Giardina, Chapter 3, "Something had to be there already." Feminist historians and sociologists have heavily debated how we should think about race in the Second Wave. In contrast to Giardina, for instance, Winifred Breines sees white and Black feminism as separate movements, observing that there was never a "groundswell" of Black feminism the way that there was for white feminism, but that a distinct tradition did develop along its own track (117). Jo Freeman observes that "the perceptions of white and black women in (and out of) the feminist movement are a classic Rashomon phenomena: even in the same movement what each experienced and how each interpreted that experience is quite different" (Freeman). Benita Roth traces the history of the second wave as one of "organizationally distinct" movements (3). Alice Echols writes that "most politically active black women, even if they criticized the black

races and commented on their subject positions instead of leaving whiteness an unmarked category. For instance, in the preface to the 1973 edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, the Boston Women's Health Book Collective writes:

> You may want to know who we are. We are white, our ages range from 24 to 40, most of us are from middle-class backgrounds and have had at least some college education, and some of us have professional degrees. (1)

While the writers of the book were white, they were also clearly conscious of their whiteness. We can infer that they thought about feminism in relation to race and saw the category "women" as one that contained important differences. The 1970 anthology *Sisterhood Is Powerful* contains a lot of white women comparing their status to the status of Black men, potentially leaving Black women out of the analysis altogether (at least at the level of language).[32] But the anthology also includes several essays from Black women: Frances M. Beal, Eleanor Holmes Norton, and a Black women's liberation group from Mt. Vernon, NY all have essays in a section titled "Women in the Black Liberation Movement: Three Views." Florynce Kennedy, a Black NOW member who later founded the Feminist Party that ran Shirley Chisholm for president, has an essay in a section titled "Up From Sexism: Emerging Ideologies," and Enriqueta Longauex y Vasquez has an article, "The Mexican-American Woman." The anthology skews heavily white, but it does not reveal the kind of blindness toward women of color that the Second Wave is often characterized as having. And when looking at the Second Wave more generally, even the National Organization for Women, the liberal organization that is perhaps most often straw-

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movement for sexism, chose not to become involved in the feminist struggle…Efforts to generate a black feminist movement…were less than successful" (291). The composition of the Women's Liberation movement depends, to some extent, on where you draw the boundaries of the movement. Here I generally follow Giardina in taking Black feminist organizing by a variety of names, within or without the Black Power movement, as Women's Liberation.

[32] Brian Norman convincingly argues that this sort of comparison underplays difference in order to forge alliance (43).

manned as exclusively concerned with white and middle-class issues, included in its founding statement a note describing Black women as "victims of the double discrimination of race and sex" and included language about ending all "discrimination and deprivation" (qtd. in Coontz 157).

As many scholars have noted, women of color played roles in the Women's Movement and have often gone unacknowledged. Additionally, white women were more conscious of their whiteness and issues of race than has often been acknowledged; and more interracial organizing happened than has often been acknowledged. Sara Evans, a Women's Liberation activist who has gone on to write about the movement, has argued that, contrary to popular belief within feminist circles, the narrative in which Second Wave feminism was a white middle-class movement, indifferent to women of color, is false. Evans suggests that the idea became common knowledge in the 1980s, when feminists of color used earlier feminist work as a foil for their theoretical explorations of race and class differences (viii). She observes that one of the errors here was the assumption that "theoretical dilemmas inherited from [the 1970s] were direct reflections of organizational behavior" (ix). In Evans' view, plenty of cross-race, cross-class, cross-sexuality organizing occurred in the 1960s and 70s, and the gap feminists address is actually a gap in *theory*. Women have *organized* across all sorts of lines, but that does not mean that theories of patriarchy had not skewed toward interpreting primarily white, middle-class experience.

At the same time, though, the belief that Second Wave feminism was theoretically unconcerned with the experiences of women who were not white and middle class is not quite accurate either. And, like feminists today, writers of the Second Wave (both of Women's Liberation and of more mainstream feminism) often distinguished themselves from an earlier,

homogenizing feminism as well. The first interview in the *Some American Feminists*, a Canadian documentary filmed in 1975 and 1976, is with lesbian feminist (and Radicalesbians member) Rita Mae Brown, who talks about how much room for diversity of opinion feminism has. "Polarization is the bacillus of Western thought," she says, and "if feminism means anything, it's diversity." Then the film cuts to Black feminist Margo Jefferson, who describes sexism within the Black nationalist movement. The film's awkward title, *Some American Feminists*, betrays nervousness about homogenizing feminism, with "Some" pushing against the idea that the film can even represent American feminism as a whole.

In the introduction *The Black Woman*, Toni Cade does not point to white Women's Liberation members as the impetus for the book. She faults the "experts (white or Black, male)": "commercial psychologists, market researchers, applied psychologists," "the biologists," and "the biochemists" (8) as untrustworthy and as reasons for Black women to "[turn] toward each other" (7). With regard to white women and specifically feminist literature, she writes:

> And the question for us arises: how relevant are the truths, the experiences, the findings of white women to Black women? Are women after all simply women? I don't know that our priorities are the same, that our concerns and methods are the same, or even similar enough so that we can afford to depend on this new field of experts (white, female). It is rather obvious that we do not. It is obvious that we are turning to each other. (9)

Cade argues for a politics that accounts for Black women's distinct experiences and interests, and she suggests a need for independent organization. But she does not fault Women's Liberation; instead she seems to see Black feminist writing as a part of it. *The Black Woman* positions itself as a part of the Black Power and Women's Liberation movements, directing political critique at other movement participants.

Carol Giardina argues in *Freedom for Women: Forging the Women's Movement, 1953- 1970* that the origins of Women's Liberation were in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating

Committee (SNCC), the famous organization that played a leading role in Civil Rights and later Black Power-oriented activism in the 1960s, and generally makes a case that we view Women's Liberation as far more intertwined in prior anti-racist work than previously thought. She also argues that we must think of women's liberation as a single movement with significant involvement of both Black women and white women, who were in a variety of organizations (some specifically Black, like the organization Poor Black Women or the Third World Women's Alliance, and others predominantly white). Giardina's work makes quite clear that the whiteness of the Women's Liberation Movement has been grossly exaggerated (often in ways that ignore the significant work Black women did as part of the movement).[33] Yet, the narrative of Women's Liberation as white and racist is so predominant that feminists today sometimes use the term "Second Wave" pejoratively.

Feminism seems to be in a near-constant state of reaction to a mythical earlier version of itself. At the same time, certainly the dominant idea of *femininity* in a deeply racist and sexist society is of white femininity. That is, feminists might not be reacting to earlier versions of feminism or to one another so much as they are reacting to a mainstream idea that is continually being attributed to other feminists instead of to society at large. Additionally, actual repression plays a role. Alice Echols notes that at vulnerable moments, the feminist movement was infiltrated by the FBI or similar agencies, with agents spurring division in the feminist movement via racial, class, and sexual difference (Echols 8). Even today, misogynists online (identifying as "Mens Rights Activists" and "Pick-Up Artists") have used the notion of privilege to "divide and conquer" in a planned infiltration of online feminist communities. In 2013 and 2014, a group

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[33] Becky Thompson also argues that the narrative of the Second Wave as "hegemonic feminism" relies on an ignoring of the work that women of color did in the Second Wave era (337).

from 4chan executed a plan to pose as feminist activists of color on Twitter and "make activists turn against each other" along the axes of various types of privilege (Broderick). The question of difference remains a political contradiction in feminist struggle and, at times, a soft spot open to exploitation by repressive forces. That is, there is a real contradiction here, one that is fundamental to social movements: people are oppressed based on certain types of difference, but that does not mean that a group of oppressed people has much in common.

In order to fight against oppression, a group must act collectively. Participants must seek to represent themselves and other group members as essentially Black, or female, or et cetera in order to mobilize members of the larger oppressed group (all African Americans or all women) who are not active members of the political group. All the while, as Cade points out with reference to the contents of *The Black Woman*, Black women, and members of any other group, are individuals, and *their conflation is precisely part of the logic of oppression*.

One cannot, then, speak as a representative of a group without in some ways echoing the logic of that group's oppression. In her work on the "we" of manifestoes, Janet Lyon observes that "'we' as it appears in a manifesto…suggests the consensus of a group, but this consensus is in fact largely the product of a pronominal sleight of hand, whereby 'we' disguises the metonymic function of the small group of composite 'I's who claim to speak for a whole" (26). She writes that this "we" is, therefore, "inherently colonizing" (26). Colonizing is, perhaps, the wrong word here—the violence of colonization cannot occur through speech acts and if the broader context of a speech act is anti-oppression activism, the power dynamics of that speech act are simply not the same as they would be in a colonial context. Yet Lyon's broader point stands: representation of a group is inherently vexed.

Regardless of the historical inaccuracy of the longstanding, recurrent idea that a previous version of feminism was homogenizing, feminism really must concern itself with the question of difference—continually, over and over again, in much the same way that Black Power Movement writers expressed anxiety about difference among African Americans. In both 70s and contemporary feminist discourse, a persistent concern about the nature of collectivity is expressed as a disavowal of the past.

V. Consciousness-Raising and Theory

While the straw man of Second Wave "white feminism" is in many ways a myth (and perhaps an attempt at interpreting tendencies that are really just symptoms of white supremacy in the culture at large), feminist epistemology really did present difficulties and contradictions for the movement. Women (both Black and white, but not usually together) created knowledge by seeing their own experiences mirrored in other women's experiences in consciousness-raising sessions and anthologies like the ones I discuss here.[34] Women's desire to see others as reflective of themselves—to identify with other women in the feminist movement and ignore difference— was a real thing. Feminists observed that society was male-oriented and suppressed women's experiences, keeping women isolated from one another and encouraging a mainstream worldview that was decidedly masculine. Women were able to develop distinctly feminist perspectives by mirroring their private experiences back to one another. For example, the Boston Women's Health Collective wrote in the introduction to *Our Bodies, Ourselves*:

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[34] Many groups of white women used consciousness-raising, but Black groups such as the SNCC Black Women's Liberation Committee and The Woman's Workshop utilized CR as well (Giardina 180). Additionally, Norman refers to texts such as those contained in the anthologies under discussion here as "consciousness-raising documents" and shows that these texts shared features with consciousness-raising (38-39). Wendy Kline, too, argues that *Our Bodies, Ourselves* served some of the same functions as a consciousness-raising group and allowed readers not connected to a group to get some of the experience of consciousness raising (26).

From our beginning conversations with each other, we discovered four cultural

notions of femininity which we had in some sense shared: woman as inferior, woman as

passive, woman as beautiful object, woman as exclusively wife and mother (Boston

Women's Health Collective 6).

The women discovered these cultural notions *as cultural notions* through conversation with one another. The introduction goes on to detail more insights that the women gleaned from one another. The writers are able to see the sexism of the medical industry by comparing their experiences and figuring out that experiences that each woman thought of as individual and unusual were in fact shared. It wasn't each woman who was wrong, but the sexist medical system. The women saw this only by reflecting their experiences back to one another. Consciousness-raising relied on a commonness of experience.[35]

By contrast, male supremacy often relies on women's separation from one another. Mid-

century gender ideas, in particular, were bolstered by middle-class white women's isolation in

their homes. In her research on Betty Friedan's iconic book *The Feminine Mystique*, Stephanie

Coontz describes *The Feminine Mystique* as having given a name to common feelings of

dissatisfaction that middle-class and upper-middle-class white women (and, she notes, likely

others) experienced in isolation. Through Friedan's writing, women who thought that their

feelings were idiosyncratic came to realize that the feelings were quite common. Coontz points

out as well that women's unhappiness was at least in part a product of the contradictions about

femininity that existed in American culture more largely. Mainstream U.S. culture put forward a

variety of contradictory messages about women's roles, and many women then internalized the

contradictions and began to feel something was wrong with them as individuals. Friedan's book

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[35] *Our Bodies, Ourselves* authors were aware of the difficulties here: Kline reports that Susan Bell, who was brought in from outside the collective for the chapter on birth control says that she had to "see from and speak to the perspectives of teenagers, single women, women of color, poor women, women with disabilities, and women without health insurance (and so forth), without falling into the trap of believing I could 'be' simultaneously in all, or wholly any, of these subjugated positions" (qtd. in Kline 24).

connected people and helped them see that their personal problems were, as the slogan goes, political.

For the somewhat younger generation that headed up Women's Liberation, consciousness-raising and other intimate conversations in all-women groups allowed them to recognize sexism by locating the negative space carved from conversations about their own experiences. They used one another's experiences to triangulate what was false about mainstream ideas. Women's Liberation activists theorized this explicitly in debates over whether they would put forward consciousness-raising as an official program: in New York Radical Women, Peggy Dobbins apparently argued that the group should study the literature on sex/gender difference, while Kathie Sarachild invoked the Enlightenment injunction to 'study nature, not books' to argue for consciousness-raising—a methodology that would allow women to focus on their own experiences (Giardina 178). Recognizing shared experience, then, was fundamental to the women's movement.[36] Many women built feminist theory and confidence as activists by seeing other women mirror their own feelings and experiences, feelings and experiences that they previously thought were theirs alone.

Yet establishing feminist theories based on personal experience required similarities among the women involved in any given group. Given the segregation of U.S. society and the fact that many politically-inclined African American women were involved in the Black Power

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[36] Here I draw on Stephanie Coontz's meticulously researched descriptions of the effect that *The Feminine Mystique* had on mid-century housewives. See Coontz's *A Strange Stirring*, particularly Chapter 8, "Demystifying the Feminine Mystique." Coontz also describes the generational and cultural differences between many *Feminine Mystique* readers and the women of Women's Liberation: "For the younger women who energized the early 1970s women's movement, The Feminine Mystique was less likely to provide a 'click' moment than it was for the slightly older group of women who first discovered it. Some read Friedan's book after they became activists, seeking validation for their views, but others skipped right over Friedan's book to read the more radical pamphlets and books being published by the early 1970s" (157).

Movement as Women's Liberation was taking off, it is unsurprising that Women's Liberation was segregated, with many of the most prominent groups being predominantly white. Many cultural-nationalist strands of Black Power were also hostile to feminism or at least invested in traditional family structures, given the influence of the Moynihan Report (even among politically-involved African Americans) and the constant mainstream critique of Black families.[37] (SNCC and The Black Panther Party, though, were officially supportive of feminism (Giardina 113, Giardina 168).[38]) In at least one case, a feminist group composed of women who were also involved in Black Power met secretly because they did not want to be accused of "tomming" by men in Black Power, and it is certainly possible that this was the case for more groups as well (Giardina 211).[39] While Jane Gerhard argues that consciousness-raising and

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[37] Carol Giardina argues that the Moynihan Report itself was a form of backlash against the Civil Rights Movement, particularly black female leadership in SNCC (86-91). She draws a sharp distinction between reactionary cultural nationalism, promulgated chiefly by Ron Karenga, Amiri Baraka, and Eldridge Cleaver, and Black Power, which of course had some of the "male chauvinism" characteristic of U.S. culture, but tended toward feminism (102-109). Giardina's account provides plentiful evidence that the narrative we currently have of Black Power as misogynistic is not wholly true. On the other hand, though, Giardina's focus on the leaders of movements—who were probably to be more clear-sighted and less contradictory in their thinking than the much larger circle of people more casually involved in the movements or simply influenced by them—tends to obscure the ways that different political positions resonated and reproduced themselves in the larger movement. For instance, the film *Some American Feminists* and several essays in *The Black Woman* all make reference to the phenomenon of Black nationalist men harassing Black women on the street and accusing the women of not being loyal to the cause if they did not respond positively to the harassment. The movement leaders that Giardina focuses on, who were responsible for the adoption of feminism by nationalist parties and the like, were not engaging in this kind of behavior—but others certainly were, and under the banner of Black nationalism.

[38] Additionally, "by 1969 the party's membership was two-thirds female. Many of these women held leadership positions in their chapters" (Giardina 214).

[39] Another source of contention was the focus within Women's Liberation on abortion rights, given that women of color were sometimes sterilized without their consent. The Black Panther Party, for example, initially lumped birth control of various sorts in with involuntary sterilization and considered these practices a genocidal effort by the U.S. government. However, Black Panther women and other feminists were able to make political arguments that shifted most Party members' beliefs by the mid 1970s (Nelson 86-89).

similar tactics got in the way of Women's Liberation recruiting Black women, since conversations tended to revolve around understandings of sexuality particular to white women and rely on certain middle-class ways of speaking (Gerhard 103), consciousness-raising was also utilized in Black women's feminist organizations around the country (Giardina 180). On top of that, many consciousness-raising groups arose out of social networks: women invited people they already knew, and they did this within a segregated society (Murphy 127). Additionally, in mixed groups, Black women were often trepidatious about complaining of Black men's behavior, given racist stereotypes that Black men were particularly sexist or macho (Giardina 211). All of these factors led to CR groups that were unintentionally (in the case of majority white groups) or intentionally (in the case of Black women's groups) segregated.

Brian Norman, in his important article "The Consciousness-Raising Document, Feminist Anthologies, and Black Women in *Sisterhood Is Powerful*," argues that second-wave feminist anthologies, including some of those I discuss here, generally invoked both analogy and difference: analogy between different texts within the anthology, and, within individual texts, analogies between different types of oppression (46). "If," he writes, "the analogy is noticeably imperfect and the 'we' cannot speak for all women's struggles, the imagined collective within and without the banner women is strengthened by the slippage—or flexibility—created by such imperfections" (47).

However, it is unclear how effective consciousness-raising would have been in more integrated liberation groups[40], and an anxiety around likeness and difference runs through feminist activism from the 60s to the present.[41]

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[40] Relatedly, in contemporary discussions of feminism, activists assume an animosity between white feminist activism and Black feminist activism that was not necessarily there in the past. Linda Burnham has recounted going to an abortion rally in San Francisco and seeing "a sea

VI. Mirroring and Identification

1. "Burn This and Memorize Yourself"

One product of the interest and tension around questions of sameness and difference among women was an interest in mirrors and mirroring. A small poetry chapbook/pamphlet by a woman named Alta is one example. Times Change Press, a small leftist press that produced pamphlets and posters, published it in 1971. Alta's last name, not given in the pamphlet, is Gerrey, and Alta also played an important role in feminist publishing as the founder of Shameless Hussy Press, which published a wide range of feminist books from 1969-1989 (Alta, "Alta and the History" 1-2). Alta had been involved in the Civil Rights Movement as a teacher, and she would go on to publish numerous books by women of color (including Ntozake Shange's important play *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf*) (Alta, "Alta and the History" 2).

"Burn This and Memorize Yourself: Poems for Women" was designed by Su Negrin, who was one of the co-editors at Times Change, and the pamphlet contained a number of photographs by Ellen Shumsky, an activist and photographer of Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation (Shumsky) as well as Alta's poetry. Notably, Shumsky was also a member of Radicalesbians ("Ellen Shumsky"), the group that disrupted a Women's Liberation conference

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of white women." Someone, she says, "grabbed the mic and said "all African American women should gather [at a specific location]." Black Sisters United grew out of this incident. In Burnham's telling of this event, Black women needed separate spaces for consciousness-raising—but there is no sense of animosity toward predominantly-white women's groups (*She's Beautiful When She's Angry*).

[41] Further evidence of this anxiety is the persistent circulation of Sojourner Truth's apocryphal "Ain't I a Woman?" speech by both Black and white groups. See Poirot, 22-29. (Poirot's conclusions about the significance of this circulation are different from my own.)

and brought the issue of lesbianism into the politics of Women's Liberation. The images and design elements are prominent, and we might think of this text as collaborative.

Alta, Shumsky, and Negrin use references to mirrors to suggest a universal female body that the Women's Liberation movement might rally around. Feminist utopia, in the world that Alta, Shumsky, and Negrin create, is gotten at through seeing oneself reflected back by another. At the same time, Alta, Shumsky, and Negrin depict groups of women, including white women, some women of color, and lesbians within the text, and the graphic design elements in the text create a sense of variation and texture that disrupts the pamphlet's homogenizing elements.

The front cover of the pamphlet shows a woman sitting cross-legged and nude, and we see her body and face in profile. The woman is looking away from the viewer. On the back cover is a version of the same image, but here there is a background to the image that has been omitted on the front cover. The image of the woman is the same, but now she sits in a room with flowers, a mirror, and a photograph hanging on the wall. On the front cover, the woman is in an imagined space—the background is solid red and the composition of her body on the page interacts with the title and other cover text. The subtitle is "poems for women," with "women" notably in the third person. As in the cover of *The Black Woman*, the third person and the location of the figure in an abstract, imaginary space detaches the cover from the reader: *this is a book about the category* women*, not necessarily a book about* you, it seems to say. When we flip over to the back cover, though, there is the same image of the young woman (and the image is oriented on the page in the exact same way—same size and direction). But here the image is within what is presumably the original photograph. She looks away from us, but toward a mirror, and we can see her face in three-quarter view reflected in the mirror, along with her breasts. Behind her on the wall is a photograph of another short-haired woman who might be her as well. A teaser reads:

"An unusual volume of plain-talking poems that, mirror-like, reflect one's own experience of being a woman." Here, the room, which reads as a bedroom because the woman is nude, seems homey and familiar. You can imagine yourself in the scene, or in your own room with a mirror and a vase of flowers and photograph hung on the wall. The odd phrase "reflect one's own experience of being a woman" rather than, for instance, "represent the experience of being a woman" emphasizes that the book will be able to get at something normally hidden from view, something that, paradoxically, is singular to the reader. Whatever the general consensus on being a woman is—that is not what the pamphlet will tell us about. Rather, the pamphlet will do something almost magical: get at one's *own* experience of being a woman, which seems to be both unique and shared here. As in consciousness-raising, the pamphlet has a special power: it allows the reader to discover something about herself that is obscured by the normal, patriarchal world.

The back cover, then, addresses the reader in three ways: 1) we can suddenly see the woman's face (in the mirror), so we now have some sort of interaction with the woman, 2) we're now located in a specific intimate space and can picture ourselves there or somewhere similar—we're invited into the space, perhaps *with* the woman, and 3) the text no longer refers to "women," as in the subtitle on the front, but to "one's own experience of being a woman," involving the reader. The cover is calibrated to create a certain reading experience: one sees the book's cover at a store or, more likely, at a meeting or a friend's house; one is curious about the category *women* referenced on the cover; then one flips the book over to check out the back and is directly addressed by the book: hailed as a reader, and implicitly, promised that from the beginning to the end of the book, she too will see herself mirrored and thus be part of the category of conscious feminists, and not simply women.

2. *Our Bodies, Ourselves*

Our Bodies, Ourselves, too, relies on images of mirroring. Each edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* contains many pictures alongside text, charts, anatomical drawings, and the like. Among the most striking images, in the chapter "The Anatomy and Physiology of Reproduction and Sexuality" and one that appears in both the New England Free Press edition and the first Simon and Schuster edition, is a photograph of a woman's vulva in a mirror. In fact, many women, when interviewed today, recall this photograph first when asked about the book (Kathy Davis 146). One woman interviewed by Kathy Davis recalled: "That picture with the woman looking at her genitals in the mirror—I'd never seen anything like it before!" (146). The image remains striking today: in the extreme foreground of the image is the woman's buttocks, and she bends over to look at her vulva in a large rectangular mirror that she holds just above the floor. We see her breasts reflected in the mirror, too, but no higher—her face is not visible. On the same page in the book, we see an anatomical drawing that, while upside down, is almost precisely the same view the mirror would see (as opposed to more common anatomical drawings from other angles). (See Figure 5.) Kristan Poirot notes that similar images appeared frequently in second wave publications like *Ms.* and *off our backs* and that these images "[interpellate] the viewer as self-examiner" (74-76).[42] The reader can imagine herself as the viewer because she is looking down at the image in the book and then seeing a woman's hands holding a mirror and reflecting a vulva back up at her—the spatial orientation of the pictures is such that the viewer could be looking down into her own mirror as she looks at the image. The reader is also actively encouraged to participate in the text. Near the image, text reads: "The following description deals

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[42] See Poirot's chapter "Visions of Sex: Freud, Gynecology, and the Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers" (64-86) in *A Question of Sex* for a most extensive discussion.

first with the outer organs and then with the inner organs. It will mean much more if you look at yourself with a mirror as well as at the diagrams*" with the asterisked text then reading

> You can squat over a large mirror or sit on the floor with your legs apart and use a hand mirror. Make sure you have plenty of light and enough time and privacy to feel relaxed. This is really body education! (14)

Additionally, though, the reader is interpellated into an identification with self-conscious feminism as well. Another chunk of text near the image, this time an italicized personal narrative (common throughout the book) reads:

> *I used to wonder if my body was abnormal even though I didn't have any reason to believe it was. I had nothing to compare it with until I started to talk with other women. I don't feel anymore that I might be a freak and not know it.* (14)

This narrative paired with the instructions at the bottom of the same page emphasize that readers may be looking at their vulvas for the first time. That is, a reader may not know what she will see, exactly, and in looking in the mirror what will be reflected is an essentially female anatomy. She will simultaneously see what make her genitals unique (which she is encouraged to observe in illustrations of the variety of ways a hymen might look on the next page) and see female genitals that could be hers or anyone's. In the fact that this may be her first detailed view of her genitals, the reader is absorbed into a non-individualized category of woman—the genitals are hers, apparently, and could also be anyone's. As Michelle Murphy observes, such images enact a "tension between common corporeality and individualism," potentially downplaying differences of race or class (142).

The identification that occurs is well documented in scholarship of the women's health movement. That identification is two-fold, though: readers are also marked off from the larger category of women by their willingness to pick up the book, by their participation in this activity.

That is, the book is not only calling readers to participate and to identify with the larger category of a semi-universal womanhood, it is asking them to become a part of the category of politically-conscious women through this act. The reader enters into a collective not with everyone who has like genitals, but with everyone who's simultaneously looking at her genitals—an emergent politically-conscious class of woman. The readers is performing her commitment by reading, and in reading she comes upon more opportunities to participate. When she gets out her own mirror and examines her genitals, she intentionally commits herself to the category *woman*. In committing herself to the larger category *woman*, she transitions into the category of politically conscious, active feminists.

The particular image in *Our Bodies, Ourselves* contributes to this sense of the genitals as simultaneously specifically one's own and a means to a self-conscious feminist collectivity. The picture is grainy, and what is remarkable about it is only the angle, and that that angle interpellates the reader, as Poirot notes. Because of the quality of the image, it is actually very difficult to identify anything beyond labia majora and pubic hair. One cannot see the clitoris, the inner labia (and their particular shape), or the vaginal opening—all potentially visible body parts identified in the labeled anatomical drawing below. This body is a specific one, of course, but the woman's face is not pictured (despite that naked women are depicted with their faces shown all over Second Wave texts), and there is little detail to the genitals in the picture, despite that much of the book depicts in detail variation after variation on genitals.[43] The vagina here is means to feminist consciousness, as well as a sort of fulfillment of a project of self-discovery.

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[43] Poirot writes of the variation in genitals in such texts: "Not only are women's organ's re-imaged over and over again and in ways that mark their complexity, but also they are imaged as one that 1) change over the course of a woman's life, 2) change throughout a woman's monthly cycle, and 3) normally vary among women." Poirot cites this variation as part of a consciousness-raising strategy she terms "amplification."

Elsewhere in Women's Liberation texts, and particularly in texts of the medical self-help movement that descended from Women's Liberation, similar images proliferated—but they were usually of a speculum (outfitted with a small mirror) and cervix, not of a mirror and vulva (Poirot 76). Cervix and speculum images share many of the qualities with the vagina and mirror image in *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, but what they suggest politically is more specifically medical. Within the women's health self-help movement, women learned how to perform specific procedures on themselves or with the help of other women to take back some measure of power from the patriarchal medical establishment. But there is no practical task attached to the mirror and vagina image—the image is about seeing and understanding oneself, and seeing oneself through embodied femininity. As in Alta's use of mirrors, there the mirror is a way to get the reader to see herself as being *like* the woman depicted, and as therefore part of the movement.

3. *The Black Woman*

The Black Woman does not make use of visual mirrors and thus takes a view of Black femininity that is less based in the physical body, even as it is still based in lived, embodied experience. Unlike Alta's book of poems or *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, *The Black Woman* does not contain images at all. As numerous writers point out, the Second Wave's interest in the body and breaking of taboos might have had less propagandistic appeal to Black women in the movement, given that white supremacist culture constructs Black women as being always more bodily than white women. That is, focusing on the body might not make for effective propaganda or pushback for Black women, which is one possible way of thinking about the book's lack of images.

The book nonetheless includes a sort of mirroring. The book, which largely consists of political theory linked by various creative work, begins with an introduction by Cade, then

moves onto poems by Nikki Giovanni, Kay Lindsey, and Audre Lorde. The first prose piece is Paule Marshall's short story "Reena." Marshall was an established novelist and short fiction writer by the time this book came out, and "Reena" had originally been published in 1962. "Reena" is about a woman briefly reuniting with her childhood friend after her aunt's funeral service. The narrator relates that, as a child, "whenever [Reena] talked about herself (and this was not as often as most people) she seemed to be talking about me also" (20-21). The narrator continues:

> She ruthlessly analyzed herself, sparing herself nothing. Her honesty was so absolute it was a kind of cruelty. (21)

Now, in the present, the narrator reports that Reena "still has the ability to disturb me profoundly by dredging to the surface those aspects of myself that I kept buried" (21). Reena's life story, and to some extent the narrator's, are told through back and forth dialogue as the two women sit in Aunt Vi's bedroom drinking and chatting until the sun comes up. Located in a prominent position in the book, the story invites the reader to identify with the two women, or at least think in terms of comparing her experiences to another's. And the narrator and Reena display a sort of doubling, representing mirroring to the reader via their relationship and inviting the reader to participate.

The story tropes sameness and difference elsewhere, too. When Reena arrives at the church, the narrator sees her from behind first. Then the narrator suddenly sees Reena's face:

> It was a good copy of the original. The familiar mold was there, that is, and the configuration of bone beneath the skin was the same despite the slight fleshiness I had never seen there before; her features had retained their distinctive touches: the positive set to her mouth, the assertive lift to her nose, the same insistent, unsettling eyes which when she was angry became as black as her skin—and this was total, unnerving, and very beautiful. Yet something had happened to her face. It was different despite its sameness. Aging even while it remained enviably young. Time had sketched in, very lightly, the evidence of the twenty years. (21).

Some aspects of this passage are unsurprising: any story involving seeing an old friend would be likely to catalogue changes in the friend's appearance. But the idea of something being a "good copy of the original" suggests doubling, or perhaps even larger-scale technological reproduction. The narrator is struck by her own similarity to Reena, and she is struck by Reena's similarity to her earlier self.

The Black Woman ends by discussing representation: the last two essays are Toni Cade's "Thinking About *The Great White Hope*" and Francee Covington's "Are the Revolutionary Techniques Employed in *The Battle of Algiers* Applicable to Harlem?" For Cade, the play is a pretext for thinking about the question "what do you do about the lone wolf, the individual, the 'noncommitted,' the uncorrect brother?" Her answer is genuinely ambiguous:

> The question should be: Who is the enemy? Who is the greater and more immediate danger—the individualist, self-centered, selfish brother who's embarrassing us or cooperating with the foe or who is likely to become agent material, or the blind, deaf, headless engine of demonic white America prepared psychically and technically to blow us all away? If we can get basic and be clear about our priorities, we might be able to get basic and clear about our possible allies. (243)

Cade, though, certainly believes the play to be misleading, and her interest in the Black man who is destructive toward the movement brings to the fore precisely the concern in many texts in identity-based movements: not everyone who is a part of this group has these politics that we think represents the group. So what do you do with your theory or those people in light of that? Cade here focuses on the lack of verisimilitude between cultural representation and real life, and she still asks the question (along with the play) whether the sort of representation that one does in political movements can address the fact that some people do not fit into the political movement.

Francee Covington's "Are the Revolutionary Techniques Employed in *The Battle of Algiers* Applicable to Harlem?" similarly addresses cultural representation. Covington goes

against the rather unfortunate convention of leftist-rhetorical-questions-as-titles: her answer is actually that no, the techniques in *The Battle of Algiers* are not applicable to Harlem. She faults the film for its misrepresentation, noting that one would think from the film that the majority of battles took place in urban spaces, despite that they did not (245). The likeness of the film is not accurate to the actual Algerian revolution. Additionally, she finds a lack of likeness in the analogy that many people are using when talking about the film: Algiers and Harlem are not alike. Covington painstakingly details why strategies from Algeria would fail in the U.S. The essay, like Cade's, is also a critique of radical rhetoric devoid of political strategy. She mocks activists who declare things like "…we're going to burn the motherfucker down" (245), and criticizes those who would use *The Battle of Algiers* as a bible or instruction manual. *The Black Woman* very nearly begins with an essay that invokes mirroring and ends with a rejection of contemporary cultural representation and activists' desire to use that representation as a guide. In *The Black Woman*, identification with like figures must happen at a more individualized level than in Alta's "Burn This and Memorize Yourself" or *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. The book has a certain suspicion around both universalized collectivities and attempts to represent the whole of a group, evidenced in Cade's statement in the introduction that "Black women are individuals too" (10).

VII. Variegation and Joy

While *The Black Woman* most clearly rejects a universalist model for forming collectivities, most of the texts of Women's Liberation couple another strategy with mirroring in order to augment the potentially overly simplistic notion of sameness or likeness as the qualifier for forming collectivities. A reviewer of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and two other women's health books noted in 1973 that the texts

attempt to give facts. They hope that facts, whether they expose wrongs or describe steps toward something better, will help readers to create more gratifying lives. As such, they are optimistic and exhilarating. Yet they also tell of the economic, psychological, and physical price we pay for our present structures. They offer us a mirror image of the self as a partial victim of anxiety, exploitation, ignorance, and waste. As such, they are pessimistic and depressing. They are about both our bodies and our political lives. *It is saddening to realize how much stronger, how much more coherent, how much more beautiful the framework of our bodies is than the reality of our political lives.* It is sad that we are forced to make our bodies a political issue at all. (Stimpson 37, my emphasis)

In Stimpson's reading, the texts mirror, and in mirroring do not merely stimulate people to involvement in a collective—in the feminist movement—but also potentially sadden and depress people. Bodies, she says, are more beautiful than "our political lives." Bodies are more hopeful, it seems, and both *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and the pamphlet *Class and Feminism* use images of proliferations of variegated bodies to complicate their impulse toward universalism and create a sense of joy in embodiment.

The variegation in *Our Bodies, Ourselves* has been well-documented. Kristan Poirot reads it as part of a strategy of *amplification*, and the Boston Women's Health Book Collective was fairly explicit about its desire to represent a wide range of women. Far less has been written about the use of similar strategies in small press materials of Women's Liberation. *Class and Feminism: A Collection of Essays from THE FURIES* is a pamphlet published by the small movement press Diana in 1974. Charlotte Bunch and Nancy Myron edited the collection. The Furies were a D.C.-based collective, and they were adherents of political lesbianism. That is, they believed women should be oriented toward other women, not men, regardless of sexual desire. Any woman could be a lesbian. Rita Mae Brown helped form the group after leaving NOW because of NOW's homophobia (Valk 141).

Class and Feminism contains both personal narratives about growing up working class or poor and scathing political critique of others on the Left: several essays address what we would

today call "lifestylism" and what was then called "downward mobility" (or "poverty made fashionable" (19)). What interests me here, though, is the text's use of photographs and typography to supplement its political critique. The text is fairly harsh and certainly part of the hashing out of politics that is likelier to occur when movements are on the decline than in the initial rush of semi-spontaneous activity. (And by 1974, the movement was both in decline and dominated by more liberal groups.) The critiques in the book are serious ones. Nancy Myron writes:

> Movements to date have dealt with class only in its romantic and academic Marxist sense. The romantic view of the working class is some groovy simplistic way of living rather than an oppressive product of capitalism. There's nothing cool or gutsy about being working class…it's a brutalizing and dehumanizing way to grow up. In a society responsive to images it is hard to break that romantic vision of the working class. Witness the popularity of the downwardly mobile life style. (36)

And, along similar lines, Tasha Peterson writes:

> If were are politically serious about changing this country and destroying male supremacy, white supremacy, and capitalism, our politics have to deal with oppression that is a lot more deep-rooted than the new found white middle class oppression for being a "hippie" or a "freak." This oppression has been created by white middle class men because of their need to join the oppressed people in the world since they have some recognition that white middle class men are an enemy. But they refuse to take their responsibility for their position as oppressors of women… (33)

The book's critiques are addressed not to the ruling class, or even just to men. The book is very much a critique of behavior within the radical movement, and often within Women's Liberation specifically. Bunch and Myron use photographs to represent a feminism of both embodiment and variety: feminism encompasses a lot of people and creates pleasure, suggest the pictures. The physical representation of women in the book, women with whom a non-working class reader might identify, cuts the harshness of the critique and invokes feelings of solidarity.

The front cover depicts two girls of about ten or so in a pink/red-scale cut-out heart, and the girls appear old-timey: the photograph the cover is made from is probably from the 30s or so.

The girls have what appears to be newspapers in their arms. The twin image of the two girls is echoed by the twin bumps of the top of the heart, and these are echoed by the words "CLASS & FEMINISM" below that, one word stacked above and to the side of the other, so that the words each read as more individuated than they would otherwise be. To the bottom left is the Diana Press logo: a rectangle split in two, each side with a small stick figure Diana (a woman with an arrow) facing toward one another. The Diana on the left side is white on a black background; the Diana on the right is black on a white background.

Hearts do not occur frequently in Women's Liberation visual culture; the one here stands out. The repeated coupling on the cover, which the heart emphasizes, works like Alta's mirrors in that it calls to mind mirroring and invites the reader to see herself in the text and in the figures depicted. But it is also a little different: here seeing yourself in the Women's Liberation movement means seeing yourself as a part of a pair in the Women's Liberation movement. The Furies lived together as a collective. Their vision of political lesbianism made room for sex—but one's status as a lesbian was based in one's politics (Valk 143). The two girls enclosed in a heart suggest romantic friendship more than sexuality, both because of the girls' age and because of the heart. The Women's Liberation movement is a place of coupling and romantic friendship, and it is also a place for the marriage of class-based analysis and feminism, as suggested by the title just below the heart. The reader goes in expecting a unification of sorts with other people, a unification of class-based and feminist political theory, and a certain immediacy suggested by the rough, low-quality image and the fact that the heart shape appears to have been cut out by hand. All of these things might enable a working-class reader to see herself in the text, or a middle- or upper-class reader to see this marriage of class-based politics and feminism as natural, inevitable, and positive.

The font for titles in the pamphlet is unusual: it is a thick, highly stylized font, and some, but not all, of the instances of the letter *S* are heavily slanted, such that the S is almost just a curved line running at a 45 degree angle from the page. Some, but not all, of the instances of the letter *C* are rotated clockwise so that the open part of the *C* is from 3:00 to 6:00, rather than just along the side of the letter. The variegation in font does two things: it draws attention to the printing itself, that is, to the material quality of the letters; and it represents difference in something that is normally uniform as a richness, an attentiveness to the very project of the pamphlet. By analogy, the variegation suggests the importance of embodied experience (in a way that is not so tied to biology as the interest in embodiment in, say, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*) and that difference within Women's Liberation is something that contributes to the effectiveness of the movement.

The pamphlet's images occur as a sort of photo essay in the middle, one after another, uninterrupted by text. They begin with a photograph of a woman smoking a cigarette and staring up at the camera, her mouth mid-sentence, her eyebrows arched skeptically. The image invites the reader to see herself as talking with the woman, since the photograph was so clearly snapped mid-conversation. The woman, who is white, is probably in her 20s and there is nothing specific in the photograph to suggest she is working-class. When one flips the page, one sees an older woman at work sewing in a factory, smiling. We then see three teenaged girls, two white and one Black, standing in front of a car in the neighborhood, staring at the camera. We've moved now from an image of one woman that interpellates the reader into conversation, an image of a working-class woman at work, to an image of a group of women: class is so far a conduit into the formation of a group. We move on to an image of a grandmother in outmoded house clothes with two grandchildren, then to an image of two middle-aged women talking to one another in a

department store. This image is followed by a photo of two somewhat butch older women who read as a couple staring into the camera. Then the final photo shifts gears dramatically: an older straight couple in formal clothing (suit, pearls) sits in a formal-looking space. While in earlier photos, working class and gay women have been interacting in a variety of outdoor and public spaces, appearing alone or in groups or in pairs, now we have a couple that appears to represent the ruling class, and traditional heterosexuality, in an indoor space. The image reminds the reader of the enemy: our couplings and romances exist and are a source of joy, but then we must contend with this couple, their hostile stares into the camera, and all that they represent. Invoking the ruling class—and stodgy tradition—is one way to elicit a sense of solidarity from a reader who might be hostile to the pamphlet's political arguments, especially given 60s social movements' attraction to "counter-culture."

VIII. Analogies between White Women and Black Men

Charlotte Bunch and Nancy Myron give strong political critiques of the Women's Liberation Movement's lack of thoughtful orientation around class, and they are able to seamlessly blend class politics, sexuality politics, and the more typical iconography of Women's Liberation in *Class and Feminism*. Texts about race and the Women's Liberation movement written by white women are generally more vexed. Throughout Women's Liberation texts, comparisons between (implicitly white) women and Black men abound. These comparisons leave Black women out altogether. Kay Lindsey observes in an essay in *The Black Woman*:

> As the movement toward the liberation of women grows, the Black woman will find
> herself, if she is at all sensitive to the issues of feminism, in a serious dilemma. For the
> Black movement is primarily concerned with the liberation of Blacks as a class and does
> not promote women's liberation as a priority. Indeed, the movement is for the most part

spearheaded by males. The feminist movement, on the other hand, is concerned with the oppression of women as a class, but is almost totally composed of white females. Thus the Black woman finds herself on the outside of both political entities, in spite of the fact that she is the object of both forms of oppression." (Cade 85)

The rhetorical gestures of Morgan's *Sisterhood Is Powerful* confirm Lindsey's impression. Martha Shelley writes that "assaults on women are no more an accident than are lynchings of blacks in Mississippi" (Morgan 309). Marge Piercy, the prolific feminist novelist, writes in a paragraph in which she chastises herself for her "acquiescence" that she has been "a house nigger in the Movement" (Morgan 436). Such comparisons between an implicitly white category *woman* and an implicitly male category *Black* recur throughout the anthology. Brian Norman calls such instances "imperfect analogies." "These analogies," he writes, "purposefully hew away important differences between political and historical contexts in order to clarify a point about oppression, but also to seek alliance with another group who might be sympathetic to the example accessed through noticeably imperfect analogy." Texts gain "meaning and momentum" through such references (43). Certainly it is possible that the comparisons worked in the ways Norman describes and *also* created rifts between Black and white women in Women's Liberation.

One key context, though, is the interplay between the Civil Rights and Black Power movements and Women's Liberation. The mainstream political establishment played a role in establishing the analogy between implicitly white women and Black men, for instance. Just prior to the Women's Liberation era, congress had passed the Civil Rights Act. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was intended to address a lack of protections for African Americans. Southern politicians started pointing out that Black men in the South would have more rights than white

women, and one added an amendment to an early version of the Act to address sex discrimination. Sex was actually added as a category in order to *prevent* the passage of the Civil Rights Act, and many progressives did not know what to do. (Some voted for the amendment and some voted against it, since it was a ploy to stop the Act from passing, despite supporting women's rights.) The amendment ended up passing, and the whole Civil Rights Act became law. In short, a tremendous feminist victory came out of nowhere, a fluke based on the tremendous momentum not of the feminist movement, but of the Civil Rights Movement. Feminists then organized around working to ensure that the protections of the Civil Rights Act were actually granted in practice, so the Act was a huge boon to the feminist movement because it prompted women to action, as well (Coontz 153-155).

Additionally, many white feminists had cut their teeth organizing in the Civil Rights Movement. Of the white college women recruited by SNCC to participate in 1964's Freedom Summer, some of those who stayed as volunteers wrote a formal paper for a November 1964 retreat arguing that sexism was a problem within SNCC (Flora Davis 74-5). In the paper, the women (Mary King and Casey Harden, writing anonymously), wrote:

> …The average SNCC worker finds it difficult to discuss the woman problem because of the assumption of male superiority. Assumptions of male superiority are as widespread and deep-rooted and every [bit as] …crippling to the woman as the assumptions of white supremacy are to the Negro. (Qtd. in Davis 74-5).

(Both Robin Morgan and Carol Giardina note that Hardin and King's document was actually presented to SNCC by Ruby Doris Smith Robinson, a Black activist within SNCC, and that the document was typed up by Hardin and King but arose out of a feminist discussion group meeting in the SNCC headquarters—a meeting attended by both Black and white women in SNCC (83-4)).

Here a number of historical contingencies—the role that white women played in SNCC and their relationships to Black women and Black men in the movement—combined to create conditions in which the Black men/white women analogy arose. That is, it seems reasonable to suspect that the analogy grew out of a collection of small historical contingencies, rather than an overarching cultural logic.

King and Harden, though, are also playing off of slavery's status as oppression *par excellence* in the American lexicon. An anxiety seems to run throughout Second Wave texts that women's oppression is illegible or that its existence will be denied. And the readers for these texts are usually not mainstream men, but *other women* and perhaps men who are part of the New Left. One solution to this anxiety seems to be to route predominantly white women's experiences through a type of oppression more established as such in American culture. An American expression from the Revolutionary War indicates that even back when the economy of the American South was based on slavery, when slavery was an actually existing thing, it already served a metaphorical purpose as well. American revolutionaries rallied behind the cry of "we won't be their Negroes!", with "their" referring to the British (Losurdo 301). Slavery and more recent forms of Black oppression in the United States have a metaphorical value in American culture, a value that effaces the actual circumstances of Black lived experience and serves a variety of American cultural narratives. There is a tendency of movements against other forms of oppression to piggyback off of Black oppression, in one view; in another view, Black struggle against oppression has been particularly crucial to the unfolding of left/progressive history in the United States, and so movement of all sorts model themselves on Black social movements.

One of Alta's poems in "Burn This and Memorize Yourself" is programmatic here. The untitled poem reads:

> yesterday i had a wild thot. hearing james brown on the radio singing say it loud i'm black and i'm proud. i thot wonder how it would feel to say say it loud I'm female and proud. it was obviously too silly. think how embarrassed i would be if a neighbor came to the door. what if john came home and i was making the bed yelling i'm female and i'm proud? i'd never hear the end of it. i started saying it and nearly choked on the words. couldn't get them out. realized it was a lie. i ain't proud. kept trying to say it. after a few tries i could. it wasn't very loud. it was probably the quietest sound in the room. me patting pillows into place on the bed and muttering i'm female and proud and thot about it and wanted to feel it and said it loud i'm female and proud and after the record was over i yelled it a couple of times and it felt okay and i haven't done it since but maybe i will again.

In comparing themselves to African Americans, white feminists project a vision of a certain amount of success: the Civil Rights Movement and then the Black Power Movement had existed (with ups and downs) in some form since the 1950s, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a concrete, significant victory. Additionally, the New Left accepted anti-racist politics as a crucial part of the larger movement, yet often dismissed feminism as a legitimate leftist concern. Widespread media coverage of Black movements provided new possible frames for the Women's Movement. Victoria Hesford writes:

> the representational forms through which the meaning of women's liberation was constructed in the mass media in 1970 would be forged in relation to the national presence of Black Power and its confrontations with the bourgeois order of white America," and, indeed, white women sought to piggyback on the perception of Black Power as a legitimate threat as their own movement was derided in mainstream media (39).

The analogy of *women* to *black* seems to have arisen out of a hoped-for analogous relationship between the Civil Rights and Black Power *movements* and the feminist movement, rather than from a purposeful analogizing of racial oppression and gender oppression.

The poem presents the analogy as a cultural one: James Brown is on the radio; "black and proud" is mainstream, a widely accepted slogan. The speaker of the poem is in her house listening. She is making a bed and thus in the most domestic possible space doing one of the most domestic things. She cannot muster the courage to say "i'm female and proud" even in that

space, and she notes that her husband, the other person who shares that domestic space, would laugh if he heard her. The inclusion of the radio here, as well as the bed, highlights the role of Black Power politics in the public sphere. Black Power is having such a moment in the national spotlight that even a popular star is aligning himself with the movement. The speaker suggests that, as a feminist, she is envious of Black Power's mainstream spotlight. She also places Black Power discourse comfortably in the public sphere and describes feminist discourse as still relegated to the home and private domesticity, pointing to a key challenge for Women's Liberation: the difficulty of turning a form of oppression associated with privacy, family life, and domestic spaces into a mass movement with attention from mainstream media. The move toward work outside the home was part of an overall move toward engagement with the non-domestic world. In this poem, racism is obvious and the Black Power Movement is a popular cultural force, while sexism goes unmarked. White women, more than Black men (or women?) are fighting an uphill battle. "After the record was over," the speaker yells "I'm female and proud" alone in her room. This scene presents the Women's Movement itself as weak—why does the speaker have to work out her feminism alone while making a bed? Additionally, while James Brown singing "I'm Black and I'm proud" is a very individualized version of Black Power, when Brown sings, he sings to an audience, either on the radio or to rooms full of people dancing. Here, the poem suggests that feminist activists need to take their cue from Black Power. The poem also does not seem to actually identify with anti-racism in and of itself—there is not much of a sense of solidarity; instead the feminist movement is to piggyback off of Black Power rather than act in solidarity. Black Power was, of course, largely a nationalist project, meaning that there were not necessarily a lot of active ways for a white writer to engage. Nonetheless, the

poem illustrates one of several tendencies in Women's Liberation: a complaint that misogyny is not as recognized as racism coupled with a precarious solidarity.

IX. The Gothic

Su Negrin's small pamphlet *A Graphic Notebook on Feminism* employs many of the strategies I have noted above: it invites the reader to see herself mirrored in the text; it uses graphic tics, such as purposeful extreme pixellation, to emphasize the physical quality of the text and thus the importance of embodiment in second-wave visions of collectivity; it presents many different women; and it draws comparisons across different types of oppression, with an emphasis on the oppression of African Americans.[44] In conjunction with these strategies, the text also invokes gothic elements. The gothic is often allied with rebellion of some sort; Leslie Fiedler has pithily observed that one type of gothic functions "to shock the bourgeoisie into an awareness of what a chamber of horrors its own smugly regarded world really [is]" (135). *A Graphic Notebook* splits the difference between exposing the horror show of mainstream U. S. culture and gesturing toward futurity. The gothic is also anticipatory and hints toward what is possible, what is spectral, what is only sort-of there—and so it is well-suited for the literature of an identity-based social movement, since one goal of the print materials of Women's Liberation was to prompt an identification from people who were in the category of *women* without being in the category of politically-conscious feminist activist.

A Graphic Notebook features on its cover a woman's screaming face. The face is ambiguously that of a woman protesting and letting her voice be heard, and that of a woman screaming in terror. Perhaps these activities are one and the same, the image suggests. (See

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[44] Su Negrin and Tom Wodetzki started Times Change Press in 1970. Working from New York, they published books, chapbooks, and political posters, including Negrin's own pamphlet "A Graphic Notebook on Feminism" ("Online Archive of California").

Figure 7.) Within the booklet, the pages are black and white and often highlight the contrast through pixellation and by frequently switching which color makes up the positive space and which the negative space. The booklet includes images of amazons, Joan of Arc riding a horse and later being burned at the stake (which perhaps calls to mind lynching imagery), Black and Native American women alongside captions about the history of the Native American genocide and slavery, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Harriet Tubman, women doing industrial jobs, women doing karate, the pill, vulvas, women doing dishes, and women flying planes. The images throughout are grainy and have idiosyncratic print qualities to them. An image of a witch being hanged early in the pamphlet prompts comparison between early modern European witches and African American lynching victims. The strange, high-contrast, grainy image quality suggests an overwhelming sense of history—images of protests at the Miss America pageant from just two years before are juxtaposed and share a style with very old drawings and photographs, as well as documents including a slave advertisement. Additionally, it emphasizes the materiality of the page, resisting public sphere models of print that might reinscribe the exclusive politics of the public sphere. Like the *For Malcolm* authors, Negrin drags embodiment into the traditionally public-sphere oriented medium of print.

The pamphlet presents patriarchy as horrific through its choice of images: a hanging witch connotes horror, and the images of a Native American woman and two enslaved children that follow shortly after give the genocide of Native Americans and the enslavement of African Americans a similar specifically *eerie* quality by proximity. Images of a chastity belt follow, with the definition of a suttee, or "a Hindu woman who voluntarily throws herself alive, and is cremated, on the funeral pyre of her husband" (np) on the same page: the book is morbid, and shares with horror films an interest in repressed or punished sexuality. Images from the First

Wave are represented in high contrast, and the old-fashioned dresses, hats, and bonnets render the women eerily other. Women doing industrial work wear goggles and face masks; women acting in some sort of theater wear monstrous costumes. A triptych of images showing women's vulvas in the foreground and faces in the background is eerie because the women wear expressions of pain and anger and because images of women's genitals that are desexualized are often rendered frightening. The last image in the book proper, under a list of photo credits, is the words "FEMINISM LIVES" in a typeface that one associates only with ghastliness—it is the wavy font of horror movies and is quite striking here because the gothic elements in the rest of the book are more subdued (with the exception of the cover).

Negrin's pamphlet and its gothic qualities in many ways epitomize the print culture of Women's Liberation. Women's Liberation texts were interested in asserting women's presence—this is most evident in Cade's *The Black Woman*. Because Black women were hailed into two social movements, but often not explicitly specified or named, the assertion of Black women's identity, and especially a diversity of thought across that identity, is a crucial intervention. All of the writers here are interested in mirroring, a sort of projection onto the reader of what the reader will see. The writers are also interested in embodiment, and they anticipate readers who are interested in a politics based around their embodied subjectivity. Through an emphasis on the graphic qualities of the text, the writers work an embodied, material quality into the books themselves, projecting new, self-consciously feminist reading subjects. Many of the writers include pictures depicting assortments of women—collections that emphasize that the subjects of the photographs are doing a variety of different things, and perhaps looking at you, the reader, in conversation. The pictures and graphic elements often emphasize or otherwise negotiate the question of difference within feminism. The reader, who

will necessarily feel different than the women she sees in the movement, is invited to project herself into the book. The reader is, over and over, an imagined phantasmic subject—partly of the category *woman* and partly not, in that she may not yet be a politically conscious feminist. The books, all forms of propaganda, aspire to align the reader's bodily identity with a newfound, anticipatory political identity as the reader reads.

CHAPTER 4: *THE BLACK PANTHER COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE***: NEGOTIATING FUTURITY AND REPRESSION**

"The Black Panther Black Community New Service, is not an ordinary newspaper. It is the flesh and blood, the sweat and tears of our people…a mirror of the spirit of the people." (Williams 10)

I. The Panthers as Malcolm X's Legacy

The Black Panther Party formed in late 1966, about a year and a half after the death of Malcolm X and amidst a larger cultural shift across the country from Civil Rights Movement discourse to Black Power (Bloom and Martin 12). 1965 and 1967 saw riots in urban areas across the country, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee—previously associated with the Civil Rights Movement—was in the midst of a shift toward Black Power in the mid-60s. At the level of both concerted political organization by activists and spontaneous eruptions of anger, something was shifting in the mid-1960s. The Black Panther Party filled a growing gap and lent an organizational apparatus to widespread dissatisfaction with the Civil Rights Movement.

This chapter is somewhat continuous with Chapter 1, in that Black Panther Party members saw themselves, and fashioned themselves, as part of Malcolm X's legacy. *The Black Panther* would run images of and articles referencing Malcolm X frequently. One example is the cover of the May 19, 1970 issue. The cover features a giant three-quarter view of Malcolm X's face next to an image of a heavily armed Huey Newton. The text reads: "The Heirs of Malcolm Have Picked Up the Gun and Now Stand Strong Facing the Racist Pig Oppressor." Later in the newspaper is another image of Malcolm X with an article by Raymond Lewis stating explicitly that Huey Newton took up where Malcolm X left off when he died. In many ways, the Black Panther Party was the answer, or at least the most successful answer, to the set of questions posed by the *For Malcolm* anthology at right around the same time that the party began to grow. An anecdote about Party leader Bobby Seale indicates how strong the affective link between

Malcolm X and the Party was: upon hearing of the murder of Malcolm X, and prior to the formation of the BPP, Seale apparently threw bricks at cars and declared, "I'll make my own self into a motherfucking Malcolm X, and if they want to kill me, they'll have to kill me" (Bloom and Martin 23). Seale's phrasing—"a … Malcolm X"—contrasts with the *For Malcolm* anthology's attention to and mourning of Malcolm X's physical body and suggests the Panthers' direction: they were interested in acting as a lightning rod in the way that Malcolm X had, and they thought that others, beyond Malcolm X himself, could fill the role. Malcolm X is a type, in this formulation, since one can make oneself into *a* Malcolm X. (This formulation is also in contrast to the Women's Liberation Movement's way of negotiating images, which did not allow for any sort of heroic or celebrity-esque status at all.)

Seale's phrasing still retains an emphasis on physicality, in that making oneself *into* a Malcolm X seems more intimate, and more bodily, than, say, "be[ing] the next Malcolm X" or some other phrasing. Also, if one can be *a* Malcolm X, as opposed to the *next* Malcolm X, multiple Malcolm X's can potentially exist at once—that is, we can have a collectivity, rather than something organized solely via the image of a leader.[45] Malcolm X's particularly is still important here; Seale identifies with him as a model to imitate. Similarly, David Parker, a rank-and-file Panther member in New York City, told the *New York Times* that he'd "been listening to Brother Malcolm's records for a long time." "I know what he said," Parker continued, "and I've just been waiting for the Panthers to come here" (qtd. in Bloom and Martin 68). Joining the Panthers follows naturally from listening to Malcolm X's records. That is, joining the Panthers

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[45] Amiri Baraka, writing about Malcolm X's effect generally, put it in a different, but still physically grounded, way: "For the young intellectuals of my generation it was Malcolm who literally moved us. From wherever we were to wherever our listening to him told us we needed to be" (Baraka 176). In Baraka's conception here, too, Malcolm X occasioned collectivity, rather than acting as a leader through which politics operated.

follows naturally from both liking Malcolm X's ideas and from being a 'fan,' of sorts, of Malcolm X. Listening to records is a removed act. Parker had apparently not heard Malcolm X in person, or sought to get involved with the Organization of Afro American Unity, or anything along those lines.[46] He was a fan of Malcolm X, and the next step was to be a Black Panther. As the Panthers grew, they used a similar model, with Seale, Huey Newton, and numerous other Panthers becoming celebrities of sorts, celebrities that readers of their paper could in turn identify with and emulate.

In spite of, or perhaps because of, the Panthers' unique and equally complicated relationship to revolutionary leaders and embodiment, the Panthers also took up many of the questions that the writers of *For Malcolm* had. As both a Marxist-Leninist group and a Black Power group, the Panthers had to negotiate questions of who belonged in the collectivity that they aimed to forge. Black Power had multiple threads—we can identify it as a large-scale political trend, in reaction to the continuation of racism despite years of Civil Rights Movement activity. It sometimes operated as Black capitalism (with aims of increasing Black business ownership and the like), other times as Black electoral strategy (getting more Black politicians into office), still other times as cultural nationalism (celebrating and creating a distinct African American culture), and in some instances operated as a radical Black nationalism (Shawki 193). That is, Black Power in each instance was about Blackness, and Blackness from a variety of political perspectives. The Panthers combined a Black Power desire for a non-white-supremacist nation with a Marxist-Leninist tradition that had always been anti-racist, but generally emphasized internationalism and inter-racialism. Starting in 1928, the Communist Party had

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[46] The Black Panther Party in New York did pick up members from the OAUU, though. Early section leaders for Harlem and the Bronx were former OAUU members (Bloom and Martin 150).

considered first African Americans and then specifically Southern African Americans an oppressed nation, with a right to autonomy and self-determination (Kelley 13). That is, there was precedent for a political ideology that was both Black nationalist and Marxist-Leninist. But this sense of nationalism—belief in a Black nation—was still part of the larger, interracial and international Communist project, and had little in common with the Black nationalist tradition of, say, Maulana Karenga.[47] As Marxist-Leninists who were also operating in a Black Power framework, and in a moment with a strong pull toward a Black nationalist politics based on identity, the Panthers constantly had to negotiate the question of who belonged in the collectivity that they both 1) concretely organized in their work and 2) projected rhetorically via their newspaper, *The Black Panther: Community News Service*, and other media representation. That is, the Panthers purported to speak for Black people, since they were a Black Power organization and political organizing inherently involves some degree of assuming the responsibility of representation. They also constantly shifted the boundaries of the categories of their collectivity: sometimes they emphasized Blackness; other times they emphasized oppression in a general, and internationalist, inter-racial, sense.

The Panthers also had to have an account of Black police, informants, and other enemies, and articulate their alliances with various white groups in order to present a coherent politics to

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[47] For more on the on-the-ground relationship between Karenga's US organization and the Black Panther Party, see Bloom and Martin's *Black Against Empire*. Karenga's US organization developed a tense relationship with the Panthers when both were organizing at UCLA in the 1968-1969 school year. Through FBI intervention—either in the form of a forged letter to the Panthers and alleging to be from US (which is documented, or possibly because US was directly working with the FBI, US members shot and killed two Panthers. Following the incident, the Panthers distinguished their own working class politics and opposition to the state from US's receipt of government funding and willingness to work with police in inner-city schools (Bloom and Martin 220).

their readership.[48] They took up questions of the role of the body in political organizing, negotiating not just identity but the fact that their vision for revolution necessarily evoked images of large numbers of deaths before victory, and that their vision even for organizing in the immediate future was one of armed struggle that quickly brought a strong, violent government response.[49] But most of the Panther Party's organizing was carried out amidst tragedies like the killing of seventeen year-old Bobby Hutton by police, as he surrendered during a face-off between Panthers and police in Oakland in spring of 1969, or the killing of twenty-one year-old Chicago organizer Fred Hampton by Chicago Police and the F.B.I. in a raid in late 1969. The Panthers were faced not only with the question of which embodied subjects are part of a collectivity—and who, in the tradition of Marxist descriptions of the working class, is the proper subject of revolutionary history—but also faced questions about death and the fragility of bodies of revolutionaries and about how organization can carry on—in an even more pronounced way than did those mourning Malcolm X in *For Malcolm*. The Panthers had to simultaneously mourn

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[48] The Panthers did plenty of actual organizing with mostly-white anti-war groups, but a brief note in a 1968 edition of the paper suggests that cross-racial alliances were not uncomplicated: "Black brothers stop vamping on the hippies. They are not your enemy. Your enemy, right now, is the white racist pigs who support this corrupt system. Your enemy is the Tom nigger who reports to his white slavemaster every day. Your enemy is the fat capitalist who exploits your people daily. Your enemy is the politician who uses pretty words to deceive you. Your enemy is the racist pigs who use Nazi-type tactics and force to intimidate black expressionism. Your enemy is not the hippies. Your blind reactionary acts endanger THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY members and its revolutionary movements. WE HAVE NO QUARREL WITH THE HIPPIES. LEAVE THEM ALONE. Or – THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY will deal with you." (No author, no title. *The Black Panther*, September 28, 1968, page 22.)

[49] There was not agreement even among prominent Black Marxist-Leninist organizations about this strategy: the Detroit-based League of Revolutionary Black Workers differed most notably from the Panthers for their emphasis on organizing at the point of production.)

their losses, including losses of those in prison, and project a vision of the radically different world that they hoped would come about.

The Panthers created a newspaper that was an extraordinarily effective organizing tool for many years by reflecting current conditions back to their readership; creating a sense of solidarity and pride around the organization and the paper, presenting ongoing activities as victories in themselves; shifting the narratives around police into versions with genre elements as a non-utopian way of accessing future imaginaries; registering the porous boundaries of the organization, bolstering representations of the organization as more solid and simultaneously allowing space for acknowledgment of the true difficulty of what the writers and the organizers around the country were doing; and looking to their own current organization in lieu of creating a solid vision of a utopian future that perhaps would not register with readers. The Panthers, in short, used a variety of types of weird propaganda to highlight the potentiality of all of "the people" coming together (with "the people" as a sort of phantasmatic force), while simultaneously registering the blank space of an unknown future and acknowledging the gory and tragic tasks that membership in the Party called on readers to engage in while simultaneously keeping an upbeat tone. The paper had to both reflect people's experiences of life and project a vision of a much better future, one worth making extreme sacrifices for. Holding both of these ideas together in relation to one another is necessarily difficult.[50]

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[50] Fredric Jameson identifies the problem the difficulty of representation of one's political situation and one's day-to-day existence as one attached to contemporary, financialized capitalism: "There comes into being, then, a situation in which we can say that if an individual experience is authentic, then it cannot be true; and that if a scientific or cognitive model of the same content is true, then it escapes individual experience (349)." That is, it is not only a question of mainstream media not representing Black experience in the U.S. in the 1960s and 70s. That is part of the problem—but there is also a gap between individual experience and political understanding that is a necessary byproduct of late capitalism. The Panthers are doing

The Panthers were involved in a number of activities, from their early armed monitoring of police to their free breakfast for children program. They also had a staunchly anti-imperialist position, made common cause with the anti-war movement, and drew inspiration from and connected with anti-imperial movements around the world. Some of the activities focused on directly confronting law enforcement; other activities built connections with the larger Black working class and poor communities that the Panthers operated within. A number of good histories of the Panthers detail the strategies, history, and internal debates of the Party. (Perhaps the most useful history is *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* by Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, Jr.) Here, though, I will focus largely on the newspaper and its presentation of Party politics, though of course the debates and activities of the Party went beyond what was chronicled there.

It was not until 1968 or so that the Black Panther Party began to draw the sort of media attention, and wield the sort of nation-wide influence, that made it internationally famous. But *The Black Panther* played a key role in the organization from spring of 1967 onward. The Panthers published six issues of the paper in 1967, then picked up steam and published eighteen the next year. From 1969 through 1977, the Panthers published the paper roughly every week or so, and then publication schedules tapered off after that until the paper ceased publication entirely in 1980. The party circulated 139,000 copies of the Panther newspaper each week at its peak in 1970 (Gaiter). Issues of the paper have articles by prominent party members, articles written by everyday members of the party, letters, advertisements for party meetings, many reports of police abuse, reports on the trials of Panther Party members after they were arrested in various scuffles and frame-ups by the police and FBI, profiles of political prisoners, instructions

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the work that Jameson describes as "cognitive mapping" when they map individual experience onto larger political systems in the paper.

for interactions with police, press releases, advertisements for various things (including Huey Newton posters and Black Panther Party Christmas cards at one point), and many, many graphics and images, most famously by Party Minister of Culture Emory Douglas, but also by Matilaba (J. Tarika Lewis), the first woman member of the Party, and others. The papers have centerfolds that can be hung up, plus graphics throughout. Douglas's images, which have received the most attention, fall into a number of categories. Douglas depicted children frequently, usually with hopeful messages. In general, Douglas has a set of images that hopefully depict Black people, sometimes with a heroic tone created by postures, stances, collage, or graphics. Frequently, text accompanies the images, often in a voice that elides or muddies the distinction between the presumed voice of the person in the image and a sort of narration from outside. Many images use heavily patterned blocks to depict run-down conditions in homes: distorted bricks, holes in walls, and cracking concrete make up the graphic content of images. Another set of images shows politicians, often juxtaposed with collaged photographs of African Americans with distressed expressions on their faces. In yet another set of images, African Americans hold weapons and heroically defend themselves against police. Some images just show people holding weapons in heroic poses; others depict the police actually being threatened or shot. Douglas also depicted images of troops fighting in Vietnam at the behest of pigs, or North Vietnamese soldiers heroically defending themselves. In short: the paper gathered articles from across the country and printed reports that frequently described local events in terms of the Panthers' politics and worldview. It also prominently printed images of ordinary people—people like the paper's potential readers—enacting or otherwise reflecting the Panthers' politics and worldview. The paper mapped for its readers their role in the Panther political project.

II. Theorizing the Paper

Radical groups must claim to speak on behalf of a larger population; attempting representation is necessary for creating a collectivity. The moments when the claim is effective—when large numbers of people *do*, in fact, feel represented—either in the sense of *depicted* or in the sense of political representation—by the group, are rare. The Black Panthers were a vanguard party, attracting large numbers of poor and working class people for several years. Notably, while the Civil Rights Movement had often used a sophisticated media strategy to make appeals on a national and interracial level, the Black Panther Party did not attempt to address the powers-that-be or neutral outsides, but others facing the same oppression as those already involved in the Party (Gaiter). Moments of mass support for left politics, or even relatively centrist politics that represent large shifts in consciousness, are fairly unpredictable, unmanageable phenomena. Activists aiming to achieve any sort of mass movement have to consider that moments of great success involve the movement getting away from the party and taking on a character of its own. But, at any rate, the Black Panther Party was a mass phenomenon that had to negotiate mainstream media coverage and what we might now call a certain viral effect. Readers wrote into the paper imitating stylistic conventions of the writers of the paper, and of Douglas. When we look at the archive of the paper, we see the Party, the vanguard, negotiating its relationship with the mass movement.

Landon Williams, one of the Connecticut 14, theorizes the paper in a January 1970 article, "The Black Panther: Mirror of the People."[51] His theorization is useful for both

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[51] The trial of the Connecticut 14 was among several highly publicized Panther trials. The trial involved the murder of Alex Rackley. Rackley was killed on the orders of George Sams, who accused Rackley of being a spy. Sams then claimed that he was ordered to kill Rackley by the national leadership, and provided testimony to this effect to the state. Those tried were the Connecticut 14. Some historians of the Black Panthers believe Rackley to have been a longtime FBI informant and perhaps killed Rackley with the FBI's knowledge (Bloom and Martin 247-53).

interpreting the paper and understanding how the paper was intended to work. The article argues that the paper is unlike bourgeois papers, and that it is something to be "studied and grasped" and "saved for future generations to read, learn, and understand" rather than discarded at the end of the day like a typical newspaper. Williams recounts the various activities of the party that the paper has chronicled, emphasizing that the paper tells the truth, unlike bourgeois papers, in that "its story unfolds far from the perfumed parlors of the bourgeoisie" (Williams 10). The paper, then, helps to form a counter-public from "the streets" and "the grassroots," since bourgeois papers obscure the truth. While Williams does not use the words "public sphere," what he describes here is an alternate sort of public sphere, something akin to what Nancy Fraser describes in her canonical essay "Rethinking the Public Sphere": a counter-public of the subaltern that acknowledges larger contexts of inequality and takes up questions that in a Habermasian public sphere would be bracketed as 'private,' not of concern to an imaginary 'general public' (Fraser 70-78).

The paper functions quite differently here than it does in Benedict Anderson's classic public-sphere-based model, in which the newspaper is key to the rise of nationalism. For Anderson, newspapers' regularity and dailiness are key to their ability to create a sense of community (35). Papers appear simultaneously and are bought and read simultaneously, and they move through a repetitive cycle of relevance in which they are, as Williams points out, discarded at the end of the day. The Panthers did not have the ability to write and distribute a daily paper even if they wanted to. But their paper also has different functions: it needs to be actively studied and internalized by its readership, if it is to work as propaganda. The paper relays current events of interest to the Panthers, and it covers news that other newspapers did not cover—but it also trains readers in a new worldview. Readers are trained to understand capitalism as a root cause of

racism; to see the police as always the enemy because they uphold white supremacy and capitalism; and to view themselves as members of a political community that fights back and is capable of winning. The newspaper interweaves day-to-day events and the larger ideologies that the Panthers saw as causes of those events, and so readers must study the paper and not merely take in the day-to-day sort of news. The newspaper that Anderson describes evolves as part of the standard social world; it does not have to push against anything. An effect of the simultaneity of papers for Anderson is a sense of affiliation with others reading the paper. With activist papers, the sense of connection is somewhat different. The connection comes through effort and must be made to exist. That is, mainstream newspapers rhetorically create a sense of addressing anyone and everyone, even as they leave many people out. They essentially address the abstract, disembodied citizen, who does not in fact exist (as Fraser points out)—but who can be projected rhetorically. Mainstream papers ask readers of all sorts to identify with this disembodied "general public." The Panther paper, though, uses the simultaneity of reading that the paper occasions to point to embodied, specific readers and ask reader to imagine themselves as part of a particular community. The paper is written by Panther members from across the country, so there is an intimate relationship between writers and readers of the paper; any reader can also be a writer. Bylines sometimes list individuals and sometimes chapters of the party, so that readers toggle between seeing individuals and seeing collectives at work. Emory Douglass's images often show individuals holding the paper or wearing Panther buttons, inviting reader to imagine other readers and other Party members. Additionally, readers of the paper buy the paper from other Panthers, not a newsstand. In the act of consuming, a reader becomes a potential contributor, Party member, writer, and part of a collective—a collective that stands in opposition to the "general public" projected by mainstream papers.

Williams goes on:

> The Black Panther Black Community News Service, when put together is a
> glorious living history, a testament to the fact that no matter how the pigs try to
> stop us, the people will be free; clearly points out that all the wild attacks by the
> pigs is like a fool picking up a rock only to drop it on his own foot; and gives
> proof of the objective truth that oppression only creates resistance. (10)

Williams does two things at once here. On the one hand, the existence of the paper *does* prove that oppression breeds resistance. In the face of oppression, a new, collective subjectivity is formed, as evidenced by the paper. But Williams's statement is also a prediction; "the people will be free" projects into the future and is not about the current moment. Williams is claiming that the continued existence of the paper *itself* proves that the Black Panther Party will win, essentially. Certainly, oppression breeds resistance—but it takes only the slightest glance at history to see that particular types of oppression, despite resistance, often continue, century upon century, day in and day out. In general, activists must bolster their own senses of usefulness in order to keep going and to keep making sacrifices. When thinking about revolutionary activism, one can always point to any victory—the production of a newspaper, a successful protest, a legal win—as against the odds and proof of inevitable victory for the side of justice. At the same time, there are only a paltry number of historical victories that anyone could count as long-term wins. Our own thinking about the Panthers now is one such case: we can point to the Panthers' legacy as quite incredible, and as having changed the terrain for all subsequent conversations about race in the United States. But also: Panthers are still being released from prison today, and we can read mass incarceration from the 1980s to today as a long-term strategy of government repression against Black social movements. At any rate, there is a tendency in activist circles to

point to the act of organization itself as a victory and to simultaneously suggest a concrete, full-scale victory in the future. Williams exploits this ambiguity here, suggesting both that the Panthers are already victorious because of the work that they are able to do and that the Panthers will be victorious because we can already see that they're victorious. The paper is, according to Williams, a "glorious living history," projecting an image of people looking back on the paper as successful, both now and in a future in which the Panthers have won.

A key idea recurring throughout the *Black Panther*, and that *Panther* writers use to build an affective connection among readers, is that the capitalist and police forces that the Party opposes are actually relatively weak, are *able to be defeated*. The paper repeatedly illustrates the Panthers and anti-imperialist forces around the world as strong and the police, FBI, and capitalist classes as inept—even as more and more Panthers were jailed and put on trial, or killed.

So it is not surprising that Williams makes the argument that the paper itself, as "a glorious living history," is evidence that "the people will be free." It is also not surprising that Williams describes the paper as "[pointing] out that oppression will breed more resistance." Victory is, in some sense, performative. The existence of the collectivity is the victory. But the existence of the collective is also tenuous. The collectivity will face more and more repression with its growth. The performative sense of victory and the concrete sense of victory are at odds with each other, and Williams uses the two senses at once to boost readers' sense of possibility.

III. The Factographic and the Weird

The circularity points to a more generalizable phenomenon: the paper needs to both reflect reality as it is, in order to connect with people, and project a version of the future that is hopeful. I.e., it has to both reflect the present moment (be a mirror, as in the title of Williams's article), and project something else, something otherwise—something that is both wildly

different enough from our current world to inspire people and raise their expectations and that is similar enough to be imaginable. The paper has to be a mirror, but a mirror of "the people": i.e., of a world that exists but is typically suppressed, and that is generally unrepresented—a mirror of what is not actually currently visible.

Jonathan Flatley, in his work on the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, a contemporaneous Black Leninist organization based in Detroit, observes that the League's newspaper was successful in part because it used flat, "factographic" descriptions to describe events of racial injustice in Detroit factories. In accord with Lenin's writing on revolutionary newspapers, writers for the paper recounted events in a straightforward way, with attention to the details of speech and movement. Flatley theorizes how affective states work in activism, and he follows Daniel Stern's concept of "affective attunement" (Flatley "How"). Drawing on Martin Heidegger, Flatley describes mood, or attunement, as "the overall atmosphere or medium in or through which our thinking, doing and acting occurs, a way of being that shapes our thoughts, our will, and our particular affective attachments to particular objects." Political texts that *work* understand—and address themselves to—readers' mood. And mood, Flatley emphasizes, is social and historical—it is not individual emotion. The most effective propaganda creates a sense of attunement with its audience (Flatley "Reading"). We can also look for mood in texts when we read, as scholars, and attempt to understand how the author or artist understood the audience's mood (Flatley, "Reading").

Moods are, Flatley suggests, inherently plural. Flatley's analysis of the way that one particular story in the League's newspaper works is:

> …the abstract notion of "racism" is here evinced precisely in the shape and rhythm of the events, the "how" of the story as much as in its "what." In so doing, the description produces in its readers the feeling of a differently positioned participation in the same ongoing event of racism at the plant. And that feeling,

the feeling of affective attunement, is also the feeling of a counter-mood being awakened. (Flatley "How" 518)

Following Flatley (who himself draws on Lenin here), we can observe that *The Black Panther* shares a tendency toward flat, quotidian description with the League of Revolutionary Black Workers' papers at many points, but simultaneously does something quite distinct. The paper's descriptions of events are a mix of similarly flat details mixed with language that so strongly wishes to convey a political perspective that it nearly obscures the actual events. That is, the Panthers use some of the League's strategy, but mix it with quite dogmatic language that functions differently. For example, Hazel Mack of Winston-Salem, North Carolina wrote an article for the June 27, 1970 issue of the paper that begins

> Mrs. Allford, victim of A & P management racism, has no insurance to cover her doctor bills, incurred since cutting her hand in November, 1969. She has no money of her own, so she called the manager of the store, who told her to do this if she needed any help, and the measley dog said he couldn't help her. (4)

At least for this reader, it took a moment to put together the story. Mrs. Allford works at A & P, does not have insurance through A & P, and her company is not helping her with money for a workplace injury. The writer of the story prioritizes rhetorical gestures like "the measley dog" over context and framing. (The article is confusing in part because of its ordering; Mack introduces management-racism, then the issue of insurance, then the fact that Mrs. Allford cut her hand—a sort of reverse chronological order. The inclusion of "do this," where it is unclear what "this" refers to, furthers the confusion.) There *are* bits of simple description, though, here and in other stories in the paper: "the doctor is telling her that the hand hasn't healed right, because there is more glass in it and she has to have an operation" (4).[52] The colloquial, talky

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[52] The Panthers launched a campaign around Mrs. Alford (the correct spelling) and A & P management, demanding that the store cease discrimination in hiring, donate to the breakfast

tone here does the same sort of work that Flatley describes in the League's paper. The *Black Panther* vacillates between this sort of simple description and conversational tone and an amped-up rhetoric that nearly obscures the stories being relayed. Even as it does the work of quotidian, simple description, the paper also encourages a certain joy in collective anger. The writers say everything that one might want to say to one's racist boss, or prison warden, or congressman, and the medium of print means that these thoughts do enter a version of the public sphere. Readers toggle between feelings of solidarity about the world as it is (with simple description) and solidarity around desire for a world with wildly different power relationships (imagined through what are essentially florid, linguistically playful insults).

Circling back to our commentary on the newspaper from Black Panther Landon Williams: Williams tells us that the content of the paper is an argument that 'we' (the 'we' brought into being rhetorically by the paper) will win, and is also concrete evidence, he's addressing this problem of both reflecting reality—providing a sort of veracity and speaking to people's experiences that normally go unrepresented—and simultaneously projecting a virtually unimaginable, hopeful future. The everyday, likely rather dull production of the paper constitutes a victory, in that it is happening against the odds, and against the wishes of the state—the production of the newspaper is itself a sort of freedom, or, in contemporary activist parlance, we might think of it as "prefigurative"—prefiguring the world the Panthers wanted to see. The content projects the future, but the paper itself is already evidence of progress and of the very existence of a collective, allowing people to feel confident in the success of their efforts, and to feel that victory is conceivable—at the same time as they imagine wildly other worlds free of racism, arrived at through armed struggle with the state. The Panthers' vision—and every

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program, and pay Mrs. Alford's bill. The store eventually met the Panthers' demands (Bloom 180).

revolutionary vision—has a fantastic quality to it, and also an uncanny quality in that it is supposed to reflect the will of a group that already exists but goes unrepresented in the current society. That is, the fantasy is in some ways quite immediate and graspable: the ability to insult cops; the coming together with other oppressed people; the organization of social programs—the Panthers are creating the situation they want, but in brief, contingent spurts that are increasingly disrupted by repression. Or, as Lauren Berlant argues, there is a dual process at work: people must simultaneously detach from the present world and imagine one that would be better. This work, Berlant writes, "requires a surrealistic affectsphere to counter the one that already exists, enabling a confrontation with the fact that any action of making a claim on the present involves bruising processes of detachment from anchors in the world, along with optimistic projections of a world that is worth our attachment to it" (263). Or, alternately, as David McNally writes, referencing Shklovsky, we are so used to the horrors of the current world that "a genuinely critical theory must operate by way of estrangement effects" (6). The revolutionary vision has to be a reflection of the current moment and a projection at the same time. This impulse toward dichotomous banal and grandiose gestures echoes through the rhetorical choices in individual articles like Hazel Mack's.

IV. Pedagogy through Animal Imagery

Much of the paper's amped-up rhetoric functions to emphasize a set of strict categories that the paper proposes. Almost everyone mentioned is either a pig/capitalist; a lackey/flunky; "the people"; or the vanguard. Pigs are mostly police, but the category also includes politicians, capitalists, military leadership, and others at times. The vanguard includes members of the Black Panther Party, but also international allies like the Viet Cong or American allies like SDS

members. The people are sometimes called "the masses." And "lackeys" and "flunkeys" are synonymous with "Uncle Toms," though "Uncle Toms" is used less frequently.

Animal imagery features prominently throughout the paper: The universe of the *Black Panther* has other animals in it, too—"running dogs" (a translation from Maoist Chinese texts that means lapdog or lackey); "racist dog" as an adjective, plus the Panther image itself. The June 6, 1970 issue has an article about the trial of Black Panther Lee Barry that refers to the judge and assistant district attorney's "tentacles." A piece expelling a Party member in the March 15, 1970 issue instructs readers to deal with the ex-member "as you would deal with a mad dog (15). The same article refers to the ex-member as "turkey trotting" (15). The May 18, 1968 issue includes a definition: "What Is a Pig? A low natured beast that has no regard for law, justice, or the rights of the people; a creature that bites the hand that feeds it; a foul depraved traducer, usually found masquerading as the victim of an unprovoked attack" (12). Additionally, Black cops are often singled out as "nigger pork chops," among other phrases.

In depicting the cops as pigs, the Panthers reverse a long racist tradition of rendering African Americans as less than human. Additionally, the pig image is one that makes the cops appear goofy and unintimidating, when in real life the Panthers had every reason to be frightened of them. A pig is not a particularly violent or lethal animal—pigs are characterized as dirty, but not intimidating. They're a perfect rhetorical fit for rendering cops goofy, repulsive, and vile without rendering them as terrifying. And while Douglas never made images of anthropomorphic panthers to complement the pig images, in the world of the animal references of the paper— which did have silhouettes of panthers as part of the logo—it's clear which animal is the stronger

force.[53] Other contributors to the paper did take up the panther image, too, such as Chico Grant, in his poem "Dig It Baby" (9, June 19, 1967): "let's get together brother / and become one hell of a Big BLACK CAT." Douglas plays up the disgustingness of the pigs, depicting several flies around them almost every time he draws them. The pigs are not there simply as shorthand for cops—they're not just a convenient means of illustrating and simultaneously demeaning police. The pig images are quite prominent and occur throughout the paper, issue after issue. They are drawn in detail, with weapons and badges.

The depiction of cops and capitalists as pigs is in part an ideological decision: the Panthers establish and follow a pattern as part of an effort to educate readers in ways that will help them both survive in the present world and make a new world. Readers need to understand the links between the state in the form of politicians, the state in the form of police, and capital. Essentially, they need to understand the different incarnations of the ruling class and its repressive forces, and consistently depicting these different groups all as pigs conveys to the Panther readership that these groups are all part of the same force.

The pig imagery is also a means of thinking about bodies and their political significance. Pigs, or at least pigs in the popular imagination, are egregiously corporeal: pigs are animals; they are fat and take up a lot of bodily space; they lay in mud and on the ground. They are an animal that we commonly think of as disgusting, and disgusting because they are so bodily. Douglas also consistently depicts flies surrounding the pigs he draws, creating a sense that the pigs are smelly, as well as connected to another gross animal. Smelliness, too, is an overstepping of

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[53] With regard to the Panther image, the Panthers derived their name and image from the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, associated with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The Panthers in Lowndes County used a Panther image to denote their party on a voting ballot. The segregation candidate was represented on the ballot by a white rooster (Bloom 42).

bounds and a sign that the pig is over-embodied. The Panthers' pig imagery is therefore a kind of reversal. African Americans have been often been depicted as overly bodily and animalistic; mainstream discourse brackets African Americans off from accessing the abstract, disembodied subjectivity that correlates to visions of an impartial public sphere. *The Black Panther* retains an interest in the bodily. Like *For Malcolm*, it affirms the bodily and avoids projecting a traditional public sphere that would separate off the "private" from the "public," thrusting questions of, for instance, how individuals find what they need to survive, into the purview of the paper, creating a subaltern counterpublic, in Nancy Fraser's language (70). As the Black Panther writers and artists create this subaltern counterpublic, though, they figure the state differently. The state—and pigs—are bodily, rather than disembodied and abstract, and they are especially bodily. Through the use of pig imagery alongside their attention to the corporeal needs of readers, the Panthers make two arguments to their readers: 1) Panthers and "the people" (including their ideal readers) are bodily and part of a collectivity based in embodiment and lived experience and 2) the ruling class (the state, capital, and police) is intimidating and all-powerful in its abstracted form, but it is composed of individual, embodied people who are both physically defeatable and morally accountable. The task of waging a proletarian revolution against the ruling class is less daunting when we pit not individual bodies against an abstract ruling class, but a collectivity of embodied subjects against a hyper-embodied and therefore individualized ruling class. The effort calls to mind again Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesenthal's metaphor for labor organization: capital (and capitalist forces) operate like water, combining easily, while workers are like a bucket of rocks—ultimately individual (74). Offe and Wiesenthal argue that this circumstance is fundamental to capitalism: you can add "dead" labor together in the form of money, but you cannot readily add "living" labor (i.e., workers) together:

> …the atomized form of living labor… stands in conflict with the integrated, or liquid, form of "dead" labor [and] causes a power relationship; the capital ("dead" labor) of each firm is always united from the beginning, whereas living labor is atomized and divided by competition. Workers cannot "merge," at best they can associate in order to partly compensate for the power advantage that capital derives from the liquidity of "dead" labor. (74)

The Black Panther, though, suggests that part of the work of propaganda is to socially cohere individuals into a collectivity, as well as to undercut the advantage that capital has by correctly identifying—naming as "pigs"—and individuating the various forces of the ruling class.

The Panther's strategies here lead to odd, surreal imagery. For instance, Douglas's insistent detail of the flies flying around each pig sticks out. An image from the June 20, 1970 issue, for instance, depicts a pig encircled by flies even as he is being hit by bullets. (The image accompanies an article about GI anti-war organizing.) We might expect the bullets to take precedence in the visual space surrounding the pig, and for the flies to drop out—but they remain. (See Figure 8.) In general, the depiction of police as pigs is so important that it persists even in increasingly odd forms. In the June 13, 1970 issue, one depiction of a cop gives the cop a normal human face and body, but with a fly buzzing around him and a label, "pig" on his shirt. The insistence on pig imagery indicates that the newspaper works in part because it engages a fantasy: that the cops and other powers-that-be are foolish and easily defeated (and more so in these individual, hyper-corporeal forms). Amiri Baraka's description is instructive:

> Emory's "pig" was a nasty scrawny filthy creature with the projected sensibility that was mostly slime lover and animal slacker, if you will. The bravura touch was the flies that always circled the creature's nasty self. Whatever one thought of the Panther philosophy as a whole, I did not meet anyone among any sector of the Movement that did not dig that pig, just looking at it would crack you up in a mixture of merriment and contempt! (180-81)

"Mixture of merriment and contempt" cuts to the effectiveness of the image. The Panthers needed to both foment positive emotions among their members and larger audience, to

offset the fact that the members were taking huge risks. They also needed to render police—a deadly and terrifying force—less intimidating. In the many iterations of the pig image in the paper, the Panthers formed new ways of thinking and talking about the police, short-circuiting the natural reaction of fear and leading, it seems, to a sort of exhilaration at having a sense of power over them. If much of the Panther readership already felt contempt toward the pigs, Douglas's art and the writing in *The Black Panther* occasioned a sense of publicity, solidarity, and therefore joy in that contempt.

Page 15 of this edition of the paper is representative. This page prints hate mail that the Panthers have received—numerous pieces of mail filled with racial slurs, death threats, and instruction to go 'back to Africa.' (The Panthers provide evidence of the sort of racism they address, and that is often denied, in people's reaction to them.) On the same page, we have an image of a gun—a rifle of some sort in silhouette toward the bottom of the page—presented with no commentary whatsoever, as a sort of decoration or reminder. On the page, below the hate mail and before an article about greedy pig businessmen is large, bolded, headline style text that reads "A pig / Is a Pig / Is a Pig." This phrase draws attention to the use of the pig metaphor here, in that it almost doesn't read, or reads ambiguously. Is the reader to take it to mean a pig (cop) is a pig (animal) is a pig (cop)? Or does it mean a pig (cop) is a pig (cop) is a pig (cop)? The phrase does usefully conflate the several types of pigs that exist in *The Black Panther*—mostly police, but also politicians, leadership in the military, and capitalists are rendered as pigs. A brief article by Durea Bethea in this same edition gets at this: it opens "a pig, is a pig, is a pig" and continues "these landlord pigs are just as bad as the pig cops" (5). This conflation makes a political point: the police, who individually might be working class, or Black, are the same as the capitalist and politicians in that they represent the capitalists' and politicians' interests. The slippage is useful

politically; it trains readers to know where they can and cannot make alliances. Additionally, "a pig, is a pig, is a pig" trains the reader that there are no exceptions here—police do not act as individuals; they can never be trusted; and you must never waiver in your understanding that they are the enemy.

At the same time, the ambiguity of what the phrase *means* highlights the pig metaphor and its weirdness, inviting readers to question the metaphor and acknowledge the terrifying nature of the cops and the state, and what must have been a certain terror felt throughout the organization: a pig is a pig is a pig, but we all know that's not true—a pig (cop) is not a pig (animal), but an armed person, backed up by all the powers of the state. While the Panthers depict the cops as easily defeated, with revolution almost inevitable—they also wink at the reader about this, which makes the propaganda more effective by acknowledging the audience's knowledge that out-and-out revolution would be terrifying. That is, the Panthers manage to both tout the politics of immediate armed revolution, unreservedly, and give a subtle nod of acknowledgment to the terror, oddity, and likely surreal quality of the moment they were in.

Sometimes the Panthers use the phrase to make a different political point: that the race of police does not matter. In the July 30, 1970 edition of the paper, Karen Thompson of Camden, NJ writes in to describe the police beating up some gang members who were fighting. As is common in *The Black Panther*, she describes the police as pigs and also makes reference to pigs in places beyond where she would need to in order to simply avoid referring to "cops" or "police": "they came for their own sadistic and piggish reasons," a reference to the "pig car." But she also notes that "there were 30 pigs, 27 White and 3 Black: which makes no difference because 'a pig, is a pig, is a pig.'" The category 'pig' trumps race and replaces the color line—an important parsing of exactly whom the Panthers hope to address in their paper, who they

consider capable of being on the right side of revolutionary politics. The Panthers faced active repression from Black police, FBI agents, and snitches, and had to have a worldview that could account for this, and one that went beyond the older notion of "Uncle Tom-ism."

Cops *are* occasionally depicted as human in the paper. In the April 11, 1970 edition, a woman named Judi Douglas has an article, "Four Pigs Were Offed this Week….A Victory for the People." The article shows the headshots of four policemen who were killed by men trying to evade them after being caught in a criminal act. As the author points out, the gunmen did not act out of political motives, and the movement cannot claim the victory. But the author has some conclusions. She argues, "the deaths of these four pigs and especially their dying in this manner should point out the fallacy of the 'superman' image of the pigs and the plausibility of dealing with them in such a manner." She goes on: "The pigs have always tried to maintain an image of being 'indestructible,' In the past whenever there were shootouts or confrontations between the pigs and the people, there was never any pig killed, one never died in the face of such over-whelming evidence that no one could have lived." Douglas suggests that the police covered up deaths in earlier instances, particularly in the riots/rebellions in Watts and Detroit. She says that the image of "supermen in blue" has been punctured. The actual pictures of the police are official police portraits of some sort—all are in uniform, looking into the camera. It's the only image of police that might be termed "dignified," and this image of the actual, real, embodied police seems to be allowed only by the fact of their deaths. The cops are unintimidating because they are dead, and so we can show them to you in their most intimidating form. Douglas then instructs readers: "Relate to pigs as men, less than men, rather as foul perverts, and see that they can be dealt with. They are only flesh and bone, and they will bleed: they will die." Disregarding for the moment the homophobic implications of using the word "pervert" in this way in 1970, Douglas

draws out for us the relationship between the depiction of cops as pigs and the emphasis on the concrete word on the page that I discuss elsewhere here. The police are both specific individuals, and an abstraction. It is far likelier that an individual officer will die or be injured than it is that the Panthers will be able to defeat the entire police force and the social apparatus that they support.

At the same time, as Vijay Prashad points out, the Panthers' bravado came partly from the Panthers, but also partly from the collective experience of African Americans in the United States seeing the Tet Offensive, and the fact that the Vietnamese army was able to defeat the United States army (63). The Panthers aligned themselves with the many third-world revolutionary movements that were occurring at the same time they were organizing. In mainstream media, the Panthers were frequently associated with Third World Communism (Rhodes 108). Images by Emory Douglas draw comparisons: a January 30, 1970 image, one among many similar images, depicts a pig composed of American flag garb knifed and skewered by sharp objects attached to wood, with guns pointed at his face. Text interspersed with the guns reads "get out of the ghetto," "get out of Latin America," "get out of Asia," and "get out of Africa." Across the world, colonial forces looked vulnerable in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Panthers' analysis was that they were both colonized and living under fascism in the United States. Nonetheless, the Panthers did not have the numbers, resources, or overall political situation of the Viet Cong or any other Third World revolutionary group. Emphasizing officers' "flesh and blood" obscures the difficulty of what the Panthers set out to do. The pig imagery in the paper allows the Panthers to dehumanize the police (which was politically necessary); makes the police seem relatively unintimidating; and counters a long racist tradition of rendering Black people less than human.

At the level of actual political analysis, the Panthers engaged in fantasy via comparisons to other political situations as well. Panther ideology held that the United States was a fascist country, and the *Black Panther* references Nazi Germany over and over again. In "Disneyland, Denver Style," for instance, an article in the March 28, 1970 edition, Michael D. Hill of the Colorado chapter critiques African Americans living in a Black middle class neighborhood in Denver:

> …it is absurd for a Black man to think that because of a few more pennies he is that much closer to being free. To fall into the pit of hoping to exist a little longer because of your economic status is to follow the blue print of your extermination that was layed out during the mass murder of the German Jewish community. You can profess your patriotism and anything else, blood, and you can dream of living happily ever after under Richard Nixon or "Georgy Boy" Wallace, your soul may belong to a wish and a dream, but your life belongs to fascism. (4)

While I do not want to de-emphasize in any way the deep racism of the United States then and now, arguably, the Panthers were wrong to argue that the United States was specifically a fascist state. Angela Davis, who had a close relationship with the Panthers but also a number of political differences, and who was also a member of the Communist Party, writes of the comparison:

> The basic difficulty, I thought, was that we were being asked to believe that the monster of fascism had already broken loose and that we were living in a country not essentially different from Nazi Germany. Certainly, we had to fight the mounting threat of fascism, but it was incorrect and misleading to inform people that we were already living under fascism. Moreover, the resistance dictated by such an analysis would surely lead us in the wrong direction. First, in seeking to include absolutely everyone who had an interest in overthrowing that fascism, we might be pushed into the arms of the liberals. Our revolutionary thrust would thus be blunted. And if we were not led in that direction, we would be pressed toward the opposite end of the political spectrum. For, if we believed we were living under genuine fascism, it would mean that virtually all democratic channels of struggle were closed and we should immediately and desperately rush into the armed struggle. (198)

Davis argues convincingly that "fascism" was not a particularly accurate descriptor, and not useful for the Panthers' purposes. This is not to say that the U. S. government acted any less

horrifically toward African Americans than did the fascist German government to Jews—but, thinking politically, strategy changes. It seems like it would also be clear to many readers that the analogy (repeated throughout the paper) was very loose. Analogies are often useful in activism. However, as Davis points out—this analogy was likely not very helpful in terms of strategy and tactics.

At the level of propaganda, it may have given people something to rally behind. It is unclear if this always worked, though. Hill ends his article with a comparison between the middle-class Blacks living in Denver and "a column of 8,000 Jews…on there [sic] way to Ponar, a concentration camp" (16). *The Black Panther* was certainly a successful organizing tool; it is unclear how this sort of rhetoric shaped its success. The Panthers oscillated between describing everyday acts of harassment and violence and engaging a particular sort of fantasy—one in which, as Davis notes, armed revolution is the key organizing strategy.

V. The Fantastical

We might, however, consider references to the Holocaust in terms of 60s activist investments in the gothic. Victorian Nelson argues that antirealist, fantastical mid-century literatures from Eastern Europe were admitted into the United States' realist and literary canon because Americans tolerated anti-realism specifically in relation to the Holocaust: "the Holocaust became an acceptable area for the fantastic in the English-speaking world if only because the experience of the camps defied one's sense of what could happen in real life" (88). Whether or not the Panthers' references to the Holocaust were helpful for theorizing strategy, they were, perhaps, an engagement with a historical moment that registered as fantastical in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s.

With this engagement with fantasy in mind, I would like to return to the larger question of the oddity of pig imagery in *The Black Panther*. In the June 27, 1970 issue, an article on the police murder of Jerry Lee Aimes describes the scene in which Aimes was killed. The article opens "Early last Saturday morning (June 20th) Los Angeles pig bullets brutally ripped through the body of Jerry Lee Amie, 25 year old" (sic) (3). Specifying the bullets as "pig bullets" carries necessary information—we don't immediately know that the sentence references a police murder otherwise. However, the construction of the sentence makes the word "pig" feel extraneous: "pig" is not usually an adjective, and it acts as one here. "Pig bullets" is not a familiar phrase. Additionally, the sentence is structured to almost animate the bullets, since the bullets are the subject of the sentence. The bullets sound like they are moving of their own will, almost. And a pig bullet reads as a particular type of bullet, as though the bullet itself were different for coming from a pig's gun. The article also includes the phrases "pig units" and "pig cars." An article on the next page, "Pigs Brutalize 16 Year Old Brother in Mantua County," references the "pig wagon" for a cop cars and "pig pen" for jails. In "Revolutionary Example," on the next page, the author references a particular cop as "a low natured beast running amuck." In writing throughout the paper, police are rendered as pigs with great consistency. The consistency is, in some ways, easy to understand: the Panthers, ideologically, felt it important to render cops as pigs and they do this throughout the paper. But also: the pigs oink things; they take people to the pigpen or the sty; they reach for things with their hooves. The Panthers extend the label "pig" to create surreal imagery. While the main purpose of the "pig" motif is to indicate that the Panthers can win and that the police are defeatable, the motif becomes at points so surreal and odd, moving beyond a simple consistency in the Panthers' way of thinking about cops, that we might take the motif to be a sort of wink. The *Black Panther* flags the nonrealism of its own discourse, admitting to

readers that difficulty of the task that the Panthers face. The surreal allows space for disbelief and doubt while simultaneously bolstering confidence.

The *Black Panther* constructs a world that mixes quotidian details—details that invite attunement and identification—with a world that describes violence in fairly fantastical ways, ways that create a sort of distance between the reader and the threat itself. The paper manages fear, often by invoking the gory, grotesque, and fantastical. An Emory Douglas image from 1974, for instance, depicts a small child looking distressed, staring down in three-quarter view. The child's bib (which also reads as a sort of straight jacket, given context) has an American flag pattern in red and black, with stripes positioned vertically to evoke the bars of a jail.[54] Text at the top of the page reads "NIGHTMARE, NIGHTMARE WE'LL FORCE YOU AWAY NEVER TO LET YOU COME BACK TO HAUNT US ANOTHER DAY." (See Figure 10). In this formulation, the "we"—the collectivity the paper addresses—faces something that is both a dream and a monster of sorts (something that can be "[forced] away" and also addressed in second person). The "we" of *The Black Panther* is also "[haunted]." The "nightmare" is never identified—just indicated by the flag imagery the boy wears and by context within the paper. "Nightmare" works on multiple scales, then: it evokes both the large-scale, all-encompassing monster of American racism and the traumatic history of individual repression that Party members had experienced. The singsong cadence and rhyme of "away" with "day" echoes nursery rhymes for children. Douglas's image creates a vision of the future only by negation of the current world: the current world is actually a nightmare—not real—and can be pushed away. The image is a young child, suggesting the future—but the child is looking downward and distraught, and is already constrained by the flag around him. The realm of fantasy here—

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[54] Douglas makes this move frequently: flag imagery is frequently also prison imagery.

nightmare and nursery rhyme—is what allows an alternative vision of the future. Fantasy figures elsewhere in the paper as well. In the March 28, 1970 issue, an article attribute simply to "Black Panther Party / Philadelphia Branch" begins by comparing the events it describes to an Edgar Allan Poe story:

> One of the identifying characteristics of a pig is that such a creature has no regard for human life--born or unborn. The incident that we are about to relate is every bit as gruesome and macabre as a novel by Edgar Allen Poe, but is far more chilling as it took place in reality, not in some writer's imagination.
>
> This brutal episode in the gory book of pig-community relations opens on Thursday, March 19th, 1970, at 6 o'clock p.m. The scene is the A & P Market at 20th and Erie and the first villain is a rent-a-pig named Abraham Blake. The victims are Rosemary Cooper, age 19, Karen Vincent, age 17, and Connie Vincent, age 16; all sisters. (6)

The events that the Philadelphia branch describes are fairly dramatic: the security guard at the store harasses the sisters; they talk back; he attempts to kick them out and then assaults them; the sisters fight back; he continues to assault them. The experience seems both horrific and fairly banal at the same time: the article later describes previous interactions with this particular security guard, who had harassed family members earlier on. The comparison to a Poe novel routes the reader's experience of racism. There is a sense of a familiar scene of harassment unfolding, inviting the kind of attunement that Flatley describes. There is simultaneously a comparison to the fantastical and the literary. Interestingly, Edgar Allan Poe wrote only one novel: *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, which is 'about' race in a fairly fundamental way (and is also an adventure tale that is not eerie in the way that one associates with Poe). The

reference seems to be more to Poe's short stories. The writers then set up the narration as though we are reading a detective novel, listing where the "brutal episode" "opens," the "scene," and "the victims." This particular article takes tendencies in the rest of the paper and accentuates them. The security guard is first referenced as "rent-a-pig Blake." He's then referred to as "Pig Blake" or occasionally "Blake" throughout the article. He later gives a bag to Rosemary "in his pig fashion." An early passage demonstrates how consistently the writers stick to Blake's being a literal "pig":

> [The sisters] were laughing and talking loudly. Pig Blake said nothing to them about the noise until they were at the cashier with their groceries. This fool told them to "shut up"!
> One of the girls jokingly said, "I don't see why he told me to shut up. I'm a psychiatric patient. I'm crazy," whereupon Rosemary laughed. Blake had put the groceries in bags and in his pig fashion rolled the bag up and gave them to Rosemary. Rosemary opened the bag and told one of her sisters to check the cookies to see if any of them were broken and if so, to put them back and get another pack. Blake oinked,"you just get out of here!"
> Rosemary replied,"I'm going just as soon as my two sisters get ready."
> Then this foul Black lackey, Blake, grabbed her and Rosemary cried,"Get off of me!" He oinked, "you're getting out!" Rosemary again cried "Get off of me!" but he wouldn't let her go as she grabbed her bag. Blake punched her in her face with one of his hoofs and punched this pregnant sister, Rosemary, in her stomach! (15)

The inclusion of the detail of Rosemary joking that she was a psychiatric patient invokes genre as well—psychiatric patients are often the subject of mysteries and horror. The descriptions of Blake here turn surreal. "Blake oinked 'you just get out of here!'" uses "oinked" when "said" or "yelled" would have been more straightforward. More interestingly, though, "Blake punched her in her face with one of his hoofs" actively creates a fantastical scene. When we read "oinked" we know that it is operating as a simple substitute for "said" or "yelled." "Punched her in the face with one of his hoofs" is odder. No one would write "punched her in the face with one of his hands," since just writing "punched her in the face" would get that idea across. Here the writer

alters more than just a word, creating a fiction of a punch with a hoof—and one tries to picture the hoof-punch; as I read I picture one of Emory Douglas's cartoon pigs fighting with the girls, not actual police. "Pig" is not a metaphor within a realistic narrative, but part of a fantasy in which police actually have the bodies of pigs. The paper relies on a mix of familiarity and fantasy.

VI. Cannibalism, Penetration, and the Integrity of Collective Formations

Along similarly dark lines, the newspaper often refers to "bacon" and "pork chops" and repeats the phrase "for every pork chop there is a frying pan" (March 15, 1970, p. 15). If police are pork chops, and a frying pan indicates the cops' deaths, sequentially the next thing is for people to eat the police. Cannibalistic imagery compounds the oddity of a set of images that is already fairly weird. Black police officers are frequently referenced as "nigger pork chops." Language about pork chops and pigs as meat more generally occurs so frequently in the papers that we can conclude that an image of eating cops is an important purpose of the metaphor, rather than just a joke that tends to pop up in relation to the pig metaphor. A particularly odd pair of adjacent articles from May 11, 1969 is illustrative. The article printed on the left of the page, "Breakfast for School Children," describes the kick-off for the Kansas City, Missouri Breakfast for School Children program.[55] The article circles around both food and borders. In the first part, the writer, Pete O'Neal, reports that some businesses have been unwilling to donate food to the Panthers:

> Some of them have come across with donations but other jive-timing corner grocery stores charging space-age prices for stone-age quality food

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[55] The Black Panthers developed a number of community programs in 1969 and 1970, including the breakfast program, a food distribution program, a pest control program, a plumbing program, and many others. The Free Breakfast for School Children program was the most successful of these. The Party reported that it fed 20,000 children in the 1968-1969 school year (Bloom 184).

> have refused to cooperate. Therefore we call on the masses of oppressed people to kill this worm of economic exploitation. (O'Neal)

"The worm of economic exploitation" gets the reader to connect "worm" with bad food—"stone-age quality food." The various metaphors operating together here do not neatly add up to anything, but do suggest an image in which the worm of economic exploitation is invading the food. That is, the metaphor gets really strange: the worm of economic exploitation (which is metaphorical) is eating the food (literal) and the people (literal) are called upon to kill the metaphorical worm.

The article goes on to list a number of groceries that have not donated. Included in the description is this:

> The Kroger chain store refused to donate food or otherwise cooperate with the people's revolutionary program because they claimed they already donated food to Soul Inc., another Black organization which is doing their thing to take care of the people's needs. But that is still a cop-out. The People will also deal with this antagonistic contradiction.

The writers' tone with regard to Soul Inc. is quite strange—on the one hand, Soul Inc. is "doing their thing"; on the other, "the People will also deal with this antagonistic contradiction"—i.e., presumably figure out how to recover ground on which Soul, Inc. is encroaching, stop the Soul program, or perhaps deal with the grocer instead. The word "also" here seems to suggest that both the grocer's unwillingness *and* Soul, Inc. are problems. "Contradiction" has a fairly idiosyncratic, but also often nebulous, meaning within Marxist organizations: capitalism produces contradictions, which might mean situations in which there is no right answer, situations that appear surprising or to have features at odds with one another, or something else —but the usage here is particularly confounding. The writers seem be pondering the appropriate response, wondering, essentially, if they should be aggressive toward Soul, Inc., negotiate with Soul, Inc., ask Soul, Inc. to join up with the Panthers, or something else. The writers here express

anxiety about boundaries, or a lack of boundaries, between them and other groups. Later in the same article, there is a fairly rare mention of White people specifically: "This revolutionary program will be a good way to show the oppressed masses of Black, Third World, and poor White peoples that they are the strength of the Revolution." The Panthers always aligned themselves with various White groups. However, White people are not frequently mentioned in the paper. O'Neal reiterates the Panthers' idea that they are an organization for all oppressed people, and that White people per se are not the enemy. It's a curious spot for this reiteration, though—O'Neal makes a point of drawing the Panthers' lines quite precisely just as he expresses a fear of co-optation by another Black group.

The article is strangely organized and covers quite a lot of ground. It next goes expresses an anxiety that the program will be co-opted by the Board of Education, which suddenly offered money to fund free breakfasts for children in their own program. That is, O'Neal expresses two worries about being co-opted in this article: anxiety about being co-opted by the school board, and anxiety about being co-opted by Soul Inc. Alongside these anxieties is a lot of discourse about food and worms. Toward the end of the article, he writes:

> Money won't buy this program because the people own it, the Dollar being a funky tool of racist Capitalism! The people can only guess what the pig structure intends to do with this money. Start a competing breakfast program?? If they do you can believe it will be with surplus commodity food – powdered milk, powdered eggs, powdered pig! But the Black Community needs soul food— FRESH eggs, FRESH milk, FRESH fruit, FRESH meat, THE PIG WILL FAIL!! RIGHT ON!!
> ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE

It is not unrealistic for the Panthers to speculate that a public schools breakfast program for poor kids would provide sub-par food. At the same time, the language here suggests that a question of authenticity is in play as well. Powdered milk, eggs, and pig read as fake food, whereas the Panthers' "FRESH" food is more authentic—their organization genuinely represents the people,

whereas the school board is co-opting their program to mitigate the effects of the Panthers' organizing. The word "soul" here, too, does more than signify Southern African American food, particularly since eggs, milk, fruit, and meat are not specific to "soul food" as a cuisine. "Soul" here also carries the more general meaning of standing in for authentic Blackness ("the emotional or spiritual quality of African American life and culture…" ("soul, n.")). O'Neal is concerned with maintaining the politics and programs of the Black Panther Party as such, keeping the politics bound to the concrete organizational activity of the breakfast program.

Additionally, powdered versions of food specifically have no integrity as particular foods, calling to mind Offe and Wiesenthal's labor metaphor once again, with capitalist forces operating like water—combining easily—and labor operating like buckets of rocks, bound to individual bodies. Offe and Wiesenthal's point would seem to contradict O'Neal's anxiety—Offe and Wiesenthal see workers' individuality as a barrier to organizing, whereas O'Neal wants to maintain the wholeness and integrity of the Panther Party against the liquidity of other organizations. The Panthers, in both formulations, though, are ideally a whole, and do not separate easily into their constituent parts. The school board is like powder, and can un-constitute and reconstitute itself, enabling it to co-opt things. But the Panthers as an organization are like real, solid food and cannot be separated out from one another outside of the act of being eaten—and eating here is nourishment and resources more generally, a vision of the world in which "Black, Third World, and poor White" kids do not want.

The passage here is also odd for its way of talking about pigs. "Pig" means police and the ruling class throughout the Panther archive; one never gets away from this usage for long. Ways of talking about meat in relation to the breakfast program take on extra layers of meaning. Here is the phrasing from the passage above once more:

> powdered milk, powdered eggs, powdered pig! But the Black Community needs soul food—FRESH eggs, FRESH milk, FRESH fruit, FRESH meat, THE PIG WILL FAIL!! RIGHT ON!!

Here "pig" switches meaning extremely quickly. We go from "powdered pig" in a list of foods to "FRESH meat, THE PIG WILL FAIL!!" in the course of a few lines of text. Notably, "pig" is still "pig" and not "pork chops" or "meat" or "bacon" (as might make sense in referencing a breakfast program). When "pig" is in the form presented by the school board, it is not intact—it's powder—but it is also still potentially living. In reference to the food the Panthers will provide, we switch to "meat"—which is definitely dead and ready to be consumed. That is—the ruling class (which for the Panthers seems to include the school board here as well as the police) is dead and ready to be eaten in the Panthers' breakfast, but possibly still viable and dangerous in the school board's breakfast. We also move immediately to "THE PIG WILL FAIL." It is clear that pig here does not (at least at the surface level) refer to meat. It seems to refer to the school board, but the relationship between the school board and "funky Capitalism" is something that is a bit trickier than the relationship between, say, the U.S. military and funky Capitalism or the police and funky Capitalism. That is, O'Neal is reacting to the fact that the school board creating a breakfast program is a pretty real co-optation threat. The same people that the Panthers want to reach with their program very well might be satisfied to have breakfast provided to them by the school.[56] The move to "THE PIG WILL FAIL" indicates that what is under analysis here is not, in fact, what kind of food the school board will serve, but rather what holds the Panther Party together, binding it to its activities and to "the people" that it wishes to represent.

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[56] Schools *did* in fact adopt free breakfast programs on a larger scale around this time, and some Panthers as well as scholars speculate that this was in part to undercut the Panthers efforts. J. Edgar Hoover was specifically concerned about the free breakfast program and the connections it allowed the Panthers to make with moderates (Milkman).

The adjacent article thematizes incorporation and bodily integrity. It also draws attention to its own status as writing in its attempt to bind a lot of Panther ideology and propaganda tactics into a single article—perhaps indicating that the authors here, John Brown and Al Croll, also felt anxious about conveying Party ideology. The article is titled "We Want an End to the Robbery by the White Man of the Black Community," which does not line up particularly well with the contents of the article. The article begins with an italicized preface:

> *The Black community has been ripped off again Brother Alvert Joe Linthcome's death by pigs. The same pigs who refused to give a piece of bacon to the masses of Black people, who were not getting their basic needs and desires met by this pig power structure. The Black Panther Party has gone forth and met the people's need with forces of the Hunters Point Community in serving the community hot breakfast every school day. The avaricious businessman can no longer exist in our Black communities and we mean all nickel slick jive monkey a - - businessmen.* (11 May 1969, page 8)

The first line reads as though it contains typos, but it is not clear where the sentence would be going if that is the case. "Rip off" suggests that something has been taken from the community, and, indeed, Linthecome was a Panther (rather than a victim of police murder unrelated to the Panthers), killed going into Panther headquarters. The passage continues "The same pigs who refused to give a piece of bacon to the masses of Black people, who were not getting their basic needs and desires met by this pig power structure." There are a few odd things here. First, the pigs who killed Linthecome are *not* literally the pigs who refused to give food to the breakfast program. One instance refers to police; the next instance refers to local businessmen. Brown and Croll push to classify the businessmen who will not give money to the program into the larger schema that the Panthers have established in the paper: people are pigs, lackeys (sellouts or good-for-nothings, people who are powerless but not trustworthy), or "the people." Businessmen, particularly Black businessmen, were an odd fit for any category—particularly given the Panthers' Marxist orientation and the fact that such businessmen would be the petit-

bourgeoisie and distinct from the bourgeoisie in traditional Marxist formulations. That is, we can detect the Panthers' frustration at not quite knowing how to deal with people who did not want to participate in the breakfast program.

Additionally, the passage "*The same pigs who refused to give a piece of bacon to the masses of Black people, who were not getting their basic needs and desires met by this pig power structure*" suggests that pigs *would* give people bacon. That is, Brown and Croll here are 1) collapsing bacon as food and bacon as police and/or businessmen into one another and 2) both asserting that the police and businessmen are the same and that they are one with the power structure and 3) suggesting that 'the people' could eat or consume the power structure, if only the pigs would give them some bacon. Food and state power are collapsed into one thing that the Panthers want access to. So pigs (and bacon, and pork) *are* state power, but also they're bodily—one can't get away from the cops having murdered Linthecome; one can't get away from the fact that "bacon" and "pig" are precisely about the body, its materiality, death, and consumption by others.

As in the previous article, one issue here is incorporation. The Panthers want access to state power, but by taking over the state—not by being granted reforms by, say, the school board, as in the last example. There is also a recognition that the gains from reforms often *do* give one power—free breakfast at school takes pressure off Panther parents to provide food at home as well as do activism, for instance—at the same time as they put the Panther project at risk.

After the italicized introduction, the article starts out colloquially. I will quote the body of the article in its entirety here, since the whole of it is useful for context.

> That's just like Allan & Sons Meat Company, dig this. Here are some gully-snipers that has one of the largest meat operations in the City and the ordors that come from these racists dog's company is enough to knock an elephant out, so when members of the Party contacts these beasts about the Breakfast for School

Children Program for donations, the dog pig didn't give up a link, do you hear me? Not even a promise. People, it's crystal clear these avaricious businessmen don't have the interest of the people in mind at all, you know like there is plenty of meat at the bottom of the hill. Enough meat to serve the people's needs but the people are supposed to play right on past that. It's just like me screwing a sister in front of a crowd of brothers and telling them they don't supposed to want to engage in no screwing, how silly does that sound? How can these punks believe that everything is here on earth to meet the people's needs and the people's needs are not being filled or met. That's his butt with his finger stuck in it. The people's needs must be met by any means necessary and it ain't no bull-shit.
power to the people
black power to black
people
POWER TO THE PEOPLE
BLACK POWER TO BLACK
PEOPLE
PANTHER POWER TO THE
VANGUARD

The body of the article continues putting images of business owners as animals in close proximity to talk of animals as meat: "these beasts…the dog pig didn't give up a link," for instance. The article also takes a decidedly sexual turn, one that is concerned primarily with 1) bodies and material as resources and 2) anxiousness about borders and incorporation. "Meat at the bottom of the hill" is, presumably, a colloquialism, and one that makes the image of meat quite abstract. What hill? Do we just mean a pile of meat? The fact that we cannot picture this meat abstracts it and lets "meat" become a synecdoche for power and material comfort. The collapsing of meat as literal meat and meat as police collapses material wealth and the seizing of power from police. That is, the collapsing of literal meat and meat as police reinforces the notion that the police are what is separating 'the people' from any degree of material comfort: defeat the police and you get to have everything you need—or, the police are the army of the racist capitalist state.

The sexual turn focuses on the state's withholding things from people and with the breach-ability of the Panthers, the lack of physical integrity to the organization. It's worth

bracketing the sexism of the analogy between "screwing a sister in front of a crowd of brothers and telling them they don't supposed to want to engage in no screwing" and enough meat being there to "serve the people's needs but the people are supposed to play right on past that." The comparison of "a sister" to "meat" is, perhaps, dehumanizing, but we might also simply read the passage as comparing the sex drive to the drive for nourishment. The phrase "telling them they don't supposed to want to engage in no screwing" objects not only to meat (resources) being withheld from 'the people,' but rather 'the people' being told they should not even *want* resources or have desires. With the Free Breakfast program, the Panthers are revealing a need that is already there and forcing an acknowledgment of it. That is, the Panthers, in asking grocers for donations, are making public and collective what has previously been an individual problem—parents not having enough to take care of food and other bills. Simultaneously, the Panthers are taking over what should be a state function, setting up the seeds of a dual-power situation.

The sexual analogy, together with the repeated references to eating pigs, reveals an anxiety around questions of incorporation—who is incorporated into the organization and who is outside of it? Are its edges penetrable? And also, what the Panthers seek to do is breach the borders of the state—to defeat the police, to take state power. It was likely quickly becoming clear that the Panthers' borders were less solid than the state's, both in terms of questions of who was and who was not represented by the Panthers and, more immediately, by the fact that the Panthers were being infiltrated by FBI sold out by former members, and so on. What is presumably another odd colloquialism occurs at the end of the passage: "How can these punks believe that everything is here on earth to meet the people's needs and the people's needs are not being filled or met. That's his butt with his finger stuck in it." "Filled or met" is redundant,

which makes "filled" seem unnecessary and echo the other images of penetration here. "That's his butt with his finger stuck in it" likely has homophobic connotations (along with "punks"); certainly male penetration is made to seem negative here. The oddest part of this, though, is that there is really no referent. Is the "he" one of the punks that was just referenced? Is it the "dog pig" owner of the meat company? The phrase reads as deeply abstract, since there is nothing to attach it to—it's a sexualized, strange phrase dropped in the middle of nowhere. The sexual penetration imagery of this article alongside images of cops as food in the neighboring article and the overall topic being getting food for the Breakfast for Schoolchildren Program registers uncertainty about the Panther organization as a body that could act collectively in a meaningful way, and successfully consume and remake the state, as opposed to being breached or dissolved.

Additionally, the article's very last lines emphasize the ink on the page in much the same way that a lot of text in *For Malcolm* did:

> power to the people
> black power to black
> people
> POWER TO THE PEOPLE
> BLACK POWER TO BLACK
> PEOPLE
> PANTHER POWER TO THE
> VANGUARD

The text repeats itself in all caps, making a move from text that bears meaning to text that operates visually, since one starts to pick up that the text is the same as what one has just read and stops listening for meaning in quite the same way, and since the shift to all caps orients the reader to visuals. The move to make words also visuals is actually about breaching boundaries, too—the reader starts out within the frame of the story/monologue that has occurred directly above then shifts to seeing the words as concrete material outside of the frame of the story, sharing haptic space with the reader. That is, the text here breaks the 'fourth wall' directly after it

has described penetration of bodily borders—hinting at a breaching of the reader's/viewer's boundaries.

VII. Futurity and Impasse

The Panthers' concerns about the integrity of the organization are also tied to a larger concern about futurity. Organizing mass numbers of people was, of course, dependent on the ability to articulate a vision of the future—but this vision could not be a utopian one. The future often appears as a sort of impasse for the Panthers. While Lauren Berlant approaches the category of the political from a wholly different perspective—one that is interested in large-scale change but which does not attempt to think through the history of radical politics—her concept of cruel optimism is useful here. The Panthers are decidedly *not* attached to the status quo—their organizing and general political work is situated within the radical left tradition. However, Berlant notes that imagining another world necessarily requires "enabling a confrontation with the fact that any action of making a claim on the present involves bruising processes of detachment from anchors in the world" (263). While the Panthers reject the world as it is, they anchor themselves to the world that they are already making—to the production of the paper, to the educational work they do, to their own political project, and the (often very successful) survival projects they organized.

The August 21, 1971 edition of the paper contains an article credited to the North Carolina chapter of the Black Panther Party with the headline: "Brother Wallace Parnell Resumes His Struggle for Survival." The article recounts that Wallace Parnell, an "elderly Black man from Burton, South Carolina," had lost his mule in a rainstorm. The rain caused the ground above his septic tank to cave in under the mule, and the mule drowned. I will quote most of the article here, as the wording is significant:

Upon learning of Brother Wallace Parnell's troubles, which are basically the same as most Black people's troubles, though they may vary, and because we are primarily concerned with the survival of Black people within the richest empire on the face of the earth, the Black Panther Party sent Brother Russell McDonald, a member of the North Carolina Chapter of the Black Panther Party and "country farm boy" himself, to Burton, South Carolina, with the intent of purchasing another mule for Mr. Parnell. Upon arriving in Burton and contacting Brother Parnell it was learned that he had been able to secure another mule, which he had appropriately named Dolly Jr. But Brother Parnell had trouble working his new mule, because it was of a different size than his previous mule; and his old, worn-out equipment would not work properly on his new mule, Dolly Jr. Comrade Russell was able to purchase the necessary equipment for Wallace Parnell and now with another mule and new equipment Brother Parnell has resumed his work of collecting trash for his living and making a buck here and a buck there.

There are thousands upon thousands of Wallace Parnells throughout the South. Recognizing that this is the Empire that sends millions to send men to the moon to get a couple boxes of rocks, one cannot help but ask the question, will the Wallace Parnells ever receive their 40 acres and 2 mules for survival? (18-19)

Additionally, there are several photos: two of Parnell and the mule, and two of Parnell, Russell, and the mule. The top two pictures have a caption: "New life for Wallace Parnell came from the People and the Black Panther Party." The second set is captioned "Wallace Parnell and New Mule Beginning New Attempt at Surviva [sic]."

The Panthers took on various local (and in this case far away but small-scale) problems in a conscious effort to be part of communities, rather than a removed vanguard (Bloom 181), often supplanting the state's supposed functions. The Panthers both point out that the "we" of the collective is barely surviving as it is—and, indeed, is sometimes dying—and gesture toward a future in which the "we" wins. The Panthers' thematization of survival here is contradictory and odd, though. This article, like many of those that I discussed earlier, has a quotidian, straightforward feel to it at times: the details about the septic tank and the fact that Parnell had already acquired a new mule and that the Party had to reevaluate how to help. The article reads the way one might recount these events to a friend, rather than like polished journalism. The

article also does pedagogical work in binding members of the Panthers' projected collectivity together. Wallace Parnell is a type; there are "thousands upon thousands of Wallace Parnells" out there. The Panthers make this gesture elsewhere in the paper, too—there are many of a certain type of person. The gesture projects collectivity, but also uses a specific name, a gesture that avoids turning people into a monolith and instead suggests a more nuanced, contradictory relationship between the embodied, specific individual and the group.

The triumphant, happy tone that occurs in parts of the article is at odds with the headline and captions: "Brother Wallace Parnell Resumes His Struggle for Survival" is not at all rosy; Parnell has overcome something only to struggle more. The first caption, "New life for Wallace Parnell came from the People and the Black Panther Party" seems to contradict the headline, at least tonally. The second caption manages to capture this roller-coaster of sentiments into a single line: "Wallace Parnell and New Mule Beginning New Attempt at Surviva [sic]." The repetition of "new" for both the mule and the attempt at survival and the word "beginning" create a hopeful tone, one geared toward the future. But "New Attempt at Surviva" does quite the opposite. "Attempt" implies that Parnell might, in fact, not be able to survive even with the new mule. "Survival" emphasizes that Parnell's life is and likely always has been very difficult. What appears to be an accidental printer error, the cutting off of "Survival" so that it is missing the final letter, only enhances the moribund effect: it suggests a life that is prematurely shortened or an inability to continue.

The strange mixture of hope and despair here indicates the quandaries the Panthers faced: at the level of affect, should they focus on the conditions of the current moment (representing parts of life not represented in mainstream media), or should they focus on the future? If the future, what is the model for the future? What model might be believable? They had to both

point out that in current conditions, people could barely survive, and often did not survive—and project a complete turnaround to conditions of prosperity, via armed revolution.

In this article, futurity is routed through white and mainstream culture via the moon landing. While the government wants to do something that feels futuristic, the Party wants to help people with the immediate struggle for survival. But the article also includes a funny sort of glance to the past: forty acres and two mules references the historical promise to former slaves in the post-Civil War era of forty acres. Historically, the mule was added later (Gates), but the usual phrase is "forty acres and a mule." Here the North Carolina Panthers reference a previous look to the future *from* the era directly after the Civil War, and then use it to suggest a further move into the future. "Will the Wallace Parnells ever receive their 40 acres and 2 mules for survival?" is, on the one hand, a rhetorical question about when the U.S. government will address the problems of impoverished African Americans. On the other, though, it's a question about the Black Panther Party. The Panthers switch the phrase here to *two* mules, to reference Parnell's need for a second mule. But the Panthers are *themselves* the organization that has just assisted Parnell with the second mule (and who originally intended to buy it for him). The question the Panthers are asking here may as easily be: will we ever take state power and provide two mules to every one of the Wallace Parnells that we have just referenced?" The Panthers reject the mainstream futurism of the moon landing in favor of a futurity that negates the present, and that leapfrogs from Reconstructionist discourse about the future to their own projection of future power.

The fear of the future here also registers in an odd passage from the April 11, 1970 edition of the paper. The future becomes a sort of impasse. In an article about a young man who has been killed by police, the writer worries the fact that the man will never be educated about *why* America is racist:

> Brother Danny is a victim of the rising tide of fascism here in America. He and so many like him never had a chance to find out what life really was or why his government allowed racists hidden behind the cause of 'law and order' to murder Black people because of their color.

The Panthers do not imagine what else Danny might have done with his life, or bemoan that he will not see them win victory against the United States and against racism. Instead, the writers can see only as far as reproducing the Panthers' vision of the world. At the same time, there is an upbeat pride in the Panthers' education program here. Finding out "why [the] government allowed racists…to murder Black people" is presented as an important and worthwhile part of life. The passage echoes the descriptions of the newspaper itself that I cited earlier in this chapter—there is a lot of pride in the organizational work that is happening at the time of the writing, as well as an inability to see much further into the future. The interest in breaching and penetration reflects the same impasse—what would Panther victory actually look like? The defeat of the Panthers is of course easier to picture and was in some ways happening from the very beginning, as the government figured out how to react to new modes of organizing. In holding representations of daily life—both everyday struggle and heroic organizing—in tension with depictions of the contemporary world as grotesque fantasy, the Panthers pry open space for readers to engage and keep doing grueling political work. They stave off the question of what victory might look like in practice, since that question would invite a utopian impulse that might actually disconnect the Panthers from people's lived experiences. Instead, they reject the current world by painting it as a fantastical nightmare. They also interweave pedagogical texts with fantasy elements. Painting U.S. racism as horrific fantasy –and emphasizing that lived experience is in fact already fantastical—pries open, in the negative space of the current horrors, room to imagine and invest in something otherwise.

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ABSTRACT

WEIRD PROPAGANDA: TEXTS OF THE BLACK POWER AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENTS

by

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May 2017

Advisor: Dr. Jonathan Flatley

Major: English

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

"Weird Propaganda: Texts of the Black Power and Women's Liberation Movements" examines texts of the Black Power and Women's Liberation Movements: the early Black Arts Movement anthology *For Malcolm*; the now-canonical texts *Our Bodies, Ourselves*; *The Black Woman*; and *Sisterhood Is Powerful*; a number of pamphlets and other small press works; and the Black Panthers' newspaper. This project argues that writers and activists used senses of the uncanny, along with elements of science fiction and fantasy, to negotiate the day-to-day uncertainties of political organizing and, more broadly, political hope. The texts examined here convey particular political views in an explicit way; they also ask questions about the nature of collectivity, who might be included in categories such as *women* or *Black* or *working class* and what that inclusion means; what a future in which radical ideas spread would actually look like; and what might have been otherwise under different conditions. The texts express uncertainty about address: who does the text represent; who does it speak to; who is the *we*. The ghastly,

spectral, and uncanny, as well as self-referentiality, allow writers to negotiate questions of representation and futurity.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

I received a B.A. in English and German from the College of Charleston in 2004 and an M.F.A. from the program for poets and writers at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in 2007. I have several books of poetry out: *Life & Style* (Patrick Lovelace Editions, 2009), *Portrait of Doom* (Krupskaya, 2015), and *Goodnight, Marie, May God Have Mercy on Your Soul* (Roof, 2017). My interest in the texts of 1960s and 1970s social movements is informed by a commitment to social justic activism and an investment in do-it-yourself publishing ventures, particularly in small press-based poetry communities. I look forward to turning this project into a book that considers a broader range of 1960s and 70s social movements and their canonical and ephemeral texts.