BLACK LIVES MATTER AND BLACK POWER

by

Daviana Fraser

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Approved by:

_____
Dr. Richard Leeman

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Dr. Jason Edward Black

_____
Dr. Janaka Lewis

ABSTRACT

DAVIANA FRASER. Black Lives Matter and Black Power.
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Today, Black Americans face the same foes as in previous efforts to secure civil rights. Over the last decade, names like Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, Keith Lamont Scott, Philando Castile, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor join those of Emmett Till, Rodney King and countless others as causalities of white supremacy. This recurrence has ignited and unified a generation of activists through the phrase "Black Lives Matter." The Black Lives Matter movement, like the Black Power movement, has named Blackness as a nexus for racial equity. For both movements, the specification of Blackness responded to a need to differentiate the experiences of Black people under racial oppression from others and binds members of this oppressed community to one another. In juxtaposition, both movements also trace the progression of Black centered social justice efforts led by and for members of the Black community who identify with the use of justified anger against injustice. These movements serve as critiques of the mainstream Civil Rights Movement and the ways that its leaders prioritized the feelings and permissions of white people. The objective of this thesis is to conduct a comparative analysis of Black Power and Black Lives Matter in order to better understand the rhetorical strategies of the latter, contemporary movement. Using Malcolm X's *Message to the Grassroots*; Stokely Carmichael's *Black Power* and *We Ain't Going*; Amanda Gorman's *The Hill We Climb*; Nikki Giovanni's *Ego Tripping (there may be a reason why)*; Beyoncé's *Black Parade*; and texts from the Black Lives Matter organizational webpage, the comparative analysis will offer an examination of each movement's approach to respectability politics, Black identity construction, and leadership structure.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my beloved family which has supported me and my academic endeavors unconditionally. To my mother Bernita, who instilled in me the value of *my* voice at an early age. Thank you for your endless love, prayer, and sacrifices.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the time of formal emancipation from enslavement in the United States, there has been continued unrest in various locations surrounding the agency and humanization of Black bodies. This struggle has been punctuated by the feats, delays, and losses that inform the tactics for subsequent efforts of protest and resistance as a response. This process has spanned decades and may be understood through moments where Black resistance was defined by the redefinition of Blackness and its place within society. With every generation, there have been shifts that are necessitated by the tests of the respective time period.

Today, Black Americans face the same foes as in previous efforts to secure civil rights. Over the last decade, names like Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, Keith Lamont Scott, Philando Castile, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor join those of Emmett Till, Rodney King and countless others as causalities of white supremacy. This recurrence has ignited and unified another generation through the phrase "Black Lives Matter." On July 13, 2013, following the acquittal of seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin's murderer, queer activist Alicia Garza turned to Facebook in mourning via a post that has since been termed "A Love Letter to Black People" (Chase, 2018). The letter closed with three simple affirmations that would give name to an organization and movement that would define a generation, "Black people, I love you. I love us. Our lives matter" (Chase, 2018).

Organized by three Black women, Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Black Lives Matter began as a project aimed at affirming and protecting the social, political, and economic rights of Black and brown people. The expression has since grown to name a 21st century movement against anti-Black injustice. Since its virtual introduction, the organization has gained more than 1 million followers on Twitter and 4 million on Instagram. From May 26,

2020 to June 7, 2020, the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was been used roughly 47.8 million times on Twitter (Anderson, et al., 2020). The expression and movement have gained the attention and support of prominent public figures including Barack Hussein Obama II, first Black president of the United States. The 44th president defended the expression in his 2016 Town Hall saying:

> "It's important for us to also understand that the phrase 'Black Lives Matter' simply refers to the notion that there's a specific vulnerability for African Americans that needs to be addressed. It's not meant to suggest that other lives don't matter. It's to suggest that other folks aren't experiencing this particular vulnerability (ABC News, 2016)."

The community built online, through the unifying nature of hashtagging, has poured into the streets with the formation of local chapters of the organization in major and minor cities throughout the country and protests around the world. By community organizers, "Black Lives Matter" has been painted in the streets of Washington DC, New York City, Seattle, Oakland, Charlotte, and other cities (Colarossi, 2020). The power of the Black Lives Matter movement has been in the authorization of individual organizers to move as leaders within their own communities.

Through a foundational phrase, Black Lives Matter has grown to both assert the preciousness of Black life and critique a reality where this evaluation is not actualized. The statement and movement reject the notion that this country has reached its peak of racial harmony. The explicit centering of treatment and experiences of Black people in this country function to disprove any abstract belief that racism is a thing of the past. Beginning during the second term of the nation's first Black president, many post-racial critics found the accusations of racism against this country unnecessary (Harris, 2019; Oberland et al., 2019).

One striking feature of the Black Lives Matters movement is that, like the earlier Black Power movement, it has specified Blackness as a nexus for racial equity. For both movements, the specification of Blackness responded to a need to differentiate the experiences of Black people under racial oppression from others and binds members of this oppressed community to one another. Black Power and Black Lives Matter have both been characterized as radical social justice movements which have used Blackness as their centralizing term. Both of these characterizations have been drawn from Black Power's rhetoric of self-defense and Black Lives Matter's confrontational politics. The objective of this thesis is to conduct a comparative analysis of Black Power and Black Lives Matter in order to better understand the rhetorical strategies of the latter, contemporary movement. Using Malcolm X's *Message to the Grassroots*; Stokely Carmichael's *Black Power* and *We Ain't Going*; Amanda Gorman's *The Hill We Climb*; Nikki Giovanni's *Ego Tripping (there may be a reason why)*; Beyoncé's *Black Parade*; and texts from the Black Lives Matter organizational webpage, the comparative analysis will offer an examination of each movement's approach to respectability politics, Black identity construction, and leadership structure.

Literature Review

Since its inception in 2013, Black Lives Matter has been regarded as a social media phenomenon. The organization, led by Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patrisse Khan-Cullors, was born of an emotional social media post, penned by Garza, and has maintained a cultural presence that goes far beyond the founding sentiments. Appropriately reflecting its origins, the movement has taken advantage of the unifying features of social media as a stage and tool for revolution (Cox, 2017). Hashtaggers are encouraged to use their truths about essential notions of Blackness under #BlackLivesMatter and other synecdochic phrases such as #SayHerName,

#SayTheirNames, and #NoJusticeNoPeace. The study of Black Lives Matter as a social media phenomenon has largely focused on the galvanizing and equalizing capabilities of the internet, the ability of the movement to transcend the screen and operate within the streets, and its role in the emergence of hashtag activism (Cox 2017; Yang, 2016). While these approaches offer insight into the ways that Black Lives Matter, as an organization and movement, has expanded the virtual stage in activism, the rhetorical positioning of this movement also merits scholarly attention.

In a review of the rhetorical scholarship examining the Black Lives Matter movement, two critical frameworks emerge: one that considers the movement in relation to earlier Black liberation efforts, and a second that views BLM as a critical framework for liberation efforts that will follow. These themes are both encapsulated in Clayton's 2018 comparative analysis of *New York Times* articles pertaining to the 1950s and 1960s Civil Rights Movement and the 21st century's Black Lives Matter movement.

Contributing to the centuries long struggle for Black liberation, Black Lives Matter is often compared to or considered to be an extension of those which came before—and most commonly the Civil Rights Movement of the mid 1950s and 1960s (Johnson, 2018). For some scholars, this relation stimulates critiques of the rhetorical strategies employed by each movement and public perceptions that follow (Clayton, 2018). For others, Black Lives Matter is seen as a continuation of the process begun by the Civil Rights Movement, although with modifiers that reflect the times (Johnson, 2018; Jackson, 2018).

Black Lives Matter vs. Civil Rights Movement

Through a comparative analysis of *New York Times* articles covering both movements, Clayton draws the conclusion that the language used by and surrounding both movements diverges at three main points. From 1960-1962, the archives collected by Clayton from the period of the Civil Rights Movement reveal themes of (a) leadership style, (b) inclusive messaging, and (c) issue framing (Clayton, 2018). In turn, these three points converge and diverge at various points from those found in *New York Times* articles surrounding the Black Lives Matter movement from 2014-2016. From his analysis, Clayton concludes that the efforts of the Civil Rights Movement were more successful than those of the Black Lives Movement. With the Civil Rights Movement spanning from the mid 1950s to late 1960s and the Black Lives Matter movement beginning in 2013 and still prevailing, Clayton's analysis does not pretend to be all encompassing, however, the themes Clayton outlines match the themes expanded upon by many scholars within the discipline. (Borda & Marshall, 2020; Biesecker, 2017; Orbe, 2015; Jackson, 2018; Richardson, 2019; Rickford, 2015; Towns, 2018).

Leadership Style. With the gendered and structured differences between the hierarchical, male dominated Civil Rights Movement and grassroots, women led Black Lives Matter movement, Clayton observes a divide between the leadership which emphasizes the politics of respectability and that which emphasizes confrontation between marginalized groups and those who maintain oppressive structures. This divide is underscored by the widely divergent responses of Black church leaders to the 21st century movement. Ashlee Lambert and Mark Orbe (2019) and Christopher House (2018) analyze the stances taken by two Black faith leaders who approach the new age liberation movement from two different places of understanding. From the 2018 eulogy of the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin, given by Rev. Jasper Williams Jr. (Lambert

& Orbe, 2019) and a letter written by Bishop T.D. Jakes, the role of the Black church and Black faith leaders in the Black Lives Matter movement is proven unclear by the difference in stances taken by each leader.

At the funeral of Aretha Franklin, Rev. Jasper Williams Jr. used the traditional authority of the pulpit to offer a critique of the Black Lives Matter movement and the civil unrest that unfolds every time a Black life is lost at the hands of law enforcement. In eulogizing the Queen of Soul, Rev. Williams raised the argument commonly used by those who juxtapose the loss of Black life against the loss of property and justify police brutality by Black criminality. This case summarized by his statement that "Black lives will not matter—Until Black people start respecting Black lives and stop killing ourselves, Black lives can never matter (Lambert & Orbe, 2019)." From this proclamation, Rev. Williams' eulogy may be analyzed following two traditions.

The first layer is his deeply traditional engagement of respectability politics—a set of practices employed marginalized individuals to be perceived, and subsequently, treated as members of a social class (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). While his discourse resonated with those who share values reminiscent of a preceding generation, his sermon was heavily critiqued by many youthful members of the immediate and extended audience who likened the performance to a 'plantation style speech'(Lambert & Orbe, 2019)—one that reifies the oppressive standard that Black Lives Matter rejects. The second layer of respectability politics lies with the decision made by Rev. Williams to critique a Black liberation movement that he clearly does not seek to represent. This decision also reflects the traditional centering of the Black church in the fight for Black liberation. This association is largely supported by the image

of Rev. Martin Luther King as *the* leader for the Civil Rights Movement and continues to create space for the Black church in conversations and acts of resistance. Though recognized as a pillar of the Black community, the Black church is embraced but no longer the nexus of Black liberation in the 21st century, while the decision made by Rev. Williams to raise the issue in his sermon speaks to the traditional assumption of authority that comes from the pulpit (Lambert & Orbe, 2019).

Bishop T.D. Jakes' decision to publicly address issues of race and social justice came in the form of a letter published in the *Huffington Post*. This letter, "A Father's Cry for Justice," was written in response to the killing of Michael Brown Jr. The response was also shaped by Bishop Jakes' experience as a Black man and father to three Black sons (House, 2018). It is through his Blackness that Bishop Jakes chooses to pen a message with an emphasis on the systemic inequalities that prevail in the country. He makes it clear that the issues in this country reside far beyond the conversion of racist individuals. His approach differs from that of Rev. Williams in three areas. First, Bishop Jakes engages in this dialogue outside of the pulpit. Second, the remarks made by Bishop Jakes place him inside of the movement as a Black man. Third, as a leader of the Black church, Bishop Jakes offers himself as a supporting actor in the efforts toward equity. These three differences allow his message to be received from members of the Black church and beyond without authorizing and centering himself over the voices of those the movement works to elevate (House, 2018). Because of this, Jakes' decision should not be seen as a move to co-opt the work done by leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement but rather to galvanize his audiences toward understanding and organizing as well (House, 2018).

House (2018) presents this approach as a religious rhetorical asset to religious leaders who wish to contribute constructively in the support of Black lives.

Through analyses of two Black church leaders from disparate sides of the modern social justice movement, scholars have thus addressed two of the ways that the Black church may engage with the Black Lives Matter movement (House, 2018; Lambert & Orbe, 2019), either by embracing respectability politics and resisting the BLM movement, or by giving voice to confrontation and thereby supporting it. When compared to the Civil Rights Movement, led by Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., the secular origin of Black Lives Matter becomes a hurdle for some faith leaders who may not fully understand their points of agreement with and or the restricted authority they have within such a movement (Lambert & Orbe, 2019). This leeriness is amplified with the implied difference of sacred and secular values (House, 2018; Lambert & Orbe, 2019). Lambert and Orbe (2019) note, however, that just because the Black Lives Matter movement is fundamentally secular, participants in the movement should not all be mistaken as being "non-religious" or "anti-religious." Some members of the movement continue to look for leadership from Black church, and Black faith leaders may hold some authority and responsibility as speakers in and for the Black community.

Inclusive versus Exclusive Language and Strategy. While Clayton does not critique the presence of queer women in leadership, he does argue that the Black Lives Matter movement fails in establishing a brand of inclusivity. This argument diverges drastically from conclusions of many scholars (Borda & Marshall, 2020; Jackson, 2018; Richardson, 2019; Rickford, 2015) who see the leadership style and representation of the contemporary movement as highly inclusive. Jackson (2018), for example, urges scholars to consider carefully the role that Black

Lives Matter has played in developing and demonstrating intersectionality as a vehicle for social justice. As a movement that embraces and is led by women, queer folks, disabled folks, undocumented folks, criminalized persons, and all others marginalized by other Black liberation movements (About, n.d.), Black Lives Matter has been praised for the way that it actively engages in inclusive rhetoric.

Under the theme of inclusive versus exclusive rhetorical strategies, Clayton acknowledges that leaders of the Civil Rights Movement submitted to politics of respectability (Clayton, 2018). The visual and linguistic appeals made by members of the Civil Rights Movement functioned to portray African Americans as upstanding—even model—citizens who were simply fighting to participate in democratic values. Through nonviolence and representation that honored many normative standards of the country, leaders and members of this movement resisted in a way that was presented as non-threatening and thus more widely appealing (Johnson, 2018; Clayton, 2018). The Civil Rights Movement agitated for the actualization of America's claim to represent equality, freedom, and justice for all. This strategy framed the Civil Rights Movement as an effort to realize America's self-evident truths and drive the nation toward its full potential, but in doing so it reinforced the nation's full set of normative values, and thus served to exclude rather than include.

This civil portrayal of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement often functions to critique the unrest stirred by the Black Lives Matter movement. What is often neglected is the last year of King's life, which Andre Johnson (2018) uses to connect the values and rhetorical strategies employed by Dr. King and Black Lives Matter activists today. Johnson draws from King's Poor People Campaign--an organization dedicated to civil disobedience and

disruption of the status quo (Johnson, 2018). Unlike demonstrative marches, the demonstrations organized under this campaign were designed to cause disruption until “definite and positive action [was] taken” by those in positions of power (Johnson, 2018). With activists willing to put their bodies in harm's way, King ignited a style of resistance that garnered hostility not unlike that facing today’s Black Lives Matter movement. From this, Johnson argues that the abrasive strategies employed by Black Lives Matter organizers does not taint the reputation of preceding Black liberation efforts but appropriately, knowingly or unknowingly, pays homage (Johnson, 2018) to an image of Dr. Martin Luther King and 20th century Black resistance that is often neglected.

For scholars who look to contrast Black Lives Matter and movement of the 1950s, the former is rooted in rejecting cultural norms (About, n.d.; Richardson, 2019) and taking a far more Black-centered, militant, and disruptive route (Clayton, 2018). This perspective has been used as a point of contention for Black and non-Black scholars, philanthropists, and organizers who dismiss the contemporary movement as chaotic and divisive (Clayton, 2018). However, exclusive is not a term used by Jackson (2019) and other scholars to describe the movement. One may go further to argue that, by refusing to uphold white-centered norms and standards of respectability and embracing those left on the margins by those standards, the Black Lives Matter movement functions to create a far more inclusive organizational network than the Civil Rights Movement (Richardson, 2019; Jackson, 2019).

Issue Framing. Under the theme of issue framing, Clayton praises the Civil Rights Movement for its ability to appeal to mainstream America with racial injustice as an issue of American values. While contested in its time, the language of fundamental American values and

their emphasis on *allness*, the Civil Rights Movement framed its issues with language that did not center Blackness as a target for opposition (Biesecker, 2017; Orbe, 2015; Towns, 2018). Because of its rejection of respectability politics, disruptive nature, Black centrality, and critique of post-racial ideology, Black Lives Matter has been associated with aggression, anti-whiteness, and violence (Clayton, 2018; Rickford, 2015). Clayton attributes this association to Black Lives Matter's failure to appeal to mainstream America with the claim of racial equality as an issue of national identity. This attribution is in direct contrast with another sentiment held by Jackson (2019) that the organization has "finally succeeded in making intersectional issues of racial oppression visible to the mainstream." For scholars like Jackson, issues of anti-Blackness have been brought into the mainstream through Black Lives Matter's use of Black centric language and issue framing in the naming and articulation of the movement. This rhetorical move has brought about profound dialogue surrounding race and, through its rejection, revealed the anti-Blackness buried so deeply that many thought racism had been extinguished (Orbe, 2015).

Critiques of Black Lives Matter's strategies often come from those complacent about the current state of race relations through claims of a post-racial America or the emergence of counter-movements that function solely to decenter Blackness and perpetuate the dominant social order (Orbe, 2015; Biesecker, 2017). The most common of the phrases used to silence pro-Black voices is #AllLivesMatter. While for some, the universal affirmation may sound like a form of solidarity, this use of allness redirects attention away from Blackness (Orbe, 2015) and reorients the audience back to a level of homeostasis where whiteness is elevated. Other attempts to dilute or shift emphasis include #WhiteLivesMatter and #BlueLivesMatter where lives that have always been valued are used to contest claims of racial injustice and a uniform is compared

to flesh (Biesecker, 2017). In what some may consider exclusive language, Black Lives Matter simply begs specificity in a nation where constitutional claims of allness have been consistently exclusive.

Significance

Within the longer storyline of Black liberation, Black Lives Matter represents a turn for many toward a [reimagined embodiment of Blackness and resistance.] The organization and movement have been largely analyzed rhetorically by situating it as a 21st century reflection, expansion, or rejection of the mainstream Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. For many scholars within the communication discipline, the Black Lives Matters movement is understood for the ways that it has offered a new template for the role of respectability politics, inclusive/exclusive language, and Black identity construction in efforts to achieve Black emancipation.

In order to understand contemporary approaches to these areas, it may be useful to turn from the mainstream Civil Rights Movement and instead consider those movements that have encouraged unconventional, radicalized Black activism. In response to and in rebellion against the Civil Rights Movement, Black Power may be considered one such reactivation of assertive, Black-centric resistance, and particularly of a movement which, like Black Lives Matter, used "Black" as a centralizing term. In order to explore the utility of a comparative analysis of Black Lives Matter and Black Power, the scholarly analysis of the latter needs to be reviewed.

Black Power

The Black Power movement of the 1960s and 1970s may be recalled as a turning point in the struggle for Black liberation. The movement developed on the shoulders of the Civil Rights

Movement that had emerged in the previous decade. The Black Power movement brought a form of resistance that rejected the respectability politics that had been promoted by its predecessor. The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) had rooted itself in demonstrating the humanity of Black folks while simultaneously turning a mirror towards the barbaric nature of those who were committed to oppressing them. The CRM's nonviolent demonstrations were the embodiment of the moral high road. The 1960s and 1970s Black Power movement shed this approach and introduced a form of resistance that mandated that Black people need not ask for that which is inborn within them. The rhetorical emphasis was no longer placed on the acquiescence of whites but rather on the empowerment of Blacks to fight against their denial.

The Black Power movement placed Blackness at the center of its rhetoric and thereby justified far more forceful revolutionary tactics. The justification of force particularly challenged the standards of rational argument set forth by most rhetorical scholars. The scholarly literature surrounding the Black Power movement has often attended to the movements' militancy. This literature review will outline the scholarly analysis of the discourse advanced by Malcolm X, which was adopted and adapted by then young Black leaders of the 1960s and 1970s who echoed X's rhetoric of radical judgment and black nationalism. Together, these rhetors represent a cultural shift that occurred within Black communities and the foundation for their calls for Black Power.

Cultural Significance

According the Gregg's (1969) early study of the movement, the Black Power movement differed from its parent movement by prioritizing the desires and needs of Black people over white comfortability or self-preservation. This centering presented itself as a psychological hurdle for predominantly white communities but resonated with parts of the Black community

not yet inspired or no longer motivated by the language of integration (Gregg, et al. 1969). In the mid-1960s, young organizers Bobby Seale and Huey Newton surveyed the ghettos of Oakland, California to ask Black residents exactly what they felt would improve their quality of life (Courtright, 1974). Courtright (1974) makes a point to note that these findings served the foundation for the Black Panther Party's ten-point platform—a platform and organization that embodied the values of black nationalism and Black Power. These ten tenets functioned to bring Black self-determination through the social, economic, and political liberation of Black people, disavowal of anti-Black police brutality, and removal of United States from wars of aggression (The Black Panthers: Ten Point Program (n.d.)).

Rhetorical scholars have supported the conclusion that the Black Power movement's rhetoric grew from and resonated with members of the Black community who did not identify with the gradualist politics of the Civil Rights Movement. Gregg, McCormack, and Pederson's (1969) conducted a case study in a poor black neighborhood of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to gauge the perception of Black Power among its students. While the study is dated, when paired with the 21st-century analysis of Richard J. Jensen, these articles outline the evolution of resistance rhetoric and the scholarship that followed (Gregg, et al. 1969; Jensen, 2006). Scholars interested in understanding Black Power were challenged to expand their application of traditional persuasive theories to include the unconventional rhetoric of the streets, confrontation, and dissent against the establishment (Jensen, 2006).

Interviewees in the case study voiced the grievances within their communities. These concerns came from their living in communities often neglected by city sanitation workers, where anti-Black violence was overlooked, and very few residents felt in control of their

socioeconomic fates (Gregg, et al. 1969). This was the reality of discontented Black youth organizers.

While militant Black nationalism excited these communities by offering hopes of Black self-determination, for the white-controlled media, Black militancy seemed to offer a new reason to depict Blackness as a threat. Acknowledging this, a Black teacher in Gregg, et al.'s case study rejected the labels of the "militant," the "revolutionary," and "Uncle Tom" and replaced those with the characterization that all of the Black leaders of the era were working to help Black people (Gregg, et al. 1969). The inclusion of the teacher's message of unity lessened the argument that Black communities were dichotomized by the rhetoric of violence and nonviolence and emphasized the attention toward language surrounding Black liberation efforts. Against the assumption of pro-Black violence, Courtright (1974) makes it clear that the implementation of armed resistance simply came as a means to discourage anti-Black harassment and violence within the community, not to provoke it. This justification of force, however, often presented problems for scholars who wanted to critique the protest rhetoric of armed resistance (Jensen, 2006).

Redefining Rhetoric

Protest rhetoric of the 1960s challenged scholars to interrogate what is considered rhetoric and rational argument. King (2004) acknowledges the link between rhetoric and society and the power in rhetoric to be adaptable to its social context. As a product of exasperated Black youth, Black Power made space for their passion and aggression in the fight against racial injustice. Informed by urban ghettos, the embodiment of Black Power brought about by the Black Panther Party came steeped in the culture of the streets (Jensen, 2006; King, 2004). Rhetoric of resistance and protest came through music, demonstration, slogan, chant, riot, and

countless nonverbals—and often carried profanity (Jensen, 2004). Although difficult to separate the rhetoric from its social, political, cultural, and technological contexts, rhetorical scholars have since been urged to redefine their standards of rhetoric (Jensen, 2006; King, 2004). This relationship, King (2004) argues, happens as rhetoric defines social phenomena and social phenomena precipitate rhetoric.

While the echo of Black resistance was for a long time neglected as a source of rhetorical analysis, the shift from nonviolent to violent self-defense demanded attention (King, 2004). Black Power's justification of force as a means for persuasion violated traditional standards of rational argument (King, 2004). King cites the works of Scott and Smith (1969) who identified the rhetoric of Black Power as a dialectic between the "haves" and the "have nots," and Campbell (1971) who understood Black Power's deliberate function of transcending rationality in fighting white supremacy (King, 2004). In both of these redefinitions, we see scholars forced to remove themselves from the bias of traditional rhetorical standards as they attempt to stand within the perspective inside of the revolution. This conscious decision becomes foundational to scholars who wish to explore the rhetoric of an oppressed and ignited people. In the 21st century, Jensen (2006) sees the combination of renewed and traditional theories of rhetoric as an ideal foundation for scholars who wish to engage with protest rhetoric and the leaders who have personified the revolution.

Radical Judgement

One critical perspective by which scholars have engaged protest rhetoric on its own grounds is through the idea of radical judgment, introduced by Terrill (2004) through his analysis of a series of addresses made by Malcolm X. Terrill argues that in these speeches, Malcolm works to decriminalize Black violence as a means for liberation. Malcolm X's rhetoric of radical

judgment differed from the Civil Rights Movement in two key ways. First, radical judgment questions the normative standards of civility by rejecting the need for Black Americans to subscribe to white American standards of respectability while also holding white America to answer to its own criteria. Second, radical judgment critiques the use of the word *civil* as the unifying term for Black liberation efforts.

Joseph (2009) notes that violence is the most controversial legacy of the Black Power era. The ideology of Black Power and the subsequent movements became negatively associated with violent community outbreaks such as the Watts riot. This negative depiction and assumption about chaos were used by white observers, lay and academic, to condemn the alternative discourse that challenged the legitimacy of the Civil Rights Movement. X's agenda, according to Terrill (2004), was to redefine what was considered legitimate, moral or just. Malcolm X's rhetoric of radical judgment functioned to challenge the mainstream standards about what would constitute a moral or just response to systemic injustice (Terrill, 2004). In this new discourse, the deprivation of human rights was criminal and therefore the radical activists were acting as legitimately as or even more than the government officers who worked to enforce the law.

The notion of radical judgment uses the standards of legality against the oppressors in a way that begs for the same level of harshness that would be used against any criminal of a comparable offense. Analyzing Malcolm X's *The Ballot or the Bullet*, Terrill (2004) clarifies Malcolm's support of violence as an option. Here violence is simply an appropriate response to violence. Historically, Black Americans have been the targets of physical and psychological violence. After centuries of labor and a refusal to provide full or even any remuneration, Black Americans have been, by an 'American' legal definition, robbed (Terrill, 2004). To this crime, X

only suggests the 'American' legal consequence. By radical judgment, where Black American's have not been treated uncivilly, it is not fair to ask or expect them to respond with civility.

The “ask” made by the appeal for “civil” rights tethers Black Americans to the laws of their land. In this context, the treatment or mistreatment of Black Americans is left to the discretion of those who make and enforce those laws. i.e., their oppressors. Understanding this, Malcolm X calls for a rhetorical shift from seeking civil rights to demanding human rights. With this shift, the crimes against Black Americans may be considered as international, and America may be judged in a court of her peers (Terrill, 2004). Human rights transcend citizenship and instead set locate the demand for equitable treatment in the idea of a fundamental quality of life that should be upheld in every country for every person on its soil. By calling for the case of Black Americans to be brought to a world court, Malcolm X sought to relate Black Americans’ situation to that of people of color around the globe (Terrill, 2004).

This association both unshackles Black Americans from *Uncle Sam* and joins their forces with others who are non-white. The issue, X posits, is in the white American justice system's aversion to Black Americans. This hatred and the parameters that define it are, he says, arbitrary. Even in simply rejecting the singularly white American label of *Negro,* Malcolm X sees the possibility for Black Americans to unite with and be treated like other persons of color (Terrill, 2004). The aim was no longer to reason with the oppressors—to do so would be to depend upon those in power to desire different rules and perceptions. Malcolm X's discourse focused on the external condemnation of white America’s anti-Blackness, and an internal redefinition of Black liberation within the Black community. The external force was to come from the United Nations. The internal force was to come from the enforcement of Black nationalism (Joseph, 2009; Terrill, 2004).

While his remedies for Black responses to the violence of oppression are vague, Malcolm X delineates the philosophies of Black nationalism as a set of commandments for the communal betterment of the Black [man] (Terrill, 2004). These philosophies address the spaces for political, economic, and social improvement in the Black community. Each of these commandments asserts Black responsibility for what Black people may do despite and against their systemic subjugation.

Politically, black nationalism involves the re-education of Black [men] and [his] inclusion in the governmental discourse that concerns him (Terrill, 2004). Economically, black nationalism involves financial literacy and responsibility among Black Americans. Socially, black nationalism involves the cleansing of the Black community through a purge of alcohol, drugs, and other *evils*. Together, these tenets function to establish a new standard to which Black people should hold themselves and a new locus of control: The Black community (Joseph, 2009; Terrill, 2004). For Malcolm X, this framework does not seek to create nor take the place of any prominent organization. Instead, these tenets set a standard that may be adopted and applied by Black communities and leaders toward bettering the experience of Blackness in the United States (Terrill, 2004). X encouraged the adoption of Black nationalism into already existing forces like Black churches, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and any other institution that would honor and stand to benefit from its teachings (Terrill, 2004). Terrill argues that Malcolm X's version of black nationalism was an important part of his rhetorical legacy and his impact on movements for Black empowerment (Terrill, 2004).

Terrill argues that Malcolm X's radical judgment, which rejected white America's normative standards and asserted Black control over their selves and their community, formed

emancipatory rhetoric which allowed Blacks to see themselves in ways they had not previously. As Terrill writes:

> [Emancipatory rhetoric] presents opportunities for judgment and critique that would not be otherwise available: the action and ideologies of the dominant culture can be observed without the necessity for immediate political engagement; the categories that the dominant culture produces as a means to manage its own analysis can be rejected; options for response and intervention that fall well beyond the limitations imposed by the dominant culture can be considered; productive comparisons and parallels between local and global events can be drawn; and judgment becomes individualized and egalitarian rather than the purview of heroic orators or divine prophets.

This foundation is remembered as the groundwork for notions of Black Power that would extend

Malcolm X's Rhetorical Heirs

Youthful leadership was encouraged within the Civil Rights Movement as it worked to galvanize youth activists through organizations like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The Southern, youth-centered committee, founded in 1960, became known for strategically nonviolent demonstrations like sit-ins, freedom rides, voter drives, political organizing (Borden, 1973). While effective for some, by the mid-1960s many young Black community members and student organizers alike had grown dissatisfied with the slow progress and became radicalized by the persistence of oppression despite their continued, nonviolent efforts (Borden, 1973; Churcher, 2009; Stewart, 1997). Following this redirection of tactics and discourse by SNCC, the development of another militant organization, The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, represented a greater emphasis on militancy that directly contrasted the tactics of the nonviolence practiced by the CRM (Joseph, 2009). Rhetorical analysis of the leadership of

the Black Power movement has often focused on the leaders of each organization as representatives of the cultural shift. The transformation and formation of these organizations represented a generation dedicated to a genre of resistance that carved a trail straight through the thicket of white supremacy (Gallagher, 2001; Johnson, 2004; Stewart, 1997).

While associated with young, prominent speakers of the mid and late 1960s, Black Power and its politics had roots dating back to the 1920s (Terrill, 2004; Joseph, 2009). This militant form of Black political activism is found in the New Negro radicalism and freedom surges born of frustrations of the Great Depression and World War II era (Joseph, 2009). Black militants during this time advocated for racial pride, Black self-determination, and against the American oppression of third world nations. The terming of Black Power may be linked to the writings of author Paul Robeson and congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr. (Joseph, 2009). Those who followed amplified that discourse and thus contributed to the idea of Black Power and Black nationalism.

Stokely Carmichael. A name tied to the origins of the Black Power movement is that of Kwame Ture or Stokely Carmichael. As a Black youth leader in the 1960s, Carmichael and his efforts reflected the sentiments and tactics of mainstream civil rights leaders. What sets Carmichael and his peers apart as leaders is their decision to radically diverge from these teachings toward the radical politics of leaders like Malcolm X. From this shift, we may understand the much later rebaptism of Carmichael to Ture. Because of this, scholarship referencing his early work often refers to Kwame Ture as Stokely Carmichael (Gallagher, 2001; Stewart, 1997). For clarity, this literature review will do so as well.

It is emphasized that neither radicalism nor Black Power originated with Carmichael. Pro-black radicalization was simply begotten as a product of frustration. The memory of

Carmichael is underscored by the ways that he redefined and reconstructed the social reality of his audiences through his employment of radical judgment and emancipatory rhetoric (Stewart, 1997). Stewart outlines Carmichael's success in this area with a dissection of his persona and the Black American identity that he sought to rebuilt through strategic rhetorical choices (Gallagher, 2001; Stewart, 1997).

Stewart (1997) attributes Carmichael's importance as a divergent character to his being blessed by the prevailing movement. Originally a leader within the earlier version of SNCC, Carmichael was a verified and respected member of the in-group (Stewart, 1997). As an agent who had moved out of the mainstream movement, Carmichael was then able to speak with authority against it (Stewart, 1997; Joseph, 2009). Rhetorically, the irony of his rebellion is understood by scholars through his treatment of both white supremacy and pacifist Blacks, with whom he once locked arms, as enemies of progress (Gallagher, 2001; Stewart, 1997). His excoriation of white supremacy and the Blacks who practiced respectability politics echoed Malcolm X's similar castigation of both groups collectively.

While much of his success as a leader may be attributed to Stokely Carmichael's persona, his message of Black reimagination and empowerment also seemed to be compelling. On October 29, 1966, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee chairman introduced his shift in ideology to an audience of middle-class whites at the University of California, Berkeley in a speech entitled "Black Power" (Churcher, 2009; Gallagher, 2001). This speech is marked as a manifesto of the pro-black rhetoric that would inform the remainder of Carmichael's career as a Black youth organizer. Gallagher parses the speech through Kenneth Burke's paradox of purity and the unraveling of five dialectic pairs that run through the roughly 5,000 words (Gallagher, 2001). These pairs--rich and poor, violence and nonviolence, integration and freedom, moral and

political, black and white--capture the social identities, values, and relationships he sought to challenge and reconstruct through Black empowerment (Gallagher, 2001). Gallagher believes that the ways that this rhetoric was received was divisive, but she also outlines the notion that Carmichael's address functioned to redefine the responsibilities and authorities of white and Black people in dismantling the prevailing construction of race and racism, i.e., functioned as emancipatory rhetoric (Gallagher, 2001). Like X, Carmichael's case for Black incivility was located in semantics and redefinition (Gallagher, 2001; Terrill, 2004) where right and wrong were clarified as a question of perspective, and the particular perspective of Blacks was reclaimed and vindicated.

Huey P. Newton. October 1966 is also remembered for the birth of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. Later known as the Black Panther Party, this organization was founded by Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton (Johnson, 2004). The Black Panther Party and its leaders embodied and symbolized the principles of black nationalism and the militant nature of the newest phase of the revolution (Johnson, 2004; Joseph, 2009). A year after the foundation of the organization, Huey P. Newton was imprisoned for the murder of John Frey, and Johnson argues that Newton’s incarceration was an event that galvanized thousands of militant Black organizers to protest against what was communally understood to be an unjust legal system (Johnson, 2004). Newton was released in August 1970. Johnson analyzes Newton’s first major speech, given at the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention one month after Newton’s discharge, as a manifesto for the notion of revolutionary intercommunalism (Johnson, 2004). The focus of Johnson's rhetorical analysis is on Newton’s employment of a form of jeremiad style unique to Black orators—the Afro-African jeremiad (Johnson, 2004). This tradition posits Black

people as chosen people whose oppression is regarded as an indication of and preparation for their role as agents for social revolution (Johnson, 2004).

Like Stewart, Johnson (2004) evaluates the effectiveness of Newton's rhetoric through an analysis of both his persona and the speech itself. The difference, though, is that Newton successfully applied the conservative rhetorical form of the jeremiad to his rebellious message, his militant persona sabotaged his impression on his immediate audience (Johnson, 2004). This interference is attributed to Newton's failure to be seen as a member of the population that he was addressing—a foundational principle of the jeremiad tradition. Despite his failure to appeal to his target audience, a common thread runs through the addresses of both Carmichael and Newton: redefinition. Newton spoke of the importance of emancipatory capabilities of language. Language of liberation has the power to not only direct media and interpersonal conversations, but within one's consciousness (Johnson, 2004).

Both orators expanded upon Malcolm X's standards for Black liberation and empowerment. This approach emphasized the justification of violence as a fair opponent to violence. Though a point of contention for many critics, the approach prioritized the preservation of Black life and livelihood over the comfortability or permission of white America. Further, the justification of violence was made through questions of language and meaning. Their strategy was to turn the judges against their own criteria and call them to condemn themselves (Gallagher, 2001; Johnson, 2004; Terrill, 2004). Beginning with the legitimization of *any means necessary*, space was opened up for radical measures of pro-blackness and black nationalism through an emancipatory discourse that disrupts normative standards and asserts the community's control over their own destiny. The standards for legitimacy laid by X offered a

foundation for those who followed to explore emancipatory tactics beyond those warranted by white America's parameters of Black civility (Joseph, 2009; Terrill, 2004).

Carmichael and Newton are remembered as a part of a new generation of Black justice leaders who adopted and adapted the approaches developed by those before them, particularly Malcolm X (Stewart, 1997). Stewart's rhetorical analysis of Carmichael acknowledges the linguistic revolution that undergirded the Black Power movement and the internal conflict that grew from the repudiation of those who went before, with their emphasis on nonviolence and respectability politics (Stewart, 1997). Until the mid-1960s, Stewart writes, the Black Power movement was an effort to amend the strategies of the Civil Rights Movement to accommodate the growing aspirations of a fresh cohort of Black organizers and community members. The emergence of the Black Panther Party as a separate entity represented the ability and will of many organizers to pick up that torch and advocate for themselves (Gallagher, 2001; Stewart, 1997).

Significance

Black Power represented a shift in the ideology and discourse of a new generation. The 1960s and 1970s movement grew from a branch of young leaders' dissatisfaction with the passive tactics of the Civil Rights Movement. Critiquing the CRM’s goal of integration, this shift prioritized the self-preservation and improvement of Black lives over the permission of white America. The literature surrounding this movement is often centered around the militancy involved in rejecting non-violence as a method, but scholars must recognize the ways that the sociopolitical conditions of oppressed people begat such a reaction. When understood as a response to systemic, racially motivated violence, foregrounding Black Power’s militant “methods” becomes self-apparently hypocritical.

More recent rhetorical scholarship has appropriately placed an emphasis on the ways that this movement challenged society to redefine its discourse. The inclusion of rhetoric from marginalized communities has more recently acknowledged the reality that many traditional standards for rhetorical analysis have been used as grounds by which to neglect or misconstrue the rhetoric produced within these communities (Jensen, 2006; King, 2004). To appropriately evaluate the protest rhetoric of the militant Black liberation movement, scholars have had to expand their notions of rational argument and even rhetoric itself.

The radical judgment and emancipatory rhetoric of Malcolm X was extended and expanded in the development of Black Power as an ideology and movement. Across this discourse, rhetors such as X, Carmichael and Newton used redefinition to reject white normative standards of civility and to assert the community's control over its own vocabulary and destiny. The idea of emancipatory rhetoric thus redefines the parameters of what constitutes "acceptable" forms of Black resistance and empowers Black communities to actualize their potential in the face of continued repression.

In this manner, while existing scholarly analysis using the CRM as a comparative template concludes that the Black Lives Matter movement has rejected respectability politics, embraced inclusivity and framed the issue specifically within the term of Blackness rather than allness. A comparative analysis of the emancipatory rhetoric of the Black Power Movement with the Black Lives Movement, however, may better illuminate *how* the latter movement has centered Blackness even within an inclusive movement.

Projection of Chapters

This project has begun with a literature review of two historic movements that have provided the rhetorical context of the Black Lives Matters movement. Using the Black Power

movement's emancipatory rhetoric as a critical framework, the following chapters will explore the three themes of respectability politics, Black identity construction, and leadership. Chapter 2 will use Malcolm *X's Message to the Grassroots*, Stokely Carmichael's *Black Power,* and Black Lives Matter organizational webpages to examine the ways that leaders of the two movements addressed the idea of respectability politics. Chapter 3 use Stokely Carmichael's *We Ain't Going* and Amanda Gorman's *The Hill We Climb* to address the construction of Black individual and group identity encouraged by these movements. Chapter 4 will use Nikki Giovanni's *Ego Tripping* and Beyoncé's *Black Parade* to examine on the leadership structure of these movements with emphasis on roles and visibility of Black women activists. Chapter 5 will summarize the themes of this analysis and suggest future research.

When juxtaposed with the radical resistance of Black Power the confrontational nature of Black Lives Matter may be better understood as a necessary and precedented approach toward Black liberation. In closing, the final chapter will present a reflection on the tactics used by Black Lives Matter and Black Power and the areas for improvement and expansion that remain in the work toward racial equity. The critical analysis of both Black Power and Black Lives Matter works as an continue and contribute to the battle toward racial equity and affirmation of minority experiences. Just as any other moment in history may be assessed rhetorically, so may the war on Black bodies and strategies of resistance. The popularity of each movement in their respective time periods suggest that they need to be understood as necessary shifts in the battle towards racial equity.

Chapter 2: Respectability Politics

Respectability politics are a set of moralistic standards employed by marginalized groups to appeal to the reasoning of a dominant population (Starkey, 2016). These standards are informed by the values of those in power and are used by those in the margins in order to demonstrate their worthiness within mainstream society (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). In the Black American community, respectability politics reflect a preference for the norms of white American culture. This practice, often employed by prominent figures within the Black community, functions to prove the capability of Blacks to contribute substantially to white-dominated, American society but often does so at the expense of those who, for an array of reasons, may not be able to reach such standards (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019).

Black liberation efforts have critiqued respectability politics for its predisposition to oppress members of Black community who may identify with overlapping marginal identities (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). Leaders of the Black Power movement spoke directly against the politics of respectability and the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement who endorsed them (Carmichael, 1966; X, 1963). Today, Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), a collection of pro-Black organizations and product of the Black Lives Matter movement, represents a similar communal shift away from politics of respectability (About Black Lives Matter, n.d.; Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019; Starkey, 2016; Vision for Black Lives, n.d.). Both Black Lives Matter and M4BL are founded on the notion that until all Black people are liberated, none will experience true freedom (6 Years Strong, n.d., About Black Lives Matter, n.d.; Herstory, n.d.; Garza, Khan-Cullors, & Tometi, 2016; Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019).

Politics of Respectability

The term *politics of respectability* was developed and coined by Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham following the study of Black, middle-class, Baptist church women in 1993. The women in this community employed these tactics to evade negative anti-Black stereotypes held by white Americans (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). The propriety of Black Americans has been used as both a form of resistance against the dominating social structure and as a means to achieve upward socio-economic mobility (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019; Starkey, 2016). For these women and those who share these politics, respectability must be applied to every facet of Black life that might shape social perception; this includes dress, grooming, money management, cleanliness of personal property, temperament, language or speech, manners, and sexual purity (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019).

The management of these traits places responsibility on Black individuals to avoid fulfilling anti-Black stereotypes which would then justify the continued subordination of Black people (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). The emphasis on personal responsibility then places the fault on those who may not be able to or who may not wish to enact whitewashed moralistic standards This ideology has the potential to harm Black people with layers of marginalized identities as it targets them as poor representations of the Black community's potential in white American society and offers grounds for 'respectable Blacks' to turn against them (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019; Starkey, 2016). This leads to the deprioritization of issues that disproportionately impact Blacks who experience secondary marginalization (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). The individualization of responsibility and subsequent neglect of Black subcommunities has spurred contemporary critiques of respectability politics and its place in Black liberation efforts (Starkey, 2016).

Individualization

The assumption of personal responsibility among Black Americans accommodates neoliberal values by placing individuals at the locus of control, or the illusion thereof, over their own successes and failures (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). This set of standards values personal intervention in the actualization of one's socioeconomic aspirations. For Black Americans, the perception of total control over one's place in society fails to acknowledge the pervasiveness of systemic racism in the lives of Black people (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). By this standard, those who uphold white supremacy are absolved of their guilt and Black people who have yet to elevate themselves are to blame for their own plight (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). While neglecting the near inescapability of white supremacy, respectability politics also ignores the layering of oppressions experienced by Black people of multiple marginalized identities.

The intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, and national status work together to shape the perceptions and opportunities of Black people in the United States. Each of these areas may be understood as social constructs that exist on a spectrum from their normativity to deviance, and hence from privilege to disenfranchisement. This is the central notion of secondary marginalization (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). Black women, products of the justice system, immigrants, and queer individuals are all members of the Black community who may be considered deviant and poor representations of Blackness within mainstream white society (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). Black people who are not able to be male, straight, cisgender, middle or upper class, formally educated, able-bodied, and fulfill the politics of respectability are often seen as obstacles to the cause and receive mistreatment from prestigious members of their community (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019).

Intracommunal marginalization becomes an accompanying force to external, systemic pressures that fall on Black, secondarily marginalized folks. Social injustices against these individuals are endorsed by respectable Blacks. In this, the fate of deviant Blacks is leveraged in favor of the progress that may be made by those worthy of assimilating into society (Starkey, 2016). As an effort to persuade whites of their allegiance to prevailing social structures, aspirational Blacks are often willing to turn a blind eye to instances of racial profiling as those who are targeted are seen as reflecting "poorly" on the Black community (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019).

Linked Fate

Members of the Black community who feel that their well-being and futures are not tied to those of other members of their community are less likely to consider members of their community in their political decision-making. This is the premise of the Black utility heuristic theory (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). The belief that the oppression of one Black person contributes to the oppression of Black people is rooted in the notion of linked fates (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). Therefore, by contributing to the oppression of dually marginalized Black people, those above are inextricably burdening themselves as well (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019).

Linked fate founds the politics of contemporary, intersectional Black social justice efforts. By proving the respectability of Black people through the neglect of Black women, justice-involved, immigrant, queer, disabled, informally educated, and poor Blacks, it is implied that Blackness alone is not respectable. By addressing the needs of those at the deepest level of marginalization, all of those of relational privilege will ultimately be served as well (Garza, Khan-Cullors, & Tometi, 2016; Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019).

Black Power and Respectability Politics

A direct critique of the Civil Rights Movement and the activation of respectability politics may be found in the activism of Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael. Both speakers rejected the tactics of Civil Rights leaders as passive and inadequate tools against systemic oppression. Themes against individualization and in support of linked fate may be found in X's Message to the Grassroots given in 1963 and Carmichael's Black Power, given three years later (Carmichael, 1966; X, 1963). Both X and Carmichael speak about the unifying feature of white supremacy: anti-Blackness. Through the synecdoche of white supremacy, X joins all people of color against what he names a common enemy.

One of the most eloquent examples given by Malcolm X, at the Northern Negro Grass Roots Leadership Conference, was that of the Bandung conference. The Bandung conference was held in Bandung, Indonesia in April of 1955 among government representatives of twenty-nine Asian and African nations (X, 1963). This meeting resulted in a communique signed by those in attendance with goals including economic and cultural cooperation, independence from the West, and a commitment to ending racial discrimination globally (X, 1963). Malcolm X uses this conference as an indication of what may happen when people of color decide to embrace their commonalities and organize against their shared oppressors. This suggestion of collaboration demonstrates X's vision of a collective response to a systemic flaw and binds people of color together in a linked fate under white supremacy.

Malcolm X and Linked Fate

As representatives of third-world countries, participants of the Bandung conference recognized experiences shared between their respective countries and made agreements surrounding the role of these nations in the Cold War (X, 1963). Malcolm X notes that though

representatives differed in religion, economic, and political standings, their common problem united so much so that these differences able to be set aside. Under linked fate, this is the objective. X characterizes the conference as a space for unity exclusively among people of color saying, “Once they excluded the white man, they found that they could get together. Once they kept him out, everybody else fell right in and fell in line. This is the thing that you and I have to understand. And these people who came together didn't have nuclear weapons; they didn't have jet planes; they didn't have all of the heavy armaments that the white man has. But they had unity (X, 1963).” As an ideology, linked fate does not rely on sameness, it simply relies on the realization of a common threat and the understanding that the permission of that threat against any population is harmful to all (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). Just as Malcolm X lists the differences between representatives of the Bandung conference, he lists all of the variations in Black American identity. “You don't catch hell because you're a Democrat or a Republican,” he asks his audience to forget these differences and remember that no matter the religious, political, or social affiliation, they catch hell because they are Black (X, 1963).

In saying, “[t]he white man knows what a revolution is. He knows that the black revolution is world-wide in scope and in nature. The black revolution is sweeping Asia, sweeping Africa, is rearing its head in Latin America,” X uses his speech as an opportunity to join the experiences of Asian, Latin, African, and other persons of color under Black revolution and discourages individualization. He challenges his Black audience to see themselves in the revolutions that occurred in China, Kenya, Cuba, and all other nations where people of color have fought against Western domination (X, 1963). As an act against white supremacy, he claims that all of these revolts as part of a larger Black revolution and dares to ask themselves if they are ready to join such a fight at home (X, 1963).

Individualization

Stokely Carmichael echoes Malcolm X's emphasis on anti-Blackness as the root of the oppression of people of color. While X uses this racial unification as a linkage for a global community, Carmichael focuses on race as an immovable trait. In a statement almost parallel to X's, Carmichael brings his audience to the shared understanding that Black people are oppressed simply because they are Black (Carmichael, 1966). No employment of respectability politics could ever change this. He critiqued respectability politics and the prevailing calls for integration for not addressing the root of America's issue of anti-Blackness. To both of these strategies, Carmichael found two main flaws. Through these major criticisms, Carmichael expressed his disapproval for respectability as a standard for human rights and integration as an indication of those rights. First, the requirement of perceived respectability in exchange for human rights implied that white people were authorized gatekeepers and that white standards are fairly applicable to all. Second, Carmichael critiques what he calls the "thalidomide drug of integration," for having fooled many Black people into "walking down a dream street talking about sitting next to white people." In this, he prioritization of integration as a symbol of racial progress is a false implication that shared physical space would beget racial equality (Carmichael, 1966).

Both are misconceptions that rely on parameters set by those in power to give the illusion of progress. For Carmichael, integration is not equality or progress, separation is the denial of a right and integration is the undoing of that denial. Carmichael challenges his audience and justice advocates to "—[M]ake it crystal clear in your mind that all men are born free but that they are enslaved by other people. That is to say that white America is denying us our freedom. So she can't give it to us. Her job is to stop denying us of our freedom," Carmichael challenges

Black listeners to reevaluate the status of their rights to see them as inherent (Carmichael, 1967). This reframing functions to evoke frustration from the Black community of individuals who have had something stolen from them. From this place, Carmichael works to undo the idea that civility is required.

To fight fairly against white supremacy, Carmichael advised members of the Black community to "--wield the group power we have, not the individual power that this country sets as the criterion under which a man may come into it," (Carmichael, 1966). Similarly, he commanded the white members of his audience to teach non-violence to whites, rather than Blacks, because he says, Blacks have been nonviolent. According to Carmichael, this is the flaws in liberation strategies that place emphasis on the behaviors of the oppressed group. "White people should conduct their nonviolent schools in Cicero where they are needed, not among black people in Mississippi," he says, "Six-foot-two men kick little black children in Grenada — can you conduct nonviolent schools there? Can you name on black man today who has killed anybody white and is still alive?" (Carmichael, 1966). Integration functioned as a distraction that directed the attention of Blacks and whites towards individual, not group, responsibility and made whiteness both the the standard for judging behavior and white people exempt from judgment.

Respectability Politics and Exceptional Blacks

With his disapproval of integration as an objective, Carmichael also speaks against politics of respectability politics as a fair standard for Black Americans to strive toward. This rejection comes in two levels. The first level of rejection recognizes respectability politics as white-washed and therefore inevitably unfair. While the values of respectability politics tackle a variety of behaviors, the bottom line is a hatred of Blackness, not incivility or work ethic.

Carmichael reminds his audience of their ancestral investment in the development of this country in saying, “We have picked the cotton for nothing; we are the maids in the kitchens of liberal white people; we are the janitors, the porters, the elevator men; we sweep up your college floors. We are the hardest workers and the lowest paid. (Carmichael, 1966)” He calls the principles of the American Dream a myth with the argument that if hard work equaled success, through their labor from enslavement to the present, Black Americans would rule the United States (Carmichael, 1966).

In the second level of rejection, Carmichael challenges his audience to consider the Black Americans who may never be privileged enough to enter predominantly white, integrated spaces. Politics of respectability apply widely to affluent members of the Black American community (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). These individuals already possess the privilege visibility to demonstrate their propriety to whites. Perceived respectability is dependent on visibility. Visibility is dependent on admission. Over the few who may advance socially off of perceived propriety, Carmichael is more concerned with what he evaluates as the 94 percent of Black Americans who will never make it into spaces where they may stand beside white people and be seen as potential equals (Carmichael, 1966). He does not desire prioritize space for whites to choose exceptional Blacks and say “Why, he’s almost as good as we are; he’s not like the others” (Carmichael, 1966). In turning his attention toward this community, he asks, “The question is, How can white society begin to move to see black people as human beings? I am black, therefore I am. Not I am black and I must go to college to prove myself. I am black, therefore I am. And don’t deprive me of anything and say to me that you must go to college before you gain access to X, Y, and Z. That’s only a rationalization for suppression,” (Carmichael, 1966). In establishing

the humanity of Black bodies among white people, the objective is to create safe spaces for all black people, not only six percent.

Finally, Carmichael brings light to assumptions of poverty that are perpetuated by politics of respectability. These assumptions include the suppositions that if a person is poor, they were born to unfavorable conditions, are uneducated, have too many children, entered the service prematurely, or have made poor life decisions. None of those apply universally to people in poverty. The only experience that poor Americans share, according to Carmichael, is their existence in a country that thrives off of systemically perpetuating inequality (Carmichael, 1966). These assumptions feed into principles of respectability politics and the notion that socioeconomic status is an indication of individual desire and aptitude to succeed.

Black Lives Matter and Respectability Politics

Black Lives Matter, and the subsequent Movement for Black Lives, are not only inevitable responses to a history of exclusionary Black liberation tactics but also a formal introduction to the power of intersectional political discourse (6 Years Strong, n.d.; Vision for Black Lives, n.d.). The appreciation for those facing the stacked oppressions of race, gender, sexuality, legal history, and other structures differs from preceding movements, such as the Civil Rights Movement, where their contributions were often plagiarized or completely ignored (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). This is demonstrated in the case of 15-year-old Claudette Colvin, who in 1955 refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a bus (National Public Radio, 2009). Though she was the first to be arrested for defying the Montgomery bus laws, Rosa Parks is remembered for her replication of Colvin's feat (National Public Radio, 2009). The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and other leading Black justice organizations felt that Parks was a much better representation of the movement than a defiant,

unwed and pregnant teen (National Public Radio, 2009). The intersectional politics of the Black Lives Matter movement are not fixated on elevating a singular, palatable symbol of Blackness.

Linked Fate

On its organizational website, Black Lives Matter places the lives of Black queer, trans folk, disabled persons, undocumented folks, subjects of the justice system, women, and all other Blacks at the center of its movement (About Black Lives Matter, n.d.). Intentionally naming the Black community members suppressed by politics of respectability politics situates this movement in opposition to both white American moralistic standards and the Black leaders who accepted them as an adequate measure of humanity.

In widening the scope of what is respectable to include those with the varying levels of marginalized experiences, all others who only experience a fraction will be lifted as well (Garza, Khan-Cullors, & Tometi, 2016). This in effect is described by Alicia Garza as an effervescence where all of those oppressed are best raised from the bottom up (Garza, Khan-Cullors, & Tometi, 2016) and a demonstration of the mindset present in linked fate. This ideology reflects a return to a philosophy present in early Black liberation efforts (Harris, 2014 as cited in Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). In the promotion of respectability politics, Harris posits a shift in focus from collective to individualistic responsibility that is described by Lopez Bunyasi & Smith (2019) as transitioning from *lift as we climb* to *lift up thyself*. The spirit of lift as we climb has become revived through the Black Lives Matter movement and outlined on the About Black Lives Matter where success is linked to "bring[ing] as many people with us along the way. (About Black Lives Matter, n.d.)." This decision follows the admittance of strength in numbers and the need for a united front against systemic inequalities (Herstory, n.d.).

Intersectionality vs Individualization

Intersectionality works as a tool against the intramarginalization of multi-marginalized Black people that occurs as a byproduct of respectability politics. When Black heterosexual, cisgender men—and women who fulfill socially acceptable gender roles—are set apart as the only acceptable faces of Blackness and its potential within society, no space is made for any Black person beyond that prototype (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). While the Claudette Colvins have moved Black social equity movements forward for generations, their faces have been compromised for the elevation of a few who reinforce standards made to perpetuate racial inequality. Black Lives Matter repeatedly rejects the further division of the Black community while prioritizing those experiencing secondary marginalization (About Black Lives Matter, n.d.). This is most evident in the Herstory webpage of the organization where writers speak of their desire to highlight the "egregious ways in which Black women, specifically Black trans women, are violated. (Herstory, n.d.)." The further emphasis places on Black trans women may function as both an acknowledgment for the contributions of Black trans women toward Black liberation and their need for protection as a vulnerable population within the Black community.

Unlike respectability politics, intersectional politics do not require conformity as a condition for human rights. In this approach, an individual's attire, grooming, money management, cleanliness of personal property, temperament, language or speech, manners, and sexual purity are not indications of their worthiness or substantial enough to treat systemic inequality. To imply so would be to ignore the many deeply in-built mechanisms of inequality that founded this nation and continue to immeasurably invade every area of Black life. The objective of intersectionality in Black activism is for Blackness to be accepted in all of its complexity, wholly and unconditionally (6 Years Strong, n.d.; About Black Lives Matter, n.d.).

These principles are outlined on the organizational websites for Black Lives Matter and Movement for Black Lives. Both platforms express an indebtedness for the many contributions that Black people marginalized within their own community can and have made toward liberating all people (Herstory, n.d.). In their vision statement, Movement for Black Lives acknowledges this group in stating, "Cisheteropatriarchy and ableism are central and instrumental to anti-Blackness and racial capitalism, and have been internalized within our communities and movements. (Vision for Black Lives, n.d.)." For Black Lives Matter, intersectionality is the antithesis of individualization and the implementation of linked fate. The use of intersectionality against anti-Black systemic injustice promotes the understanding that the inferiority of Blackness is not inherent and therefore may not be treated with the acquirement of favorable traits. The prioritization of queer, trans, disabled, undocumented, and other neglected Black folks is practiced with the acknowledgment of the multitude of oppressive structures that are beyond the control of a single Black person—or even the Black community alone (6 Years Strong, n.d., About Black Lives Matter, n.d.; Herstory, n.d.).

Conclusion

Politics of respectability encourage the elevation of Black bodies through the performance of standards set and evaluated by members of white American society. The application of these ideals to oppressed persons reinforces the notion that whiteness is standard and that human rights may be justifiably denied as punishment for nonconformity. As a tool for Black liberation, respectability politics encourages an unfair evaluation of Black potential and reinforce the idea that human life is not inherently valuable. Respectability may be evaluated through the endorsement of two major themes: individualization and linked fate. Through Black Power and Black Lives Matter, the rejection of respectability politics is found in language that

implies linked fate among oppressed populations and critiques individualization among these groups. The rejection practiced by these groups operates against the ideas that whiteness is standard and that human rights are conditional (6 Years Strong, n.d., About Black Lives Matter, n.d.; Carmichael, 1966; Herstory, n.d.).

Though Black Lives Matter explicitly critiques the exclusionary practices historically found in Black liberation movements, there is a continuation of themes that may be found between the ways that Black Lives Matter and Black Power rebel against politics of respectability. Black Lives Matter contributes to the rejection of respectability politics while expanding upon the precedents set by Black Power as a rebellion against prevailing, proper forms of Black resistance.

Black Power and Black Lives Matter on Linked Fate

In the speeches given by Malcolm X and Carmichael, the speakers outline the sentiments of a new wave of pro-Black activism that responded directly to the politics of respectability politics practiced by the leaders of the prevailing Civil Rights Movement. X demonstrates an affinity for a globally linked fate among people of color (X, 1963). The global network of Black Lives Matter operates to unite people of color against the many manifestations of white supremacy around the world (About Black Lives Matter, n.d.). X bonds these groups with the shared experience of anti-Blackness where, with whiteness as supreme, there is community among all who are not white and subsequently oppressed (X, 1963). This code may still be applied to the present global community among oppressed people of color. Language of a common enemy promotes collaboration against white supremacy with the understanding that if white supremacy prevails in Latin America, Asia, or Africa, so will it in the United States (X,

1963). Collaboration among oppressed groups against white supremacy also supports the belief that anti-Blackness is a systemic issue that warrants communal resistance.

Black Power and Black Lives Matter on Individualization

Carmichael upholds the idea of racial inequity as a product of anti-Blackness by arguing that no amount of propriety will compensate for Blackness in a white supremacist society (Carmichael, 1966). Black Lives Matter places value in the strength of numbers and builds that army through the intentional incorporation of those unable to attain the standards of respectability politics and neglected by movements organized under such values (Herstory, n.d.). The power of individuals against systemic oppression is a myth that has been dispelled by leaders of both movements. Both Carmichael and Black Lives Matter organizers refute the idea that respectability may be earned by drawing from the Black ancestral labor that built this nation (Carmichael, 1966; Herstory, n.d.). The consistent moral compass of the Black community has been paid with persisting inequality for centuries (6 Years Strong; Carmichael, 1966). This is summated in Carmichael's "I am black; therefore, I am," which asserts the fundamental worth of Black bodies. This is reinforced by the validation of all Black life that is core to Black Lives Matter (About Black Lives Matter, n.d.). In the place of respectability politics, Black Power and Black Lives Matter offer philosophies in which the goal is not for Blackness to be appraised but no longer denied of inherent rights (Carmichael, 1966; Herstory, n.d.).

Chapter 3: Black Identity

Black Power and Black Lives Matter are both movements and expressions that center Blackness in name and practice. In doing so, both movements acknowledge the need for specificity in recognizing Blackness as the target of white supremacy and the communal identity that has been built through shared Black American experiences in an anti-Black society. As a descendant of the Civil Rights Movement, the naming of Black Power also represents a deliberate shift away from liberation rhetoric meant to favor the interests of both the oppressor and oppressed. In the 21st century, Black Lives Matter serves as an affirmation of the preciousness of Black life to those who refuse to remember and honor that fact.

In centering Black life and liberation, Black Power and Black Livers Matter have been governed by ideologies that contribute to the construction of collective Black identity in their respective periods. These contributions are best understood through the Nigrescence models of Charles Thomas and William E. Cross Jr. (Cross, 1978; Cross, 1994). Nigrescence is a French term used to refer to the process of becoming Black (Cross, 1978; Cross, 1994). This process of becoming does not refer to a physical metamorphosis, but a psychological transition in Black Americans where the perception and performance of race grow to accept a Black identity that is not ruled by constructs set by white supremacy (Cross, 1978; Cross, 1994). Thomas' Nigrescence model is rooted in the concept of Negromachy which, through its structure, is often treated as a model (Cross, 1994).

Both models were constructed in the early 1970s and have five stages that progress from individuals who show characteristics of self-hatred to those who become agents for change against white supremacy (Cross, 1978; Cross, 1994). Together, the Thomas and Cross models not only outline the progression made in Black individuals on their path to self-discovery, but the

evolution of communal Black identity reflected in liberation movements. This chapter will apply these models to the evolution of Black-centered liberation efforts from Black Power to Black Lives Matter.

Thomas Model of Nigrescence: Negromachy

Negromachy, a concept developed and introduced by Charles Thomas in 1970, identifies feelings of diminished self-worth among Black Americans, arguing that these feelings are the result of their inappropriate reliance on white standards self-definition (Cross, 1978). The dissonance experienced by those wanting to belong to a society that separates itself from them is reflected in W.E.B. Du Bois' earlier notion of *twoness*; where Black Americans must cope with being Black and deprived of the American experience enjoyed by white counterparts (Cross, 1978). The anti-Blackness embedded in white-centric American standards and the lengths that Blacks must go through to meet those standards if possible, may drive Black Americans to feel inadequate in their pursuit of those ideals. This confusion of self-worth is considered by Thomas to be a form of mental illness wherein Black people may exhibit symptoms of subservience, repressed rage, over-sensitivity to racial issues, and a 'white-is-right' attitude (Cross, 1978). These feelings are believed to subside if an individual traverses Thomas' five phases, by which individuals ultimately discover their racial identity as a part of the whole of mankind (Cross, 1978). Negromachy also coincides with the shift in ideology within the Black community from 'Negro' to 'Black' (Cross, 1978; Cross, 1994) and may be understood through Thomas' five stages that trace an individual's path out of negromachy and into Black self-actualization.

The five stages that one goes through in overcoming negromachy are summarized as withdrawal, expressing anxieties about being Black, gathering information about cultural heritage, working with a group to find links to the larger Black experience, and transcendence.

The first stage, withdrawal, may be recognized in individuals who feel an urge to release tensions against their oppressor yet have difficulty conceptualizing their identity once cured of their negromachy. This repudiation of white people is called “rapping up on whitey” by Thomas, as those in this stage allow their repressed rage to erupt and rain down on whites. In the second stage, Black Americans begin to express their inhibitions toward embodying their Black identity and share their plight. In this stage, individuals grapple with confessing the oppressions that come in a Black American body, accepting this experience, and finding a comfortable performance of Blackness (Cross, 1978). Searching for a foundation for this newly adopted identity, those in the third stage become interested in information surrounding their Black cultural heritage. This interest ranges from Black contributions on American soil to the deep history of Mother Africa (Cross, 1978). Individuals in the fourth stage, linkage to the larger Black experience, are interested in joining a community focused on social change. This step toward action functions to make one's psychological metamorphosis more tangible and put their *new* Black identity into practice. Black Americans in the fifth and final stage transcend fixations on race, age, sex, class, and other constructs to see themselves as a vital part of the larger picture of humanity (Cross, 1978).

Cross Model of Nigrescence

Each of Thomas’ five phases corresponds with and are expanded upon by stages in Cross's Model of Nigrescence. The Cross Model of Nigrescence, introduced in 1971, flows through five stages of consciousness which he calls: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment.

The pre-encounter stage is used to refer to Black Americans who are still consumed by a worldview that is ruled by Eurocentric standards. As a result, individuals in this stage may also

exhibit a ‘white-is-right’ attitude comparable to that mentioned in Thomas's model. Individuals in Cross's second stage of Nigrescence become introduced to a Black worldview and must make the decision to adopt it. This stage comes with two parts. In the first part of stage two, an individual is introduced to a Black worldview may be critical of and resist information that conflicts with their already dominant Eurocentric perspective (Cross, 1978; Cross, 1994). In the second part of stage two, this individual decides to adopt the Black worldview as their own and may become frantic or compulsive in their performance of Blackness. Though they have made the decision and begun adopting a Black identity, according to Cross individuals in this phase are not yet 'Black' (Cross, 1978; Cross, 1994). The third stage, immersion-emersion, refers to the psychological metamorphosis that one undertakes in becoming Black. This stage also occurs in two parts, whereby an individual may move from a manic pursuit of Black identity to an ultimate settling in their new identity. These two parts contain expansion upon themes found in the first and third phases of the Thomas model. The first part of the immersion-emersion stage occurs in individuals who develop a dichotomous view of whiteness and Blackness. In this view, white people and culture are vilified while Black (specifically African) culture and heritage are revered. These feelings subside in the second part of stage three as individuals in this stage grow to understand and embody their Black identity without psychological defensiveness against white people and culture. At this point, the person’s Black identity is no longer at war with whiteness and they feel more control over themselves and their life as a Black American (Cross, 1978; Cross, 1994). As individuals move into the fourth stage, internalization, the internal dissonance between their former and new worldviews is resolved (Cross, 1978; Cross, 1994). People in the fourth stage no longer care how others perceive them and their Blackness as they are now comfortable and secure in their Black identity. Their anger is able to shift away from

white people and toward oppressive structures. Their embodiment of Blackness is no longer a performance based on symbolism but a lifelong commitment (Cross, 1978; Cross, 1994). The fifth and final stage of Cross' Nigrescence Model, internalization-commitment, is only found in those who decide to activate their Black identity toward social activism.

The stages of Nigrescence, developed by both Thomas and Cross, correspond with the evolution of Black social justice efforts. Through their application toward Black Power and Black Lives Matter, the progression into a new phase of Black identity construction becomes evident. The stage of consciousness prevalent in the 1960s movement is reflected in the speech *We Ain't Going* by Stokely Carmichael, while the consciousness governing the present-day movement is reflected in the Inauguration poem of activist Amanda Gorman, titled *The Hill We Climb*.

Black Power

Stokely Carmichael's speech was given April 11, 1967 at Tougaloo College in Tougaloo Mississippi, about six months after his Black Power speech given at Berkeley. Although *We Ain't Going* reiterates some of the arguments from the 1966 speech, the difference in audience necessitated a shift in language, tone, and the introduction of new themes. The speech given at the University of California at Berkeley accommodated a predominately white audience, where at historically Black Tougaloo College, Carmichael was able to introduce themes speaking directly to Black community and identity construction. There are remnants of Thomas' first stage notion of withdrawal throughout the speech where Carmichael uses derogatory terms to describe white people (Carmichael, 1967; Cross, 1978). In *We Ain't Going*, Carmichael ultimately exhibits an ideology consistent with that of Black individuals in the third stage of the Thomas model and the fourth stage of the Cross model of nigrescence. In these stages, individuals may

express an appreciation for Blackness and Black heritage that is deeply tied to Africa while maintaining contempt for white culture (Carmichael, 1967; Cross, 1978). In the fourth stage of Thomas' model, individuals are invested in community building among Black people and organizing toward social change (Carmichael, 1967; Cross, 1978). The application of these models ties further to the rhetoric of Black Power as they coincide with the ideological shift from Negro to Black which is also mentioned by Carmichael in this speech.

Withdrawal

Throughout the speech, Carmichael uses the word *honkey* numerous times when referring to white agents of injustices against Black people. This term is used to refer to white cops, journalists, slave masters, violent civilians, Sherriff Lawrence Raney of Neshoba County, and any other white person who works to deny civil liberties to people of color (Carmichael, 1967). The repeated use of a derogatory term shows disdain for this population and may be understood as an expression of repressed rage—a display of emotion that may not have been well received by the audience at the University of California at Berkeley. In addition to referring to white people as *honkies*, Carmichael also labels white people and culture as uncivilized (Carmichael, 1967). This conclusion is present in both his *Black Power* and *We Ain't Going* speeches but is made more explicit in the latter (Carmichael, 1966; Carmichael, 1967). Carmichael remembers the colonization of Africa by saying "[and] here comes this honkey who's going to civilize us and makes us slaves. Obviously, they don't know now and then never did know what civilization is all about is all about (Carmichael, 1967)." In this evaluation, he challenges the capability of the West to civilize anyone. In retelling this narrative, Carmichael expressed respect for uncolonized African culture and contempt for white people who sought to disrupt such peace by inflicting suffering (Carmichael, 1967). Through an interpretation of scripture, "Jesus Christ says

it is more honorable to suffer than to inflict suffering," Carmichael holds white America to the religious standards that they brought to the African continent and condemns them.

Black (African) Heritage and Culture

Carmichael expresses a reverence for African culture and heritage before it was contaminated by colonization. This appreciation for Black heritage and culture, specifically that set in Africa, is found in individuals in Thomas's third stage of negromachy and Cross's third stage of Nigrescence called immersion-emersion. In his framing of ethnocentric, white Western culture as uncivilized in comparison to African culture, Carmichael works to correct white supremacist depictions of Africa as in need of civilization. The idea that the West intended to help Africa ignores the violent enslavement of African people that followed their arrival and perpetuates the notion that the Western standards should be used as a compass for civility (Carmichael, 1967). In this portion of the speech, when referring to Africa and Africans, Carmichael repeatedly uses the pronoun *we* in joining the Black Americans to ancestry on the continent (Carmichael, 1967). This point is underscored in a conversation that he shares between his peers and Black college students. In this exchange, he recalls asking Black students of their lineage with responses that go as follows:

"Where you from?," "Jackson," "Where [is] your mother from?," "Jackson," "Where [is] your grandmother from?," "Jackson," "Where your great grandmother from?," to which they shrug (Carmichael, 1967) Against this, Carmichael reminds the students of their roots in the Motherland (Carmichael, 1967). He attributes ancestral ignorance in these students to misinformation about Africa and their heritage that has been given to them by whites (Carmichael, 1967). As a result of the anti-Blackness that forced Africans into enslavement and persists on American soil, Carmichael considers Black Americans brainwashed and ashamed of a

history of which they have been misinformed (Carmichael, 1967). In reminding them that the first university in the world was the University of Timbuktu, Carmichael attempts to arm his audience of students at the historically Black Tougaloo with that the academic spaces that they currently occupy are a direct product of their ancestral excellence (Carmichael, 1967).

Toward the end of his speech, Carmichael also asserts the incapability of white educators to objectively educate Black students on Black history, culture, and heritage (Carmichael, 1967). Their brainwashing is deemed a product of this flaw. To challenge this, the audience is challenged to find the antidote by interrogating their teachings and reading Black history for themselves.

> "You see if you were reading Malcolm X speech and the Autobiography of Malcolm X, when you hear his name you would jump to your feet. But you don't read it. You don't read it. What you read is what white folk tell you about Malcolm X. He hated people and you don't want to read him and you live in a world filled with white people who hate you. And you read aboutyou read about people who are filled with hate telling you that a black man hated white folk and you don't want to read him and you read a white man full of hate against you. You ought to read the primary source for yourself that's what you're in school for. (Carmichael, 1967)"

Though he uses the term *brainwashed,* this notion is consistent with the beginning phases of the nigrescence models developed by Thomas and Cross. The awakening out of this state and the subsequent wave of Black pride informed the development of the models (Cross, 1978; Cross, 1994). This wave produced the Negro to Black ideological shift and inspired songs and slogans such as James Brown's "I'm Black and I'm Proud." (Carmichael, 1967; Brown, 1968). This metamorphosis is evident in the opening of Carmichael's speech where he asserts that in no

other language is there a word that equates to *Negro* (Carmichael, 1967). Cross identifies this era as a Black Consciousness phase (Carmichael, 1967) and this ideology signals a shift toward phase four of the Cross model: internalization.

Black Community

Comparable to the inter-communal relationship Malcolm X encouraged between Black Americans and other groups oppressed by white supremacy, Carmichael uses the history of American Revolution, when Black patriots were sent West to fight the Native Americans who had allied with the British, to demonstrate the flawed relation between Black and Native Americans (Carmichael, 1967; X, 1963). He asserts that instead of sacrificing to fight for white America, the allegiance of Black Americans should have been with Native Americans against white Americans (Carmichael, 1967). The interest in Black community development is integral to Thomas's fourth stage of negromachy. Although they do not share the same ethnic background, the standard set by Malcolm X's Message to the Grassroots joins all who experience the violence of anti-Blackness in community with one another under the label *Black* (X, 1963). Carmichael's acknowledgment of common enemy with Native Americans mirrors the meaning of community argued by X. The linkage between Black Americans and those on the continent of Africa is also established in his repeated use of the pronouns *us* and *we* when referring to exchanges between Africa and the West (Carmichael, 1967; X, 1963).

The community that Carmichael establishes with oppressed groups abroad also informs his stance against the war in Vietnam (Carmichael, 1967). Carmichael advocates for both a greater sense of community among Black Americans and calls for increased activism of this population in support of their own liberation. Like X, Carmichael calls his audience to draw inspiration from the activism of those oppressed around the world (Carmichael, 1967; X, 1963).

> "We have got to see ourselves as a group. We must see ourselves as a community wherever we are, and we must let them know that infringement on one is an infringement on all. Because if we let the honkies know that every time they touch one of us they got to face all of us, they won't touch any of us (Carmichael, 1967)."

By presenting a united front, Carmichael encourages his audience to see and utilize the strength of their numbers. The creation of community and shared Black experience, and the inclusion of Blackness abroad in this experience exemplifies the consciousness present in Thomas' fourth stage of Negromachy where individuals seek to identify with a larger Black experience (Cross, 1978).

Black Lives Matter

While the teachings of Carmichael and leaders of the Black Power movement graduated Black liberation rhetoric into Thomas' fourth stage of negromachy, Black Lives Matter has introduced Black social justice efforts to a further level of Black identity construction that is consistent with Thomas' fifth stage (Cross, 1978). Both movements fulfill the final stage of Cross's model of nigrescence through their commitment to social justice. The final stage of the Thomas model, however, describes an approach to identity and liberation that transcends the confines of race, gender, sex, religion, class, and other constructs (Cross, 1978). This is the full embodiment of Blackness according to Thomas. Beyond replacing feelings of worthlessness with those of pride, upon achieving Blackness, Black Americans grow to assault all oppressive institutions that beget identity crisis and the need for such a process of self-discovery (Cross, 1978). The activation of this stage within contemporary Black social justice efforts is evidenced in the writings of Amanda Gorman and the About webpages for Black Lives Matter.

Black Community

Black Lives Matter has worked to maintain and build upon the progress made by preceding equality movements. The present-day movement displays characteristics consistent with Thomas's fourth stage of negromachy. The core of this stage is the desire to and work toward uniting Black people under a shared experience of Blackness. Blackness is characterized in the poem *The Hill We Climb* by 22-year-old poet laureate and activist, Amanda Gorman. At the 2020 inauguration of the nation's first woman and person of color as vice president, Gorman, a Black woman from Los Angeles, California, also made history as the youngest inaugural poet in the history in US history.

The introduction of the poem begins to define a shared Black experience by calling forward ancestral memories and biblical imagery:

> "We've braved the belly of the beast,
>
> We've learned that quiet isn't always peace (Gorman, 2021)."

The first line may be understood in reference to the biblical story of the prophet Jonah who found himself in the belly of a whale (The Amplified Bible, 1965). When this story is paralleled with the hardships endured by Black Americans, from enslavement to present, two subsequent parallels may be drawn. First, the existence of Jonah in the belly of the beast may be compared to the survival of enslaved Africans in the bowels of ships during the Middle Passage and the centuries of oppression that followed. Second, Jonah's relationship with God is challenged by Jonah's difficulty accepting God's display of love and mercy toward His enemies (The Amplified Bible, 1965). When this biblical reference is applied there may also be the conclusion that because Jonah's hardship was God's will, so is that of Black people in the United States. To further the parallels between the story of Jonah and Black American ancestral memory, the

second line of this portion may be applied to both the themes of Jonah and the fight against anti-Black oppression.

In this old testament narrative, Jonah is upset with God for extending love and mercy to His enemies (The Amplified Bible, 1965). The book of Jonah includes a series of encounters between Jonah and pagans where, though they are characterized as immoral, they are humanized through their willingness to repent (The Amplified Bible, 1965). The practice of extending love to your enemies calls forward the preaching of Civil Rights Movement leader Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. (King, 1957). While not as distant of a memory as the Middle Passage, the Civil Rights era is memorialized by many as a pivotal moment in the struggle toward Black liberation. The teachings and the strategies of King, often labelled docile, that come from them have been critiqued or rejected by leaders of later movements—much like Jonah critiqued and rebelled against God's practices (The Amplified Bible, 1965). Continuing the frame of this story, the second line of the passage clarifies that compliance, or docility, may sometimes only give the illusion of peace. In pursuit of actual peace and liberation, leaders of the contemporary movement accept the potential of disruption as a tool for equality (Carmichael; 1967; X, 1963). In remembering keystone moments in the Black American experience, Gorman unifies her Black primary and secondary audience under their shared history (Gorman, 2021).

For Black Power, this meant the acknowledgment of members of the diaspora outside of the United States (Carmichael, 1967). This also translated into the redefinition of Blackness to include all who are not white (Carmichael; 1967; X, 1963). These ideologies are pushed further in the incorporation of intersectionality in the definition of community for Black Lives Matter. In the modern movement, the considerations of Black identity have grown in breadth and depth. Not only does the movement acknowledge the ways that antiblackness pervades the lives of

those abroad, but there is also further discussion of the ways that Blackness may intersect with other oppressed identities. This overlap bridges the gap between the Black community interests, queer community interests, immigrant community interests, the interests of women, and other groups whose causes have been historically separated from race centered liberation efforts (Breines, 1996)

The practice of intersectional politics is what largely separates the nigrescence stages of the 1960s and 1970s from the present. Intersectionality expands the Black community to include those who may not identify as Black but find their rights linked to their Black peers (Lopez Bunyasi & Smith, 2019). The expansion of the Black community into non-Black communities moves the consciousness of the movement from Thomas's fourth stage of negromachy into the fifth stage: transcendence.

Transcendence

At the 2020 inauguration of the nation's first woman and person of color as vice president, then 22-year-old poet laureate and activist, Amanda Gorman recited her poem, *The Hill We Climb.* Gorman, a Black woman from Los Angeles, California, also made history as the youngest inaugural poet in the history in US history. Although she is not a formal leader of Black Lives Matter, Gorman and her work represent the leaderful nature of the movement and the progression of Black social justice efforts into Thomas' fifth and final stage of negromachy.

The Hill We Climb contains themes such as hope and inheritance but the most important are diversity and unity. The inauguration of vice president Kamala Harris signified, for some, a new future for a nation built on the oppression of Black and brown people (Gorman, 2021). As stated in Gorman's poem, this historic feat made realistic the dreams of many children of color to hold one of the nation's highest offices (Gorman, 2021).

Like Carmichael, Gorman repeatedly uses the pronoun *we* throughout the speech, however, Gorman's use of the word encompasses a more diverse community (Carmichael, 1967; Gorman, 2021). Without naming them explicitly, Gorman speaks of the atrocities committed against African Americans as wrongs that damaged the futures of all Americans. She places the responsibility of creating a more perfect nation on both those who have *weathered and witnessed* the hardships happening under oppressive structures of this nation (Gorman, 2021).

> "We are striving to forge a union with purpose, to compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters, and conditions of man. And so, we lift our gazes not to what stands between us, but what stands before us.
>
> We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
>
> we must first put our differences aside. We lay down our arms, so we can reach out our arms to one another (Gorman, 2021)."

This portion of Gorman's poem best summates the themes that run through it: diversity, unity, the future/ inheritance, and linked fate. Although Black Lives Matter and Black Power center Blackness in name, the modern movement is driven by the collective efforts of those in and outside of the Black community. Consistent with Thomas's fifth stage of negromachy, systemic oppression is treated as a threat to mankind, not only those in the margins. Those in the final stage of negromachy see their identity as a part of humankind (Cross, 1978).

When individuals see themselves in every person, they are then outraged and moved to fight against any form of oppression. This level of consciousness is also exemplified on the About Black Lives Matter webpage where organizers explicitly affirm the lives of those marginalized by prevailing institutions.

> "We affirm the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, undocumented folks, folks with records, women, and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. Our network centers those who have been marginalized within Black liberation movements (About, 2021)."

The decision in a Black-centric movement to prioritize the experiences of those within other marginalized communities both serves Black bodies who are at the intersection of marginalized identities and liberates individuals outside of the Black community. Through intersectional activism, Black Lives Matter has embodied Thomas' fifth stage of Black identity construction where liberation and protection of Blackness become synonymous with the liberation and protection of mankind (Cross, 1978). The emphasis on humankind and strength in numbers drives organizers in this contemporary movement. Black Lives Matter organizers and Amanda Gorman both realize this and have deliberately noted the intentions of this movement to be expansive and inclusive.

The emphasis on social justice as an intercommunal effort establishes the intention of Black Lives Matter organizers to create a society where human rights are fought for and protected for all. This goal epitomizes Thomas's notion of transcendence. The theme of reconciliation flows throughout Gorman's speech and is explicitly named as one of the three steps to and through social transformation:

> We will rebuild, reconcile and recover.
> And every known nook of our nation and
> every corner called our country,
> our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
> battered and beautiful.

For Gorman and modern Black social justice leaders, the objective is much larger than an enactment of particular rights or elevation of a race of people. In Thomas's fifth stage, transcendence comes when those who have accepted the challenge of social reform do so with the understanding that reconciliation does not come in perfecting the future but with resolving and learning from the past.

Conclusion

Although the Thomas and Cross nigrescence models were developed behind the birth of the Black Power movement and decades before the conception of Black Lives Matter, the stages appropriately summate the interests of each movement in their respective eras. It is unclear whether or not one's existence in one phase excludes their maintenance of characteristics from previous phases. For the cases of Black Power and Black Lives Matter, both movements display consciousnesses consistent with more than one phase at a time.

In response to the civil strategies employed by the mainstream 1950s and 1960s movement, Black Power challenged members of the Black community to weaponize their frustrations by proclaiming their disdain for racism and racists. While this is consistent with the negromachy beginning stages, the movement advanced this ideology alongside others (Cross, 1978). Following an era of segregation and disenfranchisement that negatively targeted the Black community, the call for Black economic and educational empowerment was presented as an appropriate countermeasure (Carmichael, 1967). For many, the continent of Africa represented an authentic, Black utopia and the appreciation and adoption of African cultures and traditions functioned as an effort to undo the evils of slavery (Carmichael, 1967). A return to African heritage epitomized the total rejection of western, white-centric values that worked to socially oppress Black people outside of the continent. The understanding that anti-Blackness persists

outside of the Americas drives the relationship between Black Americans and a larger Black experience outlined in Thomas' fourth stage (Cross, 1978). This is where the rhetoric of Black Power seems to stop.

Black Lives Matter continues the linkages formed by Black Power by forming relationships with communities in which some Black people may hold dual membership. The advocation for the improvement of a collective human experience is integral to Thomas's fifth and final stage of negromachy (Cross, 1978). In this phase, individuals assume their role as activists and advocates for all. Building on the efforts of Black women to join Blackness, womanhood, and class in the 1960s, Black Lives Matter places race, sexuality, gender, class, citizenship, legal involvement, and ability at the core of its politics. This alleviates the stress for folks who bear multiple oppressed identities, circumvents the need for diverging groups within the movement, and decreases the number of individuals uninvested in social change. By adopting members outside of the Black community (including but not limited to: non-Black members of queer and disabled communities) and developing a standard of advocating for one another, Black Lives Matter has exemplified Thomas’ stage of transcendence in a way that multiplies the numbers of those marginalized against the constructs that continue to oppress them.

Chapter 4: Leadership and Black Women

The faces and names singled out as leaders of a liberation movement reveal much about those whom the movement serves to free. While the emphasis on Blackness present in both Black Power and Black Lives Matter centers the lives and experiences of Black people, this community is not immune to secondary oppressive structures such as class, sexuality, ability, nativism and gender. The choices made by both movements as to the election of leadership and the organizational structure reflect the necessities and gender norms of their respective periods. At the intersection of multiple oppressed identities, Black women have and continue to contribute substantially to the liberation efforts of both the Black community and women. While names of Black women activists such as Angela Davis may be recalled from 1960s resistance efforts, the visibility of three Black women as founders and leading organizers in the modern resistance sets these two eras and movements apart.

The roles and visibility of Black women in the Black Power era are best understood through the foundation and evolution of the Black Women's United Front (Farmer, 2020). The organization, a subset of the Black Power movement, has been neglected in discussions of Black women's role in the 1960s movement--a byproduct of the dually marginalized identities that it sought to address (Farmer, 2020). The disregard for this unit within the prevailing narrative of the Black Power movement and Black empowerment may also be attributed to its often-overlooked target population. The Black Women’s United Front acknowledged the intersecting needs of Blackness and womanhood in a way that had been overlooked by Black and women’s liberation movements (Breines, 1996; Farmer, 2020).

Black women activists in the sixties were charged with navigating racism among white women in the prevailing white-centered women's liberation movement and sexism among Black

men in the Black Power movement (Breines, 1996). While many movements of the sixties were influenced by the philosophies and strategies of Black power, feminism centered middle-class white women and led to a distinction between black and white feminism (Breines, 1996). White women at the time failed to interrogate or acknowledge the ways that they perpetuated the oppression of Black women within their efforts to liberate all. The assumption among white women activists, if they considered the needs of non-white women, was that gender-specific concerns would apply to their peers. This belief did not account for the layering oppressions of gender, race, and class (Breines, 1996). As a result, Black women were driven to organize in their own favor.

The relationship between Black women in the Black Power movement differed from that between Black and white women as Black women assumed responsibility for the Black community and were, therefore more reluctant to critique the sexism within their community (Breines, 1996). This sense of protection stemmed from the desire to shield the Black men and the Black community from scrutiny from onlookers (Breines, 1996). Although Black women were able to provide leadership in the Civil Rights Movement, their role, and subsequently their visibility, shifted greatly with the introduction of Black Power and the gender roles assumed under Kawaida (Breines, 1996; Farmer, 2020). Kawaida, developed in 1965 by activist and theorist Maulana Karenga, was used as the foundational philosophy for the Committee of Unified Newark (Farmer, 2020). The ideology identified Black cultural revolution as the nexus of Black political and economic liberation. This cultural revolution involved a conscious shift in attitudes and relationships within the Black community, the most salient tenets of this shift came in the organization of gender roles (Farmer, 2020).

Gender roles, according to Kawaida, relegated women in the movement to supporting roles. This structure was ahistoric but meant to mimic the gender constructs believed to be practiced in pre-colonial African communities. Under this standard, the role of the Black woman was to inspire her man, educate her children, and participate in social development. Their participation in this area included the management of antipoverty programs, daycare centers, and the integration of new traditions, such as polygamy, to the Black community (Farmer, 2020). This ideology, though formulated by Karenga, was inspired by the conservative gender politics of the Nation of Islam (Farmer, 2020). In exchange for their support of Black men and the movement, Black women were offered the "promise of protection" which took advantage of a history of separation of Black men and women and subsequent abuse from slavery on. This promise served as a social contract between Black men and women in the movement whereby accepting men as leaders and defenders of the Black community, Black women would gain the security and exaltation of their womanhood (Farmer, 2020). This agreement enticed women inside and outside of the movement and caused many of them to, in turn, protect many of its leaders from claims of sexism (Breines, 1996; Farmer, 2020).

The Black Women's United Front rejected the conservative gender practices of the Nation of Islam and the organizations inspired by NOI's politics (Farmer, 2020). The United Front still identified as a subset of the Black Power movement but did not withhold its critique of the various ways that sexism was perpetuated by the practices of other members of the movement (Farmer, 2020). At the core of its infrastructure, the Black Women's United Front sought to resolve intersecting oppressions of race, gender, and class through what they called "The Woman Question." The Woman Question acknowledged the social placement of working-class, Black women under triple oppression. With this in mind, the organization agreed that the

Black woman's struggle was unable to be removed from the Black struggle or the struggles of the working class (Farmer, 2020). The refusal of the Black and women's movements to confront and attack these intersectional struggles has often prevented Black women in these movements from receiving the recognition they deserved. This chapter will examine the circumstances that gave rise to both Nikki Giovanni's *Ego Tripping* and Beyoncé's *Black Parade,* analyzing these pieces' instantiation of the leadership structures of the Black Power and Black Lives Matter movements. Juxtaposing these texts as summations of their respective eras will help chart the evolving roles, utility, and visibility of Black women in advancing the goals of Black social justice efforts.

Black Power

The Black Women's United Front represents but one of the many ways Black women activists in the 1960s navigated and challenged the politics of movements failing to make space for their identities. Part of navigating this era came in the form of creative artistry. In the sixties, very few Black women activists were able to contribute substantially in academic spaces (Breines, 1996). As a result, much of their resistance came through the telling of their stories via poetry, fiction, film, and theatre (Breines, 1996). The works of women such as Audre Lorde, Gwendolyn Brooks, Nina Simone, Toni Morrison, and Nikki Giovanni have and continue to tell the stories of resistance and celebration at the crossroads of Blackness and womanhood. Nikki Giovanni's "Ego Tripping" affirms the place of Black women as mothers to all that is Black and proud and professes the divine power of this dually oppressed identity.

Ego Tripping. Born in 1943, Yolande Cornelia Giovanni Jr. is one of many Black women activists who constituted the 1960s Black Art movement. Her works center the Black experience through calls to action, celebration, children's literature, and intimate

autobiographical works. “Ego Tripping (there may be a reason why)” was originally written by Nikki Giovanni in 1972 following her first trip to Africa. In the poem, Giovanni recounts the life of a Black goddess. Themes of maternity, creation, self-gratification, beauty, pride and the continent of Africa are strung together with affirmations closing every stanza. She is characterized through the pronoun *I,* which opens nearly every line of the poem. In her various fictitious accounts, I may represent all of Black womanhood. She is bad and beautiful. Her strength overflows. She is perfect, divine, and ethereal (Giovanni, 1993). Much of the poem takes place in Africa where the speaker assumes the credit for the significant historical events. She is the creator of the sphinx and the Nile, and the mother of Nefertiti and Noah (Giovanni, 1993). By placing the speaker in the birthplace of humanity and civilization, Giovanni urges readers to see the creation of humanity in Black women. Giovanni also uses this fantastic recollection as a means to carry her audience through the herstory of Black womanhood and present the justification for their haughtiness. This is the core of her ego trip and the root of the title’s multiple meaning.

First, the notion that one is *tripping* may be interpreted colloquially through African American Vernacular English or Ebonics. In this definition, tripping may be used to describe someone who is behaving unfavorably. To trip off of one's ego may imply that a person is expressing arrogance as a result of an inflated ego. This may be one interpretation of Giovanni's title where the crediting of Black women for the creation and advancement of civilization may be perceived as haughtiness. Second, the term *trip* may be used to refer to a euphoric experience, often associated with the use of psychedelic drugs. An ego trip in this sense may be interpreted as a fantastic experience as a result of one's elevated ego. Applicable to both interpretations, the secondary title “there may be a reason why,” may be understood as acknowledging that such

celebration of Black women's contributions to civilization is warranted considering the lack of credit awarded to this group throughout history. Understanding this, the sense of self-importance perceived in this celebration of Black womanhood may then be excused as well earned, and the opportunity to bask in these accomplishments mimics an unusual, fantastic experience for Black women.

In this fantasy, Giovanni uses hyperbole to depict her subject as a product of the divine itself by using the language of two of the most widely practiced faiths in Africa, Islam and Christianity. In the second stanza, "I sat on the throne drinking nectar with allah" and the fifth stanza, "I turned myself into myself and was jesus," she boldly asserts her proximity, and sameness, to these sacred figures and neutralizes their omnipotence through the lowercasing of their names and all other proper nouns in the text (Giovanni, 1993). This casing is juxtaposed with the repeating, and always capitalized, pronouns *I* and *My*. The speaker's might is also likened to that of figures such as Midas, where everything she touches is enhanced exponentially. The longest stanza, toward the end of the poem, tells of the precious materials produced from her most mundane acts and pure existence,

"I sowed diamonds in my back yard
My bowels deliver uranium
the filings from my fingernails are semi-precious jewels
on a trip north
I caught a cold and blew
My nose giving oil to the arab world
I am so hip even my errors are correct
I sailed west to reach east and had to round off the earth as I went

the hair from my head thinned and gold was laid

across three continents."

Compared to the excellence of building pyramids and birthing biblical figures, these feats seem unexciting. This is the charm of the subject. She enriches everything around her. This, to Giovanni, is the nature of Black womanhood.

In the closing years of a movement characterized by militancy and masculinity, Giovanni presented a case for the capacity of femininity and maternity to be equally forceful. She presents the strength in motherhood and nurture—qualities that relegated Black women to supporting roles under Kawaida (Farmer, 2020). From the tears of her birth pains, the speaker is credited with creating the Nile, also known as "the father of African rivers" (Giovanni, 1993). As the life and caregiver of creation and civilization, she is inseparable from a movement for human rights, and her contributions are immeasurable. Her identity is rooted in the intersection of oppression. To deny Black women their place at the front of the movement is to deny the movement a divine experience. In likening the speaker to Jesus, Giovanni calls forth the story of a martyr sent by God to liberate his people from evil. Jesus is introduced through the speaker's look inward and embodiment of the figure. This invites readers to understand the dwelling of Jesus in their hearts and the literal capacity of Black women to save humanity.

The final lines of the first stanza further parallels Black womanhood and the Christian idol,

Men intone my loving name

All praises All praises

I am the one who would save

Just as Jesus was both Son of God and man, the identity of the speaker, as a Black woman, is dually at the intersection of the human and divine. Ego Tripping aligns the Blackness and womanhood, two identities oppressed on Earth, with the ethereal. Being both worldly and godly identities, Giovanni proclaims that Black women, like Jesus, will be the ones to save all.

While Black women underwrote Black liberation efforts of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, their impact is often reduced to the names and actions of few (Breines, 1996). The hyperbole that forms the entirety of the poem, not only stresses the godliness of Black women but works to counter decades of being unremembered. Like the women of the Black Women's United Front, Giovanni saw the place of Black women at the front and center of liberation movements. This poem, in the context of the Black Power era, was a call for empowerment and pride among Black women within the movement and understanding that without them, there would be no substantial progress. Their names and contributions, though often overlooked, were worthy of exaltation. Ego Tripping is their ode.

The creative outlet of poetry, like film and theatre, allowed women such as Giovanni the freedom to rewrite history and depict utopias for those in the margins. This was the allure of the arts for many creative women in the era of the Black Arts Movement, which lasted from 1965-1976. Further, the accessibility of the arts brought the message of the movement to those locked out of academia and other exclusive spaces (Forsgren, 2015). The marriage of the arts and politics was used to promote the interests of Black activists by capturing the nuance of the Black experience in a way that could not be expressed through traditional means (Forsgren, 2015). This space especially benefited Black women who, through their works, were able to share their experience and tailor the resistance to their intersecting needs. The urge for Black woman

activists to organize creatively among themselves has laid the groundwork for intersectional activism that we see today in the form of Black Lives Matter.

Black Lives Matter

Decades after Giovanni's ode to Black women activists, Black Lives Matter, founded by three Black women, has not only placed Black women at the forefront but passed the mic so that anyone with a voice may be elevated as advocates and leaders for their liberation. The structure of Black Lives Matter encourages the activation of individuals within their communities and does not authorize any one singular experience or expression of Blackness over another. Through this structure, the necessity for subunits within the movement for women or the arts is dissolved as everyone is accepted as an integral part of the movement. This empowerment of all voices and faces within a movement characterizes Black Lives Matter as what organizers call a *leaderful movement*. The allowance of all Black people to act as leaders in their community also encouraged Black celebrities, such as Colin Kaepernick, Childish Gambino, Nas, H.E.R., Jordan Peele, and Beyoncé, who have used their platforms to galvanize their audiences (Roberts, 2020). In her most recent album titled *The Gift*, Beyoncé revitalizes themes present in Giovanni's *Ego Tripping (there may be a reason why)* such as Black divinity, royalty, faith, freedom, and the motherland (Giovanni, 1973; Knowles-Carter, 2019).

The incorporation of mainstream, Black social figures in the fight against antiblackness translates the dialogue of resistance into lay terms and makes the message inescapable. This is evidenced in biographical and fantastic works such as *Black Panther, Fruitvale Station, the Princess and the Frog, 13th, Two Distant Strangers, When They See Us*, and the live-action *Lion King* remake, which moves the movement forward through artistic resistance that ranges from the nontraditional representations of Black characters to the condemnation of police brutality

(Roberts, 2020). The message of pro-blackness has been sewn into the production of artworks that center Blackness and Black stories while critiquing structures that persist against the enjoyment of Black skin.

One of the most recent films to contribute to the elevation of Blackness did so without ever depicting a Black body on screen, the *Lion King*. The film, a parody of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, is set in Africa, without the mention of a specific country, and tells the story of a young lion's ascension to the throne. The live-action remake occurred a quarter-century after the release of the animated film. The main attraction for much of the 2019 audience was the voice casting of Beyoncé Knowles-Carter as Nala (NBC News, 2019). Although Blackness is never explicitly expressed in the plot, the film brought representation of the continent and members of the diaspora to Disney's 2019 audience through the casting of Black icons as voices and the incorporation of Black themes and artists in the soundtrack produced by Beyoncé.

Black Parade. *The Gift* features African artists and is accompanied by the short film written, directed, and produced by the superstar titled *Black is King*. The progression of the album follows the plot of the movie and includes interludes from the film that support Afrocentric themes (The Gift, 2020). The final song, *Black Parade*, closes the album with a song of Black pride, inheritance, and celebration that deeply mirrors Nikki Giovanni's 1973 poetry.

The song opens with Knowles-Carter declaring that she is returning to the South where her roots are not watered down (Knowles-Carter, 2019). While Knowles-Carter originates from Houston, Texas, this declaration also refers to the continent from which humanity originates and Blackness is often considered the least diluted. Following this reference, the look to the motherland is solidified as she speaks of her ancestors; the Ankh, an Egyptian symbol; and

Oshun, a Yorùbá deity. This introduction is closed with a hook that summates the inspiration for the song by saying:

> Ooh, motherland, motherland, motherland, motherland drip on me
>
> Ooh, yeah, I can't forget my history is her-story, yeah
>
> Being black, maybe that's the reason why they always mad
>
> Yeah, they always mad, yeah
>
> Been past 'em, I know that's the reason why they all big mad
>
> And they always have been

Knowles-Carter incorporates reverence for the motherland, like Giovanni, but marries this affinity with an appreciation for the excellence and progress of Blackness throughout the diaspora (Giovanni, 2973; Knowles-Carter, 2019. In her appreciation for Blackness, she characterizes those who hold or perpetuate anti-Blackness as mad and historically so. This remembering of history occurs twice in the hook. First, the word history is made to emphasize the contributions of women by the adaption of the pronoun *his* into *her*. This adaptation, while subtle, has been proven significant by its use on the Black Lives Matter About page (Herstory, n.d.). The popularization of *herstory* as a variation of *history* is a product of modern efforts to spotlight history from the feminine perspective and a critique of the ways that both society and language are often governed by a patriarchal lens. Second, at the end of the hook, Beyoncé continues to speak of those who hold hatred toward Blackness by suggesting that they are *big mad* and that they always have been. *Big mad* is slang from African American Vernacular English and is used, often in jest, to acknowledge one's unwarranted or inexpressible frustration with another. In the song, these feelings are held by racists who, for centuries, have believed and acted on prejudice and hatred toward Blackness and Black people.

In response to antiblackness and anti-Black violence, Knowles-Carter introduces the potential for war with the warning, “You could send them missiles, I'ma send my goons—Trust me, they gon' need an army (Knowles-Carter, 2019).” The concept of equal force against anti-black violence brings forth the memory of Black Panther Party strategies and is completed with the later mention of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. In the recall of both leaders, she also names her mother Tina in saying that she is a mixture of the three (Knowles-Carter, 2019). This blend reintroduces the notion of maternity and strength that comes from being and coming from a Black woman. The immediately next line calls for another march and names a present-day Black woman activist, Tamika Mallory, as the leading organizer (Knowles-Carter, 2019). Tucked between the lines introducing violent resistance and icons to the movement, there are two lines advising listeners to join hands in prayer and lie face down in the gravel. Lying prostrate is often the final position of those forcefully detained and/or murdered in incidents of police brutality. This eerie phrase precedes the mention of X, King, and Mallory, and the verse closes with the call for an iconic expression of Black pride: raised fists. This middle portion is followed by the chorus,

Honey, come around my way, around my hive

Whenever momma says so, momma say

Here I come on my throne, sittin' high

Follow my parade, oh, my parade

The major theme of the chorus, the Black parade, may be interpreted as an event that mirrors protest and dated military displays of might. Similar to protests, parades are large gatherings of individuals often joined by a specific day or occasion. In ancient times, militaries often used parades as presentations of power or battle formations. In any of these contexts,

parades typically span a designated distance with the group moving in unison. The imagery of a celebratory Black parade contrasts the protests organized by Black activists in purpose. With this consideration, the Black Parade represents an opportunity to gather and celebrate Black life and resilience over death. This song, like *Ego Tripping*, functions as a tribute to the sacredness of Black life, might, and potential.

Conclusion

While there are many similarities between the works by Giovanni and Knowles-Carter, the difference in context deepens their relationship. The respective eras and speakers both contribute a better understanding of why and how they used their platforms as public figures to elevate a Black womanist perspective. Almost half a century separates *Ego Tripping* and *Black Parade*. In the 1973 poem, Giovanni saw the need to assert the value of Black women in the revolution. In the 21st century, Knowles-Carter echoes the appreciation and visibility of Blackness and Black women present in social justice efforts, film, music, and visual art.

Giovanni's position as a Black woman activist of the 1960s and 1970s forced her to navigate the sexism that permeated the Black activist community (Breines, 1996). Like the Black Women's United Front, creative arts offered an avenue for Black women to flourish and resist oppressive structures by their means. The fantasy in outlets such as poetry granted those at the margins the authority to lead in their own stories. With this authority, Giovanni used *Ego Tripping* her affinity for Black women and all that they bring. The development of the Black Women's United Front and works of Black women creative activists demonstrates the need for leadership opportunities at the forefront of the Black Power movement era.

Today, the acknowledgment of Knowles-Carter and her works as mainstream to social justice efforts epitomizes a shift in the definition and picture of leadership for a Black liberation

movement. Beyoncé's place as a voice in the Black Lives Matter movement reflects the faces recognized as founding organizers in this era. Her song, a tribute to Black women, reinforces the current and rightful place of Black women in social justice.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The comparative analysis of Black Power and Black Lives Matter presents the opportunity to understand the ways that two generations of organizers have rhetorically approached the age-old problem of social injustice. In juxtaposition, both movements also trace the progression of Black centered social justice efforts led by and for members of the Black community who identify with the use of justified anger against injustice. These movements serve as critiques of the mainstream Civil Rights Movement and the ways that its leaders prioritized the feelings and permissions of white people. Through two movements, heavily scrutinized for their endorsement of incivility, an argument may be made for the utility of disruption in social intervention. Lastly, in calling forward the memories of Black Power alongside the modern movement, the relentlessness of white supremacy is stressed and resisted against. The lessons of this analysis are productively outlined through the comparison of their navigation of respectability politics, Black identity, and leadership.

Summary

The first theme of respectability politics comes from a notion developed in 1993 by Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham following her study of Black, middle-classed Baptist Church women. This term is often used in association with the politics and strategies employed by leaders of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. This is appropriate as both the term and Civil Rights leader Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. originated in the Baptist church. The faith-led movement that grew from this relationship failed to resonate with members of the Black community who lived outside of the church or who had no interest in attaining to white-centered moralistic standards. Further, by succumbing to the pursuit of white-centered standards in exchange for respect, arguments for the humanity, beauty, and worth of Blackness were

abandoned. By centering Blackness and declaring its inherent virtue, Black Power and Black Lives Matter have presented dramatic turns in the way humanity and human rights should be negotiated.

The second theme, Black identity, refers to both the process of developing an understanding of self under an oppressed identity and the pursuit of community among like individuals. Through the nigrescence models of Charles Thomas and William E. Cross Jr., the construction of Black identity in the eras of Black Power and Black Lives Matter flows from *Negro* to advocate for all. Organizers in the 1960s and 1970s may be characterized as existing in stages where Blackness is embodied by the appreciation of Black-centered heritage and the development of an expansive Black community. The notion that liberation comes through the appreciation and advocation for one's culture is expanded upon by Black Lives Matter's creation of an intersectional global community. The use of intersectionality as the groundwork for social justice efforts enacts Thomas's final stage of negromachy: transcendence. The inclusion of overlapping oppressed groups expands the numbers and reach of those with less power against the structures that persist out of their favor.

The third and final theme addressed in this analysis, leadership, is best evaluated through an emphasis on Black women in the eras of each movement. Black women have existed as integral parts of both movements, however, the space made for Black women to lead differs as a product of the politics held in each respective time period. While the names of some Black women activists may be recalled from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the recognition of their contributions is often a poor measure of their true worth to their movement. The existence of three Black women activists as the founding organizers of the modern movement speaks to the capacity and tendency of Black women to be forces in the protection and progression of their

community. The presence of two queer women activist among the trio brings forward the memory of the many Black queer pioneers whose names and contributions to the resistance are only remembered in whispers or secondary to those who are Black, male, heterosexual, and cisgendered. Thus, the hallmark of the fullness with which women have served as leaders of the this 21st century Black-centered movement is that the demographic of the leadership is *not* characterized as "female" or "male" but, rather, has been broadened to become fully gender-inclusive.

Future Research

Future research would benefit from the consideration of sexuality and gender in the appointment of leaders and the development of Black community. The progression of Black and queer liberation, from the 1950s to present, flows into the rhetorical move whereby the Black Lives Matter movement treats the needs of both the Black and LGBTQ+ community as inseparable. Prioritizing individuals with multiple oppressed identities necessitates the destruction of all oppressive structures. This is the foundation for Thomas's stage of transcendence, which may serve as a functional framework for future efforts against inequity.

Future research may also consider the role of the arts as mainstream to the modern movement. Through further interrogation of the conditions that beget the Black Arts Movement and the recent politicization of music and film may reveal advantages and disadvantages to the movement toward equality. The initiation of celebrities into the forefront of social justice movements should also be addressed as the commercialization of social change may distract attention from the actual achievement of the progress that needs to be made. Nevertheless, the inevitable evolution of oppressive structures necessitates the parallel adaptation of efforts to oppose them. In comparing the strategies of both Black Power and Black Lives Matter, the need

for the legitimation of Blackness in all forms and unity among all who experience oppression and is evident. With these considerations in mind, the projection for the generations of organizers who will learn from and expand upon these works is hopeful.

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